Empty Homes Strategy
Summary of Results
V1.3 Draft

Introduction

The draft Empty Homes Strategy 2021-2026 provides clarity around how the Council will address the issues of providing quality housing accommodation. It sets out how we will meet housing need and bring empty residential and commercial property back into use to reduce the number of empty properties and homes in Derby.

Best practice developed in Derby has been recognised by organisations such as the Empty Homes Network and the charity (Homes From) Empty Homes and Homes England but there is still more than can be done.

The achievements of the Service over the life of the previous strategy highlight that Derby remains at the forefront of empty homes activities nationally. To continue and build upon this success, four strategic objectives have been identified, with the overarching aim to increase the supply of housing of all tenures:
1. Increase the number of empty homes brought back into use
2. Increase the number of empty homes that are used for affordable housing
3. Ensure the thermal efficiency is improved in empty homes brought back into use
4. To maximise income opportunities including debt recovery and funding opportunities that arise

The results from this consultation will be used to inform and develop our Empty Homes Strategy.

Methodology

As part of the consultation, Derby City Council provided an online survey. A paper-based survey was available on request.

A 12-week consultation period was undertaken from 2 February 2021 until 27 April 2021. The survey was promoted on the Council's website, social media channels and sent out to networks and community groups.

A note on the data in this report: Data from the closed option questions is presented in the report as a % score. The data in the text of the report is rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage point. Charts or tables therefore may result on occasions adding up to 99% or 101%. If a table or chart does not match exactly to the text in the report this occurs due to the rounding up or down when responses are combined. Results that differ in this way should not have a variance that is any larger than 1%.

When reading the data, please note that there is a base number against all charts and tables; this is the valid number of responses for that question and the figure that the percentages are calculated from.

About those taking part

44 people gave their view through the online survey

The majority of respondents to the consultation were residents (88.6%), 2.3% of respondents were a private sector landlord. 9.1% (four respondents) said 'other', those respondents were mostly said they were 'a citizen of Derby'.

The Empty Homes strategy

Respondents to the Empty Homes Strategy (Chart 1 – below) were generally in agreement that the proposals would help to bring empty homes back into use (88.6% either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement).

4.5% (2 respondents) disagreed that the proposals would help to bring homes back into use.

Chart 1 - Extent of agreement with the overall strategy (%)

56.8	31.8	6.8	4.5

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree

Base: 44 respondents

Strategic objectives

Respondents were also in general agreement with the strategic objectives set out in the Empty Homes strategy.

Chart 2 (on the next page) shows the levels of agreement with the objectives.

The highest level of agreement (93.2%) was with the proposal for the Council and partners to buy empty properties to create affordable housing. No respondents disagreed with this proposal.

The lowest level of agreement (70.5%) was with use of Empty Dwelling Management Orders. On this objective around 1 in 5 respondents (20.5%) said they neither agreed nor disagreed.

The objective with the highest level of disagreement, around 1 in 10 respondents (11.4%) was with the proposal for how properties for compulsory purchase were prioritised. 84.1% of respondents either agreed or agreed strongly with this objective.

Chart 2 - extent of agreement with the strategic objectives (%)

Objective	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Don't know
... should buy empty properties to create affordable housing?	93.2		4.0	0
... to maximise income opportunities including debt recovery and funding opportunities.	90.9		4.5	2.3
… should look at providing financial assistance to help tackle climate change through the renovation of empty homes?	88.4		11.6	
... how we prioritise properties for compulsory purchases.	84.1		11.4	
…... the Empty Dwelling Management Orders are an effective way to bring a home back into use?	70.5	20.5	9.1	

■ Agree ■ Neither ■ Disagree ■ Don't know

Base: 44 respondents

Comments

Respondents were invited to make comments on the strategic objectives. 12 respondents took the opportunity. Comments have been coded into themes. Some comments touched on multiple themes and therefore may have been coded in more than one theme.

Five comments mentioned climate change.

"Should definitely tackle climate change through renovation of empty homes- and get the cost of this back through rent."

There were three comments on how the existing housing stock was managed.

The strategy could include tenants the right to improve and enable their properties to be energy efficient and install eco friendly non carbon fuels or storage solutions i.e. solar panels!

Two comments talked about the use of public money and grants.

"Any financial assistance should be recoverable from the owner. There is no need to offer grants to anyone that has an empty property as, even a derelict one is a huge capital asset. Grants are poor value for money for residents"

Other comments (all one comment each) included the importance of housing legislation, the need for affordable homes, the installation of gas boilers and a general comment supporting the strategy.

