

REPORT FROM: HOUSING, HEATH AND ENGINEERING SERVICES
MANAGER

TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Report Author: Paul Lloyd Environmental Health Manager
Tel. No: 01282 661029
E-mail: Paul.lloyd@pendle.gov.uk

EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval of the Empty Homes Strategy and the Empty Homes Action Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee are asked to approve the Empty Homes Strategy and Action Plan for 2019– 2022 attached to this report.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- (1) To enable the Empty Homes Plan Targets to be met.
- (2) To continue the reduction in empty properties across the Borough.

ISSUE

1. Empty Homes are a key factor in low demand housing areas, they are a wasted asset, encourage anti-social behaviour and can cause neighbourhoods to decline. It is therefore essential that the problem is tackled as part of the overall regeneration of Pendle.
2. Pendle Borough Council's first Empty Homes Strategy was produced in 2006 and whilst we have revised our action plans every 2 years we have not refreshed the strategy.
3. A range of proactive work has been undertaken by Housing, Health and Engineering Services to implement the Strategy. The actions so far have resulted in a significant reduction in the numbers from over 2131 in 2008/9 to the present level of 785 but there are still some problem areas across the Borough.
4. We need to look at ways of building on our successes and developing new ways to bring the more challenging long term empty properties back in to use.

5. Since the appointment of the Council's dedicated Empty Homes Officer there has been a marked increase in the number of empty homes that have been brought back into use. The table below shows the numbers brought back into use and the numbers of empties for each of the years since 2011/12. It should be noted that due to the turnover of properties becoming vacant the figures for those brought back into use through our actions will always be different to the yearly change

Year	Brought back into use through our action	6 month to 2 years	Over 2 years	Total empty properties (over 6 months)	Yearly change
2011/12	107	1029	741	1770	
2012/13	74	776	692	1468	-302
2013/14	85	931	483	1414	-54
2014/15	793	667	401	1068	-346
2015/16	921	716	382	1098	+30
2016/17	1104	557	369	926	-172
2017/18	1028	521	343	864	-62
2018/19	794	496	289	785	-79

6. Overall the number of long term (over 6 months) private sector empty properties has fallen from 1770 in 2011/12 to 785 in 2018/19 a reduction of 985. The total number of long term empties has fallen year on year (with exception of 2015/16) and has reduced by 79 in the last 12 months. However, the houses that have been empty for over 2 years have decreased by 61% (452 properties) since 2011/12. In the last 12 months those over 2 years have gone down from 343 to 289 A reduction of 54. This represents a current average vacancy rate of properties empty for over 6 months of 2.01% across the borough.
7. 2.54% of homes in England are considered empty and there are 3.3% of homes in the North West that are empty. So we are now below the national average for the numbers of empty properties. If we look at the numbers of empty properties over 2 years we have 0.74% of our housing stock that has been empty for over 2 years whilst the average for England is 0.86% and in the North West it is 1.25% (*Empty Homes 2016*).
8. Whilst the vacancy rate is below the national average there are still clusters of empty properties around the borough.

Strategy and Action Plan

9. An updated Strategy and Action Plan is attached to this report, in appendix 1. This sets out the actions that the Council intends to use to reduce the number of empty homes in the borough.

CONCLUSION

Whilst we must recognise what has been achieved in reducing the numbers of empty properties to below the North West average there are still clusters of empty properties that are causing problems and attracting anti-social behaviour. The emphasis must now be to tackle these clusters and reduce the long term vacancy rates in these areas to those seen in other parts of the borough by continuing to work with owners, partners and other Local Authorities. We must also be mindful of the potential for the numbers of empty properties to rise in the future.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: A proposed new Empty Homes Strategy forms an Appendix to this report

Financial: The Council currently have a dedicated Empty Homes Officer who will continue to deliver the Strategy. There is also funding within the Capital Programme to bring empty properties back into use

Legal: Nothing arising from this report

Risk Management: There is a significant risk that without the implementation of the action plan the long term empty properties will not be brought back into use

Health and Safety: Nothing arising directly from this report

Sustainability: Continuing to implement the empty homes action plan will bring back into use a wasted asset

