

DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CABINET MEMBER FOR PARTNERSHIPS AND PERFORMANCE – COUNCILLOR IVAN TAYLOR

Portfolio areas of responsibility:

- Relationships with all the Council wholly owned companies and the shareholder lead Cabinet Member
- Relationships with partner organisations:
 - Blackpool Tower complex and associated buildings (Merlin)
 - Hounds Hill Shopping Centre
- Corporate strategy development and research
- Governance
- Contracts, policy and purchasing

Introduction

The cabinet member will present the report to Council and report on any key issues.

Theme 1: Improving Housing Quality

The Decent Homes Pilot has been live in the Central area since January 2023 and has the following three key objectives:

1. Conduct proactive inspections and take actions against current statutory standards
2. Conduct advisory inspections against potential future standards
3. Provide people related support to more vulnerable households.

The pilot team has conducted approximately 300 inspections to date and has taken action against approximately 50% of those properties for falling below minimum standards, having at least Category 1 hazard, the most serious risk of harm.

The Council is also currently consulting with local residents on our proposals to expand selective licensing schemes from next 2024 across Bloomfield, Brunswick, Claremont, Talbot, Tyldesley, Warbreck, Waterloo and Victoria. These areas have been selected as they are both in the top 10 most deprived wards in Blackpool and have the eight highest proportions of private rented sector stock within their ward boundaries, with between 35% and 57% of the stock per ward. Improving the quality of private sector properties is a key strategic housing objective for

Blackpool Council and Selective Licensing can help to improve management of privately rented properties, help to decrease levels of deprivation, anti-social behaviour and crime and support the stabilisation of communities.

Away from delivery, the Council is also preparing for full implementation of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act, which received royal assent on July 2023. Key measures include:

- Strengthening the role of the Regulator of Social Housing to enable it to carry out regular proactive inspections
- Additional Housing Ombudsman powers
- New qualification requirements for social housing managers

As a landlord of almost 5,000 social housing properties, the Act will have a significant impact on the Council. We are working hard to ensure we are able to meet the new requirements and provide high quality services to our tenants across all Council owned stock. In particular, the Council has engaged with all the requirements from the Secretary of State and the Regulator in respect of damp and mould reports and actions, both in the private rented sector and in our own housing stock and is currently conducting a proactive stock condition survey across Council homes to provide further reassurance and remediation where necessary.

General questions / comments

Councillors will have the opportunity to raise questions / comments on any matter in the Cabinet Member's portfolio.