



CALDERDALE MBC

EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY

2010 – 2015

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1. The problem with empty homes

Empty homes are a wasted housing resource, they can attract vandalism, anti-social behaviour, become a 'honey pot' for crime and a target for arson. In some circumstances they become run-down, fall into disrepair, have overgrown gardens, look ugly, blight an area and cause neighbouring properties to lose value by up to 20% (RICS).

The Calderdale Housing Strategy sets out the issue of housing requirement and the problem of affordability in the Borough. New housing is clearly needed but the rehabilitation of empty homes can partly offset this need. Bringing empty run-down stock back into use is far less controversial than building new homes. The case for the provision of new homes can be undermined by the presence of empty homes in the area.

In rural areas, when properties become empty, it can lead to the deterioration of communities and villages. Small businesses, shops and schools can go into decline and ultimately close due to lack of support. In Calderdale we have clusters of empty properties in some rural villages e.g. In Heptonstall there are 551 dwellings, of these 35 (6%) have been empty for more than 6 months.

A recent initiative of the Council is to assist people with disabilities to find alternative housing in the Borough if their current home is unsuitable or impractical to adapt to their needs. In less than 2 years April 2008 to January 2010 more than 50 families have made use of this assistance with a further 60 families actively looking for properties. Savings average at £10,000 in grants per property and the long term outcomes are much improved for the families involved. Empty homes that have the potential for these families and other vulnerable groups can be targeted as a priority in order to maximise the current adaptable stock.

Empty homes can be divided into problematic or transitional vacancies. Transitional vacancies are those that are empty for less than six months largely between ownership, this is usually part of the normal cycle of people changing homes. In contrast problematic properties are those defined as being empty for 6 months or more, there is usually an underlying problem when this occurs.

The Calderdale Empty Homes Strategy is designed to show how these properties can be identified, to find the reasons for properties being empty and to offer appropriate solutions for bringing long term empty properties back into use.

Empty homes in Calderdale

There are many reasons for homes becoming empty. Empty homes can be usefully categorised according to the most appropriate solution:

Extension of transitional empties due to the economic downturn.

These homes may be in good condition (and some new) and are on the market for sale or rent for longer than usual, some have been taken off the market waiting for the property market to recover. Owners often want to bring properties back into use and are willing to work together with the Council to make this happen. Intervention may be appropriate in offering advice and assistance where possible, but the homes should come back into use without intervention when the property market begins to recover. Unless these homes are also problematic, action can largely be postponed until the market improves then reassessed to check that other longer term problems haven't occurred in individual cases.

Unpopular housing because of condition, size, type or location.

A new form of empty property ownership 'buy to leave' developed in recent years, where housing was treated as a market commodity. Blocks of new (usually apartments) properties were bought off plan by investment or pension companies with the intention of leaving them empty, at least in the medium term, as an investment. This may have added to the over-production of small, town centre apartments as demand was inflated by this type of activity. Unfortunately some new properties built in the last 5-10 years are unpopular due to their type, size, location or cost. These properties do not necessarily cause an obvious eye sore nuisance but they add to the problem of affordability, do nothing to add to the local economy and take up precious land.

Also under this heading there are also a number of social sector houses, unpopular parts of estates, tower blocks or sheltered schemes that have become redundant as the expectations for living accommodation have risen and left them behind.

Interventions in this area are large scale and need careful planning in order to regenerate the land resource or find a suitable use for rehabilitating the stock. These schemes are discussed within other strategy documents of the Council and the Local Strategic Plan and interventions are planned through area schemes e.g. remodelling of the Dudley's estate in North Halifax, regeneration of Harley Bank area of Todmorden etc.

Homes empty because their owners are unable or unwilling to take action.

Within this category are homes left in people's estates when they die, abandoned homes for all sorts of complicated reasons, homes in serious disrepair and homes in dispute. These are the homes that can generate high costs to the public purse in terms of reacting to complaints, dealing with anti-social behaviour and removing

dangers to the public. As an illustration, a property empty for over 20 years has generated over 100 complaints to the Environmental Health, Housing, Planning as well as the Police and Fire services. To date the owner has given no reason for why the property is empty.

