

REPORT TO BUCHAN AREA COMMITTEE – 15 MARCH 2022

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL EMPTY HOMES ADVICE AND INFORMATION SERVICE

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 This report is being brought to Committee, upon the request of Communities Committee, to demonstrate how Aberdeenshire Council is encouraging and supporting empty homeowners to bring their empty homes back into use.

1.1.1 Encouraging and supporting empty homeowners to bring their empty homes back into use can help address housing need whilst benefitting local communities. In Aberdeenshire 2.6% of all residential dwellings are empty compared to the Scottish average of 1.8%.

1.1.2 Over the course of the last 3 years several actions have been progressed to bring empty properties back into use. Eighty-three properties have been brought back into use by Aberdeenshire Council and our Registered Social Landlord partners as affordable housing. Aberdeenshire Council launched an Advice and Information Service and has provided support with regards to general maintenance, repairs and renovations, letting and selling to ninety-four empty homeowners. Awareness raising training sessions with regards to the Empty Homes Service have also been carried out with Council Tax colleagues. Meantime, the Development Officer – Affordable Housing and Empty Homes - continues to be an active partner of Scottish Empty Homes Partnership, enabling access to training, support, and further networking to promote best practice.

1.1.3 Bringing empty homes back into use can be challenging: - the economic downturn in the northeast; the implementation of legislation in 2017 which introduced the Private Residential Tenancy; implications of Covid 19 and Brexit; and future changes with regards to energy efficiency standards in the private sector, all are likely to have/had varying implications for empty homeowners.

1.1.4 Going forward, a number of actions will be progressed to further develop and improve the Empty Homes Service:- continue to analyse Council Tax data to inform future actions for encouraging and supporting empty home owners; promote the Advice and Information Service across all stakeholders including the development of a cross service working group; investigate potential funding streams or mechanisms; actively progress the purchase or conversion of empty properties that fit with the strategic aims of the Housing Service; and continue to implement best practice and engage with empty home owners.

1.2 The Committee is recommended to:

1.2.1 acknowledge and comment upon the work of the Empty Homes Service

2 Decision Making Route

- 2.1 The Local Housing Strategy 2018 – 2023 has a key action to “Encourage and support homeowners to bring empty homes back into use”. Progress on empty homes is monitored through the performance management of the Local Housing Strategy and reported to Communities Committee on an annual basis.
- 2.2 The Empty Homes Advice and Information Service report was considered at the Communities Committee on 3rd February 2022. The Communities Committee was keen to ensure that through the Community Planning Partnerships, Locality Plans reflect the wider Local Housing Strategy when being developed. The Housing Strategy Team will continue to actively participate in the locality planning process as appropriate. Furthermore, Communities Committee also wanted to ensure that the Housing Strategy Team has sufficient resources to drive forward actions to support empty homeowners to bring empty homes back into use.
- 2.3 The Communities Committee is seeking the views of each Area Committee. Buchan Area Committee are requested to consider the progress made to date and comment on future actions required to address empty homes in their area. This will be fed back to Communities Committee as appropriate.

3 Discussion

3.1 Background

There is significant housing need in Aberdeenshire. There are several tools in place to address this need and bringing empty homes back into use is one such tool. Empty homes are a wasted resource which could be brought back into use as part of the housing supply chain, assisting those in housing need. Empty homes can cause a negative impact on communities, attracting vandalism and antisocial behaviour, increasing feelings of insecurity and can adversely affect house prices in the locale. Bringing these properties back into use can benefit communities as new residents can help sustain local amenities and services, which helps benefit local economies, increases feelings of community safety, and positively reflects on house prices in the locale. For an empty homeowner, it can mean no more costly repairs or maintenance costs, cheaper house insurance, no more extra Council Tax levy, and a possible rental income if rented out. A long-term empty property is one which has been empty for 6 months or more and is subject to Council Tax.¹ These are the properties this report will refer to throughout. This does not include 2nd homes, holiday homes or those which have been empty under 6 months.

