

# Glasgow's Empty Homes Journey

Empty Homes Conference, February 2021

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# Glasgow Shared Services Empty Homes Project

- Empty Homes Officer - 2 Year Pilot commenced August 2015
- Post jointly Funded by SG / GGC and Glasgow Housing Association

## KEY SUCCESSES of PILOT PROJECT

- Over 200 empty homes brought back into use
- Significant Vat savings up to £1m working with partner RSLs
- Secured £2m funding from SG via Town Centre Empty Homes Fund

# Empty Homes Project –Key Dates

- GCC appoint full time EHO November 2017
- GCC appoint 2<sup>nd</sup> full time EHO appointed in July 2018
- Nov 2018 - EHOs develop a pre LTEP warning system for home owners
- EHOs invited to join LTEP Council Tax Appeals Panel
- Jan 2019 – CPO Solicitor appointed to exclusively deal with Housing CPOs
- Dec 2019 – Empty Homes Strategy 2019/2022 approved by GCC outlining 20 point action plan and how strategy will be delivered.
- <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=48787&p=0>

# Key Process Developments

- Database constructed with monthly CT extract to update. All reporting/recording infrastructure developed for GCC Empty Homes Service. (Dec 2017 )
- Closer working relationships between EHOs and Financial Services colleagues -introduction of LTEP of 100% council tax bills from April 2018.
- Process developed with RSLs and Housing Investment Team to record acquisitions of LTE properties – Key Strategic Housing Investment Plan priority.
- Online reporting established on GCC Empty Homes webpage.
- Process created with PRS colleagues to assist major statutory repair long term empty owners with council tax exemptions.(April 2019)
- CPO webpage goes live 25 June 2020 enabling CPOs to proceed.

# Glasgow's Empty Homes Strategy

- Launched 2019
- 7 key aims
- Legislative/Policy Context
- Identifying the Problems
- 20 Point Action Plan
- How Aims and Actions will be Delivered

# Delivery of Action Plan

- Apr 2019 – Feb 2020 - 305 empty homes brought back into use
- EHOs created online survey which was sent to 50 recipients.
- Increase in Empty Homes Referrals via Online and other sources
- Active Caseload increase
- Increase in registrations for Matchmaker Scheme
- Taking action to facilitate common repairs/ target abandoned shops
- Promotion of Compulsory Purchase Orders

# Effective Tool: CPOs

- Dedicated CPO Solicitor
- 47 empty flats/houses approved by Committee for promotion of CPO
- 3 empty shops approved by Committee for promotion of CPO
- 11 CPOs successfully confirmed to date & transferred to RSL
- 7 owners have sold their flats to RSL partners prior to CPO confirmation
- 2 properties brought back into use –EHO working with owners.
- Innovative website development during lockdown enabling CPO process to proceed

# Case Study - Working in Partnership

## Birkenshaw Street

- EHO received referral October 2018
- Property empty since 2009. Former owners deceased
- Engaged with firm of Genealogists
- Family members tracked down
- Property sold at auction and now occupied





# CPO as Enabler

## Beltrees Crescent

- Property empty since April 2013. Owner would not engage with EHO. Complaints from neighbours re property condition.
- Promotion of CPO Approved by Committee in March 2020.
- Owner tidied up property and put up for sale.
- Property now occupied by new family –Nov/Dec 2020.

# Case Study: Area Regeneration & Property Condition

## Allison Street

- Referral received from RSL April 2018
- Flat empty since 2013. Former owners deceased
- EHO eventually tracked down Executor and solicitors. Problems with property title.
- EHO pursued solicitors to resolve.
- Flat sold to RSL in August 2020- to be renovated for social housing

# Case Study: Homelessness Prevention

- Lockdown success story-London Road –Tenement Flat
- Flat- Empty for over 1 year
- Owner approached EHO to help let the property.
- EHO introduced owner to Ypeople, a Scottish charity, commissioned by GCC to provide temporary furnished accommodation via GHSCP
- Flat let to homeless person.

# Challenges

- Difficult to move things forward during current circumstances
- Number of Empty Homes will continue to increase as a result
- Delivering action plan within original timescales
- Tackling property and area blight caused by empty properties
- Powers available to local authorities-need for Compulsory Sales Orders
- Meeting Expectations / Lack of financial Resources