



Empty Homes
Survey of Owners
July 2021

Empty homes survey July 2021

Number of responses

- Letters were sent to all owners of properties registered with council tax as empty and unfurnished.
- 279 responses have been received as at 21/07/2021, that is over 30% response rate.
- When asked 'Are you still the owner of the property?', 27% of respondents answered 'No', they are no longer the owner of the property.
- Of the 70% that do still own the property, the answer to 'Is the property still empty?' 40% state 'no' the property is no longer empty.
- The results are from the 122 respondents that do still own an empty property.

Why are only 44% of the responses actually empty properties?

- Council tax undergo a yearly review of empty property owners, asking them to confirm the property is still empty and that they are still the owner.
- Our website has an online form to be able to report changes to your council tax account
- Our online portal 'My South Cambs' enables residents to manage their council tax accounts online.

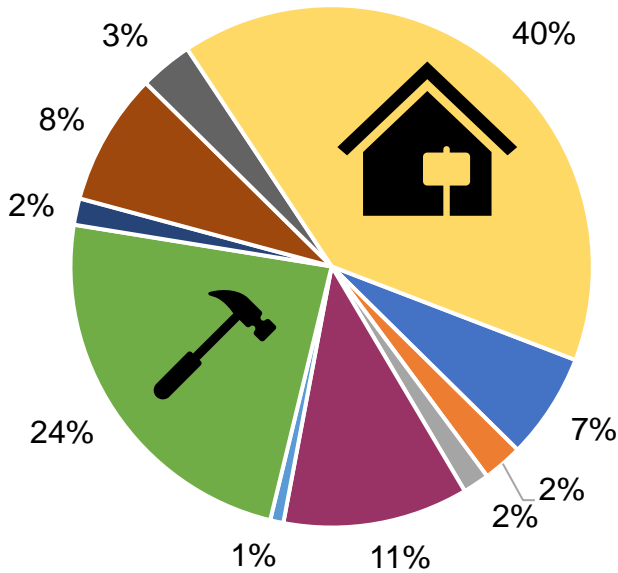
Possible reasons

- The council tax charge does not change until the property is empty over 2 years.
- The last 18 months of dealing with a pandemic means people may have had other priorities or other issues to deal with.

Conclusions from the survey results

- The main reason for properties remaining empty are that it is on the market to be sold or it is being repaired or renovated. When asked if the costs of repairs is a factor in the property remaining empty, over 85% said 'No'. Costs were not a factor in the property remaining empty.
- When asked 'which services might encourage you to bring your property back into use' only 12% responded to Grants for renovations. 79% of respondents answered 'None'.
- This indicates that money is not the main reason these properties are remaining empty and the majority of owners are not interested in services to help them bring them back into use.
- The number of empty homes has also still risen despite the rise in council tax charges on homes empty over 2 years. This is another indicator that money is not an incentive for empty home owners to bring their properties back into use.

Why is the property currently empty?