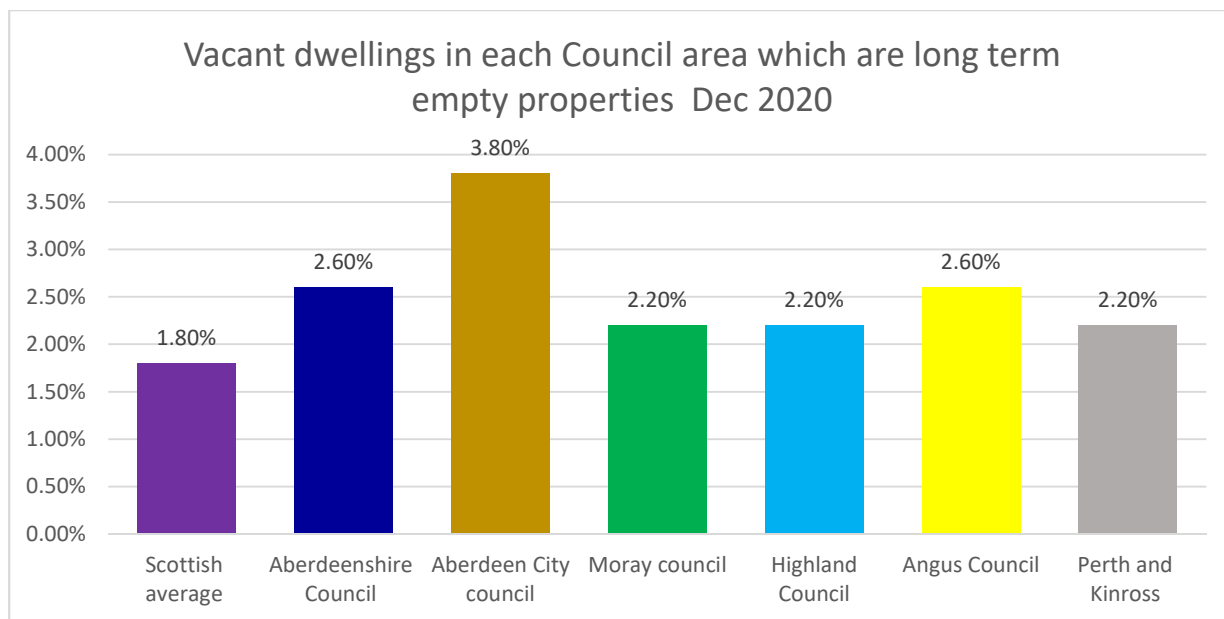
3.2 Empty homes data

- 3.2.1 Vacant dwelling data comes from Council Tax records. S157 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 allows Empty Home Officers access to this information regarding empty homeowners – name, address, contact number and length of time empty. The purpose of this is to identify empty homes in relation to numbers,

¹. [Housing statistics: Empty properties and second homes - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/consultation-papers/council-tax/empty-properties-and-second-homes/)

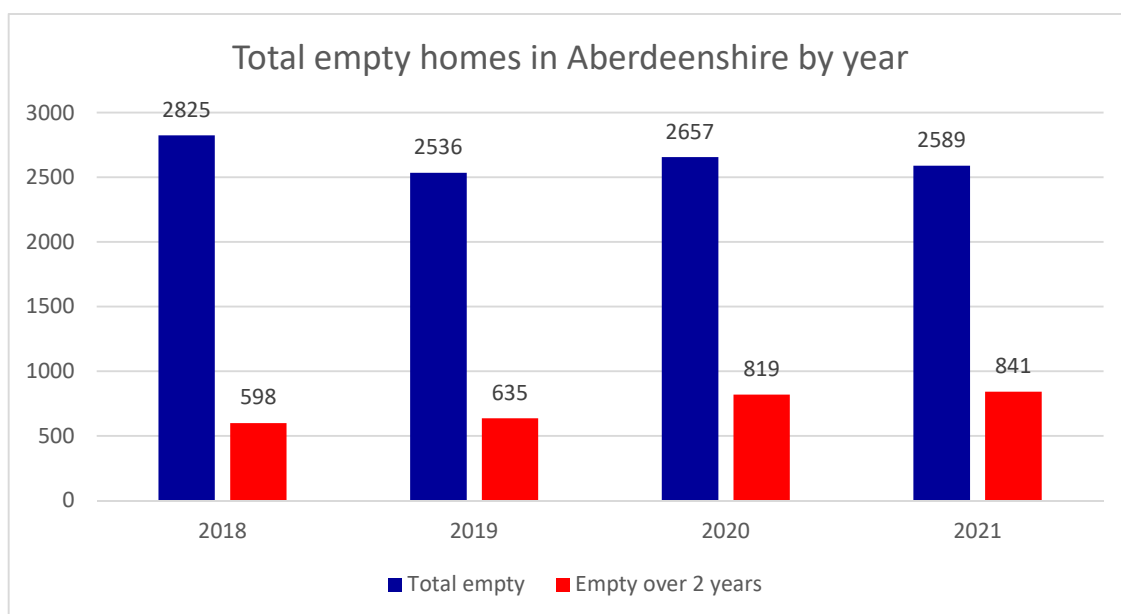
location, and length of time empty. This legislation enables the sharing of data in relation to empty homes and informs future actions to help take steps to help bring them back into use. The data, however, is limited as it does not hold details as to the type of property nor its condition.

- 3.2.2 The graph below shows the percentage of all dwellings that are empty properties in each local authority area neighbouring Aberdeenshire Council, as well as the Scottish average. These figures are from National Records of Scotland and are published each June for the year ending the previous December.

