

Empty Homes Statement for the Development of the Local Housing Strategy 2016-2021

Housing Development Section

April 2016

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
Context.....	3
2. Profile of empty homes in North Lanarkshire.....	5
Tenants' survey and focus groups	10
Stakeholder consultation	11
3. North Lanarkshire approach to dealing with empty homes	12
4. Aims and objectives	13

**North Lanarkshire Council
Local Housing Strategy 2016-21
Empty Homes Statement**

1. Introduction

1.1 North Lanarkshire's Empty Homes Statement 2017-2022 sets out clear actions to reduce the number of empty homes so as to increase the supply of affordable housing and to improve to quality of the private sector housing stock and neighbourhoods across North Lanarkshire.

1.2 The overall vision guiding the statement is an efficient, integrated service to inform and support owners and, where necessary, enforce action, to minimise the number of empty homes in North Lanarkshire.

1.3 Context

1.4 There are around 30,000 long-term empty private sector homes in Scotland that are liable for Council Tax¹.

1.5 The Scottish Government is keen to encourage empty home owners to bring their properties back into use to increase the supply of housing in Scotland (both to rent and to buy) and particularly to help tackle the shortage of affordable housing. Research undertaken to inform the Scottish Government's review of the Private Rented Sector² indicated that most empty properties were owned by individuals, with empty property ownership linked to owners dying, moving into care or repossession. The Scottish Government has developed a range of measures to address the issue of empty properties. These include

- **Town Centre Empty Homes Fund:** The fund is intended to create additional residential accommodation in Scotland's urban and rural towns by funding projects to convert disused commercial premises into residential and to target problematic empty homes that require extensive refurbishment to make them habitable again.
- **Local Government Finance (Unoccupied Properties etc.) (Scotland) Act 2012³:** and its subsequent regulations give councils the power to both remove the discount on certain types of unoccupied homes and to increase the level of council tax payable on these properties. In 2014/15, 13 councils were making use of the power.
- **Empty Homes Loan Fund:** provides loans to organisations to help them renovate empty homes and make them available as affordable housing. Following a relatively limited uptake of the loan fund, this has been extended to include loans for sale.
- **The Empty Homes Partnership:** was established Scottish Government's review of the Private Rented Sector. The Scottish Empty

¹ <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00472359.pdf>

² <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/264877/0079338.pdf>

³ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2012/11/contents/enacted>

Homes Partnership, is a partnership with Shelter, and funded by Scottish Government. It provides support for councils to work with empty home owners, including the creation of an Empty Homes Practitioner Network and specific advice and information. The Scottish Government has extended funding for the partnership until March 2015.

- **(Shared Service) Empty Homes Officers:** A number of empty homes officers are in post across Scotland. In some cases the posts are part-funded by Scottish Government, and in some cases the posts are shared across two or more authorities in shared services projects
- **House condition and enforcement powers:** A series of Acts place powers and duties on authorities with respect to the condition of the private sector. In particular, these include: the 2006 Housing (Scotland) Act, Scheme of Assistance Regulations which give authorities powers and duties to tackle poor conditions in the private sector, including Housing Renewal Notices, Works Notices, and Maintenance Orders; the Building (Scotland) Act 2003, which gives authorities powers to serve compulsory purchase orders on dangerous buildings; and the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 provides the definition of a BTS property.

1.6 There are currently no specific statutory requirements on local authorities with respect to bringing empty properties back into use. Each authority may therefore determine the approach and priority accorded to empty homes effort according to local needs and priorities.

1.7 Scottish Government has charged local authorities with meeting 16 national outcomes. Addressing empty properties will contribute to meeting several of these:

- We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger.
- We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.
- We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.
- We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.
- We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production.
- We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.
- We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.
- Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs

1.8 Local Housing Strategy (LHS) guidance requires authorities to cover

Empty Homes

- Information on the extent to which empty homes could play a part in increasing housing supply
- What is being done to bring empty homes back into use
- How increased income from council tax generation is being used to boost housing supply
- The approach to using compulsory purchase orders to tackle the issue of empty properties

House Condition

- A BTS Strategy that evidences the extent of the of BTS housing, sets out how BTS housing will be addressed, and how the strategy will be updated
- A Housing Renewal Area Policy
- Scheme of Assistance, to address substandard housing

1.10 The overarching vision for the 2016-21 LHS is ‘to assist people to achieve their potential, and be safe, healthy and included, by providing access to high quality housing and support’ and the LHS has identified a number of thematic outcomes. The Empty Homes Statement will contribute to LHS Thematic Outcome 2: Contribute to regeneration and sustainability of places.

