

NON EXEMPT

HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

25th March 2020

Report No. HBC/004/2020

**Empty Homes Strategy
Sam Ings**

RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET

**Portfolio: Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Quality
Cllr Narinder Bains**

Head of Service: Natalie Meagher

Key Decision: No

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1. This report is submitted to Cabinet for policy decision.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1. Cabinet is recommended to approve the Empty Homes Strategy.

3.0 Executive Summary

3.1. Empty homes are a wasted resource and can have a detrimental impact on neighbourhoods and the environment, as they can become an eyesore that may also cause problems for neighbours. Empty homes can quickly fall into disrepair and become magnets for antisocial behaviour and vandalism.

With affordable housing and land in short supply in Havant it is necessary to ensure that empty homes do not remain empty unnecessarily and fall into misuse and dereliction.

3.2. The intention of this Strategy is to outline the council's approach to the issue of empty homes, and provide focus as to how we will dedicate our resource.

3.3. The council is keen to avoid enforcement action and prefers to work with responsible property owners to rectify issues relating to their properties without the need for formal action, however enforcement action will be used where necessary.

3.4. This Strategy is designed to link in with and compliment the Council Tax Empty Homes Premium, and the council's Homelessness Strategy.

4.0 Additional Budgetary Implications

4.1. None

5.0 Background and relationship to the Corporate Strategy and Directorate Business Plan/s

5.1. There is an increasing pressure to provide affordable housing in the district, and for the council to pursue the best use of all existing properties within the district.

5.2. As of September 2019, the number of homes that have been empty for between 6 months and 2 years in Havant is 140. The number of homes that have been empty for 2 years or more is 97.

5.3. In early 2020 the council agreed to a new 'Council Tax Empty Homes Premium' to be implemented from 1 April 2020. This would involve 100% premium in addition to the full council tax charge for each dwelling unoccupied and unfurnished between two and five years, and 200% premium for dwellings unoccupied for more than five years.

6.0 Options considered and reasons for the recommendation

6.1. There is no obligation for the council to create an Empty Homes Strategy, however along with the Council Tax Empty Homes Premium forms the councils approach to Empty Homes, and provides the base formal action if and when it becomes necessary.

7.0 Resource Implications

7.1. Financial Implications - None

7.2. Human Resources Implications - None

7.3. Information Governance Implications - None

8.0 Legal Implications

8.1. A small increase in formal enforcement may require extra support from legal services, however this would be achieved through existing resources.

9.0 Risks

9.1. None

10.0 Consultation

10.1. No consultation required.

11.0 Communication

11.1. The Private Sector Housing Team will be communicating with the owners of empty properties as per the attached action plan.

12.0 Appendices: Empty Homes Strategy
Empty Homes Action Plan

13.0 Background Papers: None

Agreed and signed off by:

Monitoring Officer: 16th March 2020

S151 Officer:

Head of Service: 10th March 2020

Portfolio Holder: 6th March 2020

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