

COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OSC

REPORT TO CABINET

6 AUGUST 2019

Housing Strategy for Northumberland 2019-21

Mr Paul Johnston and Mr Phil Soderquest presented the report to the Committee at their meeting on 3 July 2019.

The Committee discussed a number of issues in relation to the report. Members were keen to ensure that the Council's own portfolio of properties was assessed to identify potentially suitable properties for Council housing development, and members were assured this was the case.

The Committee also discussed Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO), by which long term empty properties were brought back into use. Members welcomed the success which had been made in this area, but noted that there were still some significant challenges to be met, for example, for properties with a high repair cost it was very difficult for an adequate return to be made on investment. Members were keen to ensure that the list of properties potentially subject to an EDMO was as comprehensive and as up to date as it could be, and asked that this be subject to a future report to Committee.

Members had a detailed debate on whether three years was an appropriate length of time for the Strategy, or whether it should be five years, with views expressed in support of both. The Committee was assured by officers that the Strategy would be kept under annual review regardless of its length, although there would be no fundamental changes to the three priorities during its lifetime. The Strategy would then be subject to a full revisit at the end of its term.

The Committee therefore **resolved** that Cabinet be informed of the divided view of the Committee regarding whether the Strategy should have a three or five year term, and that Cabinet should consider which was more appropriate.

COUNCILLOR JEFF REID

CHAIRMAN