

Council: 16 December 2008

Administration Policy Item: Councillor Lynne Hillan

Hidden Homes

Background

While the recent decrease in house prices is making housing nominally more affordable, the lack of availability of mortgages and the stalling of development in many locations continues to make the goal of home ownership difficult to obtain for many, while many people remain on the waiting list for social housing.

One solution, piloted in Wandsworth LB, and now being considered by Harrow LB, is to develop redundant units, such as unused garages, into homes.

The new Homes and Communities Agency, established by the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, takes an open approach to funding small housing schemes, and this Council understands that a similar “hidden homes” policy may be able to make use of some of these available resources.

Recommendation

That Cabinet is asked to develop a policy that could see redundant non-residential units converted into housing in order to address local need, subject to Planning.