Community Safety: Reducing empty properties can reduce the anti-social behaviour that is often associated with them

Equality and Diversity: None

APPENDICES

Empty Homes Strategy 2019/2021

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Empty Homes in England Report 2016

Borough of Pendle Council

Empty Homes Strategy 2019 - 2022

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1 Introduction

- 1.1** Pendle Borough Council's first Empty Homes Strategy was produced in 2006 and whilst we have revised our action plans every 2 years we have not refreshed the strategy.
- 1.2** This document aims to give an understanding of the issues empty homes can cause and how they impact the local community. It looks at why homes become empty, what advice and assistance is available to empty home owners, and how the Council will continue to use the range of powers available to it to return empty homes to use. Tackling empty homes and bringing them back into use impacts positively on our residents, including people in housing need and the wider community for whom empty homes often cause problems.
- 1.3** In Pendle as of the 1st April 2019, according to Council Tax records there are currently around 1300 empty homes, of which 785 have been empty for six months or more and of these 289 have been empty for 2 years or more. However, this information is limited and there may be a number of empty homes where full Council Tax is being paid and the property has not been registered as being empty.
- 1.4** Empty homes can be detrimental to the lives of local residents and communities. Even a single empty home can blight a whole street or community, reducing the values of surrounding properties and causing nuisance to local residents. Empty homes can also attract vandalism, fly-tipping and other criminal activity, ranging from the minor to the extremely serious, but all increasing crime and the fear of crime as well as having a detrimental impact on the local community. They also represent a risk for the emergency services and put added pressure on various council departments
- 1.5** The benefits of a strategy to deal with empty homes can be identified as social, regenerative, financial and strategic. A strategy can:
- assist in meeting housing need;
 - improve housing conditions;
 - assist with a reduction in crime and the fear of crime;
 - regenerate blighted areas;
 - increase Council Tax collection rates and empty home premiums;
 - generate additional income through the New Homes Bonus (NHB).
- 1.6** The case for dealing with empty homes is therefore compelling from a community and housing perspective, but there are also financial incentives to not only return existing empty homes to use, but to try to ensure that the number of vacant homes does not then increase.

2 The National Context

2.1 Since 2010 the Government has placed considerable emphasis on the importance of returning empty homes to use. Statistics published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) put the number of empty homes in England in October 2017 at 605,891. Of these, 205,293 were classed as long-term empty homes (empty for longer than six months).

2.2 In 2018 'Empty Homes' a national campaigning charity published a report entitled 'Empty Homes in England'. This report identified an upward trend nationally for empty homes in 2018 after 10 years of a downward trend. It made several recommendations that have also been published in the House of Commons Briefing Paper No. 3012 June 2018, Empty Housing:

- Local authorities should have an empty homes strategy for their area, with the aspiration to reduce the number of long-term empty homes.
- Local authorities and social housing providers should seek funding and allocate resources to buy and refurbish empty properties for people in housing need.
- Local authorities should take a casework approach with owners of long-term empty properties to encourage, advise and support them to bring homes back into housing use. Employing dedicated empty homes staff can ensure that the council is able to act on information about homes, and build up expertise in working with owners, including taking enforcement action where necessary.
- Local authorities with concentrations of long-term empty homes should look at how they can support community-based neighbourhood regeneration approaches.
- Local authorities, particularly in high value areas, should conduct studies to understand the extent and impact of 'buy-to-leave' empty or hardly ever used. Where it is an issue, they should review the measures they could adopt to incentivise people to sell or rent those properties, or not to buy properties in the first place with the intention of leaving them empty or hardly ever used.

2.3 In 2011, the Government confirmed that councils could attract additional funding under the New Homes Bonus scheme for bringing empty homes back into use. Under the scheme, the Government matched the Council Tax raised for each property brought back into use for a period of six years. The number of years over which payments are made was reduced from six to five in 2017/18 and further reduced to four years from 2018/19. It is unclear whether this will continue in future years.

