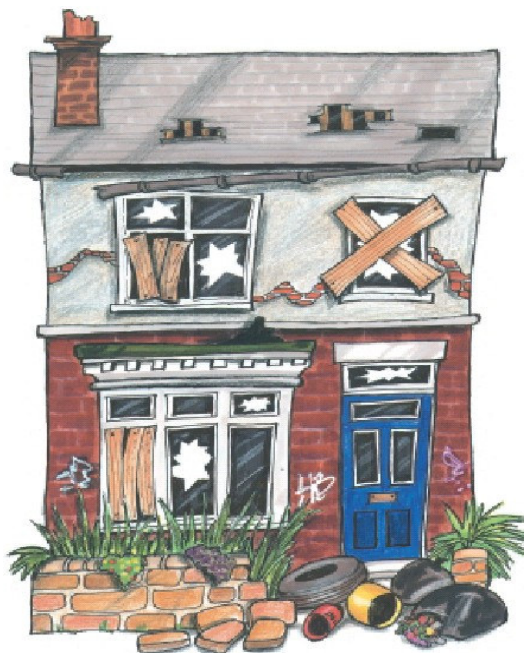




DERBY CITY COUNCIL

**Empty
homes
are
wasted
homes!**



EMPTY PROPERTY STRATEGY

Contents

	Page
1. Foreword – Councillor Gerrard	3
Terminology	
2. Introduction	4
• The nature and extent of the problem	
• The national context	
• The situation in Derby	
3. The Corporate context	7
• The Council's corporate themes	
• The Council's Housing Strategy	
4. Aims and objectives of the Empty Property Strategy	8
5. Achieving strategic objectives	9
6. Delivery plan	13
7. Monitoring progress	16

Appendices

Glossary of terms

1. Foreword – by Councillor Richard Gerrard

- 1.1 In a society where thousands of households and individuals are homeless, and thousands more live in housing unsuitable for their requirements, empty properties, quite simply, are a wasted resource.
- 1.2 They also create areas of dereliction and decay, attracting crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 1.3 Consequently, if we are to succeed in our aim to be ‘a best value Council’ and to make Derby ‘a great place to live’ then the empty property challenge is one that **must** be met.
- 1.4 I am pleased, therefore, to introduce the Council’s Empty Property Strategy.
- 1.5 The strategy outlines the national context, and then sets out the extent of the problem within Derby itself. It analyses previous successful empty property activity in the city, and provides a detailed framework for further action.
- 1.6 Of course, as changes occur - in housing markets; the size and scope of our citizens’ housing needs; and the legal framework - so shall the suitability of the measures outlined in the strategy also change. It is therefore a working document which will be subject to regular re-evaluation and evolve over time.
- 1.7 Nevertheless, a well-planned and considered approach is crucial to tackling the problems caused by vacant buildings, and this is what the Empty Property Strategy, EPS, provides. Its success depends upon the backing and commitment of the entire Council, along with other key partners. Please give it your support.

Empty homes are wasted homes – let’s tackle this waste together.

Councillor Richard Gerrard

Cabinet Member for Housing and Social Inclusion

Terminology

We have taken advice from the Council’s plain English guidance when writing this strategy. However, we have had to use some technical terminology but, where we have done this, we have provided an explanation. We have inserted referenced footnotes at the bottom of some pages.

We have also added a glossary of terms and abbreviations at section 9.

2. Introduction

The nature and extent of the problem

2.1 As outlined in the foreword, empty properties are a waste of scarce resources, whilst also contributing to urban decline. They are in fact linked with, and contribute to, a range of associated problems such as:

- lost private rental income and Council Tax revenue
- reduction in capital value of the property, and neighbouring properties¹,
- increased rate of deterioration and decline in the fabric of the building
- increased vulnerability to vandalism, squatting and anti-social behaviour
- neighbourhood blight.

2.2 Empty properties, then, are directly detrimental to both public and individual finances, and to the day-to-day conditions in the neighbourhoods in which we live.

