

Empty Home Case Studies – Appendix D

Two adjacent houses on Hockliffe Road, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 3FL

Property Description – Property A Hockliffe Road is a 2 storey, 2 bedroom end terraced property constructed in the early 1900's. It has brick walls, timber and solid floors and timber framed sash windows. It has been empty for the last 14 years.

Property Description – Property B Hockliffe Road is a 2 storey, 2 bedroom mid terraced house constructed at the same time as A Hockliffe Road. It has timber and solid floors and the ground floor original timber sash windows have been replaced with metal framed casement windows. This property has been empty for the last 15 years.

Both properties have very large rear gardens approximately 5 x 60metres in size. The end of the gardens back onto the bungalows in Miles Avenue. Both gardens are very overgrown and in poor maintenance.

These two properties along with their immediate neighbours on Hockliffe road are being held in trust by a firm of local solicitors who are trying to trace the descendents of the original owner of the property in Brazil. The original owner passed away in the 1920's. The solicitors have no funds to refurbish the properties and have no power to dispose of the properties for sale themselves.



Background

Condition - Both properties are in poor repair, although at present are weather tight. Slates have started to slip from the roof and the timber frame windows on "A" are rotten and require overhauling. "A" does not have an internal bathroom, or kitchen. "B" has an internal bathroom, which requires overhauling, but does not have a kitchen. Neither property has fixed point heating and it is suspected that both properties will need to be rewired. There is no fire separation wall in the lofts of any of the 4 houses and there is no appropriate access to the loft in "A" and "B".

"A" has suffered from penetrating damp to the gable wall and rising damp to the front ground floor of the property. The rising damp is caused by a breach in the DPC from the overgrown vegetation to the front.

"B" has slight penetrating damp to the ground floor front bay window area, again most likely caused by the overgrown vegetation.

Works required – The properties are in poor internal repair and in order to bring the properties back into residential use, some significant repair work is required. Window repair / replacement. Overhaul of the slate roofs paying attention to the flashings. Installation of new kitchens, and bathrooms to the properties. The installation of a bathroom to “A” will require taking some of the space from the second back bedroom, which will make the rear bedroom suitable as a single bedroom only. Some replastering will be required to “A” on the first and ground floor. Both properties will require the installation of a central heating system and provision of insulation to the roof, once firewalls are installed in the loft. Both properties will need decoration throughout.

Both rear gardens will need to be cleared of the overgrown vegetation and it is suspected that there is rubble from the demolished outhouses in the garden as well.

Complaints - numerous enquiries have been made to the Council over the years from members of the public wanting to buy the properties. The front of the properties is starting to become overgrown and disrepair to the properties is more evident.

Action taken to resolve – Investigations into the property began in 2006. In the last year contact has been made with the solicitors of the properties and a survey was undertaken of both properties at the beginning of this month. The solicitor has explained that as the properties stand currently there is no reasonable likelihood of them ever being occupied, due to the lack of the funds the solicitor has in the estate and being unable to sell the properties.

Owner's intention The solicitor is keen to work with the Council on either solution of an EDMO or CPO in order to get the properties reoccupied. There may be some difficulty and additional delay to CPOs for the properties, as the owners of the property cannot be traced.

Likelihood of property worsening - Whilst the solicitors manage the properties to a small extent and ensure that they are secure there appears to be little likelihood that the property will be improved to a condition where it is habitable. It is likely that they will deteriorate further without proper maintenance.

**Cost Comparison of Enforcement Options for “A” Hockliffe Road, Leighton Buzzard.
EDMO**

Account must be taken of the costs of repair to Decent Homes standard and the costs of associated private management (assumed for these purposes to be 15% of the rental value) and a 2% of rental income taken as maintenance over the 7 year period.

