

18 April 2019

Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Dear Colleague

Consultation on our inquiry into empty homes

The Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee is undertaking an inquiry into empty homes.

Terms of reference

The terms of reference for the inquiry are to examine:

- the extent to which empty properties impact on the supply of affordable housing in Wales;
- the impact of empty properties on communities in Wales and challenges faced by local authorities dealing with the problem;
- the extent to which local authorities have the legislative powers they need to deal with empty properties;
- examples of best practice in turning empty properties into affordable, energy efficient homes;
- the extent to which the changes introduced by the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 giving local authorities discretion to charge council tax premiums on empty homes have been utilised, and the effectiveness of this policy.

Invitation to contribute to the inquiry

The Committee would like to invite you to submit written evidence to assist in its consideration of the inquiry. It would be helpful if you could use the above terms of reference to frame your response.

In responding to the consultation, it would be helpful to have your comments in response to the following questions:

1. Is enough being done to tackle empty properties in Wales? If not, what needs to change?
2. What impact can empty properties have on a community?



3. How effectively are local authorities using the statutory and non-statutory tools at their disposal to deal with empty properties?
4. Do local authorities need additional statutory powers to deal with empty properties? If yes, what powers do they need?
5. Are owners of empty properties given the support, information and advice that they need to bring properties back into occupation? If not, what additional help do they need?
6. Is there sufficient awareness of the practical assistance that local authorities can offer to owners of empty properties? If not, how could this be improved?
7. Are the skills and resources of housing associations and the private sector being fully utilised to tackle empty properties?
8. Is enough being done to ensure empty properties can be brought back into use as affordable homes? Are there examples of good practice in this area?
9. Is the power to charge a council tax premium on long-term empty homes a useful tool and is it being effectively used? If not, how could this tool be made more effective?

Submissions should arrive no later than **31 May 2019**.

If you wish to submit evidence, please send an electronic copy of your submission to: SeneddCommunities@assembly.wales

Guidance

Written submissions should be no longer than five sides of A4, with numbered paragraphs, and should focus on the terms of reference.

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please provide a brief description of the role of your organisation.

Please see the [guidance for those providing evidence for committees](#).

Bilingual Policy

The Committee welcomes contributions in both or either of our official languages, English and Welsh. Information not submitted bilingually will not be translated and will be published in the language of submission only. We expect organisations to implement their own standards and schemes and to comply with their statutory obligations.

Disclosure of Information

You can find further details about how we will use your information at www.assembly.wales/InquiryPrivacy. Please ensure that you have considered these details carefully before submitting information to the Committee.

Contact details



If you wish to speak to someone regarding this consultation, please use the following contact details:

Committee Clerk

Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

National Assembly for Wales

Cardiff Bay, CF99 1NA.

Email: SeneddCommunities@assembly.wales

Telephone: 0300 200 6565

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

John Griffiths AM

Chair, Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

