

Press Cutting

Client: Kent County Council – No Use Empty
Publication: Inside Housing
Date: 4 April 2011



[Home](#) [News](#) [Analysis](#) [Need to know](#) [Community](#) [Sustainability](#) [My IH](#) [Events](#)

Empty homes scheme rolled out nationally

4 April 2011 | By [Rhiannon Bury](#)

[Print](#) | [Email](#) | [Share](#) | [Comments \(4\)](#) | [Save](#)

A scheme to bring empty homes back into use is being rolled out across local authorities after 1,627 properties were reconditioned in Kent.

The No Use Empty scheme was launched in Bristol last month, where the council plans to return 2,000 empty homes to use by 2015.

This comes following the success of Kent Council launching the scheme in 2005 with a £6 million capital fund. Owners of empty properties were able to secure interest-free loans of up to £25,000 to bring them back into use. Loans are then repaid into the scheme and recycled.

This comes following the success of Kent Council launching the scheme in 2005 with a £6 million capital fund. Owners of empty properties were able to secure interest-free loans of up to £25,000 to bring them back into use. Loans are then repaid into the scheme and recycled.

Empty homes officers provide support and guidance for property owners, and in extreme cases are able to issue compulsory purchase orders to force the sale of a property.

Steve Grimshaw, project manager for the scheme at Kent Council, said he had been asked to speak to Scottish councils about the scheme, and was expecting a number of other enquiries.

Anthony Negus, cabinet member for strategic housing and regeneration at Bristol Council, said: 'Tackling the shortage of housing in Bristol is one of the most important challenges facing us and in order to reduce the gap we need to use every means at our disposal. Targeting empty homes is one of them.'

David Ireland, chief executive of the Empty Homes Agency, urged other local authorities to make empty homes part of the solution to the housing shortage: 'The fact is that there are enough empty homes in the UK to house half of the families on housing waiting lists,' he said. 'Returning empty homes to use is crucial in addressing the UK's housing shortage.'