- 2.4** Since April 2013, powers previously held by central government to vary the amount of council tax paid on some empty homes has been devolved to local level. The aim of this policy is to further incentivise the reoccupation of long term empty homes by increasing council tax payable or by removing reductions or exemptions that were previously in place. Local authorities are now able to decide whether to apply a discount for properties empty for up to six months and those properties empty and in need of considerable renovation. There is also the option of imposing an 'empty homes premium' whereby council tax levels for most properties empty for two years or longer are set at 200%.

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3 The Local and Corporate Context

- 3.1** This strategy highlights how resources can best be targeted to address empty homes in Pendle, and to tap into the rewards and positive outcomes, both financial and community based, that this approach brings.
- 3.2** In 2006 there were in excess of 2,000 empty properties across the Borough with 1,757 being classed as long term (over six months). Since 2006 we have worked with owners to assist them in bringing their properties back into use
- 3.3** There are around 1,310 empty homes in Pendle. Many of these are 'transactional vacancies' and are necessary for the normal operation of the housing market, so when used as a headline figure, it needs to be treated with some caution.
- 3.4** However, in Pendle, around 785 homes have been empty for more than six months, while 289 of these have been empty for more than two years. Of these 79 have been empty for over 5 years and 63 have been empty for over 10 years. It is these longer term empty homes which cause most concern as they are more likely to remain empty for longer without intervention, and are also more likely to be an increasing source of blight and complaint.
- 3.5** Returning empty homes to use can be the quickest and most cost effective way to increase the supply of housing. While it will not solve the housing problem, it can nevertheless play an important part in maximising existing housing stock for the benefit of the people of Pendle.
- 3.6** This strategy links with a variety of council documents, strategies and plans, as outlined below.

Pendle's Strategic Plan 2018 -2020

Pendle's Housing Strategy 2018-23

Pendle's Homelessness Strategy 2017 – 2022

Environmental Health Enforcement Policy 2018

4 Background to Empty Homes

4.1 What is an Empty Home?

- 4.1.1 A dwelling is considered to be a long term empty home if it has been unoccupied for 6 months or longer. Privately owned long term empty homes are the focus of this strategy, but concerns will be highlighted to Public Bodies and Housing Associations (Registered Providers) where an empty home they own requires attention.
- 4.1.2 Not all empty homes are located in the urban areas, nor are they necessarily semi-derelict, boarded up or causing a problem. There are a large number of homes which naturally become empty for periods of time, perhaps due to the buying and selling process, being between tenants or when an owner passes away and the probate process delays selling the property.
- 4.1.3 When a dwelling remains empty for a significant period of time, or is attracting unwanted attention, then it would be considered a priority for intervention by the Council

4.2 Why are homes empty?

- 4.2.1 There are a number of reasons why properties become empty, including:
- The property is difficult to sell or let due to its physical state;
 - It is being renovated;
 - The owner does not have the capacity/finances/time/skills to manage the property;
 - The property has been or is being repossessed;
 - Probate issues - Where there is an issue of unresolved ownership;
 - The owner is being cared for elsewhere/is in hospital;
 - The property has been abandoned by the owner and the owner is untraceable;
 - Property holding, when a property is left empty due to speculative investment, through inheritance or where partners co-habit leaving the second property empty. Or where the property is connected to a business and the owner does not wish to let or sell it;
 - Ageing population, older property owners may move into alternative older person's accommodation for care or support needs. They may choose not to sell the property which may result in it remaining empty for the short or long term.

It is important that the Council understands why individual properties become and/or remain empty so we can work with the owners in the most appropriate way.

