

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

**JIN 2056**

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| **Job Title:**  | Empty Property Officer |
| **Reports to:**  | Strategic Housing & Development Manager |
| **Directorate:** | Housing, Neighbourhoods & Communities |
| **Division:** | Housing Needs and Supply |
| **Section:** | Housing Strategy and Supply |

**Job purpose**

Responsible for bringing empty homes back into use through the identification of owners of empty properties, the monitoring of empty properties and returning those empty properties to occupation either through negotiation or enforcement. This contributes to the delivery of the council’s statutory functions in respect of dealing with the negative impacts of long-term empty homes.

**Principal accountabilities**

1. To develop and monitor the delivery of the empty property service in line with the council’s Housing Strategy.
2. To identify and obtain information on empty properties in Brighton and Hove and to devise and maintain an empty property database. Including collating and reporting empty property statistical information in line with corporate key performance indicators (KPIs) on a monthly and quarterly basis.

3. To develop, review and maintain clear and effective communication systems with empty property owners, other departments, and stakeholders, ensuring the best use of technology. Liaise with other departments and act as a central point of contact within the council to establish a co-ordinated, ‘multi agency’ approach towards bringing empty properties back into use. Develop effective referral and feedback systems between sections dealing with empty properties.

4. Manage a caseload of empty properties. Establish and maintain up to date records of empty properties, locate and contact owners of empty properties and determine appropriate action on a case-by-case basis.

5. Initiate and respond to complex correspondence, complaints, and Councillor enquiries. Deal with enquiries from property owners, agents, developers, or other parties, offering advice and information and helping to identify appropriate solutions to bring empty properties back into use.

6. Prioritise properties for action based on agreed policy. Negotiate with owners, developers, other council services, funding agencies and other stakeholders to progress cases using the full range of incentives and enforcement action available to the council.

7. Within the agreed policy identify properties suitable for enforcement action. Act as lead officer within the housing service; provide evidence to be used in legal processes; liaise with legal and financial services; write committee reports and senior officer/member briefings as required.

8. Maintain a high level of knowledge of new developments in government legislation, regulations, guidance, policy, and best practice in relation to empty properties, including the council’s powers and duties. Keep up to date on all suitable funding sources relating to empty property work and explore any other potential sources fully.

9. To contribute to the setting of the council’s targets for the number of empty properties brought back into use each year and ensure the targets are achieved.

10. Review and update procedures for the empty property function, using the various options and solutions available including enforcement actions such as Compulsory Purchase Orders and enforced sales.

11. Develop effective partnerships with the community, landlords, owners, agents, empty property networks and other internal and external stakeholders to reduce the number of empty properties and increase the supply of homes in the city. Participate, and actively engage in the professional forums, to ensure effective networking, training opportunities and sharing good practice and experience between local authorities.

12. Actively promote and publicise the empty property service and related achievements. Participate in promotional events, public and other consultation events. Keep the council’s website up to date with relevant information.

**General accountabilities**

**Health and safety accountabilities**

To ensure all operations in their areas of responsibility are conducted according to the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and all relevant legislation and council policy. In particular: as set out in Section 4 of the Council’s Health and Safety Policy, and within their area of responsibility:

* To maintain awareness of current Health & Safety legislation and ensure that all employees understand and comply with Health and Safety Policy; that they are informed, trained, and supervised to safeguard their own and others’ welfare and safety.
* To carry out risk assessments and ensure implementation of and adherence to safe systems of working practice.
* To report and investigate accidents or incidents promptly, implementing recommended action for improvements to safe working practice.
* To ensure that safe premises, equipment and working environments are maintained.

**Equalities**

To develop practices within the directorate/division that uphold and develop the principals of the City Council’s Equality in Employment Policy and the Equalities Policy in relation to staff and to service provision.

To work within and actively promote the City Council’s Equalities and Equality in Employment Policies in relation to service delivery and staff management.

**Note regarding duties**

The list of duties in the job description should not be regarded as exclusive or exhaustive. There will be other duties and requirements associated with your job and, in addition, as a term of your employment you may be required to undertake various other duties as may reasonably be required.

Your duties will be as set out in the above job description but please note that the Council reserves the right to update your job description, from time to time, to reflect changes in, or to, your job.

You will be consulted about any proposed changes.

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**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

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**Essential Criteria**

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| **Job related education, qualifications and knowledge** | * Educated to Level 2 or equivalent in Mathematics and English language, or the equivalent level of knowledge gained through experience.
* Certificate in Housing Health and Safety Rating System or equivalent level of knowledge gained through experience.
* Knowledge of private sector empty property key issues.
* Understanding of private sector empty property legislation.
* Knowledge and understanding of the role of local government, funding agencies, communities, and other stakeholders in bringing empty properties back into use.
* Knowledge and experience of delivering a range of enforcement interventions in housing.
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| **Experience** | * Proven experience of empty property, housing environmental health, housing management or property management.
* Experience of delivering customer focused services.
* Experience of producing written reports or policy documents.
* Experience of working in partnership with a range of stakeholders to achieve joint objectives.
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| **Skills and abilities** | * Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
* Excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to deal with people with tact and diplomacy, including the ability to negotiate and mediate between various parties.
* Ability to make accurate visual inspections/surveys and generate reports on findings in simple language.
* Ability to give presentations, write reports and letters and to keep clear, factual and contemporaneous records.
* Effective time management skills with the ability to prioritise work to meet changing priorities and deadlines.
* Effective problem solving and negotiation skills.
* Intermediate skills in use of excel to interrogate, update and present data. Apply formula and import information.
* Experience of working collaboratively using Teams and Sharepoint.
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| **Health and safety knowledge** | * Commitment to acquiring awareness of current Health and Safety legislation as it applies to their area of responsibility and to attending relevant Health and Safety training.
* Awareness of the need to identify hazards in their area of responsibility and the ability to assess and manage associated risks
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| **Equalities** | * Demonstrate a commitment to the principles of equality and carry out duties in accordance with the council’s Inclusion Policy.
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| **Other requirements** | * Ability and willingness to carry out site visits/inspections across Brighton and Hove.
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