



**EAST LINDSEY**  
**EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY**

**2014 – 2018**

## **Contents**

Executive Summary	2
Introduction	3
The definition of an empty home	3
Empty homes and the national perspective	3
Empty homes and the local perspective	4
Why do homes become empty?	5
How are empty homes identified	6
Statistical analysis	6
Current options available	9
Vision for empty homes (Where do we want to be?)	14
Strategic objectives of the Strategy	14
Action Plan	16
Appendix 1 – Empty homes process map	17
Appendix 2 – Empty homes scoring matrix	18
Appendix 3 – Council tax classifications for empty homes	20

## Executive Summary

Empty Homes have been at the forefront of Government Policy for the last few years and a number of new policies have been put in place to help bring empty homes back in to use. Incentives include, the New Homes Bonus and the Homes and Communities Empty Homes fund.

Two types of empty homes are recorded: the total number of empty homes and long term empty homes. Long term empty homes are those which have been vacant for more than 6 months. In East Lindsey, at 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013, there were 1880 empty homes and 1027 of these had been vacant for more than 6 months.

East Lindsey has a higher percentage of empty homes (1.5%) compared to the national average (1%); however, the overall number in East Lindsey has significantly reduced over recent years. Between 2009 and 2013 the number of empty homes in East Lindsey has decreased by 1,101 properties.

East Lindsey District Council recognises that there remains a high number of empty homes within the District. The purpose of the Empty Homes Strategy 2014-18 is to identify the reasons why homes are empty and the mechanisms to assist home owners to bring their properties back in to use.

The East Lindsey Empty Homes Strategy identifies the options that are currently in place for empty property owners and identifies targets to reduce the number of empty homes in the District.

The vision of the East Lindsey Empty Homes Strategy 2014-18 is to:  
"reduce year on year the number of empty homes."

The key strategic objectives of the Strategy are to:

- Establish a positive relationship with owners of empty homes and to proactively promote the options for bringing their properties back into viable use.
- Raise awareness of empty property issues and increase public understanding of empty homes across the District.
- Increase the supply of affordable housing and reduce homelessness.
- Reduce the potential negative impact of empty properties on our communities.
- Ensure that up to date and accurate monitoring of the number of empty homes is carried out to maximise reward grants and Council Tax income.

There will be a toolkit available across the District which contains a range of options, tailored to meet the needs of empty property owners, to facilitate a reduction in the number of empty homes.

## Introduction

The East Lindsey Empty Homes Strategy sets out how the Council intends to tackle the issue of empty homes during the next four years. The purpose of the Strategy is to ensure that the number of empty homes in East Lindsey is reduced and kept to a minimum, and to identify new opportunities to encourage owners to bring them back into use.

Empty homes are a wasted resource, both financially and in terms of housing provision. Bringing empty homes back into occupation reduces property deterioration and associated crime. However it is acknowledged that a level of property vacancy is required for the housing market to function, and some properties will be uneconomical to return to use in the current economic climate.

## The definition of an empty home

*"A long term empty home is a residential dwelling which has been unoccupied for 6 months."*

Privately owned long term empty homes are the focus of this strategy.

## Empty Homes and the National Perspective

The most recent Council Tax statistics (October 2013) show there are 480,322 empty homes in England. Almost half of these, around 230,000, have been empty for six months or more. Bringing these homes back into use would meet the government's estimate of housing need for approximately one year, or would equate to two years' worth of new builds at the current rate of development. The majority of empty homes in England are in the private sector with owners ordinarily possessing just one or two properties. Often they are rented homes that have fallen into disrepair; sometimes the owner has inherited the property. In many cases the owner lacks the funds or the skills to repair and manage the property.

In the last decade there have been many large regeneration schemes that have involved emptying homes in preparation for refurbishment or demolition. In the last four years falling house prices, restrictions on borrowing money and reduced government funding have caused many of these schemes to stall or even be abandoned. There are also many developments of new flats in towns and cities that have high vacancy rates, some owned by investors who may be waiting for rental prices to pick up; others, never sold, are incomplete, or the development has been abandoned.

### 2011-15 HCA Funding Programme

In the Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010, the Government announced £100m to bring empty homes back in to use. £70m of this programme is being coordinated as part of the HCA's 2011-15 Affordable Homes Programme and the remaining £30m has been made available to community and voluntary groups and is being co-ordinated by Tribal Education. The aim of the

programme is to bring at least 3,300 empty homes back in to use nationally by March 2015.

