

Empty Homes

Opening the door to their potential



INTRODUCTION

The Council needs to understand what is happening with empty homes and encourage them back into use. There is a shortage of available housing in the district with many people not able to find accommodation. Also the Government penalises the Council for having homes empty so we have less funding for local services. The Council therefore sends out periodic questionnaires to empty home owners to obtain up to date information regarding their intentions.

Having empty properties in our community does not benefit anyone, they may:

- ❖ **Attract crime and antisocial behaviour**
- ❖ **Blight local neighbourhoods**
- ❖ **Deny homes to those in greatest need**
- ❖ **Increase pressure for new development**

The benefits for owners or landlords bringing empty properties into use are:

- ❖ **Increased rental income**
- ❖ **Increased capital value of property**
- ❖ **Increased sales potential**
- ❖ **Security against vandalism**
- ❖ **Security against squatters**
- ❖ **Loss of liability for council tax if property is rented out**

By leaving your property empty you will lose money. The cost of having an empty property in Wyre Forest District, including loss of potential rent, taxes, insurances and other charges all adds up to over £7000 per year.

WAYS WE CAN HELP

Repairs to bring the property back into use we can:-

- ❖ Provide you with information on what work would be needed to make it habitable.
- ❖ Advise you what fees you may be likely to incur for any works that we recommend need to be carried out.
- ❖ Provide you with contact details of local contractors
- ❖ Advise you whether you may be eligible for any financial assistance.

Renting out the property we can:-

- ❖ Provide you with contact details of all letting agents in the area.
- ❖ Advise you how you can manage the letting of your property yourself
- ❖ Advise you of your rights and responsibilities as a landlord
- ❖ Help to find you tenants for the property.

Selling the property we can:-

- ❖ Give you non biased advice if you wish to sell the property
- ❖ Provide you with contact details of all estate agents in the area
- ❖ Provide you with contact details for local social housing providers who may be interested in buying or managing your property for you.

This list is by no means comprehensive and it may be a good idea to contact the Council to see whether any further assistance could be arranged to help with you specific circumstance.

ENFORCEMENT ACTION

It is important that owners of empty properties are aware that the Council have access to a wide range of enforcement legislation that can be used to force an owner to carry out certain works on their property to make it **safe, secure, and to ensure that the property does not adversely affect the area**. The Council has powers to use Empty Dwelling Management Orders or Compulsory Purchase to ensure empty properties come back into use. The Council will also consider making owners bring a property back to a habitable standard if they are not making reasonable progress themselves.

HOW TO CONTACT

We hope that this leaflet has helped you to realise the value of an empty property, appreciating that an empty home is a wasted home. If you would like to discuss your situation or report an empty property, please contact:

Private Sector Housing Team,
Wyre Forest District Council
Wyre Forest House
Finepoint Way
Kidderminster
DY11 7WF
Telephone: 01562 732190

Email privatesectorhousing@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

Alternatively, you can find further information on Wyre Forest District Council's Empty Homes Strategy on the website, where you can also report empty properties. www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk