

North Norfolk District Council

Empty Homes Strategy

2006 – 2011

# **North Norfolk Empty Homes Strategy – 2006 – 2011**

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## **1. Introduction**

### **What is an Empty Home?**

Empty homes can take on a number of forms. There is no recognised definition of an empty home and they are not always as straightforward to identify as it may seem. For example:

- A property which appears empty may be a person's second home and occupied infrequently.
- An empty property may have been earmarked as part of a regeneration programme and demolition or reuse may already have been planned.
- Properties could be empty pending a planning consent, refurbishment or whilst awaiting the new resident moving in.

Even allowing for these factors, there are considerably more empty homes and properties are empty for longer periods, than is justified by the workings of the market. A property which has been empty for in excess of 6 months is considered to be a long term empty property and these are the properties on which the Government is encouraging action to be taken to bring them back into use.

### **Why are properties being left empty?**

There are often good reasons for properties being left empty including:

- The property may be in need of major repairs or refurbishment and the owner may not have the necessary resources to make the property habitable.
- There may be problems with accessing the property.
- There may be planning restrictions which restrict the occupancy of the property.
- The owner may be having difficulty in finding a new tenant or owner.
- The owner may have been unable to obtain the mortgagor's or freeholders consent to let the property.
- The owner may be trying to sell the property and may be prepared to leave the property empty whilst they wait for the right price.
- The owner may be unwilling to consider leasing or letting the property.
- The owner may be temporarily working abroad and intend to live in the property in the future.
- The owner may not be aware of the property's existence, for example where property records are not kept.

- There may be a complicated ownership scenario.
- The owner may not fully appreciate the business case for bringing their empty property back into use.
- The property may have been acquired solely for speculative investment purposes and the owner is not concerned that the property is empty.
- The property may be owned by a development company who has plans for its future redevelopment.
- The property may be joined to a business property and the business owner does not want to let it

### **Why is there concern over properties being left empty?**

What happens to empty homes is not simply a matter of concern to those who own them. A property that is left unoccupied and not maintained will over time begin to impact on its surroundings including neighbouring properties whose condition and value might be adversely affected. Empty properties are also at risk from being broken into by vandals and squatters and in extreme cases might become a target of arson.

Empty homes are a wasted resource from the point of view of the local authority, especially at a time when there are people in urgent need of suitable accommodation. In addition owners of such properties are losing out on an opportunity to realise an income from their property and in many cases will be spending money on maintaining and securing their property or will be allowing their property to deteriorate and become an eyesore and nuisance to neighbours.

The only effective way to reduce the negative impact of an empty dwelling is to occupy it. It is therefore in the public interest that empty homes are brought back into use.

The Government is committed to addressing issues relating to empty homes and for a number of years has required local authorities to report their progress on bringing empty homes back into use through their direct action through its Best Value Performance Indicator (164).

### **What are the benefits from empty homes being brought back into use?**

The reuse of empty homes can bring both financial and non financial benefits to local authorities, the general public and to their owners. These benefits include;

#### **For the local authority and general public;**

- A housing resource for both social and private occupiers which can assist local authorities in meeting their strategic housing objectives. For example, these can be a source of key worker housing or a way of meeting targets to reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.

- A more environmentally friendly solution to meeting housing need. In line with the Government's target to build 60% of residential units on previously used land, reuse of empty homes can reduce pressure on Greenfield development. The reuse of the existing building fabric is also generally more sustainable than building new homes.
- Acting as a catalyst for wider regeneration by building confidence in the property market.
- Cost savings to the public sector. Empty homes are frequently the cause of complaints to local authorities, for example in relation to environmental health issues. Each empty home brought back into use will save hours of officer time and enable investment to be targeted into other areas. The police and fire services are also regularly called out to deal with empty properties. Not only could costs be saved through a reduced number of empty homes, but this would also allow them to focus on other priorities.

#### **For the owner;**

The principal benefits to the owner will be financial. The returns that can be gained either as a capital lump sum on disposal or as a rental stream from lettings. Often the financial returns of reuse are considered on their own. In reality these should be weighed against the costs of holding the property empty to give a balanced view of the benefits of reuse. Despite the financial benefits that can be achieved by bringing a property back into use some owners however will continue to leave their property empty.

#### **Why is an Empty Homes Strategy important?**

Empty homes strategies have a central role to play in:

- Making it easier for property owners to bring empty homes back into use
- Setting of clear targets for reducing the number of empty homes
- Improving housing standards
- Bringing rental income to owners and development partners
- Creating homes for people in housing need
- Creating greater choice for prospective tenants
- Reducing the need to build new homes
- Improving the environment
- Reducing vandalism
- Raising the profile of empty homes and reducing the acceptability of properties being left empty
- Gaining the commitment and co-operation necessary to succeed in tackling the problem – both from within the Council and externally.

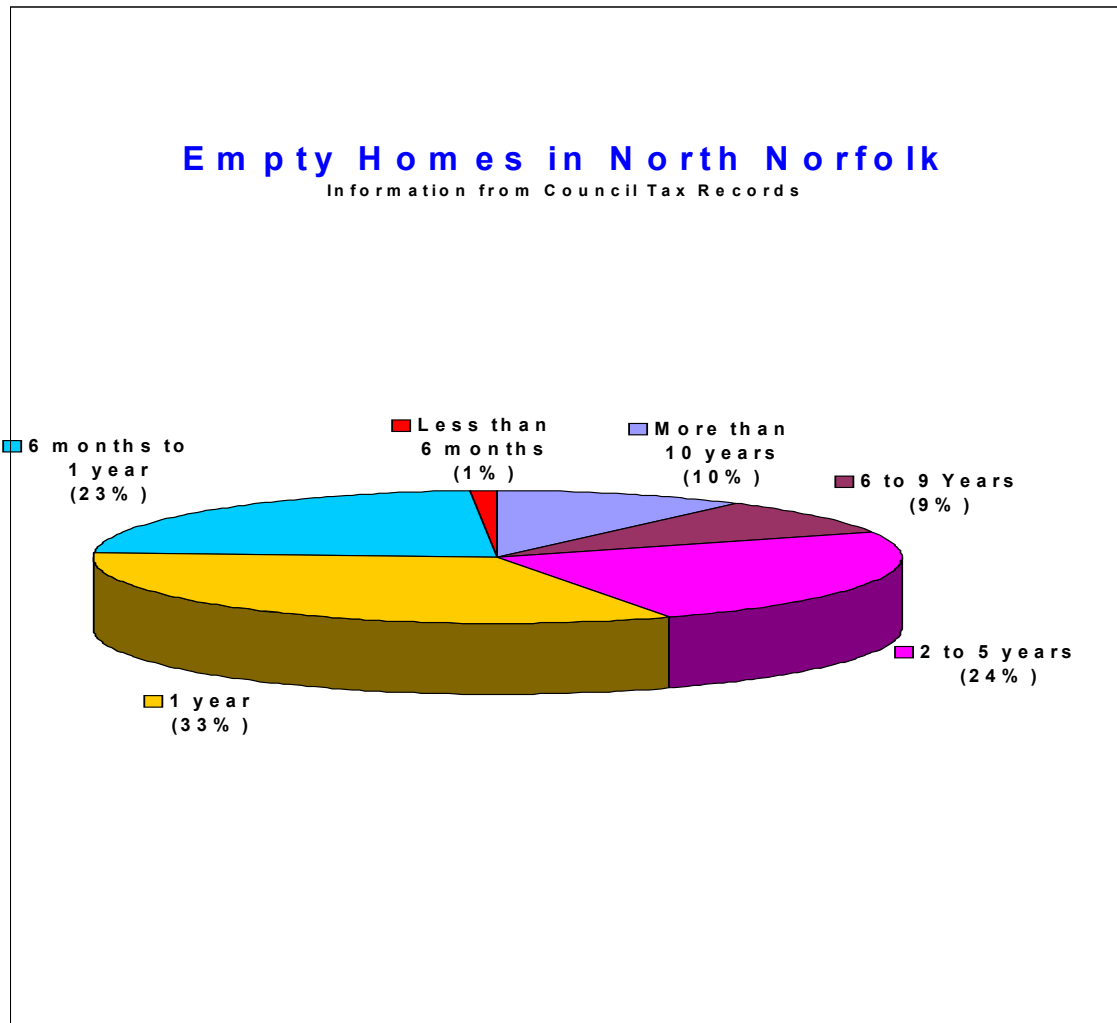
Council services like Housing, Planning and Environmental Health can have a big impact in bringing empty homes back into use if they work together within a corporate strategy. This will put the Council in a strong position to approach other organisations like housing associations and developers who want to work in partnership. The barriers to bringing empty homes back into will start to fall away – and property owners will begin to see the benefits for themselves and their communities of bringing their empty properties back into use.