This strategy concentrates on this last category of empty homes and brings into action a full range of tools to bring them back into use, ranging from a small amount of advice or persuasion to enforcement action.

1.2. Scale of the problem

In Calderdale, as at the end of December 2009, there were about 3310 homes that had been empty for more than 6 months, over 50% of those have been empty more than 12 months, 30% over 3 years and 6% over 10 years.

In the social sector, the 600 empty properties include the 300 or so empty flats near central Halifax owned by Pennine Housing 2000 which have a considerable impact on the graph of social empty properties below (Fig.2).

Of the 2500 empty private sector homes, some are owned by people who are in care, homes, hospital or prison, some have been in probate for a long time and just over 200 are second homes. There is also an element of inaccuracy in counting due to using data for counting empty properties when it was designed for Council Tax purposes. This has been estimated at between 14% and 20% over counting empty properties.

In the first three quarters of 2009/10, around 1200 properties became classified as long term empty. However, in the same period, over 2500 properties were removed from the long term empty property classification. This may be due to many reasons, but some are attributable to the work carried out in the last two years to persuade owners to bring empty homes back into use.

Long term empty properties are found in all parts of the Borough (See map page 7) and across all types of housing although clusters appear in areas where property prices are lowest and are in danger of decline. There are also considerably more empty properties in the lower price Council Tax bands. Figure 1 illustrates this, but can mask particular problems like those encountered in Heptonstall and individual problem empties.

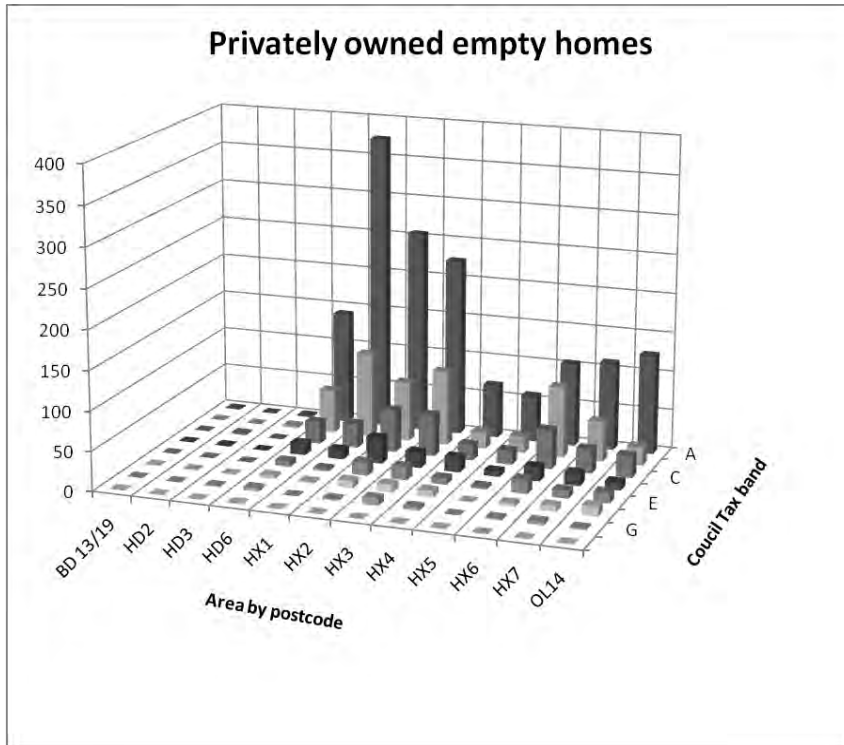


Fig. 1
Number of private homes empty for more than 6 months by Council tax band and postcode area

