

Mayor and Cabinet			
Report Title	Matters referred by the Sustainable Development Select Committee – Review of Empty Properties in Lewisham		
Key Decision	No	Item No.	6
Ward	All		
Contributors	Sustainable Development Select Committee		
Class	Part 1	Date	28 January 2009

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report informs the Mayor and Cabinet of the Sustainable Development Select Committee's Review of Empty Properties in Lewisham. The final report of the Review is included at Appendix A below.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Mayor is recommended to:
- (a) note the views and recommendations of the Committee set out in the main report at Appendix A; and
 - (b) agree that the Executive Directors for Customer Services and Regeneration be asked to respond accordingly to the Review's recommendations.

3. Context

- 3.1 The Review of Empty Properties was carried out by the Sustainable Development Select Committee between June 2008 and January 2009. The final report was agreed at the meeting on the 6th January 2009, following evidence sessions on 2nd September and 7th October, and discussion of recommendations on 18th November.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising out of this report per se, although the financial implications of several of the recommendations will need to be considered in due course.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 In terms of the legal powers available to local authorities to deal with empty properties, these are detailed in the main body of the final report (particularly Section 7) and a summary is included as an Appendix.
- 5.2 In terms of the legal implications of referring the report, the Constitution provides for Select Committees to refer reports to the Mayor and Cabinet, who are obliged to consider the report, together with a proposed response from the relevant Executive Director(s), as soon as reasonably practicable (usually within six weeks).

6. Environmental Implications

- 6.1 A full description of the environmental implications of empty properties is included in the main report. In summary, long-term empty properties often have a detrimental impact on the environment of a local area, both in terms of being unpleasant to look at, and in their associated problems such as fly-tipping, graffiti and pest infestation.
- 6.2 Empty properties may also have become dilapidated over a long period of time, and work required to make the property habitable once again may improve its energy efficiency, which will help to reduce carbon emissions.

7. Equalities Implications

- 7.1 One of the main benefits of bringing empty properties back into use is the opportunity to improve access to housing and reduce homelessness. People from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities are over-represented among homeless applicants in the borough.

8. Crime and Disorder Implications

- 8.1 Empty properties can be a catalyst for a range of antisocial behaviour and criminal activity, such as vandalism, arson, burglary, identity theft and drug use. Further detail on this is provided in Section 3 of the main report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

If you have any queries on this report or the wider Review of Empty Properties, please contact Joel Hartfield, Scrutiny Manager (0208 3149941), or Kevin Flaherty, Head of Business & Committee (0208 3149327).