

# LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY

## STATEMENT OF EXECUTIVE DECISION

The Portfolio Holder for Care Services (including Public Health), Councillor Diane Smith has made the following executive decision:

### **EMPTY PROPERTY FUNDING**

#### **Reference Report:**

*Empty Property Funding*

#### **Decision:**

That the maximum Empty Homes Property Grant available to owners be increased as set out in Paragraph 5.2 to Report CS18050.

That the current required nomination period be reduced from five years to three years, and that the request to offer additional grant linked to additional years of nomination rights as detailed in Paragraph 5.3 to Report CS18050 be allowed.

That where grant conditions are breached and the owner no longer wishes to house tenants nominated by the Local Authority, the amount of grant to be repaid be reduced pro rata by each full year that has elapsed since completion of the work.

#### **Reasons:**

Two externally-funded Empty Property Officers are employed by the Local Authority to provide advice, general support and financial assistance to owners of long term empty property to support them in bringing their property back into use for social housing. Since the introduction of the scheme in 2008, 64 properties have been brought back into use across the Borough with an average grant award of £9,800; however the uptake of grants through the scheme has fallen significantly over the past three years as a result of the differing rent levels for social and privately rented accommodation, as well as the long nomination period required for social housing. There are currently approximately 750 properties across the Borough that have been empty for at least six months. This impacts on the delivery of the Local Authority's statutory duty to house vulnerable families and individuals identified as being homeless, as well as the level of New Homes Bonus received by the Local Authority. To support the continued reduction in long term empty properties and maximise the availability of housing available to social housing tenants, it is proposed to increase the maximum Empty Homes Property Grant available to owners, reduce the required nomination period to three years and introduce a 'buy-out' option where owners no longer wishing to house tenants nominated by the Local Authority can repay grant funding.

The proposed decision was scrutinised by the Care Services PDS Committee on 5th September 2017 and the Committee supported the proposal.

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Councillor Diane Smith

Portfolio Holder for Care Services (including Public Health)

**Mark Bowen**  
**Director of Corporate Services**  
**Bromley Civic Centre**  
**Stockwell Close**  
**Bromley BR1 3UH**

**Date of Decision:** 15 September 2017

**Implementation Date (subject to call-in):** 22 September 2017

**Decision Reference:** CSD17022