

APPENDIX 1

DRAFT EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2009-2014

| | | | | | LEAD OFFICER | PROGRESS AS OF MAY 09 |
|------------------|--|--|-----------|------------------------------|---|--|
| ACTION | TARGET | PRIORITY | RESOURCES | | | |
| STRATEGY | | | | | | |
| 1 | Review the Empty Homes Strategy. | Annually | Medium | Staff time | Empty Homes Partnership Manager | Scrutiny committee on 2 June 2009 / further report to Members on September 2010 |
| 2 | Create a suitable strap line for the Empty Homes Strategy. | Proactive line which encapsulates the aim of the strategy | High | Staff time | Empty Homes Partnership Manager | Under review |
| 3 | Empty Homes Action Plan. | Monthly | High | Staff time | Empty Homes Partnership Manager | Ongoing |
| PROGRAMME | | | | | | |
| 1 | Return properties empty for more than six months to use. | 40 per year | Medium | Staff time | Empty Homes Partnership Manager / Empty Homes Negotiator | 5 properties brought back into use in January 2009 and 10 more in the pipeline |
| 2 | Negotiate with the Homes and Communities Agency to secure funding for empty homes grants. | 100 units before the end of 31 March 2014 | Medium | Staff time / capital funding | Strategic Housing Manager / Empty Homes Partnership Manager | 9 units completed at Fountain House. 20 homes per year 2009-10 to 2013-14 |
| 3 | Negotiate with internal council departments for renovation grant funding. | Subject to availability | Medium | Staff time / capital funding | Strategic Housing Manager / Empty Homes Partnership Manager | Under negotiation |
| 4 | Identify long term empty properties (over 2 years) which could be brought back into use using enforcement powers from the Housing Act 2004 (Empty Dwelling Management Orders). | 6 per year | High | Staff time | Empty Homes Partnership Manager / Empty Homes Negotiator | 4 properties currently under investigation |
| 5 | Identify funding in the council's Affordable Housing Capital Programme for use on empty properties. | £200,000 to be spent on off-the-shelf purchases by 31 March 2010 | High | Staff time / capital funding | Strategic Housing Manager / Empty Homes Partnership Manager | 10 properties being investigated |
| | | £108,500 to be spent on purchase of move-on properties | High | Staff time / capital funding | Strategic Housing Manager / Enabling Officers | 1 home purchased and 1 in the pipeline |
| | | £18,000 on family housing conversion in Rifford Road | High | Staff time / capital funding | Strategic Housing Manager / Empty Homes Partnership Manager | 1 home purchased |
| | | £249,000 on the rehab of the former Admiral Inn | High | Staff time / capital funding | Strategic Housing Manager / Empty Homes Partnership Manager | 7 homes completed |
| | | £100,000 as a leasing pot to provide further private sector leased homes in Exeter | High | Staff time / capital funding | Strategic Housing Manager / Empty Homes Partnership Manager | At least 10 homes to be brought back into use and brought up to the decent homes standard |
| | | £30,000 for the leasing of an 'eyesore' property in Oxford Street | High | Staff time / capital funding | Strategic Housing Manager / Empty Homes Partnership Manager | 1 home in the pipeline |
| | | £150,000 allocated on laings rehabilitation | High | Staff time / capital funding | Strategic Housing Manager / Empty Homes Partnership Manager | 2 homes in the pipeline. Potential to do 25 more. |
| 6 | Identify funding for the EXtraLet scheme. | £80,000 to be spent by September 2009. Consider extra commuted sum money | Medium | Staff time / capital funding | Housing Needs Manager | £50,937 spent on 40 properties since April 2008 (as of February 2009). Currently manage 80 properties. |

