



Derby City Council

COUNCIL CABINET
21 January 2015

Report of the Cabinet Member for
Housing, Finance and Welfare

ITEM 9

Draft Private Sector Empty Homes Strategy 2015-2020

SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report introduces the proposed Private Sector Empty Homes Strategy for 2015-2020. The report recommends its approval by Council Cabinet.
- 1.2 The draft Private Sector Empty Homes Strategy 2015 – 2020 sets out the council's policy and procedures in relation to the return of private sector empty properties to the useful housing stock. The strategy details the advice, assistance and encouragement offered by the council to owners of empty homes, the incentives that are available to owners and/or purchasers of such properties, and where necessary, the enforcement measures that can be utilised to ensure empty properties are reoccupied. The strategy also details the ways in which the council's Empty Homes Service undertakes to maximise the opportunity for income from empty homes related activities.
- 1.3 Derby City Council's Empty Homes Service as a whole, and individual officers within the team, have been nationally recognised for their achievements and development of best practice by such organisations as the Homes and Communities Agency and the Empty Homes Network.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To formally approve the proposed Private Sector Empty Homes Strategy 2015-2020.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To ensure the continued delivery of the Empty Homes Strategy and to maximise New Homes Bonus income to the council, as well as maximising recovery of debt associated with empty homes.



Derby City Council

COUNCIL CABINET 21 January 2015

Report of the Strategic Director for Adults Health and Housing

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 In June 2010 the Government stated that its key housing policy goal was to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent home, which they can afford, in a community where they want to live. [Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing 2010]
- 4.2 The majority of housing both nationally and locally is private sector, in the form of either owner occupied or private rented accommodation.
- 4.3 In March 2012 the Department for Communities and Local Government's 'National Planning Policy' set out its expectation that Local Authorities '*...set policies to improve or make more effective use of the existing housing stock...bring back into residential use empty housing and buildings...and, where appropriate, acquire properties under compulsory purchase powers.*'
- 4.4 New Homes Bonus was introduced by the coalition government in 2010. The Bonus rewards local authorities for both new build properties and empty homes returned to use. A decrease in the number of empty homes attracts a financial reward equivalent to the council tax income and is paid consecutively for six years. An increase in the number of empty homes attracts an equivalent financial penalty. Minimising the number of empty homes is therefore in the Council's financial interests.
- 4.5 In Derby there are long term empty private sector properties that blight neighbourhoods, blight the lives of neighbours and waste a valuable housing resource to the detriment of those in housing need. There are currently around 4000 people on the housing waiting list in Derby.
- 4.6 During the life of the 2012-2015 Empty Homes Strategy, the number of empty properties decreased markedly from around 4000 to 3400, while the number of long term empty homes decreased from 2500 to 1600.
- 4.7 Latest figures indicate that the reduction in the number of empty homes in the City has generated around £4.8m in New Homes Bonus since 2010, placing Derby within the top 10% of local authorities nationally. In addition, the Empty Homes Service has recovered in excess of £200,000 of debt associated with empty homes during the life of the previous strategy.

