

APPENDIX B



# **HERTSMERE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**HOUSING DEPARTMENT  
DRAFT EMPTY HOMES ACTION PLAN 2022 - 2027**

**Update November 2022**

## EMPTY HOMES ACTION PLAN

***Aim: To return long-term empty properties to use in the most appropriate way in the shortest possible time***

***Objective 1: To prevent properties from becoming long-term empty***

<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Date of Action</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instigate agreed procedures (appendix c) for proactive contact with owners when property is registered empty</li> </ul>	<p>Three stage contact process - Regular letters sent out to each address</p>	<p>Private Sector Housing officers Council Tax Officers</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive Council Tax report identifying newly registered empty properties.</li> </ul>	<p>Empty Homes spreadsheets are prepared monthly within Revenues and data exchange completed quarterly</p>	<p>Private Sector Housing Officers</p>	<p>Monthly / quarterly</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor and analyse data and reasons for properties remaining empty long-term</li> </ul>	<p>Two major mail outs with resultant response data</p>	<p>Private Sector Housing officers</p>	<p>January &amp; November annually</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake survey of properties empty for more than 6 months every year</li> </ul>	<p>Desk top review and site visits every 6 months</p>	<p>Private Sector Housing officers</p>	<p>every 3 months</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of enforcement procedures</li> </ul>	<p>Complete – Enforcement training undertaken</p>	<p>Private Sector Housing officers</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

**Objective 2: To raise awareness of empty homes in Hertsmere**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Date of Action</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regularly update - Empty Homes to the HBC webpage.</li> </ul>	Webpage including links to pertinent agencies	Private Sector Housing officers	Updated regularly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organise Private Sector Landlords events to encourage landlord and letting agency engagement</li> </ul>	Landlord forums held twice a year	Private Sector Housing officers	Landlords Forum twice yearly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publicise empty homes work within council and across the borough with regular articles in Hertsmere News and local press</li> </ul>	Hertsmere News articles, website articles and features, radio interviews and local paper interviews as and when	Private Sector Housing officers	As and when news available
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage ward councillors to report empties properties</li> </ul>	Increasing awareness and interest from members	Private Sector Housing officers	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Empty Homes Information Pack sent to owners</li> </ul>	PLACE brochure on website and sent directly to owners	Private Sector Housing officers	Ongoing

**Objective 3: Improve recordings of empty homes**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Date of Action</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain Empty Homes Database</li>   <li>• Receive monthly council tax reports for all empty properties in the borough</li>   <li>• Run annual performance monitoring reports from Empty Homes Database</li> </ul>	<p>Up to date data held</p> <p>Empty Homes spreadsheets are prepared monthly within Revenues</p> <p>Data ready for October Empty Homes Bonus reports</p>	<p>Private Sector Housing officers Council Tax Officers</p> <p>Private Sector Housing officers</p> <p>Council Tax Officers</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Statistics compiled in coordination with Council Tax department. Figures captured and is available for data exchange</p> <p>October annually</p>

**Objective 4: To develop better partnership working across the council to deliver a corporate commitment to empty homes work**

Action	Outcome	Responsible Officer	Date of Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate elements of the Empty Homes Strategy into the Housing and Homelessness Strategies</li> <li>• Quarterly meetings with Planning Enforcement, Environmental Health, Council Tax and other departments.</li> <li>• Attend the Herts Beds &amp; Bucks Empty Homes Forum</li> <li>• Develop and deliver empty homes PLACE grants, loans to rent or loans to sell. Attend PLACE meetings.</li> </ul>	<p>Empty homes regeneration forming key response to homeless provision and general housing needs provision</p> <p>Joint action to encourage owners to bring properties back into use.</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>Delivery of PLACE scheme</p>	<p>Private Sector Housing Officers &amp; Housing Services Manager</p> <p>Private Sector Housing Officers</p> <p>Private Sector Housing officers</p> <p>Private Sector Housing Officers</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Ongoing liaison between Units on specific cases.</p> <p>Ongoing – quarterly review</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

**Objective 5: To continue to investigate the provision of a set of robust financial solutions**

Action	Outcome	Responsible Officer	Date of Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop financial partnerships/ products &amp; delivery vehicles for new private sector financial scheme in association with a not-for-profit organisation and specialist loan provider</li> <li>•</li> <li>• Provide a competitive and fit for purpose incentive scheme for landlords to let their properties to homeless households being supported by the Council</li> </ul>	On track	Private Sector Housing Officers & Housing Services Manager  Housing Services Manager and Housing Initiatives Team Leader	Under review, explore new options as and when offered.  Regular reviews

**Objective 6: To implement available enforcement legislation to enable empty homes to be brought back into use**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Date of Action</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate use of available legislation</li>   <li>• Seek approval to use Enforced sale, Compulsory Purchase and Empty Dwelling Management Orders in appropriate cases</li> </ul>	<p>Bringing empty dwellings back into use.</p> <p>Enforcement to bring empty homes back into use.</p>	<p>Private Sector Housing Officers &amp; Housing Services Manager</p> <p>Private Sector Housing Officers &amp; Housing Services Manager, Legal and Council Tax.</p>	<p>On-going investigations</p> <p>All departments participate in discussions. Reports to executive when required.</p>