2.3 In bringing empty properties back into use, we aim to benefit:

- individuals - prospective purchasers and tenants - by increasing housing availability and choice
- the community, by improving the local environment
- owners and landlords, by improving the condition of the property and turning it into a productive asset
- the broader environment, by reducing the need for new build on greenfield sites.

2.4 We are seeking to advantage all sections of society, while giving particular emphasis to the need to contribute to the regeneration of those parts of the city in greatest deprivation.

A note on terminology

2.5 'Transactional vacancies'

- a. Inevitably, as properties are bought and sold or rented properties re-let, there will be a period of vacancy in between the changes in occupation. Such 'transactional vacancies' are not usually the cause of problems, but are a normal part of the operation of the housing market.
- b. It is those long-term empties - in excess of six months – which cause most concern. And it is these that should be considered when assessing the extent of the problem and how best to target remedial action.

¹ The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors has estimated that, on average, if you live next door to a long-term empty, your own property is likely to be devalued by 10%.

2.6 'High Demand' versus 'Low Demand' areas

- a. Traditionally, empty property analysis has categorised areas as being either 'high-demand' or 'low-demand':
- b. Empty properties in high-demand areas exacerbate problems such as rising house prices, scarcity of homes across tenures, and loss of private and public income.
- c. Empty properties in low-demand areas are associated with anti social behaviour, urban deterioration, stagnant housing markets, and neighbourhood blight. In extreme cases spiralling decline can result in wholesale abandonment¹.
- d. While the distinction broadly speaking follows a north/south divide, occasionally hot-spots are found in regions otherwise in decline, and, conversely, declining areas are found within regions that are otherwise buoyant.

The National Context

2.7 The supply of housing

- a. Empty homes work came to particular national prominence in 1992, when the total number of vacancies in England was estimated to be in excess of three-quarters of a million dwellings.
- b. Supported by the Housing Corporation, the Empty Homes Agency was established to lobby government, campaign for changes and advise and support local Councils in devising empty property strategies.
- c. This work was originally seen as addressing a **housing** issue – a means of increasing the supply of affordable housing and reducing the need to build on greenfield sites.
- d. However, over the following ten years there has been a gradual shift in focus, away from viewing the work as solely addressing a housing supply issue, to understanding the crucial role it plays in the wider field of **regeneration**.

Neighbourhood Renewal

- 2.8 The government recognises that economic and social decline is particularly concentrated in some of the most deprived of Britain's neighbourhoods. It further recognises that a number of factors such as crime, unemployment, poor health, low levels of education and training, poor housing - including empty homes - contribute to, and are symptoms of, this malaise.

¹ One of the most striking examples of abandonment nationally is seen in the M62 corridor, within an area located roughly between the north of Manchester and Bradford, West Yorkshire. A large part of this region has experienced almost total housing market collapse during the period 1996 – 2001.

2.9 Consequently, in 1997, it commissioned the Social Exclusion Unit, SEU, to work on:

...developing a new and integrated approach to reversing this [neighbourhood] decline¹

2.10 Eighteen Policy Action Teams were established to examine the root causes of this deterioration and to recommend an appropriate response. Their reports – known as PAT Reports - resulted in the formulation of a National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. This strategy addresses all the issues considered pertinent to neighbourhood renewal, but with particular reference to empty homes work it provides for:

'a clear lead role for Local Authorities...[in measures] to tackle low demand and abandonment.'²

2.11 Historically then, empty homes work was stimulated by the need to increase the housing supply, particularly in high demand areas in the south. Nowadays, the major driving force behind such work, particularly in the midlands and the north, comes from the push for neighbourhood renewal.

The situation in Derby

2.11 The situation in Derby mirrors the national picture to some degree in that it contains both areas of high and low demand. More popular areas such as Littleover, Mickleover, Darley and Allestree experience high demand, whereas there is low demand evident in parts of Arboretum, Sinfin, Derwent and Normanton. At present, there is no evidence of abandonment anywhere in the city.

2.12 Irrespective of the demand for the various areas, the empty property challenge in Derby is of considerable magnitude:

- Derby has 4,000 empty properties³
- 300 are council owned
- 2,000 are transactional⁴ vacancies
- leaving 1,700 long-term private sector empties.