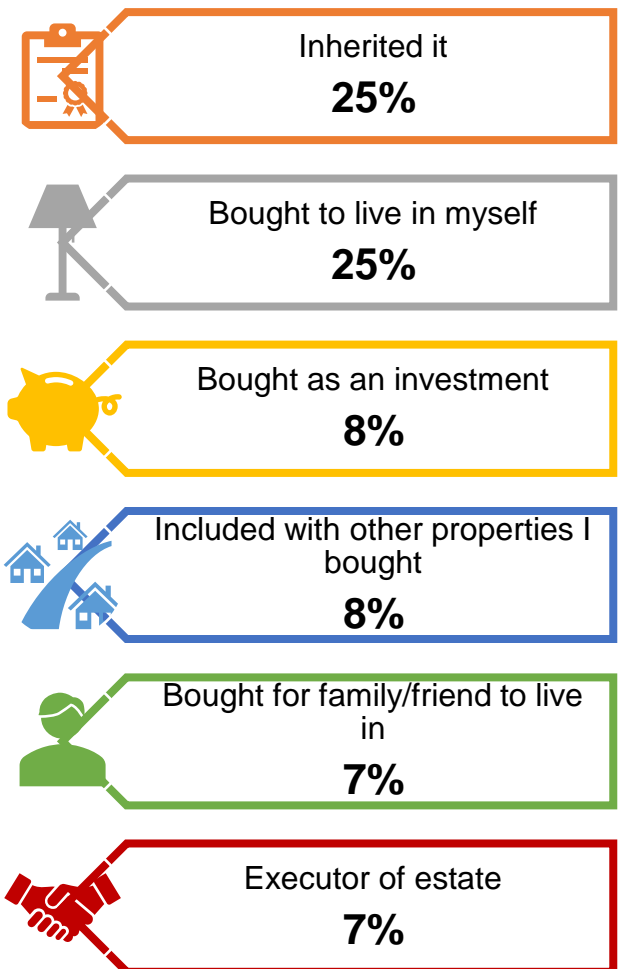


- Awaiting planning consent;
- Awaiting probate;
- Bought for investment;
- It is in need of repairs/renovations;
- It is part of another property;
- It's being repaired/renovated;
- Not answered
- Other
- Trying to let it;
- Trying to sell it;

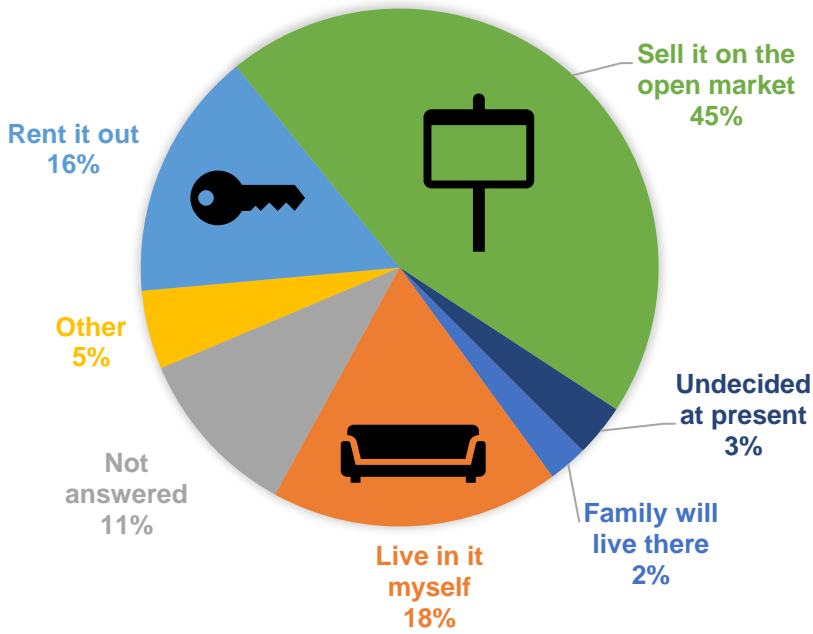
What condition is the property in?



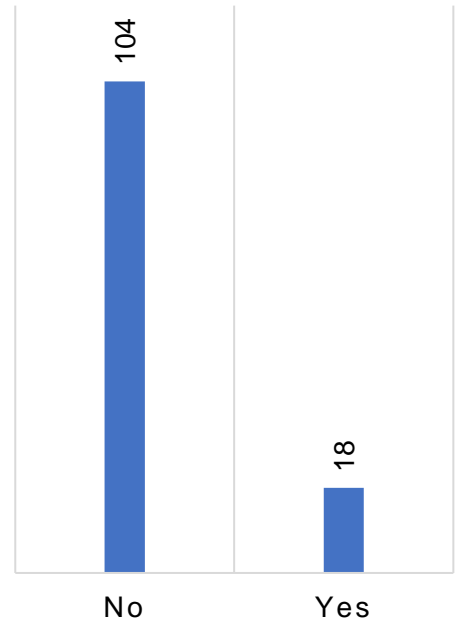
How did you come to own the empty property?