Challenges Presented by Empty Homes

- 4.2.2 Dealing with an empty home is not always straightforward. A property may be used as a second home, and so not occupied on a permanent basis, but is in use. It may be that non-residential space such as that often found above shops is being used for storage or other business related matters and although not immediately obvious it is in use.
- 4.2.3 There may be properties awaiting planning permissions and work is unable to commence whilst this is being sought. A number of these may include specialist permissions if they are a Listed Building or located in a Conservation Area.
- 4.2.4 Ownership Issues: A property may be owned by a number of different people or companies. The property may be subject to legal proceedings such as probate, divorce settlements or proceeds of crime restrictions.
- 4.2.5 Land Registry Issues: Although it is now compulsory in England to register any property which changes ownership or has a mortgage taken out against it for the first time, properties which have not changed ownership since 1977 may not be registered with the Land Registry and information regarding the property will not be available from this source.
- 4.2.6 Absentee Owner: It may not be immediately evident who the owner of a property is or where they are, as they may have moved away with little information available to trace them.
- 4.2.7 Intentional Empties: Some properties are deliberately kept empty by the owner for specific reasons such as for their children when they leave home or elderly relatives who are in care. Some are kept empty until the owner feels the housing market is suitable to sell the property at the price they want. Some owners are reluctant to engage with the Council and believe that as the property is privately owned the Council do not have the right to require action to return it to use. They may be unaware, or have no concern for, the affect the property has on the local area and surrounding properties. These are properties which are likely to be left empty for many years and fall into disrepair.

4.3 Why do Empty Homes Matter?

- 4.3.1 The Council has to deal with complaints about empty homes from local people who rightly object to unsightly disused properties. There are implications for various council services that have to use staff time and resources to intervene to deal with pests, dilapidation, overgrown gardens, damage to neighbouring properties, anti-social behaviour and other issues.
- 4.3.2 For owners leaving a property standing empty can become costly and be a source of unnecessary anxiety.
- 4.3.3 There is an increased risk of vandalism and crime and the property can be difficult to insure, which could result in high repair costs or even mean a complete loss of asset.

- 4.3.4 Even the general deterioration of an unlive in property will result in costs, to bring the property up to current housing standards.
- 4.3.5 By renting or selling the property not only are the above issues resolved but there is the added advantage of gaining regular rental income or the capital from the sale of the property.
- 4.3.6 For the local community empty homes can have a direct impact on adjoining properties through issues such as damp and structural problems. Alongside this, unsightly properties can have a detrimental effect on neighbouring house prices and can also result in a lack of pride in the area. The possibility of empty homes attracting unwanted attention can also cause anxiety and concern for local residents. The neighbours and those people living nearby find empty properties unsightly; deteriorating empty homes can be a real blight on a street or area. They undermine the communities' confidence in the area; they attract crime, vandalism and anti-social behaviour.
- 4.3.7 There is an environmental impact of leaving homes empty: It is much more efficient and sustainable to make best use of the homes that we already have than build new.
- 4.3.8 Returning empty homes to use can help eliminate these issues and ensure that house prices in the neighbourhood are protected from preventable reductions. Improving an area can also encourage investment in the local economy and a return of any lost pride in the community created by empty homes.
- 4.3.9 Empty homes returned to use as domestic dwellings increase the availability of homes, including potentially affordable homes. Instead of being a source of concern these homes can be transformed from a wasted resource into a home for an individual or family in housing need.

5 Aims and Objectives Including our Approach to Tackle Empty Homes

5.1 Aims and Objectives

5.1.1 The aims and objectives of the Strategy are:

- To collect and record relevant, accurate and current information of empty homes in the Borough;
- To raise awareness of empty homes and promote the strategy;
- To reduce the number of empty homes and return empty homes back into use;
- To maximise income opportunities including NHB and debt recovery;
- To provide advice, assistance and guidance to landlords and property owners.

5.2 Gathering relevant, accurate and current information

5.2.1 The current Council Tax database will assist in identifying the bulk of empty homes in the Borough. As well as these properties, those empty homes that are a source of complaint that have been reported to us will be recorded on the Uniform database. Other homes may also come to light when identified by other departments, key partners or other Council officers as being of imminent danger or concern.

5.2.2 The Empty Homes pages of the Council's website will be updated and enhanced to provide an overview of our activities and give the public the opportunity to report an empty home. This can be submitted anonymously.

5.2.3 We will explore further opportunities to work more closely with Council Tax colleagues. This may include 'empty homes' verification visits and information gathering throughout the year to ensure data accuracy.

5.3 Raising Awareness of the Empty Homes Issue

5.3.1 Empty homes have been high on the national political agenda for some while now; recent television programmes highlighting the waste and blight associated with empty homes have proven popular. In a time of high housing demand, the issue is even more relevant.