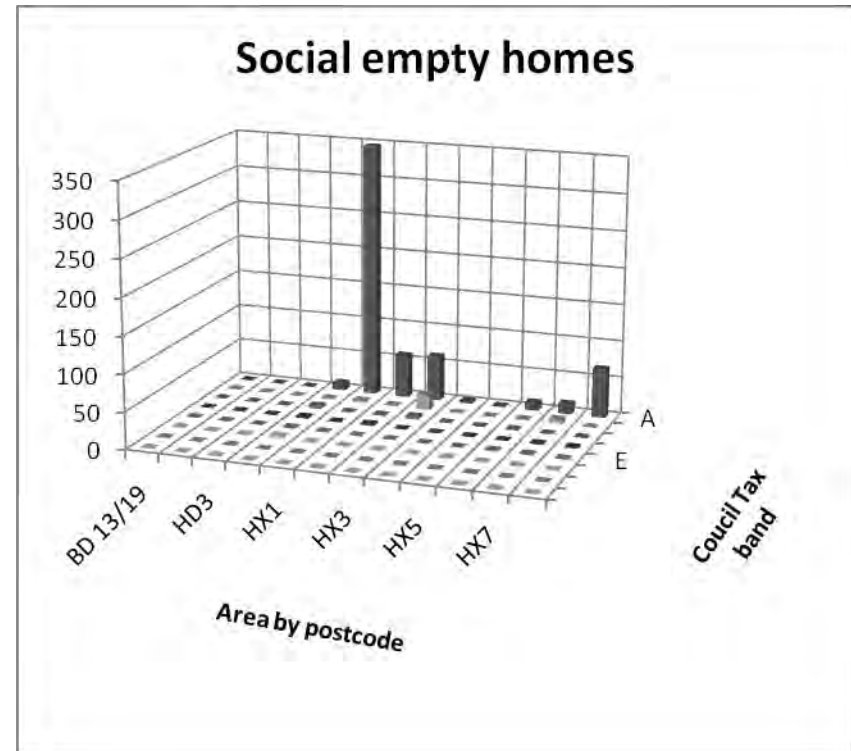
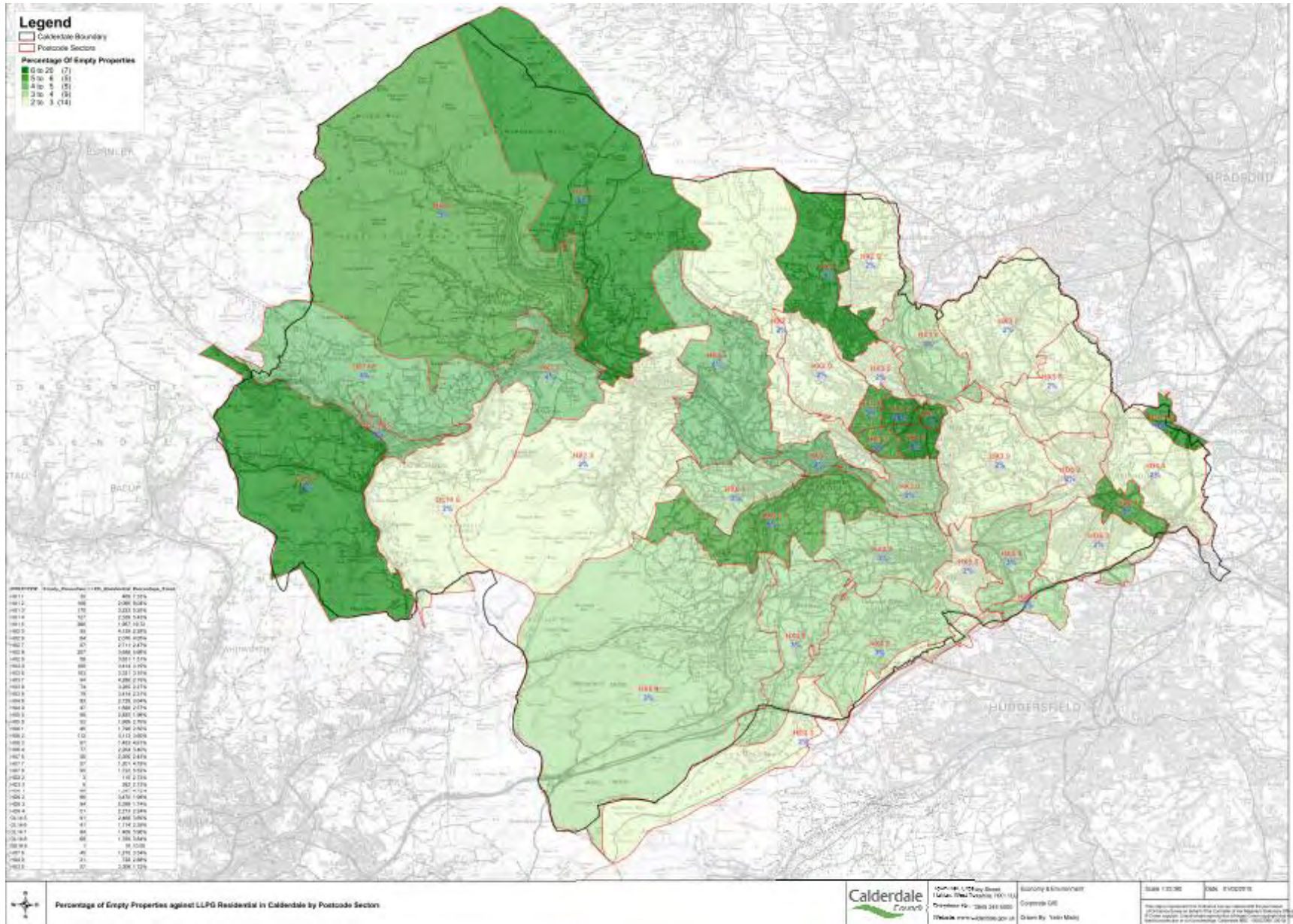


