



**HOMES AGAIN  
PROJECT**

## **A Shared Services Approach**

**28th November  
2012**

## Introductions

## How it all started.....

- Homes Fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

- new and innovative measures are required to change the way we invest in and make use of existing housing.

- a longer term strategy to supplement housing supply by making better use of existing homes through reducing the number of empty properties.



## Developing an Empty Homes Strategy

The benefits of which included:

- promoting the use of a potential resource to assist Scottish Borders Council in meeting its strategic housing objectives outlined in the 2012-2017 Local Housing Strategy;
- facilitating the provision of good quality affordable housing by the private sector ; and
- helping to create sustainable communities

Scottish Borders Council  
Empty Homes Strategy  
2012 – 2017

Housing Strategy & Services



Scottish  
Borders  
COUNCIL

[http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/5112/empty\\_homes\\_strategy\\_2012-17](http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/5112/empty_homes_strategy_2012-17)

## Challenges

### Lack of Resources

- **Financial resources** to be able to offer homeowners the incentives they were potentially looking for such as grant assistance, or low cost loans
- The **staff time** to be able to commit the time required to be able to engage with owners and to effectively make a difference,
- The **knowledge**
- The **experience**
- **Starting from scratch**



## Shared Services Proposal

### Benefits to the Council:

- **Achieving best possible value for money**
- **Shared staff costs**
- **Economies of scale**
- **Regional momentum**
- **The ability to develop expertise and consistency**
- **sustained action**