## 2. The Empty Homes Strategy in the North Norfolk context

### How many empty homes are there in North Norfolk?

There are a total of 51,248 residential properties in North Norfolk. Our Council Tax records show that as at 1 April 2005, 401 properties in the private sector had been empty for in excess of 6 months. However it is likely that the actual figure may be higher as the removal of Council Tax discount for empty homes has removed the incentive for the owners of empty homes to register them.

**Figure 1: Empty Homes in North Norfolk as at 1 April 2005** – source Council Tax Register



### Why are properties being left empty in North Norfolk?

There are 14 classes of exemption for empty homes on the Council Tax Register. There are empty homes registered in 5 of these classes, a further 15 registered properties have not been classified, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Empty Homes by Council Tax Exemption Class, North Norfolk District Council, Council Tax Register, 1 April 2005**

<b>Council Tax Exemption Class</b>	<b>Definition of Properties to be included</b>	<b>Number of properties in Exemption Class</b>
Class A	New properties, properties which need or are undergoing major repair work so that they can be lived in	97
Class C	Empty and unfurnished properties	276
Class E	Properties left unoccupied by patients in hospital and care homes	1
Class F	Properties left unoccupied when a person dies	9
Class L	Repossessed properties	3
Unclassified properties		15
	<b>Total</b>	<b>401</b>

Armed forces homes, barracks, mess and married quarters are exempt from Council Tax regardless of their occupation.

The reasons for properties being left empty however are many and complex and it is felt that the Council Tax classifications do not provide sufficient information to properly inform this strategy and allow us to make decisions on where activity to bring empty properties back into use should be focussed. We therefore sent a questionnaire (Appendix 1) to the owners of all known empty properties to obtain further information in order to understand why properties in the district are being left empty.

We sent the questionnaire to 387 owners and 299 were returned, a response rate of 77%. Of these;

- 93% of the respondents were the owners of the identified properties, however only 41% of their properties were empty
- A significant number of the identified properties had been brought back into use and had either been sold or let
- A further 11% were being marketed for sale
- 7% were being used as second homes
- 2% had been demolished

This information will supplement the information contained on the Council Tax Register and will help us to target our empty homes activity.

### **Where are the empty homes in North Norfolk?**

#### **Private housing stock**

The majority of the empty homes are within the district's private sector housing stock with the properties being distributed across the district as can be seen from Table 2 (Appendix 2) which identifies the number of empty homes by ward. The incidence of empty homes by ward is further illustrated in the ward map (Appendix 3). This information has also been

collated at Parish level which further informs decisions on targeting of action to bring empty homes back into use.

As would be expected the highest incidence of empty homes is in the towns with Cromer and Sheringham having the highest incidence with 44 empty homes being recorded in each. Fakenham has 25 registered empty homes, Wells-Next-The-Sea 23, Holt 20, North Walsham 16 and Stalham 8. Only one of the parishes has more than 10 registered empty homes, this being Mundesley with 11 registered homes. The majority of the parishes have between 1 and 5 empty homes registered.

It would appear that there is quite a high correlation between the incidence of empty homes and the areas of high demand for affordable housing which clearly assists with the targeting of activity to bring empty homes back into use.

Table 2 also identifies the number of empty homes in each ward by Council Tax band which provides some indication of the likely cost of bringing such properties back into use and the feasibility of bringing such properties back into use as affordable housing for those in housing need.

### **Social housing stock (Affordable Housing)**

There were no properties which had been empty for more than 6 months in the Council's own stock or the Registered Social Landlord (housing association) stock in the district. This would be expected given with the high levels of need and demand for affordable housing across the district. The Council transferred its Housing Stock to a newly formed Registered Social Landlord – North Norfolk Housing Trust on 13 February 2006 and all social housing in the North Norfolk district is now in the ownership of housing associations.

### **Other public sector housing**

There are 180 properties within the 'other' public sector stock which have been empty for more than 6 months, these are mainly within the ownership of the Ministry of Defence and the Defence Housing Executive and are located at R.A.F West Raynham and R.A.F Coltishall respectively.

#### **R.A.F West Raynham**

The Air Base at West Raynham closed in 1994 and the 172 properties including Officer's Houses and Airmen's Houses have been unoccupied ever since. The Ministry of Defence has recently declared the base surplus to requirements and the whole site including the housing is currently being marketed. Sealed bids have been invited and the Council has been given an opportunity to comment on the bids of 3 preferred bids.

#### **R.A.F Coltishall**

The Air Base at Coltishall is due to close in December 2006 although there will still be a presence on the base until October 2007. Whilst the Airbase takes its name from the village near to which it is located and this village falls within the Broadland District Council area, the majority of the houses on the site and the base fall within the North Norfolk District Council area including 339 of the 378 properties.

The houses were sold to Annington Homes in 1996 with a lease back arrangement to the Defence Housing Executive. The majority of the properties are occupied although there is a relatively high number which are empty and this number is likely to increase as the closure of the base draws nearer. The properties are habitable and require minor works and it is the intention of Annington Homes to sell the properties on the open market.

### **Agricultural and Forestry Workers' Dwellings in the Countryside**

The North Norfolk district is predominantly rural and thus agriculture continues to play a significant part in the district's economy although the industry is currently in decline due to the introduction of modern farming methods and diversification. It is thought that there are a large number of properties which were built to accommodate agricultural workers which are no longer required for this purpose and which are currently empty or which are likely to become empty as the agricultural industry declines further, some of these properties will have agricultural occupancy restrictions.

The occupation of agricultural or forestry worker's dwellings are restricted to a person solely or mainly working, or last working, in the locality, in agriculture or in forestry, or a widow or widower of such a person, and to any resident dependents.

The Council needs to undertake further work to ascertain the extent to which properties are being left empty due to such conditions.

