

Regeneration and Transport Select Committee
Update to Executive Scrutiny Committee – 6 June 2012

EIT Programme

EIT Task and Finish Review of Highways

The review recommendations were presented to and accepted by Cabinet on 17 May.

Current Review

Review of Long Term Empty/Abandoned Properties

The tripartite meeting took place on 14 May.

Discussion took place regarding the commercial element of the review. The breadth of commercial premises was felt to be so wide that it was agreed to:

- Focus this review on domestic properties
- Take evidence from the work being undertaken for Executive Scrutiny Committee regarding the "Regeneration of Local Shopping Parades" to inform on a commercial element for this review
- Include individual empty commercial properties (e.g. shops, offices, pubs) that are in mainly domestic housing areas
- Reconsider the commercial element originally included in this review for a suggested topic at the next Scrutiny Liaison Forum

The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:

- New powers being introduced by the Government (i.e. Council Tax discounts and exemptions as an incentive to bring empty properties back into use) – Councils to decide future policy direction
- The cost to the Council of empty properties
- Sub Regional bid to new loan scheme with Councils match funding
- Role of corporate empty homes group
- Link to New Homes Bonus and affordable housing

An initial view as to how this review could lead to efficiencies, improvements and/or transformation includes:

- Increased Council powers to bring unfit properties back into use, and
- Increased Council Tax income, and savings on temporary accommodation expenditure

The Committee meet on 11 June to agree the scope and project plan and receive its first evidence. It is anticipated that the Committee will present its findings and recommendations to Cabinet on 10 January 2013.