

BARNSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

This matter is not a Key Decision within the Council's definition and has not been included in the relevant Forward Plan

**Report of the Executive
Director - Communities**

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Members approval to formalise and implement the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the implementation of the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy with effect from 26 April 2017.**

3. Introduction

- 3.1 Good quality housing makes a significant contribution to peoples health and wellbeing. Conversely, poor quality housing can cause physical and mental health issues and also cause serious accidents. It can also have a negative effect on the environment and been associated with anti-social behaviour.
- 3.2 The effective and proper enforcement of housing enforcement legislation is therefore essential to protect the health and wellbeing of residents and to maintain environmental standards for communities.
- 3.3 Over recent years the proportion of housing tenure types in Barnsley MBC has changed. In particular there has been a significant increase in the number of dwelling in the private rented sector.
- 3.4 It is recognised that there is a need for a formally adopted Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy in order to enable officers to make decisions about private sector housing enforcement issues in a consistent and informed manner and to enable a structured approach to the process.

4. Proposal and justification

- 4.1 The purpose of this policy is therefore to detail the Council's approach to the enforcement of private sector housing issues within the borough. In the past no

such policy has been formalised. It is therefore officer opinion that such a policy is necessary in order to discharge the Council's responsibilities with respect to transparency, accountability and consistency.

- 4.2 There is a need to implement the policy in order to give guidance and direction to employees that deal with private sector housing enforcement work.
- 4.3 The policy will inform residents and businesses in and outside the borough, including private sector housing landlords and tenants, as to how private sector housing issues will be addressed.
- 4.4 Effective operation of the policy will support the Council's priority to promote strong and resilient communities and to enable people to achieve their potential by protecting the borough for future generations.
- 4.5 The proposal is to implement the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy as soon as practicable.

5. Consideration of alternative approaches

- 5.1 The only alternative approach available is not to adopt and implement a policy, which is not recognised as good practice and could leave the Council open to challenge. The council also has a responsibility to be transparent and accountable in its actions.

6. Implications for local people / service users

- 6.1 The policy will provide information for local people and service users with respect to how the housing enforcement function will be applied.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

8. Employee implications

- 8.1 Employees who deal with housing enforcement issues will be better informed and directed as to how to address housing enforcement issues.

9. Communications implications

- 9.1 The Policy will be placed on the Council's web site for the public to view.

10. Consultations

Consultation has taken place with the Head of Regulatory Services, the Head of Housing and Environment and the Equalities and Inclusion Unit.

Informal consultation to take place with local landlord and tenant groups.

11. The Corporate Plan and the Council's Performance Management Framework

11.1 The implementation of the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy will support the delivery of the following strategic priorities:

People achieving their potential

- Children and adults are safe from harm.
- Early targeted support for those that need it.

Strong and resilient communities

- Protecting the borough for future generations.

12. Promoting equality, diversity, and social inclusion

12.1 The policy recognises the Council's commitment to promoting equality, diversity and social inclusion. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken.

13. Tackling the Impact of Poverty

13.1 The policy adapts a risk-based approach to intervention to assist the most vulnerable individuals in our communities. This should have a positive impact on those living in poverty.

14. Tackling health inequalities

14.1 Those in need of housing enforcement intervention are often in sections of the community which are at risk, vulnerable or isolated. Related interdependencies will be identified by officers to ensure a holistic approach to health and wellbeing. By assisting and supporting the vulnerable members of our community, health inequalities will be addressed.

15. Reduction of crime and disorder

15.1 A clear policy will reduce the risk of crime and disorder in communities by enabling a clear intervention framework to housing enforcement issues.

16. Risk management issues

16.1 Failure to formally adopt and implement a clear housing enforcement policy may expose the Council to criticism about inconsistencies in approach.

17. Health, safety, and emergency resilience issues

17.1 No health and safety or emergency resilience issues are apparent from this report.

18. Compatibility with the European Convention on Human Rights

18.1 All legislation cited in this report and how it will be discharged will be compliant with the European Convention on Human Rights.

19. Conservation of biodiversity

19.1 None directly arising from this report.

20. List of appendices

20.1 Proposed Housing Enforcement Policy.

21. Background papers

21.1 Equality Impact Assessment.

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Financial Implications /



Consultation
*(To be signed by senior Financial Services officer
where no financial implications)*