

Empty Homes Consultation analysis

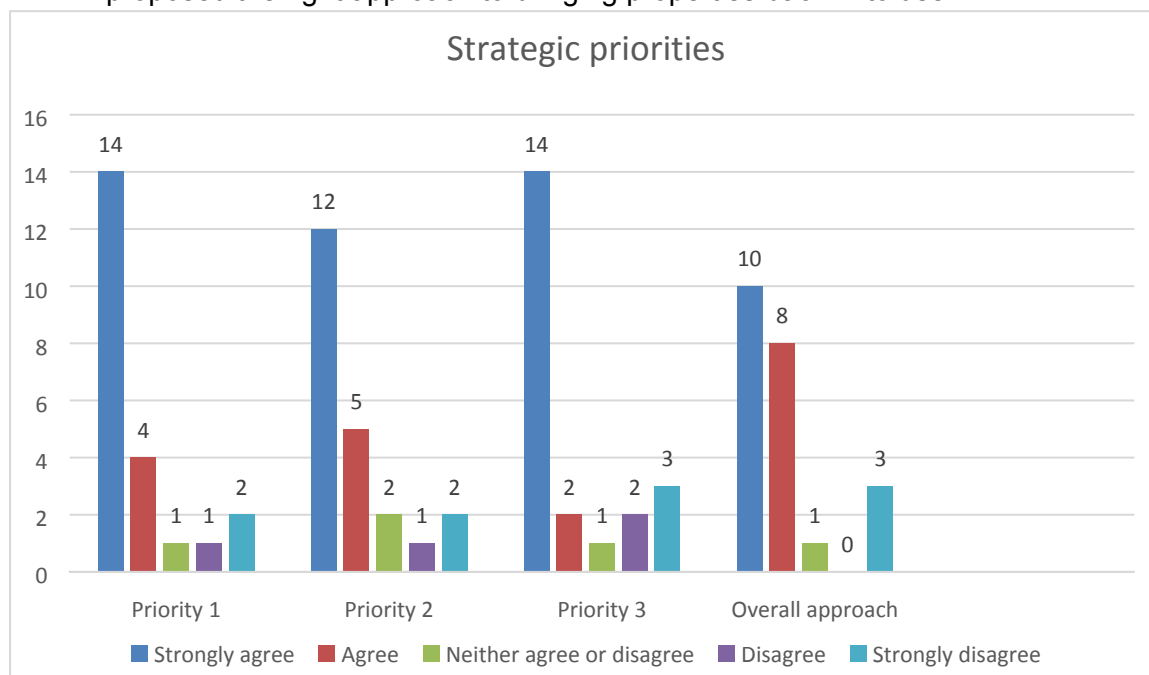
The consultation was open 02/09/22 – 02/10/22 on Engagement HQ. The page received 248 visits and 78 downloads of the plan. In total 22 people responded.

Outcome

The first question asked if respondents are aware of any empty homes in the borough and to provide information if they answered yes. The response was 40% yes (9) and 4 specific addresses were provided and are being investigated. One person that knew of an empty property strongly disagreed with the Council intervening and stated 'absolutely not' when asked to provide an address.

Respondents were asked to confirm if they supported the strategic priorities identified in the plan:

1. Assisting empty home owners by providing advice
2. Assisting empty home owners by providing support and incentives
3. Taking enforcement action against empty home owners when all other options are exhausted
4. Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree that Woking Borough Council has proposed the right approach to bringing properties back in to use?



The responses overwhelmingly supported the proposed approach to bringing empty homes back in to use with 78% (69 out of 88) combined choosing either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree' with the priorities.

Comments

Respondents were invited to make any further relevant comments which are listed below. The first comment is redacted to remove an address:

Surely the fact that it is furnished is only relevant in the short term, both the properties in xxxxxx are furnished but xxxx has been unoccupied for decades. Also, I accept that a property where the owner is in care is more challenging however if the state of the property has seriously deteriorated then the owner should be forced to sell or make the appropriate repairs especially if the property is attached or terraced as xxxx ls.

Any property that is bought and left empty should be used- the owner of 20 had another property for many years which sat empty until the council got involved

It's a very fine line between why it is empty and putting it back into use. Anything that can be done to help is worth it.

If home owners have empty properties they should be made to either sell them or relinquish them and new buyers should be given assistance to bring them back up to living standard but they should be for living in and not buy to let!

We are a family of 6 living in a 2 bed council property in Woking, we are entitled to a 4 bed but have been told we may have to wait years, if the council could utilise empty homes especially larger ones for families such as mine, I would wholeheartedly support their proposals!!

Enforcement would help the housing crisis.

The exceptions regarding this are inexhaustible. What if I leave my home for more than 6 months to care for a relative in another country? What if I travel for as long as I want to in my retirement? What if a deceased estate cannot locate heirs? What if in the case of a probate the government itself is causing the delay? You do not have the right to decide what is acceptable or not, it goes against English property ownership principles!!! If a home is abandoned and has outstanding Council tax then you may have a weak case because you would have to prove abandonment, but otherwise never.

It is a good idea to help bring empty properties back into use but it should not end up with enforcement action against the owner(s).

There should be no empty properties sitting in our Borough when there is such a high need

END