

Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

11th March 2019

Private Sector Housing Update

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Altogether better



Summary

- Our Collaborative approach
- Private Sector Housing Initiatives
- Achievements
- Challenges and emerging issues
- Forward plan

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Our Collaborative Approach



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Private Rented Sector in Durham

- 14% of households privately rent
- Rise of 78% between 2001 & 2011
- Mainly deprived areas
- Much needed accommodation
- 6,900 long term empty homes

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Private Sector Housing Initiatives and Interventions

- Advice and guidance
- Negotiation / mediation
- Referrals and Signposting
- Voluntary Accreditation Scheme
 - 139 Landlords
 - 2621 properties
 - 128 properties listed on DKO
 - 388 inspections carried out in 2018/19
 - 50% renewal rate
 - Focus Groups

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Tackling Empty Properties

- Scored assessment to prioritise
- Investigate & identify property owners
- Engagement & education
- Help to sell, rent or lease
- Interest free loans
- Move in grants

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Empty Homes 2018-19

- Annual target is 120 back into use
- Empty Homes brought back into use:-
 - 171 year to date
 - 86 grants and loans
 - 91 other means
- Over £700,000 financial assistance
- Joint working protocol review for empty properties.
- Central database for all reporting

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Challenges

- Limited powers
- Landlords viewed as burden rather than a stakeholder & valued resource
- Access to affordable housing: zero tolerance / bedroom tax
- Housing & Planning Act 2016
- More legislative changes

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Challenges to Landlords

- Negative Equity
- Rising Costs - Changes in taxation and mortgage lending / Banning of tenant fees / 100% council tax charges
- Business v Domestic v Investment; Disparity with social housing
- Legislative Changes
- Universal Credit

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Forward Plan

- Early intervention and prevention
- Supporting Tenants and Landlords
- Multi Agency Problem Solving / Partnership working
- Risk based intelligence led enforcement
- Develop Private Sector Housing & Empty Homes Policy
- Develop programme of Buy to Lease properties
- Develop business case for county wide Selective Licensing
- Area Based initiatives:-
 - CAT programme
 - Town and Village Centre Regeneration
 - Time Limited Projects

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