2.13 The highest concentrations of empties in Derby are found in certain inner city localities, particularly the Normanton/Peartree Neighbourhood Renewal Areas.

The detrimental effect these empties have on their neighbourhoods is readily apparent. Moreover, the cost in lost Council Tax revenue is approximately £650,000 a year.

¹ The Prime Minister Tony Blair in his foreword to the *New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal*: http://www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/publications/reports/html/action_plan/foreword.htm

² http://www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/publications/reports/html/action_plan/summary.htm

³ Residential dwellings only. Approximate figures as at 1st January 2003.

⁴ Shorter-term empties, that is, reoccupied within six months or less.

3. The corporate context

The Council's corporate themes

- 3.1 The Council, through extensive consultation, evaluation and appraisal, has identified six over-riding corporate themes for the city:¹
- more achievement, more achievers
 - promoting independence, providing protection
 - prosperity for all
 - a great place to live
 - safer communities
 - best value council.
- 3.2 The empty property strategy will have clear links to some, or all, of these themes. These links are demonstrated by its position within the overall Housing Strategy.

The Council's Housing Strategy

- 3.3 The delivery objectives of the Housing and Advice Services Division of the Policy Directorate are derived from the content of the Housing Strategy, which is itself informed by the Council's corporate themes and priorities for the city.
- 3.4 The Housing Strategy, then, sets out the contribution that housing services – in collaboration with other key partners such as Registered Social Landlords, RSLs, can make to the corporate goals of the city, and identifies how this can best be achieved.
- 3.5 A summary of the Housing Strategy objectives is in Appendix B. Those which have a direct bearing on empty property issues are:
- base housing strategy on sound and comprehensive information
 - improve choice of, and access to, safe, energy efficient and affordable housing including reducing empty properties across all tenures
 - protect and enhance homes across all tenures
 - tackle anti-social behaviour and direct investment to reduce crime and the fear of crime
 - contribute to the delivery of the neighbourhood renewal strategy.
 - deliver Best Value services.¹
- 3.6 Returning empty properties back to beneficial use makes a direct contribution to all of these goals because it increases the supply of cross-tenure and affordable housing while also tackling problems of antisocial behaviour and neighbourhood blight.
- 3.7 Its role within the Council's Housing Strategy, as an important tool in regeneration and housing provision, is therefore confirmed.

¹ Derby City Council Housing Strategy 2003-2006, Table 1, P.2-3

4. **Aims and objectives of the Empty Property Strategy**

4.1 The overall aim of the Strategy is to propose and implement a range of measures that will, directly or indirectly, help to return long-term private sector empty properties to beneficial use. To achieve this, we have identified three distinct strategic objectives:

- **to raise awareness of empty property issues**

and gain the commitment and co-operation necessary to succeed in tackling the problem - both from within the Council and externally

- **to assemble relevant, accurate, and up-to-date information**

including data on housing needs, market conditions, changing trends; and to compile an Empty Homes Database

- **to put into effect specific measures so empty properties can be brought back into use**

and to select that mix of tools and actions most appropriate for the City of Derby.

5. Achieving Strategic Objectives

Raising awareness of empty property issues

5.1 Raising awareness within the Council

To raise the profile of empty property issues, it is necessary to adopt a corporate approach, which must include political commitment from councillors. Furthermore, to ensure effective operation of the strategy, and 'joined up' working across the Council, we intend to liaise regularly with each department or division whose work is pertinent to empty property issues. These include:

- **Finance Directorate**
Information on empty properties from Council Tax records is crucial to maintaining an accurate database. It may also be possible to send information to property owners with Council Tax correspondence.
- **Environmental Services**
Environmental Health Officers, in the normal course of their duties, come across many properties that are empty or likely to become empty due to their poor condition. These can be referred to the empty property officer.
- **Community and Housing Strategy Unit**
The Empty Property Strategy is not a stand-alone initiative; it is one part of the overall housing strategy, which, in turn, is derived from the broader corporate strategy of the Council as a whole. Close contact with this section in promoting the policy is therefore crucial.
- **Housing and Advice Services – Private Sector Housing**
Managers and Improvement Officers in this division have been a crucial part of empty property work in the past, and are able to advise on the particular circumstances and history of long-standing problem empties.

