



# **Empty Homes Strategy**

## **2026-2029**

**LIVE**  
**LEARN**  
**WORK**  
**INVEST**  
**VISIT**

## Foreword

It is with great pleasure that I introduce our first Empty Homes Strategy 2026-2029 in North Lanarkshire. This three-year strategy is aligned with our vision in The Plan and the Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026 through the provision of high-quality housing in vibrant, attractive and sustainable communities. The Empty Homes Strategy outlines how North Lanarkshire intends to return empty private homes back into use for housing, supporting the priorities in our Local Housing Strategy.

North Lanarkshire Council is committed to tackling empty homes to address housing need through increasing choice and the supply of affordable homes as well as aesthetically improving our communities and the condition of homes across tenures. We want to successfully bring back private empty homes in to use for our residents to benefit from living in high-quality and affordable homes that meets their housing need.

Thank you for your participation and support in our Empty Homes Strategy to make living in North Lanarkshire a better place.



***Councillor Michael McPake, Convener of Housing***

**LIVE  
LEARN  
WORK  
INVEST  
VISIT**

## Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Strategic Context	4
3. North Lanarkshire's Approach to Empty Homes	8
4. Legislative Context	10
5. Defining Empty Homes	11
6. Key Evidence	12
7. How Empty Homes are Brought Back into Use	24
8. Issues and Challenges	26
9. Resources	27
10. Engagement	27
11. Monitoring Progress and Actions	27
12. Appendix – Summary of Council Tax Discounts and Exemptions	32

# 1. Introduction

## Aims of Empty Homes Strategy

The purpose of the Empty Homes Strategy is to outline how North Lanarkshire intends to return empty private homes back into use for housing, supporting the delivery of the Local Housing Strategy priorities. The main benefits of tackling empty homes include:

- Increased supply of affordable homes to meet housing need, reduce homelessness and improve the range of housing options available
- Neighbourhood, community and environmental improvements
- Improved community safety - reduced vandalism and anti-social behaviour
- Enhanced tenant and resident satisfaction and population retention
- Enables housing-led regeneration, place making and can play a key role in town centre regeneration
- Improved house condition across tenures
- Enables common works to be undertaken and helps address issues in mixed tenure developments relating to disrepair
- Support for homeowners through access to a range of advice and services
- Contributes to population health and wellbeing
- Makes best use of assets supporting environmental and climate change objectives
- Catalyst for economic activity and boosting the local economy

The objectives of the Empty Homes Strategy are:

**Objective 1:** Maintain, develop, gather and analyse data relating to empty homes across North Lanarkshire

**Objective 2:** Maximise bringing empty homes back into use

**Objective 3:** Address empty homes in a state of disrepair

**Objective 4:** Raise awareness around empty Homes

## 2. Strategic Context

### Housing 2040

The Scottish Government's Housing to 2040<sup>1</sup> has an ambitious vision of what housing should look like over the next two decades and a plan of how this should be achieved.

The Scottish Government through Housing 2040 will take action in the housing market by **'tackling the blight of empty homes** by bringing them into use and, where possible, into the social rented sector'.

Bringing empty homes back into use will help deliver the following priorities of Housing to 2040:

#### Housing 2040 Priorities

##### More homes are at the heart of great places

- Help to meet demand for affordable housing in areas of most need
- Contribute to the regeneration and revitalising of town centres, villages and rural communities

##### Affordability and choice

- Contribute to Scottish Government's ambitions of delivering 110,000 affordable homes over the next ten years
- Ensuring as wide a range as possible of property types and tenures across Scotland

##### Affordable warmth and zero emissions homes

- Help drive down carbon emissions caused by housing and housing construction
- Assist with reduced heating and operational carbon emissions through retrofitting for improved energy performance

##### Improving the quality of all homes

- Support renovation of empty homes and return them back to use
- Improve quality of housing stock and aesthetic appearance within communities

### National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

The National Planning Framework 4 known as NPF4 outlines in Policy 9 'Quality Homes' to encourage the promotion and delivery of homes across different tenures and by a range of providers. It also puts an emphasis on sustainability and opportunities for

---

<sup>1</sup> [Scottish Government, Housing to 2040](#)

tackling climate change. NPF4 promotes the reuse of buildings such as empty homes through adopting the approach of building reuse.

Repurposing vacant commercial office and retail premises is an opportunity to secure active uses in buildings that are no longer in demand for their original purpose and may be in danger of becoming obsolete. This also supports the climate agenda by using the embedded carbon within existing buildings.

Furthermore, there is recognition and encouragement for a significant contribution to housing targets to be made by existing empty homes, or buildings not currently used for residential purposes. This provides an opportunity to consider and promote the effective use of bringing existing empty homes into residential use through remodelling and rehabilitation, which can be achieved through Local Housing Strategies and Local Development Plans.

### Scottish Government’s National Outcomes

There are eleven national outcomes<sup>2</sup> outlined by the Scottish Government with several of these relating to empty homes through local authority contributions on delivery. By proactively tackling empty homes and bringing them back into use in the social rented sector, the Council and partners can contribute to the delivery of several of these outcomes covering Communities; Fair Work and Business; Economy; Environment; Poverty and Health as shown below.

National Outcomes	Empty Homes Contribution
<b>Economy:</b> We have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy	Assisting and enabling empty homeowners to bring their properties back into use, provides greater housing choice, improves the aesthetic appearance of communities, and can contribute to making communities more robust and resilient through investment, job creation and greater local spend
<b>Fair Work and Business:</b> We have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone	Empty homes can contribute to fair work and local business agendas through job creation, spend on materials and resources, learning and development of a skilled workforce and increasing the number of households accessing services, amenities.
<b>Communities:</b> We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe	Tackling empty homes improves community safety, encouraging greater levels of resident occupation to reduce security risks and enhance neighbourhood quality.
<b>Poverty:</b> We tackle poverty by sharing	Empty homes that are brought back into use can contribute to increasing the supply of affordable housing and therefore assist in tackling the poverty agenda.

<sup>2</sup> [National Performance Framework - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/national-performance-framework)

opportunities, wealth and power more equally	
<b>Environment:</b> We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment	Refurbishment and retrofitting have significantly less impact on the environment and carbon emissions than newbuild housing activity. Empty homes can contribute to increasing housing choice and supply whilst reducing impact on consumption and production. Bringing empty homes back into use safeguards properties at risk by allowing works to be carried out not only for that property but others where there are communal repairs. Ensuring properties are protected and lived in increases housing supply and provides a better environment for those who wish to live in communities in the future.
<b>Health:</b> We are healthy and active	Psychologists have long known that people's surroundings can influence their moods and mental health. The mental and physical wellbeing of people who live in the same street as an empty home can be adversely affected as the condition of the house deteriorates and it becomes the focus of anti-social behaviour. People living in areas with high levels of long-term empty homes may be more prone to depression due to the decline of their neighbourhood. Bringing empty homes back to use can help people to rediscover a sense of place and remove the negative stresses and risks to physical health that people living next door to an empty home may face.

## The Scottish Empty Homes Partnership (SEHP)

The Scottish Empty Homes Partnership (SEHP) was established in 2010 to encourage privately-owned long-term properties back into use. SEHP is funded by the Scottish Government and hosted by Shelter Scotland supporting a network of empty homes officers operating in local authorities across Scotland. The key objectives of SEHP are to support the Scottish Government in the implementation of Housing 2040; encourage local authorities to bring empty homes back into use; promote evidence-based benefits of bringing empty homes back into use as well as provide training and share best practice to support empty homes officers.

