

# Reducing Empty Homes in Salford

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2004-2005  
Benefits Administration  
Supporting People

# Reducing Empty Homes in Salford

- **2010** - 600,000 empty homes in England
  - 250,000 long term empty homes in England
  - 6237 empty homes in Salford
  - 3761 long term empty homes in Salford
- Created small intelligence led Empty Property Team on an invest to save basis (5 officers approx 200K revenue per annum).
- **2015** - 57% (3555) Reduction Achieved in Salford
  - Current National Position**
    - 216,000 long term empty homes England
    - 13.6% reduction in England since 2010

# The Problem of Empty Homes

- House of Commons briefing paper on Empty Homes (England) 2018

**High Levels of empty properties are recognised as having a serious impact on the viability of communities... As the number of empty properties within an area increases, so can the incidence of vandalism, which acts as a further disincentive to occupation...This spiral of decline can continue as further households are deterred from moving into an area devoid of amenities, and where empty property and derelict shops add to a sense of neglect.**

**Communities become trapped in a cycle of decline which has significant implications for residents physical and mental health**

# Why Homes Become Empty

## Include

- Property in Probate
- Property inherited and don't know what to do with it
- Owners don't have funds to refurbish
- Owner in residential care
- Buy to Leave
- Abandoned

## Grant Programmes

- DCLG (now MHCLG) 633K Empty Homes Grants Programme 2012-2015
- DCLG Clusters of Empty Homes funding £1.7M total funding. Upto 10k match funding per property (150 long term empty properties)
- Affordable Housing Programme £4M total (247 long term vacant properties, grants from 8K – 34K)

## Innovative Lease and repair model

- To access the funding owners were required to enter into a 5 year lease with two partner RP's
  - ❖ All homes to be let at affordable rents
  - ❖ Council retained nomination rights
  - ❖ Full management service
  - ❖ Guaranteed rent to owner

# Funding Outcomes

- All Homes brought to Decent Homes Standard
- £9.8M total refurbishment cost benefiting Greater Manchester Contractors by £6M
- £2.1M extra council tax brought in over 5 years
- £65.6M in New Homes Bonus allocation upto 2021 (28% less without the overall reduction in Empty Homes)

# Empty Homes Premium

- Since 2013, local authorities in England have had the discretion to charge a premium of up to 50% on 'long-term empty dwellings' – that is, homes that have been **unoccupied and substantially unfurnished** for at least **two years**. The premium is in addition to the usual council tax charge that applies to the property
- The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018 now gives local authorities the power to increase the empty homes premium from the beginning of the 2019-20 financial year onwards. The purpose of the premium is to incentivise owners to bring long-standing empty properties back into use to help to meet the need for housing within the city
- **From 1 April 2019, local authorities can charge an additional premium of up to 100% for properties empty for more than 2 years. Further, from 1 April 2020, the premium can be moved up to an additional 200% for homes empty for more than five years. And from 1 April 2021, the additional premium can be up to 300% for properties empty for more than ten years**



## Enforcement Action

- Housing Act 2004 gives Local Authorities power to enter and inspect any house for hazardous conditions
- Power to Serve Improvement Notices and Closures Orders
- Empty Dwelling Management Orders
- Housing Act 1985 Compulsory Purchase Orders
- ❖ power to acquire property to achieve qualitative or quantitative housing gain and compelling public interest to do so

## Enforced Sale

- Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992 allow
- Application for County Court Charging Order for Council Tax debt where Liability Order obtained in the Magistrates Court
- County Court Order of Sale of the Property

# Case Studies



## **400/402 Lower Broughton Road – CPO**

- A pair of large Victorian terrace houses within a conservation area had been empty since 1988 and various enforcement tools explored; after protracted negotiations with the owners it eventually concluded in a CPO being confirmed in July 2013. The properties were vested in Jan 2014 and after sale at auction the team entered into dialogue with the new owners who duly set about a restoration programme, keeping original features where possible. The properties have now been restored as family homes providing a much improved street scene. Conditional sale schedule of works.





## 195 Langworthy Road



- This imposing property lies within a regeneration area, on a main route which has benefited from much investment. Previously a doctor's surgery, it has been empty since 2007 after a new surgery opened in the area. The owner had the property on the market for sale as commercial but had very little interest, he willing engaged in conversation to convert the property to residential. Having sold the property with planning permission for 5 flats, it has now been fully refurbished and the first tenants are moving in.





## 87 Higher Croft - Lease and Repair grant



This property was brought to our attention after neighbours complained it was open to access in 2011. The property had been empty since previous tenants left in 2010 and owner was having difficulty in financing the repairs. The property was secured and negotiations started with the owner to look at options to bring the property back into use, lease and repair option agreed. It took several months for the mortgage company to give consent to the lease, work was started and property now fully refurbished and tenanted. The property is managed by Salix Living on a 5 year lease.

## 59 Regent Street – commercial to residential



This run down commercial premise ceased trading in 2005, since there varies attempts to re-let as commercial but not viable option. The ‘frontage scheme’ was offered to the owner and the Regeneration team contacted us regarding possible conversion to residential. Working together the property benefited from a ‘frontage grant’ and empty homes funding seeing the property converted into 2 x 1 bedroom flats. The property is now tenanted and managed by City West Housing Trust on a 5 year lease.

## Future Priorities

- **GM Housing Strategy**
  - A safe, healthy accessible home for all
  - Focus on homelessness, PRS and Affordable supply
- **Greater Manchester Spatial Framework**
  - Commitment to deliver at least 50,000 Affordable Homes by 2037 (30,000 to be social homes)

**Reducing Empty Homes remains central to these priorities**

# Questions