Scottish Empty Homes Partnership

Strategic Empty Homes Framework Template

February 2023

Donna Milton (MCIH)
Managing Director

Elaine Byrne (CPFA)
Director of Housing Consultancy

Table of Contents

1   How to Use this Template

Arneil Johnston were commissioned by the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership (SEHP) to develop advisory guidance for local authorities on producing a Strategic Empty Homes Framework. The guidance has been developed to assist local authorities to develop and improve their approach to bringing as many empty homes back into use as possible by achieving a more strategic focus in terms of policy, partnership, intervention and investment.

The advisory guidance has been structured to provide a step-by-step process which details the sequence of activities that Empty Home Officers can take to develop a Strategic Empty Homes Framework:

1	2	3	4
Step 1: Set out the policy agenda for Empty Homes	**Step 2:** Build the Empty Homes evidence base	**Step 3:** Map existing Empty Homes activity and key challenges	**Step 4:** Set Strategic Aims and Objectives

5	6	7	8
Step 5: Stakeholder consultation and engagement	**Step 6:** Develop an Empty Homes Action Plan	**Step 7:** Map implementation and delivery resources	**Step 8:** Monitor and evaluate empty homes impact

This step-by-step approach also provides the structure for this Strategic Empty Homes Framework template document, which local authorities can use as the basis for developing an effective written strategy.

This template should be used in parallel with the advisory guidance and offers a structure, sample text and presentational ideas to support local authorities to develop a Strategic Empty Homes Framework document. To use this template document effectively, the following guidelines should be followed:

1. Normal text is sample text which could be used by local authorities without editing or reframing for local context or evidence. Local authorities may choose to omit sections (at least in part) if they feel that it will not be necessary for their audience.

2. Text shaded in pale blue should be used as the basis to provide local detail, evidence and context i.e. this text provides a useful starting point to add local narrative and analysis

3. ***Text in shaded in bold and italics requires insert with local statistics or detail***

4. Text shaded in dark blue is provided as information and advice on how to complete the template document and should be deleted by local authorities when finalising the Empty Homes Strategic Framework.

2 Introduction to <<insert local authority name>> Strategic Empty Homes Framework

<<Insert local authority name>> is pleased to present this Strategic Empty Homes Framework covering the period **<<insert timeframe aligned to Empty Homes Action Plan timescales>>**.

The Strategic Empty Homes Framework sets out the direction, policies, plans and activity that will enable **<<insert local authority name>>** and partners to bring as many empty homes as possible back into use. The Strategic Empty Homes Framework sets out the important contribution that tackling empty homes makes to meeting housing need, regenerating places and communities, tackling climate change and supporting the local economy.

The Strategic Empty Homes Framework sets out the vision of **<<insert local authority name>>** and local partners for tackling empty homes. The Strategic Framework aligns to national priorities and housing outcomes and is embedded in the delivery of the Local Housing Strategy (LHS), which builds on the ambitious community planning objectives set out in the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP). The main purpose of this Strategic Empty Homes Framework is to:

- set out a shared understanding of the extent and nature of empty homes and their impact on residents, places and communities in **<<insert local authority area>>**

- provide clear strategic direction for partnership working and investment to tackle empty homes

- set out actions and targets to bring empty homes back into use

- provide a strong contribution to national, community planning and LHS outcomes

- set the framework to guide and coordinate partnership and delivery activity to achieve strategic aims and objectives for empty homes

- provide a clear basis to direct resource, monitor progress and measure the impact of empty homes activity.

Overall, this Strategic Empty Homes Framework seeks to:

- set a clear target for reducing the number of empty homes in **<<insert local authority name>>** over the next **<<insert number of years>>**

- support homeowners to bring empty homes back into use, increasing local housing options and meeting housing need

- enable housing regeneration, placemaking and neighbourhood improvement activity which improves community safety, environmental quality, and housing condition

- make a positive contribution to the building reuse and repurposing agenda aligned to the Council's wider ambitions for tackling climate change

- raise the profile of empty homes across the community planning and housing market partnership to maximise investment, partnership commitment and innovation in tackling empty homes.

2.1   What is meant by Empty Homes?

In building this Strategic Empty Homes Framework, it is important that the meaning of the term 'empty homes' is clearly defined. In **<<*insert local authority name>>,*** empty homes have been classified using the following definitions:

- **Long term empty properties**. These are dwellings that have been empty for 6 months or more and are liable for council tax. The most recent figures published by the Scottish Government show that there were **<<*insert number>>*** long term empty properties in **<<*insert local authority name>>*** in **<<*insert year>>***

- **Unoccupied exemptions.** These are properties which are empty and exempt from paying council tax. The most recent figures published by the Scottish Government show that there were **<<*insert number>>*** unoccupied exemptions in **<<*insert local authority name>>*** in **<<*insert year>>***. There is no requirement for a property to have been empty for more than 6 months before it can be included in this category.

