Empty Homes Action Plan

Number	EHN Recommendation	Priority	Cost	Benefit	Officer Response	Responsible Officer	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Apr-24
1	A renewed Empty Homes Strategy to follow on from that published in 2017, will allow the council to update members and senior management on the local and national context, and give foundation and support to the pursuit of empty homes work	High	Low	High	A renewed Strategy will be developed following the consideration of other recommendations and initiatives, in order to comprehensively outline approach and available assistance.	Housing Strategy Officer / EPO												x		
2	The creation and adoption of an Enforced Sales, Compulsory Purchase Order and Empty Dwelling Management Order policies will enable the council to outline their stricter enforcement plans, to see the numbers of empty homes returned to use increase	Low	Low	Med	Existing draft Enforced Sales Policy to be included in Resources Panel report 8.2.23 for approval	Senior Officer EH			x											
3	Adopt changes to council tax discounts and exemptions, enabling the removal of the 3-month100% discount for unoccupied and unfurnished properties, and the 12-month 50% reduction for uninhabitable properties, and to begin the process of adopting further changes to take effect from April 2023, and April 2024	High	Low	High	Figures modelling the impact of proposed changes to be included in Resources Panel report 8.2.23. With outline of any notice or consultation requirements and implementation April 2024.	Head of Revenues & Benefits			x											x
4	Minor changes to the website, in order to bring all empty homes information for owners and complainants onto a single page	Med	Low	High	Recommended changes to be made, with options booklet/leaflet (recommendation 12)	Housing Strategy Officer / Senior Officer EH/ EPO				x										
5	Through a stronger working relationship with Revenues & Benefits, develop a working comprehensive empty homes database for the storage of information concerning empty homes, and to enable the reporting of accurate and informative statistics on a monthly basis	High	Low	High	An area of work requiring additional officer capacity, to be developed following EPO appointment.	EPO							x							
6	To categorise and prioritise the empty homes database, and upload all priority cases as open and ongoing files on the Flare CMS system	High	Low	High	An area of work requiring additional officer capacity, to be developed following EPO appointment.	EPO							x							
7	To implement a revised scoring matrix for properties only categorised as a priority, and to result in a prioritised list for the local authority to focus and target their efforts	High	Low	High	Scoring matrix content has been reviewed. Weighting/ scoring to be reviewed following appointment of additional officer EPO capacity	Senior Officer EH/ EPO							x							
8	To conduct an initial three stage letter process whereby all empty home owners are contacted, in order to build property and owner profiles, and gauge level of engagement with majority of the database	High	Low	High	Initial letters have been reviewed and updated. Empty home owners to be contacted subject to additional officer EPO capacity.	Senior Officer EH / EPO		x						x						
9	To increase officer capacity to conduct an annual data cleanse, through mailshots, visits and owner engagement, therefore replacing the need to employ a third-party review	Med	Med	High	Proposal for council tax visiting officer to be included in council tax service review	Head of Revenues & Benefits							x							
10	To revisit all current and active initiative programmes such as loans and grant schemes, and determine their relevance in today's climate in terms of the feasibility, but to ascertain whether they can be amended or adapted to suit the needs of the empty home owner	Low	Low	High	Internal existing initiative, the Home Repairs Assistance grant, to be reviewed following EPO appointment for them to be involved in the development of the tools and incentives for which they will use with empty home owners.	Senior Officer EH/ Housing Strategy Officer/ EPO											x			
11	Collate, develop and build a suite of cost effective initiatives for the local authority to offer owners of empty property, and promote these through appropriate channels.	Low	Med	Med	Internal initiatives and external opportunities (i.e. energy efficiency grants) to be reviewed and collated to form a comprehensive guide following EPO appointment for them to be involved in development of tools and incentives they will use with empty property owners. Adoption of new initiatives, for instance loan scheme, would require member approval and implementation.	Senior Officer EH/ Climate Change Officer/ Housing Strategy Officer / EPO											x			
12	To develop an options booklet/leaflet that can be included within mailshots and correspondence with empty home owners, promoted through media and communications streams and promoted as a stand-alone document on the council's empty homes webpage	High	Low	High	Booklet/ leaflet to be developed for addition to website, updated as required for instance to reflect recommendation 11. Additionally information to be included within March 2023 annual Council Tax billing.	Housing Strategy Officer / Senior Officer EH/ EPO			x								x			
13	To consider the ringfencing of income generated through the Empty Homes Premium to employ dedicated officer on a limited part-time, and or, begin offering tailored loan/grant assistance to empty homeowners	Med	Med	Med	Proposal for additional officer resource EPO, to be included in Resources Panel report 8.2.23. Separate proposals to be made regarding tailored loan/ grant initiatives (following recommendation 11)	Head of Revenues & Benefits/ Senior Officer EH/ EPO/ Housing Strategy Officer			x								x			
14	To consider adopting a comprehensive proactive approach to empty homes, and using the equivalent funding spent on the empty homes review carried out by Capacity Grid to employ a dedicated resource on an initial part-time basis, with a view to expanding the role to a permanent position based on success and results	High	Low	High	Proposal for additional officer capacity, EPO, to be included in Resources Panel report 8.2.23. Proposal for council tax visiting officer to be included in council tax service review	Senior Officer EH/ Head of Revenues & Benefits			x											
15	To consider adopting an additional comprehensive approach to council tax income generation and compliance, by using the equivalent funding spent on the empty homes review carried out by Capacity Grid on employing a dedicated resource to act as a council tax visiting officer, specifically tasked with income maximisation and compliance in reviewing empty homes, the empty homes premium, single person discount and second homes	High	Low	High	Proposal for council tax visiting officer to be included in council tax service review	Head of Revenues & Benefits							x							