SEHP published new guidance setting out how more than 42,000 long term empty homes in Scotland can be used to help to tackle Scotland's housing emergency. Arneil Johnston were commissioned by SEHP to assist with developing a Strategic Empty Homes Framework, which sets out eight distinct steps including the legislative and policy context for empty homes work, through sourcing data and statistical evidence as well as establishing action plans to support delivery of a strategic approach to enabling as many empty homes as possible to be brought back into use.

## Tackling Scotland's Housing Emergency: Housing Emergency Action Plan

The Scottish Government declared a national housing emergency in May 2024. In September 2025, the Scottish Government's<sup>3</sup> Housing Emergency Action Plan was

<sup>3</sup> [Housing Emergency Action Plan](#)

published which details the Government's next set of actions to tackle homelessness, accelerate housing delivery and support vulnerable groups. The plan will deliver up to £4.9 billion of investment over the next four years recognising the vital role of delivering more affordable homes in tackling the emergency, with a commitment to increase funding allocations to local authorities for acquisitions to help buy more properties to increase the supply of affordable homes. The plan sets out a commitment to ensure action is taken to make the best use of housing, which includes bringing empty homes back into use.

## **The Plan for North Lanarkshire**

The Plan for North Lanarkshire sets the direction of travel for the council, partners, and our unique communities. The Plan has a vision where North Lanarkshire is the place to Live, Learn, Work, Invest, and Visit. Bringing empty properties back into use aligns with the vision of The Plan for North Lanarkshire:

*'To make North Lanarkshire the place to live, through the provision of high-quality housing and support in sustainable communities, that enables people to thrive and prosper'*

## **Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026**

The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2021-2026 provides the strategic direction for housing in North Lanarkshire. This will be replaced by a new interim LHS, covering 2026-2028, in spring 2026.

The LHS sets out seven strategic housing priorities:

- 1. We increase the supply of high-quality sustainable homes across tenures*
- 2. Our communities are vibrant, attractive and sustainable*
- 3. We prevent and resolve homelessness effectively*
- 4. We have a range of housing options and supports which promote independence, health and wellbeing*
- 5. We will tackle climate change and fuel poverty*
- 6. Our homes will be fit for the future*
- 7. We contribute to improving the quality and accessibility of the private rented sector*

LHS Strategic Outcome 2: Our communities are vibrant, attractive, and sustainable, outlines the ways in which the council tackles empty homes in North Lanarkshire, including Council Tax from Second and Empty Homes as well our Empty Homes Officer working with the private sector and referring to the Empty Homes Purchase Scheme/Open Market Purchase Scheme.

Other key housing strategies that align to the LHS and the Empty Homes Strategy are:

- **The Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2026/27-2030/31**

To meet growing demand for social housing, the council has increased its new housing supply target to 6,000 homes by 2035 with an additional 1,000 homes added to the programme through a mix of new builds, off-the-shelf purchases, and acquisitions via the Open Market Purchase Scheme. In addition to increasing the supply of affordable housing, the Empty Homes Purchase Scheme/ Open Market Purchase Scheme also addresses issues associated with property repair and long-term empty homes, enables common works to progress in mixed tenure blocks and contributes to preventing homelessness through the purchase of properties from private landlords.

- **Homelessness Action Plan (HAP) 2025-2028**

We have key actions in our Homelessness Action Plan 2025-2028 to increase the supply of affordable homes, flip temporary accommodation to permanent homes, and increase the proportion of council and RSL lets to homeless households to reduce homelessness and meet housing need. Bringing back more empty homes into use is a key action contained in the plan recognising the role empty homes plays in increasing the supply of homes to address homelessness.

### **3. North Lanarkshire's Approach to Tackling Empty Homes**

#### **Council tax increase of 100% on empty homes/Council Tax Levy**

Following the introduction of new legislation on the Council Tax (Variation for Unoccupied Dwellings) (Scotland) Regulations 2013, the council decided to increase Council Tax by 100% on homes (100% Levy) which is **applied to properties that have been unoccupied for 12 months or more** and are not being marketed for sale or let becoming effective from April 2014. The council raises over £400k per annum from this source. This funding is not ring-fenced for investment in housing; however, the council has agreed in principle that any additional revenue may be used for initiatives to tackle empty homes.

#### **Second Homes subject to a 100% levy**

Following a budget decision on 15 February 2024, second homes are no longer subject to a discount in North Lanarkshire (previously second homes were eligible for a discount of 10%). Instead, second homes are now subject to a 100% additional levy (essentially a 200% charge/doubling the Council Tax charge). This increase in charge does not apply to any water and sewerage costs applied by Scottish Water but billed and collected by the council. There are economic, social and wellbeing benefits to the

local authority area in bringing second homes properties into future occupation and use.<sup>4</sup> The council receives around £185k per annum from the reduction in discount for second and empty homes. This funding is ring fenced for investment in affordable housing and the council currently uses this revenue stream to help fund borrowing for the new build programme.

### **Empty Homes/Open Market Purchase Scheme**

The council introduced the Empty Homes Purchase Scheme (EHPS) in 2013 to address issues of disrepair and mitigate the negative impact that vacant properties have on communities by bringing empty properties back into use.

In 2018, the Open Market Purchase Scheme (OMPS) was established in addition to the EHPS. The EHPS/OMPS has proved to be a popular scheme, allowing the council to increase the supply of affordable housing to meet housing need whilst also addressing issues associated with property repair and long-term empty homes.

### **Extension of Empty Purchase Scheme**

As part of the council's approach to tackle empty homes, the Empty Homes Purchase Scheme was extended in 2021 to include the acquisition of homes that enable common works to progress in priority blocks. The programme was further expanded to consider the purchase of properties from private landlords, helping prevent homelessness and enabling private tenants to remain in their home as council tenants. The EHPS/OMPS has proved to be successful as an economic and effective way for the council to increase the supply of housing to meet housing need while helping tackle the issues caused by long-term empty properties. The scheme also assists with other priorities such as re-provisioning, transforming town centres and wider efforts to improve stock condition across tenures.

### **Empty Homes in the Private Sector**

A dedicated Empty Homes Officer post was created in 2014, which contributes to the number of homes brought back into use in the private sector. The role actively involves locating empty homeowners and providing them with advice and assistance as well as accessing merchant discounts and VAT reductions to bring their properties back into use.

---

<sup>4</sup> North Lanarkshire Council, Finance and Resources Committee of 28 February 2024

## 4. Legislative Framework

Whilst there are currently no statutory requirements for local authorities in relation to bringing empty homes back in to use, the Scottish Government are keen to increase the affordable housing supply in Scotland to tackle shortages in the social rented sector.

The following legislation is relevant to bringing empty homes back in to use:

**The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001** provides a statutory requirement on local authorities to prepare a Local Housing Strategy (LHS) to set the vision for the supply of housing across all tenures.

**The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 makes provisions on local authorities' duties to homeless people** including a statutory responsibility to anyone threatened with, or experiencing, homelessness.

**The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006** provides a requirement of the Local Housing Strategy to have a strategy for improving the condition of houses or arranging the provision of assistance.

**The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010** enables local authorities to use Council Tax records to identify vacant residential properties and bring them back into use.

**Local Government Finance (Unoccupied properties etc.) (Scotland) Act 2012** allows local authorities to charge increased Council Tax on certain homes that have been empty over a year.