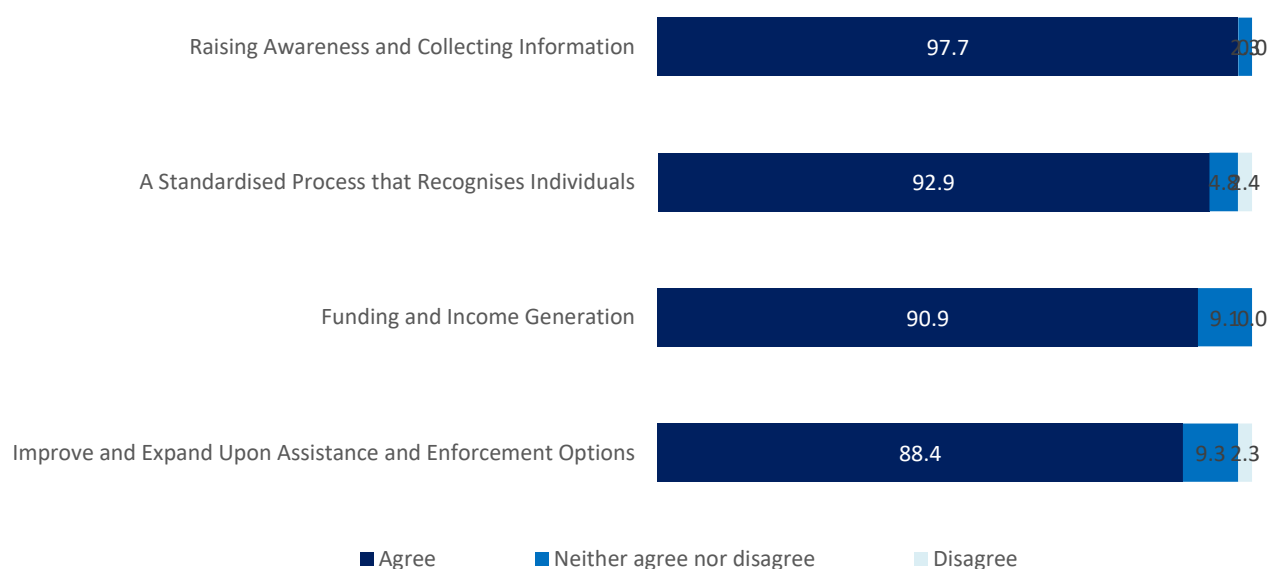*"Weak legislation and inadequate attention to HMO developments needs to be addressed as part of the Strategy"*

Action Plan

Respondents were asked their level of agreement with the proposals in the action plan in the Empty Homes Strategy (Chart 3 below).

Nearly all the respondents to the consultation agreed with the proposals under the heading "Raising Awareness and Collecting Information" (97.7%).

The lowest level of agreement (88.4%) was with the action to "Improve and Expand upon Assistance and Enforcement options". Almost one in ten (9.3%) of respondents said they neither agreed nor disagreed with this action.

Chart 3- Levels of agreement with action in the Plan (%)

Action	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
Raising Awareness and Collecting Information	97.7	2.3	0.0
A Standardised Process that Recognises Individuals	92.9	4.8	2.4
Funding and Income Generation	90.9	9.1	0.0
Improve and Expand Upon Assistance and Enforcement Options	88.4	9.3	2.3

Base: 44 respondents

Respondents were invited to make any further comments on the proposal in the action plans in the Empty Homes Strategy. Six respondents took this opportunity.

Three comments centred on the "Raising awareness" action.

"Raising awareness. Maybe ask tenants if there are any empty properties near their home"

Other comments mentioned funding and income generation …

"Funding and income generation - why are second homes only charged the standard rate of council tax, surely those that can afford a second home should pay more council tax too"

…and the need for focus on family accommodation.

Focus needs to enhance family accommodation - there is a surplus of apartment and shared living accommodation including new build in Derby - this is not sustainable and doesn't support Derby's longer term economic and social needs

Comments, suggestions, or concerns

Respondents were given the opportunity to make any other comments on the Empty Homes strategy. Six respondents took this opportunity.

Two comments mentioned general issues around empty homes.

"Empty homes left unoccupied and neglected over a long time are a blight on their neighbourhood. It's far too easy to fob the Council off with vague promises of refurbishment plans sometime in the future. Owners should be given a definite enforceable deadline."

One respondent suggested reasons why properties may be left empty.

"Someone has bought and paid for the house so must be treated with the utmost respect. There may be an emotional reason that they have left it empty"

Two respondents mentioned the allocation of properties.

"Offering them to people who have been on the housing application register the longest first before anyone else first."

Others commented…

"It's better than spreading into farmland."

Data Tables

In what capacity are you completing this survey?