- **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. The most recent figures published by the Scottish Government show that there were **<<*insert number>>*** second homes in **<<*insert local authority name>>*** in **<<*insert year>>***.

This Strategic Empty Homes Framework focuses on long term empty properties, setting out the approaches that the Council and partners will take to bring homes back into use. Having said this, it should be noted that unoccupied exemptions may include properties where the previous owner has died and/or properties that have been repossessed. The Strategic Empty Homes Framework also sets out approaches for bringing these properties back to use.

Properties can become vacant for a variety of reasons and understanding these and the potential solutions to bring them back into use, is fundamental to tackling the challenges we face in **<<*insert local authority name>>***. Reasons can include:

- household ability to manage mortgage or debts

- low demand and over supply of housing within an area

- investment as an asset or future development

- unwillingness to become a Private Landlord

- need for major repairs or refurbishment and lack of resources

- access issues

- planning restrictions

- inheritance and ownership difficulties

- the property forms part of a business

Empty homes can cause significant challenges not only for owners but for residents, local authorities and other relevant stakeholders. There can be significant disrepair and blight which has a negative impact on the local environment and quality of life for neighbours. This includes community safety problems, vandalism, fly tipping, arson, anti-social behaviour as well as removing viable homes from the local housing stock where there is housing need.

For owners, empty homes can have considerable financial impacts in terms of lost rental income, mortgage payments, council tax, insurance, maintenance and security. Empty Homes can therefore pose the potential for significant financial loss.

From a wider community perspective, empty homes can cause a negative appearance in terms of place, undermine regeneration efforts, prevent common works from taking place and lower the value of nearby properties. Furthermore, properties which are inactive within the housing market do not contribute to economic activity within communities and do not help with homelessness prevention or meeting housing need.

To reduce the negative impact of empty homes within our communities, this Strategic Empty Homes Partnership Framework sets out the practical activity, interventions and partnership approaches needed to bring empty homes back into use, enabling them to become occupied.

This Strategic Empty Homes Partnership Framework can therefore deliver significant economic and financial benefits to **<<insert local authority name>>,** communities, local businesses, owners, landlords and residents by contributing to:

- enhancing housing supply to meet housing need

- reducing homelessness by increasing housing options

- achieving Net Zero Targets and carbon savings through the retrofitting of existing properties as an alternative to new supply

- reducing neighbourhood complaints and the avoidable deployment of public resources

- reducing requirements for Police and Fire Services to attend empty homes

- financial returns for owners by realising asset value or generating rental income

- improving aesthetic appearance and sense of place within a community

- progressing common works to improve housing standards across other homes.

3 The Legislative and Policy Context for Empty Homes

There is a rich and diverse policy context for tackling empty homes in Scotland, which supports the delivery of empty homes activity and influences the contribution that empty homes can make to national, local and community objectives*.*

It is important that this Strategic Empty Homes Framework supports and helps deliver national housing outcomes and targets, whilst also reflecting the local needs and priorities set out by community planning and housing market partnerships.

This Strategic Empty Homes Partnership Framework is set within the wider Community Planning and housing strategy framework for the Council and its partners. The Framework defines the contribution that empty homes can make to local strategic priorities and meeting the targets set out in Scotland's first national Housing Strategy: 'Housing to 2040'. The national and local strategic framework that supports and enables the delivery of the Strategic Empty Homes Framework is set out in more detail below.

3.1 Statutory Requirements

There are a number of statutory requirements placed on **<<*insert local authority name>>,*** with those that relate to bringing empty homes back into use, as follows:

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

- The Housing (Scotland) Act 2011 which places a duty on local authorities to develop a Local Housing Strategy (LHS) which set out the local authority's and local partners' vision for the supply of housing across all tenures and types of housing provision

- Local authorities' duties to homeless people including a statutory responsibility to anyone threatened with, or experiencing, homelessness

- 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

- Tackling the effects of Climate Change – Section 44 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009

- 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.

This legislative framework not only places powers and duties on **<<*insert local authority name>>*** but offers mechanisms which can drive empty homes activity and intervention including enforcement action, advice, assistance and investment.

3.2   The National Policy Context for Empty Homes

The national policy context places the empty homes agenda within a framework of strategic ambitions around housing, place, community, net zero and the Scottish economy. Whilst there are currently no statutory requirements for local authorities regarding empty homes, the Scottish Government is keen to encourage empty homeowners to bring properties back into use and in particular, to increase affordable housing supply in Scotland to tackle shortages in this sector.

There are currently eleven National Outcomes describing what the Scottish Government wants to achieve, including:

- Children and Young People
- Economy
- Fair Work and Business
- International
- Communities
- Education

- Health
- Poverty
- Culture
- Environment
- Human Rights.