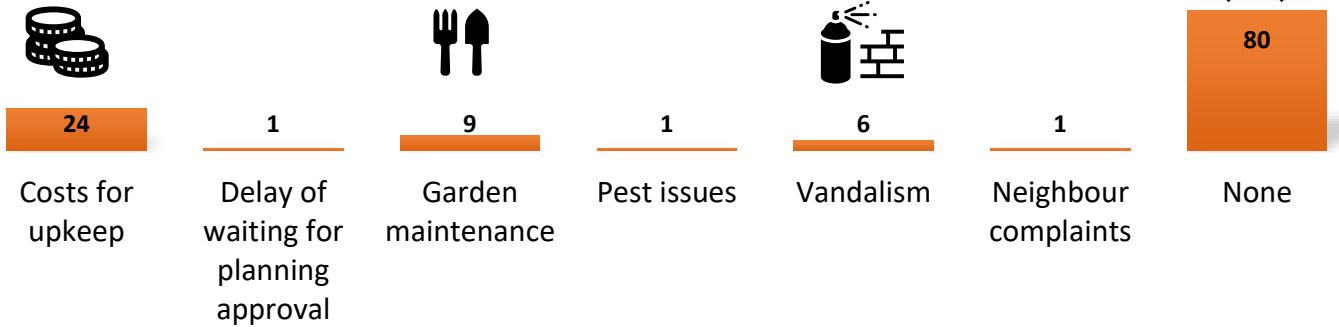
What do you plan to do with the property?



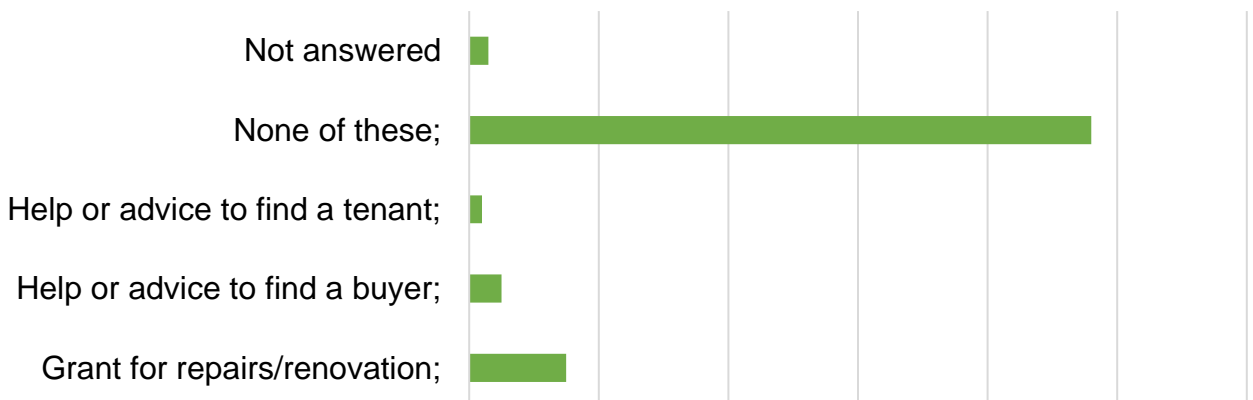
Is the cost of repairs a factor in the property remaining empty?



Does the property cause you any issues?



Which of these services might encourage you to bring your property back into use?



Empty homes in numbers Oct 21

Number of enquiries or complaints about an empty property - 5

Action taken:

Letters and a copy of our empty homes leaflet sent to the owners of the empty homes outlining the options available to them, such as our private sector leasing scheme. Enquiries about pests or overgrown gardens passed to environmental health to investigate.

Only one empty home owner has responded to the letters sent to explain that work is being done to the property to bring it back into use.

Number of enquiries from owners of an empty home about the reduced VAT government scheme – 5

Action Taken:

Confirmation sent to the owners that the property has been empty for 2 years or more to qualify for the reduced VAT rate of 5% on renovations and alterations.



Empty Over 6 months

663



Empty over 2 years

207



Responses to survey

279



Enquiries from the public

10