



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

Thursday 24 September 2026

Empty Homes Strategy 2026 - 2031

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Nathan England - Cabinet Member: Safer Streets and Better Housing
Lead Director:	Katherine Kynaston - Director: Housing, Commercial & Customer Services
Service Area:	Housing, Commercial & Customer Services
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Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Key
Forward Plan:	Yes - 26 February 2026
Report considered by:	SMT - 25 August 2026 Business Briefing - 3 September 2026 Cabinet - 24 September 2026

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1.1 Welcomes the success of the previous long term empty property strategy 2021 – 2026 which has seen 386 empty residential properties brought back into use exceeding the Strategy target, providing homes for over 900 residents* including supported and adapted homes enabling some of our most vulnerable to live independently in their communities and;
- 1.2 Approves the new Empty Homes Strategy 2026 – 2031 setting a new, increased target to bring 400 empty properties back into use
- 1.3 Agrees to receive an annual update of delivery against the new target .

*Based on Census Data

2.0 Purpose of Report

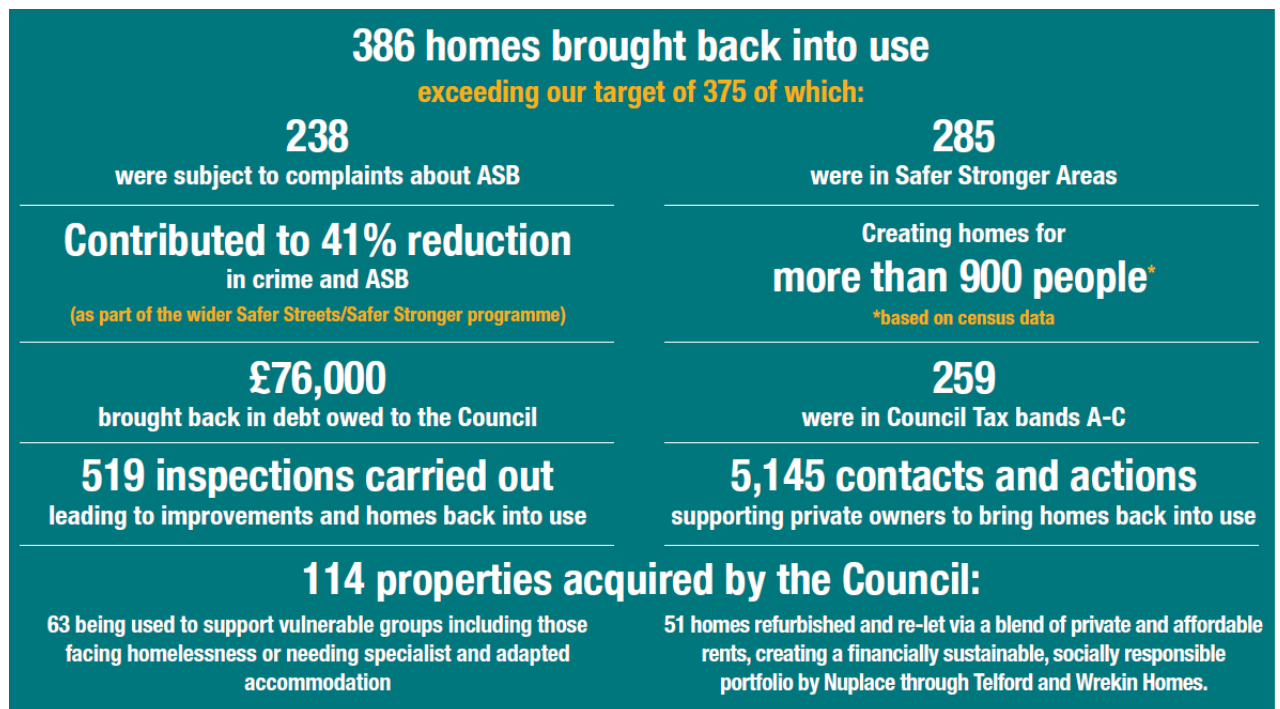
- 2.1 Following the success of the previous Long Term Empty Property Strategy 2021 – 2026, this report seeks approval to adopt a new, refreshed Empty Homes Strategy 2026 – 2031.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The Council's Housing Strategy sets out our commitment to work with partners and communities to ensure every resident has a safe and affordable home. It establishes 3 key objectives:
- To make the BEST use of our existing homes
 - To support safe, clean, green, healthy, connected communities.
 - To provide homes to support and empower our most vulnerable people.
- 3.2 In 2021 the Council published our existing Long Term Empty Property Strategy, setting a challenging target of bringing 375 long term empty properties back into use. We were one of a very small number of LA committing to a target recognising the challenges of addressing empty homes.
- 3.3 The Strategy recognised the negative environmental impacts that empty properties bring, such as the increased risk of fly tipping and anti-social behaviour but also that every unoccupied property is a wasted housing opportunity for our residents in need of affordable accommodation.
- 3.4 Between June 2021 and June 2026 we have brought 386 long term empty properties back into use exceeding our target. This has been achieved through a number of approaches including:
- Advice and support – working with owners to find bespoke solutions for their properties such as support with probate, family disputes, legal advice, owners gone into residential care etc
 - Pre-Enforcement Action – where owners have not engaged with the council and where properties are attracting anti-social behaviour, we have served notices on owners
 - Enforcement action – where pre-enforcement has not resolved matters, we have worked with Legal Services to seek court approval to enforce the sale of properties; an approach used by only a small number of local authorities nationally.
 - Bespoke Acquisition – Nuplace and Telford & Wrekin Homes (TWH) have worked with Housing Plus Group particularly to return long-term empty or redundant homes to active use. 63 of these properties are being used to house vulnerable groups such as those facing homelessness or needing specialist and supported accommodation.

