

Chronology Summary;

1. When the Council became aware of the empty Properties in 2004 informal intervention was initiated, resulting in letters, emails and discussions with the owner seeking to encourage him to bring the properties back into use.
2. Involvement continued between 2004 until 2008 when the last occupant of Fitzroy street moved out. Following this the Council increased the intervention with threat of formal action if the owner did not make steps to bring the Properties back into use.
3. The property suffered an arson attack in 2008 severely damaging the Properties internally. This caused them to be uninhabitable and the owner successfully applied for removal of rateable value.
4. Following these events and interventions at the time an application to the Cabinet to proceed with a Compulsory Purchase Order was successful.
5. After the Cabinet approval for a CPO the Housing Renewal section in the Council introduced the owner to Hyde Martlett Housing Association to further assist the owner. Following further communications by the Council, the owner and Housing Association arranged a redevelopment plan to convert the Properties into 6 flats which achieved Planning Permission (P/01467/09) in March 2010.
6. Due to the cooperation from the owner, and progress in rejuvenating these Properties the Council stepped back and concentrated resources on other empty properties, taking a monitoring stance.
7. Unfortunately Hyde Martlett Housing Association ceased operating on the Isle of Wight causing the arrangement with the owner to collapse, and the situation returned to the status as it was, and is now.
8. For several years after this the Council only undertook light touch intervention in the circumstances, however due to further complaints about the property, as well as reinvigorated commitment to deal with long term empty properties in 2018 the Council decided to increase its intervention significantly.
9. From February 2018 the Council wrote to the owner on numerous occasions to further encourage him to bring the properties back into use, and we introduced more interested developers to work with him. Each time the owner showed an initial interest, but quickly stopped engaging.
10. The Council warned the owner in writing that unless he started taking positive action we would consider the formal enforcement options, which included compulsory purchase. The owner did not engage further.
11. Within this time and more recently the neighbours have become increasingly frustrated with the condition of the Properties and complained to the Local Member as well as the Empty Property Officer.