

## Press Cutting

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# Bristol copies Kent's clever resi regeneration scheme

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### **Bristol City Council has adopted a system piloted by Kent County Council to bring empty homes back into use**

Bristol has announced it has adopted Kent's No Use Empty scheme, in which the council gives interest-free loans to people who own empty houses.

The money is used to fund the repairs needed to bring the homes back into use. The biggest loans in Kent were £25,000.

The owner repays the loan once the property has been let or sold. The money is then recycled back into the scheme, so it is cost neutral. Councillor Anthony Negus, cabinet member for strategic housing and regeneration at Bristol City Council, says:

"Tackling the shortage of housing in Bristol is one of the most important challenges facing us. We need to use every means at our disposal. Targeting empty homes is one of them."

Last month the Institute of Public Policy Research warned the UK's housing shortfall could reach 750,000 by 2025. Bristol aims to bring 2,000 empty homes back into use by 2015. Kent has regenerated 1,627 empty homes since 2005.

David Ireland, chief executive of charity the Empty Homes agency, has urged other local authorities to follow Kent and Bristol's example. "The fact is that there are enough empty homes in the UK to house half of the families on the housing waiting lists," he says.