

Everyone should have a home

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Shelter

What contribution can empty homes make to tackling homelessness?

1. Context
2. Tools
3. Argyll and Bute example

Context 1

87,000 empty homes in Scotland

48,000 in private sector (55%)

22,500 private sector vacant for more than 6 months

RSL / Council empties

More of an issue in some areas than others

Context 1: Reasons

- Transitions
- Quality
- Economic
- Inertia
- Housing market

Tools 1: REPG

Targeted on private sector in rural areas

Owner must demonstrate skills to develop and manage

Property must be available for at least 5 years.

Grant of up to 33% of costs

Targeted on local economically active people

Tools 2: Lead tenancies

Private landlord lets to RSL (“lead tenant”)

Grant to RSL increases with length of tenancy up to 20 years

Let to tenant on SSST

RSL responsible for management and maintenance

Tools 3: Compulsory Leasing Orders?

Empty Dwelling Management Orders in England

In Scotland could apply if empty for more than 6 months

LA takes over management and receives rent for property

Interim version and final version of up to 7 years.

Argyll & Bute Case study

Strategic Housing Fund:

- Council tax revenue from second homes
- Commuted sums from Affordable Housing Policy
- Lease or sale of assets formerly on HRA

Strategic Housing Fund

- Landbanking
- Empty Homes strategy
- Infrastructure costs

Empty Homes Initiative

Takes receipts from second homes (c. £1.6 million pa)

Top up fund to existing grants

Develop new schemes such as Council leasing scheme.

Questions

How much of a contribution could empty homes make? What are the limitations?

How effective are current approaches to empty homes?

Are new powers or tools needed?

Could more be done in the public or RSL sector?