## The Final Five



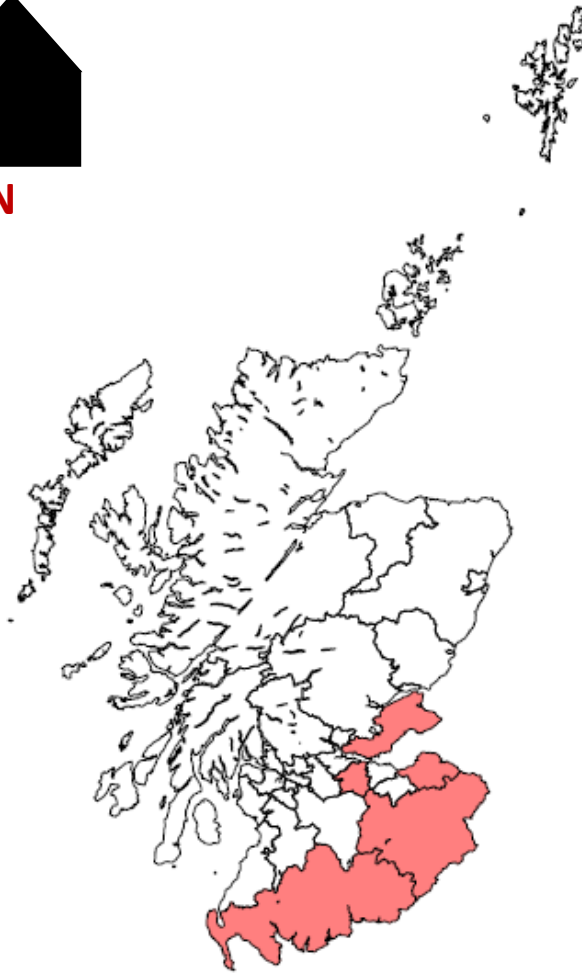
**East Lothian**  
Council



**West Lothian**  
Council



## HOMES AGAIN PROJECT

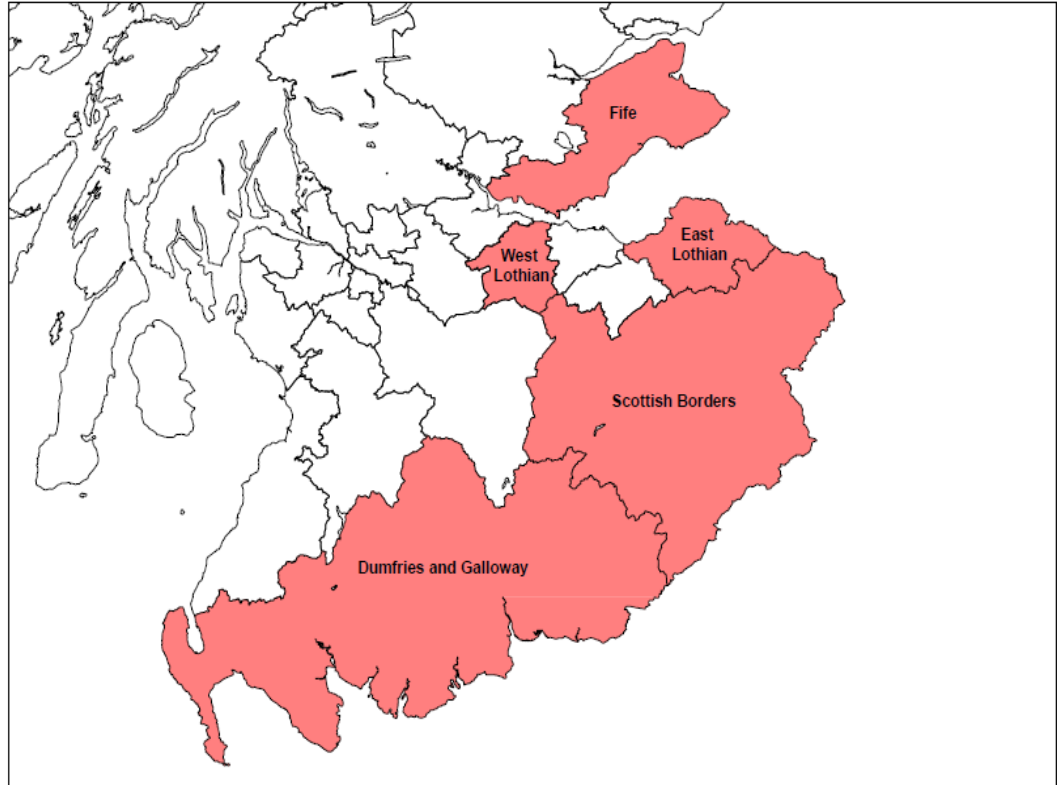






## HOMES AGAIN PROJECT

<b>D&amp;G</b>	<b>Fiona Todd</b>
<b>East Lothian</b>	
<b>Scottish Borders</b>	
<b>Fife</b>	<b>Alison Morris</b>
<b>West Lothian</b>	



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## *Other Benefits:*

- Everyone in the authorities involved benefits from the expertise currently being developed,
- All benefit from initiatives being developed region wide, such as the leaflets and support and information packs which work across the participating Councils (avoids replication)
- Significant cost and time savings
- Efficiencies through greater economies of scale (The matchmaker scheme is an excellent example of this works across the authorities)
- Great outlet for communities with concerns regarding empty properties

Consistent and holistic regional approach, Embedding the ethos of empty property work not just council wide, but on a regional scale.

- Build up a more accurate picture as to why some empty properties become 'stuck' by the sharing of knowledge, case studies and good practice.
- Building other officers skills and knowledge in relation to empty homes



## Challenges in a Shared Approach

**Quantifying the Financial Benefits (from sharing arrangements removing duplication e.g recruitment and line management, developing region wide information and advice packs that can work across all the authorities etc)**

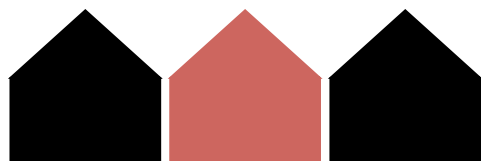


**Quantifying the financial benefits and value for money would be useful to track the benefits of shared services in terms of efficiencies and service improvements.**

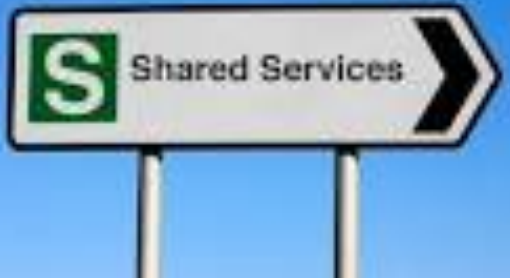
**IT issues**

**Local Council priorities**

**Varying speeds of progression**



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## Sharing Services

**The shared services approach has proved real value for money for the authorities involved**

**It has succeeded in providing good levels of performance at less cost.**

**As shared services like this mature and evolve they may be able to help stimulate wider organisational transformations such as better use of and more sharing of IT and assets in - some cases resulting in improved processes and cultural change**



## HOMES AGAIN PROJECT

**Six months into the project**

**a lot of the groundwork completed**

**number of active cases where the empty homes officer is working closely with empty property owners.**

**We are confident the rewards of this shared approach will be considerable, as the project has been well prepared for, well planned, and well implemented.**



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