By proactively tackling empty homes and bringing them back into use, the Council and partners can contribute to delivery of several National Outcomes in ***<<insert local authority area>>***.

National Outcome	Empty Homes Contribution
Economy: 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
Fair work and business: 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
Communities: 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
Poverty: We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally	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.
Environment: 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

Table 3.1: Empty Homes impact on achieving National Outcomes

Empty homes have an important role to play in helping to deliver the right homes, in the right places for people across Scotland. The Scottish Government's Housing to 2040 strategy sets an ambitious vision of what housing should look like over the next two decades and a plan on how to achieve this vision. Bringing empty homes back into use will help deliver all priorities set out in the Housing to 2040 strategy as follows:

1. **Tackling empty homes can support delivery of *'More homes at the heart of great places'* by:**
   - Helping to meet demand for affordable housing in areas of most need
   - Contributing to the regeneration and revitalising of town centres, villages and rural communities

2. **Tackling empty homes can support delivery of '*Affordability and choice*' by**
   - Contributing to the Scottish Government's ambitions of delivering 100,000 affordable homes over the ten year period 2021/22 to 2031/32
   - Ensuring as wide a range as possible of property types and tenures across Scotland

3. **Tackling empty homes can support delivery of *'Affordable warmth and zero emissions homes'* by:**
   - Helping to drive down carbon emissions caused by housing and housing construction
   - Assisting with reduced heating and operational carbon emissions through retrofitting for improved energy performance

4. **Tackling empty homes can support delivery of *'Improving the quality of all homes' by:***
   - Supporting the renovation of empty homes and returning them back to use
   - Improving the quality of housing stock and the aesthetic appearance of neighbourhoods

Furthermore, the new National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)[1] Policy 9 'Quality Homes', encourages the delivery of homes across different tenures and by a range of providers. In doing so, it places an emphasis on sustainability and opportunities for tackling climate change, as well as adopting the approach of building reuse. NPF4 therefore promotes the sustainable reuse of buildings such as empty homes.

Within NPF4 Policy 9 'Quality Homes' 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, being returned or converted to use as homes. This provides an opportunity to consider how bringing housing back into effective use through remodeling and

---

[1] https://www.transformingplanning.scot/media/2832/policy-9-quality-homes-pdf-199kb.pdf

rehabilitation of existing properties could be promoted through the **<<*insert local authority area*>>** LHS and Local Development Plan.

3.3 The Local Policy Context for Empty Homes

Community planning focuses on the collective efforts of partners to target activity and resources to reduce inequalities and add maximum value to each community in **<<*insert local authority area*>>**.

The vision for the **<<*insert local authority area*>>** Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) is to:

<<*insert Local Outcomes Improvement Plan vision*>>

The LOIP has the following strategic priorities:

<<insert LOIP Strategic Objectives aligning to empty homes activity using Section 6.2 of the Strategic Empty Homes Framework Guidance >>

The **<<*insert local authority area*>>** LHS is at the heart of the arrangements for housing and planning through its links with the Local Development Plan and its strategic role in directing investment in housing and housing related services.

The **<<*insert local authority area*>>** LHS sets out a strategic vision for the delivery of housing and housing services and the outcomes that partners are seeking to achieve to meet housing need. The LHS sets out the approach to increasing housing supply, meeting housing need and demand, preventing and alleviating homelessness, delivering specialist housing, improving private sector housing condition and energy efficiency, addressing fuel poverty and delivering the housing contribution to meeting net zero targets. More specifically, the LHS defines tackling empty homes as a key area for action, partnership and investment.

Insert overview of LHS priorities, objectives and outcomes creating links to empty homes activity using Section 6.1 of the Strategic Empty Homes Framework Guidance as a framework.

Increasing Housing Supply and Meeting Housing Need

<<*Insert LHS Actions and Priorities*>>

Placemaking and Regeneration

<<*Insert LHS Actions and Priorities*>>

Preventing and Addressing Homelessness

<<*Insert LHS Actions and Priorities*>>

Specialist Housing Provision

<<*Insert LHS Actions and Priorities*>>

Fuel Poverty, Energy Efficiency and Climate Change

<<Insert LHS Actions and Priorities>>

Stock Condition

<<Insert LHS Actions and Priorities>>

4 Evidencing the Need to Tackle Empty Homes in <<insert local authority name>>

This Strategic Empty Homes Framework has been informed by a clear understanding of the extent and nature of empty homes across **<<insert local authority area>>** and their impact on neighbourhoods, communities, homeowners and local residents. To achieve this, a robust evidence base has been developed by the Council and partners detailing the number and types of empty homes across **<<insert local authority area>>,** as well as important contextual information on tenure estimates, unmet housing need, the incidence of homelessness, the role of the private rented sector and housing condition and quality issues.