5.3.2 The Council will continue to raise the profile of the issue by participating in the National Empty Homes week of action each year and using this as a platform to increase awareness both internally and of the residents of Pendle. Social media and local press and also highlight good news stories when available.

5.3.3 The public and our partners will be encouraged to report all empty homes and will be given advice on the tell-tale signs to look out for.

- 5.3.4 The Council will update its web-site information in relation to empty homes and news updates.

5.4 Specific measures for bringing empty homes back into use

Support

- 5.4.1 In the first instance, we aim to provide help and advice to the owners of empty homes. Advice may be given about refurbishment, sales, legal and other aspects of lettings, finding tenants, health and safety and energy efficiency.
- 5.4.2 Letters will be sent to empty home owners. In many cases it is anticipated they will be successful, prompting a response from the property owner that leads to assistance that is tailored to suit their requirements. The empty homes Officer will work to build a relationship with the empty home owners to secure voluntary reoccupation.
- 5.4.3 If letters are unsuccessful then visits will be carried out in an attempt to engage with property owners and provide bespoke support. Due to its nature, this work is detailed and can be time consuming, but its successes reduce the need for further enforcement action. If this approach fails to produce the desired outcome, it provides the groundwork and justification for legal action.

Council Tax Premiums on Empty Homes

- 5.4.4 Pendle Council introduced the Council Tax 'Empty Homes Premium' in April 2014 at a rate of 150% of the normal rate for properties that have been left empty for 2 years or longer. The premium was increased to 200% in April 2019 following a change in central government policy.

Enforcement

- 5.4.5 A voluntary way forward to renovation and re-occupation is the preferred option, and officers will endeavour to encourage and persuade such progress. However, where owners cannot be traced, where informal approaches fail, or there is a detrimental effect on the community, the Council may consider proceeding with legal action. The Council has significant powers, and will use the powers listed in Appendix B including compulsory purchase and enforced sale where appropriate and as a last resort.
- 5.4.6 Due regard will be given to the Environmental Health Enforcement Policy before any action is taken.

Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO)

- 5.4.7 Available under section 133 of the Housing Act 2004, an EDMO can be made where an owner leaves a property empty and has no intention of securing its voluntary reoccupation. The Council undertake the management of a property for a set period of time, up to seven years, with the EDMO reviewed after that time.
- 5.4.8 There are currently only very limited EDMO's in the country. EDMO's are open to appeal at any stage and can be administratively burdensome. The end result is the possible return of the property into the same ownership as that

which left it vacant and neglected in the first instance.

Enforced Sale

- 5.4.9 The Law of Property Act 1925 allows local authorities to recover charges through the sale of the property. This option can only be utilised where there is a debt to the local authority registered as a charge on the property. Council tax debts or works in default can be charged to the property in many cases, allowing the enforced sale process to begin.

Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)

- 5.4.10 Nationally compulsory purchase actions on empty homes have been successful, and the outcomes have proven popular with the general public - not least because, in addition to enhancing housing availability, the anti-social and criminal activities which empty buildings can so often attract are also addressed as a consequence of the enforcement.
- 5.4.11 CPO's can play a pivotal role in bringing properties back into use, providing the final sanction to ultimately facilitate the renovation and reoccupation of the most problematic empty homes. CPO's provide the 'teeth' to the empty homes process and strengthen every aspect of this work.
- 5.4.12 CPO's can be made under S17 of the Housing Act 1985 or under S226 (as amended by Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, for the provision of housing accommodation or to make a quantitative or qualitative improvement to existing housing

Additional Statutory Powers

- 5.4.13 Where an empty home is causing a specific problem to a neighbourhood or is dangerous or ruinous for example, a range of enforcement powers are available. The timing and extent of the action taken will be dependent upon the individual circumstances encountered at the property. A detailed list of these measures is attached as Appendix C to this strategy.

5.5 Maximise income opportunities

- 5.5.1 There are three potential income streams associated with bringing empty homes back into use: New Homes Bonus, debt recovery and unclaimed sales income from CPO's or Enforced Sales. The aim is to recover the costs in delivering this strategy to ensure that it is financially viable and that finance is available to invest to bring additional homes back into use.