Further funding was allocated in 2012 to enable another 5,600 empty homes to be brought back in to use.

### New Homes Bonus

In 2011, the Government introduced the New Homes Bonus. This is paid to local councils for increasing the number of homes in use in their area. The New Homes Bonus is calculated on a number of different elements which are made up of:

- Net additional housing
- Empty Homes Brought back in to use
- Additional payment for affordable housing units (including traveller pitches)

The New Homes Bonus is paid each year for 6 years and is calculated based on the Council Tax which would be generated from the additional properties.

The empty homes element of the New Homes Bonus is calculated using the total number of long term empty homes submitted as part of the Council Tax return to the Government (CTB1 form) compared to the figure submitted the previous year. Payment is made per property for any reduction in the total number. If there has been an increase or the number remains the same, no New Homes Bonus is payable for empty homes.

## **Empty Homes and the Local Perspective**

### ➤ East Lindsey Corporate Strategy

The Council's Corporate Strategy identifies housing as a key focus and has a strategic objective to *"develop and nurture the character and viability of our towns, villages and rural areas."* As part of this, the Council states that *"we will... Seek to maximise external resources to support our partners in addressing the housing needs of our community."*

### ➤ East Lindsey Housing Strategy 2013-18

The Council's Housing Strategy identifies the issues relating to empty homes in the District and has a target to *"Bring 15 empty properties per year back in to use"* between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.

### ➤ East Lindsey Survey of Empty Homes 2012

A survey of empty property owners in East Lindsey was carried out in 2012 using information supplied by Council Tax.

The survey highlighted the following key points:

- 26% of empty homes were ready for occupation and 6% just required decorating.

- 42% of empty properties were in a poor state of repair and would require major work to bring them back in to use.
- 31% of respondents wanted to sell their empty property as soon as possible

A number of recommendations were made as part of this survey including “explore the feasibility of providing a scheme to assist property owners find a buyer for their property” and “look at the feasibility of providing a decoration/repairs allowance” to assist property owners with the repairs to the property.

## **Why do homes become empty?**

There are many reasons why homes become and remain empty for long periods. Some of the reasons include:

- Between a change in occupant.
- Undergoing modernisation, repair or conversion.
- Awaiting demolition.
- Repossessed.
- Awaiting probate.
- Owner moved into care.
- Newly completed but not yet occupied.
- Owned by a charity with restrictions on tenants.
- Unoccupied annexes.
- Trustee is in bankruptcy.
- Unfurnished and empty.
- Property kept empty for use by the owner or family member.

In some cases the owner of the empty home is already addressing the situation and there is no reason for the Council to be involved. A certain number of empty homes are inevitable as a result of issues such as the death of the resident where legal proceedings are underway. Furthermore, the presence of a number of empty homes is critical in ensuring that the housing market functions efficiently, allowing residential mobility and redevelopment or improvement to take place. In addition, it is important to note that the economic climate and the housing market have a significant impact on both the scale and nature of empty homes.

## **How are empty homes identified?**

The main source of data for the location of empty homes and their owners is identified through Council Tax records requested under section 85 of the Local Government Act 2003. This permits the address of the empty home, lead liable name, address and contact details to be used for the identification of vacant dwellings and taking steps to bring them back into use.

In addition, local authorities are also alerted to empty homes via:

- Members of the public.
- Neighbours.
- Local authority website.

- Local authority departments.
- External partnership agencies.

In order to manage resources more effectively , the Council will prioritise which empty homes are to be targeted through the Empty Homes Strategy. A balanced approach will therefore be adopted where some resources are directed towards those homes which can be brought back into use relatively easily, to those which require more intensive involvement, such as detailed negotiations or the use of statutory powers where necessary and proportionate.