All costs associated with serving and carrying out the functions of an EDMO is recoverable under statute either via rental receipts or through a legal charge on the property or direct recovery from the owner (if this is practicable)

Remedial Works (estimation)	£38,900.00
7 Years Management cost (@15% of rental income)	£8,127.00
Maintenance (estimated at 2% of rental income)	£1,083.60
Fee for Residential Property Tribunal	£150.00
Insurance (@ £200 p.a)	<u>£1,400.00</u>
Total Cost	£49,660.60

Rental Income (estimation of market level)

As at July 2008 for a 2 bedroom property = £645 per month
Local housing allowance for a 2 bed property £650 per month

Monthly Rental £645 X 7 Years (assuming no increase)	£54,180.00
Shortfall or Surplus (repaid to owner if surplus)	£4,519.40

CPO

Budget costs for an *uncontested* CPO

Property Cost (independent valuation)	£145,000.00
Basic Loss Payment (7.5% of purchase cost)	£10,875.00
Vendors' Agent Fees	£2,000:00
Vendors' Legal Fees	£1,000:00
Stamp Duty Land Tax (@1%)	£1,450.00
Insurance	£100:00
Legal Costs (Gt Yarmouth Legal Services)	£1,500:00
Land registry	£500:00
Miscellaneous costs (p c sum)	£1,500:00
Officer cost general admin and advertising	<u>£1,000:00</u>

TOTAL £164,925.00

Additional cost £4,000 to £7,000 if contested—

*Also to be taken into account would be either short-term loan costs
or else loss of interest if purchase monies used from reserves*

Council costs may be applied for but are not guaranteed to be paid from the proceeds of the sale

Priority assessment for CPO, EDMO action

Address of property	"A" Hockliffe Road, Leighton Buzzard										
Criteria	Low					High					Score
Voluntary agreement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10
Length of time empty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8
Cost – low cost = High priority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	3
Impact on neighbourhood	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	5
Level of complaints	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	7
Trace ability of owner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8
Staffing resource	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	5
Housing Demand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	4
Previous enforcement action	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1
TOTAL											51

**Cost Comparison of Enforcement Options for “B” Hockliffe Road, Leighton Buzzard.
EDMO**

Account must be taken of the costs of repair to decent homes standard and the costs of associated private management (assumed for these purposes to be 15% of the rental value) and a 2% of rental income taken as maintenance over the 7 year period.

All costs associated with serving and carrying out the functions of an EDMO is recoverable under statute either via rental receipts or through a legal charge on the property or direct recovery from the owner (if this is practicable)

Remedial Works (estimation)	£36,700.00
7 Years Management cost (@15% of rental income)	£8,127.00
Maintenance (estimated at 2% of rental income)	£1,083.60
Fee for Residential Property Tribunal	£150.00
Insurance (@ £200 p.a)	<u>£1,400.00</u>
Total Cost	£47,460.60

Rental Income (estimation of market level)

As at July 2008 for a 2 bedroom property = £645 per month
Local housing allowance for a 2 bed property £650 per month

Monthly Rental £645 X 7 Years (assuming no increase)	£54,180.00
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Shortfall or Surplus (repaid to owner if surplus)	£6,719.40
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CPO

Budget costs for an *uncontested* CPO

Property Cost (independent valuation)	£145,000.00
Basic Loss Payment (7.5% of purchase cost)	£10,875.00
Vendors' Agent Fees	£2,000:00
Vendors' Legal Fees	£1,000:00
Stamp Duty Land Tax (@1%)	£1,450.00
Insurance	£100:00
Legal Costs (Gt Yarmouth Legal Services)	£1,500:00
Land registry	£500:00
Miscellaneous costs (p c sum)	£1,000:00
Officer cost general admin and advertising	<u>£1,000:00</u>

TOTAL	£164,925.00
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Additional cost £4,000 to £7,000 if contested—

*Also to be taken into account would be either short-term loan costs
or else loss of interest if purchase monies used from reserves*

Council costs may be applied for but are not guaranteed to be paid from the proceeds of the sale

Priority assessment for CPO, EDMO action

Address of property	"B" Hockliffe Road, Leighton Buzzard										
Criteria	Low					High					Score
Voluntary agreement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10
Length of time empty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8
Cost – low cost = High priority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	4
Impact on neighbourhood	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	5
Level of complaints	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	7
Trace ability of owner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8
Staffing resource	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	5
Housing Demand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	4
Previous enforcement action	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1
TOTAL											52

“C” The Green, Caddington, Bedfordshire, LU1 4HF

Property Description - “C” The Green is a 2 storey 2 bedroom terraced cottage that was built in the early 1900’s. It has brick walls, timber floors and wood framed sash windows. It was reported to us as empty seven years ago.