**The House Condition (Housing (Scotland) Act 2006, Section 10** creates duties to have in place a Below Tolerable Standard Strategy, Housing Renewal Area Policy, and Scheme of Assistance Strategy

**Section 44 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009** to tackle the effects of Climate Change.

**Fuel Poverty (Targets, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Act 2019** introduces a new statutory target for reducing fuel poverty. The target is that by 2040, as far as reasonably possible, no household, in any local authority area, in Scotland is in fuel poverty; and, in any event, no more than 5% of households, in any local authority area in Scotland are in fuel poverty. No more than 1% of households in Scotland should be in extreme fuel poverty.

## 5. Defining Empty Homes

### Long term empty properties

In Scotland, a long-term empty home is a property that has been empty for six months or more and is liable for council tax. However, while all long-term empty homes are vacant properties, not all vacant properties are long-term empty homes. The gap is made up of unoccupied exemptions.

### Unoccupied exemptions

These are properties which are empty and exempt from paying council tax. There is no requirement for a property to have been empty for more than 6 months before it can be included in this category. Many of these properties may be transactional vacancies, empty and unfurnished properties that will be sold or let within six months. However, they may also include, amongst other things, homes where the owner is in long-term care, homes where the owner has died and their estate has not yet been settled and repossessed homes that have not yet been sold.

### 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.

### Reasons for Empty Homes

There are a range of reasons for homes becoming empty, which can include:

- Inheritance and ownership difficulties
- Owners do not want to become a private landlord
- Repossessions
- Major repairs and lack of resources
- Difficulty engaging or location of owners
- Owners living abroad

Empty homes can have considerable financial impacts on owners in terms of lost rental income, mortgage payments, council tax, insurance, maintenance, and security.

### Community Perspective

Empty homes can have a negative impact on regeneration of areas and places, prevent common works from taking place and lower the value of nearby properties. In addition, there is also the issue that empty properties are inactive within the housing market, do not contribute to economic regeneration and development, as well as not contributing to homelessness prevention or meeting housing need.

## 6. Key Evidence

### Evidencing the Extent and Nature of Empty Homes

An evidence base has been developed providing detail on the extent and nature of empty homes including the number and types of empty homes across North Lanarkshire using national and local data. The evidence base provides an understanding of the scale of empty properties alongside the challenges and issues experienced in bringing empty properties back in to use.

The Scottish Government presents data based on September each year on empty properties, unoccupied exemptions and second homes sourced from council tax base returns collected annually from local authorities. Data relates to all stock of all tenures, including social housing, private rented housing, and owner-occupied homes. The Scottish Government's September based data is published annually in December.

The data which the Scottish Government collects from North Lanarkshire has included the re-provisioning properties (pending demolition) which is reported in the nationally published data on empty homes. The national evidence below presents the data over the period 2014 to 2024 including re-provisioning properties most notable since 2018, which explains spikes in North Lanarkshire's data.

### National Evidence

#### Second homes

According to the national published data, there were 64 second homes<sup>5</sup> in North Lanarkshire in 2024<sup>6</sup> which has been decreasing over the past 10 years compared to when there were 80 second homes in 2014, albeit these are small numbers and almost one-quarter (23.8%) less than in 2019. There have been fluctuations with a decrease of 13.5% in 2024 compared to the previous year 2023; in Scotland there has been an increase of 6,273 (22.5%) over 10 years and a decrease of 2,708 (11.1%) in the past 5-years (2019-2024) with fluctuations and a decrease of 10.2% in 2024 (24,061 in 2023 to 21,606 in 2024). This could be related to the ability for local authorities to implement a 100% council tax premium (i.e. double council tax) on second homes that came into effect in April 2024. Between 2019 and 2023 the number of second homes remained broadly stable and then dropped.

---

<sup>5</sup> Second homes are defined as furnished and lived in for at least 25 days in a 12-month period but not as someone's main residence.

<sup>6</sup> At September 2024

**Table 1: Second Homes 2014-2024**

	Second Homes, according to council tax data 2014-2024										
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
North Lanarkshire	80	89	75	80	83	84	78	80	79	74	64
Scotland	27,879	27,317	26,140	25,660	24,907	24,314	24,466	23,890	24,287	24,061	21,606

Source: [Housing statistics: Second homes and empty properties - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/housing-statistics/second-homes-and-empty-properties)

### Empty Properties for 6 months or more

The national evidence shows that empty properties have been increasing in North Lanarkshire over the past 10 years with 2,634<sup>7</sup> properties that had been empty for 6 months or more in 2024<sup>8</sup> compared to 647 in 2014 and 1,885 in 2023 as can be seen in Chart 1. These increases can be attributed to the recording of properties pending demolition as empty properties, which explains peaks in 2018 and 2024 in North Lanarkshire. Nationally, the picture across Scotland is an increasing trend on empty properties of 6 months or more over the period 2014-2024.<sup>9</sup> However, there was an increase in the number of empty properties in 2020 in Scotland, which was likely to be a direct impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic directly affected both the property rental and sales markets, with the movement restrictions in place also having a range of other impacts. The number of empty properties (6 months+) decreased after 2020.

The national figures show that empty homes of 6 months or more in North Lanarkshire (including reprovisioning) represents 1.6% of all stock in 2024, which is the same as Scotland at 1.6%.

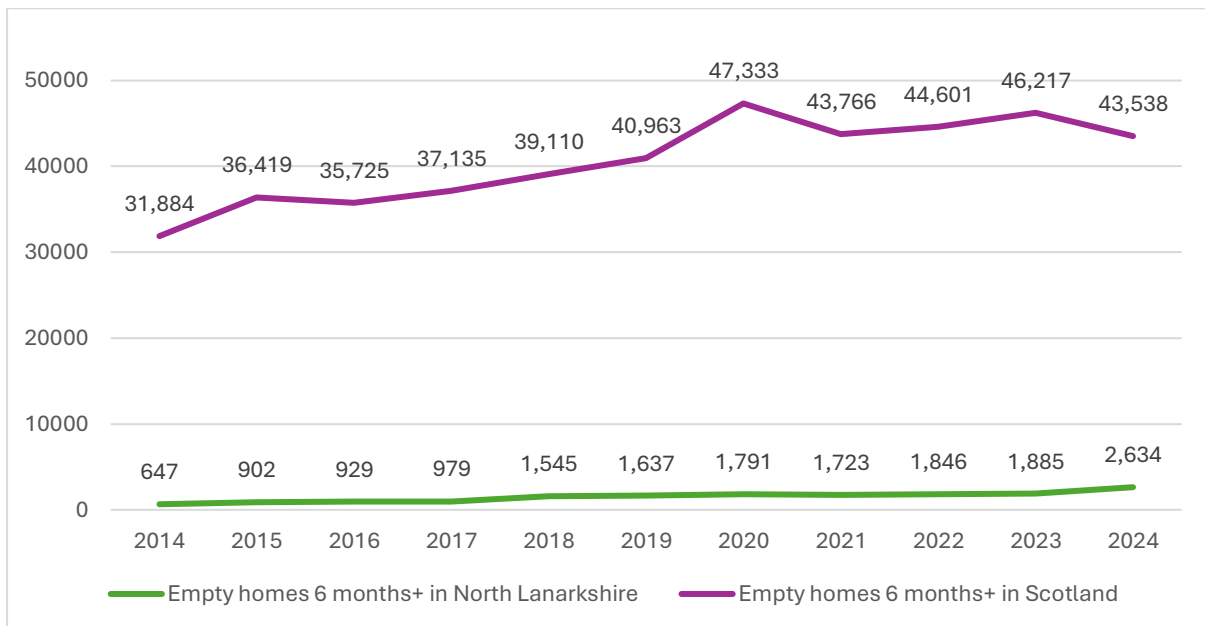
Based on the national figures including North Lanarkshire's reprovisioning properties, empty homes (6 months or more) rate per 10,000 dwellings is 164.1 in North Lanarkshire, slightly higher than Scotland at 160, however, well below the highest rates of Na h-Eileanan Siar of 478.2 and Aberdeen of 465.8.