New Homes Bonus (NHB)

- 5.5.2 In order to maximise NHB, a programme of property visits which, when combined with a close working relationship with colleagues in the Council Tax team, allows the data that is used to calculate NHB award to be as accurate as possible at the time of the data snapshot – usually early October. This ensures that NHB income to the Council is maximised each year.

Debt Recovery

- 5.5.3 All efforts to resolve debts associated with empty homes should be taken to recover public money from this wasted resource and redirect it to the services that the Council provides for the people of Pendle.
- 5.5.4 There are several types of debt that can be associated with empty homes, the most common being unpaid council tax (including the empty homes premiums), works in default costs relating to previous occupiers. The pressures on local government finances continue and we therefore seek to maximise all debt recovery opportunities. Pendle will consider utilising the powers of enforced sale to recover unpaid debts and its costs in dealing with empty homes.

Unclaimed CPO / Enforced Sale Money

- 5.5.5 Where a property has been sold using the enforced sale process the following can be deducted from the sale proceeds:

- the original works in default costs,
- the legal costs in undertaking the enforced sale procedure,
- conveyancing costs in connection with the sale,
- auctioneer's or other marketing costs,
- other officer time in relation to the enforced sale process,
- any other debts owed to the council.

The balance would then be paid to the former owner of the property subject to any other charges or mortgages on the property. If the identity of the owner is not known, the money will be paid into the courts and retained by them for 12 years.

- 5.5.7. Where the CPO process is used, the ex-owners will be entitled to compensation once the council becomes the owner of the property. If a claim is not settled, or a reference made to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber), within six years, the claim for compensation will be statute barred.

5.6 Provide advice, assistance and guidance to landlords and property owners

- 5.6.1 Whatever the situation, the Council will contact the owner, talking to them directly where possible, and outlining the options for their empty home, providing information that may assist them in deciding what to do.
- 5.6.2 The options for owners are to rent the property out, sell the property or to live in it themselves. How quickly they are able to do any of this will generally depend on the condition of the property, as well as the desire on their part. The Council will advise and forward relevant information.

Certain questions may need to be answered at this stage:

- Does the property require any building work to make it habitable? If so, does the owner intend to fund it directly or are they seeking finance privately?
 - If the owner wants to rent the property out, do they intend to do so privately or through a Leasing Scheme? What schemes are available?
 - Are they aware of the current VAT rates for developing an empty home? The Council will send a VAT information sheet outlining reduced VAT rates for works to empty homes and provide a statement that the property has been empty to Customs & Excise if needed.
 - Is the property a flat over a shop? The Council will send details of the Flat Conversion Allowance – a tax allowance introduced by the Inland Revenue in 2001 and designed to encourage people to develop empty space above shops to rent out.
 - Do they want to sell the property? The Council can offer guidance on looking for estate and letting agents locally, details of auctions and dealing with any legal matters.
 - Has the property been the subject of any complaints? It may be necessary to take action against an owner if there are issues such as build-up of rubbish, vermin, 'nuisance' to adjoining properties or if the condition of the property is affecting local amenity.
- 5.6.3 The Council in appropriate situations will offer the owner an Empty Property Loan
- Provides a loan 80% of the cost of the work up to a maximum of £15,000 up to 5 years
 - It is interest free for 3 years
 - Attracts interest at 1.46% (APR) for a further 2 years if payment is not made after 3 years
 - Can be repaid monthly or as a one off payment at the end of the agreed term

6.0 Performance Monitoring and Review

6.1 The purpose of this strategy is to explain the current situation with regard to empty homes both on a national and local basis and to set out the Council's future plans. It is essential that the effectiveness of action delivered by the implementation of the strategy is closely monitored and reviewed. In order to develop a good system of performance management it is proposed to undertake the following actions: -

- Monitor the number of empty homes back into use
- Develop up-to-date knowledge of best practice through research and liaison
- Monitor and review delivery of actions within the Action Plan.

