

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Central Area Council -Taking Forward the 2017 and beyond priorities. Continuation of a Private Sector Housing Management and Enforcement Service**

#### **DRAFT BUSINESS CASE**

##### **Introduction & background**

At its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2016, Central Area Council agreed the following revised priorities:

- **Building emotional resilience and wellbeing in children and young people**
- **Addressing loneliness and isolation in vulnerable adults and older people**
- **Family Support**
- **Clean and Green**

It was agreed that these priorities would be underpinned by the following principles:

- **Ensuring cohesion and integration**
- **Early help and prevention approaches**

##### **Purpose of this document**

For the past 18 months, and as part of Central Area Council's delivery against its Clean and Green/environmental priority, a Private Rented sector housing management and enforcement service has been delivered through a Service Level Agreement with BMBC's Safer Communities Service since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014

This service will come to an end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

The purpose of this document is to present a business case for the continuing need for this service beyond 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

The aim is to:

- Review and learn from the existing Central Area Council Private Rented Sector Housing Management and Enforcement service.
- Understand the strategic and local context for any continuation of this service
- Understand the need, value and benefit of the current service
- Identify a proposed way forward

## **The existing Central Area Council Private Rented Sector Housing and Enforcement Service –Delivery and Lessons learned:**

The current Central Area Council Private Rented Housing Management and Enforcement service commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 to deliver the following outcomes:

- Improve the physical/living conditions of the private rented stock in the Central Council area and reduce the number of private sector housing condition complaints.
- Reduce the levels of crime and anti-social behaviour relating to private rented sector housing stock in the Central Council area.
- Reduce the levels of littering and flytipping in and around the private rented housing stock in the Central Council area.

Since the contract commenced, work to deliver these outcomes has been delivered through the appointment to/deployment of the following posts/postholders:

1. Private rented sector Housing Management Officer- This post/postholder provides a proactive, reassuring, practical and visible customer focused housing and environmental management service to the private rented housing of greatest need in the Central Council area.  
The postholder is responsible for the delivery of a range of frontline elements of private sector housing support, environmental management, community and tenancy support, and community safety/cohesion.
2. Enforcement and Investigation Officer- Working closely with the Safer Communities Enforcement Service and the Central Area private sector Housing Management Officer (above), this post/postholder effectively case manages and resolves serious/persistent problems in the private rented housing stock in the Central Council area.

Since the commencement of the contract to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016, **949** different private rented properties have been visited by the Central Area Council officers. Approximately 50% of these are vulnerable households who have had 3 or more contacts from the officers.

A wide range of issues have been identified and addressed as part of this work including: anti-social behaviour, flytipping, littering, poor environmental standards, poor condition of properties, fire safety issues, drug and alcohol misuse, domestic violence, safeguarding and vulnerability issues.

Good working relationships have been developed with landlords and letting agents to ensure that they carry out their responsibilities.

In the absence of any up to date private rented stock condition information and/or any detailed information about the diversity of people living in these areas of high density poor quality private rented accommodation, the intelligence gathered by Central Council officers since April 2015 has helped build a more accurate picture of the private rented sector across the Central Council area.

## **Understanding the local context and the need for the continuation of a Private Rented Sector Housing management and Enforcement service in the Central Area Council area.**

There are an increasing number of areas across Central Council area with a high density of poor quality privately rented accommodation. Problems associated with this tenure continue to link to all the key areas of enforcement activity with much higher than average levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and environmental blighting.

In addition, and over the past few years, there has been a sharp increase in the number of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO's) operating within the Central Council area. There are thought to be over 500 HMO's currently operating across Barnsley but it can be said with certainty that there at least 300. A significant proportion of these are situated in the Central Council area.

Very transient populations who are usually the most economically deprived are living in this accommodation and these people are often subject to landlord and peer exploitation. Higher rates of crime, environmental blighting and general decline are also often seen in these areas.

The poorer quality private rented stock, including HMO's, has now been firmly established as the tenure of last resort to many and continues to exhibit some of the most damaging social and environmental problems faced in Barnsley. Unless existing interventions continue and/or new interventions are developed and delivered to address the issues identified, some of the more clustered locations of private lets are likely to become areas of serious decline.

### **What else currently exists/is planned?**

The Safer Communities Service is currently reviewing its approach to this area of work and is looking to introduce a very limited proactive private sector housing core offer across the borough from 1st April 2017. This will be very similar in the way it operates to the service provided through the SLA with Central Area Council, but it will only be provide 1 officer to cover 2 Area Council areas.

Longer term the Safer Communities Service is working towards the introduction of a Selective Licensing and Additional Licensing Scheme which should assist in sustaining a regulatory approach in the sector.

### **Summary and Recommendations**

Given the local context of the private rented housing sector, including the increasing number of HMO's and the associated issues across the Central Council area, it is important that interventions to directly address the ongoing issues across the Central Council area are delivered.

Although the Safer Communities Service plans to employ new officers to undertake some of this work as part of a revised “core” offer, this level of resource will not be enough to address the work needed in the Central Council area.

Given the success and impact to date of the Central Area Council Private rented sector Housing management and enforcement service it is proposed that this service continues for a further year. Any continued service should work very closely with the officer appointed as part of the new private rented housing sector “core” offer.

As part of the revised Service Level Agreement for the continued/extended service, it is proposed that a full review of the service is carried out in late 2017. This review should inform the development of any future service.

### **Cost of Service**

The total cost for the delivery of the service for an additional year- 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 is **£76,175**

**Report prepared by Carol Brady**

**12<sup>th</sup> October 2016.**