- 4.8 The Council Plan commits to improving housing supply and choice within the city; specific housing-related commitments include:
- *More private sector dwellings brought back into use or demolished.*
 - *Continue to protect residents by tackling statutory nuisance and environmental crime.*
 - *Provide good-quality housing across the city*
 - *Increase the housing supply*
- 4.9 The Derby Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2011 states that:
- 'Improving the housing stock that already exists will help more people than building new houses...*
- And that improving housing can '...also yield financial benefits'*
- 'If only five per cent of empty homes could be brought back into use, councils could cut their annual homelessness costs by £1/2 billion' (source: 'Building Better Lives – Getting the Best from Strategic Housing' Audit Commission, 2009).*
- 4.10 Unfortunately, current financial restraints affecting both local government and the private sector have significantly limited the range of options and interventions available and the extent of activity deliverable in support of those that remain. But, despite these pressures, decent, suitable housing remains critical to the health and well-being of Derby, the city, and to each of its residents.
- 4.11 Some of the properties returned to use will be managed or acquired by Derby Homes through the HRA. This will make a contribution to the council's target of 700 new or acquired affordable homes.
- 4.12 Consultation and an Equalities Impact Assessment have been undertaken and now Council Cabinet is asked to formally approve the Private Sector Empty Homes Strategy 2015-2020.
- 4.13 Current financial restraints affecting both local government and the private sector have significantly limited the range of options available. The Private Sector Housing Capital Programme supports delivery of the Strategy and makes best use of the available resources.
- 4.14 The resources of the Empty Homes Service have been reduced by 30%, targets have therefore been held at the same level as the previous strategy. Given current resources this represents a challenging target.
- 4.15 Through the Private Sector Empty Homes Strategy we strive to maximise the delivery of good accommodation from previously empty properties, both to increase the number of properties within the useful housing stock and to maximise income opportunities to the council through New Homes Bonus and debt recovery.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Current financial restraints affecting both local government and the private sector have significantly limited the range of options available. The Strategy as proposed makes best use of the available resources and seeks no additional resourcing from the Council's General Fund Capital Programme; additional profiling being fully funded from contributions.
- 5.2 Consultation on the draft Strategy and an Equalities Impact Assessment have been carried out, the minutes and notes being available at Appendices 3 and 4 respectively. No alternative options arose from these exercises.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer	Olu Idowu
Financial officer	Peter Shillcock/Toni Nash/Nicola Goodacre
Human Resources officer	Liz Moore
Estates/Property officer	Steve Sprason/Jonathan Webster
Service Director(s)	Perveez Sadiq
Other(s)	Richard Boneham - Risk Management

For more information contact:	Martin Brown. 01332 640319 e-mail martin.brown@derby.gov.uk
Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Draft Private Sector Empty Homes Strategy 2015-2020 Appendix 3 – Minutes and notes of Strategy consultation Appendix 4 – Notes of Equalities Impact Assessment Appendix 5 – Highlights from delivery of the 2012-2015 Empty Homes Strategy

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 The proposed Strategy is designed to show value for money across corporate priorities. The Private Sector Housing Capital Programme and Housing Renewal Policy supporting delivery of the Strategy make best use of the available resources and seek no additional resourcing from the Council's General Fund Capital Programme; additional profiling being fully funded from contributions.
- 1.2 Whilst funding is secure for the remainder of 2015-16 and programmed into future years, continued delivery of the services shown will be at significant risk should the Council become unable to offer capital funding support or should other funding sources be withdrawn. This risk will be monitored by the Housing Renewal Review Group, as defined within the Housing Renewal Policy, and will be managed in accordance with the City Council's Risk Management Handbook.
- 1.3 When long term empty properties are returned to use they will contribute toward the council's New Homes Bonus income. The success of Empty Homes and compulsory purchase and enforcement work continues to make a significant contribution to the New Homes Bonus awarded to the City Council since the introduction of the scheme. In addition, the return of the empty houses to a good use can often facilitate the repayment to the Council of outstanding, and often longstanding, unpaid debts – Council Tax arrears, charges raised by the Council for work carried out in an owner's default, unpaid residential charges for previous occupiers etc.
- 1.4 Compulsory purchase orders carry a risk of statutory compensation costs and of challenge at Lands Tribunal of property value compensation. These risks are mitigated by a close and effective working relationship with the City Council's Asset Management officers and any costs arising will be met from within the Private Sector Housing Capital Programme.
- 1.5 Empty Homes Assistance is in the form of a loan to a property owner and, as such, carries a risk of payment default. This risk is mitigated by a close and effective working relationship with the City Council's Legal, Finance and Debt Recovery officers. Such loans are subject to scrutiny by the Housing Renewal Review Group before approval and are recorded as a local charge against the property to aid recovery in case of payment default.

Legal

- 2.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this proposal.

Personnel

- 3.1 There are no specific Personnel implications arising from this proposal.

IT

- 4.1 There are no specific IT implications arising from this proposal.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 The strategy does aim to improve housing conditions, increase housing choice and tackle environmental and anti-social impacts affecting neighbours and neighbourhoods. In addition it is an opportunity to make more homes accessible for disabled people. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been done and this is attached at Appendix 4

Health and Safety

- 6.1 None directly arising, but the Strategy does seek to target resources at tackling the health and safety impacts of private sector housing conditions.