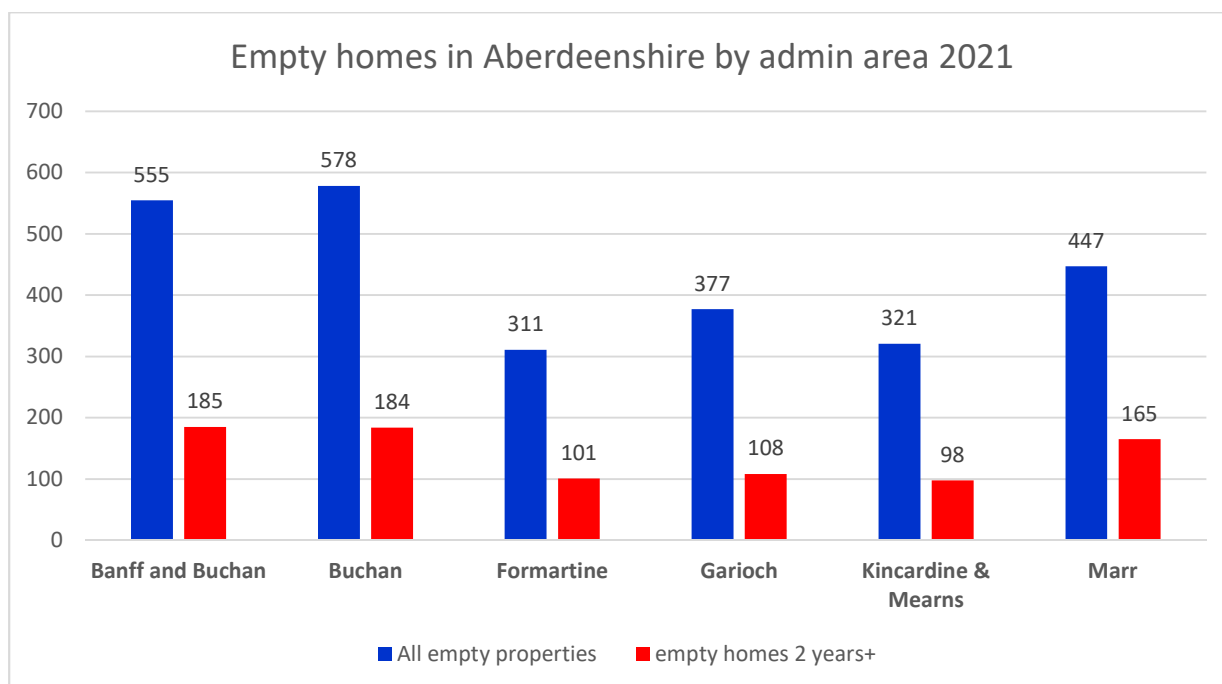


<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/households/household-estimates/2020>

- 3.2.3 The graph below shows the total number of empty homes in Aberdeenshire by year from 2018 to 2021. Of the total numbers empty, it also shows how many of these have been empty for over 2 years.

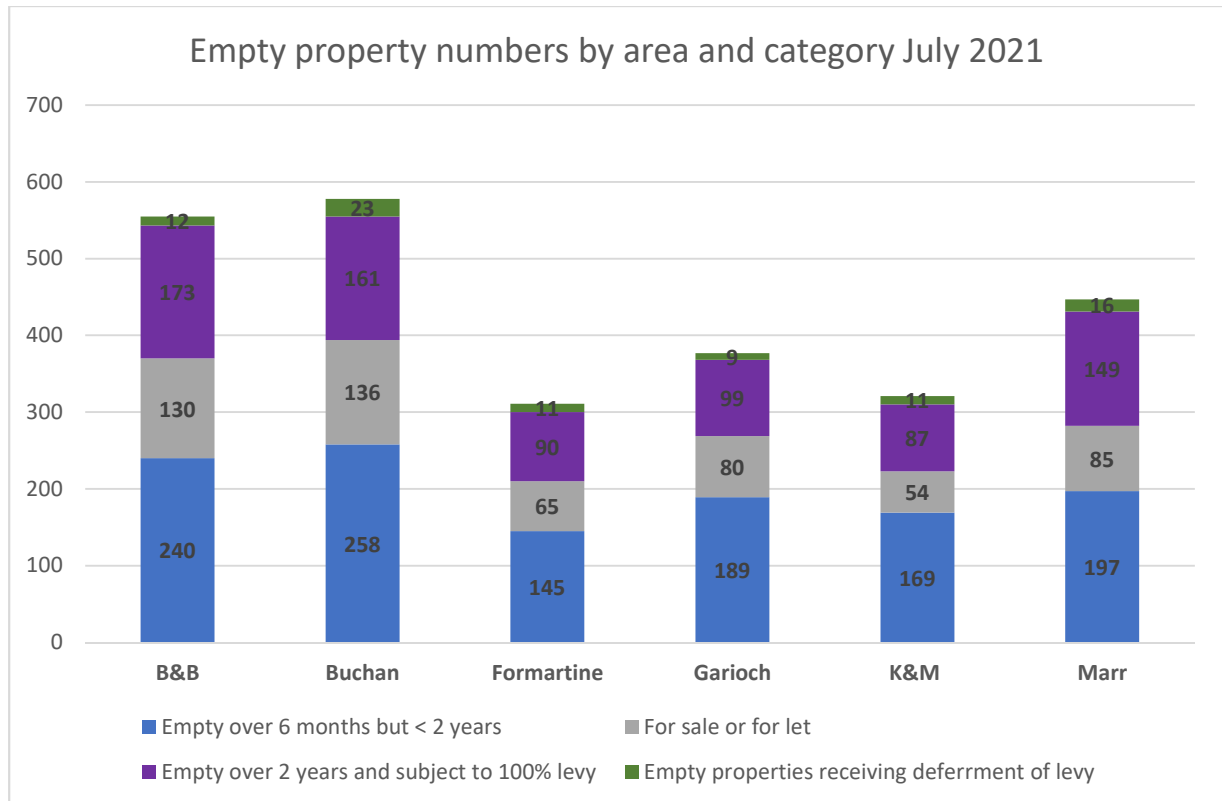


3.2.4 The following graph broadly illustrates the prevalence of empty homes across Aberdeenshire in each administration area as of July 2021.

