

Appendix 2

Empty Homes Policy action plan (Indicative subject to business cases)

Priority:	High	Medium	Low
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Ref	Intervention	Intervention description	Outcomes	When
1	Empty Homes Officer	Recruit a dedicated post to deal with empty dwellings to deliver the Empty Homes Policy action plan.	Dedicated role to progress the number of empty homes being brought back into use to fulfil the aims of the Corporate Plan and Housing Strategy.	04 Jul 22
2	Behaviour change - Communication and awareness	Targeted, sustained communication with empty homeowners as part of a standardised process.	Targeted approach through standardised processes to bring homes back into use and raise profile.	05 Sep 22
3	Risk based intervention approach	Deliver a risk rated process to prioritise properties for action.	Prioritise action through standardised processes to tackle empty dwellings through various measures including enforcement action.	18 Jul 22
4	Data matching	Data matching with private and public information to assess occupation status	Intelligence led approach providing connectivity across the organisation including corporate debt, fraud, Council Tax, Waste etc. but also externally, for example utility companies	08 Aug 22
5	Access to accommodation to reduce homelessness	Proactively work with Housing Options to find better outcomes for tenants	Link with Housing Options and Enabler to enable tenant placements and reduce homelessness	15 Aug 22
6	Enforcement	Undertake additional enforcement opportunities	Increased capacity to undertake work, for example enforced sales, as this is time consuming	05 Sep 22
7	Understanding to inform interventions	Undertake research and analysis and provide detailed reports, statistics, performance, and press information as required	Raise awareness and understanding of the issue and to inform interventions by having a greater understanding of why dwellings are empty	18 Jul 22
8	Advice and assistance	Provide high quality advice and negotiation, making sure owners are aware of their legal responsibilities and to monitor arrangements through to completion	Offer a well-regarded service, providing solutions and enforcement regimes, employing a commercially focused approach that recognises business needs to entice owners to undertake necessary works in a timely fashion, whilst minimising risk	04 Jul 22

9	Partnership activity and joint programs of work	Work in partnership with a wide range of Council departments and external organisations to ensure a joined-up approach	Work with Housing Options, Housing Standards, Planning, Legal, Economic Development, Trading Standards, Environmental Health, the Police, agents and the Empty Homes Agency to drive efficiency	18 Jul 22
10	Site visits and evidence gathering	Visiting and inspecting vacant dwellings to ensure compliance with statutory and council legislation	Provide capacity to undertake on the ground inspections as necessary	05 Sep 22
11	Financial Incentives - Purchase and Repair Scheme	Explore the use of financial mechanisms to facilitate bringing properties back into use, subject to full business case, for example the purchase of properties assisted through Homes England grants and Council contributions to increase social housing stock	To 'improve the delivery, affordability and quality of housing', 'regenerate and re-invent our town centres' and to 'encourage a sustainably developed built environment - Corporate Plan. Business case currently being explored.	25 Jul 22
12	Council Tax software	Explore software to allow a charge to be issued for not supplying update on Council Tax information (£75 fine)	Incentive for keeping Council Tax records and classification up to date and accurate.	05 Sep 22
13	Financial Incentives - Loan facility	Explore the potential of a deferred, repayment loan scheme delivered through an external community interest company (CIC), subject to full business case. This is similar to other local authorities' approach in Devon, which is a well-established process.	This is a recyclable loan fund to facilitate renovations for individuals. It is a dedicated scheme with no administration, or cost to the Council. A full business case would be required.	18 Jul 22