This evidence base provides us with a strong understanding of the scale of empty homes as well as the challenges faced in bringing them back into use. This analysis is crucial to informing our decisions on how partnerships, investment and innovation should guide empty homes activity and interventions. Our analysis of empty homes arising from this evidence, is detailed below:

4.1 Profiling Empty Homes

Table 4.1 details the scale of ineffective housing stock in **<<insert local authority area>>** providing a helpful measure of the number of homes which are not in use and do not contribute to meeting housing need on a permanent basis.

Ineffective Housing Stock	<<Insert Local Authority Area>>
Total Dwellings	*<<Insert statistics>>*
Occupied Dwellings	
Second Homes	
Long-term Empty Dwellings	
Dwellings with Unoccupied Exemptions	

Table 4.1: In-effective Housing Stock Scotland (NRS Household Estimates published June 2022)

Table 4.1 shows that empty homes, both 'long-term empty dwellings' and 'dwellings with unoccupied exemptions', account for *XX%* of all dwellings in ***<<insert local authority area>>.***

Insert further analysis and local context around Table 4.1 using Section 7.1 of the Strategic Empty Homes Framework Guidance as a framework.

The housing tenure split in ***<<insert local authority area>>*** is detailed in Table 4.2, setting out the proportion of homes in private ownership or in the private rented sector.

Geography	% Local Authority Housing Stock	% RSL Housing Stock	% PRS Housing Stock	% Owner Occupied Housing Stock	% Vacant Second Homes
Local Authority					
Scotland					

Table 4.2: Tenure Split by Local Authority and Housing Market Sub-Area (NRS Household Estimates published June 2022)

Table 4.2 shows that the housing tenure profile of **<<insert local authority area>>** is dominated by…

Insert further analysis and local context around Table 4.2 using Section 7.1 of the Strategic Empty Homes Framework Guidance as a framework, including:

- % of vacant or empty homes relative to housing tenures

- Housing market operation and impact on empty homes e.g., scale/quality of local PRS/owner-occupied sector

- Extent/nature of mixed tenure housing challenges that could influence the empty homes agenda

4.2   Long Term Empty Homes

Table 4.3 illustrates the number of long-term empty properties in **<<insert local authority area>>,** detailing where long term empty homes are concentrated.

Geography	Long Term Empty Homes	Unoccupied Exemption	Second Homes	Total Stock	% Long Term Empty Homes
Local Authority					
Housing Market Area 1					
Housing Market Area 2					
Housing Market Area 3					
Scotland					

Table 4.3: Private Long Term Empty Properties

Table 4.3 shows that the scale of long term empty homes in **<<insert local authority area>>** are…

Insert further analysis and local context around Table 4.3 using Section 7.2 of the Strategic Empty Homes Framework Guidance.

Further develop this analysis by detailing sub-area localities that have a higher proportion of long term empty homes than the % of the total housing stock in the area, showing specific concentrations of long-term empty homes as detailed in Table 4.4:

Geography	Long Term Empty homes	Total stock	% of homes that are long-term empty homes	% of local authority housing stock	% of local authority long-term empty homes
Local Authority					
Housing Market Area 1					
Housing Market Area 2					
Housing Market Area 3					
Scotland					

Table 4.4: **% of Local Authority Long-term Empty Homes**

Table 4.5 details the number of empty properties that are either receiving Council Tax discounts, have had discounts removed and/or an empty homes surcharge applied, as well as the number of properties that may be exempt from council tax.

Discount/Exemption Criteria	No. Empty Homes	%
Long term empty properties 10-50% Discount		
Discount removed and/or increase applied		
Unoccupied Exempt Properties		
Total		

Table 4.5: Discounts and Exemptions

Table 4.5 shows the extent of long term empty homes relative to other categories of unoccupied dwellings and reveals that…

Insert further analysis and local context around Table 4.5 using Section 7.2 of the Strategic Empty Homes Framework Guidance.

Further develop this analysis by detailing recent trends in the number of long term empty homes as suggested in Table 4.6:

Geography	Long Term Empty Homes Year 1	Long Term Empty Homes Year 2	Long Term Empty Homes Year 3	% Increase/ decrease Year 2	% Increase/ decrease Year 3
Local Authority					
Housing Market Area 1					
Housing Market Area 2					
Housing Market Area 3					
Scotland					

Table 4.6: Number and % of Long-term Empty Homes by Local Authority and Housing Market Subarea

Table 4.7 details the proportion of empty homes within each Council Tax Band in **<<insert local authority area>>**.