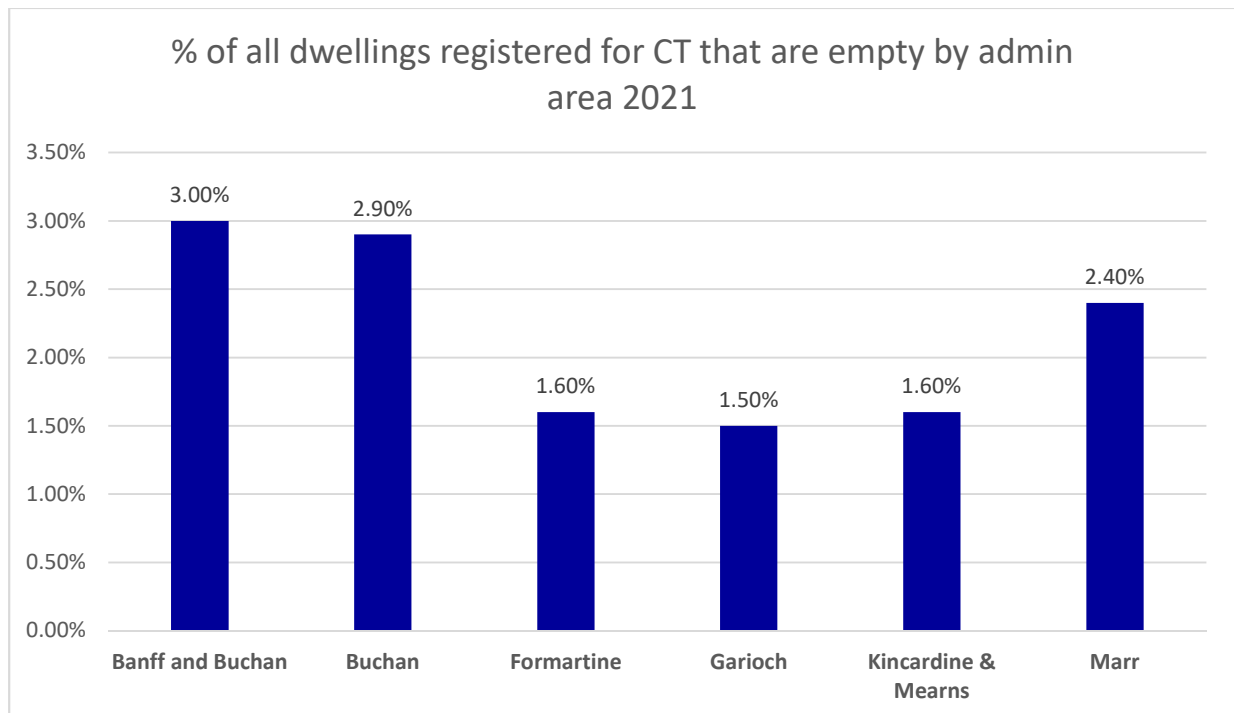


3.2.5 From the 1 April 2015 properties which have been empty for more than 2 years are subject to an additional 100% council tax charge. The Unoccupied Properties Council Tax Policy was approved by Policy & Resources Committee on 17 November 2013 with an implementation date of 1 April 2014. The purpose of the policy and associated legislation was to provide an additional tool to help local authorities encourage owners to bring empty properties back into use, both to increase the supply of housing for those who need homes and to reduce the impact on communities caused by houses being left empty and allowed to fall into disrepair. This charge can be deferred for 12 months if owners can demonstrate they are taking steps to bring their properties back into use. This deferment is discretionary and is assessed on a case-by-case merit by the Council Tax service.

3.2.6 As of July 2021, there are 2589 long term empty properties in Aberdeenshire. Of these, 841 have been empty over 2 years which is 32.5% of the total of empty properties. 82 of these, 9.8%, are receiving the deferment as they are demonstrating they are trying to bring them back into use. Of the 2589 empty properties, 550, which is 21.3%, were for sale or for let and had been empty for 3 years or less. However, there may be properties that are for sale or for let which are over 3 years empty but these will be subject to the 100% levy and recorded in that category. These figures are correspondingly shown at a local level in the graph below:



3.2.7 To evaluate the occurrence of empty homes at a more localised level, the following graph shows empty homes as a percentage of all dwellings registered for Council Tax in each admin area:



3.3 Over the course of the last 3 years the following actions have been progressed to address empty homes: -

3.3.1 Number of Empty Homes brought back into use:

Year	18/19	19/20	20/21
Empty properties bought from open market and converted into social rent by Aberdeenshire Council	0	6	9
Converted as part of new build by Aberdeenshire Council for social rent	A former workshop demolished for the provision of 12 flats; a former sheltered housing demolished for the provision of 10 units	1 empty building converted into 6 for social rent	2 empty properties converted into 11 for social rent; 1 empty building refurbished as Low Cost Shared Equity
Converted by an RSL for social rent	1 former office building converted into 15 units; 1 former hotel converted to 12 units	1 empty building refurbished	0
Total of new properties	49	13	21

3.3.2 In order to assist empty homeowners in Aberdeenshire, an Empty Homes Advice and Information page on the Aberdeenshire Council website was launched. [Empty homes - Aberdeenshire Council](#) This page comprises advice leaflets on general maintenance, repairs and renovations, letting, selling and the Matchmaker scheme.

