

Appendix 3 George Clarke's Empty Homes Review Recommendations

- 1 Refurbishing and upgrading existing homes should always be the first and preferred option rather than demolition.
- 2 Demolition of existing homes should always be the last option after all forms of market testing and options for refurbishment are exhausted.
- 3 Proper community consultation is required for any existing homes regeneration programme. The questions in a consultation should clearly consider all of the options openly and fairly and not directly or indirectly give preference to one option over another.
- 4 If, following an open and transparent community consultation process and after rigorous market testing for refurbishment, demolition is still the preferred choice of the community then tenants/owners should be moved to new 'like for like' properties. No one should be placed in temporary accommodation.
- 5 If owners/tenants are moved to a new property they should suffer no net financial loss or any increase in rent, other than what they would expect as a reasonable increase if they remained in their existing home and in line with inflation. Any significant financial increase in rent from a housing association is to be subsidised by the HA or local authority and not the owner/tenant.
- 6 Areas should not be systematically 'wound down' which is a process that destroys communities and reduces house prices in the area. If homeowners or tenants choose to move they should be moved in large clusters at the same time (entire street by street) and if homes are to be demolished they are to be emptied and demolished as quickly as possible to make way for new development.
- 7 Homes should not be emptied at all until full planning permission has been fully approved for demolition and new build development in advance (with majority support from the local community) and all funding for the new development is fully secured with a clear timetable for delivery.

- 8 If an area of existing housing requires improvement or redevelopment then a 'mixed and balanced' urban design scheme should be considered where existing properties are retained and improved while being mixed with appropriate new build development.
- 9 Local Authorities and Housing Associations should promote and encourage alternative methods of project procurement for the refurbishment of empty homes such as Homesteading, Co-operatives and Sweat Equity schemes. These are community-based schemes that encourage community involvement while providing better value for money.
- 10 Displaced occupiers should be given a 'right to return' following the completion of a housing renewal programme. In practice this means giving first refusal to new or refurbished houses at the same price as the compensation paid to the occupier when they were displaced.
- 11 Where a regeneration scheme is withdrawn or partly withdrawn prior to demolition, owners should be given first refusal to have their home back. The property should be offered at the same price as the compensation they received minus any compensation due for remedial work to return the property to the condition it was in prior to sale.
- 12 Where properties decanted for renewal schemes are left empty for more than six months, they must be openly offered for temporary accommodation in a safe and habitable state.