



# Cabinet (Resources) Panel

## 10 February 2015

<b>Report title</b>	Empty Property Strategy – Corner House, 14a Park Avenue, Wolverhampton, WV1 4AH – Property Identified for Action	
<b>Decision designation</b>	AMBER	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Peter Bilson Economic Regeneration and Prosperity	
<b>Key decision</b>	No	
<b>In forward plan</b>	No	
<b>Wards affected</b>	St. Peter's	
<b>Accountable director</b>	Nick Edwards, Service Director – City Assets	
<b>Originating service</b>	Housing	
<b>Accountable employee(s)</b>	Natalie Healy Tel Email	Housing Improvement Officer 01902 550554 natalie.healy@wolverhampton.gov.uk
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	N/A	

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### Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is recommended:

1. To include Corner House, 14a Park Avenue under the Empty Property Strategy 2010-2015.
2. To authorise employees to enter into formal negotiations to acquire the property by agreement.
3. To approve in principle, the use of compulsory purchase action if required.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request that Cabinet (Resources) Panel authorises employees to commence formal negotiations with the owner of Corner House, 14a Park Avenue with a view to acquiring the property by agreement.
- 1.2 This decision is in support of Wolverhampton City Council's Empty Property Strategy 2010-2015.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The property, highlighted on the attached map, is a three bedroom detached house which falls within a conservation area and has been empty since 2010, according to council tax records. The property has been subject to a high level of anti-social behaviour and is detrimental to the amenity of the area.
- 2.2 Squatters have recently gained access by unauthorised entry to the property, which is causing a significant amount of concern to local residents and in particular the immediate neighbours.
- 2.3 The property has fallen into disrepair and visually is in a very poor condition, which has resulted in the Council's Empty Property team serving notice on the owner under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This has expired and to date the owner has failed to comply or undertake any remedial works.
- 2.4 As informal negotiations with the owner have not resolved the situation or brought about a voluntary solution, it is now considered necessary as a last resort to take further action under the Empty Property Strategy. Voluntary acquisition or compulsory purchase is likely to be the most practical option and best course of action to resolve the on-going situation.

## **3.0 Future use of the property**

- 3.1 The property and land is visually detrimental to neighbouring properties and attracts high levels of anti-social behaviour. This continues to be an area of concern for the Council, Fire Service and Police. The recommended course of action is to open negotiations to acquire the property to enable refurbishment that will lead to owner occupation or private rental.
- 3.2 It is hoped that the possibility of compulsory purchase will bring forward an early resolution.

## **4.0 Financial implications**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. 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.

[CF/19012015/I]

## **5.0 Legal implications**

5.1 The Director of Governance will undertake the statutory processes involved in the making and confirming of the Compulsory Purchase Order and subsequently making the General Vesting Declaration.

[EB/200115/A]

## **6.0 Equalities implications**

6.1 Equalities implications have been considered throughout the process and in assessing the outcome. An initial screening has been completed and this does not indicate any adverse implications.

## **7.0 Environmental implications**

7.1 This report has evidenced the neighbourhood sustainability impact and environmental blight that a long term dilapidated empty property can have in a locality. It will allow a long term empty property to be refurbished providing much needed sustainable accommodation as highlighted in the Housing Needs Survey (2007) and remove a potential magnet for anti-social behaviour and environmental blight. This will improve the appearance of the neighbourhood, enhancing property conditions and contribute to the regeneration of the City

## **8.0 Human resources implications**

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

## **9.0 Corporate landlord implications**

9.1 This property is within the private housing sector and if negotiations to acquire are successful it will be sold at auction for refurbishment and the property will remain in that sector. There are no Corporate Landlord implications.

## **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.

