



Bristol City Council – Housing & Landlord Services

# Empty Property Policy 2022 (Private Housing and Accessible Homes)

Version 2

Approved by	Dr Donald Graham
Author	Nicola Wright
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Private Housing Policy Statement 2011-14			Version 1
Private Housing Enforcement Policy 2016 (revised 2017)			

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### 1. Policy Statement

Private Housings approach to Empty Properties has previously been set out in the Private Housing Policy Statements 2011-2014 and the Private Housing Enforcement Policy 2016 (Revised 2017)

This document updates and builds upon these policy statements and sets out Private Housings current operational approach to dealing with privately owned residential properties.

Empty Properties continue to be a wasted resource particularly given the demand for good quality affordable homes, high levels of homelessness and people living in temporary accommodation.

We will act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and communities, and we will take positive action to reduce discrimination and harassment.

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out and agreed by the Equalities Team.

### 2. Aims and objectives

To bring long term residential empty properties back in to use to meet both Bristol City Council and National Objectives

To meet corporate targets.

To increase availability of good quality accommodation which will contribute to the supply of housing available within the city.

To contribute towards the Levelling Up agenda.

To reduce the impact of long-term empty properties on neighbours and neighbourhoods.

To contribute towards sustainability, creating homes from empty properties saves substantial amounts of material compared to building new homes, minimises the amount of land used for development and avoids wasting embedded carbon; helping to combat climate change.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities and Authority

Role	Responsibility
Director of Housing and Landlord Services	Responsible for the implementation of this policy.
Service Manager Private Housing and Accessible Homes	
Private Housing Manager Private Housing Team Leader	Responsible for the delivery of this policy including CPO's
Private Housing Caseworker Senior Environmental Health Housing Officer	Responsible for taking action to bring empty properties back into use and dealing with nuisance properties
Senior Private Housing Officer	Co-ordination of initial stage mailouts

### 4. Scope

The Policy applies to

All staff involved with empty property work.

Owners of privately owned empty residential properties.

Residents affected by empty properties.

Other teams and partners who need to be aware of this policy: Council Tax, Legal Services, Debt Recovery Team, Housing Options, Adult Social Care, Economic Development, Development Management and Finance.

### 5. The Policy

#### 5.1 Current Position

The city has on average 1400 privately owned empty and unfurnished residential units that have been empty more than 6 months.\*

On 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022 there were:

- 1,169 households in emergency accommodation.
- 1,762 households registered under the main duty
- 529 households registered under the homeless relief duty
- 274 households registered under the homeless prevention duty

On 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022, there were:

- 18,939 households waiting for an offer of social housing accommodation, of which 9,535 have been awarded some degree of priority for bidding.
- The waiting list figures have increased from 16,068 at the same time last year and 14,869 two years ago. The figures for households with some level of priority for bidding have increased from 7,908 at the same time last year and 7,246 two years ago.

Empty properties can also adversely affect the lives of people in the vicinity and may attract vandalism and anti-social behaviour causing an unnecessary drain on public services.

Creating homes from empty properties requires less embodied carbon than a new build, as it substantially reduces the amounts of material compared to building new homes it also minimises the amount of land used for development which may help protect habitats.

\* figures from council tax records for empty and substantially unfurnished combined with active cases open by the empty property unit.

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### **5.2 Strategic Context**

Bringing empty properties back into use meets a wide range of higher-level policy objectives both at a local and national level.

(1) One City Plan – A plan for Bristol until 2050 outlines targets of reducing the empty property rate in Bristol by 50% by 2036 and by 100% by 2046

(2) The Bristol City Council Corporate Strategy 2022- 2027, Theme 5, Our Homes and Communities Priorities within Housing Supply Section includes to “make sure empty properties in that sector are brought back in to use, building on our success of ensuring 450 were made available again in 2020”

(3) Bristol City Council Business Plan 2018-2023 - Housing Supply- to make best use of housing supply from existing stock - KPI 2: Increase the number of private sector dwellings returned into occupation

(4) Bristol City Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, 2019–24. The Empty Property Unit is part of the Private Renting Team Workstream for ‘Move On’ accommodation project, working in partnership to unlock empty properties and help meet the objectives set by the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

(5) West of England Combined Authority strategy titled ‘A Strategy for Homes’ – the West of England Housing Delivery Strategy - 2020-23. ‘The Housing Delivery Strategy is focused on delivering outcomes – increased pace, quality homes and affordable homes across all tenures’ and pays reference bringing ‘vacant property into use’.

