

Empty Homes Strategy Action Plan Mid Term Review 2018

Key Measures

- 1 To reduce the number of long-term empty homes (those over 6 months) by 20% by 2025.
- 2 Bring a minimum of 70 empty homes brought back into use (under and over 2 years) each year through targeted interventions.
- 3 Bring at least 3 empty homes back into use annually using the Empty Homes Grant Management Scheme in partnership with South Lakes Housing.
- 4 Re-launch the Matchmaker scheme and match up to 2 empty homes per annum through the scheme.
- 5 Refer up to 5 properties per annum to the Council's Housing Options Team.
- 6 Identify and report second homes that are currently recorded as empty homes as this is classed as an intervention generating New Homes Bonus – at least 10% of interventions to be through this means.

Action

- 1a) Promote the Empty Homes Grant Management Scheme (EHGMS) in partnership with South Lakes Housing and bring up to 3 properties back into use annually subject to funding availability.

Milestones

Target media via SLDC/SLH Communications

- Mailshot (with leaflet) aimed at empty home owners in priority housing need areas
- Update website as appropriate
- Use social media to promote the scheme
- Promote the scheme with local lettings/estate agents, District and Parish newsletters

Timescale

Ongoing

www.southlakeland.gov.uk



Measures

1, 2, 3

Lead Officer

PHSO, EHO

Resources

Empty Homes Grant Funding and match funding by empty home owners.

Action

1b) Develop and promote the Matchmaker Scheme

Milestones

- Re-design the Matchmaker Scheme from a Buyer's perspective
- Update the website with information for owners and potential purchasers who wish to consider purchasing an empty home.
- Use the register of interest in affordable housing and households who do not qualify due to income for affordable housing for specific areas
- Promote via SLDC Communications team and SLDC website

Timescale

Ongoing

Measures

1, 2, 4

Lead Officer

EHO

Resources

Within existing resources

Action

1c) Consider options for a Do It Yourself Shared Ownership (DIYSO) scheme using empty homes.

Milestones

- Develop a model DIYSO scheme identifying target homes for the scheme, funding arrangements.
- Develop a South Lakeland District Council Policy as necessary or as part of the Supplementary Planning Guidance for Commuted Sums, subject to the above being viable.
- Launch of the Scheme and publicity.

Timescale

2019

Measures

1 and 2

Lead Officer

PHSO, EHO, PHSO, EHO

Resources

Commuted sum provision

Stair-cased receipts from shared ownership properties

Heylo Housing funding

Action

1d) Research and take part in new initiatives as opportunities arise

Milestones

- Continue to research other ways to help empty home owners bring their empty homes back into use
- Apply for Government funding for empty homes where opportunities present

Timescale

Ongoing

Measures

1, 2

Lead Officer

EHO

Resources

Within existing resources.

Action

1e) Review the use of enforcement options in line with the Council's Housing Enforcement Policy, targeting owners that fail to engage or make reasonable efforts to bring their empty home back into use.

Milestones

- Review use and application of enforcement measures
- Target owners who fail to engage or make reasonable efforts to bring their empty home back into use

Timescale

July 2019

Measures

1, 2

Lead Officer

PHSO, EHO

Resources

Within existing resources.

Action

1f) Continue to work with owners to bring empty homes back into use through a range of interventions

Milestones

- Targeted letters to long-term empty home owners
- VAT letters for homes empty for 2+ years
- Empty homes visits with owners

Timescale

Ongoing

Measures

1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Lead Officer

EHO

Resources

Within existing resources.

Action

1g) Consider options for a community led housing scheme that brings empty homes back into use

Milestones

- Consider options available for a potential pilot scheme including viability
- Consider potential for use of over 2 year empty properties

Timescale

2019 to 2020

Measures

1 and 2



Lead Officer

Resources

Community Led Housing Fund

Homes England

Action

2a) Update the database with key information on empty homes on a monthly basis.

Milestones

- Update the database from Council Tax records, reports of empty homes from outside agencies, public reports etc.
- Identify within the database property condition, why empty, owner's intentions, etc.

Timescale

Ongoing

Measures

1, 2 and 5

Lead Officer

EHO

Resources

Within existing resources.

Action

2b) Develop links with the Council's Housing Options Team to match empty homes that could be suitable to use for homeless households.

Milestones

- Identify and refer empty homes to the Housing Options Team, primarily in areas of greatest housing need that could be used for homeless households.

Timescale

Ongoing

Measures

1 and 4

Lead Officer

EHO in partnership with HOM & PHStanO

PSAO

Resources

Within existing resources.

Rental costs will meet the cost of management of the property.

Action

3a) Use the SLDC web-site, the media and social media campaigns to report empty homes and publicise successful interventions.

Milestones

- Regularly update the website with new initiatives and the provision of useful advice to empty home owners and enable reporting of empty homes
- Use Facebook and Twitter in advertising available schemes
- Issue Press Releases for successful interventions
- Share good practice via the Empty Homes Network blog

Timescale

Ongoing

Measures

1, 2, 7 and 8

Lead Officer

EHO



Resources

Within existing resources.

Action

3b) Work with Revenues and Benefits to ensure that the second home classification is correctly awarded and that the number of second homes continues to be monitored.

Milestones

- Report second/holiday homes that are currently classified as empty homes to Revenues and Benefits so that New Homes Bonus can be awarded
- Monitor the number of second homes

Timescale

Ongoing

Measures

1 and 2

Lead Officer

EHO

Resources

Within existing resources.

Action

3c) Work with Parish Councils in the identification of empty and second homes.

Milestones

- Publicise available schemes, how to report an empty home and successful interventions through CALC & individual Parish Councils
- Work with Parish Councils to encourage reporting empty and second homes and promoting available schemes such as the Empty Homes Grant Management Scheme.

Timescale

Ongoing

Measures

1, 2, 6

Lead Officer

EHO

Resources

Within existing resources.

Action

3d) Review and produce a revised Empty Homes Strategy in 2020.

Milestones

- Review and produce a revised Empty Homes Strategy.

Timescale

2020

Measures

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Lead Officer

PHStraO

Resources

Within existing resources.

Action

3e) Consider and implement options for South Lakeland on the legislation and amendments to the Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Bill to double, triple and quadruple Council Tax on second homes on longer-term empty properties (over 2 years).

Milestones

- Monitor the progress of the legislation
- Consideration of options and potential advantages/drawbacks to the District
- Serve relevant notices as required on empty home owners to whom the legislation will apply
- Monitor ongoing impact should the amendment be enacted

Timescale

2019

Measures

1, 2, 6

Lead Officer

Revenues and Benefits Manager

Resources

Within existing resources.

Key:

EHO – Empty Homes Officer

PHStraO – Principal Housing Strategy Officer

PHSoLO – Principal Housing Solutions Officer

PHStanO – Principal Housing Standards Officer

PSAO – Private Sector Accommodation Officer