4.0 Impact of the Strategy

- 4.1 The table below demonstrates the impact of the work we have done and the new strategy contains a number of case studies:



- 4.2 We have taken a lead role regionally in sharing best practise with other local authorities.
- 4.3 We are part of a small number of local authorities nationally to take a robust stance on empty properties, pursuing them through the Courts to resolution.
- 4.4 Our proactive and innovative approach to transforming empty properties into specialist and supported accommodation, has resulted in better outcomes for vulnerable residents and cost savings, whilst removing neighbourhood blight and improving communities. These outcomes have received national recognition by the Local Government Chronicle our shortlisting from over 100 national entries for innovative housing solutions.

Case Study

Before



After



5.0 Summary of main proposals

- 5.1 Despite the success of the previous strategy rising house prices, the cost-of-living pressures and energy costs are contributing to longer periods of vacancy, with properties remaining on the market for longer than in 2021, and a national picture that is seeing more empty properties in our neighbourhoods.
- 5.3 A refreshed Empty Homes Strategy 2026 – 2031 is appended to this report. The new strategy sets a further, stretching target of bringing 400 empty homes back into use.
- 5.4 We recognise this remains a challenging target in the current climate. However, the learning and expertise, partnerships and professional networks developed over the past five years place us in a strong position to tackle more including the entrenched and complex cases.
- 5.5 We will continue to promote our work with residents, internal and external partners such as Town and Parish Councils, Police and Fire Service to share data and intelligence around empty and problematic properties.
- 5.6 We will continue to prioritise advice and support, while using the full range of legal powers available where owners do not engage, to bring empty properties back into use.
- 5.7 As well as delivering more general needs housing recognising the needs of our most vulnerable residents and growing numbers of people requiring care and support we will continue to identify opportunities to adapt empty properties to provide a home for residents with specialist needs.
- 5.8 With Central Government focus on delivery of Council owned affordable accommodation solutions, the Council will continue to identify opportunities to bring empty properties back into use as affordable general needs housing.
- 5.9 Through our established internal and external partnerships, we will continue to prioritise empty properties linked to anti-social behaviour, crime and neighbourhood blight. We will link our work to support major regeneration programmes including Pride in Place.
- 5.10 We will also continue to work with our local Just Credit Union to provide owners of long term empty properties with affordable loans to refurbish properties.

6.0 Alternative Options

- 6.1 The alternative would be to do nothing, which would mean hundreds of properties being left empty at a time of rising housing need and having a detrimental impact on our neighbourhoods and communities.

7.0 Key Risks

- 7.1 The current cost of living crisis and increasing cost of labour and materials may hinder owners of empty homes in need of major refurbishment. A range of support is available including through loan finance provided in partnership with Just Credit Union and more support will be announced in our forthcoming Cost of Living Strategy. This will help mitigate this risk.

8.0 Council Priorities

- 8.1 The strategy detailed in this report supports the following Council priorities:

- Every child, young person, and adult lives well in their community
- All neighbourhoods are a great place to live
- A community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.

9.0 Financial Implications

- 9.1 Support for the Empty Homes Strategy is provided through the existing Housing, Legal and Enforcement Teams giving advice, guidance and intervention and also working with partners. Funding has also been provided through the capital programme should any works be needed to support bringing the properties back into use.

10.0 Legal and HR Implications

- 10.1 Whilst there is no statutory obligation requiring the Council to maintain a Long Term Empty Homes Strategy such a strategy provides a framework through which the authority may coordinate and prioritise the exercise of its various statutory powers and functions relating to empty residential properties, including housing, council tax, planning, environmental health and anti-social behaviour functions with the associated enforcement options. Compulsory purchase powers are provided for under s.17 Housing Act 1985 and s.226 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

11.0 Ward Implications

- 11.1 The work of this strategy affects all wards across the Borough.

12.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

- 12.1 Empty properties are not only associated with criminal and antisocial behaviour but affect the general morale and wellbeing of neighbourhoods and can be a contributory factor to levels of deprivation where properties create long term blight. The work of this Strategy ensures we are proactively working on bringing properties back into use for our residents whilst ensuring that residents know of the work we are doing and know where to report problematic properties.

- 12.2 The properties we have acquired through Telford and Wrekin Homes are providing accommodation for some of our most vulnerable clients including those recovering from homelessness and providing adapted homes to support independent living.

13.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 13.1 The work of this strategy aims to provide the best outcomes for all residents, from the owners of the properties, the neighbourhoods and the people accessing properties to live in, including people who are homeless, with complex disabilities.
- 13.2 The strategy supports work with internal and external partners to identify opportunities that meet the borough's specialist housing needs. This includes Lion House, a derelict property remodelled to provide independent living accommodation for adults with learning disabilities.

14.0 Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

- 14.1 This strategy ensures long standing, derelict properties are brought up to the correct energy performance standards through refurbishment whether by the owner, through acquisition or ensuring landlords achieve the correct EPC rating prior to letting. Addressing long term empties within our communities is improving the environment of our neighbourhoods' benefitting residents through reducing incidences of fly tipping and improving attractiveness of properties and streets.

15.0 Background Papers

- 1 Telford and Wrekin Long term Empty Property Strategy 2021 - 2026

16.0 Appendices

- A Telford and Wrekin Empty Homes Strategy 2026 - 2031

17.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Director	13/08/2026	18/08/2026	KK
Legal	20/08/2026	20/08/2026	ON
Finance	20/08/2026	20/08/2026	MLB