

19/06/2006

New life for derelict homes

DERELICT homes are being brought back into use to prevent danger to children, stop vandalism and cut down on anti-social behaviour.

In the last 12 months Liverpool City Council's Vacant and Dilapidated Property Initiative has brought nearly 500 properties back into use generating an extra £1/2 million pounds in council tax revenue which helps to pay for vital services and keeps bills down.

YET IN EDGE LANE THEY HAVE RENDERED 300 HOUSES EMPTY, THOSE 150 OF THEIRS FOR UP TO EIGHT YEARS, FOLLOWING REFURBISHMENT

The initiative has proved extremely popular with local communities where it has helped stop drug addicts getting into empty houses and causing mayhem. It also means that children cannot get into derelict homes and injure themselves.

Councillor Marilyn Fielding, Liverpool's executive member for neighbourhoods, said: "This is an excellent initiative. It can stop an area going downhill and brings houses back into use for families who desperately need them."

As well as increasing the number of homes in the city, the scheme has advantages for everyone:-

- Stops a build up of rubbish outside empty properties
- Helps avoid rat infestation or other vermin
- Prevents the risk of injury to children who enter an empty property
- Reduces crime and vandalism
- Prevents fly-tipping
- Stops the negative affect on house prices
- Every house brought back into use means extra council tax to pay for vital services

The council receives around 1,000 calls a year by people complaining of the blight caused by long term vacant properties.

Andy Hull, head of Liverpool's Environmental Health and Trading Standards service which runs the initiative, said: "Council members recognised that some properties were blighting their local environment so we introduce this policy which has resulted in a significant number of derelict properties being brought back into use."

The Vacant Housing team were recently commended in the prestigious 'Best in Business' category of the council's 'Staff Oscars'