They also have established relationships with a number of local private sector housing providers and are fully acquainted with local housing standards. Consequently, they can provide a valuable input into the process of returning empty properties to use.

The Empty Properties team is based within this section.

- **Housing and Advice Services – The Housing Options Centre**
The Housing Options Centre has direct dealings with the public through managing social housing allocations; the Derby Homefinder service; the bond–bank scheme; and the landlord/tenant advice service. It is therefore an invaluable means of access to the city at large in promoting empty property issues.

- **Derby Homes**
Derby Homes is the arm's length organisation now managing the Council's housing stock. With a network of housing offices across the city, staff there are employed in strategic front line locations and are well placed to pass on and receive information from the public. They are also particularly aware of the status of ex-council right-to-buy stock.
- **Planning and Building Control**
Planning officers can provide information on properties that are likely to be shortly returned to use, while the recent appointment of a Brownfield Development Officer provides for complementary working in sites of mixed commercial and residential use. Furthermore, structurally unsound buildings are usually reported to Building Control. Where appropriate, these can be referred to the Empty Property Officer.

5.2 Raising awareness within the community

- **The role of councillors**
Councillors are our link with the community and their ability to publicize and shape local issues is invaluable. With their political and civic links, councillors can promote partnerships within the community, and thus play a major role in maintaining the EPS as high profile.
- **Communications Unit**
This unit is the obvious choice for advice on all promotional and marketing matters and the suitability of various advertising materials and media.
- **Landlords' Forum and landlords' groups throughout the city**
Professional and private Landlords are key players in ensuring private sector empties are reoccupied. They are also likely to provide a major part of the market in the purchase of empties returned for sale, while also providing information regarding market conditions. Their active engagement will therefore be encouraged.
- **Other strategic partners**
The process of returning empties to use usually involves a number of private sector institutions and professional services at some stage in the process. These will include any number of the following:
 - banks / building societies
 - conveyancers
 - estate agents
 - property management companies
 - letting agencies.

To make sure of maximum exposure to all relevant organisations, we should engage these at the outset.

Housing associations are also frontline players in the property market, and therefore have an important role in the disseminating of empty property information and implementing of remedial actions.

- **Promotion of the Empty Property Service**
The best way to 'get the project off the ground' is with an extensive publicity drive. This will happen in January 2003, and will be covered by the local media. To raise the profile of the campaign, we aim to involve as many key stakeholders and partner organisations as possible, including councillors, representatives of the Empty Homes Agency and so on. A mail shot to the owners of the city's long term 'empties' will be organised, as well as a widespread leaflet and poster campaign.

Gathering relevant, accurate, and up-to-date information

5.3 Accurate data collection is essential if we are to:

- gauge the extent of the existing problem
- set SMART targets – **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**chievable, **r**elevant, **t**ime-bound – for reducing the number of problem empties
- measure progress.

5.4 Information on housing needs is readily available from the Housing Needs and Market Study 2001. The specific objective here is to compile a comprehensive database of the empty private sector properties in the Derby city area. Details on individual empties will come from many of the Council departments already listed, but will be further supplemented by:

- land registry searches
- site surveys
- the electoral roll
- mailshots
- calls to the Empty Property hot line, to be set up January 2003.

5.5 The database will be used not only to list the addresses of empties but also to include details such as house type/size, state of repair, owner's preferred action for occupation, any previous enforcement action and so on.

To implement specific measures for bringing empty properties back into use

5.6 There are a number of ways by which specific empty properties may be directly addressed. These include...

- **Financial incentives** – usually renovation grants targeted at empty properties and funded by the Housing Capital Programme.
- **Bond Bank Scheme** – to provide deposits for low-income tenants who would otherwise be unable to move into private sector rented accommodation.
- **Advice** – the owners of empties have often acquired their property through inheritance or some other unplanned event so are unsure about the most suitable course of action. Lack of knowledge about sufficient standards of repair, and concerns about problems that may arise from letting may further inhibit progress.