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.1 The re-use of existing empty homes contributes to environmental sustainability by making best use of existing resources

Property and Asset Management

- 8.1 There are no specific property and asset management implications arising from this proposal, but the commitment to empty homes services will restore presently wasted houses to the useful housing stock in the city

Risk Management

- 9.1 The key risks are financial and these are fully covered within the financial implication sections.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 10.1 This proposal supports the following commitments within the Council Plan:
- More private sector dwellings brought back into use or demolished.
 - Continue to protect residents by tackling statutory nuisance and environmental crime.
 - Provide good-quality housing across the city
 - Increase the housing supply

Draft Private Sector Empty Homes Strategy 2015-2020
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Document available in the Members Room.

Minutes and notes of draft Empty Homes Strategy consultation

A consultation plan was agreed with colleagues in Policy, Research and Engagement and with the Communications colleagues. The public consultation exercise then took place for six weeks through September and October 2014.

In addition to targetted communications, mailings, press release, web-site presence, In-Touch article, availability in Libraries and at Council House Reception and similar, the consultation appeared on the Your City, Your Say web-pages along with an electronic consultation response pro-forma.

Consultation responses were, however, few and proposed no alternative options for the Strategy. General suggestions and comments, as below, have prompted slight amendments to Strategy wording.

1.

From:	Pheasant, Jonathan	Sent:	Mon 20/10/2014 13:54
To:	Brown, Martin		
Cc:	Lee, Steven (D&CS); Waterhouse, Andrew; Clarke, Paul		
Subject:	Empty Homes Strategy consultation		

Martin

See below some comments on the Empty Homes Strategy consultation:

The Strategy title refers to PRIVATE SECTOR EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY but there is a bit of blurring about public/private in there. Should the distinction be set out in the intro for clarity? Perhaps explain that where there are private sector vacant homes they can be acquired by the Council, made good and contribute to affordable public sector housing by Derby homes etc?

Section 4 says in the initial bullets that bringing back empty homes into use can achieve a reduction in the need to build on greenfield sites. Although this is true it is limited. Vacancy is factored into forward housing requirement projections. Our overall housing requirements in the City are so great that we can't anywhere near meet projected needs so we have to do 'as much as we can in the city' including greenfield sites. Even if we brought back into use all of the long term vacants in the City our own strategy would still need to build on the same number of GF sites as it would without that happening. It would simply mean that we could rely less on Amber Valley and South Derbyshire meeting our (Derby City) housing needs in their areas. So while technically correct, that bullet is a bit misleading. This is a debate we regularly get into with local communities where they say 'why don't you bring housing back into use and build on BF sites instead?' The answer is we are doing that but needs are so great that we still have to build on all of the suitable and realistic GF sites we have. The projections are more about increasing the 'supply' of housing and although they are empty, vacant homes are already part of that supply.

Section 6 (bullets) similarly to the above, bringing back empty homes into use is not increasing the 'supply' of housing. The empty units are already in the supply, they are just vacant. Only if they are demolished or changed to another use are they lost from the supply. It does however increase opportunities for living in different types and sizes of housing in different locations around the City.

Section 6 – para 5 – This is a very important point to make. I think this should also be made earlier in the document (exec summary) where it is stated that there are 3,500 vacants. It's very important to stress that most of these are 'transactional vacancies' necessary for the normal market operation. The real key in the 1,600 long term vacants and they are the focus for the Council. This is important because lots of residents don't seem to understand this issue.

Section 7 – second para – is this 2009-14 Housing Strategy data on affordable need up to date? The 2013 Derby HMA Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update identifies that between 2012 and 2028 10,117 affordable homes will be required.

Section 7 bullets could refer to the Adopted City of Derby Local Plan Review and the Draft Derby City Local Plan Part 1 : Core Strategy

The CDLPR has a policy H14 supporting the re-use of underused buildings throughout the city for residential purposes.

The City Council's emerging Core Strategy has a policy to "continue to encourage the re-use of under utilised or vacant properties for residential uses, including empty homes and the upper floors of commercial properties within centres'

Hope that the above helps

Regards

Jon

Jonathan Pheasant | Senior Planning Officer, Planning and Property Services |
Neighbourhoods Directorate | Derby City Council, The Council House, Corporation Street,
Derby, DE1 2FS | Telephone 01332 642122 | Minicom 01332 640666 | www.derby.gov.uk

2.

From: Hayward, Lyndsay

Sent: 30 September 2014 10:56

To: Brown, Martin

Cc: Cobb, Linda

Subject: RE: consultation on proposed Housing Renewal policy and Empty Homes Strategy

Hi Martin,

Thanks for the opportunity to comment, I've had a look at both documents and made some notes below. These are my own observations/ideas not necessarily those of DASH.

