

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Derek Murphy, Cabinet Member for Economic Development

DECISION NO:

23/00013

For publication Yes

Key decision: YES

Subject Matter: No Use Empty (NUE) update and continuation of the initiative

Decision: As Cabinet Member for Economic Development, I agree to support:

- a) the continuation of the NUE initiative to at least 2027-28 with a further update to be provided at that time;
- b) how NUE is funded and seek the agreement of the Section 151 Officer or the Cabinet Member for Finance as appropriate for approval to spend; and
- c) for authority to be delegated to the Director of Growth and Communities to take appropriate actions including, but not limited to, KCC entering into legal agreements (loan agreements, legal charges, personal guarantees, equity loans, joint ventures, deed of priority, deed of postponement), consider and approve requests which may require KCC consent and discharge of legal charges, recovery of loans through legal action, as necessary to implement this decision.

Reason(s) for decision:

Kent County Council (KCC) launched the No Use Empty initiative in 2005 in East Kent. Following the success of NUE in East Kent, the initiative was rolled out across Kent in 2008/09 and is now delivered by KCC in partnership with all 12 district and borough councils.

The primary aim of the initiative is to improve the physical urban environment in Kent by bringing long-term empty properties back into use as quality housing accommodation through a range of interventions.

The purpose of this decision is to secure support to continue with the initiative.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision is being discussed by Members of the Growth and Economic Development Cabinet Committee at their meeting on 14 March 2023.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Do Nothing – to proceed as planned which means that the main No Use Empty initiative is phased out after 23/24 and no longer funded under the Capital Programme.

Do minimum – to proceed as planned with reduced funding coming out of the initiative (£4.7m in 24/25) but look to defer later withdrawals to keep £7m in the initiative.

Do switch funding – to proceed as planned with reduced funding coming out of the initiative (£4.7m in 24/25 and in later years) but increase the call on Treasury Investment Funds from 24/25 onwards, which would require more of the £40m currently available for investment being allocated to NUE.

Defer- to rephase all the repayments under the Capital Programme by 3 years.

Do maximum – to increase Treasury Investment funding by £4.7m in 24/25 and in later years to

entirely offset the reduced funding from the Capital programme.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

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signed

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date