Similarly, prospective tenants may be concerned about the extent of the obligations they are taking on.

Good advice from the Empty Property Officer and/or the Housing Options Centre is essential to overcome these barriers.

This may take a number of forms, such as:

- to owners about refurbishment, renovation and health and safety standards
 - to owners or prospective landlords about legal aspects of lettings
 - to prospective tenants about tenancies.
- **Registered Social Landlords, RSLs, – purchase and repair** – Housing associations and other registered social landlords can, subject to certain conditions, procure Housing Corporation funds to acquire and renovate empty properties that are currently uninhabitable.
 - **The inner city regeneration initiative**– the Council, working in partnership with Home Housing, has agreed a scheme for the purchase and return to occupation of 150 private sector empties over a three-year period starting April 2000. This scheme was established under the government's Private Finance Initiative, PFI
 - **Housing Association Leasing Schemes, HALS** – in the past, certain RSLs have participated in this type of scheme – where the property is renovated and put on the market to let, the rental income generated or part of it, being used to offset the initial costs and the ongoing management costs. At the end of the agreed period, the property is returned to the control of the owner.
 - **Private sector partners** – the Council is negotiating with a number of key service providers, including letting agents, estate agents and financial institutions, to provide a package of incentives to encourage the owners of private sector empties to return their properties to beneficial use.
 - **Enforcement measures** – properties that have become an eyesore or that may pose a danger to the public may be subject to a range of enforcement measures using a variety of legislation. See Appendix A for a detailed list of measures.

In most cases, failure by the owner to comply with a notice can lead to the Council arranging for the works to be done in default and charging the owner. If the costs cannot be recouped by billing, the owner a charge is placed on the property. These costs may be recoverable by way of an enforced sale.

Alternatively, a number of notices and enforcement actions over a period of years, coupled with long-term non-cooperation, may be the basis for starting a compulsory purchase order, CPO.

6. Delivery Plan

Background

- 6.1 The Council has a long history of effective empty property work and has established a good reputation in this field.
- 6.2 For example, in 1988, a substantial three-storey Victorian property on Hartington Street was compulsorily purchased, and a little later - when some Capital Challenge money became available - was converted into six self-contained flats. The Empty Homes Agency and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, in a joint publication, highlighted the scheme as exemplifying 'good practice'.¹

The 1990s saw a number of new initiatives in operation, including...

- **Rehab For Rent** – a scheme using public funds to 'lever in' private finance to tackle disrepair and return empties to use.
- **Approved Development Funding** – has been sourced regularly to enable the purchase of existing empty properties.
- The establishment of the **East Midlands Empty Property Forum**, and the commissioning, in 1998, of the Good Practice Directory.
- **The Housing Options Centre** – which manages the Joint Housing Register, provides an advice service to private tenants and landlords, and operates the Bond Bank Scheme mentioned at page 13.
- **Regular Landlord Forums** – to ensure consultation with key private sector stakeholders and to disseminate good practice.
- **The Private Finance Initiative, PFI**, with Home Housing Association, see section 5 – commenced April 2000 and ongoing.

The appointment of an Empty Property Officer

- 6.2 More recently, the Council's continued commitment to tackling empty properties was further demonstrated by releasing the funds to recruit a full-time dedicated Empty Property Officer who was appointed in April 2002.
- 6.3 The principal role of the Empty Property Officer, EPO, is one of organisation and facilitation. In discussion with all participants in the process, the EPO must evaluate the suitability of the various tools and measures available and then oversee effective implementation.

¹ *Joined Up Thinking: A Directory of Good Practice for Local Authority Empty Property Strategies*. P.48 The Empty Homes Agency 1998.

