

Cabinet (Resources) Panel

7 June 2016

Report title	Empty Property Strategy – 21 Thompson Avenue, Parkfields, Wolverhampton, WV2 3NT – Property Identified for Action	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Peter Bilson City Housing and Assets	
Key decision	No	
In forward plan	No	
Wards affected	Ettingshall	
Accountable director	Lesley Roberts, Strategic Director, Housing	
Originating service	Private Sector Housing	
Accountable officer(s)	Natalie Healy Tel Email	Housing Improvement Officer 01902 550554 natalie.healy@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	n/a	

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is recommended to:

1. Note the property identified for action (21 Thompson Avenue) under the Empty Property Strategy.
2. Authorise Council employees to enter into formal negotiations to acquire the property by agreement.
3. Approve in principle, the use of compulsory purchase action if required.
4. Declare the property surplus to council requirements and dispose of the property on the open market via Auction on condition that the property is refurbished and re-occupied within 6 or 12 months dependent of the scope of works

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request the Panel authorises Council employees to commence formal negotiations with the owner of 21 Thompson Avenue with a view to acquiring the property by agreement.
- 1.2 This decision is in support of City of Wolverhampton Council's Empty Property Strategy.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The property, highlighted on the attached map is a three bedroom semi-detached property that has been empty for a considerable period. Complaints regarding the condition of the property were first received in October 2012.
- 2.2 The council's empty property team served a Section 215 Notice on the property, in order to remove the visual detriment the property and land has on the area. Some work to the property and land was carried out; however, the Notice has not been fully complied with.
- 2.3 As informal negotiations and Notices served have not brought about a solution, it is now considered necessary to take further action under the Empty Properties Strategy.

3.0 Proposals

- 3.1 The recommended course of action is to work with corporate landlord to open formal negotiations with the owner in order to bring the property back into residential use.
- 3.2 It is hoped that the offer to acquire, supported by the possibility of compulsory purchase action will achieve an early resolution.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 The approved housing capital programme includes provision over the medium term for the Empty property strategy with a capital allocation in 2015/16 of £550,000. In the event of negotiated acquisition, the costs will be met from this provision initially. Properties acquired under the empty property strategy are then sold on in order to recoup costs as far as possible.
- 4.2 There are no exceptional circumstances in the case of 21 Thompson Avenue, Wolverhampton. A Notice under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to tidy the buildings and land has not been fully complied with and it will therefore not be necessary to pay the additional statutory 7.5% compensation payment should the Order be confirmed.
- 4.3 Any financial implications arising from the negotiations or the necessity to progress a Compulsory Purchase Order will be the subject of a further report to this Panel.
[JB/20052016/E]

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report at this stage. If required the Solicitor to the Council will undertake the statutory processes involved in the making a Compulsory Purchase Order and subsequently making the General Vesting Declaration.
[RB/23052016/T]

6.0 Equalities implications

- 6.1 This report has been developed in line with Council's overall strategic approach in this area which itself was subject to an equality analysis. Equalities implications for this property have been considered in the light of the strategy throughout the process and in assessing the outcome. An Equality Analysis has been completed and this does not indicate any adverse implications. Bringing an empty property back into use will improve the visual amenity of the area and can make the area more welcoming to some groups covered by the Equality Act 2010, in doing so this will promote participation in public life. Sale of the property will also make available funds to the Council and will be used to provide services to people in housing need.

7.0 Environmental implications

- 7.1 Long term empty properties can have a detrimental impact on neighbourhood sustainability and cause environmental blight. Bringing the property back into residential use will improve the appearance of the neighbourhood, enhance property conditions and contribute to the regeneration of the City, meeting the Council's strategic objectives.

8.0 Human resources implications

- 8.1 There no human resources implications arising from this report.

9.1 Corporate landlord implications

- 9.1 Where applicable, corporate landlord will work with housing to negotiate and agree a valuation with the owner. Should the property be acquired by agreement corporate landlord will arrange for the disposal of the property by auction.

10.0 Schedule of background papers

- An Action Plan to Deliver the Empty Property Strategy 11/01/06;
- Private Sector Empty Property Strategy 2010-2015;
- Wolverhampton Housing Needs Survey 2007.