2. Profile of empty homes in North Lanarkshire

2.1 There are three broad categories of empty properties for council tax purposes:

- **Long term empty properties:** properties which have been empty for 6 months or more and are liable for council tax
- **Unoccupied exemptions:** properties which are empty and exempt from paying council tax (for example, properties which are unoccupied and unfurnished for up to 6 months)⁴
- **Second Homes:** homes which are furnished and lived in for at least 25 days in a 12 month period but not as someone’s main residence. They are entitled to a council tax discount of between 10% and 50%.

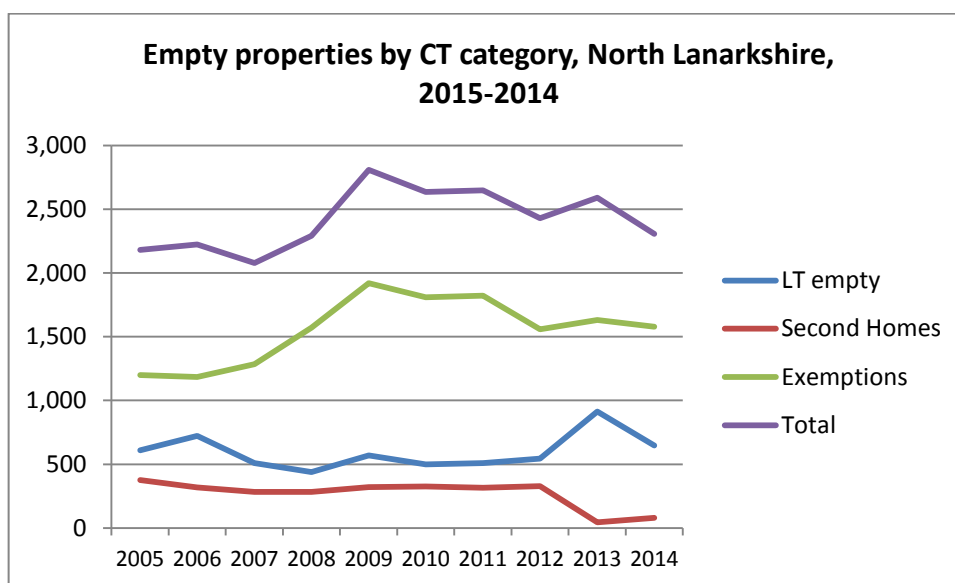
2.2 Chart 1 shows how the number of properties in each category has changed over the last 10 years. The total number of empty properties increased during the early years of the recession largely as a result of the growth in the number of exemptions, peaking in 2009. The second peak, in 2013, is likely to result from the change in legislation that allowed authorities to impose a levy on

⁴ Note: the Scottish Government statistics on exemptions include properties which have been empty for less than 6 months, whereas the NLC statistics on exemptions only include long term empty properties (6 months and more).

long-term properties, together with the positive impacts from the empty homes shared service post.

- 2.3 This profile follows the same broad trend as that nationally, which shows the number of Long Term Empty properties rising over the period since 2005, particularly so since the introduction of the new powers to levy a higher rate of council tax were introduced, which resulted in the improved recording of empty homes and the reclassification of properties between second homes and long-term empty.

