

# FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Fenland District Council trialling new approach to bring empty properties back into use**

Fenland District Council is stepping up its efforts to bring empty homes back into use.

A survey this year estimated that there are over 1,400 properties sitting empty in Fenland – 500 of these have been empty for over six months. The Council wants to better understand the reasons behind this and proactively work with owners to bring their properties back into use.

Following its success in Peterborough, the Council is trialling a three stage model to bring properties back into use – specifically those that have been empty for over six months. This will see a dedicated officer work with property owners to find solutions to the challenges that may prevent a property from being occupied.

There are a number of reasons why properties remain empty. The most common ones include the cost of repairs and/or upkeep, challenging market conditions, difficulty in finding tenants and planning restrictions. However, many of these can be overcome and teams across the Council are well placed to provide specialist support.

This effort is part of the Council's wider Housing focus which aims to improve the standard of accommodation across Fenland.

Councillor Samantha Hoy, Fenland District Council's Portfolio Holder for Housing, said: "Every empty home is an opportunity and could provide a warm, safe haven for a local family. We know that properties can become vacant for a number of reasons, and in more cases than not, they become occupied again within a few months.

"Long-term empty properties can quickly deteriorate and spoil the look of the local area, which is frustrating for the wider community. They also run the risk of being vandalised and attracting anti-social behaviour. The longer they are left, the harder it is to bring them back into use.

"We are committed to working with property owners to bring their properties back into use. We hope that our efforts will increase the amount of good-quality accommodation available for local people and successfully tackle the derelict properties that bring our communities down."

- We are currently advertising for the Private Sector Housing Empty Homes Officer role. Applications are welcomed until October 16<sup>th</sup>. Full information about the role can be found at: <https://www.fenland.gov.uk/article/14456/Private-Sector-Housing-Empty-Homes-Officer---closes---16-10-2019>

**ENDS**

**For more information contact Fenland District Council press office on 01354 622226**