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| 7 Maintain Empty Homes Partnership for the Strategic Housing Market Assessment Region. | Annually | High | Staff time | | Empty Homes Partnership Manager | Maintained |
| 8 Continue to promote downsizing to free up properties for families in the Exeter area and help prevent under-occupation. | Council target of at least 25 moves per year. Budget of £50,000 | Medium | Staff time / capital funding | | Housing Enabling Officers | Promoted in Insight and by Estate Management. 81 moves so far total. Review 31 March 2010 |
| | RSL target of at least 20 moves per year. Budget of £50,000 (2008-10) | Medium | Staff time / capital funding | | Housing Enabling Officers | Review December 2009 |
| 9 Promoting the creation of resident landlords within the city willing to take in lodgers. | 20 lodgers in 2009-10 | Medium | £5,000 spent on officer time | | Empty Homes Partnership Manager | Becoming a Resident Landlord Booklet produced April 2009 (300 produced) / Accompanying leaflet for City services at design stage as of April 2009 |
| 10 Create a register of landlords and potential lodgers as a housing option. | Create list | Medium | Staff time | | Housing Needs Manager | Ongoing |
| 11 Promote and monitor the STEPs programme run by Exeter Community Initiative. | Work with STEPs to come up with funds and 2 properties for affordable housing | Medium | Staff time / capital funding | | Housing Enabling Officers | Revenue: £5,000 invested 2008 and £5,000 in 2009 |
| | | | | | | Conditional capital funding of £50,000 on the production of a viable scheme |
| 12 Conversion of under-used or hard to let sheltered housing blocks. | 10 possible guest room conversions | Medium | Staff time / capital funding | | Head of Housing Services / Housing Enabling Manager | Investigation underway and nearly complete |
| 13 Tackle restrictive lettings practises. | persuade some Housing Associations to change practises which restrict letting of flats to people with children | Medium | Staff time | | Housing Needs Manager | Ongoing |
| INFORMATION & TRAINING | | | | | | |
| 1 Obtain and review council tax lists to identify empty properties. | February / June / October. (Every 4 months) | Medium | Staff time | | Empty Homes Partnership Manager / Empty Homes Negotiator | First list requested January 2009 |
| 2 Conduct street surveys to identify vacant units over shops and empty buildings. | Fore Street, Heavitree / Cowick Street, St Thomas to be thoroughly surveyed by 31 March 2011 | Medium | Staff time | | Empty Homes Partnership Manager / Empty Homes Negotiator | First survey September 2009 |
| 3 Ensure the Empty Property database is kept up to date in order to establish the capacity for linking the data to broader regeneration. | Monthly | High | Staff time | | Empty Homes Partnership Manager / Empty Homes Negotiator | On going |

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| 4 | Remain abreast of changes in legislation and best practise as discussed by the Government, the Empty Homes Agency and the National Association of Empty Property Practitioners. | Continuous process | Medium | Staff time | Empty Homes Partnership Manager | On going |
| 5 | Continue to build staff skills and knowledge. | Continuous process | Medium | Staff time | Housing Enabling Manager / Empty Homes Partnership Manager / Empty Homes Negotiator | 2007 - Affordable Housing Masterclass. 2008 - Negotiations skills courses and more planned. Houisng Market Viability Event. 2009 - Continued mentoring of Housng Enablers and Empty Homes Officers and a certificate in Enabling being investigated. |
| 6 | Empty Homes Partnership Newsletter | Every 6 months | Medium | Staff time | Empty Homes Partnership Manager | Second issue in production |
| 7 | Advertising | Consider additional resources to facilitate publicity | High | Staff time | Empty Homes Partnership Manager | Under review |
| ADMINISTRATION | | | | | | |
| 1 | Aim to reply to all calls / emails relating to empty properties within 2 days. | 200 per month. Subject to number of messages | High | Staff time | Empty Homes Partnership Manager / Empty Homes Negotiator | Jan 09: 239 calls Mar 09: 235 calls |
| 2 | Secure revenue funding for the administration of the Empty Homes Partnership beyond 2011 subject to Local Government reorganisation of Devon. | 7 Resident Social Landlords and 2 District Councils plus Exeter City Council by 2011 | Low | Staff time / capital funding | Empty Homes Partnership Manager / Empty Homes Partnership Officer | Funding secure up to April 2011 except for Magna Housing who have been written to |
| 3 | Continue to host the Empty Homes Partnership meetings. | Every 6 months | Medium | Staff time | Empty Homes Partnership Manager / Empty Homes Partnership Officer | Next meeting April 2009 |
| 4 | Continue to host the South West Empty Homes Forum. | Every 6 months | High | Staff time | Empty Homes Partnership Manager / Empty Homes Partnership Officer | Next forum June 2009 |
| CONSULTATION | | | | | | |
| 1 | Empty Homes Strategy 2009-2014 to be placed on the Council's website for public view and comment. | Subject to approval from Committee | High | Staff time | Empty Homes Partnership Manager / Empty Homes Partnership Officer | To be uploaded June 2009 |
| 2 | Review and revise Empty Homes Strategy in light of comments from the public. | Subject to approval from Committee | High | Staff time | Empty Homes Partnership Manager / Empty Homes Partnership Officer | Revision awaited |