### **Why do we need to take action to bring properties back into use in North Norfolk?**

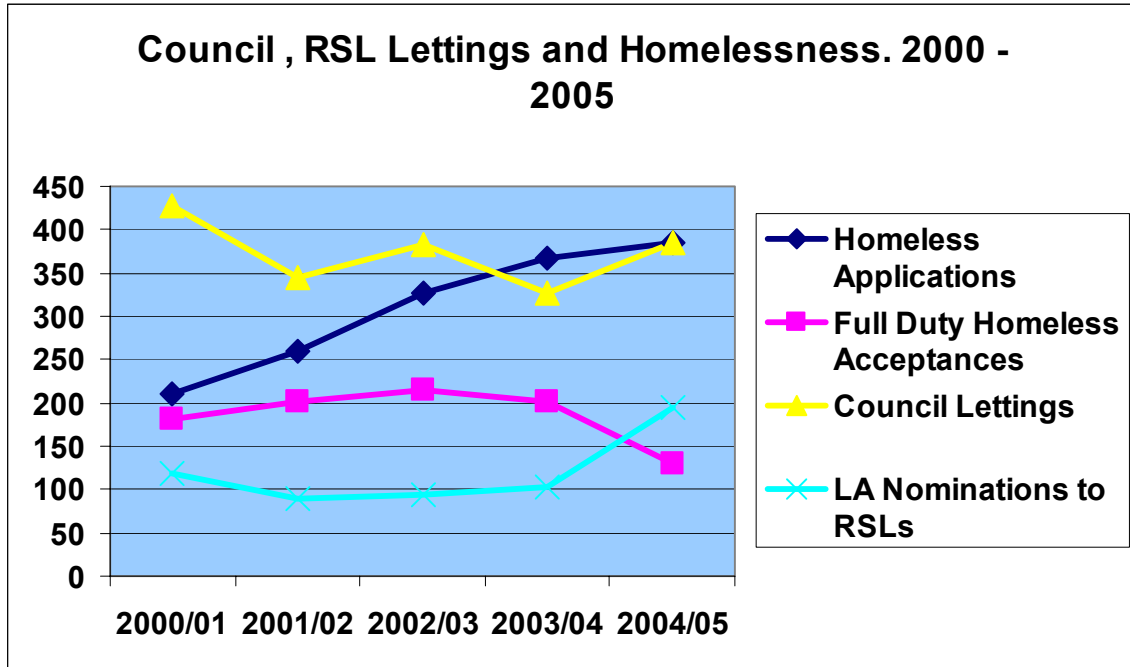
The population of the North Norfolk district over recent years has increased at a greater rate than for the East of England and is predicted to increase further during the life of this strategy. There are 4,949 second homes in the district representing almost 10% of the housing stock (it is believed that unfurnished second homes are registered as empty homes on the Council Tax Register). The district has a low wage economy and house prices have continued to increase.

The updated Housing Needs Survey (2003) identified a need for a further 509 affordable homes per year over and above the current rates of delivery. The Council is in the process of commissioning a new Housing Needs Survey imminently and it is expected that the survey results will show a further increase in the need for affordable housing. The number of households on the Housing Register waiting for affordable housing remains high, with 2454 households registered as at 1 April 2005, whilst the number of homelessness applications received in 2004/05 continued at a high level with 385 applications received (figure 2).

The Council's priorities for housing are to reduce homelessness and increase the availability of decent and affordable housing for local residents. The Council aims to deliver, in partnership with its Registered Social Landlord partners, 75 affordable homes per year over the 5 year period to 2009, this clearly falls short of the number of affordable homes required to meet the needs of the district. The Council is currently reviewing this target in the review of its Corporate Plan and it is likely that the figure will be increased to deliver 450 affordable homes over the next 5 year period. The opportunities to deliver further increases in affordable housing will be limited by the amount of development allowed through the Local Plan and the developing Local

Development Framework and the availability of funding. The Council therefore needs to seek other ways of increasing the amount of housing available, one option is to encourage owners of empty homes to bring them back into use.

**Figure 2: Council, Registered Social Landlord and Homelessness Application – 2002 - 2005**



Bringing empty homes back into use will result in an increase in the housing stock available to meet the needs of local residents and result in an improvement in the condition of the housing stock. We will endeavour to ensure that where possible properties brought back into are affordable and where financial incentives are provided to owners by way of grant or loan funding we will negotiate for the properties to be made available to those in housing need through the use of nominations arrangements. This work will therefore contribute towards achieving our priorities for housing.

### **3. What practical action can be taken to bring empty homes back into use**

The action that is taken to bring an empty home back into use will depend both upon the principal reasons for it being empty and who is seeking to secure its reuse – that is the local authority or the owner.

There is a range of benefits to be derived by local authorities and owners working together to bring empty homes back into use. However, little success will be yielded where local authorities and owners work in isolation. Close partnership working is essential. Local authorities will often work in partnership with property owners, private landlords, property management companies and lettings agencies, developers and Registered Social Landlords and may use a number of ‘carrot and stick’ options.

#### **How can empty homes be identified?**

The primary source of information on empty homes has until recently been the Council Tax Register held by the local authority. Owners of empty homes have until recently been eligible for discounts on Council Tax. Local authorities were given the discretion to remove or reduce such discounts along with the discounts for second homes. It was felt that the availability of such discounts did not encourage owners to actively seek to ensure that their properties were occupied. The removal of the discounts may have resulted in some previously long term empty homes being brought back into use but it has also removed the incentive for owners to notify the local authority of the existence of empty homes. Council Tax Registers therefore can no longer be relied upon to give an accurate picture of the true number of empty homes and other forms of intelligence will be required to supplement Council Tax Register information, this could include use of other information held by the following local authority services:

- Building Control
- Environmental Health
- Buildings at risk and conservation teams
- Planning lists

Empty homes could also be located through undertaking of survey work.

Members and Town and Parish Councils can play a key role in identifying empty homes and notifying the Council of their existence.

#### **Tracking the owners of empty homes**

Once empty homes have been identified, the next stage in the process of bringing such properties back into use is to locate the owner of the property. Use of the following may prove helpful;

- Land Registry
- General public
- Neighbours
- Companies House
- Experion or other credit reference checking agency

## **Managing information on empty homes**

The information collected on empty homes should be held on a database which contains information including detailed information on the property's ownership and history, working case notes and technical and survey information.

## **Advice and assistance**

Local authorities now have clearly defined duties to maintain and enhance the health of the housing market across all tenures and can provide a range of guidance and financial support to owners.

Most local authorities provide, in effect, an agency service to work with owners of empty homes, to encourage them to bring their property back into use voluntarily. They will often tailor a package to suit the needs and aspirations of the individual owner, assessing their current position, their financial commitments and the level of their redevelopment knowledge. The services provided will often include the provision of free impartial advice on the options available to sell or let the property and would include information on the availability of grant and loan funding to assist with refurbishment or conversion. Providing as many options as possible, giving the owner time to digest the information and being prepared to manage the momentum are the keys to success.

Many owners would consider privately renting their property but can often be daunted by the responsibility of becoming a landlord and fears that they will get a bad tenant. Very often guides for landlords containing advice on letting and management and the availability of damage deposit and rent guarantee schemes will be enough to persuade an owner to let their property. If they still have anxieties over letting their property a referral to a Registered Social Landlord who would be willing to lease the property under a Private Sector Leasing or Temporary Social Housing Scheme might be more appropriate.

## **Private Landlords**

Individual private owners can collectively offer a local authority a good supply of accommodation to rent. This can be utilised by establishing a successful partnership network between various sections of the local authority, private owners and local letting / estate agents.

Many local authorities now have landlord's forums to keep in close contact with what's happening in the private sector, as well as providing information and improving standards of practice.

Developing a good rapport with the private rented sector is a high priority for a local authority.

## **Direct Lettings Schemes**

Direct Lettings Schemes provide support to landlords with the letting and management of their properties. Support will be provided through nomination of prospective tenants, undertaking credit checks, fast tracking of Housing Benefit claims, ensuring property

safety checks are undertaken and providing landlord and tenant mediation. This service can be provided for most properties but would be targeted at the lower ends of the rental market in an attempt to assist those households in greatest need and those who have the greatest difficulty in accessing accommodation without such support.

### **Damage Deposit and Rent Guarantee / Rent in Advance Schemes**

Most local authorities operate some form of Damage Deposit and Rent Guarantee / Rent in Advance Scheme to assist households in housing need to access the private rented sector. Such schemes make letting their properties more desirable to prospective landlords and reduce the risks associated with letting a property. Such assistance can be offered as part of a package of support to encourage owners to bring their properties back into use through letting.

