

Written response to: Members of the Business & Scrutiny Panel

Resolution: 2) That the Corporate Director of Economic Development provide the Panel with information on the use of S.106 funding (Affordable Homes commuted Sums) to bring empty properties back into use, specifically:

- would all of the money be used to bring empty properties back into use;
- how many houses were brought back into use;
- who were payments made to.

Written response from: Jeremy Hewitson (Housing Development Officer)

Response: It has been necessary to draw up a legal agreement between the Council and Brampton Rural Housing Society (BRHS), which has led to a slight delay in the scheme 'going live'; however, the signed agreement has now been returned to the Council by BRHS, so the initiative can get fully underway.

In respect of the specific questions:-

- Would all of the money be used to bring empty properties back into use:

Not necessarily, it would depend how well the scheme progressed in respect of how many properties were being brought back into use and how quickly. The Council needs to monitor affordable housing commuted sum funding held, as any sums not spent within a fixed timescale (in accordance with the Section 106 Agreement for each scheme) would need to be returned to the developer. The following quotation from the Risks section of Executive report ED.25/21, from 2 August 2021, sets out that an element of flexibility is built in for both organisations:-

4.1 *This would be a flexible arrangement for both parties – BRHS would only acquire properties they were interested in managing through this process, and the Council would still be able to look for other schemes to positively use its affordable housing commuted sum funding, should suitable opportunities arise.*

- How many houses were brought back into use: none as yet, as the legal agreement has only recently been agreed. Each individual grant will take a while to process, as this will involve BRHS acquiring the properties, and in most cases carrying out repair work to bring them up to a lettable standard.

- Who were payments made to?

Not applicable for the reasons set out above.

Date: 31 January 2022