



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

AREA PANEL 3 20 JUNE 2007

Report of the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood, Social Cohesion and Housing Strategy

Vacant and derelict properties.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1.1 At the Area Panel 3 meeting of 21 March 2007, a resident requested information on the state of some of the empty and derelict properties in our area. The resident asked to be advised on what is to happen in order to improve the 'visual amenity' of the neighbourhoods. In particular, Leopold Street, Dashwood Street and Mount Carmel Street. The resident referred to section 215 of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act which gives powers to local authorities to address the problems of derelict and empty properties and why is the Council not making more use of these powers.
- 1.2 At the meeting, Area panel 3 requested a report back from the relevant department on current work being undertaken in relation to empty and derelict properties in the area. Information requested by the panel was as follows:
 - Progress/status report on properties in the area, in particular, properties on Leopold, Dashwood and Mount Carmel Street.
 - Location of empty properties in Abbey, Arboretum and Normanton wards
 - Whether the properties are privately owned or by a public or statutory agency
 - What is to be done with the properties
 - Success or achievements to date in the area
- 1.3 **General**

The Council's strategy in the Hartington Street Renewal Area has been to tackle the more serious long-term vacant properties with CPO powers rather than S215. The advantage of this approach over S215 is that it guarantees the future responsible ownership and management of the buildings, and their future occupation. It is therefore a more complete and long-term solution than S215, which just tackles the *symptoms* of neglect.

Negotiations with owners coupled with the threat of CPO are also current with respect to some properties in Arboretum square. Our CPO programme is expected to result in a Council resolution in July, followed by submission of the order to the secretary of state in the autumn.

1.4 **Mt Carmel Street**

No 2 Mt Carmel Street, despite its condition was actually occupied until November last year and as such was not subject to empty property enforcement action. However, we have recently commenced discussions with the owner, and are advising on options regarding sale, or renovation and then sale. Action prior to this time has proved difficult due to the vulnerable nature of the former occupant.

1.5 **Leopold street**

Numbers 22/23/24 on the corner of Normanton road are the most problematic. These are now subject to CPO, along with a number of other properties in the area, and we now have an officer dedicated to this work. Freeth Cartwright solicitors have been instructed to advise and undertake the legal aspects of the case.

The Council's formal resolution is expected in July, with submission to the secretary of state expected in the autumn.

Number 35 Leopold Street has also been empty and derelict for a number of years. Dialogue with the owners along with the threat of CPO has resulted in an agreed sale of the property, which should be concluded in June. Improvement works are already underway.

1.6 **Dashwood street.**

The shop on the corner of Dashwood Street and Normanton road has been an eyesore for a number of years. Being a commercial unit it has been outside of the remit of the Housing and Advice Services section. However, the potential of the site as a car park has been identified in the recent Normanton Rd study. Furthermore, its possible acquisition as part of the Rose hill Market Renewal Project will be looked at by the project board.

1.7 **Location of properties and nature of ownership**

The department has a detailed list of the location and ownership status of all empty and derelict properties across the city. However, it is advised that this information is not published in the public domain as a list of addresses of vacant properties, if falling into the wrong hands, could be used for the purposes of robbery, squatting and other criminal and anti social behaviour.

1.8 **What is to be done with the properties**

We attempt to trace the owners of all properties referred to us, and try to open discussions as to the best way to bring the property back into use. We ask the owner for their intentions, and if they have no definite plans will assist with an informal assessment and 'option appraisal'. In certain circumstances we can provide financial assistance with renovations. If the owner is unwilling to act we will consider enforcement action which in extreme cases can result in a CPO, as with the very difficult properties described above.

This service applies to vacant residential properties only

1.9 **Success or achievements to date in the area**

After the properties on Leopold street the most problematic empty property in the whole of Derby has been 15 Hartington street. However, a combination of cajolement and threat of CPO has resulted in substantial improvements to it in the last six months. We are presently considering how we might support the completion of the project and see full reoccupation.

Perhaps one of the most prominent eyesores outside of the renewal area was 195 Upper Dale road.

With Council assistance this long-term vacant and derelict mixed-use property has been restored and renovated. It now provides two shop units and two apartments to let. At present it is fully occupied. **Please see Appendix C.**

Other prominent properties now back in use that we have recently been actively involved in are 2 Harrington street, 141 Mill Hill Lane, and 18-20 Leacroft Rd. These are all large, multi-occupancy buildings that have given rise to a number of complaints and referrals.

PROPOSED ACTION

2.1 To note the report.

For more information contact:	Jeremy Mason	01332 256172	e-mail Jeremy.mason@derby.gov.uk
Background papers:			
List of appendices:	APPENIDX A – 195 UPPER DALE ROAD NORMANTON		

APPENDIX A – 195 UPPER DALE ROAD NORMANTON

The Empty Property Service, based in Housing & Advice Services, aims to give advice and assistance to bring empty homes back into beneficial occupation.



BEFORE

One of the more problematic and eyesore properties to be adversely affecting our streets was this mixed-use building on **Upper Dale Road** – comprising shop units on the ground floor and self-contained flats on the first floor.



BEFORE

Vacant and derelict for in excess of ten years, the Empty Property Service provided financial assistance to a new purchaser, to enable a buy-out and implement a high quality refurbishment programme.



AFTER

Purchased last autumn, the property was renovated over a three-month period and then reoccupied early this year. (2006)



AFTER

Residents have expressed their delight at seeing a long-term problem property finally brought back to use, to the benefit of everyone in the locality.



AFTER

For more information contact Jeremy Mason, Empty Property Officer, on 256172.

