

HousingNorthwest

Empty Properties workshop

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Afternoon Session

Need to involve everybody
Council tax = false picture?

Do as part of stock condition survey. What are the reasons for them being empty? Is there a housing need for these properties?

Working group – in council:

- Create prioritised list for empties
- Establish ownership

Empty business properties – full council tax after 6 months.
Planning CPOs used frequently
Pendle regeneration area – once purchased they have to pay their own council tax
No nomination tights
Seems expensive spending a large amount using Housing Pot money

Case Study 1

Not in poor condition

Answers: Make it look like a 'normal house'. Nothing outstanding – don't want to sell it. EDMO decided to do – on receiving letter it is up for sale.

Case Study 2

Rubbish hoarded but not filthy. Social services involved but wants to go back.

EH not really involved.

Have got him sectioned & power of attorney (local Cllr) and up for auction

Case Study 3

No floors, walks etc

Owned by someone who doesn't need money and won't do anything with it.

BC say not bad enough to do anything but could be dangerous

Not suffered from vandalism

CPO powers but a large amount of money – sold to developer.

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Case study 4

Gutted inside. Bought at auction, started renovations. Untraceable – advertised etc. CT exempt so no debt against property – taken this off to rack up CT debt – enforces sale.

Housing doc s.215 because most planners won't develop them – work in default most of the time people turn up

s.215 or dangerous building notice then CPO will reduce the compensation.

Case study 5

Structural problems

BC won't serve notice as dangerous structure

Developers offered to buy it.

s.215 and enforced sale.

Case study 6

Owner moved out – claims may come back to it.

Has had an improvement grant on it. Threatened EDMO but he hasn't got it rented yet.

EDMO

- Can use a tracing company for people but may not have the right name – check register for deaths.
- High level of buy to leave but not sustainable community
- Some people put money into it from unethical means
- Some people buy their next door to prevent any one else moving in
- Empty flats – Manchester Salford Pathfinder looked into this to find out why empty – property good investment
- Can keep Cat. C 'empty' category but charge full amount
- Second homes – you can keep the money
- Chester – 10 PSL, 40 specifically targeted with action plans for future – mainly not returned as affordable homes
- Some of this may vary time consuming
- Work with RSLs – Housing Corporation funding but people reluctant