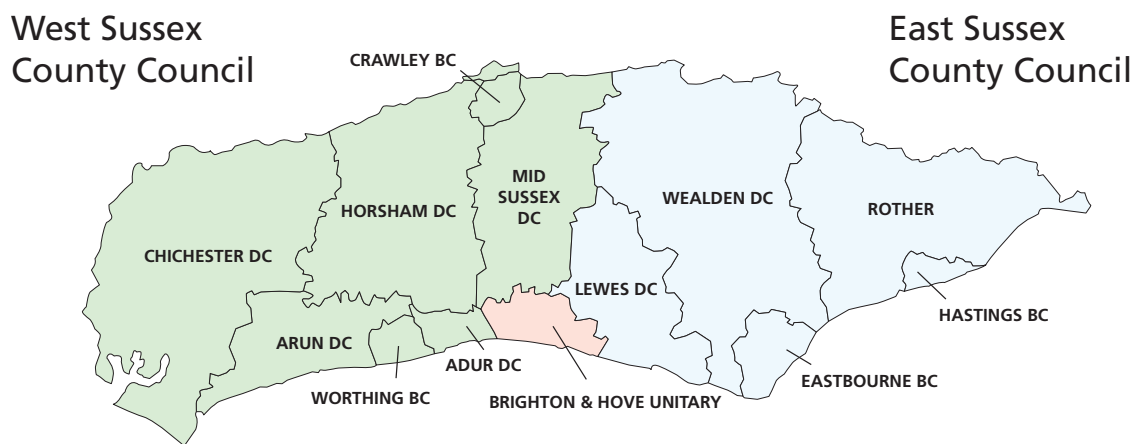


Tackling Empty Homes in Sussex



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Sussex Empty Homes Forum Strategic Framework 2008 - 2011

6,723 privately owned homes were reported as being empty for more than 6 months across Sussex in 2007*. Councils in Sussex believe that empty homes are not a 'stand alone' issue and the condition or use of a house can greatly affect the local area and most of all they are a wasted home. Every empty home brought back into use is another home for someone; whether it is a private buyer or a tenant.

The thirteen local authorities that make up East and West Sussex and Brighton & Hove may differ widely but have shared aims when it comes to privately owned empty homes. Empty Homes Officers in each authority work to bring them back into use by offering help and advice to the owner. Grant funding is available from some authorities, and as last resort, councils can use enforcement options. The local authorities in East and West Sussex work together through the Sussex Empty Homes Forum with wider membership including the County Councils, The Housing Corporation, The Empty Homes Agency and National Association of Empty Property Practitioners.

The Forum provides a strategic framework for a co-ordinated approach to empty homes work. It complements individual council's strategies to deal with privately owned empty homes. Brighton & Hove City Council and authorities in East Sussex also work to a sub-regional target through the BEST programme of Private Sector Renewal Funding.

*Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix 2007

For further information about the SEHF, and the work under this strategy contact:

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Strategic Framework 2008-2011

Objectives

Making the best use of Resources

Consistency and Partnership

Sharing knowledge and best practice to increase performance

Actions

- Devise and adopt a Sussex-wide performance measure for empty property
- Collate quarterly performance figures based around this measure
- Hold two Good Practice workshops each year
- Create a sub-group to facilitate spend of the £1.8 million awarded to Brighton & Hove and East Sussex to spend on Empty Homes under the BEST programme; working with the BEST Working Group as appropriate
- Launch this Strategic Framework and hold other awareness events throughout the region
- Participate in national organisations and campaigns relating to empty property
- Produce and adopt a protocol for Freedom of Information Act queries in the region
- Have a standing agenda item of Equalities and Human Rights to consider the implications of empty property work in a wider light
- To encourage and develop additional cross-boundary working between authorities including Sussex-wide publicity and other initiatives



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