Chart 1



Source: Scottish Government: Housing Statistics for Scotland, Quarterly Update March 2015⁵

- 2.4 More detailed analysis of local profile data indicates that there were around 1,600 properties which were empty for more than 6 months in North Lanarkshire in March 2015. This was a 13% increase on the previous year. As noted with the national dataset, it is likely this increase, at least in part, will be a result of the introduction of the council tax powers. It may also result from the appointment of the empty homes officer, who, among other things engages with owners, encouraging them register their property accurately on the register, and liaises with officers across the authority to ensure that information about empty homes is collected and used to update the empty homes database.
- 2.5 The largest group of empty properties is in the Kilsyth/Cumbernauld area (570 properties, some 2% of the local housing stock). Around half of these are properties are being held empty for demolition as part of the regeneration of the Cumbernauld area. There are also significant levels of empty properties in

⁵ <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/LTEmpysecondhomes/EmptySecondhometables>

Wishaw (185 properties, 1.1% of the stock) and Airdrie (216 properties, 0.9% of the stock).

Table 1: Long term empty homes, by LHMA, 2014, 2015

	At end March 2014		At end March 2015		Change in no. of empty homes 2014-2015
	No.	% of stock	No.	% of stock	
Airdrie	180	0.7%	216	0.9%	20%
Bellshill	84	0.7%	124	1.0%	48%
Coatbridge	140	0.6%	177	0.8%	26%
Cumbernauld/Kilsyth	473	1.6%	570	2.0%	21%
Moodiesburn	75	0.9%	62	0.7%	-17%
Motherwell	174	0.7%	166	0.7%	-5%
Shotts	82	1.2%	65	0.9%	-21%
Viewpark	35	0.5%	32	0.5%	-9%
Wishaw	176	1.0%	185	1.1%	5%
North Lanarkshire	1,419	0.8%	1,597	1.1%	13%

Source: Council Tax Register, at end March 2014 and March 2015

- 2.6 Some 24% of owners are receiving a discount because their property has been empty for less than a year, or because they can demonstrate that they are actively marketing it or undertaking major repairs. It is envisaged that these actions will also serve to bring the property back into use.
- 2.7 A substantial proportion (30%) of long-term empty homes are now subject to the council tax levy⁶. These home owners are required to pay double council tax; and it is envisaged that this will act as an incentive to return the property to use.
- 2.8 The rest of the long term empty properties are exempted from paying council tax. 19% of these are properties (281 dwellings) are owned by housing authorities and are being held empty prior to being demolished; all of these are in Cumbernauld, and account for more than half of all the LTEs in the area. A further 13% of LTEs are deceased estates and 9% are properties belonging to people now in long-term care. Others exemptions include empty agricultural properties, unoccupied manses, and properties held by a trustee in bankruptcy.

⁶ Applies to all homes empty for more than two years, and for homes empty more than one year that are not being actively marketed. Some exemptions apply as shown on table 2.

Table 2: Long term empty homes, by type of discount, by LHMA, at Aug 2015

	Long-term empty		Exemptions				Total
	Levy	Discount	Hsg authority demolitions	Deceased estate	Long-term care	Other exemptions	
Airdrie	33%	36%	0%	14%	6%	10%	212
Bellshill	30%	25%	0%	21%	10%	14%	84
Coatbridge	32%	30%	0%	18%	16%	4%	145
Kilsyth/Cumbernauld	15%	16%	55%	6%	6%	2%	509
Moodiesburn	25%	25%	0%	22%	16%	12%	68
Motherwell	41%	31%	0%	14%	10%	5%	195
Shotts	39%	27%	0%	10%	18%	6%	62
Viewpark	53%	18%	0%	24%	3%	3%	34
Wishaw	51%	18%	1%	17%	9%	4%	168
North Lanarkshire	30%	24%	19%	13%	9%	5%	1,477

Source: Council Tax Register at August 2015

- 2.9 Table 3 shows the long term empty homes (including exemptions) by council tax band. The majority are lower value properties, band A and B. Notably, some 71% of the LTEs in the Kilsyth Cumbernauld area are in band A; the majority of these are the social rented properties being held for demolition. Elsewhere, a substantial proportion of LTEs are also in band A, accounting for over 50% of the long term empty properties in Bellshill (60%), Shotts (58%), Viewpark (53%) and Wishaw (51%). The low council band indicates that it is unlikely there will be substantial levels of equity in the property to support any capital works that are required, and it is likely that the properties are unable/unwilling to fund substantive works from their income.
- 2.10 Long term empty properties do not appear to be concentrated among the lower priced properties in Moodiesburn. As a consequence owners may have greater resilience and resources to address their empty home. Further detail on this will be revealed when the Moodiesburn wave of the empty home owners survey is undertaken.

