

empty homes strategy progress report 2018-2019

	ACTION	PROGRESS UPDATE AND OUTCOMES	DELIVER BY
1.	Review advice and assistance available to empty home owners including Partnership Grants and the Tenant Finder Scheme	<p>The Council have been offering home owners a free valuation service and getting properties sold at Auction to avoid enforcement action in addition to offering Partnership Grants and the Tenant Finder Scheme.</p> <p>55 empty homes have been brought back into use as a result of direct intervention by the Empty Homes Officer.</p>	Continuous
2.	Explore opportunities for Empty Homes Leasing and Social Lettings	<p>A new Social Lettings Coordinator post was created and Social Lettings Service (CBC Lettings) established. New Tenant Finder and Tenancy Management Services for Private Sector Landlords have been developed.</p> <p>Funding received from the MHCLG Rapid Rehousing Fund is being utilised to expand the CBC Lettings Service across Leicestershire and Rutland.</p>	Completed
3.	Arrange and host advisory events for empty home owners	Empty Homes Event was hosted during Empty Homes week in September 2019.	Continuous
4.	Review current publicity arrangements and consider the production of a newsletter for stakeholders	<p>Posters have been displayed at Community Centres, Libraries and Supermarkets.</p> <p>The Empty Homes Service has been promoted through social media, online and local media.</p>	Continuous
5.	Develop an Enforcement Policy for dealing with problematic empty homes	The Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy was approved by Cabinet on the 19th May 2018 and this incorporates the enforcement action the Council can take to bring Empty Homes back into use.	Completed
6.	Consider the establishment of an affordable loan scheme for those renovating empty properties for their own eventual occupation	Research, discussions and advice is being sought through our Finance team to consider the options and the risk to the Council.	March 2020
7.	Explore the establishment of a Council Owned Development Company	Cabinet considered options for establishing a Housing Company wholly owned by the Council including an outline business case. A £20,000 budget was approved to establish the Company, project management and specialist legal and financial advice.	Continuous



8.	Develop improved communication channels	<p>Work continues with the Police, Planning Enforcement, Council Tax and Environmental Services in tackling problematic empty homes.</p> <p>A partnership approach has been developed with local Auctioneers to visit owners of Empty Homes to provide a free no obligation property survey.</p>	Continuous
9.	Publicise incoming minimum energy efficiency standards for rented accommodation and assistance available for landlords to comply to minimise potential for increase in number of empty homes	<p>Regulations were introduced on the 1st April 2018 that it is no longer lawful to rent a property that breaches Energy Efficiency standards of a minimum E rating, unless there is an applicable exemption.</p> <p>This will be expanded to cover all existing tenancies on the 1st April 2020</p> <p>The Council will impose a Civil Penalty of up to £4,000 on Landlords who breach this requirement.</p> <p>Private Sector Housing Standards Officers are creating a list of rented properties across the Borough to inspect to ensure that these regulations are being adhered to.</p> <p>CBC Lettings will provide information to new and existing landlords.</p>	Continuous

