

## **Housing Emergency submission, Moray Council, 9 August 2024**

Dear Ms Burgess,

I apologise for the delay in responding to your request of 28 June 2024 on behalf of Moray Council.

In terms of void or unlettable properties within the Council's ownership, we have succeeded in significantly reducing relet times from 52 days in 2022/23 to 35 days in 2023/24. This followed an end to end review of processes and coordinated focus on 'every day counts' across respective teams. Having reduced voids to a comparatively low level, a further project to tackle a small number of properties requiring considerable work has commenced, as well as devising solutions to refurbish a small number of trust properties which have been vacant. Finally, a small number of properties have been declared surplus due to being uneconomic for the Council to refurbish and in the expectation that private buyers will be in a position to bring the them back into use.

Outwith the Council's own portfolio, there is a multi-departmental framework for engaging with owners whose properties have been unoccupied to understand the reasons for this and consider interventions which may alleviate the situation. This includes legal, environmental health, planning, council tax and housing participants. Our Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) has been revised to include and prioritise acquisition of empty homes, subject to value for money assessment, and the Council is actively considering a number of properties on this basis. See below link to the SHIP, of which Section 8 refers to open market purchases/empty homes: <http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file152349.pdf>

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further details or clarification.

Yours Sincerely,

Edward

**Edward Thomas** | Head of Housing and Property Services | Economy, Environment and Finance