

What can the Council do?

The Council will encourage owners to bring their homes back into use. Solutions being offered are centered around assistance and enforcement.

Assistance

- Offer help and advice.
- Assistance to become a landlord.
- Help new and existing landlords find suitable tenants.
- Introduction to managing agencies.
- Help with financial assistance depending on circumstances & when loans or grants are available.
- Assist with procurement of work and repairs.

Enforcement

- Serving repair and improvement notices under Housing, & other legislation.
- Enforced sale of a dwelling.
- Repairs or 'works in default' & recovery of costs where an owner fails to arrange repairs themselves.
- Empty Dwelling Management Orders or Agreements.
- Compulsory Purchase Orders.



For further advice please contact:

Empty Homes Officer
Private Sector Housing Team
Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue
Southend-on-Sea, Essex. SS2 6ER

Phone: 01702 215002

Web: www.southend.gov.uk/emptyhomes

Email: council@southend.gov.uk



Private Sector Housing EMPTY HOMES

What constitutes an empty home?

Any domestic empty property can be investigated and acted upon.

However, the main focus of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council's (the Council's) attention will be on properties which have been empty for more than two years as there are specific enforcement powers available for properties which have fallen empty long term.



Bringing empty dwellings back into use

Empty dwellings can soon start to cause problems in the community, especially if they are allowed to go into disrepair.

Empties have the potential to:

- Attract crime.
- Attract anti-social behaviour.
- Become a venue for fly-tipping.
- Attract vermin.
- Become 'eye sores' and blight individuals & communities.
- Reduce the value of neighbouring properties.

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council has a full time Empty Homes Officer working within the Private Sector Housing Team whose primary objective is to bring empty homes back in to use.



Realising the Potential

Privately owned empty homes are a wasted resource and where possible and practicable, the Council will assist with bringing them back into use.

There are a number of benefits for owners who decide to bring empty dwellings back into use including;

- Increased capital value of the property.
- Increased sales potential.
- Rental income.
- Reduced risk of vandalism & squatting.
- Avoidance of the 150% Council Tax Premium where a property is empty for 2 years or longer.



The Council's Empty Homes Strategy can be downloaded from our website at: www.southend.gov.uk/emptyhomes

What can the owner of the empty dwelling do?

Each empty dwelling will require its own solution. Owners are encouraged to work with the Empty Homes Officer to develop the most appropriate solution for their circumstance. Some simple suggestions include:

- Live in the dwelling themselves.
- Sell the property.
- Let the dwelling, either privately or through a letting agent.
- Enter into an Empty Dwelling Management Agreement whereby the Council leases the property from the owner for a fixed term, for example 3 - 7 years.

The Council would prefer to bring a dwelling back into use through a negotiated process and provision of support and incentives. However, if the owner does not engage with the Council and they continue to leave the dwelling empty, the Council will give consideration to the use of enforcement powers.