

REPORT FROM: HOUSING, HEALTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SERVICES MANAGER

TO: BRIERFIELD AND REEDLEY COMMITTEE

DATE: 7th JUNE, 2016

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RAILWAY STREET AREA OF BRIERFIELD EMPTY HOMES UPDATE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform the Committee on the position regarding the management of vacant houses in the Railway Street neighbourhood.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Committee note the action that is being taken to manage empty houses in the area.
- (2) That the Committee note the position regarding each of the empty properties.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) To ensure that empty properties in the Railway Street Neighbourhood are managed
- (2) To ensure that the Committee is kept up to date with the position regarding each of the empty properties in the area.

ISSUE

1. There are a number of empty homes in the Railway Street Area of Brierfield. These houses are a wasted resource, attract anti social behaviour and detract from the amenity of the area.
2. The Committee, following its walk about in the area with senior officers and members of the Councils Executive in 2015, have asked for an update on the numbers and condition of the empty properties in the Railway Street Area. They already receive update reports from other Service Areas on Problem Sites, Environmental Crime and Enforcement Action within Brierfield.

3. There are currently 158 long term (over 6 months) empty residential properties in the Brierfield and Reedley Committee area which represents 3.0% of the housing stock covered by the Brierfield and Reedley Committees wards. This is a reduction of 45 since April 2014.
4. The Empty property officer has visited all the empty properties in the Railway Street area and details of the condition and current status can be found in the attached list in appendix 1.
5. There are 41 empty properties in the Railway Street Area and of these properties 10 have been refurbished and are ready for re-occupation. 10 are undergoing renovation work which we anticipate will be completed in 2016 and 21 houses are empty, in good order, not boarded up and not considered a problem.
6. There are 22 properties that have recently become occupied and a further 6 that have been sold or are being marketed
7. The empty homes officer is therefore concentrating his efforts into contacting and encouraging the owners of the remaining 21 properties to bring them back into occupation and they are being given advice and the offer of assistance through our Empty Property Loans Scheme. Where appropriate they are also referred on to other Service Areas to tackle problems such as litter in backyards and collapsing rear walls. Progress on bringing these properties back into use will be reported as part of the regular Empty Homes Report that covers the whole of the Area Committee's area.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: None

Financial: None

Legal: None

Risk Management: None

Health and Safety: As empty houses attract anti social behaviour there are potential risks for officers inspecting these houses. However there are departmental risk assessments in place to minimise these hazards

Sustainability: The reoccupation of empty properties will bring a valuable resource back into use.

Community Safety: Empty houses attract anti social behaviour and fly tipping bringing them back into use will reduce these activities and improve the neighbourhoods.

Equality and Diversity: None

APPENDICES

1. Vacant Properties in the Railway Street Area of Brierfield

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Vacant Properties in the Railway Street Area of Brierfield

Railway Terrace

Number 2 Now Occupied

Number 4 is empty and in good order externally, but has been gutted internally and is the subject of a legal dispute between the owner, the contractor and the Council.

Number 8 Now Occupied

Number 18 Now Occupied

Number 20 Renovated and now occupied

Number 30 appears to have been empty for a considerable time. The front curtilage is overgrown and the door and window have been boarded up at the front together with the ground floor window at the rear. The rear yard is littered with rubbish and rubble and the gate is missing allowing free access.

Albion Street

Number 4 is undergoing total renovation – (visited with Councillor Hanif and radio presenter) with double dormer on rear elevation.

Number 6 Now Occupied

Number 8 Recently become empty

Number 11 Now Occupied

Number 13 has fallen empty, but not causing any problem

Number 15 Now Occupied

Number 26 is being marketed For Sale

Number 28 is empty, has been the subject of some internal renovation work in the recent past, is in general good order with the ground floor windows boarded up front and rear.

Number 30 is empty, in good order and being marketed “For Sale”. Now Occupied

Number 34 Now Occupied

Number 36 Recently become empty

Milton Street

Number 14 Rossendale Borough Council manage this property

Guildford Street

Number 3 **Now Occupied**

Number 7 **Now Occupied**

Number 18 is undergoing renovation work. **Near complete**

Number 25 **Now Occupied**

Number 30 **For Sale**

Montague Street

Number 1 **To Let**

Number 5 **Now Occupied**

Number 8 **Now Occupied**

Number 10 is empty and boarded up. It has been the subject of a recent fire where no major damage has resulted.

Number 18 is empty, in good order and not causing any problems.

Number 24 is empty, in good order and not causing any problems. **Now Occupied**

Number 34/36 **is being renovated to form one house with No 36**

Numbers 38/40 are empty and in a derelict condition but a commitment has been received from both owners to renovate and bring the properties back into live use in the near future.

Regent Street

Number 15 **Now Occupied**

Number 27 **Now Occupied**

Number 29 **Now Occupied**

Number 31 is boarded up, generally in good order and not causing any problems.

Sackville Street

Number 1 **Now Occupied**

Number 3 **Now Occupied**

Number 5 is empty, generally in good order with signs of internal renovation work.

Number 7 is empty and in poor condition. The rain water pipe is missing, resulting in dampness to the front elevation wall and the door glazing has been smashed.

Number 8 **Now Occupied**

Number 12 **For Sale**

Number 15a boarding has been removed. This property is attached to number 38 Montague Street where a commitment has been made to renovate.

Number 17 **To Let**

Number 21 is empty and generally in a poor condition. The door and windows have been boarded up. The front elevation gutter is broken and causing dampness.

Number 23 Recently become empty

Number 25 **Undergoing renovation.**

Number 29 **Rossendale Borough Council**

Number 34 has been tinned up since last visit

Number 39 **Fully renovated under Loan Scheme and awaiting tenant.**

Cambridge Street

Numbers 6 and 8 10 and 12 are in a very poor/derelict condition and could be considered for Compulsory Purchase procedure.

Number 3 has recently fallen vacant and is boarded up

Number 9 **Now Occupied**

Number 7 **Now Occupied**

Number 11 is empty and the ground floor door and window have been boarded up. At the rear the door and window have been barred/grilled, the first floor window glazing is cracked and the rear yard gate is missing. **Recently sold and boarded up**

Number 13 **Now Occupied**

Oxford Street

Number 5 **Undergoing renovation**

Number 9 is empty and in a poor condition. The front elevation window has been boarded up and the door skylight glazing has been smashed.

Numbers 11 **Undergoing renovation**

Number 13 **Now Occupied**

Number 28 **Now Occupied**

Numbers 30/32 **Recently Sold**

Number 34 is empty and in a derelict state, but the owner has made a commitment to renovate in the near future.

Carlton Street

Number 6 **Undergoing renovation**

Ross Street

Number 11 **Now Occupied**