3.3.3 A dedicated email address was also created to enable owners to contact the service with any enquires regarding empty homes – emptyhomes@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

3.3.4 A database has been set up to monitor and track enquiries made to the advice service.

- 3.3.5 The table below shows the number and types of queries received at emptyhomes@aberdeenshire.gov.uk since the Advice and Information scheme started.

Type of enquiry	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Advice re buying and selling & Matchmaker Scheme	0	6	9
Advice re renting	0	0	1
Funding and financial related queries with regards to VAT exemptions	12	11	39
General enquiries	4	2	6
Report an empty property	0	1	3
Seeking advice re renovations and maintenance	0	0	0
TOTALS	16	20	58

- 3.3.6 A training session with Council Tax colleagues was carried out to raise awareness of the Empty Homes Service. This enabled us to work in partnership with them and for them to signpost empty homeowners to the service.
- 3.3.7 A Matchmaker Scheme was also introduced. This is where an owner who wishes to sell their empty property can register for the scheme via an application form. Likewise, if someone is interested in buying an empty property, they can also register their interest. All details go on a database and when a potential “match” is spotted then contact details of each party are passed on to one another for them to progress.
- 3.3.8 The Development Officer - Affordable Housing and Empty Homes is an active member of the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership (SEHP), hosted by Shelter Scotland and funded by the Scottish Government. The Empty Homes Service is part of the Scottish Empty Homes Officer Network (SEHON), and as such is supported by SEHP with training, support, workshops, best practice meetings and idea and information sharing so that the most beneficial advice and assistance can be given to empty homeowners.
- 3.4 Challenges
- 3.4.1 A downturn in the global price of oil led to an economic slump in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire with substantial job losses, business closures and impacts that extended to other industries. The local economy declined, and the housing market was affected with house prices dropping significantly and taking much longer to sell than previously. These factors may have had an impact on empty homeowners’ ability to afford any works required to their property, and perhaps a reluctance to sell until house prices started to rise again.
- 3.4.2 The new Private Residential Tenancy which came into force in 2017 under new legislation offers tenants more security than previously. This has possibly resulted in the prospect of becoming a landlord for empty property owners

being too daunting and a reluctance for some landlords to relet their property once empty, albeit advice and information is readily available to support empty homeowners to become landlords. Recent legislation introduced because of Covid 19 now provides tenants with greater security of tenure, with landlords required to provide 6 months' notice to tenants to end the tenancy. This may also be a contributor to the number of empty homes with some landlords preferring to retain more direct control over their properties.

- 3.4.3 Covid 19 has had further implications with regards to empty properties with restrictions on social distancing and moving house, with temporary business closures and job furloughs. This made it challenging for empty home owners to procure a contractor to do works. Materials were either very difficult to obtain or had increased significantly in price, which may be partly due to Covid and partly because of Brexit. Again, a very challenging time economically for owners. The Matchmaker scheme was also paused due to the social distancing rules and house moves being prohibited.
- 3.4.4 Impending changes in relation to energy efficiency standards within the private sector are also likely to present some challenges in respect of empty homes and encouraging and supporting their owners to bring them back into use. The costs of any works required may outweigh the short to medium term benefits, notwithstanding the desire to reduce carbon emissions/achieve net zero carbon. Furthermore, for some properties it may be very technically difficult to achieve these higher standards.

3.5 Next Steps

- 3.5.1 Continue to analyse empty homes Council Tax data to identify pressure points including any triggers for Housing Renewal Area Assessments and inform future actions for encouraging and supporting empty homeowners.
- 3.5.2 Continue to raise awareness of the Advice and Information Scheme by contacting empty homeowners. This would include targeted digital correspondence to empty homeowners offering advice and assistance.
- 3.5.3 Awareness raising and training sessions across other parts of the Council and external organisations such as Community Planning Partners, Community Councils for example
- 3.5.4 Develop a Cross Service working group within Aberdeenshire Council with other services such as Environmental Health, Building Standards, the Private Rented Sector service, Housing Options, etc.
- 3.5.5 Explore the potential of enhancing the Matchmaker Scheme using a dedicated webpage and assessing the potential for a Matchmaker rental scheme
- 3.5.6 Continue to investigate any funding mechanisms or packages that could potentially provide financial assistance to empty homeowners

- 3.5.7 Continue to investigate the potential to work in partnership with RSL partners, Create Homes, and external bodies.
- 3.5.8 Continue to proactively look to buy empty homes that fit with the strategic aims of the housing service of Aberdeenshire Council in terms of location, housing need, financial viability, and sustainability
- 3.5.9 Continue to convert empty properties that fit with the strategic aims of the housing service of Aberdeenshire Council in terms of location, housing need, financial viability, and sustainability
- 3.5.10 Continue to examine and implement best practice by working in partnership with SEHP and SEHON, sharing information, ideas, and best practice.
- 3.5.11 Maintain and monitor advice and information website and leaflets to ensure they reflect any changes to legislation, policies, guidelines etc.
- 3.5.12 Quality measures to include surveys of empty homeowners to rate the service which they have received and more generally about the type of assistance that would support them to bring their empty property back into use.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 4.1 Affordable housing cuts across the three pillars of Aberdeenshire Council's Strategic Priorities.