<sup>7</sup> The spikes in empty homes in 2018 and 2024 in North Lanarkshire are explained by the recording of reprovisioning properties in the Council Tax data on empty homes, which effects comparison with the previous year's figures. Therefore, when looking at trends over time the figures for each of the categories should be interpreted with some caution as increases or decreases can be due to recording practices in local authorities rather than real changes in the numbers.

<sup>8</sup> At September 2024

<sup>9</sup> In September 2024, the guidance for empty properties data collection was strengthened to ensure that councils excluded properties empty less than 6 months from their data return (in CTAXBASE 8b). It was discovered that prior to 2024 some councils had included properties furnished and unoccupied for a shorter period in their data return to the Scottish Government. Empty homes (properties empty for more than 6 months) will therefore be overstated in such instances; however, we are not able to quantify the impact of their inclusion on published statistics before 2024.

**Chart 1: Empty Homes 6 months + (6 months or more) in North Lanarkshire and Scotland 2014-2024 (at September)**



Source: [Housing statistics: Second homes and empty properties - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/housing-statistics/second-homes-and-empty-properties)

### Long term empty properties

According to national published data which includes reprovioning properties (pending demolition) as explained above, long term empty properties have been increasing in North Lanarkshire over the past 10 years; 2,121 properties have been empty for 12 months or more in 2024<sup>10</sup> compared to 492 in 2014 and 1,090 in 2023, as can be seen in Chart 2. Given reprovioning properties have been included in the national published data which is the most likely explanation for the higher figures in 2018 and 2024, then there were most likely real increases each year in empty properties from 2014-2017, however, since 2018 up until 2024, we are not able to quantify the impact of the inclusion of the reprovioning on published statistics.<sup>11</sup>

According to the published national data, long term empty homes (12 months or more) are 1.3% of overall housing stock in North Lanarkshire in 2024 (total dwelling estimate is 160,560), which is slightly above Scotland at 1.16%. The inclusion of reprovioning properties explains the increase in 2024 in North Lanarkshire.

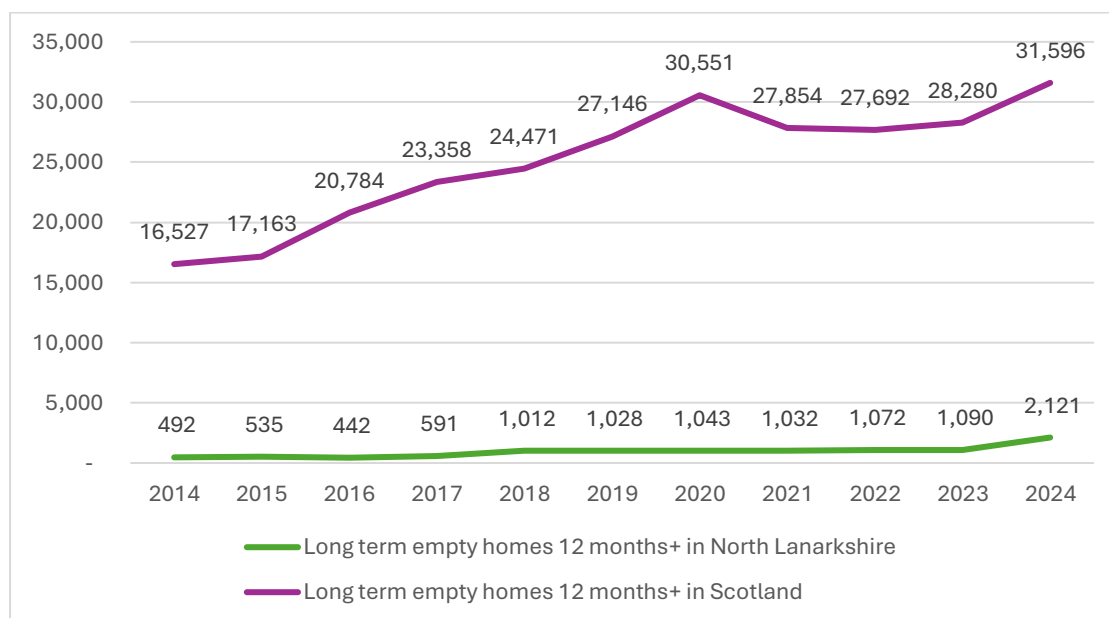
<sup>10</sup> At September 2024

<sup>11</sup> As explained above, the recording of properties (pending demolition) in the Council tax national data explains the spike in empty homes between 2018 and 2024 in North Lanarkshire, which effects comparison with the previous years' figures. In addition, policy changes can impact on the number of long-term empty properties and second homes. In April 2013 local authorities gained discretionary power to remove the council tax discount associated with long term empty properties or to set a council tax increase of up to 100% on certain properties which have been empty for 12 months or more. Prior to April 2017, second homes were entitled to a council tax discount of between 10% and 50%, and as of April 2017, local authorities were also given the option to remove the council tax discount on second homes.

North Lanarkshire has a higher rate of long-term empty homes (12 months or more) in the national published data at September 2024 - 132.1 compared to the rate in Scotland at 116, which will be due to the inclusion of reprovioning. The highest rates of long-term empty homes in Scotland were in Na h-Eileanan Siar at 435.8, Shetland Islands at 374.9, and Highland's rate is 296.2.

According to the national data, North Lanarkshire's proportion of Scotland's long term empty homes (12 months or more) was 6.7% in 2024. The inclusion of reprovioning properties explains in the main the increases in the number of long-term empty homes in North Lanarkshire. The highest proportion reported was in Highland at 12% and East Renfrewshire reported no long-term empty properties.

**Chart 2: Empty homes 12 months+ in North Lanarkshire and Scotland 2014-2024 (at September)**



Source: [Housing statistics: Second homes and empty properties - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/housing-statistics/second-homes-and-empty-properties)

### Unoccupied exemptions

There were 2,532 unoccupied exemptions in North Lanarkshire in 2023 which is 1.6% of all stock: 46,319 unoccupied exemptions in Scotland in 2023 – 1.7% of all stock.

### Local Evidence

The local evidence on empty homes refers to empty homes across all tenures that are known to North Lanarkshire Council at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. The local data below does not include reprovioning properties (pending demolition) and therefore, does not correspond with the national data as at September 2024. The local evidence reflects actual real empty properties that can be potentially brought back in to use for housing. Due to a number of properties subject to demolition being deleted by the Assessor, the

national data will change for 2025 to show a substantial drop in empty homes in North Lanarkshire as a result of the removal of re-provisioning properties.

### Empty Homes as Percentage of Council Tax Properties

When looking at long-term empty homes by Local Housing Market Area (LHMA) as a percentage of council tax registered properties, Shotts, Kilsyth, Airdrie, Coatbridge and Cumbernauld have the highest proportions, above the average for North Lanarkshire. Airdrie, Coatbridge, Cumbernauld, Wishaw and Motherwell have the highest percentage share of empty homes. Empty homes of 12 months or more accounts for 0.75% of all North Lanarkshire's Council Tax registered properties.