### **Registered Social Landlords (RSL's)**

Partnership working with local RSL's can achieve solutions to many empty properties.

### **Temporary Social Housing**

Under such a scheme a Registered Social Landlord enters into a lease agreement with the owner of the property for an agreed period. The Registered Social Landlord effectively becomes the tenant and sublets the property to a household in housing need nominated by the local authority. They will rent and manage the properties for 2-29 years (typically 3-5 years).

A grant may be available to help improve the property. The grant is not normally repayable but owners are committed to a minimum term for the agreement and will have to repay it should the agreement be prematurely terminated for any reason. The owner is not responsible for any costs arising from tenant damage.

The rent is guaranteed to the owner for the full term of the lease regardless of any void periods albeit at a discounted rate which reflects that the owner is being relieved of most of the risks and responsibilities of managing and maintaining their property.

#### **Advantages**

- A grant may be available for suitable properties
- Lease period of 2-20 years (typically 3-5 years)
- Guaranteed rental income
- Management by experienced housing professionals
- Guaranteed vacant possession at lease end in the same condition in which it was taken (less fair wear and tear)
- Responsive repairs service

### **Private Sector Leasing**

Under such a scheme a Registered Social Landlord or local authority leases the property from the owner typically for a 2-5 year period and sub lets the property to a household in housing need. The rent is guaranteed to the owner although at a discounted rate which

reflects that they are being relieved of all risk and responsibility for the management and maintenance of the property during the period of the lease and the property is handed back at the end of the lease in the same condition allowing for fair wear and tear.

If the property is managed by a Registered Social Landlord there would normally be an arrangement with the local authority whereby they pay the rent including a management fee along with a bond against damage in return for nomination rights.

The advantages to the property's owner are the same as for the Temporary Social Housing Scheme.

### **Purchase and Repair / Acquisition and Works schemes**

Registered Social Landlords might also be in a position to purchase empty properties. Purchase and Repair / Acquisition and Works schemes allow for the purchase of a property and for a programme of works to be undertaken to bring the property up to the Decent Homes Standard. Purchase and Repair would normally be used for the purchase of properties requiring a low level of work and Acquisition and Works for properties requiring more extensive works. The Registered Social Landlord would require subsidy to enable the purchase and this could either come from the Housing Corporation or from the local authority in the form of local authority social housing grant. The potential for the use of such a scheme would therefore be dependent upon the availability of funding and the priorities for such funding.

### **Other sources of funding**

There are other organisations that may have an interest – and occasionally funds to invest - in the restoration of certain empty properties which have a particularly historical or architectural significance. Examples include The Preservation Trust, English Heritage and Conservation Area Partnership schemes.

### **Housing Renewal Policies and financial assistance**

The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 repealed most of the previous law relating to the provision of grant assistance. The changes gave Housing Authorities greater freedom to offer a variety of assistance to improve housing conditions in the private sector including loans as well as grants. The Government made it clear that it considered that maintenance of property is primarily the responsibility of the owner and where an owner can afford to carry out improvements or repairs from their own resources or where a commercial loan is available there is no need for the Housing Authority to intervene.

In cases where assistance is not available from elsewhere however it is considered appropriate for the Housing Authority to step in. The use of loans will help to make the resources available for private sector housing renewal go further and, as the loans are repaid, will allow the money to be recycled in the future. It is accepted grant aid may continue to be appropriate for minor works.

## **Loan assistance / grant aid for empty homes**

As part of its overall housing strategy a local authority may offer loan assistance and grant aid to help deal with empty homes. Renovation loans and grants (or an equivalent loan / grant) may be made available to owner occupiers and landlords to renovate, improve or convert empty properties. Such loans and grants are discretionary and the local authority will need to be sure that the market has had sufficient opportunity to deal with the property and failed to do so.

## **Removal of Agricultural and Forestry Workers' Occupancy Conditions**

Changes in the scale and character of farming and forestry in response to market changes may affect the longer-term requirement for dwellings for which permission has been granted subject to an occupancy condition. The Government's advice on the matter is that such dwellings should not be kept vacant, nor should their present occupants be unnecessarily obliged to remain in occupation simply by virtue of planning conditions restricting occupancy that have outlived their usefulness. Applications for the removal of occupancy conditions should be considered on the basis of realistic assessments of the existing need for them, bearing in mind that it is the need for a dwelling for someone solely, mainly or last working in agriculture in an area as a whole, and not just on the particular holding, that is relevant.

Applications for the removal of an agricultural or forestry worker's occupancy condition will only be permitted if the applicant has demonstrated that there is no long-term need for an agricultural or forestry worker's dwelling on the particular holding in which the dwelling is situated nor in the surrounding area. In establishing the absence of long-term need the following criteria will be expected to have been met:

- (a) no planning application for a new agricultural or forestry worker's dwelling has been submitted on the particular holding or within the surrounding area during the last three years; and
- (b) a marketing exercise over a period of twelve months giving reasonable publicity has been carried out which is based on the genuine ability of an agricultural worker on average agricultural earnings to purchase the dwelling.

For the purposes of such policies 'surrounding area' is likely to mean an individual civil parish together with adjoining civil parishes.

## **Enforcement**

Voluntary initiatives are not entirely effective without a credible threat of compulsion to back them up. Before using any of the enforcement options that may be available to the Council owners must be encouraged to reuse empty homes voluntarily. In some cases however owners will need to be made aware of the enforcement powers available to the local authority.

There are a range of options that can be considered when dealing with issues arising from a property that has been left empty, they are as follows:

- To remedy serious disrepair – Housing Act 1985 s190
- To secure a property – Local Government Act 1982 s29
- To allow for fencing off the property – Buildings Act 1984 s34
- To address unsightly external appearance – Town and Country Planning Act 1990 s215

### **Improvement Notices**

When a dilapidated empty property is identified the local authority can serve improvement notices on an owner ordering that remedial work be done to rectify the problem. The notice will differ depending upon the type of work necessary.

In these circumstances, local authorities have statutory powers to enforce repair works. Where owners remain unwilling to undertake these works, local authorities can step in and undertake the works themselves, reclaiming the costs from the owner. In these cases not only is there a cost to the owner, but the opportunity to offset the cost against grant that might have been available is lost.

If the property remains empty for a long period and the owner will not negotiate with the local authority consideration can be given to the use of the following enforcement powers:-

### **Enforced sale procedure**

The Enforced Sale Procedure enables the sale of a property to be forced via auction to enable the recovery of costs incurred in dealing with an empty property, the procedure is as follows; -

- Request to owner to carry out remedial work
- Works in default carried out by the local authority following non compliance with requests to the owner to carry out remedial work
- Legal charge attached to the title of the property
- Application to HM Registry to enforce the sale of the property

### **Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO)**

The Housing Act 1985 gives local authorities the power to apply to compulsory purchase empty homes to bring them into use where there is a proven housing need. This option may be pursued where owners are reluctant to take action to bring their property back into use, where an owner of a property cannot be traced or where a property has been empty for a long time and is causing a nuisance or danger to the public. A Compulsory Purchase Order will only be sought as a last resort and where other actions have failed.

The CPO procedure can be very lengthy especially if objections are received. It is advisable to take photographic evidence of the condition of the property and damage being caused to neighbouring properties and the surrounding area, in order to demonstrate the negative impact on the area. In addition it will be necessary to

demonstrate that attempts were made to work with the owner on a voluntary basis and that the human rights of the owner are not being contravened.

### **Back to back sale**

This is a transaction that immediately follows a CPO and involves selling the property as quickly as possible to another buyer in order to recover the costs. Usually the buyer is a Registered Social Landlord enabling the property to be offered to a household in housing need. Alternatively sealed bids can be invited from private buyers. It is useful to have a back to back buyer lined up before starting the CPO process.