(6) Sustainability -The work of this Unit can be a key player in achieving ‘Bristol’s Climate Vision’ of becoming a ‘carbon neutral and climate resilient’. Bringing properties back into use will help capture ‘the opportunities of new jobs and investment, improved health, wellbeing and education, and a better environment for local people’. One City Climate Strategy: A strategy for a carbon neutral, climate resilient Bristol by 2030.

### **5.3 National Policy**

(5.31) National Planning Policy Framework 2021 refers to the need for local authorities to ‘promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing’. Section 11- Making effective use of the land states ‘As part of this approach, plans and decisions should support efforts to identify and bring back into residential use empty homes and other buildings, supported by the use of compulsory purchase powers where appropriate.’

(5.32) Levelling Up White Paper- As part of the levelling up agenda the government wants to encourage empty homes back into use and empower local leaders to re-invest back into their communities. The UK Government intends to introduce new powers to allow Local authorities to apply a 100% premium for properties left empty for 1 year rather than 2 years. They will allow extra revenue to be retained by Local authorities to deliver on their priorities and deal directly with the impacts of Empty Homes, including the disproportionate cost burden they can place on local services and the negative impact on housing supply.

### 5.4 Financial Implications of Empty Property Work

(5.41) **The New Homes Bonus** : (NHB) scheme rewards local authorities for the reduction in the number of empty homes and reinforces the need to tackle empty properties. Currently local authorities receive a NHB payment for each long-term empty property (6 months plus) that is brought back into use.

(5.42) **Council Tax**: The Local Government Finance Act 1992 allows councils to charge a long-term empty dwelling premium for properties that have been empty for 2 years or more. Initially this was levied at 50% on top of what was normally paid, however in 2019 this increased to 100% extra on top of the standard charge. From 2020 owners of properties empty for five years or more can be charged 200% on top of the standard charge and from 2021 where a property has been empty for 10 years or more, 300% can be levied on top of the standard charge. Implementation is at the discretion of individual local authorities and Bristol City Council applies these premiums.

The Empty Property and Renewal Unit can also assist in identifying owners who are not paying the correct council tax amount or may help identify council tax fraud.

(5.43) **Future Funding opportunities**: Through work with the West of England Empty Property Group and the Empty Homes Network Executive Board we look to investigate and identify funding opportunities.

### 5.5 Legal and regulatory requirements

The City Council has legal powers to deal with statutory nuisance and detriment to local amenities. Powers are also available to Compulsory Purchase residential dwellings where there is clear housing need and to consider the making of Empty Dwelling Management Orders.

### 5.6 Actions to Bring Long Term Empty Residential Properties Back into Use

In order to encourage owners of long term private residential properties to bring them back in to use we will take a series of steps to achieve this.

When a property has been empty for 6 months we will send out a of letters at approximately 6 monthly intervals offering advice support and assistance to owners of these empty properties to facilitate them in getting the property re-occupied

Once a property has been empty for 2 years, we will escalate action by advising owners of legal powers the council has available to ensure properties are brought back into use, but still offering support and assistance to facilitate them in getting the property re-occupied

Where a property has been empty for 3 years and there is no sign of it being returned to use, letters are sent advising that the use of CPO or EDMO powers may be considered.

Once a property has been empty for 4 years plus and there is no evidence that it will be brought back into use Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO's) or Compulsory

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Purchase Action (CPO) action will be considered. Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO's) enable the council to take over the management of a property for a period of up to seven years - ownership of the property is not changed and the owner will receive any remaining rent once the Council's costs have been covered. Where there are significant repair costs EDMO's are unlikely to be the most appropriate course of action.

An empty property will be prioritised for a CPO where other means of encouragement has been exhausted.

As a matter of last resort where all other options have been considered and where negotiation fails CPO action will be pursued subject to financial and staffing resources.

Throughout the entire process the offer of advice, assistance and negotiation will always be available. A property could be purchased voluntarily at any point in the process and could be retained by the city council or sold onto a housing association, a not-for-profit housing organisation or developer with an agreement that the property is brought back into use within an agreed period.