**Table 2: Long Term Empty Homes as % of Council Tax Properties and % of Total Empty Homes**

LHMA	CT Registered Properties	Empty Homes	% of CT Properties	% of Total Empty Homes
Airdrie	26,315	224	0.85%	18.5%
Bellshill	14,971	108	0.72%	8.9%
Coatbridge	23,687	184	0.78%	15.2%
Cumbernauld	23,987	182	0.76%	15.1%
Kilsyth	6,242	54	0.87%	4.5%
Moodiesburn	11,069	64	0.58%	5.3%
Motherwell	21,438	143	0.67%	11.8%
Shotts	6,237	55	0.88%	4.5%
Viewpark	6,855	40	0.58%	3.3%
Wishaw	21,013	155	0.74%	12.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>161,814</b>	<b>1,209</b>	<b>0.75%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Council Tax Register and North Lanarkshire Council Empty Properties Data Spreadsheets at 31/03/25

### Long-term Empty Homes by Council Tax Band

There are 64.9% of North Lanarkshire's long-term empty properties (12 months or more) in Council Tax Band A and B (34.7% in Council Tax Band A and 30.2% in Council Tax Band B). There are 78% (142) of Cumbernauld's long-term empty properties in Council Tax Band A and B, 75.9% (41) in Kilsyth, 75% (81) in Bellshill and 71.3% (102) in Motherwell. In contrast, Moodiesburn has 76.6% (49) in Council Tax Bands C to G compared to the lowest proportions of 22% in Cumbernauld.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Council Tax data held on a spreadsheet is based at 31/3/25 whereas the above Scottish Government statistics is based at September 2024. The national data on CTAXBASE may not correspond with the data on the Council Tax Spreadsheet as this is live data with properties coming on and off.

**Table 3: Empty Properties 12 months or more by Council Tax Band**

Empty Properties 12 months or more by Council Tax Band									
LHMA	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	Total
<b>CT Charge 2024/25</b>	<b>£880.52</b>	<b>£1,027.27</b>	<b>£1,174.03</b>	<b>£1,320.78</b>	<b>£1,735.36</b>	<b>£2,146.27</b>	<b>£2,586.53</b>	<b>£3,235.91</b>	
Airdrie	78	60	33	17	27	5	4	-	224
Bellshill	59	22	13	5	7	2	-	-	108
Coatbridge	27	83	37	14	14	7	2	-	184
Cumbernauld	55	87	11	7	15	6	1	-	182
Kilsyth	25	16	-	3	7	3	-	-	54
Moodiesburn	2	13	14	17	12	5	1	-	64
Motherwell	62	40	13	8	12	4	4	-	143
Shotts	28	10	6	4	5	1	-	1	55
Viewpark	19	4	7	6	4	-	-	-	40
Wishaw	65	30	21	17	12	5	4	1	155
<b>Total</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1,209</b>
<b>% empty 12 months +</b>	<b>34.7%</b>	<b>30.2%</b>	<b>12.8%</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	<b>9.5%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: North Lanarkshire Council Empty Properties Data on Council Tax Register Spreadsheet at 31/03/25

### Empty Properties 12 months or more by Type of Discount

There are 72.3% (873) of long-term empty homes (12 months or more) that are subject to empty property Levy 100%, 13.6% (164) are receiving no discount and 4.2% (51) are Levy for second homes as can be seen in Table 4.

**Table 4: Long-term Empty Homes on Council Tax Register by Type of Discount**

Empty Homes 12 months or more by Type of Discount									
LHMA	Empty Property Discount	Empty Property Levy 100%	Levy Extension 10% Discount	Levy for 2nd Homes	New Owner - Levy Extension	No Discount	Under Repair – Follow Empty Period	Tied Accomm	Total
Airdrie	3	167	3	8	9	27	6	1	224
Bellshill	1	85	1	2	2	14	3	-	108
Coatbridge	2	135	8	12	4	20	3	-	184
Cumbernauld	6	140	3	5	2	22	4	-	182
Kilsyth	-	39	1	4	1	6	2	-	53
Moodiesburn	2	35	-	6	3	15	3	-	64
Motherwell	4	98	3	3	6	25	3	1	143
Shotts	1	41	2	2	2	4	2	1	55
Viewpark	1	24	3	1	2	9	-	-	40

Wishaw	2	109	2	8	8	22	3	1	155
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>873</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1,208</b>
<b>% of empty homes 12 months+</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>72.3%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>13.6%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: North Lanarkshire Council Empty Properties Data on Council Tax Register Spreadsheet at 31/03/25

### Empty Homes on the Council Tax Register by Exemption Reason

Excluding properties (1,045) with no exemption, there are 164 empty properties of 12 months or more with an exemption reason and of these, 56.1% (92) are exempt due to deceased former owner (deceased and deceased grant of confirmation) and 20.1% (33) are due to the occupant providing/receiving care.

### Empty Homes on the Council Tax Register by Length of Time Empty

Table 5 below uses the Scottish Government's definition of homes empty for '6 months or more' and '12 months or more' with long-term reserved for 12 months or more empty. The figures are based on empty homes information on North Lanarkshire's Council Tax Register at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. There are 1,879 empty homes that have been empty for 6 months or more, which excludes 63 properties with date empty unknown. There are 1,209 empty properties of 12 months or more empty, 390 empty properties that are empty for 2-5 years and 334 empty properties that are empty for more than 5 years.

**Table 5: Empty Homes in North Lanarkshire by Length of Time Empty**

Length of Time Empty	No. of Empty Homes	%
6 months & <12 months	670	35%
≥1-2 years	485	25%
>2-5 years	390	20%
>5-10 years	200	10%
>10 years	134	7%
Unknown	63	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,942</b>	<b>100%</b>
<6 months	1,640	46%

Source: Council Tax Empty Homes Data March 2025

Table 6 provides further detail on the length of time properties have been empty in North Lanarkshire by LHMA.

In Shotts, there are 23 properties empty for more than 5 years which is 41.8% of empty homes of 12 months or more in this area: 58 in Coatbridge representing 31.5% of long-term empty homes in this area, 57 in Cumbernauld at 31.3% and 65 in Airdrie at 29%.

Airdrie, Coatbridge and Cumbernauld have largest share of North Lanarkshire's properties empty more than 5 years.

**Table 6: Length of Time Empty by LHMA**

LHMA	Length of Time Empty						Total
	6 months & <12 months	≥1-2 years	>2-5 years	>5-10 years	>10 years	Unknown	
Airdrie	129	85	74	42	23	10	363
Bellshill	50	51	31	12	14	8	166
Coatbridge	90	73	53	35	23	9	283
Cumbernauld	107	65	60	42	15	7	296
Kilsyth	20	23	22	7	2	1	75
Moodiesburn	49	27	26	9	2	6	119
Motherwell	85	60	52	15	16	7	235
Shotts	34	22	10	9	14	-	89
Viewpark	23	14	16	6	4	3	66
Wishaw	83	65	46	23	21	12	250
<b>North Lanarkshire</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>1,942</b>

Source: North Lanarkshire Council Empty Properties Data on Council Tax Register Spreadsheet at 31/03/25

As can be seen in Table 7, Airdrie (18.5%), Coatbridge (15.2%), Cumbernauld (15.1%), Wishaw (12.8%) and Motherwell (11.8%) have the highest share of long-term empty homes (12 months or more) in North Lanarkshire.

