



Hastings Empty Homes Strategy 2007 - 2013 Action Plan

Making empty properties work again for our community

The Hastings Empty Homes Strategy 2007 – 2013 Action Plan has been created to guide the implementation of the Empty Homes Strategy. The Action Plan builds upon the already successful work carried out to tackle empty homes, since the first incarnation of the Empty Homes Strategy in 2000. The Action Plan is a working fluid delivery document put in place to work towards achieving the objectives laid out in the Hastings Empty Homes Strategy 2007 – 2013:

- To improve neighbourhoods by helping to bring privately owned empty properties back into use
- To identify non-residential empty property and land that could provide potential residential use
- To minimise the number of properties becoming long-term empty by identifying them at an early stage and working with owners
- To give advice and assistance to owners of private empty properties, to those who wish to purchase or develop empty property, and those who are living near to empty property
- Provide point of contact within the council for empty properties
- To campaign and lobby on issues related to or likely to affect the Empty Homes Strategy at local, regional and national level.

The Council's Empty Homes Officer will be responsible for monitoring overall progress and will report at regular intervals.

Red = the target will not be met

Amber = the target is not on track to be achieved (remedial action required)

Green = on course to meet the target

Objective	Risks	Target	Milestones	Lead	Progress	RAG
To improve neighbourhoods and the existing built environment by helping to bring privately owned empty properties back into use	The new strategy and legislative powers may fail to have a positive impact and this can affect the achievement of the aims of the Community strategy.	Aim to return empty properties back into use. Reduce numbers of long-term empties by 30% by 2013 in line with Community Strategy target.	To bring 40 homes back into use per year	Empty Homes officer		
		Enable the use Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO). Where other methods have failed, we can bring long-term empty homes into the rental market.	Develop a Management Order delivery model in 2008/2009.	Empty Homes officer Central St Leonards Team Leader		
		Regularly monitor and review strategy to track effectiveness in order to adapt to local changes in market conditions and housing need.	Review annually	Empty homes officer and Housing Strategy Officer		
		Bench mark with best practice and with similar local authorities to identify innovative ways of working	On going through participation in the Sussex Empty Homes forum	Empty Homes officer		

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To minimise the number of properties becoming long-term empty by identifying them at an early stage and working with owners	Weak partnerships may limit positive impact of the strategy and performance against the targets for returning empties into use	Maintain links with external agents who are in contact with empty homes owners, such as estate agents and architectural practices, to enable full uptake of incentives offered in the strategy. Send information on strategy and financial assistance.	Send Empty Homes Strategy on publication.	Empty Homes officer		
		Maintain database of empty homes, logging empty homes by ward and the length of time empty	Each quarter	Empty Homes officer Council Tax		
		Analyse empty homes data to identify trends and take appropriate action	Each quarter	Empty Homes Officer. Housing Renewal Manager.		
		Maintain active involvement in Sussex Forum and contribute to Sussex Empty Homes Forum to ensure coordinated action and sharing of ideas.	Attend quarterly meetings and contribute towards Sussex Wide Strategy (in progress)	Empty Homes officer		
		Organise empty homes involvement at Landlords Forum	Attend twice yearly	Empty Homes officer		
		Update and maintain the empty homes web site.	October 2008.	Empty Homes Officer. Marketing. IT		

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		Actively participate in the national week of action on empty homes.	October 2008	Empty Homes officer		
To complement the provision of good quality affordable housing	Changes in housing market and demographic may influence housing need and the take up of financial assistance	Liaise with Housing Options team to identify the current demand for housing need to target empty homes most in need.	Quarterly meetings.	Empty Homes officer		
		Maintain links with housing associations looking at the use of or purchase of empty properties.	On going.	Empty Homes officer		
		Empty properties brought back into use via Financial Assistance to meet the Decent Homes Standard	All properties achieve Decent Homes Standard	Empty Homes officer		
		All Financial Assistance Packages to carry 5 year tenancy referral agreements	All landlords signed up to tenancy referral agreements	Empty Homes officer		
To complement the wider regeneration agenda for the town	Inadequate or ineffective marketing and emerging threats to the sustained regeneration	Market strategy. Market directly to all borough residents and provide contact details: enabling reportage of problematic empty properties and allaying there associated fear of crime.	A minimum of 2 advertising campaigns per annum.	Empty Homes officer		

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	of housing could affect the overall regeneration time table for the town.	Maintain active involvement in Central St Leonards improvement task group meeting to ensure maximum input from agents working within the St Central Leonards Renewal area renewal area.	Attend monthly meetings	Empty Homes officer, St Leonards Neighbourhood Manager.		
		Establish reasons for property falling into disuse to enable appropriate action and prevention and represent database.	Send questionnaire to owners once a year.	Empty Homes Officer.		
		In partnership with the Council Tax service obtain information from the Valuation Office on empties taken off the Valuation List and where appropriate target these properties to encourage re-use	Annual report from the Valuation Office	Empty Homes Officer.		