Where CPO action is pursued through to vesting of the property with the city council then a decision will be made as to whether to retain the property or to dispose of it to a third party as above.

Where an empty dwelling is in such a condition as to be causing nuisance or danger to neighbours' the most appropriate action will be taken to remedy the nuisance.

Where the amenity of the local environment is adversely affected consideration will be given to using legislation to enforce the improvement of the appearance of the property. Powers available are outlined in Appendix C3

This approach outlined above is explained in more detail, including variations to the process in Appendix C1

Achievement of the objective of bringing empty residential properties back into use will be monitored through SPARNET targets.

Additionally, the Empty Property and Renewal Unit may also assist in identifying owners who are not paying the correct council tax amount (e.g., empty property premium; Part F exemption expired) or may help identify council tax fraud.

Potential fraud issues with respect to empty homes are:

Owner claiming 25% Single Persons Discount, on a vacant property

- Non-payment of the correct Council Tax Empty Property Premium
- Homeowners falsely claiming Second Home status on empty properties.

By identifying these cases Council Tax accounts can be corrected and will generate additional revenue for collection.

## **6. Equalities and Diversity Statement**

We will make sure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently to all our citizens/service users/residents. We will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people. We will act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and communities, and we will take positive action to reduce discrimination and harassment.

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out and agreed by the Equalities Team.'

Where Bristol City Council is aware that a person to whom this policy applies is vulnerable, it will consider that person's vulnerabilities when applying this policy. This may include, but is not limited to, considering whether extra advice and assistance needs to be provided, liaising with agencies involved with the care and/or support of that person (where known) and referring that person to agencies and/or BCC departments who may be able to support or assist that person.

## **7. Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed every three years or in line with legislative or regulatory changes.

## **8. Appendices**

### **Appendix A – Legal and Policy Context**

#### **External**

Housing Act 1985 (See Appendix C3 for full list of Legal Powers available to deal with empty residential properties, nuisance and detriment to the environment)

The Equalities Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998

#### **Internal**

One City Plan – A plan for Bristol until 2050

Bristol City Council Corporate Strategy 2022- 2027

Bristol City Council Business Plan 2018-2023

Bristol City Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, 2019–24

West of England Combined Authority strategy titled 'A Strategy for Homes' – the West of England Housing Delivery Strategy - 2020-23.

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

Levelling Up White Paper

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Private Housing Enforcement Policy

Private Housing Enforcement Policy for HHSRS (Housing Act 2004)

Private Housing Financial Assistance Policy April 2022

### **Appendix B – Glossary of terms**

Long Term Empty Property - Defined as being a property empty for 6months or more

CPO - Compulsory Purchase Order

EDMO - Empty Dwelling Management Order

### **Appendix C – Associated Documents**

**Appendix C1: Empty Property Process**

**Appendix C2: Empty Property Advice and Assistance**

**Appendix C3: Legislation**

#### **Appendix C1: Identification of Long-Term Empty Property Properties, Reasons Left Empty and Private Housings Detailed Approach To Bringing Empty Properties Back Into Use**

##### **1. How Long-Term Empty Properties are Identified**

Long term Empty properties are identified through

Monthly Council Tax lists of empty

Report of EP via BCC website. Direct report to Private Housing Service of an empty property.

Complaints of nuisance arising from a property that is empty

Referrals, including Council Members and MPs

##### **2. Reasons Why Properties Are Left Empty**

Unsure what to do with the property

Emotional attachment

DIY projects that never get completed

Specific Issues around inheritance and probate

Delays with probate office being able to process applications

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Following the death of an occupant the ownership of the property may be unclear

Owners in hospital or residential care

Owners unable to afford refurbishment of the property

Owners lacking the knowledge and confidence to address the situation

Perceived problems associated with letting of properties

Buy to let – tenants not actively sought

Owner lacks the personal ability to deal with the property

Owner suffers from mental ill health issues

Owner indifference/ unwilling to bring the property back into use

Owners living away/overseas or in rare instances in prison

Owner claims property is a second home which may or may not be used as such

### **3. Private Housing Approach to Tackling the problem of empty properties**

The Private Housing Service has a systematic approach to bringing empty properties back into use through relentless contact with all empty property owners.