### **Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO's)**

The 2004 Housing Act will enable local authorities to secure occupation of long term empty properties by applying for an Empty Dwelling Management Order. These new powers come into force in April 2006.

The legislation operates alongside existing procedures by providing a back up to voluntary leasing arrangements and an alternative to enforcement action under other legislation.

There are two types of order – Interim EDMO and Final EDMO. They allow a local housing authority to secure occupation and proper management of privately owned houses and flats that have been unoccupied for at least six months and where certain other conditions are met.

An Interim EDMO must be approved by a Residential Property Tribunal before it can have effect. Once approved it will usually last for a maximum period of 12 months (but can be extended):

With an Interim EDMO the council cannot arrange occupation of the dwelling without seeking the consent of the owner. This means that the owner has a final opportunity to reach an agreed solution. If an agreement cannot be reached, an Interim EDMO can be revoked and replaced with a Final EDMO.

The making of a final EDMO does not require the approval of a Residential Property Tribunal. Once in force an EDMO lasts for a fixed period of not more than 7 years. The local housing authority does not require the consent of the owner to grant occupation rights under a Final EDMO.

Properties will revert to their owners on an agreed date or sooner if the owner so requires – provided due notice is given and arrangements to repay any reasonable costs incurred by the local authority are settled. The local housing authority has the right to possession of the property whilst the EDMO is in force which enables it to undertake the management of the property. The local housing authority however does not acquire a legal interest or estate.

The local housing authority must notify the owner of the property of its intention to apply for an EDMO and ascertain the intentions of the owner in respect of the future use of the property in question. If the EDMO is the most appropriate course of action, the authority must seek the authorisation of the Residential Property Tribunal which must be satisfied

that the property has been unoccupied for in excess of 6 months and that there is no reasonable prospect of the property being occupied in the near future. In addition the local authority must demonstrate that it has a reasonable prospect of securing the properties occupation and must have complied with all of the duties and procedures.

An EDMO will not be approved if the following exemptions apply:

- The property has been empty for less than 6 months
- the property is the principal home of an absent owner
- the property is a second home or holiday home
- the property is undergoing repair or renovation
- the property is awaiting planning or building regulation approval
- the property is being marketed for sale
- the owner has died within specified time period

To obtain a Final EDMO the proposed order must be served on the owner and representations invited. A Management Scheme is required which must set out how the dwelling will be managed with details of any work the local authority proposes to carry out with expenditure estimates, open market rent and proposed rent (where different) and how and when any surplus income will be passed on to the owner.

All income / expenditure must be accounted for and facilities for inspecting accounts must be made available. The rent collected must be used to offset the expenditure incurred by the local authority and any surpluses must be paid to the owner on the expiry of the order. The local authority cannot recover any deficit from the owner unless this forms part of any agreement reached with the owner in respect of the early revocation of the order or if the deficit relates to a service charge.

The owner may seek revocation at any time and the local authority may seek revocation if;

- It fails to secure occupation of the property
- The dwelling will be occupied following revocation
- The dwelling is to be sold
- The Final EDMO is replacing an Interim EDMO
- The EDMO interferes with the rights of a third party
- Other circumstances the local authority considers appropriate

If there are tenants in occupation the consent of the owner would be require before revocation and the local authority may refuse the revocation if the property is likely to remain unoccupied.

A person affected may appeal to Residential Property Tribunal against;

- The decision of the local authority make a Final EDMO
- The terms of the Final EDMO (including the terms of the management scheme)
- The terms of the Interim EDMO (relating to payment of rent / compensation)
- The decision of the local authority to vary or revoke / refusal to vary or revoke the EDMO
- The decision of the local authority not to pay compensation / the amount of compensation

#### **4. What action have we taken so far to bring empty homes back into use?**

Since April 2002 North Norfolk District Council has brought 7 properties back into use and currently has a target to bring 8 properties a year back into use.

In May 2005 the Council renewed its commitment to bringing empty homes back into use through the employment of a dedicated Empty Homes Officer on a 12 month fixed term contract to research the problem of empty homes in North Norfolk, develop this Strategy and kick start its implementation.

#### **North Norfolk District Council's Housing Renewal Policy**

The Council's Housing Renewal Policy has recently been revised and the new policy will come into effect on 1 June 2006. One of the main aims of the Housing Renewal Policy is to assist the Council in meeting its Best Value Performance Indicator target to bring empty homes back into use and £150,000 of the £550,000 2006/07 Housing Renewal Budget has been set aside for bringing empty homes back into use. The Council has increased the maximum available grant for bringing an empty home back into use from £20,000 to £25,000 but the grant will now be dependent upon agreement to the Council having the right to nominate tenants for a fixed period of time dependent upon the amount of grant given.

#### **Empty Homes Grant**

A grant to encourage owners of properties that have been empty for in excess of 12 months to undertake all necessary works to improve them to the Decent Homes Standard and let them out at rent determined by the rent officer, to tenants nominated by the Council.

#### **Eligible works**

- Work to repair or improve a property that has been empty for in excess of 12 months to meet the Decent Homes Standard.

#### **Applicant's eligibility**

- The applicant must have an owner's interest in the dwelling.

#### **Property eligibility**

- The dwelling must have been empty for in excess of 12 months
- The dwelling must be within Council Tax bands A, B, C or D
- The dwelling is of a type and in an area which will meet a housing need as determined by the Council having regard to the current housing waiting list.
- The dwelling currently does not meet the Decent Homes Standard.

#### **Application**

To apply an applicant must provide:-

- A completed application form signed by the applicant.

- Two detailed priced quotations covering the work from builders not related to any person with an owner interest in the dwelling.
- or, where the applicant is to carry out the work, a priced list of materials to be submitted.
- Plans of the work to be carried out where required by the Council.
- Evidence of ownership of the dwelling.
- A completed agreement to nomination rights, certificate of future letting and acceptance of the grant terms.
- Signed authority to carry out the work from all persons with an owner's interest in the dwelling.
- Any other documentation or evidence required by the council.

### **Value of the Grant**

- The maximum grant available for each application is £25,000.
- The cost of the work will be based on the lowest quotation submitted or such lower figure as the Council's Grants Officer may determine to be reasonable having regard to the work proposed.
- The eligible works are those which are necessary to meet the Decent Homes Standard.
- The grant can also include any reasonable costs incurred by the applicant in preparing and submitting the application.
- Claims for unforeseen work will be considered subject to the grants maximum value where the work has been authorised in advance by the Council.

### **Carrying out the work**

- On completion of the work the property must meet the Decent Homes Standard
- The work should not be commenced in advance of receipt of written confirmation of the grant offer signed by the Responsible Officer.
- The work must be carried out in accordance with the plans and specification submitted.
- The work must be carried out by one of the contractors whose quotations were submitted as part of the application.
- Any changes to the work or to the contractors used must be authorised in advance by the Council.
- Failure to comply with the above will result in loss of the grant.

### **Payment of the Grant**

- All requests for payment must be supported by an invoice from the contractor(s) carrying out the grant aided work.

- The grant will be paid by cheque sent to the applicant but made payable to the name on the invoice submitted.
- Stage payments may be claimed where agreed by the Grant Officer up to a maximum of 90% of the approved grant. In all cases 10% of the grant will be retained until all works have been completed to the satisfaction of the Council's Grant Officer determined by an inspection.

