

Empty Homes Review

Samantha Selby
(Project Manager)



Your council working for you

Why do an empty homes review?

- We have a significant number of empty properties that are classed as being empty for 6 months and over within the district
- Results in lack of capacity in housing market
- Has an impact on homelessness, and the sizes of houses available
- Can be a cause of anti-social behaviour
- Can be a blight to neighbourhoods

How will we do the review?

- We are working with a specialised company to undertake the review
- Regular data is extracted from our Council Tax database and sent to specialised company
- They will research the properties by carrying out
 - occupancy validation,
 - occupancy reviews,
 - inspections to survey occupancy status and
 - maintain our council tax database with updates on occupancy status

What happens then?

- Some properties may be found to be occupied already
- Private Landlords/owners will be signposted to apply for financial assistance in order to help them bring the property back into residential use currently up to £3,000 (there is a draft proposal out for consultation to increase the grant up to £5,000 this is due to be approved by Cabinet on 5 August, an additional “repayment condition if sold within 5 years” has also be included)
- Strict criteria is applied in the process of approving the grant
- Result in properties be let to a decent homes standard and rents to be no higher than the Local Housing Allowance Rates for a period of 3 years

How do we benefit?

Customer

- Improved neighbourhoods: create less of an eyesore for surrounding properties
- Increase of available rented properties at a affordable rental rate
- Improved properties that meet Decent Homes Standard

SKDC

- Reduction in housing waiting list
- Reduce homelessness
- Increase of available rented properties
- Reduced reports of anti-social behaviour
- Increase in Council Tax base where properties are found to be in occupation or able to be brought back to a residential state
- Increase in new homes bonus

Update on progress made to date

- We have begun the occupancy validation and reviewing of unoccupied properties from database extraction supplied (this part of the process started at the beginning of June)
- 29 properties identified so far
- Project team meet once a month to review progress and to identify if more SKDC communication is required

Further questions?

- Review is due to be complete by March 2014
- Further questions to the project team
- Council Tax information: Jeanette Strutt on ex 6253
- Private Sector Rental Standards: AnneMarie Coulthard on ex 6319
- Communications Team: Ed Palmer on ex 6453