## Statistical analysis

### ❖ Total number of empty homes

<b>Empty Homes Statistics</b>	<b>Total number of Dwellings on Council Tax valuation list</b>	<b>Total number of Empty Homes</b>	<b>% Empty</b>	<b>Privately Owned – 6 Months Vacant (Long term empty)</b>	<b>% long term empty</b>
<b>England</b>	23,311,646	480,322	2.1%	232,668	1.0%
<b>East Midlands</b>	2,000,510				
<b>Lincolnshire</b>	328,940	7,446	2.26%	3,660	1.1%
<b>East Lindsey District Council</b>	66,467	1880	2.8%	1,027	1.5%
<b>Boston Borough Council</b>	28,692	404	1.4%	265	0.9%
<b>City of Lincoln Council</b>	44,016	1,080	2.45%	468	1.06%
<b>North Kesteven District Council</b>	48,518	887	1.8%	440	0.9%
<b>South Holland District Council</b>	38,996	689	1.77%	294	0.75%
<b>South Kesteven District Council</b>	60,870	1,261	2.07%	448	0.7%
<b>West Lindsey District Council</b>	41,379	1,245	3.0%	718	1.7%

\*Source: CTB1 Form 2013 – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/council-taxbase-2013-in-england>

In England, 2.1% of the housing stock is empty, of which, 1% has been empty for more than 6 months. This is compared with 2.26%, and 1.1% over 6 months across Lincolnshire, which shows that the County has a slightly higher average than the national picture.

East Lindsey has the second highest percentage of empty homes across the county with 2.8%. It is unclear why the number for East Lindsey is so high but it is possible that the rural nature of the District could have an impact on it.

### ❖ Empty Homes - reduction

The table below shows the total number of empty homes recorded in October each year by Council Tax and reported to Central Government. These figures form part of the calculation for the Government's New Homes Bonus.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>East Lindsey</b>	2981	2858	2852	2860	1880

\*Source: CTB1 Form - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/council-taxbase-2013-in-england>

There is no definitive reason why the number of empty homes has decreased by such a large figure since 2012. However it could be assumed that the Government drive to reduce empty homes, (including the changes to Council Tax charges) and a greater accuracy in data cleansing could be partially responsible.

### ❖ Long term empty homes - reduction

Long term empty homes are classed as properties which have been vacant for more than 6 months

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>East Lindsey</b>	1268	1259	1271	1248	1027

\*Source: CTB1 Form - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/council-taxbase-2013-in-england>

### ❖ Empty homes and housing need

The table below shows the number of long term empty homes compared to the number of households on the Council's Housing Register who are in a reasonable preference category. 'Reasonable preference' is defined in the Housing Allocations Policies of each respective Council.

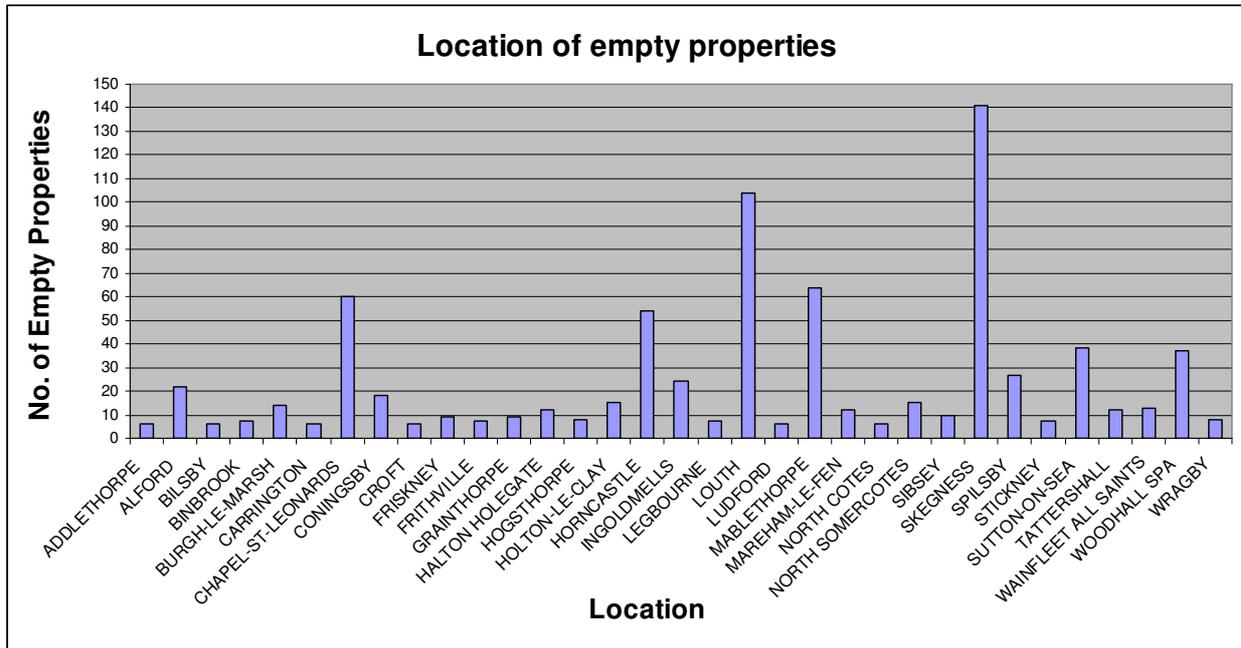
<b>Long term empty homes &amp; people with a housing need – 2013</b>	<b>Privately Owned – 6 Months Vacant*<sub>1</sub></b>	<b>Reasonable preference figures *<sub>2</sub></b>
<b>East Lindsey District Council</b>	1027	2535