Council Tax Band	No. Empty Homes by Council Tax Band	% Empty Homes by Council Tax Band
Band A		
Band B		
Band C		
Band D		
Band E		
Band F		
Band G		
Band G		

Table 4.7: Number and % Empty Properties by Council Tax Band

Table 4.7 provides a suggestion of the property sizes and/or types most likely to be empty and therefore the potential costs and feasibility of bringing such homes back into use. It reveals that…

Insert further analysis and local context around Table 4.7 using Section 7.2 of the Strategic Empty Homes Framework Guidance.

Further develop this analysis by detailing the length of time properties have been empty as detailed in Table 4.8, aligned to analysis of the complexities associated with property deterioration and tracing owners.

Length of time empty	No. of Empty Homes	% of Empty Homes
6-12 months		
1-2 Years		
2-3 Years		
3-4 Years		
4-5 Years		
5-10 Years		
10 Years +		

Table 4.8: Empty Property Timescales (Private Sector)

While unoccupied exemptions include properties which are empty and unfurnished for less than 6 months, and some other homes empty for less than six months; the term also covers properties that are empty due to the owner being in long term care, the property being repossessed, and the death of a previous owner. A breakdown of the reasons why unoccupied properties are exempt from council tax in **<<insert local authority area>>** provides an indication of the likelihood of the property returning to use or remaining empty without EHO intervention. To explore this, Table 4.9 details the number of empty homes by exemption category in **<<insert local authority area>>**.

Property Description	No. Empty Properties
Dwellings last occupied by persons living or detained elsewhere	
Deceased owners	
Dwellings empty under statute	
Dwellings awaiting demolition	
Dwellings for occupation by ministers	
Repossessed dwellings	
Dwellings of persons made bankrupt	
Dwellings occupied by severely mentally impaired persons	
Dwellings of people in prison	

Table 4.9: Exemption Classifications

Table 4.9 reveals that…

Insert further analysis and local context around Table 4.9 using Section 7.2 of the Strategic Empty Homes Framework Guidance as a framework.

4.3 Housing Need and Demand

Table 4.10 sets out important evidence of the extent and nature of housing pressure in **<<insert local authority area>>** and emphasises the important role of empty homes activity in increasing housing supply to meet housing need and demand. Information from the latest Housing Need & Demand Assessment (HNDA) sets out the scale of housing estimates for both affordable and market housing as a starting point for the number of new homes needed over the next 20 years in **<<insert local authority area>>.**

Years	Market Housing Requirements	Affordable Housing Requirements
1-5		
5-10		
10-15		
15.-20		

Table 4.10: HNDA Housing Estimates for Market and Affordable Housing

Table 4.10 highlights the extent of housing pressure over the next 20 years, including…

Insert further analysis and local context around Table 4.10 using Section 7.3 of the Strategic Empty Homes Framework Guidance, highlighting the extent of unmet housing need and how bringing empty homes back into use can relieve housing pressures.

4.4   Affordable Housing Pressures

Table 4.11 further details the extent of pressure placed on the current supply of affordable housing in **<<insert local authority area>>** by illustrating expressed need for housing relative to the number of homes that become available to local households each year.

Area	No. Social Rented Units	No. Available Lets per Annum	No. Applications on Housing Register	Ratio of housing applicants to annual Lets
Housing Market Area 1				
Housing Market Area 2				
Housing Market Area 3				
Local Authority				

Table 4.11: Housing Pressures

Table 4.11 showcases the extent of pressure placed on affordable housing in **<<insert local authority area>>,** highlighting the need to increase affordable housing supply by bringing empty homes back into use in…

Insert further analysis and local context around Table 4.11 using Section 7.4 of the Strategic Empty Homes Framework Guidance detailing the potential role of property buy-backs or acquisition programmes in returning empty homes back into use as affordable housing.

4.5   Homelessness

<<Insert local authority name>> has a statutory duty to the prevent homelessness wherever possible and to mitigate the impact of homelessness where it cannot be prevented. The Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) sets out a framework for transforming homelessness services in **<<insert local authority area>>** including work around enhancing housing options and the role of empty homes in improving housing access.

Table 4.12 sets out the scale of homeless applications in **<<insert latest reporting year>>** detailing the extent of households experiencing housing crisis.

	No. Homeless Applications per Annum
Local Authority	
Scotland	

Table 4.12: Homeless Applications per annum

Table 4.12 details the extent of urgent housing need in **<<insert local authority area>>,** highlighting the need to maximise the contribution of empty homes in increasing housing supply.

Insert further analysis and local context around Table 4.12 using Section 7.5 of the Strategic Empty Homes Framework Guidance detailing further information and analysis on the extent and nature of homelessness as set out in the RRTP, including households in temporary

accommodation, households requiring support, along with reasons for homelessness and the settled housing outcomes for households who have presented for assistance.