Fig. 2
Number of social sector homes empty for more than 6 months by Council tax band and postcode area

POST CODE AREAS



2. BENEFITS OF AN EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY

- **Coherent approach**

As previously discussed a great deal of officer time can be spent on reacting to complaints and incidents at individual empty homes. Without a coherent approach, little is known of other work being carried out which at best wastes a precious time resource and at worst means services may unwittingly undermine each other's efforts. This strategy will include an action to continue to collaborate strategically and with respect to individual properties.

- **Housing Supply**

An Empty Homes Strategy should lead to the availability of more homes in the Borough. The Calderdale Housing Strategy sets out the general housing need in Calderdale as well as the affordable housing need. The more housing that can be provided from existing stock, the less need there is to develop green field sites.

- **Financial Gains**

There is the potential for large financial gains in terms of cutting down on officer time reacting to complaints about empty homes. By tackling a handful of the worst cases, officers can be freed up to deal with other work. There is also potential to make savings in terms of additional council tax receipts, housing benefit and council tax fraud recouped and contributions from partners in the Empty Property Strategy.

- **Responding to Public Concern**

Many complaints are received into the Council about the problems caused by empty properties. The Police and Fire and Rescue services are also called out to react to incidents involving empties. This causes a great deal of bad feeling in a neighbourhood and many residents are offended by the presence of an empty home where houses are in high demand.

- **Arson prevention**

A property brought back into use or demolished will remove the attraction for anti-social behaviour including fire-starting and arson and will reduce the number of call-outs made by the fire service therefore reducing the risk to fire-fighters and others.

- **Crime and Anti-social behaviour prevention**

As with the fire service, a property brought back into use or demolished will remove the 'honey pot' for anti-social behaviour and criminal activity and therefore reduce the amount of police resources expended on empty properties.

- **Neighbourhoods and local economy**

The presence of derelict property can cause a great deal of dissatisfaction in a community. In particular to the direct neighbours who may find that their house value has diminished and may be difficult to sell or let. Examples of this type of complaint have been made from both owner occupiers and from landlords. By bringing empty homes back into use, the local economy may benefit from the additional people using local services and shops.

3. AIMS OF THE STRATEGY

- Reduce the number of long term empty homes in Calderdale.

3.1. Objectives

1. Prevent homes from becoming empty and minimise the time homes are empty
2. Identify the empty homes in the Borough and maintain good up to date data about ownership, intentions and interventions
3. Promote collaborative effort between sections of the Council and other organisations to maximise the effectiveness of intervention work
4. Reduce blight and develop solutions with others for properties past their usefulness e.g. demolition/regeneration
5. Raise awareness about the need to bring homes back into use e.g. promote responsible property ownership and lettings, awareness of problems associated with empty homes
6. Devise a range of flexible tools to bring homes back into use. The strategy will set out a broad range of persuasive techniques, incentives and enforcement actions to be used in various circumstances

4. A STRATEGY FOR CALDERDALE

4.1. Prevent homes from becoming empty – objective 1

Action to prevent properties becoming empty for long periods overlaps with areas of works of other sections of the Council. The work is described here as it interacts with the work to reduce empty homes. The strategy will also consider the reasons property become empty and encourage owners to seek assistance from the authority for solutions to problems.

