

REPORT FROM: HOUSING, HEALTH AND ENGINEERING SERVICES
MANAGER

TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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COMPULSORY PURCHASE OF LONG TERM EMPTY PROPERTIES UPDATE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform the Policy and Resources Committee of the current position with regard to the properties highlighted for compulsory purchase across the Borough.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) The Policy and Resources Committee note the current position of properties approved for CPO.
- (2) The Committee agree that officers begin to prepare the necessary documentation for compulsory purchase of the following properties:

24 Ruskin Avenue Colne
47North Street Colne
24 Norfolk Street Nelson
- (3) The Committee receive future reports to agree Compulsory Purchase of these individual properties.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

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

ISSUE

The Executive, at its meeting on the 15th March 2018 agreed to the compulsory purchase of properties that had been empty for over 2 years and considered to be impacting on the local environment/neighbouring properties where the owners are unknown or unwilling to engage with the Council.

Since the report in March 2018 the Policy and Resources Committee have approved the Compulsory purchase of three properties. Two properties in Nelson and one in Barnoldswick.

Legal Services are currently preparing the necessary documentation to submit to the Secretary of State for the Nelson properties but I can confirm that the Barnoldswick property has been renovated and is now occupied.

Since the report to the Executive in December 2017 the owner of the empty properties on Cambridge Street Brierfield completed the purchase and now has all four properties in his ownership.

The owner is working with the Council, has obtained building regulation approval for the renovation work and has recently started to refurbish the properties.

Since March 2018 we have been monitoring the 33 properties previously approved for compulsory purchase and the current position is in the table below.

Current Position	No of Properties
CPO	2
Occupied	8
Undergoing Renovation	5
For Sale	1
Sold	2
No Change	15
Total	33

The Empty Homes Officer has carried out a review of the long term empty properties where there has been no change and has identified a further 3 properties, 24 Ruskin Avenue Colne, 47 North Street Colne and 24 Norfolk Street Nelson 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 and we expect to bring individual reports to the Committee for approval later in the year, subject to the Committee agreeing that this work is progressed.

We are also carrying out some preliminary investigation into fire damaged properties on Leeds Road to determine whether compulsory purchase is a viable option as we are led to believe that there is a substantial mortgage on the properties. Once we have determined the best course of action we will bring a further report for the committee's approval.

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

None

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None