### **Post Grant Conditions**

- The dwelling must remain let or available for letting as a main permanent residence for at least 5 years from the date of the final grant payment.
- The applicant agrees to give the Council rights to nominate tenants to occupy the property for a minimum of 2 years following the completion of the works, with a further year of nomination rights for each £5,000 of grant provided, up to a maximum period of 5 years.
- The dwelling must be let or available for letting at a reasonable rent as determined by the Rent Officer service.
- If the period for which the Council has nomination rights has expired and the owner of the property fails to find a tenant through other means and the property is empty for in excess of 3 months, the Council reserves the right to impose a further period of nomination rights.
- The dwelling must not be sold or advertised for sale or ownership of the dwelling transferred during the five year period.

Failure to comply with these conditions will require repayment of grant in full with interest from the date the grant was paid, calculated at the Council's bank's base rate. A Local Land Charge will be placed on the property for the 5 year period or until the grant is repaid. The Grant conditions will be monitored to ensure compliance. The Council will determine whether sufficient effort is being taken by the owner of the property to ensure that the property is let to its optimum and whether any refusal of a prospective tenant nominated by the Council is reasonable. The grant may be repayable if the owner consistently refuses the Council's nominees.

### **R.A.F West Raynham**

The Council has lobbied the Ministry of Defence and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to consider sale of the housing on the decommissioned Airbase at West Raynham to a Registered Social Landlord or consortia of Registered Social Landlords to ensure that some of the properties are made available for affordable housing.

Circle Anglia and Flagship Housing Group prepared a report which considered the potential for bringing the properties back into use which proposes the sale of the Officer's Houses in their current condition to be sold on the open market to cross subsidise the refurbishment of the remaining properties which would be made available as affordable housing to meet the needs of local residents from the North Norfolk district in addition to those of the neighbouring authorities, Breckland District Council and the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk. The properties are all unfit and would require a substantial amount of

work and investment in the region of £4m to bring the properties up to the Decent Homes standard.

In addition considerable investment in the region of £5.5m would be required to improve the site's infrastructure including provision of a new water supply, upgrading of power supplies, drainage, sewerage and highways. The site would also benefit from investment in community infrastructure due to its current lack of amenities and remote location.

The wish of the Ministry of Defence to dispose of the whole site however is likely to mean that the Council's aspirations for the empty properties to be brought back into use as affordable housing will not be realised. It is likely that the site will be acquired by a developer and that the properties will be sold onto the open market.

The whole site including the housing is currently being marketed. Sealed bids have been invited and the Council has been given an opportunity to comment on the bids of 3 preferred bids. The Council will continue to maintain a close interest in the disposal of the site and will where opportunities arise seek to have influence over the future of the housing on the site.

### **R.A.F Coltishall**

Officers of the Council have been involved in discussions about the future use of the site and housing on the Airbase at Coltishall which is due to close in December 2006. The Council will maintain a watching brief and will seek to influence the disposal of the housing where possible.

## **5. What further action needs to be taken to increase the number of empty homes being brought back into use in North Norfolk?**

### **Raising the profile of empty homes**

The Council needs to use every opportunity to raise the profile of empty homes and promote its activities to bring empty homes back into use and in particular promote its successes. The Council will do this through a formal launch of this Strategy.

It is also essential that work on bringing back empty homes into use is mainstreamed and the activity not confined to one dedicated post.

### **Managing information on empty homes**

The Council needs to develop its systems for managing information on empty properties and encouraging other agencies and individuals to notify it of properties that may be empty. Any information received should be acted upon in a timely manner and where possible feedback on action taken should be provided to the agency or individual providing the information.

The Council is committed to reducing the number of empty properties across all housing sectors within the district and although there are currently no properties that have been empty for more than 6 months in the social housing sector this situation needs to be monitored and appropriate actions taken to address any issues that arise in the future.

### **Improved advice and assistance**

The Council needs to further develop the information it provides to owners of empty homes. Such information should clearly set out the options for consideration with details of officers and organisations who can assist with each option.

The Council could offer basic training to landlords promoting good practice in the letting and management of property and develop an accreditation scheme for landlords who apply good practice.

The Council needs to review the role of the Private Landlords Forum and seek ways to have an effective dialogue with landlords and provide opportunities for the sharing of good practice and provision of mutual support.

### **Development of initiatives**

- **Direct Lettings scheme**

The Council is working with landlords through a Direct Lettings Scheme and should continue to develop this work and target it to owners of empty properties. Where the Council is handing back properties which it has leased, it should encourage the owner of the property to consider continuing to let the property through the Council's Direct Lettings Scheme.

- **Damage Deposit and Rent Guarantee scheme**

The Council has a damage deposit and rent guarantee scheme and could target the scheme to owners of empty homes.

- **Temporary Social Housing**

The Council needs to consider on a case by case basis the merits of supporting Registered Social Landlords with local authority social housing grant in leasing empty homes under a temporary social housing scheme. This may be appropriate where the amount of work required to bring the property up to a lettable standard would mean the Direct Letting Scheme and Private Sector Leasing scheme would not be appropriate particularly if the owner wanted to retain the ownership of the property and was not prepared to take on the responsibility of a landlord. Such properties would have to meet a defined housing need and be in an area where the availability of affordable housing was extremely limited and the lease would have to be for a period of not less than 5 years although it is likely that 10 year leases would need to be sought in most cases. The Council needs to bid for any funding made available through the Housing Corporation for this scheme.

- **Private Sector Leasing**

The Council needs to review its private sector leasing scheme to ensure that it has a portfolio of property to enable it to meet its statutory duty to temporarily accommodate homeless households. This may result in the portfolio being rationalised and more closely targeted to the changing needs of the Council.

- **Purchase and Repair / Acquisition and Works scheme**

The Council needs to consider on a case by case basis the merits of supporting Registered Social Landlords with local authority social housing grant in purchasing empty properties under a Purchase and Repair Scheme. The Council needs to bid for any funding made available through the Housing Corporation for this scheme.

### **Housing Renewal Policy and financial assistance**

The Council needs to monitor the effectiveness of its actions in bringing empty homes back into use and if it is not meeting its targets it will need to consider whether it needs to change the conditions applied to the Empty Homes Grant in order to make it more attractive to owners of empty homes. This will need to be considered alongside the Council's enforcement role.

### **Removal of Agricultural and Forestry Worker's Occupancy Conditions**

The Council needs to undertake further work to ascertain the extent to which properties are being left empty due to such conditions and provide advice on the process for the removal of such restrictions.

It is likely that due to the isolated locations of many of these properties that the opportunities to bring such properties back into use for those requiring affordable

housing would be limited and it might be better to consider options which enable the properties to be sold or rented on the private market.

## **Enforcement**

The Council has not traditionally undertaken enforcement activity for any aspect of Housing Renewal and has tended to use grant funding to effect improvements to the district's housing stock. If the Council is serious about bringing empty properties back into use it must consider taking enforcement action to demonstrate to owners of empty properties that it is not acceptable to leave their properties empty and to encourage them to work with the Council on a partnership basis. This will particularly be the case where empty properties are causing a nuisance to neighbours and impacting on the neighbourhood generally.

At the present time it is not thought that there are empty properties which are causing a nuisance to their neighbours to the extent that Compulsory Purchase or enforced sale would be viable options. It is also expected that there will be some quick wins and that the Council's targets to bring empty properties back into use in the initial years of the strategy will be met through working with owners on a voluntary basis.

The Council has not had a policy of undertaking works in default. The Council could use the Housing Renewal Budget to cover the costs of such works but if this policy is pursued, it would have to be in conjunction with a policy of enforced sale or compulsory purchase to recover its costs,

The Council however should ensure that it is aware of the necessary process to undertake such action where necessary and has the necessary means to cover the costs associated with taking such actions.

- **Empty Dwelling Management Orders**

At the present time it is not thought that the circumstance will arise where application for an Empty Property Management Order would be appropriate. This situation will be monitored in line with implementation of the licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation.

