

<b>STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 5</b>
<b>23 NOVEMBER 2016</b>	<b>Public Report</b>

<b>Report of the Service Director - Adult Services &amp; Communities</b>		
<b>Contact Officer</b>	<b>Belinda Child - Head of Housing, Prevention &amp; Wellbeing</b>	Tel. 863769

## **HOUSING RENEWALS POLICY 2017 - 2019**

### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with the opportunity to scrutinise the council's new draft Housing Renewals Policy.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Committee are recommended to:

1. Scrutinise the draft policy which includes:
  - the proposed assistance that will be available to vulnerable householders whose housing conditions are such that they may be detrimental to their health, safety, wellbeing or their ability to access their home due to disability.
  - the proposed assistance to owners of an empty property or property that is privately rented in order to provide the Council with additional housing stock in which to accommodate families in housing need and to prevent homelessness.
2. Provide challenge where necessary and to suggest ideas and initiatives to support further activity.

### **3. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND RELEVANT CABINET PORTFOLIO**

- 3.1
- Drive growth, regeneration and economic development - by improving the condition of the housing stock, by creating better places to live and to utilise local contractors to carry out grant funded works
  - Improving educational attainment and skills - by creating safe, warm and good quality housing to help reduce physical and mental illness in order to promote higher levels of achievement, particularly in education and employment.
  - Safeguard vulnerable children and adults - by improving the housing condition and by preventing homelessness by increasing the available housing stock for vulnerable families
  - Implement the Environmental Capital agenda - by improving the energy efficiency of existing housing stock and reducing carbon emissions from domestic dwellings
  - Keep all our communities safe, cohesive and healthy - by building and empowering local communities, making Peterborough safer and building pride in Peterborough's neighbourhoods
  - Achieve the best health and wellbeing for the city - by providing good quality, secure, accessible and affordable housing to all of the residents of the city
- 3.2 The Housing Renewals Policy is within the remit of the Communities & Environmental Capital Portfolio

## **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 As part of Peterborough City Council's legal duty to regularly review the condition of its housing, the Building Research Establishment was commissioned to undertake a series of modelling exercises on the housing stock and produce an integrated stock modelling report.

In addition, the Council also commissioned the Building Research Establishment to produce a quantitative Health Impact Assessment which utilises the data in the stock modelling to better understand the effect of private sector housing hazards and intervention strategies on the health of residents in Peterborough. The key findings of those reports are detailed in Section 5 below.

- 4.2 The population of Peterborough is expected to increase from 183,961 in 2011 to 227,890 in 2036. 1,005 new dwellings, including 620 affordable homes, are needed each year to meet current and projected population growth. There are approximately 3,300 households on the Council's Housing Register awaiting suitable accommodation.

The introduction of Selective Licensing in September 2016 has seen some private landlords indicate that they cannot afford to carry out necessary repairs to their properties or meet Licensing requirements and are considering withdrawing from the market. The private rented sector is an important source of accommodation for individuals and families in housing need.

- 4.3 The introduction of the Better Care Fund in April 2014 and the Care Act in April 2015 is leading to the creation of new integrated services centred on the home. Peterborough City Council's Home Service Delivery Model, launched in October 2016, brings together Therapy Services, Reablement, Assistive Technology and the Care and Repair Home Improvement Agency, working closely with the Housing Programmes and the Housing Needs Teams.
- 4.4 In addition to making the grant delivery more effective, efficient and customer focussed, the preventative role of the Disabled Facilities Grant in keeping people living safely and independently can be fully explored by using the extra Disabled Facilities Allocation received through the Better Care Fund in more flexible and responsive ways to help reduce pressures on health and social care

## **5. KEY ISSUES**

- 5.1 The key findings of the Building Research Establishment's Stock Modelling are:

- The estimated number of dwellings with Housing Health and Safety Ratings Scheme (HHSRS) Category 1 hazards in Peterborough's private sector stock is 7,952. The estimated average cost of mitigating hazards per dwelling is £3,548 resulting in the total cost of mitigating all hazards within those dwellings as £28.2 million
- 7.3% (4,821) of all private sector dwellings and 8.8% (1,454) of private rented dwellings in Peterborough are estimated to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating below band E
- In Peterborough's private sector stock there is an estimated 13,374 dwellings with un-insulated cavity walls and 9,652 dwellings with less than 100mm of loft insulation
- Using the 10% Fuel Poverty Indicator 6,500 (13%) of owner occupied dwellings and 3,318 (20%) of private rented dwellings are occupied by households in fuel poverty. These figures fall to 4,156 (8%) and 3,062 (19%) respectively when using the Low Income High Cost Fuel Poverty Indicator

