



Long Term Empty Homes Strategy

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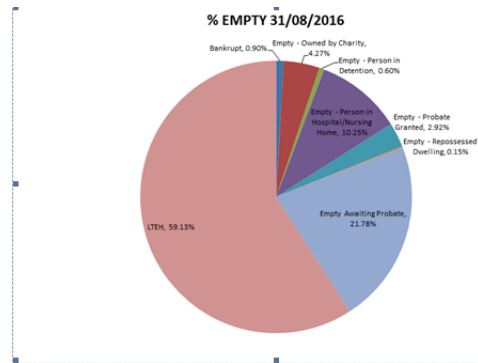


Long Term Empty Homes Strategy – summary

- Most empty homes are short term and are part of the normal housing market e.g renovations, in process of sale or rent
- Our focus is on homes empty for more than 6 months which are dangerous or with significant impact for neighbours or communities
- Enforcement is a last resort and action is co-ordinated through Derelict Land and Buildings Group
- LTEH Strategy adopted in 2013 and needs refreshing
- This presentation summarises progress since 2013 and sets out a proposed future approach



Reasons for LTEH – council tax classification



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Numbers of Long Term Empty Homes

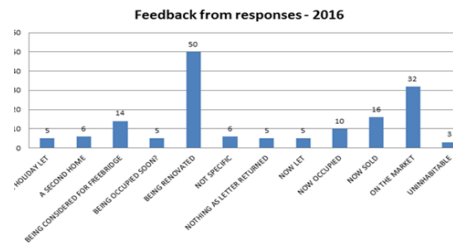
- The Strategy and statistics relate to the LTEH (59%) shown in previous chart
- The number of Long Term Empty Homes has reduced from 1026 in 2013 to 846 in January 2017
- Although the trend for the total LTEH has stabilised around 800 - 900, the individual properties change as homes become empty and are re-occupied



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Priority 1 Gain a greater understanding of why homes are empty

- Improved systems and recording
- 6 month questionnaire



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Priority 2 To raise awareness of empty homes

- Empty Homes Forum held to promote empty homes schemes
- LTEH Strategy published on website
- Press releases for promotional activity



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Priority 3 To adopt a systematic approach

- Robust systems established
- Monthly review of numbers and trends AND:
- Letter sent to owner when homes shows as empty for 6 months
- Homes empty and unfurnished for more than 24 months subject to 150% council tax
- Complaints about empty homes assessed in accordance with LTEH Policy



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Priority 4 - develop pathways to bring empty homes back into use

- Private sector leasing scheme and acquisitions with Freebridge Community Housing created 40 new social homes from empty properties
- No specific funding but individual cases reviewed



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Issues relating to lease or purchase of empty homes

- Acquisition rather than leasing more appropriate in many cases
- Flats problematic – no freehold interest and covenants restrict use of property
- Some not suitable to meet housing need e.g. area and type of property
- Renovation costs can be prohibitive especially in conservation areas
- Not suitable for many empty homes



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Proposed future direction

- Retain our broad approach and 4 priorities but also:
- Lobby for changes to council tax regulations to enable additional premium at 12 months
- Explore initiatives to bring empty homes into use including consideration of funding a scheme to bring low cost LTEH into use to meet housing needs where acquisition and/or remediation costs are not prohibitive

Note – changes to council tax for empty/unfurnished homes from second month to be introduced (approved Council 19 January 2017)



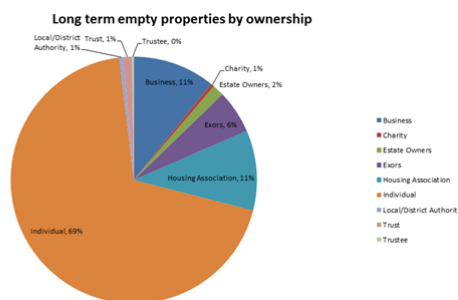
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Questions and comments



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LTEH by ownership



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Comparisons across Norfolk

Authority	Total number of dwellings	% of which are long term empty	
BCKLWN	71881	1.140%	819
Breckland	58000	0.700%	406
Broadland	56124	0.504%	283
Great Yarmouth	47232	1.750%	827
North Norfolk	53590	1.010%	541
Norwich	65022	0.520%	338
South Norfolk	58364	1.330%	776



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