**Table 7: Empty Homes by LHMA as Proportion of 6 months+ and 12 months+ Empty**

LHMA	Empty ≥6 months	% of empty ≥ 6 months in NL	Empty ≥ 12 months	% of empty ≥ 12 months in NL
Airdrie	353	18.8%	224	18.5%
Bellshill	158	8.4%	108	8.9%
Coatbridge	274	14.6%	184	15.2%
Cumbernauld	289	15.4%	182	15.1%
Kilsyth	74	3.9%	54	4.5%
Moodiesburn	113	6.0%	64	5.3%
Motherwell	228	12.1%	143	11.8%
Shotts	89	4.7%	55	4.5%
Viewpark	63	3.4%	40	3.3%
Wishaw	238	12.7%	155	12.8%
<b>North Lanarkshire</b>	<b>1,879</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,209</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: North Lanarkshire Council Empty Properties Data on Council Tax Register Spreadsheet at 31/03/25

As can be seen in Table 8, Airdrie, Coatbridge, Kilsyth, Wishaw, Cumbernauld and Shotts have the highest levels of long-term empty homes (12 months or more) as a proportion of stock in each LHMA, above 0.7% for North Lanarkshire.

**Table 8: Empty Homes as Proportion of Stock by LHMA**

LHMA	Stock at 31/03/25	6 months or more empty	% of stock in LHMA	12 months or more empty	% of stock in LHMA
Airdrie	25,656	353	1.4%	224	0.9%
Bellshill	14,486	158	1.1%	108	0.7%
Coatbridge	21,580	274	1.3%	184	0.9%
Cumbernauld	24,008	289	1.2%	182	0.8%
Kilsyth	6,241	74	1.2%	54	0.9%
Moodiesburn	13,446	113	0.8%	64	0.5%
Motherwell	25,488	228	0.9%	143	0.6%
Shotts	7,286	89	1.2%	55	0.8%
Viewpark	6,171	63	1.0%	40	0.6%
Wishaw	17,492	238	1.4%	155	0.9%
<b>North Lanarkshire</b>	<b>161,854</b>	<b>1,879</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>1,209</b>	<b>0.7%</b>

Source: North Lanarkshire Council Empty Properties Data on Council Tax Register Spreadsheet at 31/03/25

### Private Sector Empty Homes Brought Back into Use

Over the 5-year period 2020/21-2024/25, the Empty Homes Officer has brought 154 empty homes in the private sector back in to use which have been long-term empty for 12 months or more and subject to the Council Tax levy. Most private sector empty homes (123) were empty for more than 2 years, with 49 empty for more than 5 years.

**Table 9: Private Sector Empty Homes Brought Back by Length of Time Empty**

Private Sector empty homes brought back					
Year	≥6 & <12 months	1-2 yrs empty	2-5 yrs empty	>5 yrs empty	Total Private
2020/21	3	10	12	5	30
2021/22	4	10	19	8	41
2022/23	2	4	13	15	34
2023/24	3	5	21	9	38
2024/25	3	2	9	12	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>169</b>

Source: Data from Empty Homes Officer in Private Sector

During 2023/24, most private empty properties brought back into use were located in Motherwell and Wishaw (one fifth, or 21.1%, in each area), albeit numbers are small. Most properties were located in Cumbernauld (29.4%) and Motherwell (26.5%) in the previous year 2022/23. In 2021/22, Airdrie had the highest proportion (24.4%) brought back into use, and this was a higher proportion in 2019/20 at 34.3%. The number of properties is small when undertaking more detailed analysis at LHMA level.

**Table 10: Empty Private Sector Homes brought into use by LHMA 2019/20 – 2023/24**

LHMA	2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24	
	No.	% total	No.	% total	No.	% total	No.	% total	No.	% total
Airdrie	12	34.3%	6	20.0%	10	24.4%	3	8.8%	4	10.5%
Bellshill	2	5.7%	2	6.7%	3	7.3%	2	5.9%	4	10.5%
Coatbridge	6	17.1%	6	20.0%	6	14.6%	6	17.6%	5	13.2%
Cumbernauld	5	14.3%	5	16.7%	3	7.3%	10	29.4%	2	5.3%
Kilsyth	1	2.9%	2	6.7%	2	4.9%	-	0.0%	2	5.3%
Moodiesburn	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	2	4.9%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Motherwell	2	5.7%	1	3.3%	7	17.1%	9	26.5%	8	21.1%
Shotts	-	0.0%	1	3.3%	2	4.9%	1	2.9%	2	5.3%
Viewpark	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	1	2.4%	-	0.0%	3	7.9%
Wishaw	7	20.0%	7	23.3%	5	12.2%	3	8.8%	8	21.1%
<b>Total Empty Properties</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Data from Empty Homes Officer in Private Sector

### **EHPS/OMPS Properties Brought Back into Use**

Since inception and up to the financial year 2024/25, 845<sup>13</sup> properties (including those empty for less than 6 months) have been brought back into council stock through the Empty Homes Purchase Scheme/ Open Market Purchase Scheme with 412 for the Empty Homes Purchase Scheme only (including less than 6 months), therefore reducing the risk of properties sitting empty on a long-term basis. During 2024/25, North Lanarkshire brought 38 homes back with 10 empty for more than 6 months into use through our Empty Homes Purchase Scheme.

There were 166 properties that were empty for less than 6 months brought back into use as social housing through the Empty Homes and Open Market Purchase Schemes from 2020/21 to 2024/25. In this five-year period, only 28 EHPS homes were empty for 12 months or more and 49 EHPS homes were empty for 6 months or more. Table 13

<sup>13</sup> Since 2013/14 and up to the financial year 2024/25.

below shows there are less long-term empty homes in the EHPS with most empty homes in the 0-6 months category.<sup>14</sup>

**Table 11: EHPS Empty Homes Brought Back by Length of Time Empty**

EHPS empty homes brought back (former council homes)						
Year	<6 months empty	≥6 & <12 months empty	1-2 yrs empty	2-5 yrs empty	>5 yrs empty	Total EHPS
2020/21	37	3	3	4	-	47
2021/22	27	6	5	3	-	41
2022/23	42	4	1	-	-	47
2023/24	32	3	5	1	1	42
2024/25	28	5	1	4	-	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>215</b>

Source: New Supply Team EHPS/OMPS Data. Date of empty property is unknown prior to 2020/21.

Table 12 highlights the number of EHPS empty homes that have been empty for 6 months or more by LHMA. Numbers are very small with Airdrie having the most over 5 years (2020/21-2024/25) at 18 and Motherwell with 8 long term empty properties during this period.

**Table 12: EHPS Empty Homes (6 months+) by LHMA**

EHPS purchased properties by LHMA - Long term empty homes (6 months+)											
Year	Airdrie	Bellshill	Coat-bridge	Cumber-nauld	Kilsyth	Moodies-burn	Mother-well	Shotts	Viewpark	Wishaw	Total
2020/21	4	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	1	1	10
2021/22	6	-	2	-	1	-	3	-	1	1	14
2022/23	2	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	5
2023/24	5	-	1	-	-	2	1	-	-	1	10
2024/25	1	1	2	-	-	-	3	1	-	2	10
<b>Total (5 years)</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>48</b>

Source: New Supply Team EHPS/OMPS Data.

During 2024/25, 78.8% of homes acquired through the Open Market Purchase Scheme (OMPS) and Empty Homes Purchase Scheme (EHPS) were allocated to households who were homeless or at risk of homelessness, highlighting the significant contribution the scheme makes to addressing homelessness in North Lanarkshire.

<sup>14</sup> The date the property became empty was not collated before 2020-21.

