

Empty Properties

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Empty Property Strategy Aims

- Develop a co-ordinated approach.
- Develop a proactive approach.
- Effective use of statutory powers.
- Develop partnership working.
- Achieve national and local targets.
- To meet housing demand.



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Nature of the problem

- Numbers
- Distribution and property type
- Length of time vacant
- Hidden properties
- Reasons for vacancy
- Housing need



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Developing the strategy

- Set up a Working Group
- Establish specific local strategic aims:
 - Affordable housing?
 - Preventing decline?
 - Quality of existing stock?
 - Changing range of stock?
 - Preventing nuisance / crime?
- Funding



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Identify

- Create prioritized list of target properties
- Establish ownership
- Consider options available



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Encourage

- Financial assistance
- Council Tax levels
- Partnerships with RSLs and private developers
- Providing Advice



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Enforce - nuisance

- Town & Country Planning Act 1990 s.215-219
- Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 s.29
- Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 s.4
- Environmental Protection Act 1990 s.79



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Enforce - repair

- Building Act 1984 s.77
- Planning (Listed and Conservation) Act 1990
- Housing Act 2004 s.11 & 12



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Enforce – back into use

- Housing Act 1985 s.289 Clearance Areas
- Housing Act 1985 s.17 Compulsory Purchase Orders
- Law of Property Act 1925 s.101 Acquisition to recover charges
- Housing Act 2004 s.133 & 136 Empty Dwelling Management Orders



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Council Tax

- No Council Tax up to 6 months.
- Full Council Tax after 6 months
- Enforced sale procedure once debt reaches £1000.
- Takes 6 months to point of sale.



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Conversion Grant

- Minimum 12 months vacant.
- Planning permission.
- 50% of cost up to a maximum of £15,000 per unit.
- Target Rent for 5 years and council nominations.
- Meets requirements of Landlord Accreditation Scheme.



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Equity Loan

- Minimum 12 months vacant.
- Property non – decent.
- Maximum of £30,000, minimum of £1000.
- Means tested for owner occupiers OR.
- Let for 5 years under the Landlord Accreditation Scheme.



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Empty Property Repair Grant

- £1,000 Grant
- Eligibility
- Over 45 grants paid to date
- Working with estate agents



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Partnerships

- RSL's / Estate Agents
- Purchase Empty properties
- Private Sector Leasing Scheme
- Managing Agents
- Valuation of properties



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EDMO's

- Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO's)
- Housing Act 2004
- What are they ?
- Exemptions
- How and when can we use them ?



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Barriers

- Cost of repair
- Family Attachment
- Contaminated land
- Investment potential
- Unrealistic expectations
- Capital gains tax



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Conclusion

- Wasted resource
- Total of 58828 empties in the north west
- Empties as an affordable housing solution



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Case Studies



- Vacant for 9 years.
- Minor disrepair.
- Estimated value £110,000.
- Owners promise to tidy it up and sell but never follow through.



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Case Studies



- Property vacant for 2 years.
- Internally uninhabitable for 30 years.
- Estimated value £100,000.
- Elderly owner suffers from mental illness, he intends to move back in.



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Case Studies



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Case Studies



- Property vacant for 25 years.
- Town centre location.
- Shell only
- Conservation area.
- Estimated value of block £1,000,000.
- Block owned by local property developer who does not respond to correspondence.



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Case Studies



- Vacant for 5 years
- On main road into village
- Internal improvements not completed
- Owner untraceable (part of travelling community)



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Case Studies



- Vacant for 10 years
- Victorian double fronted house on canal side near to city centre
- Major structural works required
- Access issues



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Case Studies



- Vacant for 17 years
- Mid Terrace property in cul-de-sac
- Good condition improved 2002
- Owner unwilling to rent or sell



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