

Selby District Council Empty Homes Action Plan 2017

Aim: To reduce the number of long-term empty homes through a co-ordinated approach

Objective 1: Develop new, and strengthen existing partnerships				
Action	Milestones	Timescale	Lead Officer	Outcome
Promote the Empty Homes Commitment	➤ Launch the Empty Homes Strategy and Action Plan using media promotion ensuring all potential marketing opportunities are considered	January 2018	Housing + EH Service Manager	Promoting the empty homes commitment will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ re-energise existing partnerships ✓ allow other potential partners to understand the benefits of working with us By publicising the outcomes of any enforcement action we will promote our commitment to tackling empty homes helping to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Encourage members of the public and partners to trust in the process and sends a message to owners of empty homes that we are committed to taking action where and when it is required.
	➤ Support Local Regeneration Initiatives	On-going	Private Sector Housing Officer	
	➤ Publicise the outcome of enforcement action	Ad-hoc and on-going	Housing Enforcement Officer	
Unlock the Benefits of Empty Homes Networks	➤ Identify opportunities for sharing best practice and for training opportunities	On-going	Private Sector Housing Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ By working closely with Empty Homes Networks Selby DC is able to keep up

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NHC Network Event ▪ Shadowing COYC Empty Homes Officer <p>➤ Work closely with the HCA to identify and bid for available funding streams</p> <p>➤ Engage with local Letting Agents, Sales Agents and Auction houses to understand the support available for owners of empty homes</p>	<p>Complete Complete</p> <p>November and on-going</p> <p>November and on-going</p>	<p>Private Sector Housing Officer Empty Homes Officer</p> <p>Housing Strategy Officer</p> <p>Empty Homes Officer</p>	<p>to date with best practice.</p> <p>✓ Strengthened partnerships between sub-regional empty property officers</p> <p>✓ Any HCA grant will reduce the reliance on SDC funding which will increase the number of properties we are able to bring back into use through financial support</p> <p>✓ The Empty Homes Officer can connect owners of empty properties to support them with wider options for bringing their empty home back into use.</p>
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Objective 2: Improve the quality and consistency of empty property management				
Action	Milestones	Timescale	Lead Officer	Outcome
Introduce a new specialist Empty Homes Officer Role	➤ Recruit, appoint and train Empty Homes Officer	Complete	Private Sector Housing Officer	✓ Dedicated and intensive resource available leading empty homes management
	➤ Review success of role	Quarterly KPI updates and full review March 2020	Housing + EH Service Manager	
Support the Empty Homes Work of the sub-region and share best practice	➤ Develop a protocol for the reporting of empty properties in line with the New Homes Bonus and direct action of each local authority	On-going	Private Sector Housing Officer	✓ Best practice and knowledge shared within the sub-region
	➤ Support the development of a sub-regional best practice handbook for practitioners	On-going	Private Sector Housing Officer	✓ An understanding of the direct impact the empty homes work is having ✓ A consistent approach to empty property work across the sub-region
Create and maintain a Database of empty homes	➤ Receive real time council tax data reports	Monthly	Revenue and Benefits Team + Empty Homes Officer	✓ This will support our Empty Homes Performance Management and provide an understanding of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The number of empty properties ii. The length of time a property has been empty iii. The type and location of
	➤ Create and distribute an empty homes Owners questionnaire	Complete and on-going	Empty Homes Officer	
	➤ Contact owners through a Mail Drop or through local connections	On-going	Empty Homes Officer	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Visit all long term empty properties to carry out a visual inspection and audit ➤ Create the database ➤ Look at options to map empty homes using GIS ➤ Introduce Performance Targets 	<p>November 2017 and on-going</p> <p>November 2017</p> <p>November 2017</p> <p>December 2017</p>	<p>Empty Homes Officer</p> <p>Empty Homes Officer</p> <p>Data & Systems + Empty Homes Officer</p> <p>Housing and Environmental Health Service Manager</p>	<p>empty properties</p> <p>iv. The condition of empty properties</p> <p>v. The reason an property is empty</p> <p>vi. Who the owner is and what their intentions are</p> <p>✓ Increased income generated through New Homes Bonus</p>
Develop and maintain a system to prioritise empty properties for action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Agree Empty Homes Action Plan, Empty Homes Assessment Process ➤ Introduce a standard risk assessment form ➤ Understand Housing demand ➤ Assess all properties using the risk assessment matrix ➤ Identify and maintain the priority 20 properties 	<p>December 2017</p> <p>October 2017</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>November 2017 and then on-going</p> <p>November 2017 and on-going</p>	<p>HoS + H&EH Service Manager</p> <p>Private Sector Housing Officer</p> <p>Empty Homes Officer</p> <p>Empty Homes Officer</p> <p>Empty Homes Officer</p>	<p>✓ Executive will agree the planned approach to addressing and prioritising empty homes for action</p> <p>✓ The Empty Homes Officer continually has a manageable work load which is outcome focused and will prioritise working with properties that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a negative impact on the Neighbourhood • Are of a type and in a location that would meet housing need