Already the Council has taken the step of reducing the Council Tax discount the Authority offers to owners of empty properties in the Borough from 50% to 25%. This adds to the strategic approach to bringing empty homes back into use by removing an incentive for owners to leave their properties empty.

The good landlord scheme, 'FAST' Landlords is being included in all area based improvement and regeneration schemes. Landlords are encouraged to join in order to enjoy the benefits of being able to advertise properties on Keychoice as well as getting up to date information and advice about being a responsible landlord.

The housing options service includes many services to prevent tenancies and home ownership from breaking down, often the root cause of an empty property. Assistance is available for landlords and tenants to maintain tenancies, and to owner occupiers to prevent mortgage repossessions.

Housing Support is available for vulnerable households throughout the Borough through the services provided by Supporting People. This includes specialist support for people with drug, alcohol and offending issues as well as people with learning disabilities, mental ill health, young and inexperienced people and older people.

4.2. Identify empty homes – objective 2

The basis of current intelligence about empty homes is from the Council Tax exemptions and discounts list. There are limitations about how this data is used and also about how useful it is for this purpose. Information gathered for Council Tax use can only be shared in certain circumstances, it hasn't been designed for obtaining information about empty properties and their owners but it provides a reasonable starting point for a database.

For general purposes section 85 of the Local Government Act 2003 is used in order to share Council Tax information with empty property officers. Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2003: allows information on property details, address, owners name and contact info obtained from Council tax to be used to identify vacant properties and take steps to bring vacant dwelling back into use.

Where enforcement action is being considered, however, Section 237 of the Housing Act 2004: Council Tax & Housing Benefit, (Part 1 to 4 Act – Enforcement / EDMO etc.) allows for all information to be shared.

Because the empty homes database uses information collected for this other purpose, there are properties that appear empty but essentially are not, they may have the wrong discount code, information has become out of date etc. A drive-by survey was carried out in 2008 and from this it is estimated that some 16% of homes listed as empty are occupied. Also, there are properties, which are not on the list, as they have been taken out of council tax banding. These properties can remain empty for years and can cause the most problems.

Information therefore needs to be continually added to the database to keep it up to date and this requires the co-operation of the members of other services. The most problematic properties are often known to more than one organisation. Where properties are found to be empty, they need to be reported and added to the database, where action is taken, this also needs to be recorded. The current information needs to be shared and available to all services working on the empty homes.

4.3. Collaborative approach – objective 3

Empty properties affect the work of many parts of the Council, external organisations, investors and residents. A strategic approach to tackling the issue is necessary so that efforts are co-ordinated and coherent. A strategic working group will deliver the actions within this strategy and carry out periodic reviews. The private sector housing team will take a lead in co-ordinating the work of the group and on empty property management and the group will consist of representatives from :

- Private Sector Housing
- Council Tax
- Legal Services
- Housing Benefits

- Environmental Health
- Planning & Regeneration services
- Building Control
- Land & Property Services
- Community Safety
- Fire and Rescue Service
- West Yorkshire Police Service
- Registered Social Landlords

Different powers and duties are available to most of the above services (see Appendix 2), by taking action together many hours of enforcement activity can be reduced. The potential savings to the Council, Fire Service and Police are significant in terms of complaints handling and dealing with crime and arson.

Complimenting the work of this group will be consultation with property owners, RSL's, estate agents, lettings agents, community representatives, and a range of investors, developers.

4.4. Regeneration and demolition – objective 4

The presence of groups of empty homes can give an indication that area based intervention work is needed. Part of the work of identifying empty properties will look at clusters so that information can be included in funding bids for area regeneration work.

There are several area based schemes such as Upper Parkinson Lane, Beech Hill and Bailiff Bridge renewal which impact on the Empty Homes Strategy. These are well documented elsewhere and therefore little needs to be added about individual schemes.