## **Review of the target for bringing Empty Homes back into use**

The Council needs to review its overall target for bringing empty homes back into use. It is recommended that the target be increased from 8 properties per year to 15 properties per year or 75 over the period of the strategy, it is further proposed that 75% of these are in the towns in the district with the remaining 25% in the rural parishes. It is recommended that the activity in bringing empty homes back in to use be restricted for the most part to properties in Council Tax Bands A – C to target the more affordable properties in the district, although exceptions will be considered where a particular size or type of property is required to meet a specific housing need.

Progress towards the target should be monitored on an annual basis and where appropriate result in a review of the target, how the Council targets the properties it wants to bring back into use and the initiatives it employs, including the use of grant and loan funding and the use of compulsory purchase and compulsory management powers.

## **Action Plan**

The Strategy has examined the incidence of empty homes in the district and considered the tools at the Council's disposal. It is proposed that a range of initiatives are developed and action undertaken to enable the Council to achieve its target to bring empty homes back into use.

## Action Plan

Aim	Action	By whom	Target	Resources
<b>Raise the profile of empty homes</b>	Launch Empty Homes Strategy	Strategic Housing Manager / Lead Member for Housing	June 2006	Revenue Budget
	Contact all owners of empty homes every 6 months to monitor progress on the property being brought back into use, ensuring that owners are aware of the importance that the Council places on the bringing of empty homes back into use	Enabling Team	June 2006 ongoing	Revenue Budget
	Develop partnerships with other relevant agencies e.g. Police, Fire Service, Town and Parish Councils to encourage the identification and reporting of empty homes	Enabling Team	June 2006 – ongoing	Revenue Budget
	Develop publicity material to inform residents in the district of the importance that the Council places on bringing empty homes back into use to encourage the identification and reporting of empty homes	Enabling Team	June 2006 – ongoing	Revenue Budget
<b>Managing information on empty homes</b>	Develop a comprehensive database to record details of empty homes and monitor progress towards them being brought back into use	Enabling Team	June 2006 – ongoing	Revenue Budget
	Develop an accurate means for reporting progress against the Empty Homes Best Value Performance Indicator	Enabling Team	April 2006 – ongoing	Revenue Budget

<b>Improved advice and assistance to enable owners of empty homes to bring their properties back into use</b>	Develop a comprehensive package of advice and assistance for owners of empty homes to enable them to bring their properties back into use	Enabling Team / Housing Options Team and Private Sector Housing Team	June 2006	Revenue Budget
<b>Develop a range of initiatives to assist owners of empty homes to bring their properties back into use</b>	Develop the Direct Lettings Scheme and promote the scheme to owners of empty homes to assist them in bringing their properties back into use	Housing Options Team	June 2006	Revenue Budget / Homelessness Prevention Funding
	Promote the Damage Deposit and Rent Guarantee Scheme to owners of empty homes to enable them to bring their properties back into use	Enabling Team / Housing Options Team	June 2006	Revenue Budget / Homelessness Prevention Funding
	Consider the feasibility of developing a Temporary Social Housing Scheme in the district in partnership with a Registered Social Landlord	Enabling Team	September 2006	Housing Capital Budget / Bidding opportunities
	Undertake a review of the Council's Private Sector Leasing Scheme and consider whether this would provide any opportunities for the owners of empty homes	Strategic Housing Manager / Enabling Team / Housing Options Team	June 2006	Revenue Budget
	Consider the feasibility of developing a Purchase and Repair / Acquisition and Works Scheme in the district with a Registered Social Landlord	Enabling Team	June 2006	Housing Capital Budget

<b>Provision of financial incentives to owners of empty homes to enable them to bring their properties back into use</b>	Monitor the effectiveness of the changes to the Empty Homes Grant within the Housing Renewal Policy and in particular the requirement for owners to give the Council nomination rights, through take up of the grant	Private Sector Housing Team	December 2006	Revenue Budget / Capital Budget £150,000 identified to support the Empty Homes Strategy
	Undertake an annual review of the Housing Renewal Policy to determine the Council's priorities for the spend of its Housing Capital Budget	Private Sector Housing Team	April 2007 – annually	Revenue Budget / Capital Budget
<b>Removing barriers to bringing empty homes back into use</b>	Use information available on the reasons for properties being empty to ascertain the extent to which properties are being left empty due to the imposition of Agricultural and Forestry Worker's Occupancy Conditions and consider if specific advice and assistance should be developed in this area	Enabling Team	December 2006	Revenue Budget
<b>Using enforcement to bring empty homes back into use</b>	Develop an enforcement policy which clearly sets out the enforcement options available to the Council in bringing empty homes back into use	Private Sector Housing Team	June 2006	Revenue Budget
	Consider the use of enforcement to bring empty homes back into use on a case by case basis following the undertaking of a cost benefit analysis	Private Sector Housing Team	Ongoing	Revenue / Capital Budget

	Consider the application for an Empty Dwelling Management Order on a case by case basis following the undertaking of a cost benefit analysis	Private Sector Housing Team	Ongoing	Revenue Budget
<b>Ensure that the Council meets its target to bring empty homes back into use</b>	Monitor the Council's performance against its target to bring empty homes back into use and adjust the target appropriately in accordance with the resources available	Enabling Team / Private Sector Housing Team	To bring 15 empty homes back into use per annum or 75 over the life of the strategy. To be monitored quarterly and reported annually	Revenue Budget
	Contribute to the work of the Regional Empty Homes Advisory Group in developing good practice	Enabling Team / Private Sector Housing Team	Ongoing	Revenue Budget
<b>Monitoring of the Action Plan</b>	To monitor the Council's progress against the Empty Homes Strategy Action Plan	Enabling Team / Private Sector Housing Team	Monitor progress against the Action Plan and report progress to the Strategic Housing Working Party quarterly	Revenue Budget

**Appendix 1: Empty Home Questionnaire**

**Empty Home Questionnaire**

**Address of Empty Property**

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**How long has the property been empty?**

**Reason for Empty Property being Empty**

- Disrepair/ Undergoing renovation
- Property being marketed for sale
- Keeping it for a family member to live in, in the future
- Keeping it to rent out to tenants in the future
- Using it occasionally as a holiday home
- Other (please specify)

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**Do you want to see your empty property brought back into use in the near future?**

**YES**  **NO**

**Would you be interested in getting further help and advice from the Council to help you bring your property back into use?**

**YES**  **NO**

**If yes, which of the services below would be of assistance to you?  
(please tick one or more boxes)**

- Grant Assistance to help with major repairs
- Grant Assistance to help with converting the property
- Advice and assistance with renting the property out
- Help with selling the property

