

Wiltshire Council

Council

8 November 2011

Notice of motion No. 26 – Empty Homes in Wiltshire

To consider the following motion submitted by Cllrs Howard Marshall (Calne Central Division) and Brian Dalton (Salisbury Harnham Division)

1. 'That this Council recognises the acute demand for housing in Wiltshire, given the 16,245 persons on the waiting list for social housing, as well as the need for growth and development.
2. Council recognises that of the 16,245 applicants seeking social housing in Wiltshire, 4,022 are currently identified as Gold or Platinum banding applicants, who are in urgent need of housing or re-housing due to threats of violence, urgent medical needs, severe overcrowding, and other similar problems.
3. Council further acknowledges that the cost of providing emergency accommodation can be disproportionate to the cost of providing good-quality social housing. (FOI request has been submitted, more info on costs soon).
4. Council regrets that there are currently in excess of 5,000 empty homes in Wiltshire, of which 1,751 are long term empty homes, and calls on the executive to prioritise the appointment of an empty homes officer. Council recognises the cost of making an empty home habitable is usually significantly less than building a new home from scratch.
5. Council recognises that neighbouring local authorities have had success with Empty Homes Officers, including Bristol City Council, which has brought over 250 long term empty homes back to the market in the last 6 months, compared to Wiltshire's 79 homes brought back to market in the last year.
6. Council therefore calls for the immediate appointment of an Empty Homes Officer, for which funding has already been allocated, to ensure that unused houses are brought back into the market as soon as possible'.