\*1 Source: CTB1 Form - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/council-taxbase-2013-in-england>

\*2 Source – ELASH 2013

❖ **Location of empty homes**

The charts below show the location of the highest concentrations of empty homes in East Lindsey.



A number of locations with 5 or less empty homes have not been recorded on the above chart.

❖ **Empty homes brought back in to use**

The table below shows the number of homes that have been brought back into use as a result of assistance from the Council .

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14 (up to 31/12/13)
East Lindsey District Council	N/A	64	57

**Current options available to the Council**

➤ **Proactive support to bring properties back into use.**

ELDC’s preferred approach as set out in this Strategy is to proactively support property owners to bring empty homes back into use rather than use the legal powers that are available to them.

By entering into an agreement with Capacity Grid, the Council can identify properties which are classed as empty by Council Tax but are actually occupied. Having identified the owner, the Empty Homes Officer will help them to identify the options open to them.

❖ Council Tax charges on empty homes

The Local Government Finance Act 2003 provides Local Authorities with discretionary powers to raise the amount of council tax charged on empty homes. This is to discourage property owners from leaving them empty for long periods of time.

East Lindsey District Council incentivises home owners to improve empty homes and from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013, properties that have been unoccupied and unfurnished for longer than 2 years are charged 150% council tax.

The table below shows the current Council Tax charges in East Lindsey

	<b>East Lindsey*</b>
Empty and unfurnished (Class C exemption)	100% discount for 1 month then 0% discount (100% charge) for the remaining period
Empty and unfurnished and in need of major repairs or is undergoing structural alterations to make it habitable (Class A Exemption)	25% discount for up to 12 months then 0% discount (100% charge) for the remaining period
Second homes	10% discount if the property is furnished and it is a 2 <sup>nd</sup> home, holiday home or is unoccupied between tenants.
Long term empty homes (6 months to 2 years)	0% discount (100% charge)
Properties unoccupied and unfurnished for longer than 2 years	50% premium (150% charge)

\* *These discounts are discretionary and dependent on circumstances*

In addition, ELDC can and will use a range of other powers as appropriate to reduce the number of empty homes.

➤ **Statutory Powers for Empty Homes**

❖ Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)

A CPO is made where the owner of a troublesome property makes little or no effort to rectify problems associated with a property, or to have it occupied and refuses to co-operate with the voluntary measures offered by the local authority. CPO's can be carried out under the Housing Act 1984 Section 17 and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Section 226. The power can also be used where the owner of a property is untraceable. A CPO permits the local authority to purchase a property from the owner to dispose of as they wish. These procedures can be costly and take a long time; careful consideration of the pros and cons is given before their use.

❖ Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO)

The Housing Act 2004 introduced the EDMO for properties that have been vacant for more than of 2 years where negotiation has been unsuccessful in returning it back into use.

If the owner of a property makes no effort or cannot demonstrate having a plan to return a property back to use, the local authority can apply for an Interim EDMO which lasts for 1 year. During this time the local authority can enter the property to identify and design schedules of work; they can also let the property, should it be in reasonable condition, with the owner’s consent. During this time voluntary measures should still be encouraged. If these fail, the local authority can then apply for a Final EDMO; this involves an enforced lease on a property allowing work to be carried out to make the property inhabitable. The property is then rented out and the income will pay for the works carried out and any management costs. The use of these measures is at the local authorities’ discretion, and they require the approval of the Residential Property Tribunal. Throughout the order, the owner retains ownership of the property.

