

Empty property work in Swansea

Introductions

- 1 Sally Jones – Technical Officer
- 1 Huw Morgan – Divisional EHO
- 1 Mark Wade – Community Housing Services Manager

Agenda

Empty property statistics

Measures to bring empty properties back into use

Informal action's

Changes to Council Tax

Any questions

Empty property figures for the Swansea area:

3,428 privately owned
empty properties
(as of 1st April 2014)

1,969 of which have
been empty for more
than 6 months

Last year 94 properties
were brought back to
occupation through
direct action.



Measures to bring empty properties back into use



Annual mail-shot:

Makes owners aware of loans, vat discounts etc.

Identifies the length of time their property has been empty

Confirms potential lost income for that period;

Highlights any key issues (such as changes in council tax rates)

1,732 letters sent out April / May this year

<u>Lost rental income</u>	2 yrs empty	4 yrs empty	6 yrs empty	8 yrs empty	10 yrs empty
2 Bed	£10,908	£21,816	£32,724	£43,632	£54,540
3 Bed	£11,966	£23,932	£35,898	£47,864	£59,830

Legislation allows us to deal with:

Ruinous and dilapidated building;

Faulty rain water goods;

Gardens that are in such a condition as to attract and provide harbourage for rodents;

Properties that are causing a statutory nuisance;

Properties that are prejudicial to health

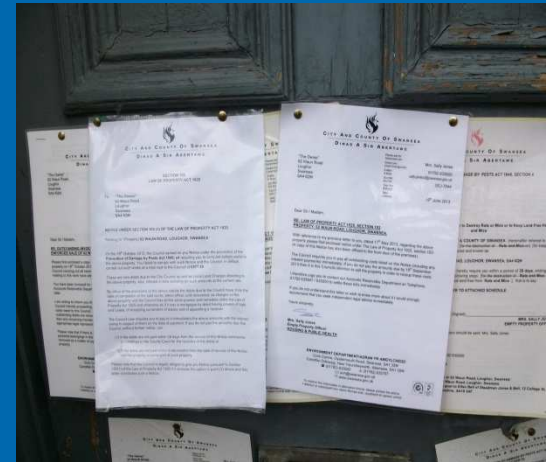
Securing empty buildings that are open to access.

Prosecute an owner for failure to comply with the notice.



Enforced sale of empty properties

- 1 11 properties sold via enforced sale (since 2008);
- 1 4 currently going through the process;
- 1 1 sold by the owner & all debts settled prior to the Council putting into auction;
- 1 1 owner settled a long term debt rather than loose the property via auction.
- 1 Ideal way of dealing with problematic, long term, empty properties;
- 1 New ownership normally leads to improvement & re-occupation.
- 1 No cost to the Council.



Informal actions:

Grant for Nomination rights – a grant of up to £20,000 in return the property must be let for a min of 3 years via the Councils preferred Social Letting Agent.

Houses into Homes Loan scheme – an interest free loan of up to £25,000.

VAT discounts (to 5% for the cost of renovation works)for owners renovating their empty properties – property must have been empty for longer than 2 years,

Mail-shots – to make owners aware of the above (& empty property information pack)



Informal actions *(continued)*;

Advice – on general letting, how to manage the property, instructing builders, insurance, reassurance etc.

City & County of Swansea Web page;

Encouragement to sell - Links with local auctioneers;

Inter department working

Links with the Fire Service & Police

Persuasion, persistence & perseverance



Houses into Homes

Interest free loan of up to £25,000 per unit. Max £150,000 per applicant.

28 Houses into Homes loans have been issued to date.

Value to date £834,000

2 loans repaid so far with a value £40,000. Will be recycled as new loans

16 properties brought back to occupation to date. Further funding available in 2015/16.

Dillwyn Road, Sketty

Before



After



Derelict Bakery at rear of Henrietta Street

Before



After



Castle Street, Loughor

Before



After



Role of the RSL's

A typical long term empty property owner is **very** risk averse. They perhaps want to retain ownership of the property but don't know how to manage renovation work, letting the property etc

An RSL can lease the property on a long term basis, renovate it then rent it out.



And finally...



Any questions?

