

Date of Meeting	Item	Members wished to make the following recommendations	Response/Comments
21-Mar-2018	Empty Properties	<p>Members recommended that BCBC recruit their own dedicated Empty Properties Officer. Members understood that BCBC has major problems in the Borough with the number of properties being empty and stated it was essential that BCBC have their own dedicated officer to address the issues in the Borough. Members further recommended that once the Empty Properties Officer is appointed that they become a co-ordinator of the Empty Properties Working Group.</p> <p>Members recommended that officers take a more blended approach to targeting empty properties and bringing them back into use to prevent properties falling into the longer term category of being empty for two years plus, which members believed would lead to them becoming more difficult and costly to bring back to use. Members further recommended that officers take a targeted approach as the representative from RCT described in relation to empty properties in high density areas.</p> <p>Members recommended that officers are more proactive in their approach to bringing empty properties back into use and explore what tools and resources were readily available to them. Members used the example of officers in RCT attending property auctions in the area to share information with new owners on what support and grants were available to them to bring the properties back into use was an excellent one and one that BCBC should look to replicate</p>	<p>The Empty Properties Working Group is meeting week commencing Monday 16th April and one of the items on the agenda is the Empty Property Officer. The Working Group will agree the remit and responsibilities of the Empty Property Officer to enable recruitment to progress.</p> <p>A desktop scoring exercise has been carried out to identify the priority of empty properties to be tackled. The method of scoring enables a "blended" approach to be taken and not just a focus on the longer-term empty properties. The Working Group will discuss taking a targeted approach and what the focus of this approach will be. An Empty Homes Strategy is being developed to clearly outline the corporate approach to bring empty properties back into use.</p> <p>An officer from the Sustainable Renewal Team already attends auctions to promote grants and loans, in addition to speaking to estate agents, landlords in the Bridgend Landlord Forum and carrying out leaflet drops at local DIY stores. A mailshot is undertaken twice a year to owners of empty properties promoting the grants and loans and going forward, local builders and developers will also be communicated with.</p>

Members were concerned about the high number of empty churches and chapels in the Borough and recommended that officers attempt to contact the owners to establish what their long term plans for the properties were and report back to members

Owners of empty churches and chapels across the county borough will be contacted seperately as part of a targeted approach.

Members asked to receive the following further information

Members asked to receive evidence on how successful other Local Authorities have been in bringing empty properties back into use where they have charged 100% upwards Council tax on properties after they have been empty for longer than 6 months. Members felt they would then be better informed to put a recommendation forward on how BCBC should proceed for charging Council Tax on empty properties and whether charging a higher rate of Council Tax is encourages owners to bring the properties back into use.

This will be investigated.

Members asked to receive further information on the properties that have been un-banded by the Valuation Office Agency. To include reasons why the properties would not have been banded and how many of these are there within BCBC.

This will be investigated.

Members requested information on what the average loss of Council tax looks like in BCBC due to empty properties in the Borough. Members recommended using the average Band D property to be able to quantify the loss.

This will be investigated.

Members asked of the 1200 properties liable for the 50% charge on Council tax for empty properties, how much of this are BCBC successful in receiving.

This will be investigated.