



## Hastings Empty Homes Strategy 2009 - 2013 Action Plan

Making empty properties work again for our community

The Hastings Empty Homes Strategy 2009 – 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 version of the Empty Homes Strategy in 2000. The Action Plan is a working fluid delivery document put in place to work towards achieving the Strategic Priorities laid out in the Hastings Empty Homes Strategy 2009 – 2013:

1. To prevent homes from becoming long term empty.
2. To bring long term empty homes back into use (empty over 2 years).
3. Increase the amount of decent, affordable housing for those in housing need.

The Council's Empty Homes Officer will be responsible for monitoring overall progress and will report on progress at regular intervals to the appropriate group or groups.

Strategic Priority	Objectives	Opportunities and Risks	Target	Milestones	Lead
<p>To prevent homes from becoming long term empty.</p>	<p>Minimise the number of properties becoming long-term empty (2 years of more), continuing to identify them at an early stage and promote interventions to owners or potential purchasers.</p>	<p><b>Opportunities:</b> Effectively target Council resources.  Create positive, transparent relationship with empty home owners</p> <p><b>Risks:</b>  Reliance on strong and committed partnership working to enable performance</p> <p>Continued funding is required to maintain interventions</p>	<p>1. Promote available services through a variety of media to the community and external agencies working within the private sector to encourage the reporting of empty properties</p>	<p>Basic Empty Homes information available on the Council's website by July/August 2009</p> <p>A minimum of 2 advertising campaigns per annum</p> <p>Intensive campaign in annual empty home week</p>	<p>Empty Homes officer</p> <p>Marketing and Communications Department</p>
			<p>2. Attend the landlords forum twice yearly to promote available services</p>	<p>Attend forum on a six monthly basis</p>	<p>Empty Homes Officer</p>
			<p>3. Maintain database of empty homes and analyse empty homes data to identify trends and take appropriate action</p>	<p>Cross reference with previous data base on a quarterly basis to inform action</p>	<p>Empty Homes officer</p> <p>Council Tax</p> <p>Housing Renewal Manager</p>

Strategic Priority	Objectives	Opportunities and Risks	Target	Milestones	Lead
			4. To identify all new empty properties (over 12 months) and target for prevention. All properties to be cross referenced with planning enforcement, conservation, council tax and environmental health.	All owners of new empty homes to be contacted on a 6 monthly basis	Empty homes officer
			5. 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.
To bring long term empty homes back into use (empty over 2 years).	1: To improve neighbourhoods and the existing built environment by targeting and helping to bring long term empty properties back into use	<b>Opportunities:</b> Full use of housing resources. Increase value of property, which will in turn encourage owners to invest in run down and empty properties. Reduce fear of crime and associated problems	6. Reduce numbers of long-term empties (over 2 years) within top five wards (Central St Leonards, Castle, Gensing, Maze Hill and Braybrooke)	To bring 10 long term empty homes back into use per year (bigger is better)  Identify the reasons for properties becoming long term empty (over 2 years)	Empty Homes officer
	2: Focus our activity on wards with the highest		7. Develop a Management Order delivery model to enable the use of Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO).	Model developed by December 2009	Empty Homes officer  Central St Leonards Team Leader

Strategic Priority	Objectives	Opportunities and Risks	Target	Milestones	Lead
	concentrations of long term empty properties.	<p>surrounding empty properties</p> <p><b>Risks:</b></p> <p>The new strategy and legislative powers may have no inherent effect</p> <p>Continued funding is required to maintain interventions</p>	8. Work with other local authorities and East Sussex Empty Homes Forum to benchmark performance and develop County Empty Homes Strategy	<p>Establish performance baseline by July 2009</p> <p>Adopt the strategy by December 2009</p>	Empty Homes officer
			9. Work with public sector partners that own empty homes to encourage their return to use were there is little justification for these homes to remain empty	<p>Identify all empty properties owned by public bodies by August 2009</p> <p>Make contact with the public owners to establish the reasons for the properties remaining empty by December 2009</p> <p>Develop a list of properties that require intervention by March 2010</p>	

Strategic Priority	Objectives	Opportunities and Risks	Target	Milestones	Lead
		<p><b>Opportunities:</b></p> <p>To target and assist long term empties to fulfil their latent potential. To provide a trail of council action to support Compulsory Purchase and Empty Dwelling Management Order action</p> <p><b>Risks:</b></p> <p>To allow properties to negatively effect the neighbouring properties, to waste a resource and to ultimately contribute to housing shortage</p>	<p>10. Exercise the use of Compulsory Purchase Powers in appropriate circumstances where all other options for bringing an empty home back into use have failed.</p>	<p>Where all other options have failed to bring an empty home back into use, seek Cabinet approval for funding and confirmation for the use of a CPO.</p>	<p>Empty Homes officer</p> <p>Housing Renewal Manager</p>

Strategic Priority	Objectives	Opportunities and Risks	Target	Milestones	Lead
<p><b>Increase the amount of decent, affordable housing for those in housing need.</b></p>	<p>Improve access to decent, affordable housing for people in housing need and stimulate inward investment to areas of deprivation thereby complementing the regeneration activity for the town.</p>	<p><b>Opportunities:</b></p> <p>Give owners opportunity of letting to public sector tenants to the advantage of owners, the Council and its tenants, and housing associations.</p> <p>React strategically to needs of the town and enable input from the towns residents to determine future use of empty homes</p> <p><b>Risks:</b></p> <p>Economic and social variations</p>	<p>11. Enable vulnerable people with a housing need to access empty homes brought back into use.</p>	<p>House 10 people per year (bigger is better). Signpost via the councils LetStart Service</p>	<p>Empty Homes officer</p> <p>Senior Housing Options Providers</p>
			<p>12. Maintain links with housing associations looking at the use of or purchase of empty properties.</p>	<p>Share information on a quarterly basis through RSL development forum</p>	<p>Empty Homes officer</p> <p>Housing Policy Officer</p> <p>RSL Preferred Partners</p>
			<p>13. Empty properties brought back into use via Financial Assistance to meet the Decent Homes Standard.</p>	<p>All properties achieve Decent Homes Standard</p>	<p>Empty Homes officer</p>
			<p>14. All Financial Assistance Packages to carry 5 year tenancy referral agreements.</p>	<p>All landlords signed up to tenancy referral agreements</p>	<p>Empty Homes officer</p>
			<p>15. Ensure that all work to bring empty properties back into use compliments the wider regeneration objectives of Central St Leonards Renewal Area.</p>	<p>Report to Central St Leonards Improvement Group Meetings and delivery on set tasks</p>	<p>Empty Homes officer</p> <p>Neighbourhood Manager.</p>

Strategic Priority	Objectives	Opportunities and Risks	Target	Milestones	Lead
		<p>may have an unforeseen influence on housing need and take up of financial assistance</p> <p>Effective regeneration dependant on resources and effective promotion of available assistance</p>			