Empty Homes Strategy (Draft)

The document comprehensively demonstrates the need for bringing empty houses back into use linking to regeneration, increased supply, affordable housing, crime reduction etc.... it could potentially go a step further and link these elements as part of the wider social determinants of health, thus also contextualising the strategy within the wider public health framework.

Document could also highlight renewal of empty properties and its contribution toward modernising the existing housing stock. Furthermore, increases and projected increased demand in the Private Rented Sector may also be relevant and worth highlighting.

A recent document by CIH highlighted these issues:

http://www.cih.org/resources/PDF/Policy%20free%20download%20pdfs/CIH014%20resolution_foundation_2.pdf

3.

If an empty property is in dis-repair or causes a social issue for the local community & the landlord has had been informed, then it would be right to pursue the issue & ensure the property is repaired & rented or sold. If the property is in good order, and the property owner does not wish to rent it out, pays council tax & all relevant bills - why should they be bullied into renting the property to tenants who are often on benefits/low wages/English is there second language & have no respect for the property?

Anonymous - from Your City Your Say consultation exercise

4.

My parents live on Maree Close in Sinfin, near to an empty property. The property was burgled and windows smashed regularly. My parents and I were worried for the safety of their own home as well as the general problems the empty property was causing in the area. Officers from the council kept my parents informed of progress through compulsory purchase and the property is now being renovated. I am very grateful that this action has been taken and support these actions completely.

Anonymous – from Your City Your Say consultation exercise

5.

Broadly, I agree strongly with the draft strategy. You may wish to include the full range of measures you will use to identify the correct owner of a property. Without that any attempts to take action will ultimately be frustrated (page 17)

In answer to the question 'is anything missing from the strategy'?

Partnership working with Council Tax, including widening the remit for undertaking Council Tax empty property inspections throughout the year, not just around NHB time.

DCC Employee – from Your City Your Say consultation exercise

6.

I think empty homes which have particular architectural attractiveness and are in severe danger of decay should be looked at urgently. Renovating these buildings would have a timely and significant positive impact on the local community. One example of this would be the large Victorian houses on

Osmaston road near the old hospital. If something isn't done about these buildings soon they will be beyond repair, yet they would make a very nice home for someone and rapidly improve the surrounding area leading to a positive upward spiral.

 Anonymous – from Your City Your Say consultation exercise
Derby City Council

Appendix 4

Equality impact assessment form

Directorate - Adults Health and Housing

Service area - Strategic Housing

**Name of policy, strategy, review or
function being assessed – Private Sector
Empty Homes Strategy 2015-2020**

Date of assessment – 13th October 2014

**Signed off by – Ian Fullagar, Head of
Strategic Housing Services – 13/11/14**

**Cabinet, Personnel Committee or Chief
Officer Group's decision – Accompanying
report to Cabinet January 2015**

Derby

Date published on website

Achieving

Equality impact assessment – please read this section first before you do the assessment

This is our equality impact assessment form to help you equality check what you are doing when you are about to produce a new policy, review an older one, write a strategy or plan or review your services and functions. In fact you need to do an equality impact assessment whenever a decision is needed that affects people and **before** that decision is made.

So why do we need to do equality impact assessments? Although the law does not require us to do them now, the courts still place significant weight on the existence of some form of documentary evidence of compliance with the **Public Sector Equality Duty** when determining judicial review cases. This method helps us to make our decisions fairly, taking into account any equality implications, so yes we still need to do them.

The Public Sector Equality Duty is part of the Equality Act 2010 and this Duty requires us as a public body to have ‘**due regard**’ to eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act. It requires us to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a ‘**relevant protected characteristic**’ and people who don’t.

Having ‘due regard’ means:

- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people
- encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where the participation is disproportionately low.

The protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

This completed form should be attached to any Chief Officer Group, Cabinet or Personnel Committee report to help elected members make their decisions by taking the equality implications into account. Equality impact assessments **must be done before** decisions are made. Include the Cabinet or Personnel Committee's decision on the front sheet when you know it.

