

# Bringing Empties Back On Line

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9<sup>th</sup> October 2015

# Introduction

- About Hull
- Why Empties
- HCC Approach
- Working with Partners
- Experiences and Case Studies
- Conclusions



# About Hull

- Economy
- Housing
- Funding/ Cuts
- Empties
  - Over 2500 (now)
  - Private sector issue
  - Concentrations
  - Complex range of reasons causing emptiness



TELL THE WORLD



# Why Empties

- Job creation and training
- Local priorities
- Save money
- Sustainability
- Complaints
- Welfare reform
- Regeneration tool



# HCC Approach

1. Strategic focus
2. Encouragement
3. Loan
4. Long Lease
5. Support for sale
6. Enforcement



# Working with Partners

- Established 2011
  - Combined funding bid
  - Set priorities
  - Share experience and support
- Special programmes
  - Links with college
  - Volunteering
  - Hard to reach
  - Providing housing



## Rebuilding our homes and job opportunities

HULL: Council working with community to renovate empty houses

BRINGING empty properties back into use is about more than just bricks and mortar. For Steve Coltham, it is about getting his life back on track. The 31-year-old builder has recently landed a full-time job with social housing charity Disc after initially volunteering to work on its first project makeover in Hull. Working in the city for the first time, the charity is bringing ten long-term empty properties back into use after receiving £100,000 of funding from the Government.

**InShort**  
A charity has completed work refurbishing long-term empty properties after securing a Government grant.  
by Angus Young  
Local Government Reporter

"It's a lot tougher to get a job in the building industry these days compared to when I was younger," said Mr Coltham.

"Back then, you used to be able to turn up at a site, ask if there were any jobs going and the chances are you would be working there by the end of the day."  
"Now there's hardly any work and it's all about filling in forms and CVs and hoping for the best because hundreds of people are looking for work."  
"I even went after one job at a site doing a lot of brickwork and the offer said I really shouldn't be doing it because I was overqualified for what they wanted me to do."  
"I thought, but looking to keep his heart in, he volunteered to join the Disc programme after the charity identified ten suitable properties with Hull City Council.  
After working on the flat in Holderness Road, east Hull, for seven weeks, he has not only landed a job but is also now living in the property he helped refurbish.  
Mr Coltham said: "It hadn't really been touched since the 1930s, so it needed a lot of work doing to it. It was good to be doing something useful again."  
"Thanks volunteering, I would be sitting at home all day getting on people's nerves."  
"Getting back out on a job, renovating a property alongside others who have been in the same situation as me turned out to be a good move for me."  
"We all supported each other and we are really proud of the results."  
Site manager Steve Evans has also secured a job with Disc after initially volunteering his services at the Holderness Road flat.  
He is now supervising the renovation of a two-bedroom house in Lansark Street, west Hull, which has been empty for three years.  
He said: "It's early days for Disc in Hull but with its properties on the books as far as it means there's work for the next two years."  
"Having volunteered myself on the flat, I know what some of the lads are prepared to do to help themselves by getting involved."  
"It's a good way to keep their skills up to date by turning empty properties back into places where people can live."  
As well as the empty homes initiative, the charity is also looking to open a six-bed "community house" in Hull for tenants recovering from drug and alcohol problems, long-term unemployment or family break-ups.  
Follow Angus on Twitter @Angus\_Young51

**"Making areas look and feel safer"**

Hull City Council is working with five community groups, including Disc Housing, to bring up to 400 empty houses back into use in the city.

We support the work Disc is carrying out. Empty homes can have a negative impact on neighbourhoods and surrounding areas. If homes are brought back into use, they can increase volunteering and job opportunities, increase the supply of affordable housing and make the areas look and feel safer.

**In your words**

Councillor John Black, housing portfolio holder

# Partnership Roles

- Co-ordination of bidding and information
- Data Sharing and Memorandum of Understanding
- Sharing of approaches and challenges
- Tackling blockages



# Empty Homes Powers

- Range of offers available
- Most effective route (time and cost)
- Powers –
  - Request for information
  - Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs)
  - Enforced Sale
  - CPO
  - Other powers



# Overall Delivery 2012-15

- 585 quality affordable homes
- Partners
- Area based improvements
- Wider benefits
- £15m+ external funding



# Before and after



# Before and after



Partner: Probe

# Conclusions

- Momentum and costs
- Long term area based approach
- Range of offers (not just enforcement)
- Working with Partners
- Resources
  - Empty Homes Agency/ Homes from Empty
  - Empty Homes Network