Background

Condition - The property is in poor repair with slates missing from the roof, rotten frames and missing panes from windows. The garden at rear is overgrown and full of rubble from the old outhouse and the rear of the property which has collapsed leaving a hole approximately 4sqm. An internal inspection of the house was carried out 2 years ago.

Works Required - In order to bring the property up to standard and return to residential use significant repair work is required including, window repair/replacement, rebuild defective rear elevation including new roof, fascias and gutters, installation of a working kitchen and bathroom, NICEIC and CORGI checks and subsequent work. The property has been open to the elements for a number of years and will require walls re-plastering, floor timbers replacing and decoration throughout.

Complaints - This property is in a conservation area and is an eye sore for local residents. Over the last 10 years they have dealt with people gaining unauthorised access to the property, theft and criminal damage occurring, rats entering residence through unused soil pipe, mice infestation and damage to the neighbours car from roof slates falling.

Action Taken to resolve- Over the last seven years the Private Sector Housing and Building Control Teams have been called out to this property on numerous occasions due to its failing structural stability. The owner has been met on site, and has been offered advice and even financial assistance in the form of a grant.

Notices Served - Notice to provide support at rear of property as structurally unstable January 2002. Requisition for Info served August 2003. Requisition for info served April 2004. Notice to demolish outhouse served August 2004. Notice to secure property April 2005

Owners intention - The owner has always stated his intention is to move back to the property but has never given any timescales or shown any interest in funding to carry out repairs. Minimal repairs required to prevent us taking legal action have been completed. Since August 2005 no further work as been carried out at the property, the owner hasn't been seen and we have had no response to letters.

Likelihood of property worsening - Problems that could occur in the next 12 months - More slates have come off of the roof this year and fallen onto the footpath, which runs along the front of the property, it is possible for a member of the public to be injured by a falling slate. The property is not watertight and both neighbours are suffering damp problems due to this. One neighbour shares the kitchen roof elevation and the risk of the rear collapsing completely and bringing down her kitchen walls and roof increases every year the property is left open to the elements.

Cost Comparison of Enforcement Options for "C" The Green, Caddington.

EDMO

Account must be taken of the costs of repair to decent homes standard and the costs of associated private management (assumed for these purposes to be 15% of the rental value) and a 2% of rental income taken as maintenance over the 7 year period.

All costs associated with serving and carrying out the functions of an EDMO is recoverable under statute either via rental receipts or through a legal charge on the property or direct recovery from the owner (if this is practicable)

Remedial Works (estimation)	£34,200.00
7 Years Management cost (@15% of rental income)	£8,820.00
Maintenance (estimated at 2% of rental income)	£1,176.00
Fee for Residential Property Tribunal	£150.00
Insurance (@ £200 p.a)	<u>£1,400.00</u>
Total Cost	£45,746.00

Rental Income (estimation of market level)

As at July 2008 for a 2 bedroom property = £700 per month
Local housing allowance for a 2 bed property £634.99 per month

Monthly Rental £700 X 7 Years (assuming no increase)	£58,800.00
Shortfall or Surplus (repaid to owner if surplus)	£13,054.00

CPO

Budget costs for an *uncontested* CPO

Property Cost (independent valuation)	£150,000.00
Basic Loss Payment (7.5% of purchase cost)	£11,250.00
Vendors' Agent Fees	£2,000:00
Vendors' Legal Fees	£1,000:00
Stamp Duty Land Tax (@1%)	£1,500.00
Insurance	£100:00
Legal Costs (Gt Yarmouth Legal Services)	£1,500:00
Land registry	£500:00
Miscellaneous costs (p c sum)	£1,000:00
Officer cost general admin and advertising	<u>£1,000:00</u>

TOTAL £169,850.00

Additional cost £4,000 to £7,000 if contested—

Also to be taken into account would be either short-term loan costs or else loss of interest if purchase monies used from reserves

Council costs may be applied for but are not guaranteed to be paid from the proceeds of the sale

