

# KNOWSLEY

Empty Homes Strategy 2016 - 2021



Knowsley Council





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## FOREWORD

I am delighted to introduce the new Empty Homes Strategy for Knowsley. The previous Strategy which was launched in 2011 took a proactive approach to tackling long term empty homes and as a result this has made significant reductions in the number of long term (over two years) empty homes. We continue to proactively manage the remaining 2,000+ empty homes we have in the Borough and our new Strategy will make a big difference in returning those to occupancy. Tackling empty homes is a national and local priority, primarily as they serve as a wasted housing resource in a time when housing demand is outstripping supply.

We have taken a balanced approach in returning long term empty homes into occupancy using a mix of advice and assistance to support empty home owners. However, where collaborative working fails we make no apology for taking appropriate and robust enforcement action which helps protect our communities from blight. This approach effectively prioritised the most problematic empty homes in the Borough and in 2011 Knowsley became the first Authority in the Liverpool City Region to make use of the Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO) power which enabled us to refurbish and take over the management of a problematic empty property - a tool which we have successfully used on a further eight occasions since.

This Strategy aims to build on the excellent progress we have already made and I am confident that through a co-ordinated approach with our local partners we can continue to tackle the blight that these empty homes can have on our local communities and more importantly make available those homes for new occupancy where they are needed most.



**Councillor Brian O'Hare**  
Cabinet Lead Member for  
Regeneration and Economic Development





## INTRODUCTION

In 2013 Knowsley Council published the 'Strategy for Knowsley' which set out the Knowsley Partnership's long term vision to make Knowsley the 'Borough of Choice' by 2023. This Strategy was reviewed in 2016 and one of the goals of this Strategy is to improve Knowsley 'The Place' and provide attractive and sustainable neighbourhoods, towns and green spaces. In support of these goals the Council's Corporate Plan sets out four key priorities - one of these being to deliver business, growth and housing. The Council's overarching Housing Strategy sets out the housing priorities for the period 2016 - 2021 so that Knowsley has a housing offer that meets the needs of existing residents and attracts economically active people to the Borough. The Empty Homes Strategy is an important element of the overarching Housing Strategy, along with other key strategies and policies as shown below.

The Council's Local Plan sets out the requirement to deliver 450 net new homes per annum between 2010 and 2028. It is therefore vital that existing housing continues to be utilised effectively otherwise the need to deliver new housing would inevitably need to be higher. An effective and resourced Empty Homes Strategy will play a vital part in achieving the vision of making Knowsley the Borough of Choice.





## What is an empty home?

There are two main types of empty home:

**Short-term empty homes** are those homes that have been unoccupied for up to six months. They are often in the process of being sold or between lettings, are being renovated and improved prior to occupation or awaiting probate following the death of the occupier. Short-term empty homes are a natural part of the housing market. Within Knowsley, over half of all empty homes fall within this category, and whilst they do not normally require any intervention, we will carefully monitor this group of empty properties as naturally some of them transition to become long-term empty homes.

**Long-term empty homes** are those homes that have been empty for six months or longer. It is these properties that this Strategy will focus on. We will continue to focus our resources on bringing these long-term empty homes back into use, particularly those homes that have been empty for longer e.g. two years or more, as these homes often cause our residents the most problems.



Knowsley Council is fully committed to tackling empty homes and this is reflected by the £0.300m investment made by the Council to support enhanced empty homes activity. Refreshing the Empty Homes Strategy ensures that we continue to have a current, targeted approach to tackling empty homes. One of the principal aims is to not have any homes empty for five years or more. This will have a considerable impact, as longer term empty homes tend to have the greatest effect on our neighbourhoods. In turn, this will positively contribute towards ensuring that Knowsley has a housing offer that meets the needs of existing residents and helps attract economically active people to the Borough.

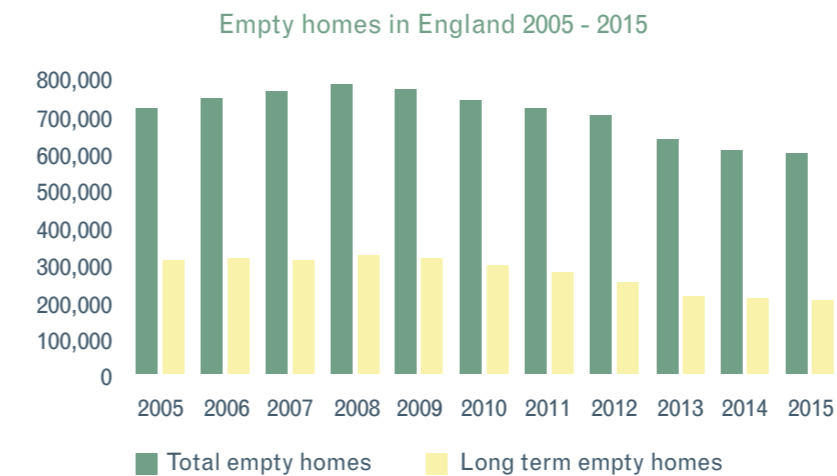
The Delivery Plan, which is attached at Appendix 1, sets out a range of actions within each thematic priority which will form the basis from which service delivery will be achieved.



## THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

According to Government figures there are over 23 million dwellings in England and over 600,000 of these are empty. Of these empty homes 200,000 have been unoccupied for over six months.

In the last ten years nationally, the number of empty homes has decreased from 723,509 in 2005 to 600,179 in 2015. Much of this decrease has been seen since 2011 when there were 719,352 empty homes recorded in England. There has also been a significant reduction in the number of homes empty for six months or more in recent years as they peaked at 326,954 in 2008 falling to 203,596 by 2015. This trend between 2005 and 2015 is illustrated in Figure 1 below.



DCLG ONS Table 615: Vacant dwellings by local authority district: England

In 2011, the Coalition Government published 'Laying the Foundations' - A Housing Strategy for England, which demonstrated a clear commitment to tackling empty homes, in particular through:

- the awarding of New Homes Bonus to Local Authorities where empty homes have been brought back into use;
- investing £100m funding to bring problematic empty homes back into use; and
- affording Local Authorities the opportunity to charge an Empty Homes Premium on long term empty homes.

The New Homes Bonus allocated funding to Local Authorities for a six year period as a reward for increasing housing supply, which included the return to use of empty properties.

The investment of £100m to bring empty properties back into use as part of the Affordable Homes Programme was welcomed both nationally and locally. Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, and Wirral Councils adopted a collaborative approach to access this funding through the formation of the 'Restore' consortium.



Changes to Council Tax exemptions were also introduced in April 2012 to act as an incentive for owners of empty properties to return them to occupancy. It was decided in Knowsley that unoccupied properties would receive 100% discount for one month only and empty home owners would be charged a premium of 50% on properties empty for over two years.

The current Government has so far not announced any further support for empty homes and a recent consultation sought views on a proposal to reduce the New Homes Bonus payment from six to four years.

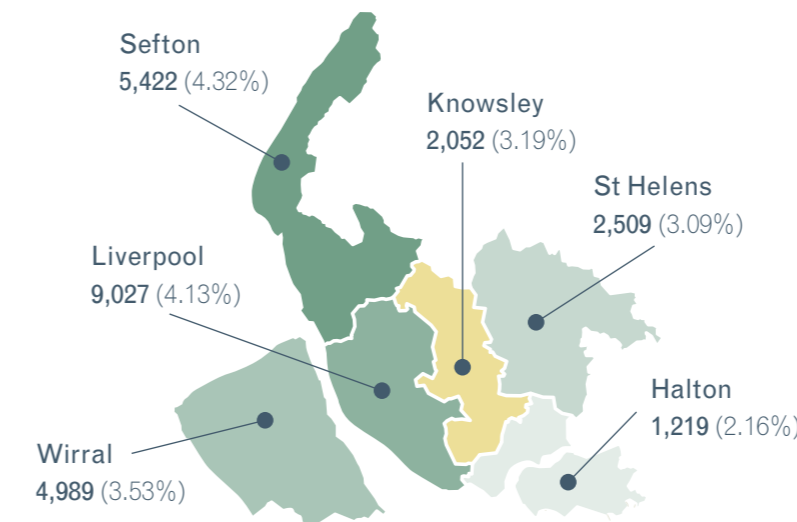
## THE NORTH WEST REGION AND LIVERPOOL CITY REGION CONTEXT

According to the latest Government figures the North West Region has 109,485 empty homes and total number of 3,193,675 dwellings. This means that 3.43% of the housing stock is lying empty which is the highest percentage of any region in country.

The Liverpool City Region has 25,218 empty properties from a total number of 692,670 dwellings which equates to 3.64% of the overall stock illustrating that empty properties continue to be a problem in the Liverpool City Region and in the wider North West.

Whilst the North West and the Liverpool City Region have higher than the national average percentage of stock which is empty, Knowsley is actually performing well in comparison to some of our City Region partners as shown below. Only Halton and St Helens have a lower percentage of empty homes than Knowsley.

