



Walsall Area Partnerships

Willenhall and Short Heath Area Partnership Void Properties

10 November 2016

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide the Area Panel with an update relating to void properties within the partnership area and an update from the Void Property Group.

2. Context

- 2.1 This report has been requested, following a number of discussions at the Area Panel in relation to void properties within the Area Partnership area and progress being made with these properties to bring them back in to use, either being commercial or residential.
- 2.2 It should be acknowledged that there are a number of void properties across the Borough and that there are several powers which can be applied to bring a property / site back in to use. For example, the Building Act 1984: Section 77 – Dangerous Buildings; Section 78 – Dangerous Building Emergency Measures; Section 79 – Ruinous and Dilapidated Buildings and Neglected Sites; Town and Country Planning Act: Section 215 – Untidy Land; Community Protection Warning / Notice.
- 2.3 There is a Void Property Group, which was re-established during 2015.

3. Void Property Group

- 3.1 This group meets on a six-weekly basis and is chaired by West Midlands Fire Service. The group membership is from a number of service areas including Area Partnerships, building control, planning, enforcement, legal, council tax, business rates, supported housing, emergency planning, town centre team and also has representation

from partner agencies including the Police and Walsall Housing Group.

- 3.2 The group is supported by the Communities and Partnerships Team, which ensures that there are strong links with Area Partnerships and matters can be progressed locally.
- 3.3 The purpose of the group is to identify, assess and prioritise properties which have been notified as needing a co-ordinated approach to dealing with issues that are affecting the local community, for example, anti-social behaviour, arson, crime and environmental health. The properties which have been notified, via Council or partner agencies, are discussed and possible solutions are agreed. It is also a forum to share information on what is being done to address the issues relating to a property / site.
- 3.4 Any properties / sites can be raised to the Void Property Group, via the Partnership Manager / West Midlands Fire Service. The Group will then agree on further action or refer to appropriate service area / partner agency.
- 3.51 At the Void Property Group meeting held on 31 October 2016, the group agreed to prioritise (focus) both the commercial and residential lists, to those which are receiving current activity. The remaining properties would remain on the 'watching' list, until such time as the property / site is dealt with.
- 3.5 Where there is a potential risk to health and safety with a property / site, the Area Managers have been tasked with facilitating a co-ordinated approach to dealing with any issue(s).

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 The Willenhall and Short Heath Area Panel is requested to:
 - i) Note the update on the Void Property Group
 - ii) Notify the Partnership Manager of any properties / sites that may be considered by the Void Property Group

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