This objective will have a large impact on the empty homes owned by social landlords as long term social voids are unusual in Calderdale unless there are underlying issues with the house types. In recent years several regeneration schemes have successfully rescued areas from decline and removed empty properties. For example the Dudley's Estate in North Halifax: a number of flats and houses were demolished to provide space to redesign the estate layout, the existing social and privately owned stock was refurbished, defensible private space was created and new social housing built, further private housing will be added when the market improves.

4.5. Raise awareness - objective 5

Part of the awareness raising of the problems associated with empty homes will take place in the working group to take forward the work of this strategy. Being aware of the impact of services other than the one that officers work in has already been quite a revelation.

Public awareness of the issues also needs to be addressed. Making owners aware of the misery that can be caused by their properties will form part of the intervention process. Encouraging responsible property ownership is a theme that influences the Council's approach to all work with private sector housing.

The public will be encouraged to report empty homes that they become aware of, rather than waiting for a complaint to be made.

4.6. Toolkit for intervention – objective 6

It is important that owners of empty properties are aware of the range of options available to them to bring their property back into use. It is recognised that many owners need some assistance in order to take action. Often they have chosen to ignore the issue for some years and often cannot see a way forward. In working with the owners the aim is to find a course of action acceptable to the owner as well as bringing the property back into use. The development and preparation of enforcement tools is to ensure that the strategy is taken seriously and to make sure that the most problematic properties can be brought back into use to the benefit of the community.

Below is a list of interventions that Calderdale Council will use to provide the flexibility needed to bring homes back into use. The strategy sets out a broad range of persuasive techniques, incentives and enforcement actions to be used in various circumstances.

5. BRINGING PROPERTIES BACK INTO USE – TOOL KIT OF INTERVENTIONS

Tools to bring empty properties back into use fall into 3 main categories, enablement, inducement and enforcement and they are designed for use in that order:

Enablement

Initially, letters are sent to owners of empty properties asking why the property is empty and what the owners' intentions are. The letter explains the options available in order to bring their property back into use.

These include

- Technical advice – for any work required to bring property up to standard
- Help to become a good landlord – join the councils property registration scheme – FAST Landlords – Fair and Safe Tenancies
- Help to find a tenant – via Housing Options or Smartmove
- Make an introduction to an organisation to manage a tenancy – Lettings Agents or RSL's
- Assist with ownership disputes and complications in order to enable a sale or tenancy

Inducement

Where necessary, and subject to available funds, the following can be offered to owners of empty homes when they have indicated that they would like to bring the property back into use but that they need assistance to do so. These interventions are limited in size, eligibility and carry conditions about repayment, future occupation etc.

- Interest free loans to owners to help them to carry out work required to an empty property to bring it up to standard for re-use.
- If the owner of an empty property intends to live in their property upon completion of any works required then we will be able to consider the use of a Home Appreciation Loan (HAL) to fund the work required.
- If owners of empty properties become landlords then there may be other financial assistance available for their tenants such as Warmfront grants or Disabled Facilities Grants.

Enforcement

Where owners refuse to co-operate with officers and the property is causing serious problems enforcement action will be taken appropriately. There are many enforcement actions already being taken by the Council in terms of repair notices etc. where danger needs to be removed, empty property enforcement does not replace this but in some cases will build on it. The associated legal powers, costs and risks are listed in Appendix 2, but a summary is listed below.

The Enforcement Action Group meets regularly in order to identify and prioritise properties for co-ordinating enforcement activity on empty homes. The group has representatives from many sections across the council and external partners such as the Fire Service. The Chief Officer for Housing and Environment will make the decision to carry out the activities below in individual cases following consultation with this group.

- **Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO)**

Allows Councils to take over the management of empty residential properties with a view to agreeing with owners a plan to bring them back into occupation. This can only happen where the council has been unable to persuade the owners to bring the property back into use and considers this course of action is necessary as a last resort. A Residential Property Tribunal has to give approval prior to the serving of an EDMO. For many owners the threat of an EDMO is sufficient to provoke action.

An EDMO may be considered if there is little or no work required to the property and a Registered Social Landlord would be interested in the temporary (up to 7 years) management of the property.

