

**REPORT FROM:** HOUSING, HEALTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
SERVICES MANAGER

**TO:** EXECUTIVE

**DATE:** 15<sup>th</sup> MARCH, 2018

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**LONG TERM EMPTY PROPERTIES TO BE CONSIDERED  
FOR COMPULSORY PURCHASE**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide the Executive with a list of properties that could be considered for compulsory purchase across the Borough.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) The Executive approve a programme of potential Compulsory Purchase of the properties listed in appendix 1.
- (2) The Executive agree to receive future reports to agree Compulsory Purchase of individual properties.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

To allow the effective management of long term problem properties across the Borough

**ISSUE**

The Executive, at its meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> December agreed a fund of £150,000 to allow for the compulsory purchase, initially of four properties in Cambridge Street Brierfield and that a further list of long term empty properties across the borough be considered.

Since the report to the Executive in December the owner of no 10 and 12 Cambridge Street has acquired no 8 and is in negotiation with the solicitors acting for the executors of No 6. He has also given assurances to the Council that he proposes to start work renovating the properties in March. On this basis we are proposing that any further work on the compulsory purchase of these properties be suspended but that we continue to monitor progress on renovation works.

A range of proactive work has been undertaken by Housing, Health and Economic Development Services, since 2012 as part of the Empty Homes Plan. The actions so far have resulted in a

significant reduction in the numbers from over 2131 in 2008/9 to the present level of 976 but there are still some problem properties across the Borough.

The Empty Homes Officer has carried out a review of the long term empty properties across the borough and has identified properties listed in appendix 1 as properties where the owners are either untraceable or have refused to carry out any work to bring the properties back into use. Some of these have previously been highlighted by Area Committees as problem buildings.

It is proposed that the following criteria are used to prioritise the properties in appendix 1 so as to deal with the worst ones first;

- Length of time property vacant
- Condition of property and impact on local environment/neighbouring properties
- Unwillingness of owner to engage in dialogue with Council
- Frequency of enforcement action taken to secure property/causing nuisance to neighbouring property/fly tipping/ overgrown garden
- Debt relating to works-in- default and non-payment of Council Tax.

The council proposes to acquire the properties, on a rolling programme, through the use of compulsory purchase powers under The Housing Act 1985 and sell them unimproved under a development agreement to ensure that work is carried out to bring them back into use. It is envisaged that each property will be acquired and sold separately as we believe there is sufficient demand for unimproved properties.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

**Policy:** Nothing arising from this report

**Financial:** The Executive approved a budget of £150,000 at its meeting in December 2017. Properties will be acquired on a rolling basis that does not exceed this amount, taking into account the purchase cost and any associated Compulsory Purchase costs

**Legal:** Each property acquisition Compulsory Purchase will require a resolution from the Council. Compulsory Purchase will be under powers granted in the Housing Act 1985

**Risk Management:** There is a significant risk that these properties will deteriorate and cause problems to the neighboring properties.

**Health and Safety:** Nothing arising from this report

**Sustainability:** Empty properties are a wasted resource acquiring these properties will bring this resource back into use

**Community Safety:** Reducing empty properties can reduce the anti-social behaviour that is often associated with them

**Equality and Diversity:** None

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 Recommendations

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

*None*

## Appendix1

### Recommendations

Address	No of days empty	Comment
7 Sackville Street, Brierfield	4000	Poor condition distant Owner
38 Every Street, Brierfield	1941	Boarded and deteriorating – local owner
21 William Street, Brierfield	4206	– probate - not causing a problem, but deteriorating
11 William Street, Brierfield	2209	local owner – not causing a problem, but deteriorating
7 Grange Avenue	1200	local owner - property not causing a problem, but deteriorating
462 Wheatley Lane Road	6033	distant owner - not causing a problem, but deteriorating
479 Wheatley Lane Road	2999	Not causing a problem, but deteriorating – owner cannot be traced
Glen Cottage, Rainhall Road, Barnoldswick	2103	Poor condition – local owner – probate issues
34 Brogden Street, Barnoldswick	8767	local owner - property not causing a problem, but deteriorating
3 Peter Street Colne	207	boarded – distant owner - property not causing a problem, but deteriorating
34 Salisbury Street, Colne	1120	Not causing a problem, but deteriorating – distant owner
24 Ruskin Avenue, Colne	1812	Overgrown garden and poor condition – local owner
47 North Street, Colne	1801	Poor condition and some boarding – distant owner
35 Walton Street, Colne	3411	distant owner – subject of external environmental improvements – property deteriorating
29 Walton Street , Colne	1983	distant owner – subject of external environmental improvements – property deteriorating
26 Keighley Avenue, Colne	811	distant owner – property deteriorating
65 Fir Street Nelson	7936	Poor condition and some boarding – local owner
16 Elizabeth Street Nelson	2480	Poor condition – distant owner
8 Beddington Street, Nelson	1332	– local owner - property not causing a problem, but deteriorating
71 Macleod Street, Nelson	3842	local owner - property not causing a problem, but deteriorating
225 Every Street, Nelson	1922	local owner - property not causing a problem, but deteriorating
36 Princess Street, Nelson	1451	Manchester owner– property deteriorating
31 Camden Street, Nelson	1784	local owner – not causing a problem, but deteriorating
20 Holly Street, Nelson	950	local owner – not causing a problem, but deteriorating
83 Holly Street, Nelson	1549	local owner – not causing a problem, but deteriorating

6 Cooper Street, Nelson	1364	local owner – not causing a problem, but deteriorating
45 Elizabeth Street, Nelson	1372	Poor condition and deteriorating – distant owner
5 Ragland Street Nelson	895	Manchester owner – property deteriorating
24 Norfolk Street, Nelson	6941	Not causing a problem, but deteriorating - distant owner
64 Every Street, Nelson	4654	local owner – property not causing a problem, but deteriorating
69 Stanley Street, Nelson	2336	local owner - property not causing a problem, but deteriorating