Table 3: Long term empty homes, by Council Tax band, by LHMA, Aug 2015

	A	B	C	D	E	F-H	Total
Airdrie	32%	32%	17%	8%	7%	6%	212
Bellshill	60%	19%	7%	10%	4%	1%	84
Coatbridge	19%	47%	21%	5%	3%	5%	145
Kilsyth/Cumbernauld	71%	19%	4%	2%	2%	1%	509
Moodiesburn	18%	26%	16%	13%	21%	7%	68
Motherwell	41%	31%	11%	6%	8%	4%	195
Shotts	58%	13%	18%	2%	5%	5%	62
Viewpark	53%	21%	6%	12%	9%	0%	34
Wishaw	51%	22%	15%	3%	5%	4%	168
North Lanarkshire	50%	26%	11%	5%	5%	3%	1,477

Source: Council Tax Register at August 2015

- 2.11 A letter was sent to all the properties registered as long-term empty in Coatbridge⁷, to collect more detailed information on the status and condition of the property, explore the reasons why the property was empty, and to identify measures that could assist bring the property back into use.
- 2.12 A total of 173 letters were issued to home owners on 2 July 2015⁸. To date four of the letters have been returned as 'undeliverable'; 12 of the properties have been sold, three are being used as second homes and two are 'no longer empty'. Of the others, owners have indicated that the properties are empty because:
- Trying to sell it (4)
 - Don't want the hassle of tenants (2)
 - Legal dispute (2)
 - It is being repaired/renovated (2)
 - Waiting for the right time to sell (1)
 - Intend to repair/renovate it (1)
 - Want to repair/renovate it but can't afford to (1)
 - Other (1)
- 2.13 Fourteen of the owners provided an assessment of their property's condition. A third considered it ready for occupation, while most considered that renovations or repairs were required.
- Ready for occupation (4)
 - Requires minor renovations or repair (4)
 - Requires major renovations or repair (4)
 - Unsure (2)
- 2.14 The help and advice that would assist owners of empty properties bring the property back into use is set out on the table below. Finance is clearly important, with several owners identifying financial support to repair or renovate the property as a key factor. A substantial number of owners also noted that advice and information on a variety of matters, including finance and how to go about selling or renting the property would also be of assistance.

⁷ Because the responses will be followed up as individual cases by the Empty Homes Officer, the survey forms are sent out in batches. Letters covering other parts of North Lanarkshire will be sent out in due course.

⁸ Letters were sent to the owner's registered address for council tax purposes, not to the empty property address

Table 4: Help and assistance to bring LTE properties back into use, Coatbridge, Aug 2015

Type of help and assistance	No. of responses	%
Loans for repairs and renovations	3	11%
Knowing that you would be guaranteed a rental income on the property	2	7%
Help/advice on renovations	2	7%
Grants for repairs and renovations	2	7%
Help/advice on accessing private finance for repairs and renovations	2	7%
Help/advice on selling the property and the income it could generate for you	2	7%
Legal advice	2	7%
Advice renting out the property and the income it could generate for you	1	4%
Having someone else manage renovations on your behalf	1	4%
Help finding a buyer	1	4%
Other (please detail)	9	33%
Total	27	

Source: Empty Homes Owners Information Survey, August 2015

2.15 Evidence from consultation

2.16 Although the number of empty homes across North Lanarkshire is relatively small, the impact of empty properties on local communities, and the potential to utilise the housing to meet housing need are recognised as important issues by both local residents and by council stakeholders.

2.17 Tenants' survey and focus groups

2.18 Addressing empty homes is an important issue for North Lanarkshire Council tenants and for residents generally. In the 2014 North Lanarkshire Tenants Survey, over a fifth of tenants (23%) said they were interested in the management of empty homes (only antisocial behaviour, repairs and the capital programme ranked higher – 30%, 29% 23%)⁹. The Survey was followed up by a series of focus group. Again empty homes emerged as a key issue during discussions. When participants were asked to identify priorities for the LHS, 73% of participants identified bringing empty homes back into use as important or very important, while bringing empty homes back into use ranked second highest of all the issues (behind building more affordable homes)¹⁰.

