Empty Properties

Narrative

Whilst the number of empty properties has increased it is not believed that this should be an issue of major concern in terms of the overall number. It equates to 1.5% of the overall dwellings across the District and across the empty properties 46% have been empty for under one year.

There does not appear to be a particular pattern in regards to the additional empty properties, nor has there been an increased in complaints or issues that have occurred as a result.

As a result of Covid, the Council has not focussed its resources on proactive work relating to empty homes and as a result of the Viable Housing Solution project in Gainsborough the financial assistance for empty property owners has now ceased.

The approach moving forward will be reactive based on complaints in the main, alongside a more coordinated approach across work areas to address problematic longer term empties that are on prominent sites. There is little merit in being proactive in this work without the ability to provide any assistance financially.

This approach may mean that the overall number of empty properties does not reduce, however this number will still be monitored and if it continues to increase options will need to be provided to Management Team to look at how this can be addressed.

It is not the view of officers currently that this increases in numbers has led to an increase in associated issues, therefore no further action is proposed at this time. The P & D measures moving forward will be reviewed to consider whether a percentage based approach would be more helpful.

Data

In October 2020 there was 648 empty properties within the district. This figure increased 5% from 2019 when 615 properties where empty within the district. Although the number of empty properties is increasing; the figure is 1.5% of dwellings within the district.

276 (35%) of all the districts empty properties are within Gainsborough, Market Rasen has the second highest number of empty properties with 55 (7%) whilst Caistor has 32 (4%).
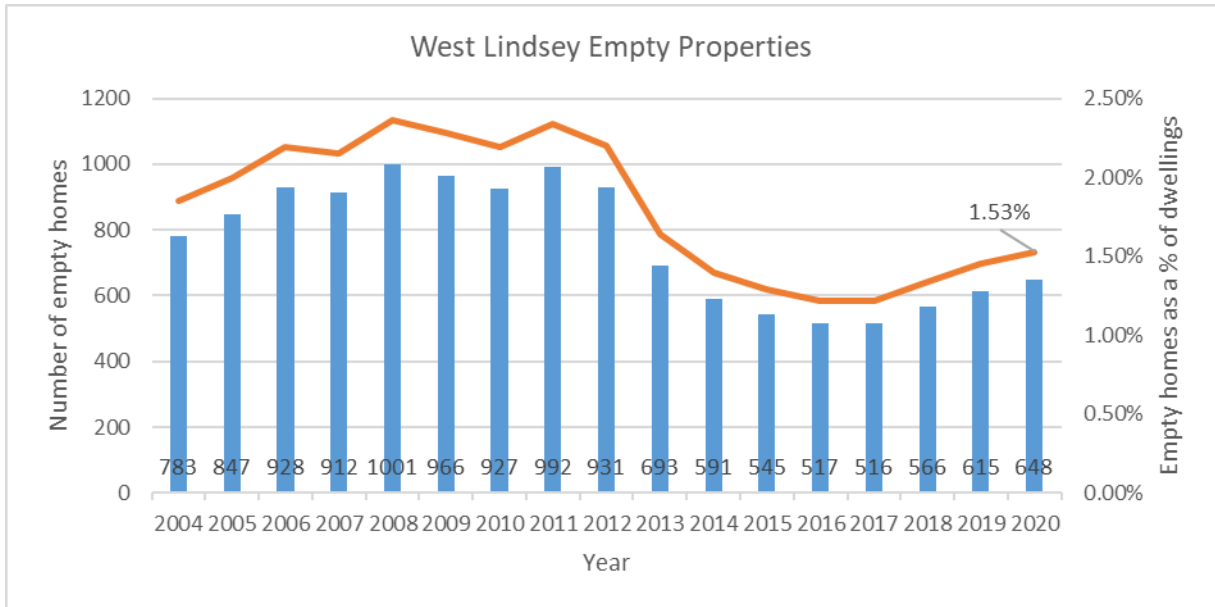
Chart 1: Empty properties within the district

