

Empty Homes Strategy 2014 – 2017: Consultation Summary Feedback

Total responses: 79

Method of feedback	Number of responses
Online consultation portal	72
Email	7

Feedback provided from	Number of responses
Parish/Town Councils	9
Shropshire Council Officers	2
Housing Association	1
Individuals	67

Within the feedback survey, consultees were asked whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the following standard questions:-

Comments	Response
<p>Question 1) The Strategy clearly explains why time and money should be spent on bringing empty houses back into use</p> <p>In relation to this question only two respondents (2%) disagreed, no respondents strongly disagreed. 63 respondents (88%) either agreed or strongly agreed.</p> <p>One respondent said they didn't notice an explanation in the strategy for why properties become empty.</p> <p>One respondent was concerned that deeming a dwelling empty after a period of 6 months was questionable, but also acknowledged that properties detrimental to the local area need to be dealt with.</p> <p>One respondent could not find mention of what types of property are included in the strategy.</p> <p>One respondent commented that tied agricultural properties may be become empty due to reduction in agricultural workers and these properties may present access and rural character preservation issues.</p> <p>One respondent commented that the strategy does not mention what the scheme costs and questioned the value of the time and effort in relation to the outcomes.</p>	<p>There is a 'Why are homes empty?' paragraph in Section 2 of the strategy. It is thought this is sufficient for the purposes of this document.</p> <p>6 months is the nationally recognised trigger point for determining a long term empty property, it is felt appropriate to maintain a consistent approach.</p> <p>Section 2 states that the strategy's focus is privately owned properties; however properties owned by registered providers, the local authority or other organisations will also be dealt with as necessary.</p> <p>Empty Homes Officers work in close partnership with Conservation and Historic Environment colleagues to ensure that where possible the historic and rural character of properties and the areas they occupy are preserved, whilst also making them as accessible as possible.</p> <p>Empty Homes work is funded through New Homes Bonus (NHB) funding, a central government grant paid to the Council each year for increasing the number of homes in the county. Empty Homes work contributes to this. In 2012/13 £300,000 of NHB was made available for Empty Property Incentive Grants (EPIGs) in Market Drayton, and in 2013/14 £250,000 for grants</p>

	<p>in Oswestry. This funding was applied for internally, and will continue to be applied for every two years to allow the Empty Homes Action Zones and EPIGs to be delivered in more areas. If this funding should cease to be available, this would not alter the approach of the strategy, although EPIGs would no longer be available.</p> <p>The current and future targets in the strategy reflect resources presently available for Empty Homes work.</p>
<p>Question 2) Efforts should be focused on bringing houses back into use that have been empty for six months or more, with special focus on those that are assessed as Red in the RAG pointing system</p>	
<p>Only two respondents (2%) disagreed with this, no respondents strongly disagreed. 63 respondents (90%) agreed or strongly agreed with the approach in this question.</p> <p>One felt that the RAG system is a complicated admin system, the other felt that the strategy did not explain how a property would be assessed as 'red'.</p> <p>One respondent commented that demolition of properties can sometimes allow for better infrastructure.</p> <p>One respondent asked if properties which are likely to become long term empty could be identified sooner.</p>	<p>It is necessary to have a transparent and consistent way of assessing and prioritising properties in order to target resources at the most problematic cases. The RAG system is felt to be the most effective and appropriate way of achieving this. The criteria which would cause a property to fall into the Red, Amber or Green categories are clearly defined in Appendix 6 of the strategy.</p> <p>In returning empty properties to use the most appropriate action is not always to reinstate the existing structure. It is a key aim of this strategy that housing provision is increased, however where demolition and rebuilding is the most appropriate course of action this would be supported.</p> <p>Properties may stand empty for short periods of time for many reasons including renovation, the probate process or whilst they are being sold. In general this will not exceed a period of 6 months and intervening in cases such as this would not be considered an appropriate use of resources. For properties which are not long term empty the Empty Homes Officers are still able to offer advice and assistance with returning the property to use as quickly as possible.</p>
<p>Question 3) The approach, of beginning by providing information and advice, then looking at enforcement options should this not be successful in returning a property to use, is a good approach to take</p>	
<p>60 respondents (86%) agreed or strongly agreed with this approach. In general they felt that advice and assistance is an important first step but that enforcement options should be utilised where necessary. Some commented that enforcement options should be clearly outlined to owners from the outset.</p> <p>Several respondents felt that enforcement must be</p>	<p>It is strongly felt that offering empty property owners the opportunity to return their property to use voluntarily, with the advice and assistance of the Empty Homes Officers is the most effective first step. Where owners decline this offer of assistance or do not respond, alternative options, including enforcement, are made clear to them.</p> <p>The Council is currently developing its approach to the</p>