- **Public Request Ordering Disposal (PROD)**

Since 1980 there has been the power of a PROD – a Public Request Ordering Disposal, by which a member of the public has the power to request the disposal of an empty public sector home.

- **Enforced Sales**

A council can enforce the sale of a property if the owner has a financial debt to the Council registered against the property. The debt can be for one or more of many different reasons, but in order to enforce a sale the debt needs to be for a reasonable sum of money.

If the debt is unpaid, the Authority can issue a notice to the owner to enforce the sale of the property in order to reclaim the debt (and costs).

This process has been used effectively by other Councils as a tool for empty homes work particularly when properties are in a condition where money needs to be spent in order to make the building habitable. Many of the most problematic empty properties in Calderdale already have charges against them.

- **Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)**

A Compulsory Purchase Order allows the council to buy the property without the owner's consent. The compulsory purchase powers are provided to enable authorities to compulsorily purchase land and property if it is in the public interest. It is legally complex, expensive, time consuming and leaves the Council with the ownership of a property and the responsibility of it.

Circumstances where Compulsory Purchase Orders could be used might be for acquisition and demolition although it is envisaged that this would be used as a last resort.

6. **SUMMARY**

By implementing the recommendations in this Strategy the authority should see:

- a reduction in empty homes
- an improvement in the safety and well being of local neighbourhoods and communities
- an increase in the availability of housing across the Borough
- savings in officer time
- a reduction in complaints

The Empty Property Strategy will also complement and contribute to other initiatives in Calderdale including:

- Housing Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy
- Town Centre Regeneration
- Economic Development Strategy
- Calderdale Community Safety Plan
- Regeneration Projects
- Private Sector Renewal Policy

APPENDIX 1 - ACTION PLAN

Action	Target Date	Progress
Empty Homes Strategic Working Group convened and to meet on a regular basis to put the Empty Homes Strategy into action and review the strategy	meeting quarterly	Started October 2009
Continue to share best practice across the sub-region and beyond	Quarterly meetings from April 2008	Started April 2009
Consultation – build partnerships in the private sector – private landlords, RSL’s, Housing Associations, Lettings Agents, Police, Fire Service and Smartmove. Links have already been forged with a range of partners, however, regular dialogue with the private sector together with a strong corporate commitment will provide the building blocks for the delivery of the Strategy.	Develop Rolling programme by April 2011	Consultation during private sector landlord events started early 2009
Identify empty homes – gather information from Council Tax records, Housing Benefits, Environmental Health, Fire Service, Police, Public and share information with other sections in the council appropriately	Sept 2010	
Develop the processes for reporting empty properties in to the Council & proactively seek out empty homes	Dec 2010	
Identify reasons for homes being empty – contact owners – visit properties – ascertain issues	Develop Rolling programme by April 2011	Initial work includes direct contact with over 800 owners in 2009
Identify funds for assisting with bringing empty homes back into use. Support funding bids from others to regenerate, remodel or demolish empty homes.	Regular updates to	Loans for owners to

	strategic working group	carry out repairs funded from CMBC first loans to be made March 2010
Encourage take up of packages of assistance where available e.g. loans for repairs, advice to new landlords etc. Discuss alternative ownership arrangements with owners.	Develop Rolling programme by June 2010	
Enforcement Action Group to meet regularly to identify and prioritise properties for enforcement activity and make recommendations for enforcement to the Chief Officer for Housing and the Environment	Develop Rolling programme by Dec 2009	Group has been meeting since mid 2009

APPENDIX 2 - Enforcement

Table1 Empty property enforcement activity

Type of Enforcement	Legislation	Costs	Risks	When to be used
Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)	Town & Country Planning Act 1990 S 226 Acquire land or buildings	Potentially very expensive, costs include market value of the property & legal costs.	The costs, time and Council reputation are at risk if there is an appeal. Council will take ownership of property to manage, maintain or dispose of.	Where negotiated purchase has failed and the ownership of the property needed as part of a larger scheme of regeneration. Usually for demolition purposes.
	Housing Act 1985 S17 Acquire under-used or ineffective used property and land			As above and must show that there is a general housing need in the area and need to show a qualitative housing gain.
Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO)	The Housing Act 2004 Part 4 S132 - 138	Council funds any work required and recovers costs through rental income.	To apply to the Property Tribunal for Order. EDMO creates the right of possession not ownership. A management organisation needs to be identified. Time consuming to set up. Property may not be suitable for rent.	When property has been left empty and owner refuses to give a reasonable explanation. Property not exempt and all other aspects of assistance have been explored.