2.19 This is in line with national research released by Callcredit Information Group which found that 58% of people would prefer dilapidated and empty properties were brought back into use, instead of being demolished or replaced by new builds, etc¹¹. The survey also asked people their views on dealing with waiting lists for social housing. As might be expected, the top priority was to build

⁹ Question 13 (weighted responses). Multiple responses were possible

¹⁰ Percentages based on a questionnaire that accompanied the focus groups.

¹¹ YouGov GB survey, sample 1,700+, fieldwork 9th – 10th April 2015

more social housing (29%). But third on the list was forcing owners of empty housing to rent or sell their property (16%). ['Building more affordable housing for people to buy' was the top response at 20%]

2.20 **Stakeholder consultation**

2.21 A series of thematic consultation events have been held to inform the development of the LHS. The Private Sector event, which addressed issues relating to the private sector and empty homes, was held on 6 May 2015. Over 40 delegates attended, including a cross-section of council officers from Housing Services, Housing Development, Environmental Services, Finance and Legal Services, as well as representatives from Registered Social Landlords, Citizen's Advice Bureau, Police Scotland, and the National Landlords' Association. The empty homes workshop discussed a series of key challenges relating to empty homes.

Quantifying empty homes: Stakeholders stressed that owners have the right to own more than one home. However, there is a case for the Council to intervene when an empty property becomes a blight on the local area and the level of disrepair is so serious that it is having a material impact on surrounding properties. Challenges exist in developing accurate information on such 'problem' empty homes. Cross-departmental support is already invaluable in populating the Empty Homes Database; this work will continue to be developed to refine the information collected.

Managing expectations: It was suggested that owners of empty homes sometimes have unrealistic expectations around the outcome for the property and, in particular, the value of their home. Providing information and advice will therefore be important in both helping the owner work towards disposing of the property (understanding the property's value, condition, actions that will be required to sell it and the timescales involved), as well as short term options, such as securing the property, making repairs, and renting the property.

Dealing with serious disrepair: 'Problem' empty homes tend to be in serious disrepair. This can impact directly on neighbouring properties and affect the amenity of an area. It was suggested that even simple 'cosmetic' works could make a real difference to mitigating wider community issues. It was also suggested that dealing with the disrepair alone is not necessarily sufficient: the property has to be properly maintained on an ongoing basis.

Engagement: A key challenge in addressing empty homes was encouraging owners to engage. A number of reasons why owners may be reluctant to engage were suggested. For example, they may feel they are already working effectively to bring the property back into use; they may have unrealistic expectations around the price they will achieve for their property; disputes between co-owners may impede agreement on the disposal of the property; they may have an emotional attachment to the property. A range of solutions

were suggested, including use of incentives to encourage engagement; mediation to actively work on issues and concerns with owners; and shuttle negotiations. Sanctions were also suggested – from enforcement orders right through to CPOs – to encourage owners to engage and ensure properties are brought back into use.

Empty homes and commercial properties in town centres: present a number of specific issues. These are often complex projects that are a mix of residential and commercial properties, and often involve high levels of disrepair. They require joint working across services (housing property, etc) to develop effective funding packages. It is also important to develop joint working with housing associations. However, it was noted that once these properties are brought back into use, they tend to be in demand.

3. North Lanarkshire approach to dealing with empty homes

3.1 North Lanarkshire has adopted a multifaceted approach designed to bring empty homes back into use, so increasing the housing supply. The key components of this are summarised below.