You'll find that doing these assessments will help you to:

- understand your customers' and communities needs
- develop service improvements
- improve service satisfaction
- demonstrate that you have been fair and open and considered equality when working on re-structuring
- make sure you pay due regard to the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Don't do the form by yourself, get a small team together and make sure you include key people in the team such as representatives from our Diversity Forums and employee networks and you could invite trade union representatives too – the more knowledge around the table the better. You also need to decide how and who you will consult with to help inform the equality impact assessment. Our Lead on Equality and Diversity can help with useful contacts – we have a team of people who are used to doing these assessments and can help with information on barriers facing particular groups and remedies to overcome these barriers.

You'll need to pull together all the information you can about how what you are assessing affects different groups of people and then examine this information to check whether some people will be negatively or positively affected. Then you'll need to look at ways of lessening any negative effects or making the service more accessible – this is where your assessment team is very useful and you can also use the wider community.

Agree an equality action plan with your assessment team, setting targets for dealing with any negative effects or gaps in information you may have found. Set up a way of monitoring these actions to make sure they are done and include them in your service business plans.

When you have completed the assessment, get it signed by your Head of Service or Service Director and send it to our Lead on Equality and Diversity for checking and to

publish on our website. It is a public document so must not contain any jargon and be easy to understand.

Remember, we need to do these assessments as part of our everyday business, so we get our equality responsibilities right and stay within the law – Equality Act 2010.

Equality groups and protected characteristics

These are the equality groups of people we need to think about when we are doing equality impact assessments and these people can be our customers or our employees and job applicants...

- Age equality – the effects on younger and older people
- Disability equality – the effects on the whole range of disabled people, including Deaf people, hearing impaired people, visually impaired people, people with mental health issues, people with learning difficulties and people with physical impairments
- Gender reassignment – the effects on trans people
- Marriage and civil partnership equality
- Pregnancy and maternity equality - women who are pregnant or who have recently had a baby, including breast feeding mothers
- Race equality – the effects on minority ethnic communities, including newer communities, gypsies and travellers and the Roma community
- Religion and belief or non-belief equality – the effects on religious and cultural communities, customers and employees
- Sex equality – the effects on both men and women and boys and girls
- Sexual Orientation equality – the effects on lesbians, gay men and bisexual people

In addition, we have decided to look at the effects on families and people on low incomes too as we feel this is very important.

Contact for help

Ann Webster – Lead on Equality and Diversity

ann.webster@derby.gov.uk

Tel 01332 643722 Minicom 01332 640666 Mobile 07812 300079

The form

We use the term 'policy' as shorthand on this form for the full range of policies, practices, plans, reviews, activities and procedures.

Policies will usually fall into three main categories...

- Organisational policies and functions, such as recruitment, complaints procedures, re-structures
- Key decisions such as allocating funding to voluntary organisations, budget setting
- Policies that set criteria or guidelines for others to use, such as criteria about school admissions, procurement methods, disabled facilities grants, on street parking bays

If in doubt - do one! You never know when we may get a legal challenge and someone applies for Judicial Review.

What's the name of the policy you are assessing?

Private Sector Empty Homes Strategy 2015-2020

The assessment team

Team leader's name and job title – Martin Brown, Housing Initiatives Manager

Other team members invited through all Diversity Forum s.

Those attending:

Name	Job title	Organisation	Area of expertise
Janet Warner	Management member	Derby Fibromyalgia Support Group	Fibromyalgia; Mobility issues; Disability issues generally.
Pamela Thompson	Engagement Officer – Diverse Communities	DCC	Community engagement; Diversity
Safia Iqbal	Healthy Housing Officer	DCC	Healthy Housing; Private sector housing; Housing renewal
Tony Briggs	Empty Homes Manager	DCC	Empty Homes Services; Private sector housing market
Laura Dennis	Housing Strategy Development	DCC	Housing Strategy

	Officer		
Martin Brown	Housing Initiatives manager	DCC	Healthy Housing; Housing Enforcement; DASH Services; Empty Homes Services

Step 1 – setting the scene

Make sure you have clear aims and objectives on what you are impact assessing – this way you keep to the purpose of the assessment and are less likely to get side tracked.

- 1 What are the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy? How does it fit in with the wider aims of the Council and wider Derby Plan? Include here any links to the Council Plan, Derby Plan or your Directorate Service Plan.**

The Private Sector Empty Homes Strategy sets out the processes, initiatives and assistance that the Council will undertake to promote the renovation and reoccupation of long term empty private sector properties.