For the purposes of this document the strategy concentrates on long-term empty properties, but advice and guidance will be given to anyone enquiring about what to do with an empty property irrespective of the amount of time empty.

A programme of frequent contact with owners of empty dwellings in the city is to be maintained throughout the period of the property's vacancy.

Stage 1 Contact will initially be made via automated standard letters at intervals of approximately 6, 12 and 18 months from the date identified as being empty. These letters offer details of advice and assistance to help owners bring properties back into use.

*Full details of types of advice and assistance can be found in Appendix 1*

Stage 2 Once a property has been empty for two-years contact continues through a series of specific letters to the individual property owner. Officers will continue to make contact via emails, visits and telephone calls with owners and will continue to offer practical advice, support and financial assistance dependent upon the specific circumstances. Along with details of advice and assistance available the letters outline formal action that could be considered such as Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO) activity if the property is not brought back into use or reasonable plans are in place to achieve this.

Stage 3 Where a property has been empty for 3yrs and there is no sign of it being returned to use soon further letters are sent advising that the use of CPO or EDMO powers will be considered. Confirmation of ownership and interests in the property will be requested through the service of Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 Section 16 - Requisition for Information Notice. Request for access to inspect the property Inspection

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under the Housing Act 2004 Section 239 will all be sent. The offer of advice and assistance considers to be offered through all stages.

Stage 4 Once a property has been empty for 4years plus and there is no evidence that it will be brought back into use EDMO or CPO action will be considered. The robust enforcement process detailed later in this document will then be followed.

### **4. Variation to Stage 1- 4: Deceased Estates**

The above approach will also be used for deceased estate properties but the regular process of sending letters will not normally commence until a property has been empty for 2 years to give grieving relatives time to resolve probate etc. However, where a complaint is received about a property the matter will be investigated and appropriate action taken.

We endeavour to locate owners or beneficiaries of a property as far as possible in order to bring a property back into use by informal means – checks might include council tax records, Land Registry searches, probate checks or obtaining copies of death certificates. We are currently trialling a pilot project to use the services of procured tracing agents when a more in-depth search is needed to locate owners or unknown heirs to a property.

### **5. Confirming a Property is Re-Occupied**

We will seek proof that a property has been returned to occupation before closing the case. This may be by a visit to the property, council tax checks or requests for other evidence via documentation for example utility bills or a combination where the situation may not be straightforward.

### **6. Legal Proceedings Against longest-term empties to return them to occupation**

Where owners work with us, the use of statutory powers action are not generally needed. Where this is not successful the council will pursue the most appropriate power to ensure the property be brought back into use.

#### **(1) Compulsory Purchase**

For the longest standing and problematic empty properties, a robust programme of compulsory purchase action will be maintained with the aim of progressively reducing the period for which a house will remain empty in the city.

Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) S17 Housing Act 1985 – allows local authorities to acquire empty houses, land or other properties by compulsion for the provision of housing accommodation. Acquisition must achieve a quantitative or qualitative housing gain. This power can be used where owners cannot be traced, where owners are unwilling to bring their property back into use, or where owners cannot be traced. The Council can seek to compulsory purchase a property with a view to retaining the property, disposal to a housing association or sale on the open market.

Compulsory purchase of empty properties will only be considered as a last resort in situations where there appears to be no other prospect of a property being brought back into residential use despite best endeavours to encourage the owner to do so. However, cases may arise where the owner cannot be traced and therefore use of compulsory purchase powers may be the only way forward.

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Prioritisation of properties for compulsory purchase action will primarily be made on the basis of those empty longest and where there appears to be no other prospect of the property being brought back into residential use. Where a property has not necessarily been empty the longest but is giving rise to significant nuisance issues it may be prioritised for CPO action ahead of those that are empty longer but are not having such a detrimental impact on the area.

If CPO is the most appropriate action use a formal offer to purchase will be made to sell property to the Council on a voluntary basis. If no resolution is achieved approval will be sought to make a CPO in accordance with Bristol City Council's authorised scheme of delegations.

The Service may work with other departments in the organisation who may have more appropriate legislation to appropriately deal with a particular empty property.

