

## OPTIONS TO ASSIST BRINGING EMPTY PROPERTIES INTO USE AND THE RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

### APPENDIX A

OPTION	Type of property targeted	No. Likely to be brought into use per annum	Resource Implications		Contribution to BVPI 64	Risks	Impact for other service areas
			Revenue	Staff Days P/A			
<b>PUBLICITY:</b> Letters to owners of all properties empty for over 6 months. Leaflets and posters Articles / displays	All empty properties	Impossible to monitor the direct impact of publicity only – It will assist in the success of other initiatives	Costs in printing leaflets say £100	Production of leaflets / articles/ promotions and general admin  14 days	None Publicity alone does not count towards the indicator.	<b>Benefits</b> cheap; reaches all residents and owners; positive message to the community <b>Risk</b> none	None
<b>EFDC WEBSITE:</b> Provide an updated list of empties with a link to the Land Registry Dept	All empty properties. Allows the public access to information on known empties so that they may approach the owner directly.	Not quantifiable.	None	2 days to create website and update every 6 months	None As above	<b>Benefits</b> with periodic updates it runs itself <b>Risk</b> that information exposes empty properties for squatting	I.T.Services
<b>LETTING AGENTS:</b> Producing a data base of information re letting agents to distribute to interested owners	All empty properties	Not quantifiable.	None	3 days	None As above	<b>Benefits</b> simple to administer <b>Risks</b> none	None

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<b>REMOVAL OF DISCOUNT ON COUNCIL TAX</b>	At discretion of the LA E.g. properties left empty > 12 months  <b>NB:</b> Maybe reduction to 10% discount rather than complete removal.	Not quantifiable.	System modifications and new stationery.	None for Env. Services but implications for Finance Services	None As above	<b>Benefits</b> no longer a financial incentive to leave a property empty. Sends out a consistent message <b>Risk</b> Financial cost to administer and increased revenue cannot be retained by the LA. May lead to under-reporting / counting of properties.	Finance Services Council Tax
<b>EMPTY PROPERTY GRANT</b>	Detail of grant dependent on results of house condition survey E.g. >12 months empty & requiring major works to Decent Home Standard	5	E.g. £100,000 from single capital pot (additional to existing grant budget for DFG's etc.)	10 days per grant	5	<b>Benefits</b> grant targeted to suit EFDC policies and targets  <b>Risks</b> poor take up if inadequate publicity / targeting / interest from owners / abortive work on some	Housing Services in allocation of nominated tenants if this forms part of the grant conditions

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<p><b>PRIVATE SECTOR LEASING SCHEME:</b> Utilising the existing Fresh START scheme set up with East Thames Housing Association</p>	<p>Those properties of type and location in particular housing demand</p> <p>May lead to formal action through an EDMO</p>	6 - 10	There will be costs to this scheme – to be investigated further.	Approximately 2 days in liaison.	6-10	<p><b>Benefits</b> PSL is already set up by Housing Services.</p> <p><b>Risks</b> Poor take up if suitable properties not available or owners not interested ETHA may be reluctant to take properties requiring major works.</p>	Housing Services in the allocation of nominated tenants
<p><b>LCB SUB REGIONAL BID:</b> Approx. £350,000per annum for 2 years</p>	Problematic long term properties in disrepair	10	None If successful this is a non- repayable grant.	56 days to set up. Thereafter 5 days per annum for 2 years	10	<p><b>Benefits</b> A non-repayable grant targeting properties in poor condition and likely source of complaint. Properties will be brought to the Decent Homes Standard.</p> <p><b>Risks</b> target may not be met if poor interest</p>	Housing Services in the allocation of nominated tenants

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<b>FINDERS FEE SCHEME:</b>	Properties requiring only minor works; suitable for letting to single non-priority homeless	Poss. 5 but depends directly on funding	£1000 single payment to landlord £5000 for 5 properties	None for Env. Services but implications for Housing Services	5	<p><b>Benefits</b> targeted at non priority homeless; should be reasonably simple to administer</p> <p><b>Risks</b> £1000 may not be a large enough incentive to landlords. Some LA's offer additional landlord insurance schemes at reduced premium. It may target small scale landlords who are unaware of their contractual responsibilities</p>	Housing would be most appropriate Service area to administer the scheme including the processing of Housing Benefit Claims

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<b>DEPOSIT GUARANTEE SCHEME:</b>	Properties requiring only minor works; suitable for letting to single non-priority homeless	Estimate 5-10	Existing scheme is funded by £40,000 lottery funding.	None for Env. Services but implications for Housing Services	5-10	<p><b>Benefits</b> targeted at non priority homeless; should be reasonably simple to administer</p> <p><b>Risks</b> May not be a large enough incentive to Landlord especially if property requires work to bring it to lettable condition.</p>	Existing scheme administered by Housing Services.
<b>ENFORCED SALE:</b>	Problematic long term empty that has incurred a debt as a local land charge	Maximum one n/a to our current known empties	Council never takes ownership therefore no budget implications. Council can recover all associated costs No compensation payable to owner	20	1	<p><b>Benefits</b> cheaper and quicker process than CPO. Deals with worst cases</p> <p><b>Risks</b> none</p>	Legal Services

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<b>EMPTY DWELLING MANAGEMENT ORDERS (EDMO):</b>	Long term empty suitable for Private Sector Leasing. Comes into force April 2006	Only realistically workable if PSL scheme is in place for RSL to take on management	Budget allocation to carry out essential works poss. £20000 per property. Compensation may be payable to the owner- LA can claim back from any surplus rent	Officer time to set up the scheme approx. 30 days To administer thereafter 2/3 days per property.	Likely none for two years. Possibly 2 p/a thereafter.	<p><b>Benefits</b> provides a back up to voluntary leasing and an alternative to enforcement</p> <p><b>Risks</b> If property requires major works it may not be possible to recover costs within the 7-year lease period. Owner retains the right to sell the property at any time.</p>	<p>Housing Services in the allocation of nominated tenants</p> <p>Management of property taken on by the preferred RSL.</p>

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<b>CPO:</b>	Problematic long-term empty e.g. run down, squatters, nuisance. All other options to bring property back into use have been exhausted	Maximum one due to capital & revenue implications	Requires a budget allocation from the single capital pot to purchase property- approx. £300,000. If the property is sold on within 3 years, 90+% of monies can be returned to the capital programme. Costs in engaging consultants- up to £2000. Compensation costs to owner- poss. £20,000. CPO procedure- up to £6000	35	1	<b>Benefits</b> last sanction measure where all other options have failed. Deals with the worst cases and sends a strong message of commitment to addressing empty properties <b>Risks</b> Council takes on full liability for property until it is sold Risk that the property cannot be sold on or that it cannot be sold at market value	Legal Services