The Strategy supports the following commitments within the Council Plan:

- More private sector dwellings brought back into use or demolished.
- Continue to protect residents by tackling statutory nuisance and environmental crime.
- Provide good-quality housing across the city
- Increase the housing supply

The Strategy supports the following commitments within the Derby Plan 2011-2026

- A better built and natural environment
- More good quality and affordable housing
- Better mental health and well-being
- Less household carbon emissions

The Derby Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2011 states:

'Latest figures (March 2011) show there were 7,139 applicants on Derby's waiting list for social housing; 2,040 of which had a 'need for at least one extra bedroom'. Given this, it is frustrating that in January 2011 there were 4,247 empty properties in Derby, of which 1,959 had been empty for six months or longer.'

Derby City Council's Housing Strategy 2009-14 estimates a further 553 affordable units will be needed each year, over and above those units supplied through new build, and states:

...'It is clear that no matter how innovative development partners and the Council are in delivering additional new affordable homes, it will not be possible to meet this need through new build alone. It is essential therefore that the City makes best use of all of its housing resources including those that are privately rented, those that are under occupied and those that are empty.'

Tackling empty properties contributes to the regeneration of the City, reducing crime, ASB and urban blight. Additionally, the financial benefits, through new Homes Bonus and recovery of debt associated with empty homes, contributes favourably to the councils overall budgetary position.

2. Who delivers/will deliver the policy, including any consultation on it and any outside organisations who deliver under procurement arrangements?

The Strategy is owned by the Head of Strategic Housing Services and delivered by the Strategic Housing Division via the Empty Homes Service and Compulsory Purchase and Enforcement Programme

In partnership with several other council departments including Council Tax, Electoral Roll, Housing Standards Team and external organisations, including Derby Homes and other local Registered Providers.

The Strategic Housing Division is delivering the consultation on the Strategy, with support from Consultation Officers and Engagement Officers within the Strategic Services and Transformation Division.

The Empty Homes Service links in to the wider Housing Renewal Policy, but has a standalone strategy and EIA

3. Who are the main customers, users, partners, employees or groups affected by this proposal?

Empty Homes Service

Assistance, advice encouragement and the provision of incentives for all owners or potential owners of long term empty private sector property across the city. Service promoted widely, but all owners of empty residential property are proactively identified and contacted.

Tackling the waste of empty homes benefits neighbours and neighbourhoods affected by such properties through a reduction in crime, the fear of crime, local ASB, risk to local residents and emergency services and also helps address housing need in the city.

Partners include local Registered Providers and the Homes and Communities Agency

Compulsory Purchase and Enforcement Programme

Enforcement programme relating to owners of empty private sector property across the city, where owners have failed to co-operate with the Empty Homes Service and return their long term empty properties to occupation.

Tackling the waste of empty homes benefits neighbours and neighbourhoods affected by empty homes and helps address housing need in the city.

Step 2 – collecting information and assessing impact

- 4 Who have you consulted and engaged with so far about this policy, and what did they tell you? Who else do you plan to consult with? – tell us here how you did this consultation and how you made it accessible for the equality groups, such as accessible locations, interpreters and translations, accessible documents.**

Consultation plan developed with Consultation Officers within the Strategic Services and Transformation Division.

Wide spread dissemination in the form of information about the consultation and links to the documents on Your City, Your Say – with links to response questionnaires. Appearing on DCC website.

Coverage in In-touch to reach all DCC employees and Members.

Strategic Liaison Group – housing associations.

Diversity forums.

Email alert with background information and link to the Strategy and consultation response questionnaire sent to many partners and contacts across local authority and health services, 3rd sector (such as JET), libraries, CH Reception, newsletters, Information and Advice Forum, and so on ...with encouragement to cascade further using their own mailing lists.

Requested DCC Twitter and Facebook coverage.

Consultation response questionnaire available for on-line completion or hardcopy submission.

Access to translation and interpretation services is available; and these are used as required.

Information, communications, etc. can be made available in other languages, formats or hard-copy on request. For example, our Strategy states:

We can give you this information in any other way, style or language that will help you access it.
Please contact us on 01332 640319 Minicom 01332 640666.