<p>seen as a real threat and not just a 'paper tiger' that owners feel will never happen.</p> <p>Two (2%) respondents strongly disagreed with this approach but did not make any comment about why.</p>	<p>use of various enforcement options in relation to empty property. Whilst enforcement is never a first port of call it is recognised that it is an important tool in empty property work, and we are currently developing a consistent approach to how these powers are used to ensure they are effective and taken seriously.</p>
<p>Question 4) A multi-agency and locality based initiative through Empty Homes Action Zones is a good approach</p>	
<p>56 respondents (80%) either agreed or strongly agreed with this approach. Five respondents (7%) disagreed, no respondents strongly disagreed.</p> <p>In general respondents felt that this was a positive approach, particularly where local jobs can be created and local organisations and groups are actively involved and supportive.</p> <p>The majority of comments expressing concern about the Action Zone approach raised concern that Action Zones will have resources focused on them at the expense of other areas in the county, and that there shouldn't be an over-focus on market towns at the expense of smaller communities and more rural areas.</p>	<p>Input and involvement from local residents, community groups and other bodies is recognised as crucial to the success of the Action Zones. The Empty Homes Officers work very closely with local members, community groups, residents and other local stakeholders whilst setting up the Action Zones and whilst they are active to ensure local needs and priorities are recognised and addressed.</p> <p>Action Zones are chosen based on level of housing need in an area and the prevalence of empty properties. For the first few Action Zones towns which have very high levels of these issues have been targeted. The importance of empty homes work in rural areas is recognised, and it is not the case that Action Zones will always be based in towns and more urban areas. As the approach progresses more rural areas may be considered. For areas which are not designated Action Zones focused work is still possible, and they are not overlooked by the Empty Homes Officers. Owners in all areas of the county will always be informed about external sources of funding which may become available.</p>
<p>Question 5) It is important to use the Empty Homes Strategy to maximise the number of affordable homes in the County</p>	
<p>65 of respondents (90%) either agreed or strongly agreed with this. The majority felt that affordable housing in Shropshire is important and much needed and that empty homes are a good way of providing it.</p> <p>Three respondents (4%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed. They commented that the number of empty homes being returned to use for affordable housing is quite low in comparison to the number of empty homes in Shropshire.</p>	<p>The targets set for returning empty properties to use, and creating residential dwellings from empty properties, reflect the current available resources. It is thought that whilst the provision of 100 affordable homes a year may seem quite low in comparison to the total number of empty properties, this is a valuable contribution to housing supply and provides much needed affordable housing for local people.</p>
<p>Question 6) The approach stated in the Strategy in regards to Monitoring and Reviewing of Shropshire Councils Empty Homes work, is a</p>	