6.4 To perform this function satisfactorily, it is necessary to:

- record reports of empty properties from all available sources
- undertake selected site visits, surveys and so on
- establish the particular circumstances of individual properties and advise owners of the most pragmatic options
- follow up progress of specific projects and initiatives
- ensure an up-to-date knowledge and understanding of best practice and new developments in the field is constantly maintained; through ongoing research, consultation and benchmarking, with other experts and practitioners
- generate new proposals and inducements to help and encourage owners bring empties back into use.

The current phase¹

6.5 The Council is building on previous and current successes, while organising extensive consultation and re-evaluation on the best way forward. With this in mind, we are planning a major relaunch and publicity drive in January 2003.

6.6 In the meantime, we have taken, or are in the process of taking, these actions:

- setting up of the Empty Homes web page, with web-form facility for council officers and the public, for speedy referral of empties
- establishing a new empty property database
- introducing an empty property 'Hotline' number
- establishing links with other relevant departments such as Council Tax, Environmental Health and so on
- liaising with the Landlord Forum, and distributing a landlords' questionnaire to inform our understanding of the private sector perspective
- tying in empty property work with other renewal initiatives. Empty property surveys have already been sent to owners within the newly declared Hartington Street Renewal Area
- negotiating with a number of key service providers including letting agents, estate agents and financial institutions to provide a package of incentives to encourage the owners of private sector empties to return their properties to use
- continuing to work closely with national organisations such as The Empty Homes Agency, EHA, and The National Association of Empty Property Practitioners, NAEPP.

¹ Autumn 2002

Latest developments

6.4 **New legislation** – The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002 will replace the current housing grants legislation from 2003/2004. It provides for a more flexible single grant and loan giving power which leaves the decision on targeting and allocation to the discretion of the local Councils. It thus radically changes the way in which funding may be provided and directed, and enables local Council to bring a more strategic focus to their grants policy.

6.5 Bearing this in mind, and having already taken the progressive step of appointing a dedicated Empty Property Officer, we now have the opportunity to fully explore the most appropriate resourcing support to be made available to the function

6.6 The government commented on this issue in a Select Committee report into empty homes by the DTLR, entitled the Sixth Report:

'The government endorses the Committee's view that a pre-requisite for an effective empty property strategy is a 'top-down' commitment from both members and officers within an authority... the person responsible for taking forward an empty homes reduction strategy must receive the full backing of the council (and its resources) .¹

6.7 In addition to directly contributing to bringing empties back into use, financial support has further advantages as it:

- establishes the credibility of the project with third parties and prospective partners
- helps foster the Council's image as 'enabler' rather than 'enforcer'
- is often more cost effective and less time consuming than certain enforcement measures, such as CPOs
- can be targeted to complement other renewal initiatives.

Other initiatives

6.8 As part of the pre-launch, we are also considering:

- targeting the most intensive efforts to particular eyesore properties and within renewal areas
- investigating establishing regular contact with Area Panels and landlords' groups to get grass-roots feedback and with the National Federation of Residential Landlords, NFRL
- drawing up an 'Approved Contractor' list, possibly based on the Quality Mark scheme
- the resurrecting of a HALS scheme with a major RSL
- providing a landlords' training day with the Housing Options Centre

¹ <http://www.housing.dtlr.gov.uk/information/emptyhomes/response/index.htm>

- exploring ways of tying in any grant aid with improved management practices – that is, using the strategic targeting of grant aid to tackle the problems previously experienced as a result of poor management by absentee landlords.

7. Monitoring progress

7.1 The government recognises that bringing vacant homes back into use helps to maximise occupation of the existing housing stock and consequently alleviates the pressure to new-build on green field sites. It also recognises the problem of low demand and abandonment. Consequently, The Urban Task Force, in its final report 'Toward an Urban Renaissance' endorsed the need for local Councils:

'To maintain an empty property strategy that sets clear targets for reducing levels of vacant stock.'¹

7.2 Following this direction, the government has gone on to provide further guidance on how to measure progress toward this goal, by establishing Best Value Performance Indicator 64, BVPI 64. This requires local councils to measure and publish information on the number of privately owned homes brought back into use as a direct result of its actions.²

7.3 Setting a realistic target on how many vacant dwellings we can expect to return to use will be determined by, amongst other things, the funding allocated to the initiative. This, in turn, will be determined by the outcome of the comprehensive review underway as a result of the new Regulatory Reform Order - see section 6.4 - and is therefore subject to further consultation.