Priority assessment for CPO, EDMO action

Address of property	"C" The Green, Caddington										
Criteria	Low					High					Score
Voluntary agreement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1
Length of time empty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	4
Cost – low cost = High priority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8
Impact on neighbourhood	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10
Level of complaints	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8
Trace ability of owner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10
Staffing resource	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	7
Housing Demand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	5
Previous enforcement action	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	7
TOTAL											60

“D”, Totternhoe, LU6 2AN

Property Description - “D” is a 2 storey 3 bedroom semi-detached house built in the early 1930’s. It has tiled roof, cavity walls and double glazed windows. It has been empty for fourteen years.



Background

Condition - The house fails to meet any current fitness standards due to lack of heating and hot water as there is no working boiler. The house is structurally sound but there are various repairs required.

Works Required - In order to bring the property up to standard and return to residential use the following work would be required; unblock guttering, replace rotten soffit boards, new tiles to ground floor bay window, new soil vent and down pipe, pointing to brickwork on side elevation, new window panes, new rear door, NICEIC and CORGI checks and subsequent work and cleaning and decoration throughout.

Complaints - The gardens of the property are being kept in order by the next-door neighbour after years of them being overgrown and being home to rats and mice. The adjoining property did suffer with some damp problems before roof repairs were carried out on the empty property by enforcement action in December 2005.

Action Taken to resolve

We have been in contact with the owner since July 2003 and we were allowed access to the property in order to carry out a survey in October 2005. We carried out works in default to the roof with the owner’s agreement. Grant assistance and advice on how to bring the property back into residential use has been offered, but no attempts have been made to do so.

Notices Served - Notice to execute roof repairs December 2005.

Owners Position - The owner has not informed us of intentions for the property and does not respond to correspondence.

Likelihood of property worsening

Whilst the owner lives nearby there appears to be little likelihood that the property will be improved to a condition where it is habitable and it is likely that it will deteriorate further without proper maintenance.

Cost Comparison of Enforcement Options for “D”, EDMO

Account must be taken of the costs of repair to decent homes standard and the costs of associated private management (assumed for these purposes to be 15% of the rental value) and a 2% of rental income taken as maintenance over the 7 year period.

All costs associated with serving and carrying out the functions of an EDMO is recoverable under statute either via rental receipts or through a legal charge on the property or direct recovery from the owner (if this is practicable)

Remedial Works	£45,100.00
7 Years Management cost (@15% of rental income)	£9,450.00
Maintenance (estimated at 2% of rental income)	£1,260.00
Fee for Residential Property Tribunal	£150.00
Insurance (@ £200 p.a)	<u>£1,400.00</u>
Total Cost	£57,360.00

Rental Income (estimation of market level)

As at July 2008 for a 3 bedroom property = £750 per month

Local housing allowance £725.01 per month

Monthly Rental £750 X 7 Years (assuming no increase)	£63,000.00
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Shortfall or Surplus (repaid to owner if surplus)	£5,640.00
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CPO

Budget costs for an *uncontested* CPO

Property Cost (independent valuation)	£160,000.00
Basic Loss Payment (7.5% of purchase cost)	£12,000.00
Vendors' Agent Fees	£2,000:00
Vendors' Legal Fees	£1,000:00
Stamp Duty Land Tax (@1%)	£1,600.00
Insurance	£100:00
Legal Costs (Gt Yarmouth Legal Services)	£1,500:00
Land registry	£500:00
Miscellaneous costs (p c sum)	£1,000:00
Officer cost general admin and advertising	<u>£1,000:00</u>

TOTAL	£180,700.00
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Additional cost £4000 to £7000 if contested—

*Also to be taken into account would be either short-term loan costs
or else loss of interest if purchase monies used from reserves*

Council costs may be applied for but are not guaranteed to be paid from the proceeds of the sale

Priority assessment for CPO, EDMO action

Address of property	"D", Totternhoe										
Criteria	Low					High					Score
Voluntary agreement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1
Length of time empty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8
Cost – low cost = High priority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2
Impact on neighbourhood	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	6
Level of complaints	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10
Trace ability of owner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10
Staffing resource	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8
Housing Demand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10
Previous enforcement action	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10
TOTAL											65

“E”, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EP

Property description “E” is a 2 storey 3 bedroom, mid terraced house constructed in the mid 1970’s. The dwelling is of a timber frame construction, with tiled roof and single glazed timber framed casement windows. It has been empty in excess of 20 years.