- Creation of a full time Empty Homes Officer post from July 2015
- Market intelligence: The authority is working across departments to ensure information on empty homes is collated and updated appropriately. The implementation of a rolling survey of long term empty home owners enables the database to be updated; the information, advice and support needs of owners to be identified; and detailed case work to be initiated as appropriate.
- Information, advice and engagement activities: The Council has a wide range of information and advice materials, in a variety of media, designed to respond to initial enquiries and to underpin the Empty Homes Officer's support and engagement activities. These materials are subject to review, to ensure they reflect current policy and initiatives, meet users' expectations and requirements, and innovative practice.
- Initiatives: The Council has implemented an Empty Homes Purchase Scheme which successfully brought back 23 properties into use as social housing during 2014/15. This scheme has widespread benefits, including improving community safety, improving the fabric of the housing stock, and increasing the supply of social rented housing. We are currently testing the feasibility of a project funded through the Town Centre Empty Homes Fund, which would involve conversion of the previous library building into flats in Coatbridge town centre. Identification of further initiatives and funding, for example through liaison with the network of empty homes officers, is an important task for coming years, to ensure that appropriate, innovative and cost-efficient responses continue to be developed within the authority.

- Council tax powers: The Council has used powers available under the Local Government Finance (Unoccupied Properties etc.) (Scotland) Act 2012 to increase the level of council tax payable on long term empty homes. The purpose of the levy is two-fold. First, it acts as a financial incentive to the owners of empty properties to bring the property back into use (for example, by selling it or by renting it out if they do not wish to use it themselves). Second, the revenue raised is used to fund affordable housing-related activities. The monies raised have, thus far, been identified to fund the newly created Empty Homes Officer post and to part-fund to the Empty Homes Purchase Scheme.
- Intervention and enforcement: There are also a number of enforcement measures relevant to bringing empty homes back into use. The Empty Homes Officer liaises closely with the Private Sector Housing team to consider enforcement options as a last resort where information, advice, support and any other available measures are insufficient. These measures include the attachment of a Works Notice, to require the owner to repair the property; and serving a compulsory purchase order (CPO), to allow the authority to acquire the property and so bring it back into back into use.

4. Aims and objectives

- 4.1 The overall aim of the empty home statement is to deliver an efficient, integrated service that informs and supports owners and, where necessary, enforces action, to minimise the number of empty homes in North Lanarkshire. Further, to increase the supply of affordable housing and to improve to quality of the private sector housing stock and neighbourhoods across North Lanarkshire.
- 4.2 The action plan below sets out how we will work towards this.

North Lanarkshire's Empty Homes Statement					
Priority 1: Work collaboratively to improve sector and customer insight. This will inform resource prioritisation and service development and, in particular, will assist in tailoring services to meet customer requirements and ensure information/engagement is targeted appropriately/ effectively. It will also support effective monitoring, review and evaluation of the service.					
Key Action	Baseline 2015	Measure/Milestone	Target	Timescale	Service/ Partner
1. Maintain empty homes database:	Database in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual analysis of properties classified as long-term empty from Council Tax records • Rolling survey of owners of empty homes based on Council Tax information • Re-contact owners on database • No. owners in need of support and/or interventions identified • Collation of information from other council officers, ie private sector officers, Env Health Officers, Housing officers etc, regarding empty homes 	Annual reporting 3 mail outs (LHMAs) pa Every 6 months	Ongoing Complete cycle 2018. Then ongoing Ongoing	Lead: Empty Homes Officer Service: Private Sector Team, Property services, Operations, Environmental Health, Police, Fire, Council Tax

North Lanarkshire's Empty Homes Statement					
Priority 2: Streamline service delivery					
Key Action	Baseline 2015	Measure/Milestone	Target	Timescale	Service/ Partner
2. Review the flowchart that describes the sets out each stage in the Empty Homes Purchase Scheme process, to ensure that the options, potential outcomes, relevant resources and personnel are set out clearly. Update as necessary.	Empty Homes flowchart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify the service pathways relating to empty homes in Town Centres Test the resulting flowchart. Review and update procedures as appropriate 	Complete flowchart and review	2016	Lead: Empty Homes Officer Service: Private Sector Team, Operations, Environmental Health, Police, Fire, Council Tax

North Lanarkshire's Empty Homes Statement

Priority 3: Raise awareness of the issue of empty homes: To deliver good quality information and advice, in a variety of formats for owners of empty homes, so that they are aware of the range of options and support that is available to bring their property back into use. To make the information available in a wide range of formats and forums, so that owners, and other stakeholders, can be successfully engaged and motivated to participate in the process.

