

Turning empty properties into affordable rented homes for local people

Responding to the communities and its partners needs Stratford-on Avon District Council recognised the need to create more affordable housing for local people in its Corporate Strategy 2008-2012.

In response to this need a range of initiatives have been launched to bring into use some of the 600 plus properties kept empty by owners for more than 6 months. One of the initiatives, the **Empty Homes Assistance Grant** provides funding to assist owners of disused houses in bringing them back to a habitable standard.

The first tenant who will benefit from this grant money will move into the renovated property in Studley, which has been converted into two self contained two bedroom flats, on Wednesday.

The District Council placed a number of conditions on the owner following the award of the grant including:

- Tenants must be registered on the Home Choice Plus Scheme with a housing need
- Tenants have a local connection with Studley
- Tenants will pay an affordable rent, significantly lower than the market rent
- The properties will be modernised and left in a higher standard

In many cases only relatively small amounts of work need to be undertaken to bring properties back into use and whilst Councils now have additional powers to bring this about, the District Council would rather work with owners.

Owners of empty properties who would like further information and guidance regarding bringing their properties back into residential use or would like further details of the Empty Homes Assistance Grant should contact Carol Roberts, Empty Homes Officer at Stratford District Council on 01789 260866 or email carol.roberts@stratford-dc.gov.uk or visit www.stratford.gov.uk for further information.