❖ Enforced Sale/Order for Sale

Enforced Sale is where the local authority, under the Law of Property Act 1925, Section 103, can force the sale of a property to recover a debt registered as a land charge. This debt may have occurred as a result of works completed in default, or a court- imposed charging order placed on the property following non payment of Council Tax. During the process, the owner can halt proceedings by paying the money owed, and the land charge is removed. With this procedure the local authority never retains ownership of the property as it is sold directly into the open market.

❖ Other statutory powers

<b>Statutory Powers</b>	<b>Legislation</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>Dilapidated buildings or structures.</b>	Building Act 1984 Sections 77 and 78	Requires the owner to make the property safe (s77) or enable LA to take emergency action to make safe (s78).
	Housing Act 2004 Section 5	Where Category 1 hazards exist duty to take action.
<b>Unsecured properties where there is a risk it may be entered or suffer vandalism/arson etc.</b>	Building Act 1984 Section 79	Permits LA to fence off the property if dangerous, this can lead to a demolition notice.
	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982	Requires the owner to secure the property or allow LA to board up in

	Section 29	an emergency.
<b>Vermin (present or risk of attracting)</b>	Environmental Protection Act 1990 Section 80.	Used to cure vermin issues, remove waste where nuisance to someone else.
	Prevention of Damage by Pest Act 1949 – Section 4 & Public Health Act 1936 – Section 83	Requires the destruction of rats and mice or keeping land free from them.
	Public Health Act 1961 Section 34.	Requires owner to remove waste so that vermin not attracted to site.
<b>Unsightly land and property affecting the amenity of an area.</b>	Building Act 1984 Section 79.	Requires owner to take steps to address a property adversely affecting the amenity of an area through its disrepair.
	Clean Neighbourhoods Act 2005 & Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.	Requires owner to remove rubbish and clear graffiti.
	Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.	Empty listed building or building in conservation area that is falling into disrepair the LA can undertake works for their preservation.
	Public Health Act 1961 Section 34.	Requires owner to remove waste from the property.
	Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Section 215-219.	Requires owner to address unsightly land or external appearance of property.
<b>Protection from dangerous land.</b>	Highways Act 1980 Section 165.	Fencing off dangerous land.
<b>Sharing data from other local authority departments.</b>	Housing Act 1985 Section 237.	Use of information collected for other purposes in relation to section 1-4 of the Act.

	Local Government Act 2003 Section 85.	Permits the council tax department to share the addresses of empty properties, the owners name and contact details.
<b>Requiring information from an owner.</b>	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 Section 16.	Requiring information i.e. ownership details, from a person with an interest in a property.
<b>Powers of entry.</b>	Housing Act 2004 Section 239.	Permits LA officers to enter unoccupied premises or land to carry out inspections in relation to its statutory capacities.
<b>Demolition Orders.</b>	Housing Act 1985 Section 265.	Making demolition orders on a property where a category 1 hazard exists.

## Current options available to empty home owners in ELDC

This section provides details of the options which are currently available within East Lindsey to enable empty homes to be brought back in to use. The options available vary between areas because they are tailored to meet the specific needs of each area.

### ➤ **Private Sector Leasing Schemes**

#### ❖ Lincolnshire Rural Housing Association leasing scheme

Lincolnshire Rural Housing Association (LRHA) operates a leasing scheme for properties in rural locations which have been vacant for more than 6 months. The scheme operates in the following way:

- LRHA will lease the property from the owner for an agreed period (minimum of 5 years, up to 20 years);
- The property will be restored up to Decent Homes standard so it is ready to let;
- LRHA will find a suitable tenant with local connections, let and manage the property for the period of the lease;
- All repairs and maintenance will be carried out by LRHA at no cost to the owner;
- At the end of the lease period LRHA will hand the property back to the owner in good condition.

- The property owner will get a regular income from the lease of the property.

❖ Waterloo Housing Group leasing scheme

Waterloo Housing Group operates a similar scheme to Lincolnshire Rural Housing Association, covering the whole of the District, including the towns. As part of this scheme:

- Waterloo leases the property from the owner for a minimum of 6 years.
- Waterloo maintains, manages and insures the property during the term of the lease.
- Waterloo also carry out agreed works to bring the property up to a lettable standard. This could be worth several thousand pounds.
- The owner will be paid an agreed rent on a monthly basis which is based on the affordable rent less a deduction for management and maintenance.
- At the end of the lease, Waterloo returns the property back to the owner in good condition.

