

REPORT FROM: Housing, Health & Economic Development Manager

TO: Brierfield and Reedley Committee

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Brierfield Empty Homes Update

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform the Committee on the current position with each of the vacant houses in Brierfield.

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 Brierfield 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 Brierfield. These houses are a wasted resource, attract anti social behaviour and detract from the amenity of the area.
2. The Committee, at its meeting on 6th September 2016 have asked for an update on the numbers and condition of the empty properties in the Brierfield Area. They already receive update reports from other Service Areas on Problem Sites, Environmental Crime and Enforcement Action within Brierfield.

3. There are currently 123 long term (over 6 months) empty residential properties in the Brierfield and Reedley Committee area which represents 3.1% of the housing stock covered by the Brierfield and Reedley Committees wards.
4. The Empty property officer has visited all the empty properties in the Brierfield area and details of the condition and current status can be found in the attached list in appendix 1.
5. There were 146 empty properties in Brierfield on the 1st April 2016 and of these properties 56 properties have come back into occupation since the 1st April 2016 a further 24 have been refurbished or are undergoing renovation work which we anticipate will be completed in 2016 and 47 houses are empty, in good order, not boarded up and not considered a problem.
6. There are 23 that have been sold or are being marketed. However, 19 properties have become empty since the beginning of the financial year
7. The empty homes officer is therefore concentrating his efforts into contacting and encouraging the owners of the remaining 29 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 Brierfield - **(For members of the Committee only)**

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None