7.4 Nevertheless, the Housing Strategy document does identify three preliminary targets and these presently provide the focus for our work ...

- Bring back into use 131 long-term 6+ months empty properties in 2002/03³.
- Ensure no part of Derby has more than 4% of properties standing empty for six or more months by 2004/05 - Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy Target³.
- Ensure no part of Derby has more than 3% of properties standing empty for six or more months by 2007/08 - Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy Target³.

7.5 These targets may be made significantly harder to achieve following the dramatic appreciation in house prices that has occurred in Derby over the last one to two years⁴.

¹<http://www.urban.odpm.gov.uk/whitepaper/taskforce/renais/4.htm#16>

² The exact wording from DTLR is as follows: 'The number of private sector vacant dwellings that are returned into occupation or demolished during 2002/2003 as a direct result of action by the local authority. An authority should include any dwelling that it considers was re-occupied or demolished during the year directly as a result of action it undertook or initiated.'

³ Derby City Council Housing Strategy 2003-2006, Appendix 1: 2002/03 – 2005/06 Action Plan

⁴ This may be the case for two reasons: 1) The PFI scheme with Home Housing may be impeded by the increased cost of acquiring empty homes. 2) The appreciation of the value of these assets makes it an easier option for their owners to do nothing with them while still 'showing a profit'.

Appendix A

Legislation supporting Enforcement Measures

Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Section 215 notices can be served where a property is said to be 'detrimental to the amenities of the neighbourhood'.

Building Act 1984

Provides powers to tackle 'dangerous and ruinous' structures. Sections 76 – 79

Local Government Misc. Provisions Act 1982

Section 29 gives power to the local Council to secure empty properties against access, where there is considered to be a danger to public health.

Environmental Protection Act 1990, sections 79 – 82

These are used to enforce remedy of a condition prejudicial to health or that constitutes a statutory nuisance.

Housing Act 1985

Sections 189 –190 may be used to tackle unfitness or general disrepair.

Law Of Property act 1925, section 101

This may provide the first step to an enforced sale where one of these following applies:

- returning the property to use is crucial to the regeneration of the area
- works in default total £1, 000 or more
- the property has been empty for more than two years.

Housing Act 1985 sections 17, 289.

Local government and Housing Act 1989 section 93

These pieces of legislation provide the basis for commencement of a compulsory purchase order.

Appendix B

Housing Service Strategic Objectives¹

- Base housing strategy on sound and comprehensive information.
- Improve choice of, and access to, safe, energy efficient and affordable housing including reducing empty properties across all tenures.
- Tackle the specific housing needs of Derby's community care and other vulnerable and minority groups.
- Protect and enhance homes across all tenures, and make all council properties meet the government's Decent Homes Standard by 2010 at the latest.
- Tackle anti-social behaviour and direct investment to reduce crime and the fear of crime.
- Use the Housing Service's investment potential and influence to promote training and employment for Derby residents.
- Contribute to the delivery of the Neighbourhood Renewal strategy.
- Deliver Best Value services.
- Facilitate active customer participation.

¹ Derby City Council Housing Strategy 2003-2006, P.2-3

Appendix C

Glossary of terms and abbreviations

BVPI	• Best Value Performance Indicator
CPO	• Compulsory Purchase Order
DTLR	• The Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions
EHA	• Empty Homes Agency
EPS	• Empty Property Strategy
EPO	• Empty Property Officer
HALS	• Housing Association Leasing Scheme
High demand area	• An area where the demand for housing substantially exceeds the supply
Low demand area	• An area where the supply of housing substantially exceeds the demand
NAEPP	• National Association of Empty Property Practitioners
PFI	• Private Finance Initiative
RSL	• Registered Social Landlords or housing associations
SEU	• Social Exclusion Unit
Transactional vacancy	• A property that is vacant for less than six months, usually due to a change in owner or tenant