The Liverpool City Region Local Investment Plan 2011- 2015 highlighted the significance of bringing empty properties back into use through partnership working, identification of priority areas and effective use of enforcement powers and these figures further highlight the need to tackle empty homes as a City Region.



England	610,123	(2.61%)
Liverpool City Region	25,218	(3.64%)
South West	63,507	(2.58%)
South East	84,666	(2.25%)
London	56,715	(1.63%)
East of England	58,197	(2.25%)
West Midlands	63,991	(2.65%)
East Midlands	58,197	(2.25%)
Yorkshire & Humber	77,117	(3.27%)
North West	109,485	(3.43%)
North East	40,708	(3.40%)

DCLG ONS Table 615: Vacant dwellings by local authority district: England and Table 100: Number of Dwellings by Tenure and district: England





## EMPTY HOMES IN KNOWSLEY

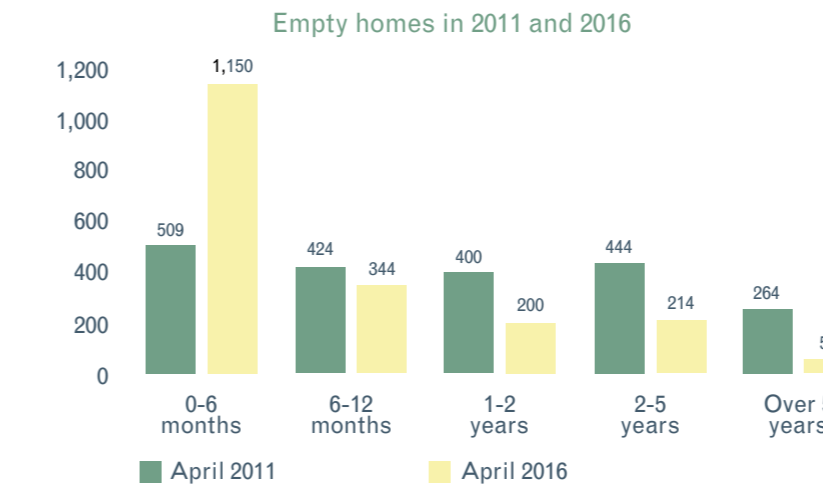
Between April 2011 and April 2016 there has been a 4% reduction in the overall number of empty homes in the Borough from 2,041 to 1,962. Since 2011 there was a significant reduction from 444 to 214 in the over two years empty category and a reduction from 264 to 54 in the over five years empty homes. These reductions exceeded the targets of 30% and 15% which formed part of the vision of the previous Strategy. In this same time period the number of empty homes which had been empty between zero to six months had increased from 509 to 1,150. At present this is considered to be as a result of increased market movement associated with improved economic activity but will be closely monitored to determine whether there are any underlying factors influencing this trend.