<p>good approach.</p> <p>57 respondents (87%) agreed or strongly agreed with the monitoring and reviewing approach. They felt regularly reviewing the situation was a positive approach, and that the targets are a sound starting point and not too aggressive.</p> <p>2 respondents (2%) disagreed, no respondents strongly disagreed.</p> <p>The majority of comments from respondents highlighted a concern that monitoring and reviewing the strategy added a layer of bureaucracy which may detract from carrying out the actual work of the strategy. Although some acknowledged the need to demonstrate responsible use of public funding.</p> <p>One respondent commented that the question didn't need a response as it is rhetorical.</p>	<p>Monitoring and reviewing the strategy is necessary to ensure that it is realistic and in line with current resources and available funding.</p> <p>Return to use and creation of dwelling figures need to be continuously monitored in order to ensure that on-going work is meeting the expectations set out in the strategy and the best possible use is being made of public funding. Realistically this is not a lengthy or particularly time consuming process and should not detract from carrying out the work outlined in the strategy.</p> <p>All the feedback comments were posed in the form of statements rather than direct questions. They are not rhetorical, rather offered respondents a wider range of responses relating to the extent to which they agreed with the statement, rather than being limited to a yes or no answer.</p>
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In addition, consultees were invited to give any additional comments on the Strategy.

Comments and officer responses to the numbered questions are detailed below:-

General Comments

Comment	Response
<p>The scoring system for categorisation under the RAG scheme does not yet give any bandings indicating which category a particular property might fall into. This suggests that the bands are subjective rather than prescriptive. The strategy also falls short of stating when enforcement action will be employed where incentives have demonstrably failed. The Council needs to commit to enforcement action in some cases and allocate funds as necessary.</p>	<p>At the time the draft strategy was put out for consultation the exact number of points a property would need to score to fall into each of the RAG bands had not been fully established. This is because it was felt important to test a number of cases through the RAG system to ensure that the points for each band were fair and representative of the type of action required for the properties in each band. This was to ensure that the system is consistent rather than subjective. The points have now been decided and the ranges for each band included in Appendix 6 of the strategy. None of the scoring criteria or types of action to be taken for properties in each category were changed as part of this.</p> <p>Stating a single approach or threshold for when enforcement action will be taken is not possible due to the varying and individual nature of each property and situation. It is recognised that enforcement action is a necessary and important tool in some cases and where other incentives have demonstrably failed appropriate alternative action will be considered, including enforcement.</p>

<p>The strategy mentioned the use of funding from the National Empty Homes loans fund, but this seems to be withdrawn as far as I can see, I found this a bit disconcerting.</p>	<p>At the time the draft strategy was put out for consultation the National Empty Homes Loan Fund (NEHLF) was active. However shortly after this on 30th June 2014 we received notification that the scheme had been withdrawn. Reference to the NEHLF has now been removed from the strategy.</p>
<p>Concerns that financial assistance available is too little in a large number of cases. Time too is of the essence - a much quicker process would be desirable.</p>	<p>The Council aim to make the best possible use of the funding made available for this work. In the Empty Homes Action Zones there are two types of grant available. £5000 grants for properties which require lower levels of work to bring them up to a good standard, and £negotiable grant, which do not have a funding limit on them, to assist in larger scale projects where properties may be in a poorer state of repair and require more work to return them to use.</p> <p>Applications for funding and the process to get projects underway is a fast and efficient process. Empty Homes Officers are very aware that time is of the essence and make every effort to work with owners to ensure that projects are not delayed through unnecessary processes.</p>
<p>A refreshing approach and the document is very clear to read.</p>	<p>Every effort was made to ensure that the strategy is clear, concise and easy to navigate, providing necessary information in a direct and easily understandable way.</p>
<p>How is it funded?</p>	<p>Empty Homes work is funded through New Homes Bonus, a central government grant paid to the Council each year for the provision of new and returned to use housing in the county.</p> <p>The New Homes Bonus is paid each year for 6 years. It is based on the amount of extra Council Tax revenue raised for new-build homes, conversions and long-term empty homes brought back into use. There is also an extra payment for providing affordable homes.</p>
<p>Waiting until 6 months seems a long time before offering any sort of help at all. Also I could not find any mention directly of any policy about Council Tax on empty properties. I understand there are concessions that a rented property that stays empty for a short time (one month?) does not attract council tax and then attracts a reduced rate if still empty. I was expecting to find something in the document about this but it is not mentioned. Could there be some sort of incentive linked to taking action to get a property rented - maybe a period of a couple of months council tax free if property being renovated for rental.?</p>	<p>Nationally a long term empty property is defined as one which has been empty for 6 months or longer. It is felt appropriate to maintain this definition for Empty Homes work in Shropshire to remain consistent. Whilst financial assistance is aimed at long term empty properties, in the interest of targeting those likely to be most problematic, this does not mean that no assistance is available to owners of property empty for fewer than 6 months. Officers are very willing to offer advice and assistance on a range of issues to any owner of empty property.</p> <p>Ultimately Council Tax policy and therefore discounts are determined by Council Tax and empty homes work does not specifically influence this. Officers do however have a good working</p>