The average number of days empty for the properties is 909 days; 12 properties have been empty for the longest period (8,220 days) whilst 363 (46%) have been empty for under one year.
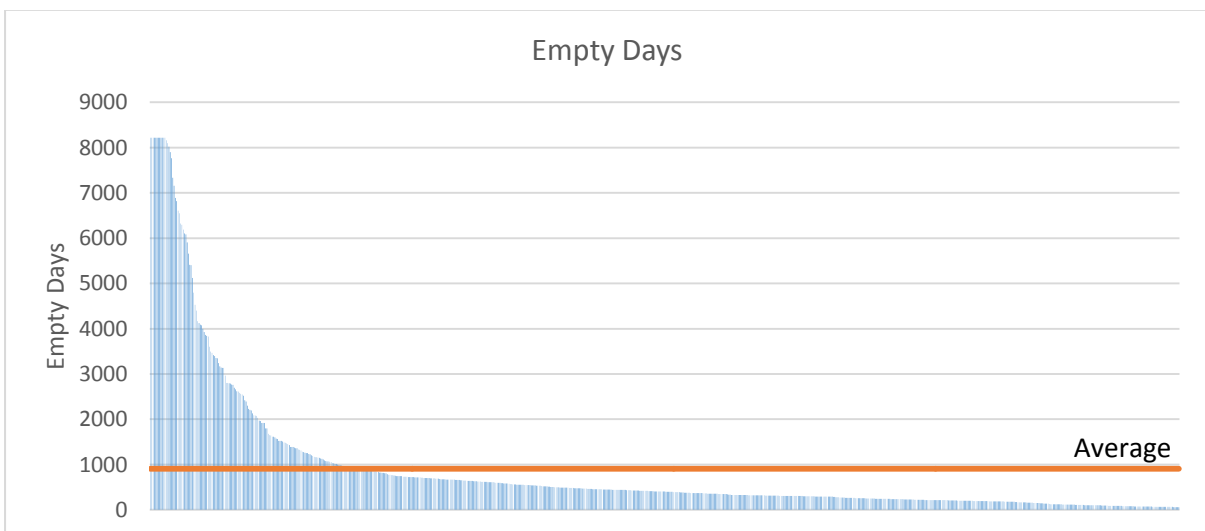

Chart 2: Empty days

Please note that this benchmarking is for 2019 data and does not include 2020/21 returns.

Chart 3 shows WLDC empty homes against ten of WLDCs most similar Local Authorities. This information is based on 2019 returns and WLDC is third within this comparable group. Allerdale has the largest % (1.74%) of empty homes whilst Mid Devon has lowest (0.34%).
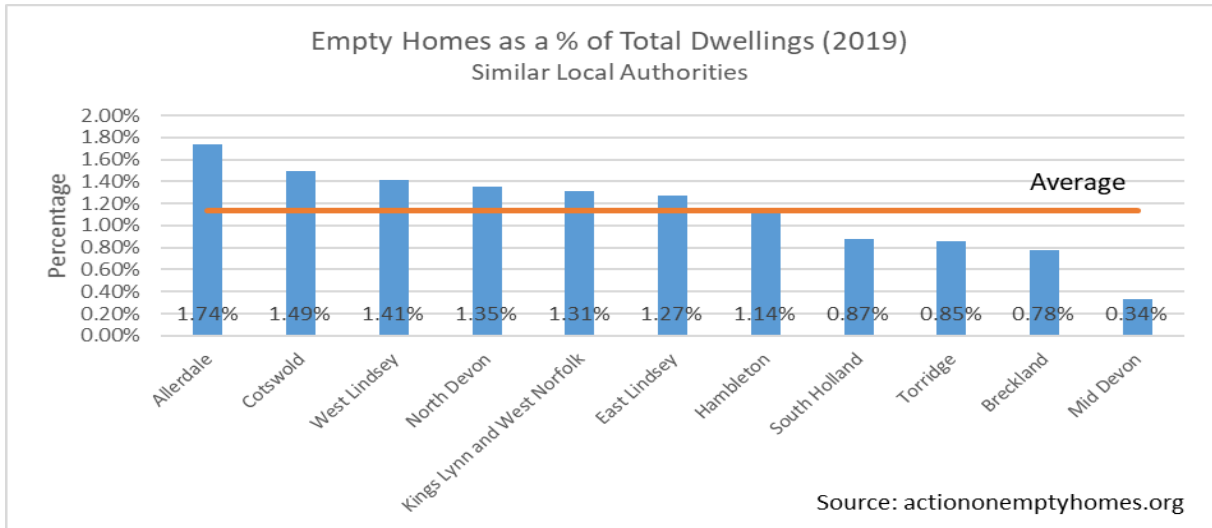
Empty Homes as a % of Total Dwellings (2019)
Similar Local Authorities

Chart 3: Similar Council comparisons

With an Empty Homes percentage of 1.41%; WLDC has the highest percentage within the county. The LA with the lowest percentage of empty properties is North Kesteven with 0.77%. This is shown in Chart 4.