Before



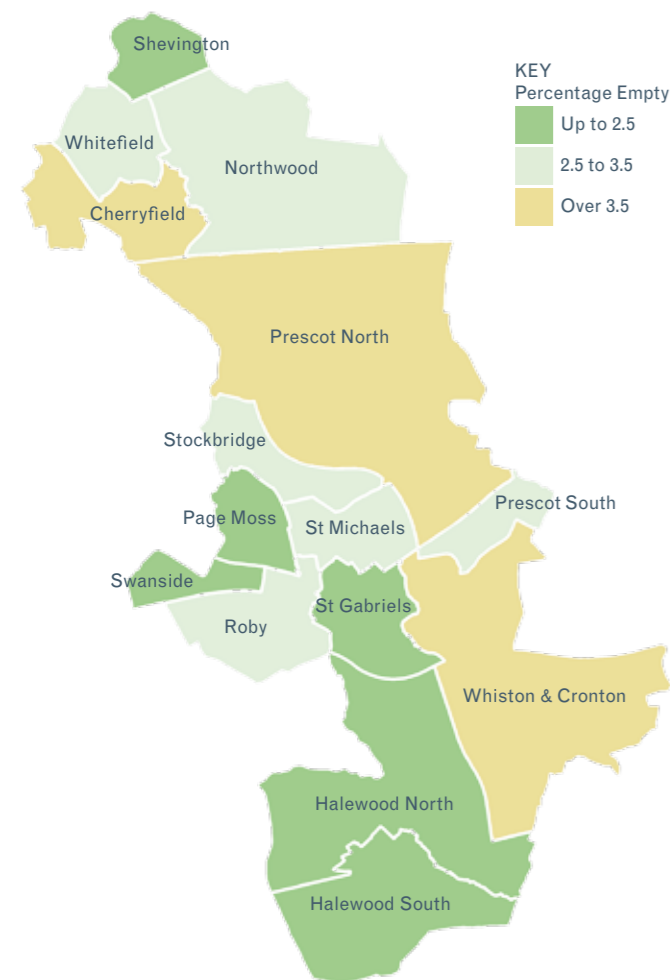
After



Empty Homes Strategy 2011 and Empty Homes List April 2016



Empty Homes in Knowsley at March 2016 based on Council Tax Data



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Ward	%
Cherryfield	4.2
Halewood North	2.1
Halewood South	2.0
Northwood	2.6
Page Moss	2.4
Prescot North	4.0
Prescot South	2.7
Roby	3.1
Shevington	1.7
St Gabriels	2.3
St Michaels	2.5
Stockbridge	3.1
Swanside	2.2
Whiston & Cronton	4.4
Whitefield	2.6

Of the overall 1,962 empty homes in the Borough, 70% or 1,381 of these are in private ownership. Whilst this would indicate that much of our attention should be focussed on the private sector there is also recognition that the Council needs to work closely with Registered Providers to support them to reduce the number of empty homes in their ownership. This is further highlighted by the demand for affordable housing as current figures show 40,183 households on the Sub Regional Housing Register, with 2,660 households in Knowsley currently seeking quality, affordable housing.

## SUCCESSSES OF THE PREVIOUS EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY

The success of the previous Strategy was achieved as a result of the following key initiatives:

- the adoption of a standardised communication process to proactively engage with empty property owners;
- the adoption of a prioritisation scoring matrix which ensured that resources were directed towards tackling the most problematic empty homes first;
- the utilisation of a range of enforcement approaches to both minimise the visual impact of empty homes and bring them back into use;
- the use of the Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO) power which was used on nine occasions. Knowsley remains the only Liverpool City Region Authority to have used this power;
- the launch of an annual informative newsletter for empty home owners;
- the launch of a designated matchmaker scheme to connect empty home owners with potential purchasers; and
- effective City Region partnership working to successfully secure external funding through the Restore Consortium.

### Living Over the Shops Scheme in Prescot (LOTS)

Forming part of the 'Restore' Consortium, consisting of Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral Councils, Knowsley was successful in bidding for a share of £16.75m from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to tackle empty properties across the Liverpool City Region.

In total, Knowsley secured £0.229m and developed a scheme to convert disused commercial space in Prescot Town Centre. Prescot presented a unique opportunity as the town centre had a high concentration of empty properties, and without a co-ordinated approach, these properties had little chance of being brought back into use. Furthermore the Prescot Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI), a five year project to repair and restore of the town's historic fabric and improve Prescot's appearance, was due to start. It was felt the two schemes would complement each other to make Prescot the vibrant place it once was.

The schemes were also funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Knowsley Council and other local partners and would see around £4m invested into the town, highlighting Prescot's rich heritage, attracting new business whilst creating new homes.

All 14 properties converted are now fully accredited under Knowsley's Landlord Accreditation Scheme and available to rent at affordable rent for a period of five years.



## Living Over the Shops Case Study

The building is used as a dry cleaners with accommodation above and is situated on a prominent gateway corner to Prescott Town Centre. The building had fallen into disrepair and required significant works to be brought back into use.

The work has made dramatic changes to the exterior of the building, which has seen decades of paint stripped away to reveal beautiful brickwork and stonework, traditional cast rainwater works and a renovated slate roof. In addition the twentieth century shop front has been replaced with a more traditional all-timber shop front which complements the building's architecture.

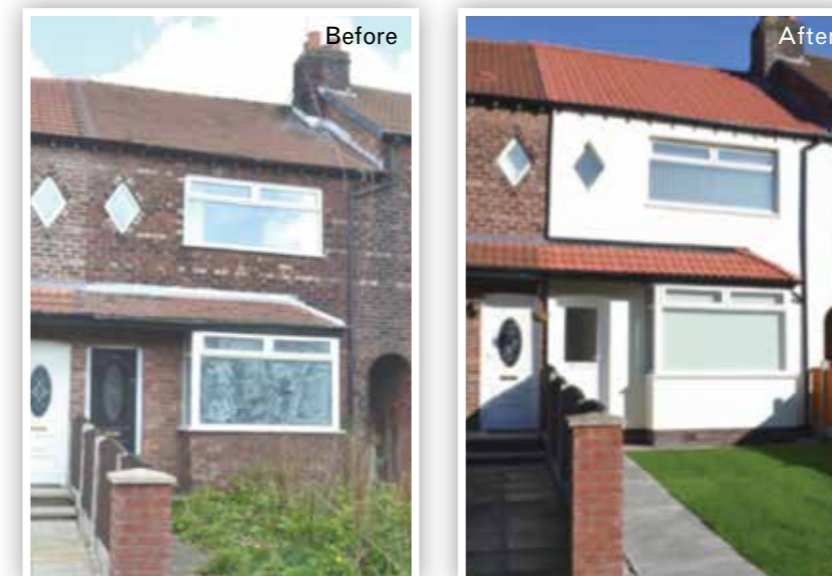
The two bedroom flat above benefited from a full renovation, including contemporary open plan kitchen/living area, full re-wire, new heating system and the original sash windows professionally restored.

