



Subject:	Notice of Motion – Action to Address Empty Homes
Date:	21st March, 2025
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance Manager

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted? Yes No

Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in? Yes No

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
	To bring to Members' attention a motion in relation to Action to Address Empty Homes, which the Standards and Business Committee considered at its meeting on 20 th February.
2.0	Recommendation
	<p>Members are asked to note that in accordance with Standing Order 13(i) that Notices of Motion which commit the Council to expenditure must be referred to the appropriate committee for consideration and report.</p> <p>At this time Members are only asked to note that the Notice of Motion has been received and that, if agreed, a subsequent report will be brought to Committee outlining a detailed consideration of the Notice of Motion and the potential costs implications.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 20th February, referred the following motion to the Committee for consideration:</p> <p>"This Council notes with concern the growing number of households (48,000) on the housing waiting list.</p> <p>The Council also notes with concern that despite the huge demand for public housing: there remains a substantial number of homes in Belfast which are empty. According to Land and Property this figure sits at 3,694 for the Belfast area.</p> <p>As a local authority, the Council commits to working with the relevant departments to try to bring empty homes back into use as affordable and social housing. Council notes that the DFC Empty Homes strategy, which aimed to do this, ended in 2018.</p> <p>The Council therefore commits to developing a strategy alongside DFC, the Housing Executive and other statutory bodies to ensure there is a coordinated action plan to bring disused homes into public use. This action plan will be funded and appropriate measures such as an empty homes rates premium, strengthened compulsory purchase powers and financing support for converting empty homes into social housing are brought forward to ensure it is able to be delivered.</p> <p>The Council will seek to establish an Empty Homes Partnership, similar to the Scottish model, which will coordinate these efforts with the relevant bodies.</p> <p>The Council will also seek funding from DFC to appoint an Empty Homes Officer in order to liaise directly with the owners of empty homes, to understand why the home is empty, and to offer tailored solutions to turn it into a home again."</p> <p>Proposer: Councillor Michael Collins</p>

3.2	<p>Secunder: Councillor Áine Groogan</p> <p>The motion calls upon the Council to undertake a number of actions in relation to empty homes, including developing a strategy, establishing a partnership and appointing an empty homes officer - the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is responsible for strategic policy, working with partners to lead on the Belfast Agenda and also agreeing the Local Development Plan and accordingly the motion was referred to this Committee.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None at this stage as there is no commitment to proceed with the Notice of Motion. Details of any financial and resource implications will be reported at a subsequent meeting.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>This motion, if agreed, may have potential equality, good relations and rural needs implications and should be subject to our normal screening process as appropriate.</p>
3.3	
3.4	
4.0	Documents Attached
	None