

REPORT FROM: Housing, Health and Economic Development Services
Manager
TO: Barrowford and Western Parishes Committee
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FOR INFORMATION

VACANT HOUSES BY WARD

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform the Committee on the position regarding the numbers of vacant house in each of the wards in the Committee's area.

ISSUE

1. There are a number of known vacant houses in the Barrowford and Western Parishes Committee's wards. These houses are a wasted resource, attract anti-social behaviour and detract from the amenity of the area.
2. The Committee have asked for the number of vacant properties in each of the wards covered by the Committee to be reported to them.
3. The Empty Property Loan scheme was extended to cover all areas of the Borough in 2014 and we have received 97 applications for assistance with 2 being in the Barrowford and Western Parishes Committee wards. However we are finding that when we have provided schedules of work properties are being improved and the financial assistance is not being taken up.
4. There are currently 106 empty residential properties in the Barrowford and Western Parishes Committee area which represents 2.5% of the housing stock covered by the Committees wards
5. The table below shows the number of empty properties in each ward for over 2 years and over 6 months up to 2 years.

Ward	Over 2 years	Over 6 months up to 2 years	Total
Barrowford	13	48	61
Blacko and Higherford	6	9	15
Higham and Pendleside	3	15	18
Old Laund Booth	5	7	12
		Committee Area Total	106

6. The owners of all these empty houses have been written to and the Empty Homes Officers from Private Sector Housing is constantly monitoring the properties and in contact with the owners and they are being encouraged to take bring the property back into use. Where owners inform us of their intention to renovate the property we offer loan assistance and monitor the house to ensure that the renovations proceed and do not stall.

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

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None