The project was supported by the Prescott Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI), including the Heritage Lottery Fund award, Homes and Communities Agency Empty Homes Cluster Fund and additional funding provided by Knowsley Council and the property owner.



## Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs)

An EDMO gives the Council the power to improve the standard of a property and identify a tenant. The Council then recovers its costs through the rent paid by the new tenant. EDMOs are approved by a Residential Property Tribunal, and a total of nine have been approved to date in Knowsley. The first two cases granted in 2011 and 2012 are leased to Knowsley Housing Trust and have now been occupied by the same tenant for four years and two years respectively. A further three EDMOs were revoked during the interim stage as this action was sufficient for the properties to be brought back into occupation.



## EDMO Case Study

If a property remains empty after an interim EDMO has been granted we have the option to make a final EDMO and carry out works in default. This approach was used to take control of a problem property which had been left empty as a blight on the community for eight years. Officers used the EDMO to secure the two bedroom house in Whiston and appointed a contractor to carry out a wide range of improvement works which included re-roofing, new kitchen, new bathroom, full electrical re-wire and a full decoration of the property. The property also received energy saving measures which included a new gas central heating boiler and the installation of external wall insulation to the property. After overseeing the improvements, Knowsley Council handed the property over to Knowsley Housing Trust to manage. The house has now been let out to a local resident through the Property Pool Plus allocation scheme.





## TACKLING EMPTY HOMES

While an empty property is the responsibility of the owner, Knowsley Council aims to engage with and support empty home owners wherever possible. As a Council there are a range of ways in which we can intervene with empty homes from an informal approach, such as telephone calls and sending out a newsletter, to offering repayable grants to eligible empty home owners, escalating to enforcement action where necessary. The previous Strategy introduced a standard approach for addressing empty homes which means that when a property is empty for a period of six months the empty homes newsletter is sent out and at the two year mark a standard letter process begins which opens a dialogue with owners and makes them aware of the Council's position and possible actions if the property remains empty.

Two years has previously been identified as a useful marker in time as homes are often empty to allow renovation works to be completed or for legal issues such as probate to be resolved and this was deemed an appropriate length of time before active intervention was required. The 2016 - 2021 Strategy will look to tackle empty homes based on the length of time they have been empty, however, we will also establish the reason why a property became empty. This proactive approach will also be flexible in that it will not prevent problematic homes from being tackled should they cause a nuisance to communities irrespective of how long they have been empty.

There is a range of possible reasons why empty homes remain unoccupied and this engagement process aims to understand those reasons which then informs what tailored support the Council may be able to offer. A key issue for empty home owners is a lack of funding to complete necessary works to their property and many owners state this as their reason why the buildings remain empty. Other potential reasons include:

- time for renovation works to take place;
- issues with Probate;
- owner waiting for the right time to sell;
- difficulty sourcing tenants;
- legal issues;
- owners expectations of the property's value;
- owner not living locally and having inadequate management arrangements in place.

A range of legislation exists for those owners who will not engage to help tackle empty homes including:

- Improvement Notices under the Housing Act 2004;
- repairs required to dangerous buildings under the Building Act 1984;
- enforced sale under section 103 of the Law of Property Act 1925;
- use can also made of section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act to tackle properties deemed to post a detriment to the visual amenity of the area;
- Empty Dwelling Management Orders under the Housing Act 2004.



## THE EMPTY HOMES PROGRAMME

The Corporate Plan 2015 - 2019 identified empty homes as a priority in Knowsley as part of the plan to create attractive and sustainable neighbourhoods. As a result the Empty Homes Programme has been created with 140 empty homes being targeted in the over two to five years empty category. Empty home owners who are not actively trying to bring their property back into use will face enforcement action and this work will be supported by the Council investment of £0.300m which will be used to support engagement and enforcement action as required.