	<p>relationship with Council Tax colleagues and aim to work together to target empty property in the most appropriate way.</p> <p>Council Tax incentives to return properties to use are already in place. At present unoccupied and unfurnished properties receive a 1 month exemption and then a 25% discount for the next 5 months. This allows some time for renovation and improvement works to be carried out when full Council Tax is not payable. Since April 2014 new charging policies have been applied in respect of unoccupied and unfurnished properties. Where a property has been unoccupied and unfurnished for more than two years a Council Tax premium of 50% will be charged. (Effectively this means that properties that have been unoccupied and unfurnished for more than two years will pay 150% Council Tax).</p>
<p>This survey is not really going to give you any real info.... It seems to be confirming what you have already decided.</p>	<p>The survey questions were posed in the form of statements and respondents asked to what extent they agreed with them. The questions were posed in this way as it is felt they offer a wider range of responses, based on respondents opinions, rather than limited yes or no answers. The questions did not confirm any pre-determined decisions as respondents had options to disagree with the statements and provide comments and suggestions.</p> <p>The draft strategy put out for consultation was the Council's proposed approach to dealing with empty property; it was not a final or adopted version. All of the feedback and comments provided by respondents has been analysed and taken into consideration. Changes and amendments have been made to the strategy accordingly (details of which can be found in the appendices of this report). It is this amended version which will be put forward for formal adoption.</p>
<p>The broad principles of the strategy are good but will be irrelevant if SC is not prepared to invest resources enforcing actions where no positive cooperation or response is received. They must realise that in rural areas one long term empty property can cause as much distress and waste of resources as those in the action zones. Indeed in small rural communities it can be much more acute regarding residents fears and blight on the community. Comments made by officers of the council that its not cost effective to pursue properties in small rural communities and the compulsory purchase or investment in one off affordable house are not efficient as they require extra infrastructure support such as school transport should be weighed against the distress these properties cause the community.</p>	<p>It is recognised that in certain situations enforcement action will be necessary, and resources will be invested in this where appropriate.</p> <p>Officers are very aware that in smaller and more rural communities a single empty property can be as much a blight as higher volumes in more built up areas. For this reason each case is considered individually, with consideration for its specific set of circumstances, including its setting and surroundings. No options are immediately ruled out for any property, and Officers will follow the process described in the strategy in order to direct an appropriate amount of resources to the case and find the most suitable solution.</p>