	Number	%
A resident	39	88.6
A private sector landlord	1	2.3
Other	4	9.1
Total	**44**	**100**

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Council's proposed strategy will help to bring empty properties back into use? *Please select one option*

	Number	%
Strongly agree	25	56.8
Agree	14	31.8
Neither agree nor disagree	3	6.8
Disagree	2	4.5
Strongly disagree	0	0
Total	**44**	**100**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal that the Council and its partners (registered providers and charities for those in housing need) should buy empty properties to create affordable housing? *Please select one option*

	Number	%
Strongly agree	27	61.4
Agree	14	31.8
Neither agree nor disagree	2	4.5
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know	1	2.3
Total	**44**	**100%**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the strategic objective to maximise income opportunities including debt recovery and funding opportunities. *Please select one option*

	Number	%
Strongly agree	20	45.5
Agree	20	45.5
Neither agree nor disagree	2	4.5
Disagree	1	2.3
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know	1	2.3
Total	**44**	**100%**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposals for how we prioritise properties for compulsory purchases. *Please select one option*

	Number	%
Strongly agree	23	52.3
Agree	14	31.8
Neither agree nor disagree	2	4.5
Disagree	4	9.1
Strongly disagree	1	2.3
Total	**44**	**100**

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Empty Dwelling Management Orders are an effective way to bring a home back into use? *Please select one option*

	Number	%
Strongly agree	17	38.6
Agree	14	31.8
Neither agree nor disagree	9	20.5
Disagree	4	9.1
Strongly disagree	0	0
Total	**44**	**100**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal that the Council should look at providing financial assistance to help tackle climate change through the renovation of empty homes? *Please select one option*

	Number	%
Strongly agree	20	46.5
Agree	18	41.9
Neither agree nor disagree	5	11.6
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Total	**43**	**100**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed actions under the action plan headings in our Empty Homes Strategy... *Please select one option per line*

Raising Awareness and Collecting Information

	Number	%
Strongly agree	20	46.5
Agree	22	51.2
Neither agree nor disagree	1	2.3
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Total	**43**	**100**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed actions under the action plan headings in our Empty Homes Strategy... *Please select one option per line*

A Standardised Process that Recognises Individuals

	Number	%
Strongly agree	24	57.1
Agree	15	35.7
Neither agree nor disagree	2	4.8
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	1	2.4
Total	**42**	**100**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed actions under the action plan headings in our Empty Homes Strategy... *Please select one option per line*

Improve and Expand Upon Assistance and Enforcement Options

	Number	%
Strongly agree	24	55.8
Agree	14	32.6
Neither agree nor disagree	4	9.3
Disagree	1	2.3
Strongly disagree	0	0
Total	**43**	**100**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed actions under the action plan headings in our Empty Homes Strategy... *Please select one option per line*

Funding and Income Generation

	Number	%
Strongly agree	23	52.3
Agree	17	38.6
Neither agree nor disagree	4	9.1
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Total	**44**	**100**

About you

Are you…?

	Number	%
Man/boy	16	36.4
Woman/girl	27	61.4
In another way	1	2.3
Total	**44**	**100**

Do you identify as a gender other than what you were assigned at birth (for example you are a trans person or someone with a trans history)? *Please select one option*

	Number	%
Yes	9	21.4

	Number	%
No	32	76.2
Prefer not to say	1	2.4
Total	**42**	**100%**

What was your age on your last birthday?

	Number	%
Under 25	0	0
26-35	0	0
36-45	0	0
46-55	8	50.0
56-65	3	18.8
66 and over	5	31.3
Total	**16**	**100%**

To which group to you consider you belong?

	Number	%
White – English/ Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	36	81.8
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3	6.8
Asian or Asian British – Chinese	1	2.3
Duel Heritage – White and Asian	1	2.3
White – Gypsy or Traveller	1	2.3
Any other White background	1	2.3
Any other ethnic group	1	2.3
Total	**44**	**100%**

Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?

	Number	%
Yes	14	31.8
No	28	63.6
Prefer not to say	2	4.5
Total	**44**	**100%**

I consider myself to be…

	Number	%
Heterosexual/straight	32	78.0
Bisexual	2	4.9
A gay man	2	4.9
A gay/women lesbian	1	2.4
Prefer not to say	3	7.3
Other	1	2.4
Total	**41**	**100%**

Do you have any religious beliefs?

	Number	%
Yes	21	47.7
No	19	43.2

	Number	%
Prefer not to say	4	9.1
Total	**44**	**100%**

If yes, to which religion do you belong?

	Number	%
Christian	20	66.7
Buddhist	2	6.7
Other	2	6.7
Prefer not to say	6	20.0
Total	**30**	**100%**