

Support available to empty homes' owners

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COPELAND Council is urging owners of empty homes to access its support to help bring their property back into use.

The council is using Empty Homes Week (September 23 to 27) to highlight the role of its Empty Homes Officer, who works with private property owners to reduce the number of vacant homes in Copeland.

Since September 2018, the officer has worked with over 300 owners to encourage them to bring their long-term empty property back into use; this has resulted in 92 properties being lived in again. There were 35 brought back into use in 2017/18.

One of the most high-profile - a Whitehaven town centre Georgian property - is featured in a countywide newsletter produced for Empty Homes Week.

The council worked with the owner of the building which had stood empty for over 20 years, and it has now been sold and is under renovation.

Councillor Mike McVeigh, Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing, said: "Long-term empty properties can become a blight on the community, and although it is not a statutory obligation for us to work with empty home owners, it's another example of our Housing team going over and above their duty.

"Using this approach, we have achieved high levels of success with almost 100 properties brought back into use in the last year alone as a result of our intervention.

"We work hard to identify the owners and work with them to develop a plan for their property; the aim being to repair it, sell it or rent it, all with a view to bringing it back into use as a home.

"We can assist as there are several options available and we encourage owners to get in touch to discuss what is on offer. We are also asking the public to make us aware of long-term empty homes in their communities so we can ensure they are on our radar."

Contact Copeland Council's Housing team on 01946 598300 or info@copeland.gov.uk.

To view the newsletter, visit www.copeland.gov.uk [4] or Copeland Council's Facebook and Twitter pages.



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