<p>The strategy of bringing empty homes into use is worthwhile. However, I hope that the money spent is cost-effective in these difficult financial times and that there is not unnecessary money spent on personnel in offices making reports and 'pushing paper' etc. rather being out in the field making a difference! Too often, it seems to me these days, too much time is spent on the paperwork rather than actually working out in the field. You must be careful that the demands of the necessary recording of the situation, does not financially outweigh the gain at the end.</p>	<p>By its nature empty homes work demands that Officers are familiar with the areas they work in, and spend a suitable amount of time in the field. The processes managed by Empty Homes Officers are designed to be effective and efficient, therefore minimising the amount of time taken up by paper work, allowing for time to be dedicated to the practical elements of the work.</p>
<p>I have read the report and found the principal aims to be reasonable, helpful to contribute to housing needs, supportive towards people living near empty property and financially supportive via grants. The document provides a positive approach to bringing empty properties back into more constructive use.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>Every effort is needed to increase the number of affordable homes available. Comparing the need with the rate of provision shows that some people will have to wait a very long time.</p>	<p>Demand for affordable housing in Shropshire is high, and in some areas the wait can be longer than others. The Empty Homes Strategy sets out how empty homes work can target resources at those areas with the highest demand for affordable housing, and also high levels of empty property, so that the homes returned to use through this work can have the biggest possible impact on provision of affordable housing in Shropshire.</p>
<p>A good report. All aspects taken into consideration. It seems to me that the whole idea and plan is really important. But it is going to be very difficult to have many successful outcomes. Public money well spent on a project such as this. Good luck.</p>	<p>As outlined in the strategy, empty homes work is challenging for a variety of reasons. However we are achieving many successful outcomes across the county and hope that this strategy will support the achievement of many more.</p>
<p>I believe that the interest rate for the loan is too high. It's probable that the owner of an empty home has already looked into the costs of renovation and possibly cannot afford to do it. A reduction in the loan rate should be considered to around 2.5% max.</p>	<p>The National Empty Homes Loan Fund (NEHLF) was a national scheme developed by central government, administered by the Empty Homes Agency and Ecology Building Society. Shropshire Council chose to participate in the scheme in order to offer the widest possible range of options for bringing empty homes back into use; however the Council had no input into setting the terms or interest rate for the loans.</p> <p>At the time the draft strategy was put out for consultation the NEHLF was active. However shortly after this on 30th June 2014 we received notification that the scheme had been withdrawn. Reference to the NEHLF has now been removed from the strategy.</p>
<p>I welcome the strategy, but would like to see more action in my ward where there are long term empty properties that have not been returned to use for 10 or so years. It's very frustrating for neighbours to live next to a property that's going to wrack and ruin, and no one can understand why these homes aren't being put to good use. I worry that the zoning concept will deprioritise action in areas that are not included within a zone. Affordable housing is needed everywhere in the county, and I'm not sure what is gained through the</p>	<p>The Council welcome reports of empty properties directly to the Empty Homes Team, who will deal with the case following the process set out in the strategy. Available funding is limited, and the decision to introduce Empty Homes Action Zones was taken in order to allow targeted use of resources in areas which are currently worst affected by empty property, and also have high demand for affordable housing. As long as funding continues to be available a new zone will be chosen on an annual</p>