4.6 Specialist Social Housing

There are opportunities for empty homes to play an important role in meeting specialist housing requirements in **<<insert local authority area>>**. Table 4.13 sets out the number of specialist housing units across categories such as wheelchair, amenity and sheltered, as well as the number of households waiting for this type of housing locally.

Area	Wheelchair	Amenity	Sheltered	Lets per Annum	No of Applicants on Housing Register
Housing Market Area 1					
Housing Market Area 2					
Housing Market Area 3					
Local Authority					

Table 4.13: Specialist Housing Provision and Requirements

Table 4.13 details the extent of unmet need for specialist housing in **<<insert local authority area>>,** highlighting the need to maximise the contribution of empty homes in increasing specialist housing options through strategic property acquisitions.

Insert further analysis and local context around Table 4.13 using Section 7.6 of the Strategic Empty Homes Framework Guidance detailing key gaps in specialist housing provision that could be eased by empty homes activity. Consider how a targeted approach to bringing empty homes back into use to meet specialist housing requirements could relieve pressures.

Further develop this analysis by detailing the extent and nature of activity associated with the Council's Scheme of Assistance in Table 4.14, aligned to analysis of whether Council funding is supporting disabled adaptations activity or assistance for disrepair work.

	Total Spend Grant Funding Scheme of Assistance	No. Properties Assisted (Adaptations)	No. Properties Assisted (Works Under Notice)	No. Properties Assisted (Other Assistance)	Total No. Properties Assisted
Local Authority					

Table 4.14: Scheme of Assistance

4.7   Private Rented Sector

Tables 4.15 and 4.16 provide an overview of the Private Rented Sector (PRS) in **<<insert local authority area>>**, illustrating how the affordability of PRS rents compare with rents in the social housing sector. This analysis helps us to understand the role that PRS properties play in meeting housing need locally.

Area	No. PRS Properties
Housing Market Area 1	
Housing Market Area 2	
Housing Market Area 3	
Local Authority	

Table 4.15: PRS Properties

Rent	PRS	Local Authority	RSL	LHA
Local Authority				

Table 4.16: Rental Comparison

Tables 4.15 and 4.16 details the scale of the private rented sector in **<<insert local authority area>>** and offers some indication of housing affordability pressures across rental tenures. This offers some indication of the extent to which market rental opportunities may be a viable outcome for an empty home.

Insert further analysis and local context around Tables 4.15 and 4.16 using Section 7.7 of the Strategic Empty Homes Framework Guidance as a framework. Consider how a targeted approach to bring empty homes back into use could support the growth and improvement of the PRS.

5   Local Action, Challenges & Barriers in Tackling Empty Homes

As well as evidencing the need to tackle empty homes in **<<*insert local authority area>>*, the Strategic Empty Homes Framework builds upon the activity and interventions which have succeeded in bringing empty homes back into use; as well as specific local challenges and barriers to tackling empty homes.

The Strategic Framework therefore builds on successes that have been achieved by projects and initiatives within **<<*insert local authority area>>*,** as well as innovation in empty homes activity across Scotland, other parts of the UK and elsewhere as the basis of piloting or programming future activity.

5.1   Empty Homes Projects and Initiatives in <<insert local authority name>>

Insert details of specific empty homes services, initiatives and local projects which have been successful in tackling empty homes, using Chapter 8 of the Strategic Empty Homes Framework Guidance to detail activity.

Provide further detail of empty homes innovation and best practice under consideration as a result of specific local context and/or circumstances, using case study examples where possible.

5.2   Challenges and Barriers to Tackling Empty Homes

There are a number of key challenges and barriers to tackling empty homes in **<<*insert local authority area>>*** which require to be proactively addressed by the development and delivery of this Strategy Empty Homes Framework.

Insert details of specific challenges to tackling empty homes, using Chapter 9 of the Strategic Empty Homes Framework Guidance to detail difficulties including the examples provided in Section 9.1.

These challenges have been identified through the development of the empty homes evidence base and by engaging with local partners and stakeholders involved in empty homes activity.

Some of the key local barriers to developing and implementing a strategic approach to empty homes includes:

Insert details of specific local barriers to tackling empty homes, tailoring the examples provided below to local analysis and context.

- **EHO Capacity:** Competing priorities for action and intervention alongside operational responsibilities

- **Resources:** Lack of/limited grant assistance and loan schemes to support investment in empty homes

- **Competing priorities:** Balancing operational workload issues with new projects, initiatives and reporting requirements

- **Legal complexities:** Challenging cases where owners can't be traced, or ownership is in dispute can be extremely time consuming

- **Sharing of information:** Data sharing agreements are not in place and/or there is lack of appetite to resolve data barriers

- **Resource intensive activities for limited outcomes:** Small number of empty homes brought back into use annually compared to costs/time involved in doing so

- **Wider understanding and appreciation of contribution empty homes makes to corporate and community objectives:** Lack of knowledge and understanding of how empty homes links to LHS and wider local authority plans and priorities

- **Lack of awareness of empty homes work and the opportunities for advice and assistance:** Empty homes agenda is not understood by partners, stakeholders and wider public with greater marketing and communication required.

