

North Yorkshire Council
Scarborough and Whitby Area Committee

5 June 2026

Development of new North Yorkshire Council Empty Homes Strategy

Briefing Note of the Assistant Director Housing

Whilst empty homes are an inevitable feature of the housing market because of sales and natural churn, the Council recognises that long-term empty homes can have a negative impact. Around 1% of all homes across North Yorkshire have been vacant for more than one year. In the former Scarborough Borough Council area 723 homes have been vacant for more than a year (around 1.2% of all homes).

The Council's Housing team are currently developing a new strategy and policy approach for the Council to determine its approach to tackling empty homes. This strategy shall replace the previous legacy arrangements inherited from the seven former district councils.

To help inform this work a survey has been undertaken to give a better picture on the reasons why homes are empty and a further assessment of available data, including information highlighting Council Tax Exemptions.

Members of the Council's Housing and Leisure Scrutiny Committee have requested the establishment of a Member led Task and Finish Group. The terms of reference and timings for that group are to be agreed at the next meeting of that committee on 10 June 2026. The purpose of the committee is likely to be to help inform the development of the strategy, including recommendations to officers around the pros and cons of different enforcement tools, along with recommendations around incentives to help property owners return homes back into use.