zoning scheme.	basis and funding will be available in different areas of the county in line with this. This does not mean that other areas of the county are deprioritised. The strategy sets out how all empty property will be dealt with, and the RAG system provides a system of prioritising action dependent on a variety of criteria, as set out in Appendix 6 of the strategy.
Seems to be an excellent policy	Noted
There should be protection for tenants so it cannot be used for private landlords to bring properties up to standard who then evict tenants to get a profit from council money.	Tenanted properties are not empty and therefore would not be eligible for funding dedicated to returning properties which have been empty for 6 months or longer. In addition, Empty Property Incentive Grants are provided with certain conditions attached, one of which is that once renovated the property must remain occupied as per the individual terms of the agreed grant, or the grant may become repayable. Grants are lodged as a land charge on the property in order to help monitor this, and tenants of grant funded properties are asked to register with Shropshire HomePoint so the Council will be made aware if a tenancy ends and the property is potentially empty.
While well meant it does seem to be a tortuous and costly way of going about achieving something which is being sold as a benefit to the customer - the people of Shropshire. The amount of time and internal cost overhead incurred in getting to the point of actually doing something is remarkable in its longevity.	The processes involved in dealing with empty property have been designed to be as streamlined and efficient as possible. Empty property work can be challenging, and in certain circumstances it can take some time to establish all the facts, locate owners and see the appropriate action being taken. The benefit to the customer is that problematic, unsightly and wasteful empty properties are brought back into use in a way which benefits local people in need of affordable housing. As with any area of work overheads are unavoidable, however it is thought that these are kept to a minimum with empty homes work and maximum possible resources are directed at funding to return properties to use.
Empty homes are a waste when there is a huge waiting list. However preference should be given to local people when filling them with residents, not those who just turn up in this county	There is a local lettings policy incorporated in the conditions of Empty Property Incentive Grants (EPIGs), amongst other criteria this policy stipulates that priority will be given in the first instance to applicants with a strong local connection to the area the property is in, either through current or past residence and/or current employment (paid/unpaid) or training. This lettings policy is in place to ensure that priority for accommodation brought forward through the EPIGs is given to local people in need of affordable housing.
All cases should be seen as individual.	<p>As the strategy outlines, properties can be empty for a wide range of reasons and have various complications. For this reason all cases are treated as individual and their specific circumstances taken into account.</p> <p>The RAG rating system provides consistency in the way properties are assessed and prioritised, but this</p>

	does not mean that there is necessarily the same solution to each case.
Much seems to depend on trained and knowledgeable council officers, and it is literally a waste of everybody's time if this is affected by the current policy of staff reduction.	At present there are two dedicated and experienced Empty Homes Officers carrying out empty property work in Shropshire. There are no plans at present to reduce these resources.
Important to take account of complexities around changes of use, changing family size, affordability, rural and urban character, provision of adequate services including public transport, internet, care of elderly/disabled, sewerage and water supply etc. While not confining all development to larger existing settlements.	The Empty Homes Officers are experienced in managing the complexities of empty homes cases and their different requirements. The team works closely with other Council departments and external organisations to ensure these issues are taken into account.
Getting empty housing back into use should be a top priority. Increasing Council tax on these properties is a good way of helping to bring them back into use. If these are brought back into use then less new housing needs to be built.	Shropshire Council prioritises empty homes work, as the contribution it is able to make to the provision of housing and regeneration of communities in the county is fully recognised. Following changes in legislation, from April 2014 Council Tax for properties empty for 2 years or longer was increased to 150% across Shropshire, to incentivise their return to use.
Empty homes are a waste of services that Shropshire provide, as streets are cleaned and lights used but no income is generated by way of rates, they also demoralise an area and encourage vandalism which in turn cost the community in so many ways.	Empty property is a wasted resource in many ways, as Section 3 of the strategy outlines. The strategy is designed to help tackle this.
Spend time changing the minds and concepts of local agents and landlords	Officers aim to work closely with all stakeholders in empty property cases, including property agents and landlords. As part of this we are currently developing a relationship with the Shropshire Branch of the National Landlords Association to better understand how empty homes work can effectively support landlords.
I would just like to point out that there may also be nature conservation, heritage issues, etc. that may need to be taken into account. Therefore any remedial works that are encouraged or undertaken need to ensure they do not compromise a historic asset or affect priority species or habitats. Empty homes and surrounding land may have been colonised by legally protected species. While it may be laudable to provide additional housing it would still be an offence if these species were disturbed or killed.	The Empty Homes Officers are always mindful of the setting and situation of an empty property. We work closely with colleagues in the Council including Conservation and Natural Environment Officers to ensure these issues are managed and the relevant legislation is adhered to.
I can't stress how important I feel this area of work is. People who own multiple properties and let them sit empty to rot are simply selfish morons who deserve to lose those properties.	As outlined in Section 3 of the strategy, properties can become empty for a multitude of reasons, and sometimes these are very complex. The Empty Homes Officers aim to support and enable owners of empty properties to address any problems and return their properties to use voluntarily. Where this does not appear to be happening there are other options open to the Council, including enforcement.
It is hard to find somewhere reasonable to live that I can afford so if this helps young people like me to rent or buy a house that would be good	A key aim of the strategy is to increase the provision of good quality affordable housing across the county.

