

Rother District Council

Report to	-	Cabinet
Date	-	10 February 2020
Report of the	-	Executive Directors
Subject	-	Draft Empty Homes Action Plan

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 27 January 2020, considered a report on the Draft Empty Homes Action Plan. The recommendation and minute arising is reproduced below.

Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED:** That the draft Empty Homes Action Plan 2020-24 attached at Appendix A to the Overview and Scrutiny report, be approved, subject to liaison with interested parties, such as letting agents and landlords, including social landlords.

OSC19/50. **DRAFT EMPTY HOMES ACTION PLAN**

Members considered the report of the Executive Director which gave details of the proposed Empty Homes Action Plan, setting out a number of methods for bringing into use empty homes. The action plan was to be implemented in 2020 and detailed how action would be taken against at least five empty properties per year. In reality, this number was likely to be higher through a combination of the impact of the increase in Council Tax and publicity given to the action plan. The plan was required in accordance with the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy.

There were 173 properties that had been empty for two years or more within the Rother District, the largest number of which were found in Bexhill-on-Sea, followed by Rye Foreign, Camber and Rye. This figure did not include the numbers of E Exemptions or Deleted Properties.

The overall aim of the Empty Homes Action Plan was to bring long term empty homes back into use, including: identifying long term empty homes; providing support for empty home owners; taking action against empty property owners; and raising awareness.

The action plan would concentrate on properties within areas of the district that had the greatest housing demand and properties with one to three bedrooms, as these had been identified as being highest in demand to meet the needs of the population. Prioritisation for any intervention and action would be directed to this size of property, but larger properties would not be excluded if there was development potential and this was beneficial for the local area.

In addition to the four areas identified there was also a need for temporary accommodation (TA) within Bexhill and Rye. Families displaced often wanted to remain in areas they had already established

links with for the purpose of accessing employment, schools, family and relative support.

Action would therefore be focused on Bexhill and Rye, where there were a larger number of empty properties, housing need was greater and there was a demand for TA.

(Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda Item 10).

Dr Anthony Leonard
Executive Director