➤ **Loans**

❖ National Empty Homes Loan Fund

The National Empty Homes Loan Fund (NEHLF) is a partnership between the Empty Homes Agency, Ecology Building Society, central government and participating local authorities in England. It provides a loan of up to £15,000 to owners of empty homes, to help bring them back into affordable use. Loans are available for properties that have been empty for 6 months or more;

- Fixed interest rate of 5%
- Term of loan 5 years
- Repayable monthly by standing order
- Maximum loan amount £15,000
- Loan is subsequent (2<sup>nd</sup>) charge
- Loan is paid on completion of the loan application not the works
- Property must be let at an affordable rent

The Empty Homes Agency will check whether the owner is eligible for the scheme and if so will then send their details to Ecology Building Society.

➤ **Advice & Guidance**

❖ HM Revenue & Customs - VAT Discount for empty homes

Owners of empty homes can receive discount on their VAT for supplies to bring the empty property back in to use. Properties that have been empty for two years have a VAT reduction down to 5%. There is 0% VAT payable on properties that have been empty for over 10 years.

## Vision for empty homes (Where do we want to be?)

**“We will reduce year on year the number of empty homes in East Lindsey.”**

Target	Outcome	Resources and lead officer	By when
Bring 15 empty properties back in to use each year as a result of LA action	Reduction in the number of empty homes in East Lindsey	Within existing resources Empty Property Officer	Annually (Apr 14 – March 18)
Bring an additional 140 properties back in to use as a result of joint working with Capacity Grid.	Reduction in the number of empty homes in East Lindsey	15% of the first years NHB per property Empty Property Officer	December 2014
Research the potential for a purchase and repair scheme to bring empty homes back in to use	Reduction in the number of empty homes in East Lindsey	Within existing resources Empty Property Officer	September 2014
Publish a 'toolkit' of options available to bring homes back in to use	Increased knowledge and assistance for empty property owners	Within existing resources Empty Property Officer	July 2014

To support this, we will develop a toolkit available across the District which contains a range of options, tailored to meet the needs of empty property owners to enable a reduction in the number of empty homes

## Strategic Objectives

Despite a significant number of changes at a local and national level, 'empty homes' remains a high priority for East Lindsey. In order to go some way towards addressing the issue of empty homes across the District the following strategic objectives have been identified.

The 5 key strategic objectives of the East Lindsey Empty Homes Strategy are

- Establish a positive relationship with owners of empty homes and to proactively promote options to owners to facilitate bringing them back into viable use.
- Raise awareness of empty property issues and increase public understanding of empty homes across the District.
- Increase the supply of affordable housing and reduce homelessness.
- Reduce the potential negative impact of empty properties on our communities.
- Ensure that up to date and accurate monitoring of the number of empty homes is carried out to maximise reward grants and Council Tax income.

## Action Plan

- **Strategic objectives** - Establish a positive relationship with owners of empty homes and to proactively promote the options for bringing their properties back into viable use. AND Reduce the potential negative impact of empty properties on our communities.

Target	Outcome	Resources and lead officer	By when
Attend the Private Landlords Forum on a regular basis	An increased understanding of the needs of empty property owners	Within existing resources Empty Property Officer	Ongoing
Publish a 'toolkit' of options available to bring homes back in to use	Increased knowledge and assistance for empty property owners	Within existing resources Empty Property Officer	July 2014
Publish an approved contractors list for empty property owners	Increased knowledge and assistance for empty property owners	Within existing resources Empty Property Officer	August 2014

- **Strategic objective** - Raise awareness of empty property issues and increase public understanding of empty homes across the District.

