

Appendix: York Empty Homes Strategy Action Plan 2011-2016

| Strategic Aim 1. Maintain accurate information about the numbers of long term empty homes | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Objectives: | Why | Baseline position | Target/date | Resources | Lead* |
| Maintain, and where possible improve the accuracy of data held by the council regarding the number of empty homes | To ensure that the action is targeted at those homes which are causing the most detrimental impact on their neighbourhood and which will positively impact on the new homes bonus | Number of private sector Homes empty at the 1st October 2010 1470 .Number of Private sector homes empty for more than 6 months at the 1st October 2010 632 . Number of homes which meet the new homes bonus criteria at the 1st October 2010 383 | to reduce the number of properties to 200 by 1st October 2011 | Existing and Empty Homes Officer *tbc | CYC Housing/Resources |
| Actions towards this objective will include: | | | | | |
| Through an annual audit of empty homes | | | | | |
| Develop good working relationships with owners of empty homes - to encourage them to be brought back in to use | | | | | |
| Effective partnership working with colleagues in Resources (see strategic aim 4) | | | | | |
| Encourage residents to inform the council of long term empty homes | To ensure that action is targeted at those homes that have the greatest detrimental impact on their neighbourhood. | Number of referrals are low. Between 1st April 2010 - 31st March 2011. | To increase number of referrals by 10% | Empty Homes Officer *tbc | CYC Housing |
| Actions towards this objective will include: | | | | | |
| Press releases on an on-going basis regarding enforcement action and properties brought back into use | | | | | |
| Effective communication with residents through ward newsletters and liaison with Neighbourhood Management Officers and Street Environment | | | | | |
| Improve the information available to residents through the council website and leaflets - development of an electronic report form for the website | | | | | |
| To encourage owners of property to advise the council when the property is occupied | To ensure that action is targeted at those homes that have the greatest detrimental impact on their neighbourhood and to maximise the amount of new homes bonus . | The empty homes audits have established that many homes were not empty (approximately 50%) | To ensure that all homes which have been reoccupied by the 1st October are recorded accurately | Empty Homes Officer*tbc | Resources |
| Actions towards this objective will include: | | | | | |
| Development of standard letter templates that mention the benefits for empty home owners of keeping the council informed of changes in circumstances | | | | | |
| To establish protocols with other departments | | | | | |
| To carry out annual audits of all empty homes | | | | | |

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| Strategic Aim 2. To encourage owners of privately owned empty homes and owners of vacant property to bring them back in to residential use | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|-------------|
| Objectives: | Why | Baseline position | Target/date | Resources | Lead* |
| To encourage owners to bring empty homes back in to use through a range of information and advice | Empty homes are a waste of resources and by targeting empty homes it maximises the new homes bonus | Limited Information on the website | To review all information provided by the council by March 2012. Then every six months by stakeholder group - see strategic aim 4 | Empty Homes Officer*tbc | CYC Housing |
| Actions towards this objective will include: | | | | | |
| Provide access to free advice and information for owners | | | | | |
| To provide an Empty homes leaflet | | | | | |
| Publish a list of trades people for empty property owners | | | | | |
| Work with landlords and letting agents (see Strategic Aim 4) | | | | | |
| To encourage and support greater access to home appreciation loans and equity release products to fund repairs and maintenance to bring back in to use the empty homes | Empty homes are a waste of resources and by targeting empty homes it maximises the new homes bonus | 9 homes have been directly brought back in to use through financial help from the council. | to bring back into use 5 empty homes per year | Empty Homes Officer and capital resources *tbc | CYC Housing |
| Actions towards this objective will include: | | | | | |
| Targeted marketing of products available to empty home owners | | | | | |
| To provide technical support (site surveys and technical advice)to home owners to ensure that homes are brought back in to use quickly | | | | | |
| Review assistance policy regularly to ensure that it continues to support objective | | | | | |
| Where empty homes are brought back in to use to encourage owners to rent them at an affordable rent | To increase the number of affordable empty homes in the city | 2502 households on the waiting list as of May 2011 | To bring back into use 5 empty homes per year linked to YorHome | Empty Homes Officer *tbc /YorHome | CYC Housing |
| Actions towards this objective will include: | | | | | |
| To work closely with YorHome manager | | | | | |
| Review assistance policy to maximises opportunities | | | | | |