### **(2) Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs)**

Where appropriate The Housing Act 2004 gives local authorities power to apply to the Residential Property Tribunal for an interim management order which may lead to compulsory leasing of the property for a fixed period of time. The use of these powers is at the discretion of the local authority. EDMOs are not intended to replace existing enforcement options such as compulsory purchase. Instead, they offer an alternative course of action where LHAs determine that acquisition is not the most appropriate course of action to pursue. The decision on whether to pursue an EDMO amongst other things will be based on consideration of the cost of making the dwelling fit for occupation and the cost of maintaining the dwelling once the EDMO is made.

## **7. Alternative Approach for Different categories of Empty Residential Properties**

(1) Approach to Second Homes- if we have investigated a property in the belief that it is empty, but it is accepted that it is a second home we will send an annual letter advising of the benefits of considering letting it as an alternative.

### **(2) Approach to Owners in Care Home**

Where a property is empty because the owner and former resident is in a Care Home, we will write to them or their representative on an annual basis. We will ask if they have any plans for the property and offer advice on renting out the property and make them aware of schemes that are available to facilitate renting.

### **(3) Approach to flats and flats above shops**

Where there is an empty flat above a shop, we will send annual letters outlining options for bringing them back into use and the financial benefits of doing so. However, where an entire property including a commercial unit is empty CPO action may be considered more appropriate and, in such cases, will follow the standard empty property procedure.

Where there is an individual flat within a privately owned block, we will offer advice and assistance and send out annual letters encouraging owners to bring them back into use

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Where there is a privately owned flat is known to be within a BCC Freehold property, we will follow the standard empty property procedure and work with other Local Authority departments to assist with bringing the property back into use.

### **8. Nuisance and impact on local amenity**

Empty properties can cause problems to both adjoining properties and affect residents in the nearby vicinity.

Where an empty dwelling is in such a condition as to be causing nuisance or danger to neighbours' the most appropriate action will be taken to remedy the nuisance.

Where the amenity of the local environment is adversely affected consideration will be given to using legislation to enforce the improvement of the appearance of the property.

Notices may be served where there is evidence of a statutory nuisance or issues causing serious detriment to the local amenity. Where an owner fails to comply with the notice, a prosecution may be considered and or works may be carried out in default and a charge will be registered against the property.

See Appendix 3 for list of enforcement powers available with respect to nuisance and eyesore properties

Any debt will be pursued and where not recovered enforced sale of the property will be considered to recover the council's costs.

The Service may work with other departments in the organisation who may have more appropriate legislation to appropriately deal with a particular type of empty property ie commercial property

## **Appendix C2: Summary of Advice and Assistance details**

(Please note these may vary depending on current projects and funding opportunities)

### **1. Advice on becoming a landlord**

We can offer guidance to empty property owners who may become first time landlords. They may be unsure about how to take their first steps in the property business. As well as offering advice on works that might be needed to bring the property up to a standard for letting.

### **2. Referrals to our private renting team**

We promote and refer to the free private renting team's service this is to help empty property owners find a suitable tenant and help add properties to their list. The service is run by Bristol City Council and includes, property checks, assessing tenants and tenancy support. More information can be found at [Get help with renting out your property \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk)

### **3. Referrals to our Bristol Refugee Resettlement Team**

Bristol city council will offer to manage the property and carry out necessary repairs for the purpose of resettling refugees. Currently, subject to the condition of the property, the council can offer to rent the property on license on behalf of the owner. The owner will offer a five

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year tenancy and be open to continuing to rent the property to the tenant after 5 years. Rental charges per month will be at the local housing allowance level. BCC will recover cost of renovation works by reducing rent paid on to the owner. For more information visit [The Refugee Resettlement Scheme for landlords \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/refugee-resettlement-scheme-for-landlords)

### 4. We provide information on current Local Housing Allowance Levels

For more information on the current LHA please see: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/benefits-financial-help/local-housing-allowance>.

### 5. VAT Exemption information and letters

Where appropriate we can provide VAT Exemption Letters if a property has been empty over 2yrs. This can then result in owner paying a reduced rate VAT for eligible renovation works (currently 5% for a property that has been empty for 2 years plus or 0% if property has been empty over 10yrs).