Pillar	Priority
Our People	Education Health & Wellbeing
Our Environment	Infrastructure Resilient Communities
Our Economy	Economy & Enterprise Estate Modernisation

Underpinning the Priorities are several key principles. They are right people, right places, right time; responsible finances; climate and sustainability; Community Planning Partnership Local Outcome Improvement Plans; human rights and public protection; tackling poverty and inequalities; digital infrastructure and economy. Encouraging and supporting empty homeowners to bring their properties back into use supports a number of these principles as well as the Local Housing Strategy 2018-2023 and the Local Outcome Improvement Plan priority – child poverty.

- 4.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is (are) agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		X	

Staffing		X	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland	Integrated Impact Assessment attached as Appendix 1		
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing	Integrated Impact Assessment attached as Appendix 1		
Climate Change and Sustainability	Integrated Impact Assessment attached as Appendix 1		
Health and Wellbeing	Integrated Impact Assessment attached as Appendix 1		
Town Centre First	Integrated Impact Assessment attached as Appendix 1		

4.3 An integrated impact assessment has been carried out as part of the development of the proposals set out above, with positive and neutral impacts, identified as set out in **Appendix 1**.

4.4 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level:

- [ACORP002 Corporate Risk Register](#) - changes in Government legislation, policy and regulation. These will be monitored and reported to the Communities Committee as appropriate

The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level:

- [ISR0016 Infrastructure Services Directorate Risk Register](#) – affordable housing - Everyone having access to appropriate accommodation and housing support where required. Deliver actions in the Local Housing Strategy 2018 – 2023 in relation to (i) affordable housing and this will be monitored and reported to the Communities Committee on a yearly basis.

5 Scheme of Governance

5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated

within the report and are satisfied that the report complies with the [Scheme of Governance](#) and relevant legislation.

- 5.2 The Committee is able to consider this item in terms of Section B1.2 of the [List of Committee Powers in Part 2A](#) of the Scheme of Governance as Committee is being asked to monitor programmes with regards to Empty Homes which has an impact on their area.

Alan Wood, Director of Environment & Infrastructure Services

Report prepared by Moira Simpson, Development Officer - Affordable Housing and Empty Homes
Date 8th February 2022

List of Appendices – Appendix 1 – Integrated Impact Assessment

Aberdeenshire Council

Integrated Impact Assessment

Empty Homes

Assessment ID	IIA-000328
Lead Author	Moira Simpson
Additional Authors	Elaine Reid
Service Reviewers	Alexander Macleod
Subject Matter Experts	Audrey Michie, Susan Forbes, Claudia Cowie, Lynne Gravener, Christine McLennan
Approved By	Rob Simpson
Approved On	Monday January 10, 2022
Publication Date	Monday January 10, 2022

1. Overview

This document has been generated from information entered into the Integrated Impact Assessment system.

Sets out the key actions to encourage and support empty home owners to bring their empty properties back into use.

During screening 10 of 10 questions indicated that detailed assessments were required, the screening questions and their answers are listed in the next section. This led to 5 out of 5 detailed impact assessments being completed. The assessments required are:

- Childrens' Rights and Wellbeing
- Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty
- Health Inequalities
- Sustainability and Climate Change
- Town Centres First

In total there are 42 positive impacts as part of this activity. There are 0 negative impacts, all impacts have been mitigated.

A detailed action plan with 1 points has been provided.

This assessment has been approved by rob.simpson2@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

The remainder of this document sets out the details of all completed impact assessments.

2. Screening

Could your activity / proposal / policy cause an impact in one (or more) of the identified town centres?	Yes
Would this activity / proposal / policy have consequences for the health and wellbeing of the population in the affected communities?	Yes
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect greenhouse gas emissions (CO2e) in the Council or community and / or the procurement, use or disposal of physical resources?	Yes
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the resilience to extreme weather events and/or a changing climate of Aberdeenshire Council or community?	Yes
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the environment, wildlife or biodiversity?	Yes
Does the activity / proposal / policy have an impact on people and / or groups with protected characteristics?	Yes
Is this activity / proposal / policy of strategic importance for the council?	Yes
Does this activity / proposal / policy reduce inequality of outcome?	Yes
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's rights?	Yes
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's wellbeing?	Yes

3. Impact Assessments

Children's Rights and Wellbeing	No Negative Impacts Identified
Climate Change and Sustainability	No Negative Impacts Identified
Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty	No Negative Impacts Identified
Health Inequalities	No Negative Impacts Identified
Town Centre's First	No Negative Impacts Identified

4. Childrens' Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment

4.1. Wellbeing Indicators

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Safe	Yes			
Healthy	Yes			
Achieving	Yes			
Nurtured	Yes			
Active	Yes			
Respected	Yes			
Responsible	Yes			
Included	Yes			

4.2. Rights Indicators

<p>UNCRC Indicators upheld by this activity / proposal / policy</p>	<p>Article 1 - Definition of a child Article 2 - Non-discrimination Article 3 - Best interests of the child Article 4 - Protection of rights Article 5 - Parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities Article 6 - Life, survival and development Article 12 - Respect for the views of the child Article 13 - Freedom of expression Article 14 - Freedom of thought, conscience and religion Article 15 - Freedom of association Article 16 - Right to privacy Article 17 - Access to information; mass media Article 22 - Refugee children Article 23 - Children with disabilities Article 27 - Adequate standard of living Article 30 - Children of minorities / indigenous groups Article 42 - Knowledge of rights</p>
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4.3. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Achieving	Bringing empty homes back into use potentially provides shelter and opportunity for all children and young people to achieve their potential.
Active	Bringing empty homes back into use potentially provides shelter and opportunity for all children and young people to lead active lifestyles.
Healthy	Bringing empty homes back into use potentially provides shelter and opportunity to lead a healthy lifestyle for all children and young people.