6 The Strategic Framework for Tackling Empty Homes in <<insert local authority name>>

This Strategic Empty Homes Framework sets out how the Council and partners will work together over the next **XX years** to proactively tackle the impact of empty homes on communities, neighbourhoods, homeowners and residents across **<<insert local authority area>>.**

To achieve this, the following aim has been set for the Strategic Empty Homes Framework:

> **<<Insert Strategic Empty Homes Framework aim>>**

This aim provides the overarching vision for empty homes in **<<insert local authority area>>.** It sets out what the Council and partners want to achieve in tackling empty homes and reflects the level of ambition agreed with delivery partners. It also reflects the strategic aim of the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership to 'bring as many privately-owned empty homes back into use as possible'.

> Insert local context on the development of the strategy aim including how it reflects local policy priorities, capacity to deliver and the partnership network available to ensure successful delivery.
>
> Where possible, also provide details of any targets set locally on the number of empty homes to be brought back into use each year.

To guide, coordinate and target empty homes activity, a number of main issues have been identified informed by local evidence and aligned to local policy priorities. These main issues also reflect the local initiatives and innovation which provide a strong foundation for future empty homes activity, as well as the specific local challenges and barriers that partners and stakeholders seek to overcome.

> Insert local context on the development of strategic objectives including how they reflect the main issues arising as a result of analysis, policy alignment and stakeholder feedback.

These main issues have been used as a basis to define the following strategic objectives, which break down the overarching aim for empty homes and offer more detail on what will be delivered, by whom and when:

> **<<Insert Strategic Empty Homes Framework Objective 1>>**
>
> **<<Insert Strategic Empty Homes Framework Objective 2>>**
>
> **<<Insert Strategic Empty Homes Framework Objective 3>>**
>
> **<<Insert Strategic Empty Homes Framework Objective 4>>**
>
> **<<Insert Strategic Empty Homes Framework Objective 5>>**

In order to deliver this aim and strategic objectives, a schedule of activities, projects and initiatives have been developed into an Action Plan, enabling partners to bring empty homes back into use over the next **XX years**. This Action Plan has been developed in collaboration with local partners and stakeholders who will support implementation, monitoring and evaluation of empty homes activity.

7   Consultation & Engagement Outcomes: What did Our Partners Say?

Consultation and engagement on developing the Strategic Empty Homes Framework was delivered to ensure that residents, partners and stakeholders had an opportunity to influence and have their say on the future strategy for tackling empty homes in **<<insert local authority area>>.**

As a result, the Strategic Empty Homes Framework reflects the local needs and experiences of residents and communities, as well as the views of partners and stakeholders on the development of priorities and actions.

Insert details of consultation activities carried by tailoring the following sample text to detail the range of channels used to support activity, details of the key partner or stakeholder representatives engaged and response rates achieved.

To maximise participation in consultation process, a creative approach was employed, offering a range of engagement and consultation opportunities. This included digital platforms and channels to enable residents, partners and stakeholders to take part, whilst offering wider alternative options for those who require a more person-led option.

A range of consultation opportunities were hosted throughout the course of developing this Strategic Empty Homes Framework, making good use of existing housing and community networks and interest groups wherever possible. To maximise participation, the following approaches and channels were utilised:

- *surveys (both online and telephone) targeted to specific communities and/or wider stakeholders)*
- *focus groups (both online and in person) targeted to communities and/or wider stakeholders)*
- *public forums*
- *targeted forums (including consultation activity to support engagement with hard to reach groups)*
- *live Q&A sessions*
- *piggy backing onto existing consultation opportunities or sounding bords e.g. LHS, RRTPs, Community Planning processes, Citizen's Panel or Tenants and Residents Association feedback.*

7.1   What do Residents, Partners and Stakeholders Think?

Informed by analysis of empty homes in **<<insert local authority area>>** and by considering housing and community planning policy priorities; partners and stakeholders were asked to define the local challenges which drive the need for future partnership, investment and delivery activity to tackle empty homes. Key priorities for action include:

<<Insert Key Issue 1>>

<<Insert Key Issue 2>>

<<Insert Key Issue 3>>

<<Insert Key Issue 4>>

<<Insert Key Issue 5>>

Insert further details explaining how the views of partners and stakeholders have helped to influence the development of empty homes priorities and actions.