The Council will utilise funding in a way to support improvement works, whilst ensuring that the full amount is recovered within an agreed period which will ensure that public funds which are used to support empty home improvements are available in future through recycling to support further empty homes activity. It is estimated that if the identified 140 empty homes are brought back into occupancy this could generate up to £0.840m New Homes Bonus income at £0.001m per house for each of the six years following occupancy at a time when Local Authorities are increasingly required to generate their own revenue to replace the revenue support grant from Government.

## CONSULTATION

A range of stakeholders were consulted in the development of this Strategy including empty home owners, neighbours of empty homes, Merseyside Police, Merseyside Fire Service, Knowsley Housing Trust (KHT), Villages Housing Association and colleagues from other services such as Environmental Health, Planning and Building Control and Community Safety.

The consultees recommended the Council should:

- continue to take a proactive approach and look to engage empty property owners at the earliest possible stage;
- continue to target problematic empty homes which are generating complaints;
- continue to maintain strong links with local Registered Providers and City Region Local Authorities;
- aim to eradicate over five year empty homes if possible;
- aim to have a better understanding of the churn of empty homes;
- conduct some research to better understand why there has been increase in 0-6 months empty homes;
- improve and better advertise the information available through the Council's website.

The consultation highlighted five key themes which stakeholders felt should inform the Strategy:

1. Ongoing communication and engagement
2. Effective enforcement
3. Enhanced advice and support to owners and residents
4. Strong partnership working
5. Enhanced knowledge and information





## OUR VISION

### Our Vision

To reduce the number of empty homes across the Borough and thus creating more housing opportunities for existing and potential future residents

### To achieve this we will:

1. reduce the impact of empty homes on communities by ensuring early proactive and tailored engagement with home owners;
2. target the most problematic empty homes through a structured prioritisation process;
3. reduce the actual number of homes that have been empty for more than two years; and
4. aim to eradicate over five year empty homes by 2021.





## MONITORING PROGRESS

In order to deliver the Empty Homes Strategy 2016 - 21, tasks have been identified and are set out in an initial twelve month Delivery Plan. The Plan has been developed and agreed in consultation with stakeholders who are essential to the successful implementation of the Strategy.

Monitoring of progress towards achieving the actions set out within the Plan will be undertaken within the Empty Homes Steering Group. This will be informed by quarterly updates from the Council's Exchequer Services who administer Council Tax. On an annual basis the Delivery Plan will be refreshed and reported to the Cabinet Lead Member for Regeneration and Economic Development and new actions will be identified which support the priorities set out in the Strategy.

To ensure that empty homes remain high on the corporate agenda the Council will produce an annual empty homes report which will be available to the Cabinet Lead Member with responsibility for empty homes and the Senior Managers Group. This will report the direction of travel in tackling empty homes, provide a comparison of performance within the City Region, monitor the success in meeting actions set out within the Delivery Plan and identify future action being proposed towards tackling empty homes.



Before



After



# APPENDIX 1 Delivery Plan

## Ongoing communication and engagement

Task	Sub tasks/Milestones	Outcomes	Target	Lead	Timescales
Programme of engagement with private sector owners of empty homes	Continue to raise awareness of empty homes with owners after property has been empty for 6 months by sending out an annual newsletter	All owners become aware of advice and support available once their properties have been empty for 6 months	All owners of private properties that have been empty between 6 - 18 months receive newsletter signposting them to advice and support	Environmental Health and Consumer Protection Team	Annual process
	Tailored letters (3 stages) to all empty home owners programmed on an annual basis as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deceased owner: 1st letter after 12 months empty</li> <li>Company owner: 1st letter after 18 months empty</li> <li>Individual owner: 1st letter after 18 months empty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification of the reasons why properties have been empty and the owners future intentions</li> <li>Provide advice, encouragement and identify solutions to overcome barriers</li> <li>Monitor progress of owners and escalate case for action where appropriate</li> </ul>	Owners of private properties that have been empty for more than 12 -18 months are actively engaged  <b>Empty Homes Returned to Use 140 in 2016 - 2017</b>	Environmental Health and Consumer Protection Team	Annual process
	Empty Homes which are subject to a complaint irrespective of length of time empty are communicated following same 3 letter process				

