

Appendix B: Results of the Public Consultation on the draft Empty Homes Policy (sensitive material redacted)

Q1: are you responding as a:

Resident	48
Voluntary Sector Organisation	0
Neighbouring Local Authority	0
Registered Housing Provider	1
Private Landlord	2
Managing/Estate Agent	0
Other (please Specify)	2

Q2: please state what your interest is in the Empty Properties Policy:

"I am a landlord who would be open to renovating properties and renting back for social housing".

"Maintaining desirable neighbourhoods and increasing housing".

"During a housing shortage, we need to maximise properties available to buy and rent".

"Local Resident" x 8

"No direct interest" x2

"Concerned about homelessness in the area".

"I strongly believe need to make some changes to what I would describe as a housing crisis. With council houses essentially a non-existent option unless you are in severe need of housing such as being pregnant, homeless (and even then it's no guarantee) it leaves residents only choice is through private renting which lets face it is only built for commuters who work in London as they are the only ones that can afford it the horrify (sic) high rents/house prices. I have lived in Welwyn Garden City since I was born and work in Welwyn Garden City, and at the age of 26 I haven't got a chance at getting a council home or being able to rent privately. At this rate I would be better off going further North or leaving the country all together and that is a pretty consistent sentiment felt by other people my age. While the empty properties policy wouldn't be my first choice for solving this issue and I would much prefer to see an option for the council buying back properties as opposed to the current proposal but I believe its better to make some difference rather than nothing at all"

"To house the homeless, help young people get on the property ladder and house asylum seekers".

"There is not enough available housing".

"As a homeowner, I am aware of the impact neglected properties can have on an area in terms of safety and value. Making use of existing properties will alleviate (albeit to a very small extent) high rental and housing prices without large costs to public funds. Social housing is totally unfit for purpose and anything which could help this situation mist be a positive outcome".

"Housing Shortage"

“There should be no empty houses. Any empty housing should be added to the housing list for people to use. Also, empty offices should be used for the homeless”.

“I’m stuck in a 2-bedroom second floor flat. Unable to get on the housing list as apparently suitably housed although we really need a house due to medical needs. Even if on the list it may be years before we could get house to a suitable property”.

“I would like the council to help get empty properties occupied”.

“I don’t like to see empty properties when people are in need of housing”.

“There a few nearby where I live”.

“I’m working in the NHS until now still renting. I need an affordable home for my family”.

“news”

“Keeping community safe and ensuring property values of nearby houses aren’t deflated”.

“I am a tenant in a housing Association”.

“To see that empty properties are allocated to those who need them most and contribute to the local economy”.

“There is an empty property in the row of houses in which I live”.

“The lack of affordable housing for people in the borough”

“Empty housing stock during housing crisis”

“Seeing the number of empty properties reduce in the area”.

“Why has [redacted] at Panshanger been unoccupied for at least 4 years”.

“While homes are required properties should not be left long term empty especially at the detriment of the neighbours and local area through decline”.

“Looking for bigger property”.

“An empty property is located near my mother’s house, and is a state of disrepair encouraging vermin, so I would like to see this property brought back into use”.

“I’m concerned about the lack of really affordable housing (“really” here meaning something that a family on low wages can really afford rather than any government definition of “affordable”) in our area”.

“Appreciate the need for housing and it is a waste of resource to have a property long term empty”.

“Providing more housing”.

“Member of the local Community”

“There shouldn’t be empty homes!”

“Too many properties left empty for too long”.
“Curiosity”

“With the lack of housing in the borough, the policy makes sense to bring empty homes including little used 2nd homes back into use”.

“See who gets them as building too many on the green belt”

“Council taxpayer”

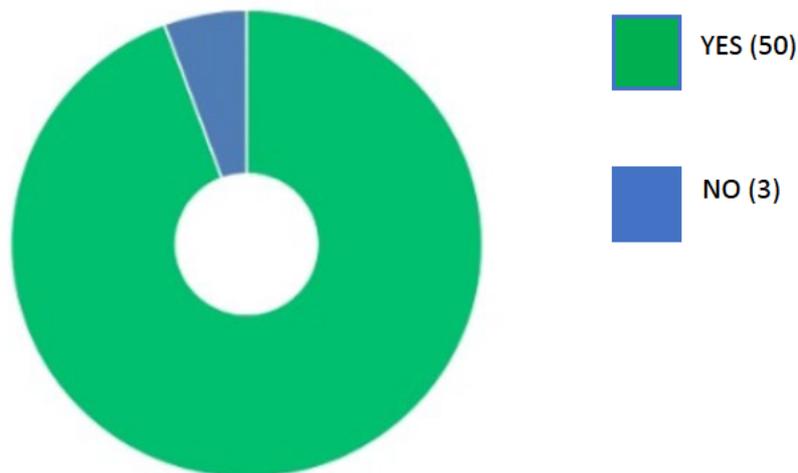
“Homes for local young people”