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Objective 3: Improve the range of assistance available to owners				
Action	Milestones	Timescale	Lead Officer	Expected outcome
Introduce financial incentives to support owners of empty properties to bring their empty homes into use	➤ Consider options available	Complete	Private Sector Housing Officer	✓ The introduction of a grant and loan scheme will allow owners to access funding to do essential repairs and maintenance works on their homes to bring them up to a saleable or lettable standard ✓ By utilising available funding the council & securing grants will be able to maximise the support offered and be in a position to purchase and repair properties on a voluntary basis or pursue Compulsory Purchase Orders where required. ✓ The Private Sector Assistance Policy will provide the framework required to allow us to administer any grants and loans
	➤ Undertake some benchmarking and feasibility work as well as some soft market testing to see what would work in Selby	October 2017	Private Sector Housing Officer	
	➤ Identify options for funding and make bids as required	Options 2017 and on-going	Head of Service + Housing and EH Service Manager	
	➤ Complete financial business case for preferred options	October 2017	Head of Service + Housing and EH Service Manager	
	➤ Identify grant funding and submit bids to support the delivery of the programme (e.g. HCA)	December 2017	HoS, Housing Development Team + EH Service Manager	
	➤ Update the Private Sector Assistance Policy	December 2017	Housing and EH Service Manager	
	➤ Review success of incentives	Quarterly	Housing and EH Service Manager	

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Relaunch the Landlords Tenant Find scheme and offer support to owners to let and manage their properties	➤ Review incentives available to encourage Landlords to use the Scheme	December 2017	Housing Options Development Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sustainable longer term let's resulting in an increase in council tax income and housing need met. ✓ The Tenant Find Scheme allows Landlords to keep up to date with the requirements of them as a landlord in terms of property condition and management
	➤ Consult Landlords	December 2017	Housing Options Development Officer	
	➤ Re-Launch the Scheme	January 2018	Housing Options Development Officer	

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Objective 4: Improve the quality of advice and information available to owners				
Action	Milestones	Timescale	Lead Officer	Outcome
Create an Empty Homes Communications Plan	➤ Complete a Stakeholder Analysis to enable communications to be tailored	October 2017	Housing + EH Service Manager	✓ An increase in the number of empty properties reported by members of the public
	➤ Identify what the Empty Homes messages are and the options for delivering the message	Quarterly	Housing + EH Service Manager	✓ An increased awareness of our Empty Homes work
	➤ Communicate	Quarterly	Housing + EH Service Manager	✓ Empty Property owners engaged with our proposals
	➤ Review the success	Annually	Housing + EH Service Manager	✓ Owners and other Stakeholders feel informed
	➤ Work with the sub-regional private sector housing group to ensure that any information is consistent and standardised where possible	On-going	Private Sector Housing Officer	✓ Improved links with local community groups
				✓ Improved quality and consistency of the information available through our websites and in leaflets
Sign post owners to advice on property maintenance/improvement and options around sale	➤ Understand what advice and assistance is available from other providers through networks	November 2017	Empty Homes Officer	✓ Empty Property owners will access services to enable them to bring their properties to a relevant

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure through relevant communications that the necessary people are informed of the options 	January 2018	Empty Homes Officer	standard in preparation for lettings or for sale
Ensure information is available to us on the range of enforcement options available and in what circumstances these could be used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Based on the Empty Homes Assessment Process and Standard Risk Assessment, identify Enforcement Options to bring properties back into use and to improve the appearance or safety of empty properties that are unsightly or unsafe 	December 2017	Empty Homes Working Group Housing Enforcement Officer	✓ An increased awareness of enforcement options and our willingness to use coupled with promotion of any successful use, will further support our proactive campaign and reduce the need to use them in future
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increase awareness of the options for enforcement through improved communications 	December 2017	Empty Homes Officer	✓ Using 'Quick Win' Enforcement Tools to improve the appearance and safety of empty homes will give the message that the council is taking complaints seriously and that action is on-going. This is especially useful when we are pursuing longer term enforcement options such as EDMO's or CPO's that do not provide quick results
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Take swift and appropriate enforcement action where required 	As required and on-going	Housing Enforcement Officer	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure any successful enforcement action is proactively promoted 	As required and on-going	Empty Homes Officer	