Polish

Aby ułatwić Państwu dostęp do tych informacji, możemy je Państwu przekazać w innym formacie, stylu lub języku.
 Prosimy o kontakt: 01332 . 640319 . Tel. tekstowy: 01332 .. 640666

Punjabi

ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਹੋਰ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਨਾਲ, ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਬੋਲੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਦੇ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਜਿਹੜੀ ਇਸ ਤੱਥ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੋਵੇ। ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ 01332 640319 ਮਿਨੀਕਮ 01332 640666 ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Urdu

یہ معلومات ہم آپ کو کسی دیگر ایسے طریقے، انداز اور زبان میں بھیج سکتے ہیں جو اس تک رسائی میں آپ کی مدد کرے۔ براہ کرم 01332 640319 منی کام 01332 640666 سے رابطہ کریں۔

- 5 Using the skills and knowledge in your assessment team, and from any consultation you have done, what do you already know about the equality impact of the policy on particular groups? Also, use any other information you know about such as any customer feedback, surveys, national research or data. Indicate by a tick for each equality group whether this is a negative impact, a positive one or if you are not sure

Equality groups	What do you already know?	No impact	Positive impact	Negative impact	Not sure
Age	Programme applies across all ages, but clients taking advantage of incentives tend to be in the 30 - 55 age range	x	x		
Disability	empty homes are bought by compulsory purchase and made into useable housing stock then opportunities exist for making them more accessible for disabled people .	x	x		
Gender reassignment - trans	No specific impacts, and able to benefit where fit criteria for programmes offered.	x	x		
Marriage and civil partnership	No specific impacts, and able to benefit where fit criteria for programme offered.	x	x		
Pregnancy and maternity	No specific impacts, and able to benefit where fit criteria for programme offered.	x	x		
Race	No specific impacts, and	x	x		

	able to benefit where fit criteria for programmes offered. Though in general, the worst housing tends to be in areas with higher BME population, level of deprivation and relatively greater level of need – so programmes that improve housing condition do tend to have a higher focus on these areas.				
Religion or belief or none	No specific impacts, and able to benefit where fit criteria for programmes offered.	x	x		
Sex	No specific impacts, and able to benefit where fit criteria for programmes offered.	x	x		
Sexual Orientation	No specific impacts, and able to benefit where fit criteria for programmes offered.	x	x		
Families and people on low income	No specific impact, but the provision of additional, good quality housing increases housing choice for all	x	x		

Important - For any of the equality groups you don't have any information about, then make it an equality action at the end of this assessment to find out. This doesn't mean that you can't complete the assessment without the information, but you need to follow up the action and if necessary, review the assessment

later. You can get lots of information on reports done from organisations' websites such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Stonewall, Press for Change, Joseph Rowntree Trust and so on. Please don't put down that the impact affects 'everyone the same' – it never does!

6 From the information you have collected, how are you going to lessen any negative impact on any of the equality groups? How are you going to fill any gaps in information you have discovered?

The Empty Homes Service has assisted many different types of people in different situations. These include bereaved relatives with no knowledge of the probate process who either wish to sell or renovate a property that has become vacant due to the death of a friend or relative. We have worked with individuals with mental health issues, including hoarding and agoraphobia, in order to resolve issues arising from empty properties to the benefit of all parties. Each empty homes case is unique and it is our aim to ensure that the service we offer is inclusive to all.

Day-to-day experience shows that, for all groups, but particularly older people, the general national shift of information and services to digital on-line can exclude from service take-up. Our services will, within the capacity of resource availability, ensure that hard-copy and other options remain available

Age, Disability, Gender, marriage, sex, sexuality, religion – programmes are gender, marriage, sex, sexuality neutral.

Race – in general, the worst housing tends to be in areas with higher BME population, level of deprivation and relatively greater level of need. The incentives and initiatives we offer, as well as enforcement interventions are therefore most likely to be targeted in these areas as the number of empty properties is likely to be higher. This is confirmed by the 'heat maps' accompanying this EIA that demonstrate the location of empty properties and the relative incidences of Empty Homes Service interventions across the City.

Step 3 – deciding on the outcome

7 What outcome does this assessment suggest you take? – You might find more than one applies. Please also tell us why you have come to this decision?