“My desire to free up empty property”.

“Buy back for housing list”.

“I am a private landlord, resident and business owner in the borough. I am aware of the challenges empty properties can cause”.

Q3: Is the Empty Homes Policy easy to understand?



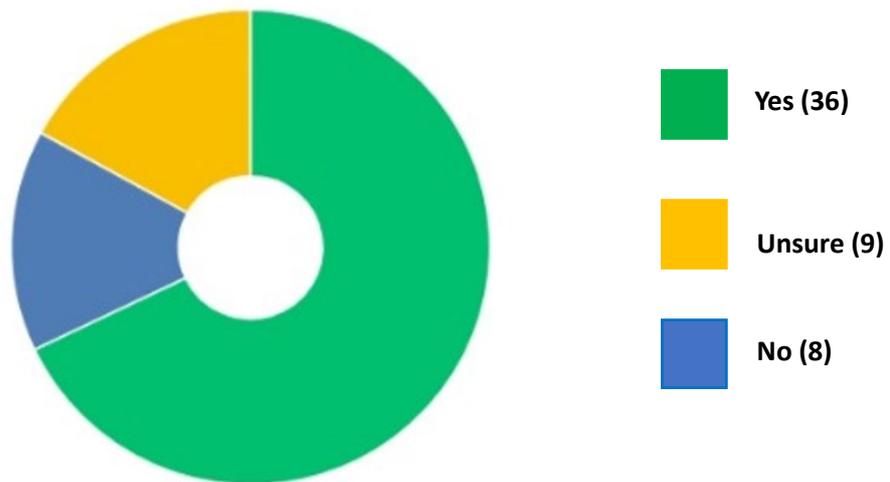
Answered: 53 Skipped: 0

Q4: If you answered No to Q3, please state below what you think we could do to either change the content or layout to make the document more understandable?

“The layout needs improvement. I refer particularly to section 6. You need to have the sections e.g. 6.1, 6.2 to refer to your strategies. The inclusion of partners in that position is confusing”.

“Make it easier to understand”.

Q5: Do you think our key aim of getting empty homes back into use is evenly balanced between education and enforcement?



Answered: 53 Skipped: 0

Q6: If you answered No or Unsure to Q5, please state below how we could improve the balance between education and enforcement.

“It is clearly a way to get land and property for nothing”.

“You should stick to your jobs of cleaning the streets, collecting rubbish and making sure the area looks attractive to residents. The Council is overreaching its status and acting as [redacted] interfering with privately owned properties. Should people want to buy houses and leave them empty it is their right as a free human. If the council want to build their own homes using employees [redacted] money that’s their choice, they can build or buy their own homes. [redacted]. The council should concentrate on looking after publicly owned properties keeping them well maintained and occupied, that’s where their job ends. [redacted]”

[redacted] I reiterate the council needs to reduce its overreach and concentrate on the basics, emptying bins, clearing rubbish and looking after the amenities of the area”.

“You should know that without having to ask me”.

“Should be more enforcement”

“I would remove having private landlords. The legislation for private landlords is very weak (sic) and they can demand huge sums due to the lack of housing”

“Give it to hardworking family”

“unsure”

“All empty homes should be put on the council bidding website so that the housing crisis will cease”

“You need to advertise clearly the help homeowners can get and send them detailed information too of how you can help them. Maybe add it to your website. I agree with the policy, but we have to ensure everyone has had every opportunity to understand their options before enforcement is taken.

“The council doesn’t seem to think it matters as much as the others”

“Empty properties should go to local residents. That have lived in the area, or have family in the area”

“Stop nannying”

“I understand it is only a draft policy but there is provision in it to help me free up an empty property that is currently not being acted upon”.