Background

Condition and works required– The house is in reasonable structural condition and is still weather tight to the elements. The timber frame windows have started to rot and decay and most of the windows will need to be replaced. The soffits and fascias to the front and rear of the property are in disrepair and will require replacement. The bathroom and kitchen will require refurbishment, as they have been damaged some time ago when the property was squatted. Gas fires heat the property; these will not be compliant with current standards. New central heating will need to be supplied to the property.

Complaints– There have been numerous complaints concerning the property over years from the public and members. The property is blighted by fly tipping to the rear garden and suffered from vandalism and squatters, the most recent of which occurred in January 2008.

Action taken to resolve

We have been in contact with the owner since 1999; the most recent response from the owner was in 2005. We boarded up and secured the rear of the property following a break in, January 2008. Grant assistance has been offered to the owner, but no response has been received from the owner for either the notice or offer of grant.

Notices served – Notice to execute the securing of the property.

Owners intentions - The owner has stated his intention is to move back to the property but has never given any timescales or shown any interest in funding to carry out repairs. The owner claimed that he is fearful to return to the property for fear of harassment from the neighbours. Both neighbours either side of the property has changed twice since the property became vacant. We have had no responses to recent letters.

Likelihood of property worsening

Within the next 12 months it is possible that the property may no longer be weather tight as there is evidence from external surveys that, the flashing on the roof requires repointing and refixing. No repairs are likely to be undertaken by the owner as no effort has been made with the property since it was abandoned. Without intervention from the Council the property will continue to remain empty.

Cost Comparison of Enforcement Options for "E", Houghton Regis, EDMO

Account must be taken of the costs of repair to decent homes standard and the costs of associated private management (assumed for these purposes to be 15% of the rental value) and a 2% of rental income taken as maintenance over the 7 year period.

All costs associated with serving and carrying out the functions of an EDMO is recoverable under statute either via rental receipts or through a legal charge on the property or direct recovery from the owner (if this is practicable)

Remedial Works (estimation)	£27,900.00
7 Years Management cost (@15% of rental income)	£9,450.00
Maintenance (estimated at 2% of rental income)	£1,260.00
Fee for Residential Property Tribunal	£150.00
Insurance (@ £200 p.a)	<u>£1,400.00</u>
Total Cost	£40,160.00

Rental Income (estimation of market level)

As at July 2008 for a 3 bedroom property = £750 per month
Local housing allowance for a 3 bed property £725.01 per month

Monthly Rental £750 X 7 Years (assuming no increase)	£63,000.00
Shortfall or Surplus (repaid to owner if surplus)	£22,840.00

CPO

Budget costs for an *uncontested* CPO

Property Cost (independent valuation)	£115,000.00
Basic Loss Payment (7.5% of purchase cost)	£8,625.00
Vendors' Agent Fees	£2,000:00
Vendors' Legal Fees	£1,000:00
Stamp Duty Land Tax (@1%)	£1,150.00
Insurance	£100:00
Legal Costs (Gt Yarmouth Legal Services)	£1,500:00
Land registry	£500:00
Miscellaneous costs (p c sum)	£1,000:00
Officer cost general admin and advertising	<u>£1,000:00</u>

TOTAL £131,875.00

Additional cost £4000 to £7000 if contested

Also to be taken into account would be either short-term loan costs

or else loss of interest if purchase monies used from reserves

Council costs may be applied for but are not guaranteed to be paid from the proceeds of the sale

Priority assessment for CPO, EDMO action

Address of property	"E", Houghton Regis										
Criteria	Low					High					Score
Voluntary agreement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1
Length of time empty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10
Cost – low cost = High priority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10
Impact on neighbourhood	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8
Level of complaints	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10
Trace ability of owner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10
Staffing resource	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	7
Housing Demand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10
Previous enforcement action	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10
TOTAL											76