Empty Homes as a % of Total Dwellings (2019)
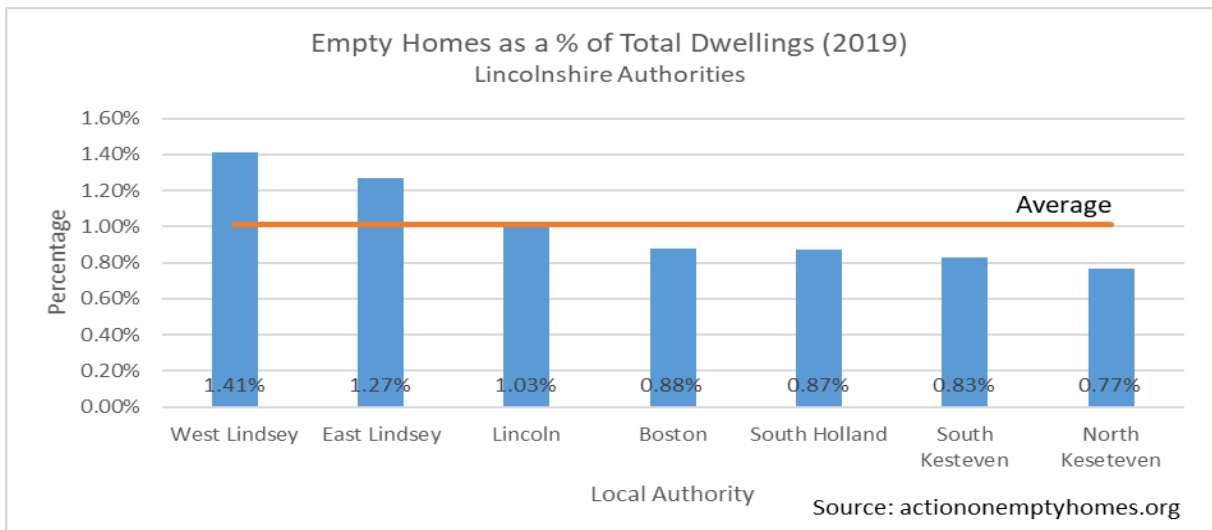**Lincolnshire Authorities**

Chart 4: Lincolnshire comparisons

Table 1 shows the national picture for empty homes as of 2019. WLDC is within the East Midlands group which has a group performance of 0.96%; the national percentage is 0.92%.

REGIONAL SUMMARY	LTEH		LTEH						Occurrence %
	2018		2,019	Homes	Change	%Change			
NORTH EAST TOTAL	16,979		18,154	1,243,868	1,175	7	UP		1.46
YORKSHIRE & HUMBER TOTAL	28,071		28,884	2,445,646	813	3	UP		1.18
EAST MIDLANDS TOTAL	19,664		20,324	2,114,436	660	3	UP		0.96
EAST OF ENGLAND TOTAL	19,950		20,922	2,715,518	972	5	UP		0.77
LONDON TOTAL	22,481		24,677	3,662,131	2,196	10	UP		0.67
SOUTH EAST TOTAL	27,743		29,552	3,954,810	1,809	7	UP		0.75
SOUTH WEST TOTAL	19,148		20,562	2,580,675	1,414	7	UP		0.80
WEST MIDLANDS TOTAL	22,381		23,515	2,517,477	1,134	5	UP		0.93
NORTH WEST TOTAL	39,769		39,195	3,314,453	-574	-1	DOWN		1.18
ENGLAND TOTAL	216,186		225,785	24,549,014	9,599	4.44	UP		0.92

Key: LTEH + Long term empty homes (6 month plus, non-exempt, as defined by MHCLG, data submitted by billing local authorities)

Table 1: National comparison[1]

[1] https://www.actiononemptyhomes.org/facts-and-figures