Target	Outcome	Resources and lead officer	By when
Publicise the empty property scheme at least twice per year	Raised awareness of empty homes and the possible solutions available	Within existing resources Empty Property Officer	Annually (Apr 14 – March 18)

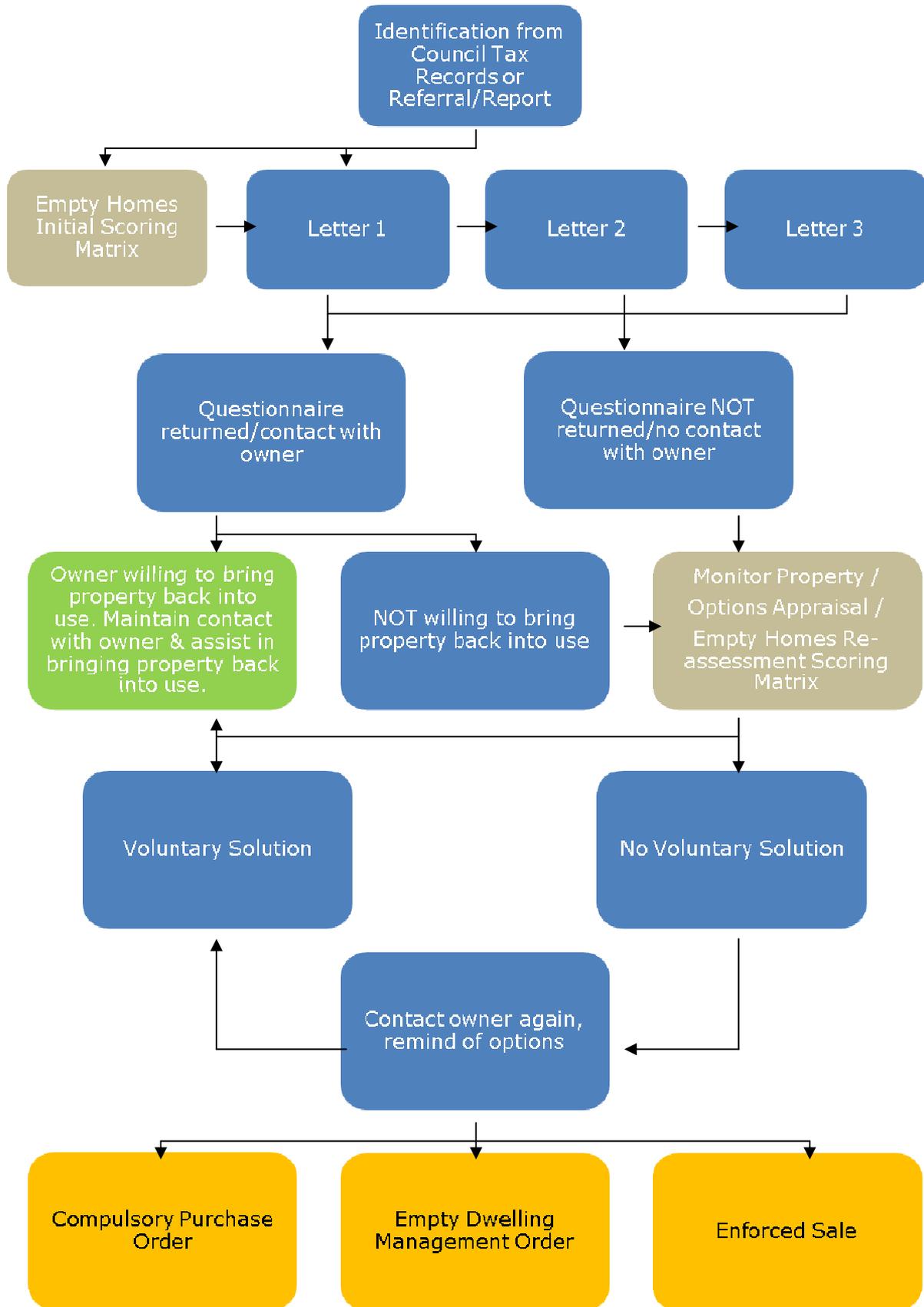
- **Strategic objective** - Increase the supply of affordable housing and reduce homelessness.

Target	Outcome	Resources and lead officer	By when
Work with Waterloo Housing Group to bring 10 empty homes back in to use as affordable housing	Increased affordable housing	£20,000 (Avg £2,000 per property) within existing resources Empty Property Officer	April 2013 – March 2015
Work with Lincs Rural Housing Association to bring 10 empty homes back in to use as affordable housing	Increased affordable housing	Within existing resources Empty property officer	April 2013 – March 2015

- **Strategic objective** - Ensure that up to date and accurate monitoring of the number of empty homes is carried out to maximise reward grants and Council Tax income.