### 6. Advice on Council tax empty property premiums

If a property is empty and unfurnished for 2 years or more, owners will be liable to pay a council tax premium. This is levied at

200% of the council tax if your home is empty for over 2 years (ie double)

300% of the council tax if your home is empty for over 5 years (ie triple)

Visit [Empty properties and council tax \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/empty-properties-and-council-tax) for further information.

### 7. Empty property loans

Where a property has been empty for 6 months or more an owner can apply for a maximum loan of £20,000 per self-contained flat and up to a maximum of £60,000 per property. The interest rate is 4% fixed throughout the term of the loan. There are two options available

For renting: available as a capital and interest repayment loan over a maximum term of 10 years. In some cases, repayment of capital may be deferred for up to one year whilst renovations are being made and repayments will begin once rental income is being received.

For selling: Available as a short-term interest only loan for full capital repayment within two years of drawdown or earlier disposal of the property.

Loans are also available for conversion of empty commercial properties to create new homes where appropriate planning permission has been obtained.

If the intention is for the owner to occupy the property themselves post improvement, a standard would be more appropriate.

The loans are administered by our partner organisation Lendology CIC in conjunction with the Private Housing Empty Property and Renewal Unit.

For information on all loans we offer please see our latest [Financial Assistance Policy](#) for more details.

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### 8. Advice on Selling as Property.

We can offer advice on how to sell a property through estate agents or auction

It may be possible to put owners in touch with potential buyers if we are aware of interest in a particular property.

### Appendix C3: Summary of Main Legal Powers Available in Relation to Empty Properties

Issue	Legislation	Reason For Use
Unightly land and property affecting the amenity of an area.	Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 215)	Where a property is considered to be 'detrimental to the amenities of the neighbourhood'.
	Building Act 1984, Section 79	To require the owner to address unightly land or the external appearance of a property.
Securing Buildings	Local Government (Miscellaneous provision) Act 1982 Section 29	To secure empty homes against access, where there is considered to be a danger to public health.
Vermin	Public Health Act 1961 (Section 34) Prevention of Damage by Pests Act, section 4 and Public Health Act 1936, section 83.	Where vermin are present or there is a risk of attracting vermin
Nuisance	Environmental Protection Act 1990- Section 80	To abate a statutory nuisance arising from an empty property
Drainage	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, section 35, Building Act 1984, section 59 and Public Health Act 1961, section 17	To remedy blocked or defective drainage or private sewers
Dangerous or dilapidated buildings or structures	Building Act 1984 sections 77 and 78	To require the owner to make the property safe (Section 77) or enable the Local Authority to take emergency action to make the building safe. (Section 78) Both Enforced by Building Control)
	Building Act 1984 Section 79	To require the owner to repair ruinous or dilapidated buildings seriously detrimental to an area.

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Breach of Housing Health and Safety Rating System	Housing Act 2004	Under Part 1 the Housing Health and Safety Rating System local authorities can evaluate the potential risks to health and safety arising from deficiencies within properties and take appropriate enforcement action.
Enforced Sale	Law of Property Act 1925 sections 101 and 103	The use of enforcement actions on empty properties can result in the gradual build-up of debt if the work is carried out in default of the owner failing to comply with the enforcement notice. Where a reasonable charge has been registered against the property it is possible to force the sale of the property to recover that debt. Under Section 103 of the LPA, the local authority is able to force the sale of a property with a local land charge on it for money owed, either for works carried out in default by the Council or for unpaid Council tax.
Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)	Section 17 of the Housing Act 1985	Local authority has the power to compulsorily acquire land and property where all else fails in order to satisfy housing need
Empty Dwelling Management Orders	Housing Act 2004	An application to make an EDMO can be made to a Residential Property Tribunal (RPT) which must be satisfied that there is no reasonable prospect of the dwelling being returned to use in a reasonable timescale without an EDMO. If approved the Local Authority takes

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		management control, initially for one year under an interim EDMO and then for seven years under a final EDMO.
Identifying Empty Properties and Contacting Owners	Section 85 Local Government Act 2003	Legislation that allows council tax information to be used find empty properties and assist with bringing them back into use. The Local Government Act 2003 s85 inserts para (18A) into Schedule 2 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 specifically allowing Local Authorities to utilise Council Tax data in the pursuance of empty property work.

**\* This is not an exhaustive list and there may be other appropriate legislative powers that can be considered.**