Waltham Forest Council

EMPTY PROPERTY UPDATE

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Effects of Empty Homes

- Waste of a property that could provide an additional home in an area of high housing need
- Attract crime and anti-social behaviour particularly squatters.
- Reduce the value of surrounding properties
- Are an eyesore in the neighbourhood
- Costly for the owner to maintain
- Costly for the Local Authority to investigate
Empty Properties in Waltham Forest; How many, How long?

• As at June 2013, there were 1,663 privately owned empty properties in Waltham Forest, over half of which had been empty for more than six months. This figure reduced lately due to changes in Council Tax exemptions.

• Probate accounted for 850 properties.

• 200 were Council or Housing Association.

• The rest were privately owned empty for less than six months.
Benefits of Returning Empty Homes Back Into Use

- Provides additional housing
- Reduces crime and vandalism in the area
- Regenerates the area
- Reduces the need for new developments
- Unlocks potential capital for the owner
- If just over half of the empty homes in England were renovated this would represent about 20% of the government’s requirement to deliver three million new homes by 2020.
Approaches to Bringing Empty Homes Back Into Use

- Grants to owners from government funds, there is currently one grant available through GLA, bid pending for Lord Mayors Office funding.
- Enforcement action, EDMO.
- Working with various Consortiums to spend the recently allocated government grant funds.
- Attending auctions to liaise with new purchasers in the borough.
- Mailing empty homeowners to encourage them to utilise their properties.
Grants to owners

- Average grant of £13,000 per property;
- In exchange for exclusive nomination rights for 5-10 years
- Grants funded from the Central Government via GLA bids.
- Grant spend since April 2012 = £237,135
- Total owner contribution in same period = £447,047.
History of Empty Property Grants.

- In 2009/10 five properties were brought back into use via an Empty Property Grant.
- In 2010/11 this increased to thirty four.
- In 2011/12 the figure achieved was 60.
- The total invested by owners in last 3 years (including 2013) is £2,596,687.00.
Why Enforcement Action is Necessary
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