Impact Area	Impact
Included	Bringing empty homes back into use potentially provides shelter and opportunity for all children and young people to engage and be included.
Nurtured	Bringing empty homes back into use potentially provides shelter and opportunity for all children and young people to feel nurtured.
Responsible	Bringing empty homes back into use potentially provides shelter and opportunity for all children and young people to be responsible for their own tenancy.
Respected	Bringing empty homes back into use potentially provides shelter and opportunity for all children and young people to participate with their views respected.
Safe	Bringing empty homes back into use potentially provides shelter to ensure that all children and young people are safe.

4.4. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
Internal Data	Council Tax data	Identifies numbers and locations of empty properties across Aberdeenshire.	Childrens rights are incorporated into any actions required to bring empty properties back into use.

4.5. Accounting for the Views of Children and Young People

Engagement with tenants groups, through electronic mailshots, live events and Engage Aberdeenshire, which includes a diverse range of tenants including young people taking into consideration their views and comments.

4.6. Promoting the Wellbeing of Children and Young People

By bringing empty homes back into use this will support young peoples rights to potentially access affordable housing which will have a positive impact upon their wellbeing.

4.7. Upholding Children and Young People's Rights

By bringing empty homes back into use this will support young peoples rights to potentially access affordable housing.

4.8. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

By bringing empty homes back into use it is anticipated that this will have a positive outcome in respect to young peoples rights and wellbeing.

5. Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment

5.1. Protected Groups

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Age (Younger)	Yes			
Age (Older)	Yes			
Disability	Yes			
Race		Yes		
Religion or Belief		Yes		
Sex		Yes		
Pregnancy and Maternity		Yes		
Sexual Orientation		Yes		
Gender Reassignment		Yes		
Marriage or Civil Partnership		Yes		

5.2. Socio-economic Groups

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Low income	Yes			
Low wealth	Yes			
Material deprivation	Yes			
Area deprivation	Yes			
Socioeconomic background	Yes			

5.3. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Age (Older)	Bringing empty properties back into use potentially as affordable housing will offer households access to housing appropriate to their needs.
Age (Younger)	Bringing empty properties back into use potentially as affordable housing will offer households access to housing appropriate to their needs.
Disability	Bringing empty properties back into use potentially as affordable housing will offer households access to housing appropriate to their needs.
Area deprivation	Bringing empty properties back into use potentially as affordable housing will offer households access to housing appropriate to their needs.
Low income	Bringing empty properties back into use potentially as affordable housing will offer households access to housing appropriate to their needs.

Impact Area	Impact
Low wealth	Bringing empty properties back into use potentially as affordable housing will offer households access to housing appropriate to their needs.
Material deprivation	Bringing empty properties back into use potentially as affordable housing will offer households access to housing appropriate to their needs.
Socioeconomic background	Bringing empty properties back into use potentially as affordable housing will offer households access to housing appropriate to their needs.

5.4. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
Internal Data	Council Tax data	Identifies the numbers and locations of empty properties across Aberdeenshire.	Empty homes are a wasted resource which could be brought back into use as affordable housing to help reduce inequalities.

5.5. Engagement with affected groups

Annual and ad-hoc consultation with tenant groups and empty home owners.

5.6. Ensuring engagement with protected groups

The tenants groups and empty home owners are made up of a diverse range of individual some of whom have protected characteristics.

5.7. Evidence of engagement

During the consultation event with regards to the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) which included Empty Homes, tenants were asked to reflect and share their views based on their own personal experiences. This event took place in September 2021.

5.8. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

By bringing empty homes back into use it is anticipated that this will have a positive outcome across all households including those with protected characteristics.

5.9. Improving Relations

Engage and consult with appropriate stakeholders using a variety of methods through electronic mailshots, Engage Aberdeenshire and live events to ensure a wide range of households can participate.

5.10. Opportunities of Equality

Bringing empty homes back into use will potentially assist in promoting good relations and equalities and encourage integration.

6. Health Inequalities Impact Assessment

6.1. Health Behaviours

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Healthy eating		Yes		
Exercise and physical activity		Yes		
Substance use – tobacco	Yes			
Substance use – alcohol	Yes			
Substance use – drugs	Yes			
Mental health	Yes			

6.2. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Mental health	Bringing empty homes back into use as potential affordable housing will provide households who have mental health issues with support through a Housing First approach to pursue personal goals and improve their quality of life.
Substance use – alcohol	Bringing empty homes back into use as potential affordable housing will provide households who have substance use-alcohol with support through a Housing First approach to pursue personal goals and improve their quality of life.
Substance use – drugs	Bringing empty homes back into use as potential affordable housing will provide households who have substance use-drugs with support through a Housing First approach to pursue personal goals and improve their quality of life.
Substance use – tobacco	Bringing empty homes back into use as potential affordable housing will provide households who have substance use-tobacco with support through a Housing First approach to pursue personal goals and improve their quality of life.