Outcome 1	x	No major change needed – the EIA hasn't identified any potential for discrimination or negative impact and all opportunities to advance equality have been taken
Outcome 2		Adjust the policy to remove barriers identified by the EIA or better advance equality. Are you satisfied that the proposed adjustments will remove the barriers you identified?
Outcome 3		Continue the policy despite potential for negative impact or missed opportunities to advance equality identified. You will need to make sure the EIA clearly sets out the justifications for continuing with it. You need to consider whether there are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sufficient plans to stop or minimise the negative impact • mitigating actions for any remaining negative impacts • plans to monitor the actual impact.
Outcome 4		Stop and rethink the policy when the EIA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination

Our Assessment team has agreed Outcome number(s)

<p>Outcome 1</p>

Why did you come to this decision?

<p>No EIA adjustments to the Strategy considered necessary by the panel</p>
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If you have decided on **Outcome 3**, then please tell us here the justification for continuing with the policy. You also need to make sure that there are actions in the Equality Action Plan to lessen the effect of the negative impact. This is really important and may face a legal challenge in the future.

If you have decided on **Outcome 4** then if the proposal continues, without any mitigating actions, it may be likely that we will face a legal challenge and possibly a Judicial Review on the process - it is really important that the equality impact assessment is done thoroughly, as this is what the Judge will consider.

Step 4 – equality action plan – setting targets and monitoring

- 8** Fill in the table (on the next page) with the equality actions you have come up with during the assessment. Indicate how you plan to monitor the equality impact of the proposals, once they have been implemented.

Equality action plan – setting targets and monitoring

What are we going to do to advance equality?	How are we going to do it?	When will we do it?	What difference will this make?	Lead officer	Monitoring arrangements
Further develop links with Healthy Housing Hub and other agencies offering support to vulnerable people to identify cases where joint working could achieve the desired goal	Publicise partnership working with HHH and others where Empty Homes Loan allows reoccupation of home. Maintain close contact with HHH and associated agencies to identify additional opportunities	ongoing	Increase awareness of the availability of our services across those disciplines in direct contact with vulnerable clients	Ian Fullagar	
Work to ensure that, for all groups, but particularly older people, the general national shift of information and services to digital on-line does not exclude from our service take-up.	Ensure that hard-copy and other options remain available	ongoing	Increase awareness of services and take-up of services by those members of the target group which do not have access to or cannot readily make use of digital on-line services.	Ian Fullagar	
Regularly review intervention mapping to maintain understanding and awareness of ward	Six monthly review by Empty Homes Manager	ongoing	Will maintain an understanding and awareness of ward by ward focus of activity – and enable	Tony Briggs	

by ward focus of activity.			any adjustments necessary to be identified at an early stage.		
Where houses are bought through compulsory purchase take every opportunity to make them more accessible for disabled people	Design disability equality into refurbishment of empty homes	ongoing	More homes for disabled people to access whether as a householder or as a visitor		

Make sure you include these actions in your Directorate service business plans.

Highlights from delivery of the 2012-2015 Empty Homes Strategy

Just a few highlights from delivery of the 2012-2015 Empty Homes Strategy to date

- In excess of 600 properties returned to use with the help of the Empty Homes Service
- The overall number of empty properties has reduced from 4000 in 2010 to 3400 in 2014. The number of properties empty for 10 years or more has reduced from 238 in 2010 to 46 in 2014.
- Total New Homes Bonus earned as a result of the reduction in the number of long term empty properties surpassed £4.8m
- In excess of £200,000 of debt associated with empty homes has been recovered as a direct result of the sole intervention of the empty homes service. We have assisted in the recovery of a further several hundred thousand pounds when working with other departments, often taking the lead on the debt recovery process.
- In excess of £650,000 loaned through Empty Homes Assistance to facilitate the renovation and reoccupation of long term empty homes. The loans are fully repayable and recyclable
- Successful use of Enforced Sale powers to recover outstanding council tax debts
- Successfully bid for and delivered HCA 'Empty Homes round 1' funding
- Encouraged, facilitated and assisted with the bidding for HCA 'empty homes' funding on behalf of several Registered Providers. This led to the delivery of in excess of 70 units of affordable housing in Derby from previously empty properties, with an estimated grant income of £500,000.
- Empty Homes Manager named 'National Empty Homes Practitioner of the Year 2013' by the Empty Homes Network - the country's foremost empty homes practitioner group.
- Empty Homes Service highly commended in the 'Team of the Year' category at the 2014 Derby City Council VIP awards.
- Empty Homes Manager highly commended in the 'Employee of the Year' category at the 2014 Derby City Council VIP awards