

Empty Homes Strategy - Recommendations

1. That the Council's Housing department ensures it has a complete list of empty properties in the borough at all times to ensure that the Council Tax Premium can be applied properly to discourage have properties vacant.
2. That Officers examine the options available to get the most meaningful information possible from the council tax system in respect of empty domestic property reporting.
3. That the Executive Member explore the possibility of receiving a financial contribution from TVH to help fund its partnership working in relation to HCA empty homes funding.
4. That the Executive Member encourages TVH to use local tradesmen to work along side THV to carry out improvements to properties under the Empty homes project.
5. That the Executive Member should look to were possible increase the staffing level in the Empty Properties Group to ensure effective delivery of the strategy.
6. That the Committee recommend the reprioritisation of empty properties (empty just over 6 months) to identify those that can be brought back into use sooner.
7. The Committee recommend increased publicity of successes when empty properties are brought back into use to assist tackling this issue.
8. The Environment portfolio design clear standards and criteria for when enforced sales; compulsory purchases or empty homes management orders procedures should commence.
9. That the Committee request the Executive Member consider changes to the length of time a property can be empty before landlords are charged the Premium Council Tax Rate.
10. That the Committee recommend the Council look to establish a facility whereby it is a landlords responsibility to make sure tenants have bins to enable them to recycle and any replacement bins are charged to the landlord.
11. That the Housing department work with the Council Tax Team to include leaflet / information about empty properties with next annual Council Tax bill to all residents. Also when owners register their vacant properties with Benefits & Local Taxation Team, information should be sent to them outlining the various options available, highlighting penalties to be imposed for failing to comply with the Council's requirements, concerning bringing empty properties back into use.
12. That the Environment Department continues to work closely with other departments and partner organisations to ensure sources of fly tipping in back allies and wards as witnessed by the Committee are further reduced.