



Dereliction Policy Proposal

By David Lamont, Rathkeale Community Council. Revision: 2/1/21
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Summary: A priority-based approach that demands results. It would treat an out-of-the-way occupied house that needs paint differently to an abandoned building that endangers its neighbours on Main Street. It assumes that there are all sorts of regulatory reasons why dereliction issues cannot be fixed but expect those reasons to be addressed. Lastly, the cost is carried by the derelict property owner, there is a helping hand when warranted and action even if the property owner cannot be identified.

Goal: An effective, fast¹, measurable, methodology for reducing the impact of dereliction in Limerick County enabled by regulation and enforcement improvements by Limerick City and County Council with active participation by Community Councils in the decision-making process.

Key Elements:

- Recognition that the impact of dereliction is a continuum based on factors like: The Complaint; Registered PSRA (owner known); Hinderance; Prominence; Condemned; Occupied/Unoccupied; Historical/Listed Building; Structurally Unsound; Interdependency; Unattractiveness; Planning Permission; History of Actions Taken; Owner Tax Compliance; and Community Importance. Therefore, remedies might range from painting to bulldozing and the fixer could be the owner or County Council.
- A Case Worker (e.g. Renovation Consultant) is assigned to work with the owners of derelict structures to help them understand what renovation is required, available resources (e.g. grants), penalties for not acting, to request a social worker (if needed) and to keep the process moving to an on time conclusion.
- Property owners are responsible for fixing dereliction, quickly (within 12 months.) If they do not act and Limerick City and County Council acts to fix the dereliction, the cost (plus reasonable interest and service charges) must be paid by the structure owner. If unpaid, a lien is placed on the deeds requiring payment upon sale/transfer of ownership or Limerick City and County Council may foreclose on the property or compulsorily acquire the property.
- Prominent areas (e.g. a Main Street) would be designated as Protected requiring planning permission for certain structural and use (e.g. commercial to residential) changes. If a structure is changed in a way not covered by guidelines and without permission, then the property owners should be responsible for restoring the facade to non-derelict standards and/or reverting the property to its former intended use. Fines would be imposed on both the property owner and contractors who carry out unauthorised work on such Protected structures.
- Limerick City and County Council will make policy changes to meet the needs of Community Councils and the Dáil will legislate to meet the needs of County Councils.

¹ Fast equates to 12 months or less from the complaint to resolution.
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