- 5.2 The key findings of the Building Research Establishment's Health Impact Assessment are:

- There are an estimated 11,796 Category 1 hazards in Peterborough's private sector stock, of which over 3,700 are within the privately rented sector
- The estimated total cost of mitigating the Category 1 hazards so that the risk is reduced to an acceptable level is £27 million with £8.4 million in the private rented sector
- It is estimated that poor housing conditions are responsible for over 631 harmful events requiring medical treatment every year

- The estimated cost to the NHS of treating accidents and ill health caused by these hazards is £2.1 million each year. If the wider costs to society are considered, the total costs are estimated to be £5.2 million each year
- If these hazards are mitigated to an acceptable level then the total annual savings to society are estimated to be £4.9 million, including £1.9 million of savings to the NHS

5.3 Offering Repairs Assistance to tackle poor housing condition of vulnerable householders reduces the risk to their health, safety and wellbeing enabling them to live independently within their own homes and participate in their community. Improved living conditions will also lead to a reduction in respiratory and other cold related illnesses and this, together with reducing the likelihood of falls in the property, could potentially reduce hospital admission and re-admission.

5.4 The Council has had considerable success over the last 5 years in returning empty property back into use through voluntary negotiation and enforcement action when owners will not engage and the property is adversely affecting the surrounding neighbourhood. Empty Homes Assistance is an incentive to owners of empty property of a type that is in high demand who cannot afford to get essential repairs carried out in order for them to be brought back into use. Properties that benefit from Assistance will be put on a private leasing scheme where they will be managed and utilised for families in housing need. Any refurbishment costs will be recouped through the rental income during the lease period and rent will be set at the Local Housing Allowance rate.

5.5 The introduction of Repairs Assistance to private landlords who cannot meet licensing or housing condition requirements is proposed within this Policy in order to prevent potential homelessness of in-situ tenants. It is also proposed to offer Empty Homes Assistance to Private Landlords who cannot meet requirements. The conditions attached to both Repairs and Empty Homes Assistance is that the landlord hands over the property which will be placed on a private leasing scheme and which will be managed by a management agent working in partnership with the Council. The property will then be used to house families in housing need at a rent based on the Local Housing Allowance rate.

5.6 The Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant has a maximum of £30,000. Over the last two years large scale ground floor adaptations to provide bedrooms with en-suite level access shower rooms have been significantly exceeding the grant maximum amount. Part of the role of The Care and Repair Home Improvement Agency is to source alternative/charitable funding to contribute towards the cost but in many circumstances families are asked to meet any excess costs. This leads to delays in providing much needed adaptations and in some cases the inability to proceed with the necessary work. The draft Renewals Policy introduces a Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant which can be utilised to “top up” a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant.

5.7 The draft Renewals Policy introduces a Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant in order to carry out timely and responsive work in people’s homes to enable to support speedy transfer out of hospital, facilities to enable home care to be provided and work to prevent hospital admission, readmission and to reduce the cost of domiciliary care packages.

## **6. IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Assistance will be available city wide and will be dependent on the housing condition and/or its suitability to be adapted. Funding is provided by the Council’s capital programme for Repairs Assistance and Disabled Facilities Grants. Grants are provided to owners of property, with the exception of Disabled Facilities Grants which are cross tenure. All grants are discretionary and subject to funding availability with the exception of Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants where the Council has a statutory duty to provide suitable adaptations once a need has been identified.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

7.1 The Housing Renewals Policy will be uploaded onto the Consultation & Engagement pages of the Council’s website for a period of 3 weeks.

**8. NEXT STEPS**

- 8.1 Following scrutiny of current and proposed assistance detailed in the Policy document, and after consideration of all comments made by the committee, officers will further develop the Housing Renewals Policy in order to go out to public consultation. The Policy will then be referred to the Cabinet Member for Communities & Environmental Capital for a decision.

**9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

- 9.1
- Building Research Establishment Integrated Dwelling Level Housing Stock Modelling Report July 2016
  - Building Research Establishment Quantitative Health Impact Assessment: The Cost of Private Sector Housing & Prospective Housing Interventions in Peterborough July 2016.
  - Foundations - The Disabled Facilities Grant: Before & After the Introduction of the Better Care Fund - July 2016

**APPENDICES**

- 10.1 Appendix 1 The draft Housing Renewals Policy 2017- 2019.