Key Action	Baseline 2015	Measure/Milestone	Target	Timescale	Service/ Partner
3. Maintain a range of resources to inform and advise of owners of empty homes owners of their responsibilities for their home, and of the range of advice, support and initiatives available to help them bring their property back into use.	Leaflets and webpage in place Empty homes sessions undertaken at a number of stakeholder events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a suite of leaflets on the full range of relevant topics (hard copy and on-line) • Maintain webpage on NLC website to provide information on Empty Homes council services • No. of web page views from outwith the authority • Make best use of existing forums, networks, and so on, to raise awareness of the Empty Homes service, and of key initiatives, to staff, partners, landlords and so on. • Annual review of information resources and use of stakeholder networks to ensure up-to-date and relevant 	Increase	Ongoing	Lead: Empty Homes Officer Service: Corporate Communications; Partner: Shelter
4. Use of Scheme of Assistance to provide empty home owners with information on carrying out repairs and maintenance to their properties. Financial assistance is very limited and only available in specific circumstances.	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of owners assisted, by type of assistance • Contribute to the review of the Scheme of Assistance 	Increase assistance	Ongoing	Lead: Private sector team Empty Homes Officer

North Lanarkshire's Empty Homes Statement

Priority 4: Reducing the number of empty homes and improving the housing quality of neighbourhoods across North Lanarkshire.

Key Action	Baseline 2015	Measure/Milestone	Target	Timescale	Service/ Partner
5. Work with Council Tax, to ensure that Council Tax discounts and levy are fully harnessed to provide owners with incentives and encouragement to bring empty homes back into use	24% of empty homes receive discount, 30% subject to levy (Aug 2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of LTE properties • Number of long-term properties charged 100% levy 	Improve accuracy of recording	Ongoing	Lead: Council Tax Empty Homes Officer
6. To deliver a range of initiatives to return empty homes to use	23 EHPS properties in 2014/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to deliver Empty Homes Purchase Scheme • Reviewing operation of current council tax levy and consider any changes required • Review potential incentives to owners of empty homes to help bring back into use • Work in partnership with RSLs to bring properties in serious disrepair into use 	TBC	2017 and ongoing as appropriate	Lead: Empty Homes Officer Service: Property services, Legal services, Council Tax, Operations, Regeneration Finance

North Lanarkshire's Empty Homes Statement					
Priority 4: Reducing the number of empty homes and improving the housing quality of neighbourhoods across North Lanarkshire.					
Key Action	Baseline 2015	Measure/Milestone	Target	Timescale	Service/ Partner
7. Carry out research to identify priorities within each town centre in relation to housing services starting with Airdrie and Wishaw	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify research parameters in agreement with Environmental Services Research to be completed for identified town centres 	Complete	2021	HS/ES
8. Contribute to delivery of Town Centre Action Plans including increasing opportunities for residential use	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify suitable opportunities and assess feasibility of same to increase supply of affordable housing such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coatbridge Library The Whitehouse, Kilsyth Orrs Building, Airdrie Muiryhall Street, Coatbridge Tesco Site, Wishaw Alexandra Primary School, Airdrie Bank Street, Coatbridge 	Complete	Ongoing	HS/ES
9. To support and encourage owners improve the condition of empty properties and return property to use		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empty Homes Officer: Engagement with owners to encourage actions to bring the property back into use Private Sector Team: Works notices attached where the property is in poor condition Links made to BTS Strategy where empty property is Below Tolerable Standard Use of enforcement measures as required. Empty Homes Officer to pursue CPO as an action of last 	Increase number of empty homes brought back into use	Ongoing	Lead: Empty Homes Officer Service: Private sector team, Legal services

North Lanarkshire's Empty Homes Statement

Priority 4: Reducing the number of empty homes and improving the housing quality of neighbourhoods across North Lanarkshire.

Key Action	Baseline 2015	Measure/Milestone	Target	Timescale	Service/ Partner
		resort following an option appraisal. Sustained engagement with owner will be maintained to attempt to secure alternative, mutually agreeable outcome.			