## **Housing Need and Demand**

Tackling empty homes contributes to increasing housing supply to meet housing need and the demand for affordable housing in North Lanarkshire. Bringing empty homes back in to use can also support North Lanarkshire to meet its statutory duty to prevent homelessness wherever possible.

While work on the latest GCV HNDA3 is now complete, due to delays caused by the global pandemic and national planning reform, output from the assessment was not available at the time of writing the current LHS. As a result, evidence from GCV HNDA2 was used, alongside the latest and most accurate local and national data, statistics, and research, to help determine the outcomes and priorities in the LHS. The new LHS, which will cover the period 2026-2028, is informed by the outputs from HNDA3, which estimates a future requirement for between 6,818 to 8,264 additional homes in North Lanarkshire over a period of 19 years.

Empty homes activity can contribute to increasing housing supply to meet housing need including homelessness, as well as wheelchair and amenity housing and other housing needs.

## **Homelessness**

North Lanarkshire Council has approved its Homelessness Action Plan for 2025 to 2028, building on the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and placing a strong emphasis on prevention, swift access to permanent housing, and tailored support. The HAP was developed in collaboration with a range of partners in the context of the national housing emergency in May 2024 and in response to the increasing demand for homelessness services. North Lanarkshire's HAP reflects a strategic shift towards a more holistic, preventative, and person-centred approach to tackling homelessness with short-term and long-term actions. The HAP is structured across four strategic priorities:

- **Housing supply:** Significantly reduce homelessness through increasing the supply of affordable homes.
- **Temporary accommodation:** Reduce the time spent in temporary accommodation through access to settled housing quickly.
- **Support:** Improve support for households who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- **Prevention:** Preventing homelessness through early intervention, education and other support services.

The homelessness landscape has been exacerbated by an unprecedented housing crisis with increasing demand, affordability issues, and budget constraints making it difficult for some authorities to meet their statutory duties and provide adequate support to those in need. Although North Lanarkshire has not declared a housing emergency, there has been a rise in homelessness, mirroring national trends, which has created local challenges, particularly in housing supply, affordability, and service delivery.

North Lanarkshire's HAP is now entering its second year, with progress being made across key actions including the increased provision of affordable housing, reducing the length of time in temporary accommodation, faster transitions to settled housing, increased prevention, and improved tenancy sustainment. Our Empty Homes Strategy aims to increase the supply of available homes by bringing back empty homes back into use in the social rented sector making an important contribution to meeting housing need including homelessness.

Although homelessness rose by 13% and 16% in consecutive years between 2022 and 2024, recent data indicates a period of stabilisation.

## **7. How Empty Homes are brought back in to use in North Lanarkshire**

### **Private Sector**

The Empty Homes Officer in the private sector provides a range of advice, information, and assistance to help owners consider the options available to bring their property back in to use as well as working with a range of council services. This includes:

- Working alongside colleagues from Building Standards, Environmental Services and Planning to bring private sector properties back in to use.
- Providing advice on renting out the property if the owner does not want to sell the property and to become a Private Registered Landlord.
- Assisting on selling the property which involves making a referral to the empty homes buy back scheme, advice on obtaining a Home Report, how to pick an estate agent and general selling tips, selling at auction and matchmaking with developers.
- Helping with renovations and repairs through the Empty Homes Partnership which has organised several discounts with traders.
- Advising on how to make the property more energy efficient whereby the Empty Homes Officer can liaise on an owner's behalf with the Home Energy Team.
- Referring to the Private Sector Officer for advice and guidance on obtaining quotations for renovations.

### **EHPS/OMPS Social Housing**

- A Project Development Officer in our New Supply Team manages (1) EHPS to bring back in to use abandoned or neglected empty properties which were former council housing; and (2) OMPS to identify and enable the purchase of properties that are for sale on the open market, mainly former council houses

purchased under right to buy that meet the council's criteria and housing priorities.

- The EHPS/OMPS is funded by Prudential Borrowing, Scottish Government Funding and Subsidy Income with the Scottish Government's grant funding contributing towards the cost of each purchase.
- The Open Market Purchase Scheme is managed by the council's New Supply Team and engages with owners, landlords and estate agents to buy back properties which have been abandoned or neglected by owners, or those sold in areas where there is high demand for council properties.
- The main aim is to increase supply of council homes to meet housing need including the prevention of homelessness, tackle issues associated with the blight of empty homes as well as improve property condition and aid the completion of common works.
- Acquiring properties in blocks of flats where the council owns all of them enables investment and improvements in council homes and improves the lives of tenants living within them.

### **Our Approach on Below Tolerable Standard and Disrepair**

- **Prevention:** Compulsory Purchase Orders are viewed as an option of last resort for properties that are structurally unsound, unsafe, or are otherwise putting communities at risk. The approach in North Lanarkshire is to encourage homeowners to take responsibility for repairs and maintenance of their homes. Work Notices are used where homes fail to meet the Tolerable Standard and/or are in disrepair. The Empty Homes Officer ensures that private sector owners meet their obligations under the Repairing Standard. The Environmental Health Officers/Private Sector Officers in the Private Sector Team deal with any disrepair issues.
- **Enforcement:** While it is the responsibility of the owner for repairing and maintaining a house, North Lanarkshire Council's aim is to encourage and support owners to do this without the need for enforcement. Any requirement for enforcement would be proportionate, targeted and reasonable. Enforcement powers would only be considered as a last resort.
- **Compulsory Sale Orders and Compulsory Rental Orders:** The Scottish Empty Homes Partnership (SEHP) have recommended the introduction of Compulsory Sale Orders and Compulsory Rental Orders to aid bringing empty homes back in to use. EHPS/OMPS and the Empty Homes Officer for the private sector do not currently use CPOs to bring empty properties back in to use.

## 8. Issues and Challenges

- **Engagement with homeowners** and maintaining contact can be challenging for the Empty Homes Officer.
- **Tracing owners** can be difficult as some are living abroad. Some owners have bought properties, some in low demand areas in North Lanarkshire to make a profit and on the open market these properties will sell at a relatively low price. Some owners have a portfolio of properties and are not interested in engaging on properties which require improvements.
- **Common repairs work** whereby an owner can have a property within a flat where common repair works may be required, which can lead to the deterioration of the property and can affect the adjoining properties. It may be difficult to trace the absent owner of an empty property to discuss common repairs and works.
- **Repairing standard** where many empty homes require significant works to bring it up to the repairing standard with many owners lacking the financial resources to carry out the necessary works, particularly in the context of increased material and labour costs.
- **Lack of awareness of empty homes work** within the council and the opportunities for advice and assistance.
- **Reporting on long-term empty homes** as not all are reported via council tax reports where a discount or exemption has been awarded
- **Length of time lenders take processing repossessions**, even when proof is provided that the property has been abandoned or the outstanding mortgage is low.
- **A better joined-up approach to Empty Homes** with other services meeting on a regular basis (i.e. Regulatory Services, Building Standards, Planning, Environmental, Finance, Legal Services, Council Tax, Social Work) as these Services are governed by legislation, and this is where the role of the Empty Homes Officer is limited.
- **Empty homes can be a blight on the local community** and can become a concern to those living within the neighbourhood resulting in complaints.

## 9. Resources

There has been a full-time Empty Homes Officer in post since 2014 that focuses on bringing empty properties in the private sector back into use. Match funding from the Scottish Government has been secured to recruit an additional full-time Empty Homes Officer to bring more empty homes back into use.