6.3. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
Internal Data	Council Tax data	Identifies the number and locations of empty homes across Aberdeenshire.	Empty homes are a wasted resource which could be brought back into use as affordable housing potentially having a positive impact upon health inequalities.

6.4. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

By bringing empty homes back into use it is anticipated that this will have a positive outcome in respect to health inequalities.

7. Sustainability and Climate Change Impact Assessment

7.1. Emissions and Resources

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Consumption of energy	Yes			
Energy efficiency	Yes			
Energy source	Yes			
Low carbon transition	Yes			
Consumption of physical resources	Yes			
Waste and circularity	Yes			
Circular economy transition	Yes			
Economic and social transition	Yes			

7.2. Biodiversity and Resilience

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Quality of environment	Yes			
Quantity of environment	Yes			
Wildlife and biodiversity	Yes			
Infrastructure resilience	Yes			
Council resilience	Yes			
Community resilience	Yes			
Adaptation	Yes			

7.3. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Adaptation	Bringing empty homes back into use will provide refurbished buildings which meet higher energy efficiency standards and will possibly contribute to improved adaptation to potential changes in climate.
Council resilience	Bringing empty homes back into use will provide refurbished buildings which meet higher energy efficiency standards and will possibly support improved Council resilience to related stresses.
Infrastructure resilience	Bringing empty homes back into use will provide refurbished buildings which meet higher energy efficiency standards and will possibly support infrastructure resilience.
Quality of environment	Bringing empty homes back into use will provide refurbished buildings which meet higher energy efficiency standards and will likely to contribute to an enhanced quality of environment.
Quantity of environment	Bringing empty homes back into use will provide refurbished buildings which meet higher energy efficiency standards and will possibly contribute to an increased quantity of environment suitable for nature.

Impact Area	Impact
Community resilience	Bringing empty homes back into use will provide refurbished buildings which meet higher energy efficiency standards and will possibly support improved community resilience to related stresses.
Wildlife and biodiversity	Bringing empty homes back into use will provide refurbished buildings which meet higher energy efficiency standards and will possibly support wildlife and biodiversity.
Consumption of energy	Bringing empty homes back into use is more environmentally friendly when compared to new build.
Circular economy transition	Bringing empty homes back into use will provide refurbished buildings which meet higher energy efficiency standards and will contribute to a more circular economy.
Energy efficiency	Bringing empty homes back into use will provide refurbished buildings which meet higher energy efficiency standards.
Energy source	Bringing empty homes back into use will provide refurbished buildings which meet higher energy efficiency standards and potentially less reliant on fossil fuels.
Economic and social transition	Bringing empty homes back into use will provide refurbished buildings which meet higher energy efficiency standards and will contribute to the economic and social transition of more sustainable patterns of working and living.
Low carbon transition	Bringing empty homes back into use will provide refurbished buildings which meet higher energy efficiency standards and contribute to a transition of lower carbon operations and communities.
Consumption of physical resources	Bringing empty homes back into use will provide refurbished buildings which meet higher energy efficiency standards and will use less materials when compared to a new build.
Waste and circularity	Bringing empty homes back into use will provide refurbished buildings which meet higher energy efficiency standards and will produce less waste and encourage circularity.

7.4. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
Internal Data	Council Tax data	Identifies the number and location of empty homes across Aberdeenshire.	Empty homes are a wasted resource which could be brought back into use.

7.5. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

By bringing empty homes back into use it is anticipated that this will have a positive outcome in respect to sustainability and climate change.

8. Town Centre's First Impact Assessment

8.1. Local Factors

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Town centre assets	Yes			
Footfall	Yes			
Changes to road layouts		Yes		
Parking		Yes		
Infrastructure changes		Yes		
Aesthetics of the town centre	Yes			
Tourism		Yes		
Public safety	Yes			
Town centre business	Yes			
Cultural heritage and identity	Yes			
Social and cultural aspects	Yes			

8.2. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Aesthetics of the town centre	Bringing empty properties back into use will have a positive impact on aesthetics of the town centre.
Cultural heritage and identity	Bringing empty properties back into use will have a positive impact on cultural heritage and identity.
Footfall	Bringing empty properties back into use will have a positive impact on footfall.
Public safety	Bringing empty properties back into use will have a positive impact on public safety some empty properties may be classed as dangerous buildings.
Social and cultural aspects	Bringing empty properties back into use will have a positive impact on social and cultural aspects.
Town centre assets	Bringing empty properties back into use will have a positive impact on town centres.
Town centre business	Bringing empty properties back into use will have a positive impact on town centre business.

8.3. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
Internal Data	Council Tax data	Identifies the numbers and locations of empty homes across Aberdeenshire.	Empty homes are a wasted resource which could be brought back into use.

8.4. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

In adopting a Town Centre First approach into bringing empty homes back into use it is anticipated that this will ensure that any new projects will either only have a positive or neutral effect. Each project will be assessed on its own merits.

9. Action Plan

Planned Action	Details
Continue to analyse empty homes Council Tax data to identify pressure points including any triggers for Housing Renewal Area Assessments.	<p>Lead Officer Moira Simpson</p> <p>Repeating Activity No</p> <p>Planned Start Thursday December 23, 2021</p> <p>Planned Finish Thursday December 22, 2022</p> <p>Expected Outcome Pressure points identified with future actions mapped out to encourage and support empty home owners to bring their properties back into use.</p> <p>Resource Implications Within existing resources</p>