

APPENDIX B – SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Public consultation on the draft Empty Homes Strategy began on the 03 June and closed on 17 July 2023 (a period of 6 weeks). An online survey was used to gather feedback from local residents.

The following summarises the feedback received, based on the questions in the online survey.

Do you agree with Objective one?

- 94% answered yes
- 6% responded no

Is this the right approach to address Objective one?

- 86% answered yes
- 9% said no
- 4% responded that they don't know

Q3: If not, please tell us why

Key themes:	Comments:
Why is it a concern of a Council why a property is occupied or not and who lives there?	3
It's not fair to charge excess council tax when owners aren't using services.	3
What about special circumstances where the property has been left unoccupied?	2

Do you have any further ideas or comments that could support objective one?

Key themes:	Comments:
There needs to be flexibility through open dialogue and communication. There must be options for special circumstances for individual cases.	8
Owners should also be responsible for keeping the surroundings in good order.	5

Q5: Do you agree with Objective two?

- 92% responded yes
- 8% said no

Q6: If not, please tell us why

Key themes:	Comments:
A heavy-handed approach	3
Owners should have the right to keep their property unoccupied so long as they maintain its state.	1
Fails to understand the reasons for a property being empty.	1

Q7: Is this the right approach to address objective two?

- 76% said yes
- 14% responded no
- 11% answered don't know

Q8: Do you have any further ideas or comments that could support objective two?

Key themes:	Comments:
Homes that pose a risk to others or are an eyesore or environmental hazard need to be dealt with.	5
Any costs must be re-reimbursed to the Council as the pressure on their funds.	3
Each case should have a cost / benefit analysis of actions to be taken.	3
Obviously, this is a last resort however all options in Objective One need to be exhausted before proceeding to Objective Two.	2

Q9: To what extent do you agree that this strategy reflects the needs of the Borough?

- 81% responded positively with either 'agreed or strongly agreed'.
- 9% of respondents 'neither agreed nor disagreed'.
- 9% stated they either 'disagreed or strongly disagreed'.

Q10: Overall, was the strategy clear and easy to understand?

- 93% responded yes
- 4% answered don't know
- 3% stated no

Q11: Do you have any further comments to make on the Empty Homes Strategy?

Key themes:	Comments:
The current incidence of empty properties in the borough raises the question as to whether it requires this amount of council expense.	7
The objectives and approach seem worthy/reasonable/fair.	6
Make options available to manage each circumstance differently	3