Effective enforcement					
Task	Sub tasks/Milestones	Outcomes	Target	Lead	Timescales
Prioritise empty homes	All properties escalated for prioritisation will be scored against the Matrix (Appendix 2) and placed in rank order for action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The top 20 empty homes are identified</li> <li>Properties below the top 20 are rank ordered for action</li> </ul>	All empty homes that have been empty for more than 2 years or identified through complaints are prioritised for action where communication has failed to achieve a successful outcome	Environmental Health and Consumer Protection Team	Annual process
Utilise the most appropriate enforcement approaches to return empty homes to occupation	Top 20 prioritised empty homes appraised for most appropriate enforcement solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Empty Homes creating the greatest problems for communities are tackled first</li> <li>The Council focuses resources on tackling properties which have the greatest impact on limited reactive resources (invest to save)</li> <li>Over the lifetime of the strategy the impact of problematic properties on Council and Neighbourhoods is reduced</li> </ul>	Enforcement Action taken against the owner of empty homes in line with corporate enforcement	Environmental Health and Consumer Protection Team	Ongoing
	To include consideration of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Act 2004 powers e.g. Improvement Notices and Empty Dwelling Management Orders</li> <li>Enforced Sale</li> <li>Compulsory Purchase</li> </ul>				
	Develop a Service Level Agreement with the Property and Development Team for the management and delivery of enforcement works	Enforcement works delivered in an effective and timely manner	Service Level Agreement in place during 2016 - 2017	Strategic Housing Team	Service Level Agreement completed by Quarter 3 2016 - 2017



Task	Sub tasks/Milestones	Outcomes	Target	Lead	Timescales
Utilise the most appropriate enforcement approaches to minimise the impact of an empty home	Provide a coordinated response to effectively tackle immediate problems presented by empty homes	Prevent empty homes causing a statutory nuisance e.g. damp, accumulations of refuse, graffiti	All complaints responded to within 3 days*  *subject to review currently being undertaken	Environmental Health and Consumer Protection	As required
		Minimise the visual impact of an empty homes on the surrounding neighbourhood	All complaints acknowledged within 5 days	Group Manager Development	As required
		Ensure properties remain safe and secure	All complaints concerning dangerous structures responded to on the same day	Environmental Health and Consumer Protection	As required
Assess the feasibility of delivering a targeted area-based approach to tackling empty homes	Complete a feasibility assessment of taking an area-based approach to tackling empty homes	Feasibility assessment completed	Feasibility assessment completed during 2016 - 2017	Environmental Health and Consumer Protection Team	Feasibility assessment completed during 2016 - 2017

### Enhanced advice and support to owners and residents

Task	Sub tasks/Milestones	Outcomes	Target	Lead	Timescales
Develop information and advice pack for empty homes owners	Review best practise material	Owners of empty homes have access to up to date advice to assist them in returning their property to occupation	Annual review completed during each year of the Delivery Plan	Environmental Health and Consumer Protection Team	Annual review
	Produce Knowsley Empty Homes Pack			Annual review	

Task	Sub tasks/Milestones	Outcomes	Target	Lead	Timescales
	Refresh website area for empty homes and link relevant information			Annual review	
Provide advice to owners who wish to let their property	Owners considering private rental of their property are referred to and receive advice from Landlord Accreditation	Owners receive advice on best practise for operating privately rented accommodation	Ongoing	Strategic Housing Team	Ongoing
Clear process for reporting empty homes	Publicised empty homes telephone number	Residents complaining about empty homes can easily report problem empty homes	Ongoing	Environmental Health and Consumer Protection Team	Ongoing
	Deliver 'Do it online' reporting of empty homes				
Deliver assistance and support for marketing empty homes	Promote assisted sales process through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Matching owners with purchasers</li> <li>Delivering developer open days</li> </ul>	Owners who find it difficult to sell their empty property are assisted in the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote system to introduce prospective purchasers with owners who have indicated they wish to sell their empty home</li> <li>Run a developer open day as required</li> </ul>	Environmental Health and Consumer Protection Team	Ongoing
Offer repayable grants to eligible empty home owners to facilitate the return to occupation of empty homes	Introduce repayable grant for eligible empty home owners where the empty home owner is unable to undertake works required to bring the property back into use without financial assistance, to prevent the property from being left empty because of its condition	Empty home owners have access to repayable grant funding to assist them in returning their property to occupation	Repayable grant available for empty homes owners during 2016 - 2017 to be reviewed and delivered for the remainder of the Strategy lifetime subject to funding availability	Environmental Health and Consumer Protection Team and Strategic Housing Team	Repayable grants offered during 2016 - 2017



