

## **Heather Bradley**

On behalf of Carlisle City Council I'd like to welcome you all to this, our second Empty Homes event, which brings together people and organisations with an interest in dealing with long term empty homes.

As we all know, there is a shortage of housing to meet current needs – not just in the numbers of homes needed but also in the types of tenure. Many younger people especially cannot access the property owning ladder – in some parts of the country, the multiplier for mortgages has now reached 8 times income. There is a pressure on social rented housing with demand exceeding supply and on private renting.

At the same time, we have homes standing empty and possibly in need of renovation and repair. This event aims to offer advice, help and ideas for going some way to reconciling the two points – housing need and housing supply by showing how empty properties can be brought back into use and provide decent homes. It also aims to help individual property owners who are looking for a solution to deal with an empty property.

There are many reasons for houses being unoccupied and we hope that this event will help to provide solutions. We have contributions from the public sector, the private sector and the voluntary sector - all able to give advice and expertise to assist bringing homes back into use in some way. We hope you will talk to the organisations represented here during the break and over lunch.

Finally, I'd like to thank David Sanderson and the team for organising this event and the work which they do – but more than that, I'd like to thank David personally for his efforts on behalf of the Council which saw 54 homes brought back into use last year, national recognition for his work and for the passion he brings to the task of turning long term unoccupied properties into warm, comfortable decent homes.

**Biography:** Heather Bradley is Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Housing. Elected to the Council in 1988, her main interests have always been planning and housing, both of which are in her portfolio. She is a retired lecturer in modern languages but has also worked as a folk singer and ran small hotel.