<b>Target</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Resources and lead officer</b>	<b>By when</b>
Carry out a quarterly review of Council Tax empty property data	Accurate information on the number of empty homes in the District.	Within existing resources Empty property officer	Ongoing
Carry out annual research in to the needs of empty property owners	Accurate options available to encourage property owners to bring their property back in to use	Within existing resources Empty property officer	Between 1 <sup>st</sup> April and 30 <sup>th</sup> September annually
Purchase the BRE stock modelling data	Ensure accurate data on the condition of housing stock is available.	Within existing resources Team Leader - Private Sector Housing	July 2014

## Appendix 1 – Empty Homes Process Map



## Appendix 2 – Empty Homes Scoring Matrix

Identified empty homes will be risk assessed using the new scoring matrix to determine their priority and an appropriate course of action.

<b>Empty Homes Initial/Re-assessment Scoring Matrix</b>							
<b>Ref:</b>				<b>Address:</b>			
<b>Visit Date:</b>	/	/	<b>Time</b>	:			
<b>Property Type</b>	Flat in block			A	<b>Pictures</b>	Front	
	Flat above commercial			B		Rear	
	Detached house			C		Prospect	
	Semi detached house			D		Others (Condition)	
	End terrace house			E			
	Mid terrace house			F			
<b>Occupation/Vacancy</b>	Occupied			1	<b>Comments/Action:</b>		
	Vacant			2			
	Vacant for sale/let			3			
	Vacant being renovated			4			
	Unlicensed occupation			5			
<b>Question</b>				<b>Scale</b>		<b>Score</b>	
<b>Q1.</b>	Period Property Empty			5 years +	20		
				2-5 years	15		
				1-2 years	10		
				6-12 months	5		
<b>Q2.</b>	Property Appearance			Derelict	20		
				Major Disrepair	15		
				Poor	10		
				Acceptable	5		
<b>Q3.</b>	Garden Condition			Overgrown	10		
				Poor	5		
				Acceptable	0		
<b>Q4.</b>	Impact on Neighbourhood			Serious	15		
				Poor	10		
				Average	5		
				None	0		
<b>Q5.</b>	Accumulated Refuse/Litter			Action Required	10		
				Minor	5		
				None	0		
<b>Q6.</b>	Boarded Over Windows/Doors (Secure)			Requires Boarding	15		
				Boarded Up	10		
				No Boarding Required	0		
<b>Q7.</b>	Previous Local Authority Action			Yes	10		
				No	0		

<b>Q8.</b>	ASB/Crime & Disorder at Property	Major Minor None	10 5 0
<b>Q9.</b>	Complaints	3+ 1-2 None	10 5 0
<b>Q10.</b>	Location	Main Road Side Street/Estate Rural/Isolated	15 10 5
<b>Q11.</b>	Next Door is Empty	Left Property Right Property None	5 5 0
<b>Q12.</b>	Other Empty Homes on Street	Yes No	10 0
<b>Q13.</b>	Property in Area of Housing Need	Yes No	10 0
<b>Q14.</b>	Contact with Empty Homes Officer	Letter 3 Letter 2	10 5
<b>Total:</b>			
<b>Category</b>			
Low (0-59)		High (60+)	

## Appendix 3 - Council Tax Classifications for empty homes

Council Tax Classifications From 1 April 2013	Definition
B	Unoccupied dwellings owned by a charity (up to 6 months).
D	A dwelling left unoccupied by people who are detained e.g. in prison.
E	An unoccupied dwelling which was previously the sole or main residence of a person who moved hospital or care home.
Empty uninhabitable & major works	Unoccupied dwellings where major repair works or structural alterations are required, underway or recently completed (up to 12 months).
Empty & unfurnished	Unoccupied dwellings - empty and substantially unfurnished (up to 1 month).
F	Dwellings left empty by deceased persons.
G	Unoccupied dwellings where the occupation is prohibited by law.
H	Unoccupied clergy dwellings.
I	Unoccupied dwelling which was previously the sole or main residence of a person who is the owner or tenant and has moved to receive personal care.
J	Unoccupied dwelling which was previously the sole or main residence of a person who is the owner or tenant and who has moved in order to provide personal care to another person.
K	Unoccupied dwelling where the owner is a student who lived in the dwelling as their main home.
L	Unoccupied dwelling which has been taken into possession by a mortgage lender.
Long term empty premium	Unoccupied dwellings that have been vacant for more than 2 years.
Q	Unoccupied dwelling where the person who would otherwise be liable is a trustee in bankruptcy.