The Scottish Government has agreed to provide £2.925m grant funding in the current financial year to support the purchase of 100 homes through the EHPS/OMPS. Additional funding may become available later this year, dependent on progress with the wider North Lanarkshire Affordable Housing Supply Programme resource allocation. Acquiring former public sector stock has been successful in increasing housing supply, improving stock condition while sustaining and enhancing local communities in North Lanarkshire.

## 10. Engagement

In preparation of the Empty Homes Strategy engagement has been undertaken with relevant stakeholders including the Scottish Government, Scottish Empty Homes Partnership, Empty Homes Officer (Private Sector), Project Development Officer (EHPS/OMPS in New Supply Team), Housing, and relevant partner services as well as ongoing dialogue with networks. Consultation for the new interim LHS 2026-2028 including our approach and actions on tackling empty homes will be undertaken during October through to December 2025. Additionally, we will consider further ways to engage with stakeholders throughout the duration of the strategy, to ensure the strategy actions remain relevant.

## 11. Monitoring Progress and Actions

The Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026 has well-established, robust evaluation and monitoring arrangements in place. The LHS is reviewed annually to evaluate progress made in relation to the milestones and targets being achieved within the timescales as set out in the LHS action plan with currently two actions for empty homes. Progress is monitored and reported to Housing Committee on an annual basis. Part of this progress report relates to progress achieved in bringing back empty homes.

A more detailed update on the progress made towards the specific actions contained in the Empty Homes Strategy will be presented to Committee annually. In addition to this, progress is also monitored by the SEHP as part of the empty homes returns that each local authority Empty Homes Officer completes annually.

If you would like to comment on the Empty Homes Strategy, please contact [localhousingstrategy@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:localhousingstrategy@northlan.gov.uk).

## Empty Homes Strategy Action Plan 2026-2029

Objective 1: Maintain, develop, gather and analyse data relating to empty homes across North Lanarkshire				
Action	Milestone	Target	Lead	Timescale
1.1 Develop a robust empty homes spreadsheet	Maintain and review the empty homes spreadsheet	Spreadsheet maintained and reviewed annually	Empty Homes Officers	Monthly
	Verify and analyse annual data on empty homes on Council Tax Register	Data verified and analysed	Housing Strategy Team	Annually
1.2 Monitor trends to identify challenges and progress solutions	Analyse empty homes data collected to identify trends/challenges, and develop appropriate solutions	Trend analysis completed	Empty Homes Officers/Housing Strategy Team	Annually
	Map empty homes and areas with high number of empty homes	Map completed	Housing Strategy Team	Annually
1.3 Increase understanding on why properties are left empty	Explore ways to engage with owners and other stakeholders to improve understanding	Engagement completed	Empty Homes Officers	2026 - 2029
1.4 Improve processes for recording and monitoring of empty homes	Carry out process mapping to identify opportunities to streamline recording	Process mapping complete	Empty Homes Officers	2027

<b>Objective 1: Maintain, develop, gather and analyse data relating to empty homes across North Lanarkshire</b>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
	processes of empty home referrals			
	Review recording processes across finance and housing services to ensure accuracy in recording in relation to NLC reprovisioning programme	Recording processes reviewed	Housing Strategy Team/Finance	2027

<b>Objective 2: Maximise bringing empty homes back in to use</b>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
2.1 Increase the number of empty homes brought in to use	Continue to work with owners and partners to bring private sector empty homes back into use (of which 50% should be brought back into use as affordable homes)	110 per annum	Empty Homes Officers/New Supply Team	Annual
	Continually review methods to bring empty homes back in to use	Methods reviewed	Empty Homes Officers	Ongoing
	Identify opportunities for purchasing housing to	Opportunities identified	New Supply/ Empty Homes Officers	Ongoing

<b>Objective 2: Maximise bringing empty homes back in to use</b>				
	meet need and demand in North Lanarkshire			
	Recruit additional Empty Homes Officer	Additional Empty Homes Officer appointed	Housing Strategy Team	Dec 2025
	Explore new innovative ways in which more empty homes can be brought back into use	New ways to tackle empty homes explored	Empty Homes Officers	2026-2029
	Ensure all key council services and officers are well informed about empty homes and how to tackle them	Briefing session for key council services complete	Empty Homes Officers	2026
	Ensure elected members are well informed about empty homes	Elected member briefing session	Empty Homes Officers	2026

<b>Objective 3: Address Empty Homes in a State of Disrepair</b>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
3.1 Work with private landlords to improve management and quality standards in the PRS	Provide advice and assistance to private landlords/homeowners through the work of the Private Sector Team	Advice and assistance provided	Empty Homes Officers/Private Sector Team	Ongoing

<b>Objective 3: Address Empty Homes in a State of Disrepair</b>				
	Explore the creation of loan/grant funding to support landlords	Creation of fund explored	Empty Homes Officers	2026/27
	Proactively target support and advice to owners of problematic empty properties including properties that have been empty the longest	Targeted support	Empty Homes Officers	Ongoing

<b>Objective 4: Raise Awareness around Empty Homes</b>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
4.1 Promote communications approach offering advice and assistance on empty homes	Promote empty homes activity on social media	Awareness increased	Empty Homes Officers/ Communications Team	2025/26
	Provide an online mechanism for empty homes to be reported	Digital reporting method created	Empty Homes Officers	2027
4.2 Joint working with internal and external services to bring empty homes back in to use	Develop and improve partnership approaches with internal and external partners	Partnership approaches created	Empty Homes Officers	Ongoing

<b>Objective 4: Raise Awareness around Empty Homes</b>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
	Attend Empty Homes best practice forums and events	Forums and events attended	Empty Homes Officers	Ongoing

## Appendix – Summary of Council Tax Discounts and Some Exemptions

Type of Discount	Explanation
Empty and unfurnished	6-month exemption when empty and unfurnished. 6-month discount of 50% if still empty and unfurnished. 10% discount after 1 year if still empty and unfurnished. 100% Levy automatically applied after 2 years if still empty.
Empty and furnished	10% discount for a year and after 1 year 100% Levy.
Empty Property Discount 10%	A 10% discount is applied when owner reports property empty.
Empty Property Discount 50%	A 50% discount is applied after 6 months empty if owner struggling to sell.
Empty Property Levy 100%	A 100% Levy is applied to properties that have been unoccupied for 12 months or more and are not being marketed for sale or let.
Levy Extension 10% Discount	If a property is being marketed for sale or let, a 10% discount can be awarded from the property being unoccupied for one year until it has been unoccupied for two years
Levy for 2nd Homes	A 100% additional Levy is applied to second homes. There is no longer a council tax discount on second homes.
New Owner - Levy Extension	A 50% discount can be applied for six months to properties which have been purchased by new owners, which have been unoccupied for more than one year and require repairs or structural alteration.
Under Repair – Follow Empty Period	Homes that are undergoing repair or structural alteration may be exempt for up to 12 months.
Tied Accommodation	A 50% discount is applied to tied accommodation.

Type of Exemption	Explanation
Deceased	In circumstances where a property is owned by the deceased person, unlimited exemption is awarded from the date of death until Confirmation is awarded.
Deceased grant of confirmation	Exemption then applies from the date Confirmation is awarded for a maximum period of six months. Confirmation is a legal document from the sheriff court giving the executor authority to administer the estate of the deceased person.
Housing pending demolition/CPO	Awarded exemption.
New/existing dwelling	A property that is unoccupied and unfurnished with exemption awarded for up to six months from the last occupation date.
NLC empty	Long term NLC properties which are not pending demolition are awarded exemption for one years from the last occupation date, followed by a 10% discount until the property is unoccupied for two years. A 100% Levy would then apply.