Enforced Sale (see table 2)	See table 2, below for list of legislation which can lead to an Enforced Sale	Cost of work carried out in default of a notice or order (table 2). Cost of work, legal and sale costs can be reclaimed from proceeds of sale. For some actions the debt becomes the 1 st charge and is therefore paid prior to any other debt on the property	Relies on the change of ownership to bring property back into use. Debt to the Council can be paid by owner at any time prior to sale.	Where other assistance has not brought the property back into use and the property is causing a substantial nuisance and there is a reasonably large debt to the Council, secured against the property which is unlikely to be recovered otherwise.
Demolition or clearance	The Housing Act 1985 S265	Can be time and labour intensive	Building Act 1984 may be more effective	Properties no longer useful where it isn't economically viable to bring back into use.
	Building Act 1984 S79	Costs can be recovered by enforced sale of the land, debt has priority charge.	Cost of demolition in default of the notice may not be fully recovered	Properties no longer useful where it isn't economically viable to bring back into use.
	The Housing Act 1985 S289	Can be expensive if CPO is required	As CPO above	Clearance areas for regeneration projects.

Table 2 Enforcement action which can lead to an enforced sale if a charge is placed on the property

Legislation	Section	Description	Priority Charge	Interest	Costs	Risks
Town & Country Planning Act 1990	S215	Land adversely affecting the amenity of the neighbourhood (eyesore notice). Notice to owner to improve unsightly land or the external appearance of a property.	No	No	Council can prosecute or do works in default, or both, at cost to council.	May be difficult to recover if owner has little equity. S79 of the Building Act 1984 may be a better option.
	S172	Planning Breach	No	No	Council can prosecute or do works in default, or both, at cost to council.	May be difficult to recover if owner has little equity
Building Act 1984	S77 & S78	Dangerous Buildings Council will need to consider the financial case in relation to possible demolition i.e. if property is beyond economical repair.	Yes	No	Cost of work in default, Costs can be recovered by enforced sale, debt has priority charge.	
	S79	Unsightly land/property affecting the amenity of the area. Requires the owner to execute repair work or restoration. Can also be used for demolition.	Yes	No	As above	
	S59	Drainage Owners will be instructed to remedy the defects as per Section of the Act.	Yes	No	As above	

	S60	Soil Pipes As above	Yes	No	As above	
	S76	Defective Premises As above	Yes	No	As above	
	S84	Yards As above	Yes	No	As above	
Local Govt (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982	S29	Unsecured properties Owner will be required to board up. Reduces risk of squatters, vandalism and burglary. Generally work is required within 48 hours.	No	No	Cost of works carried out in default. Cost are usually small	Can be ineffective in some areas where intruders are persistent
	S27	Obstructed Drains	No	No		
Local Govt (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976	S35	Private Sewer	Yes	No		
	S33	Restore Services	Yes	No		
Highways Act 1980	S154	Hedges	Yes	No		
	S165	Unfenced Land	Yes	No		
Housing Act 2004	S11 & S12	Improvement Notice Cat 1 & Cat 2 Hazards Order to carry out improvements to remove serious hazards Can use even if owner can't be contacted.	Yes	Yes	Can be expensive if large scale work required but can recover costs through enforced sale.	

	S40	Emergency remedial action As above	Yes	Yes		This is difficult to implement if not in contact with owner and has limited use.
Environmental Protection Act 1980	S80	Statutory Nuisance Owner will be instructed to deal with nuisance, remove waster or rubbish or repair property,	Yes	Yes	Council can carry work out in default, which can be recovered through enforced sale.	
Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949	S4	(rats & mice) Owner to treat, remove food and harbourage and repair property to prevent rat or mice infestations.	Yes	Yes	Council can carry work out in default, which can be recovered through enforced sale.	
Public Health Act 1961	S17	Defective, blocked drains Required owner to un-block stopped up drain	Yes		Council can carry work out in default, which can be recovered through enforced sale.	