8   Empty Homes SMART Action Plan

The following Action Plan has been developed to enable the Council and partners to plan, deliver, monitor and evaluate the impact of empty homes activity over the next *XX years*. It sets a framework for partnership working and investment that reflects strategic objectives and creates a route map for delivering the aim of the Strategic Empty Homes Framework.

The Action Plan sets out a range of milestones detailing the activity associated with implementation, setting target timescales and details of the lead agency for implementation. The Action Plan, activities and targets will be reviewed annually to ensure partners are able to respond flexibly to changes in need across *<<insert local authority area>>.*

The Strategic Empty Homes Framework Action Plan should set out the actions required to achieve the overall aim and strategic objectives. The Action Plan should clarify the resources required, timescales and responsibilities of all those involved in delivery.

Insert detailed action points coproduced with partners and stakeholders, informed (where relevant) by the suggested Action Plan framework detailed in Chapter 12 of the advisory guidance.

Objective 1:				
Action	Milestones	Timescale	Responsibility	Resources
1.1	•			
1.2	•			
1.3	•			

9   Resourcing Empty Homes Activity in <<insert local authority name>>

This Strategic Empty Homes Framework has been developed upon a sound understanding of the resources and funding streams available to deliver the Action Plan. Mapping available resources has been vital in enabling partners and stakeholders to target interventions and prioritise investment towards the key challenges and barriers to bringing empty homes back into use in *<<insert local authority area>>.*

In developing the Strategic Empty Homes Framework, there is strong recognition of the resource pressures facing *<<insert local authority name>>* as a result of the challenges arising from demographic change, public sector austerity, the regeneration of communities, achieving energy efficiency and housing quality standards, as well as the pressures associated with the Covid-19 pandemic and current cost of living crisis. There is therefore a real need to ensure that resources for tackling empty homes are maximised through partnership, innovation and targeting preventative activity over the next *XX years.*

Despite these significant financial challenges, dedicated resources as well as potential income streams have been identified as potential funding to support the delivery of the Strategic Empty Homes Action Plan. This indicative resource schedule has been informed by the last 3 years of empty homes activity and is set out in Table 9.1:

Average 2018/19 – 2021/22			
Resource	Budget	Spend	No of Homes Assisted Back into Use
Direct Empty Homes staffing costs: Empty Homes Officer			
Private Sector Team			
Indirect Empty Homes staffing costs: Finance & Legal Staff			
Empty Homes Purchase Scheme (AHSP)			
Empty Homes Purchase Scheme (Council)			
Affordable Housing Policy			
Private Sector Housing Grants			
Scheme of Assistance			
HEEPS: ABS Programme			
LHEES Programme			

Table 9.1: Average 3 Year Income & Expenditure on Empty Homes

Insert local analysis and context of the funding available, as well as the funding required to meet local empty homes priorities and targets. This analysis should include identified shortfalls in funding, plus options and opportunities to bridge the gap.

10   Monitoring Progress and Evaluating Impact

The actions scheduled under each strategic objective, have been developed into the detailed Action Plan in Chapter 8, which sets out specific timescales, resources and partner responsibilities to guide implementation and delivery. This Action Plan provides a strong basis for monitoring progress in implementing the Strategic Empty Homes Framework on a regular basis.

A range of milestones have been developed to measure impact over time aligned to delivery timescales. The Action Plan therefore provides a basis for evaluating the longer term impact of activity, partnership and investment in tackling empty homes.

Insert details of the monitoring arrangements that will be put in place to track the progress of the Strategic Empty Homes Action Plan. Arrangements could include ongoing reviews to monitor progress made on milestones, targets and use of resources within the timescales outlined in the Action Plan.

If relevant, provide further detail to the Empty Homes Steering Group established to oversee this work including partner composition and remit.

In order to monitor progress and achievements the following monitoring arrangements will be adopted:

- *establish an Empty Homes Steering Group*

- *six monthly and annual updates of Action Plan*

- *Steering Group review of actions not progressed or slow to commence.*

10.1 Evaluation

Insert details of the evaluation arrangements that will be put in place to measure the impact of the Strategic Empty Homes Action Plan over the life of the strategy. Arrangements could include periodic reviews to measure impact of key interventions over the medium to longer term.

It is important to ensure that the evaluation of the Strategic Empty Homes Framework is reported to relevant partners and stakeholders as well as internally within the local authority. This evaluation reporting will include:

- *demonstrating progress against actions that contribute to the LHS, RRTP, Community Plan and Corporate Plan*

- *the wider partnership frameworks which are achieving shared or national objectives.*

This regular programme of evaluation with provide the Council and partners with an opportunity to understand:

- the progress that has been achieved

- current position

- delivery improvements required.

This approach will provide an assessment of the successes and challenges associated with tackling empty homes and provides a transparent approach to improvement planning and scrutiny.

Progress reports will be made available and be published on the Council's website with any supporting documents.