### Strong partnership working

Task	Sub tasks/Milestones	Outcomes	Target	Lead	Timescales
Review Knowsley Empty Homes Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review attendees</li> <li>Review Terms of Reference</li> </ul>	Forum continues to meet to share relevant information and agree priorities and shared solutions	Annual Forum meeting or other communication means	Environmental Health and Consumer Protection Team	Annual Forum meeting or other communication means during the lifetime of the Strategy
Review management arrangements for empty homes where the local authority has taken control	Management process refined for KMBC/ Registered Provider partners delivery of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lease management</li> <li>Empty Dwelling Management Orders</li> </ul>	Empty Homes are returned to occupation through the management of empty homes being taken over through agreed or enforcement backed arrangements	Annual review to be completed	Strategic Housing Team	Ongoing
Work with Registered Providers to explore all available options to bring empty homes back into use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly liaison meetings with the 2 largest Registered Providers</li> <li>Complete options appraisals for problematic empty homes in partnership with Registered Providers and other key agencies to explore all available for options for bring empty homes back into use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a clear understanding of the extent of empty social housing within Knowsley</li> <li>Agreed approach to increase the number empty social housing stock being returned to use and reduce the length of time voids remain empty</li> <li>Deliver innovative solutions for problematic empty homes based working with Registered Providers and other key agencies</li> </ul>	10% reduction in the number (to be reviewed after year 1) empty social homes over 6 months empty for VHA & KHT (of those that can be returned to occupation e.g. not identified for demolition/ regeneration)	Strategic Housing Team	Ongoing

### Enhanced knowledge and information

Task	Sub tasks/Milestones	Outcomes	Target	Lead	Timescales
Implement standardised empty homes monitoring	Standardised reporting of empty homes monitoring	Actual improvements in terms of the numbers of empty homes and % of stock can be compared for localities across the borough and the borough itself over the lifetime of the strategy  Closely monitor trends relating to the number of 0-6 month empty homes to establish if there are any underlying factors	Corporate Plan quarterly performance reports  Project performance reports	Environmental Health and Consumer Protection	As required
Utilise data management system to record all empty homes cases	Configure CAPS Uniform database	Case management ensures that all information is recorded consistently  Performance reports can be generated to monitor performance	All new 2 year proactive engagement cases and complaints are recorded on CAPS	Environmental Health and Consumer Protection Team	Ongoing
Support the work of the Liverpool City Region	Attend the City Region Empty Homes Forum  Share best practise and intelligence  Explore opportunities for closer working in relation to enforcement activity	Share resource and outcomes in developing new initiatives and best practise	Attend all forums	Environmental Health and Consumer Protection Team and Strategic Housing Team	Ongoing



Task	Sub tasks/Milestones	Outcomes	Target	Lead	Timescales
Develop understanding of actual cost of returning empty homes to occupation to identify best value and promote service	Develop time recording for areas of work relating to empty homes  Costs annual processes  Compare costs of different approaches	Develop a full understanding of the cost and potential savings that proactive empty homes intervention derives	Cost report presented to EMT	Environmental Health and Consumer Protection Team	Ongoing

## APPENDIX 2 Prioritisation Scoring Matrix

	Comment	Score
<b>Property Condition</b>		
Property disrepair (+ 5pts)		
Windows/doors boarded up (+ 5pts)		
Overgrown garden (+ 5pts)		
Vermin (+5pts)		
Other (+5pts)		
<b>Anti-Social Behaviour</b>		
Arson (+5pts)		
Graffiti (general + 5pts offensive + 10pts)		
Refuse dumped (+ 5pts)		
Youths congregating and entering onto property (+5pts)		
Other (specify) (+ 5pts)		
<b>Property background</b>		
Length of time vacant (variable score)		
No. of Complaints (different people) (for each add 2pts)		
Petition (30+ signatories) submitted from local community (+50pts)		
Referrals from: Police, Fire Service, Area Relationship Director, Councillors, or Member of Parliament (for each add 2pts)		
No. of enforcement actions (+ 5pts for each)		
Property actively being marketed (-10pts)		
Property currently being renovated (-10pts)		
<b>Location</b>		
Property either side empty (+5pts for 1 property + 15pts for both neighbouring properties being empty)		
Additional empty properties in the road (+5pts for each additional beyond neighbouring empty properties)		
Property located in top 6 wards for empty homes (+ 5pts)		
Property located on main arterial road (+5pts)		
Located in area of Housing Demand (10pts - 40pts)		
Area of Affordability (5pts or 10pts)		

Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_



**Length of Time Vacant** **Points**

1 - 2 years	2
2 - 3 years	4
3 - 4 years	6
4 - 5 years	8
5 years +	10

**Level of Demand** **Points**

Property in Level of Demand A	10
Property in Level of Demand B	20
Property in Level of Demand C	25
Property in Level of Demand D	30
Property in Level of Demand E	40

**Level of Affordability\*** **Points**

Medium Level of Affordability	5
High Level of Affordability	10

\* The methodology used to identify which areas are deemed as 'In demand' or 'Affordable' will be confirmed as the strategy goes live in order to ensure the most current local picture is used.