6.2 It is proposed to review and update the Action Plan on every two years.

Appendix A

Empty Homes Action Plan 2019/21			
Action	Lead	Milestones	Milestone Completed date
Continue using empty homes loan funding to facilitate the Compulsory Purchase (CPO) of properties that have been empty for over 2 years where the owner is not willing to bring the property back into use.	Empty Homes Officer	Work through the existing list	31/03/20
		Review the current CPO list and identify further properties	31/03/20
		Report to Management Team	31/05/20
Continuation of the empty Homes Loan Scheme.	Empty Homes Officer	Offer loan to empty property owners	ongoing
Investigate empty properties with mortgages to encourage action from lenders.	Empty Homes Officer	Identify long term properties with mortgages.	01/10/19
		Work with mortgage providers	31/03/20
Target the long term empty properties in Nelson and Brierfield and reduce numbers by 20% by 2020.	Empty Homes Officer	Report progress to management team	31/12/19
		Report progress to management team	31/12/20

Action	Lead	Milestones	Milestone Completed date
Develop an empty property matching service to link Owners to Buyers/Investors	Empty Homes Officer	Identify potential Investors and buyers Identify property owners that would like to sell	01/10/19 01/12/19
Develop a scheme to use the enforced sale powers to take control of properties that have incurred significant financial charges	Empty Homes Officer/Environmental Health Manager	Review the enforced sale procedure Identify properties Report to Management team Enforce the sale of first property	01/10/19 01/02/20 31/05/20 31/07/20
Work with Bradley Community Land Trust to secure the reoccupation of long term empty properties	Empty Homes Officer	Identify suitable empty properties for the Trust to consider	30/09/19
Work with Calico to investigate the use of empty homes for affordable housing	Empty Homes Officer	Identify suitable properties to pilot	30/09/19
Investigate using empty homes loan funding to facilitate the voluntary acquisition of properties that have been empty for over 2 years where the owner is not willing to bring the property back into use	Empty Homes Officer/Environmental Health Manager	Identify properties that we need to acquire Report to management team for approval to acquire Acquire first properties	30/01/20 31/03/20 30/06/20

Action	Lead	Milestones	Milestone Completed date
Review the need for the dedicated empty homes officer post.	Environmental Health Manager	Report to management team	31/12/19
Review the Empty Homes Action Plan.	Environmental Health Manager	Review the existing action plan and report to Management Team	31/07/20

Appendix B

Main Statutory Enforcement Options

Town & Country Planning Act 1990, Section 215: Where the condition of an empty home is detrimental to the amenity of the area.

Building Act 1984, Sections 77-79: Where an empty home is in such a condition to be dangerous or is seriously detrimental to the amenity or of the neighbourhood.

Building Act 1984, Section 59: Where the condition of the drainage to a building is prejudicial to health or a nuisance.

Environmental Protection Act 1990, Section 80: Where a statutory nuisance exists, is likely to occur or recur at the property.

Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949, Section 4: Applied where the condition of the property is such that it is providing or likely to provide harbourage to rodents.

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, Section 29: Allows the Council to act if a property is open to unauthorised access and is a risk to public health.

Housing and Planning Act 2016, Part 7: Allows authorisation to be given for officers to enter land (and property on that land) in connection with a proposal to acquire a compulsory interest in that land (and property on that land).

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, Section 16; and Town & Country Planning Act 1990, section 330 – A notice may be served to establish information regarding property ownership or interests in land.

Housing Act 1985 Section 17 and the Acquisition of Land Act 1981: Forms the basis for the compulsory purchase of land/buildings for the provision of housing accommodation.

Housing Act 2004 Part 4: Grants powers to take over the management of a property using Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO).

Law of Property Act 1925, Part III: The basis for enforced sale where certain debts are owed to the Local Authority.

The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, Part 4: Allows for enforcement of matters considered to be detrimental to the quality of life to those in the locality.

Public Health Act 1961 Section 34: Deals with the removal of waste from property or land.

Public Health Act 1936 Section 83: Deals with the cleansing of filthy or verminous premises.

Housing Act 2004 Part 1: Housing conditions, improvements