**Name:**

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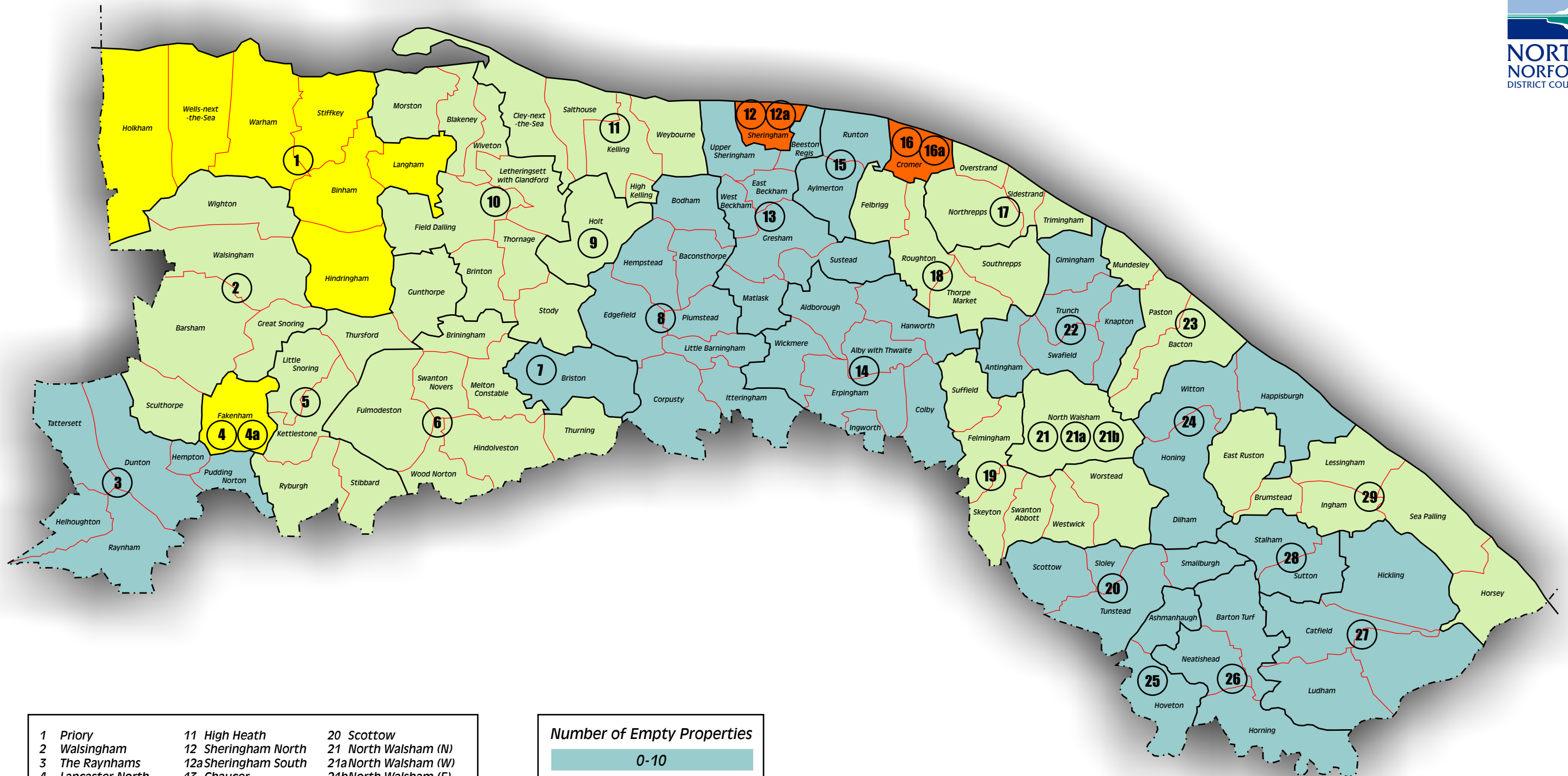
**Contact Details:**

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**Appendix 2; Empty Homes Council Tax Listing by Ward and banding**

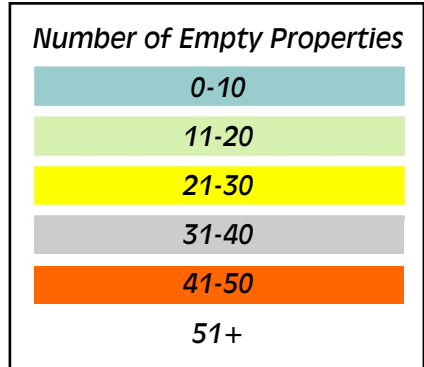
Ward	No. of empty properties	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	X
Priory	30	4	10	5	7	1	1			2
Walsingham	16	8	1	1	2			1		3
The Raynhams	8	1	4	3						
Lancaster North and South	25	10	6	6	1	1				1
Wensum	12	2	1	4						5
Astley	18	6	4	4		1		2		1
Briston	6	1	3							2
Corpusty	5	2	2	1						
Holt	20	2	9	3	2	1				3
Glaven Valley	12	3		3	1	2	1	1		1
High Heath	15	2	1	1	6	4				1
Sheringham North and South	44	14	10	8	4	1	3			4
Chaucer	6		1	2						3
Erpingham	9	2	1	1	2	1	1			2
The Runtons	2	1					1			
Cromer	44	28	4	4	4				1	3
Poppyland	16	2	5	4	4					1
Roughton	11	2	5	1	1					2
Worstead	13	1	5	3						4
Scottow	2		1							1
North Walsham	16	6	4	2	2	1	1			
Gaunt	5		1	1	1					2
Mundesley	15	8	5		1		1			
Happisburgh	10	2	1	5	1		1			
Hoveton	6		3	2	1					
St. Benet	5		1	1	2					1
Waterside	6	2	2	1						1
Stalham and Sutton	10	4	3	2			1			
Waxham	13	5	1		1	1				5

# North Norfolk Number of Empty Properties



1 Priory	11 High Heath	20 Scottow
2 Walsingham	12 Sheringham North	21 North Walsham (N)
3 The Raynhams	12a Sheringham South	21a North Walsham (W)
4 Lancaster North	13 Chaucer	21b North Walsham (E)
4a Lancaster South	14 Erpingham	22 Gaunt
5 Wensum	15 The Runtons	23 Mundesley
6 Astley	16 Cromer Town	24 Happisburgh
7 Briston	16a Suffield Park	25 Hoveton
8 Corpusty	17 Poppyland	26 St. Benet
9 Holt	18 Roughton	27 Waterside
10 Glaven Valley	19 Worstead	28 Stalham and Sutton
		29 Waxham

**Parish Boundaries** —  
**Ward Boundaries** —



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## Appendix 4: Empty Property Report Form

### Empty properties

This form can be used to seek information, request a service or make a complaint regarding an empty property.

Please note you must provide full details otherwise we cannot respond/investigate. All requests will be handled in confidence.

Please provide your details

Title

Your Name

Your Address

Post Code

Contact Telephone Numbers

Email Address

**Details of Service Required**

- |                |   |           |                          |
|----------------|---|-----------|--------------------------|
| Nuisance       | - | Noise     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                | - | Pollution | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| General Advice |   |           | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**The name of the person/owner causing the problem if known/applicable**

**Address of Empty Property/Owner's Address if known**

**Brief Nature of Problem**

**Data Protection Act 1998. For the purposes of the Data Protection Act 1998, the Data Controller in relation to any personal data you supply is North Norfolk District Council.**

**I accept that the information provided on this form will be processed and stored in accordance with the principles of the Act for the purposes of this Service Request by North Norfolk District Council**

- Please tick**

## Contacts

### North Norfolk District Council

We welcome all feedback concerning this strategy. All comments received will be taken into account during the annual review of the strategy.

Comments can be made in the following ways:-

Direct to;      Strategic Housing Manager  
                     Strategic Housing Team  
                     North Norfolk District Council  
                     Holt Road  
                     Cromer  
                     NR27 9EN

Tel: 01263 516183

E-mail: [khill@north-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:khill@north-norfolk.gov.uk)

Via direct link on the North Norfolk District Council Website

[www:northnorfolk.org](http://www.northnorfolk.org)

By returning the comments/property report sheet

### External Contacts

#### **Empty Homes Agency**

[www.emptyhomes.com](http://www.emptyhomes.com)

195 - 197 Victoria Street, London. SW1E 5NE

Tel: 020 7828 6288

#### **Go - East** (Government Office for the East of England).

[www.go-east@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk](http://www.go-east@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk)

Eastbrook, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge. CB2 2DF

#### **ODPM** (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister)

[www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk)

Eland House, Bressenden Place, London. SW1 5DU

Tel: 020 7944 3300