<p>I was a Steering Group member which produced the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan, the current empty homes strategy was used as part of our evidence base to produce development targets for Much Wenlock. There is a high profile empty home with possible affordable homes development land attached. the council has shilly shallied a little too long on this one especially as the community is now embarking on a community led affordable housing scheme.</p>	<p>Officers are very aware of this case and are currently working with the owner of the property to reach a solution.</p> <p>We would welcome the opportunity to work with the community in Much Wenlock on the community led affordable housing scheme.</p>
<p>Encourage each Town and Parish Council to bring to their Agenda once a year all the properties they know of that have been empty for over a year and forward this to the Empty Homes Team. Not a formal survey just from local knowledge. As I found by telephoning the team one in my central small town location has been empty for over 10 years but not recently recorded. Well maintained externally and presumably all taxes paid it has fallen under the radar but its vacant state is well known to local people. As a good size two/three bedroom terrace property it could have been looked after by a housing association and let to a local family for all this time whilst the owner decided what to do with it. (There are a number of older properties in the street already looked after by a housing association)</p>	<p>Local knowledge and reporting of empty properties is an important source of information for the Empty Homes Team. The Empty Homes Officers already work in this way with some Town and Parish Councils, and would welcome the opportunity to extend this to others.</p> <p>The majority of information held on empty properties is gained from Council Tax records and reporting. If the owner of the property has the property registered as something other than unoccupied with Council Tax and is maintaining the property to a level which doesn't cause people to report it, empty properties can go unnoticed. We would encourage anyone who is aware of an empty property to report it to the Empty Homes Team. Once properties have been reported the Empty Homes Officers can make contact with the owners and explore options for bringing them back into use, including possible management by a housing association.</p>
<p>For a successful implementation of this strategy, there will be a need for the LA to work closer with the local parish and town councils. Shropshire remains highly diverse county and local knowledge will be vital to its success.</p>	<p>See above response</p>
<p>Page 5, data on housing register is out of date (December 2013) Page 11, should refer to registered providers rather than housing associations (as on page 4). There appears to be concentrations of empty homes in Oswestry and Bridgnorth, which is where ST&R Housing manage over 4,000 properties on behalf of Shropshire Council so we would very much like to be involved with this.</p>	<p>This data has now been updated and the suggested amendments made on Page 11. (The term Housing Association was originally used due to it being widely understood in layman's terms and the Strategy is aimed at all, including those outside the area of knowledge.) The Empty Homes Team will contact ST&R Housing to discuss how we can work together in the areas ST&R operate.</p>
<p>Broseley Town Council heartily commend this well-written, multi-strand strategy and section 3 admirably sets out why having such a strategy is so important. We in Broseley know too well how an unoccupied home can have various damaging effects on a neighbourhood causing a great deal of frustration and resentment in a time of housing shortage. Appendix 1 shows the extent to which empty homes are a problem in this area. We urge Shropshire Council to ensure that this strategy is adequately resourced (particularly officer time) and does not become another paper aspiration.</p>	<p>Some of the work outlined in the strategy is already underway and there is every intention to ensure that it continues in further Empty Homes Action Zones and across the rest of the County.</p> <p>At present there are two dedicated and experienced Empty Homes Officers carrying out empty property work in Shropshire. There are no plans at present to reduce these resources.</p>
<p>Bridgnorth Town Council support the idea of bringing empty homes into use.</p>	<p>Noted</p>

On behalf of Munslow Parish Council I have read the strategy and discussed it at a parish meeting. Briefly, we welcome the strategy and its intentions and hope that it will provide the basis for bringing into use empty property throughout the county.	Noted
Montford Parish Council fully SUPPORTS this sensible initiative in principle	Noted