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|--|--|---|---|---|---------------------------|
| Objectives: | Why | Baseline position | Target/date | Resources | Lead* |
| To explore opportunities to bring back in to vacant commercial properties | vacant commercial properties are a waste of resources and by exploring new opportunities we can maximise this resource | Explore the governments new initiatives | By March 2012 exploring with partners ways of maximizing the use of vacant commercial properties. | New formal liaison group *tbc | CYC Housing/city Strategy |
| Actions towards this objective will include: | | | | | |
| Provide access to free advice and information for owners | | | | | |
| To provide an Empty homes leaflet | | | | | |
| Publish a list of trades people for empty property owners | | | | | |
| Work with landlords and letting agents (see Strategic Aim 4) | | | | | |
| Continually investigate funding opportunities to maximise the opportunities available | Empty homes are a waste of resources and by targeting empty homes it maximises the new homes bonus | Homes and Communities Agency expression of interest submitted June 2011 | To bring back in to use 5 homes per year linked in to YorHome | Housing Strategy Manager and Senior Officer (housing standards and adaptations) . Capital resources *tbc | CYC Housing |
| Actions towards this objective will include: | | | | | |
| To work with the Housing Strategy manager to prepare bids to the Homes and Communities Agency to access the National Affordable Housing Programme (NAHP) £100m programme | | | | | |
| To seek complimentary funding from City of York Councils own capital programme. | | | | | |
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| Strategic Aim 3. To target owners whose empty homes cause a significant detrimental impact to the neighbourhood | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Objectives: | Why | Baseline position | Target/date | Resources | Lead* |
| To encourage residents to inform the council of long term empty homes | To ensure that action is targeted at those homes which are causing the most detrimentally impact on their neighbourhood. | Number of referrals are low | To increase referrals by a minimum of 10% | Empty Homes Officer required *tbc | CYC Housing |
| Actions towards this objective will include: | | | | | |
| Development of an effective publicity strategy | | | | | |
| Effective communication with residents through ward newsletters and liaison with Neighbourhood Management Officers and Street Environment | | | | | |
| Improve the information available to residents through the council website and leaflets - development of an electronic report form for the website | | | | | |
| To bring empty homes back in to use through a mixture of enforcement action where they score more than 40 using the empty property impact matrix and meet the criteria of the enforcement policy | To tackle problems of environmental nuisance ,ASB and blight to neighbourhoods caused by long term empty homes where the owners has not engaged with the council | Limited use of enforcement action is used to bring back properties in to use due to lack of resources | to bring back in to use 20 empty homes per year | Empty homes officer required *tbc | CYC Housing |
| Actions towards this objective will include: | | | | | |
| To ensure that all long term empty homes are scored using the empty homes matrix | | | | | |
| To utilise the most appropriate enforcement tool to tackle the issue | | | | | |
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| Strategic Aim 4. Strengthen existing and develop new partnerships to reduce the number of long term empty homes in the city | | | | | |
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| Objectives: | Why | Baseline position | Target/date | Resources | Lead* |
| Maintain clear strategic leadership | To help all stakeholders with a role maintaining and reducing the number of long term empty homes | Strong links developed with resources | To establish formal liaison group with key internal partners (YorHome, Environmental Health, Building Control , Street Environment Officers and Neighbourhood Management Unit) by December 2011 | Senior Officer (Housing Standards and Adaptations) | CYC Housing |
| Actions towards these objectives will include: | | | | | |
| To meet quarterly to ensure that the homes which are causing the most detrimental impact on their neighbourhood are identified and the options to bring them back into use are found. | | | | | |
| Analyse and share findings from future research projects with key stakeholders | | | | | |
| Disseminate best practice and facilitate learning | | | | | |
| Continue and strengthen partnership between sub regional empty homes officers | Sub regional partnership is an important arena for sharing good practise and bring investment in to the city | North Yorkshire Empty Homes Practitioners group established | Maintain programme of quarterly meetings sharing good practise from across the Region and country | Senior Officer (Housing Standards and Adaptations) | CYC Housing |
| Actions towards these objectives will include: | | | | | |
| to maximise any funding opportunities | | | | | |
| Regular progress reviews for key stakeholders | | | | | |
| Greater use of shared protocols and agreed principles for joint working | | | | | |
| Establish better partnerships with organisations | | | | | |
| Develop links with Housing Providers, developers, leaseholders and landowners | To increase the number of affordable empty homes in the city | The current Housing Association Liaison Group. Private Sector Landlords Association | Use existing programme of meetings to share ideas and review opportunities for investment bids | Housing Strategy Manager with support from Senior Officer (Housing Standards and Adaptations) | CYC Housing |
| Actions towards these objectives will include: | | | | | |
| Use annual landlord conference to share good practise and to ensure that empty home owners are supported and have access to information | | | | | |
| By obtaining a more detailed understanding of the role private sector landlord /letting agents role to ensure that empty homes are brought back in to use quickly | | | | | |
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