# Medway Council logo.

**Medway Council Derelict and**

**Empty Properties Strategy 2022-2026**

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# Introduction

Most empty properties are privately owned. With the majority of owners tending to own one or more properties. There are many reasons why properties may be left empty, some are easily categorised, and other circumstances are more complex with owners having their own individual reasons for keeping their property empty.

Empty properties generally fall into two main categories. Short term empty properties, which include those empty for a period up to 6 months whilst they are being sold, between lettings, being renovated or awaiting probate following the death of the previous occupier. These properties do not normally require any intervention by the Council. Whereas long-term empty properties will likely require action by the Council in order to be brought back into use.

Properties are usually vacant for the following reasons:

* The property is being re-possessed.
* The owner is being cared for elsewhere or is in hospital.
* The owner has passed away and the property is undergoing probate.
* The property is being renovated.
* The property is being marketed for sale or rent.
* The owner does not have the time/skills/finance or the inclination to manage the property.

Properties that remain empty for a long time can have significant and adverse consequences for local communities. They can:

* Cause damage to neighbouring properties.
* Become an eyesore and blight the local area.
* Attract anti-social behaviour, vandalism, and arson.
* Encourage fly-tipping, accumulations of waste and pests.
* Be open to adverse possession or squatting.
* Represent a wasted resource of capital or rental income and a home for a family in need.

Empty and derelict properties are an issue across the country, alongside a shortage in both market and affordable housing. A House of Commons briefing paper 1 estimates the need for 345,000 new homes in England per year and the table below shows the last 10 years of completions.

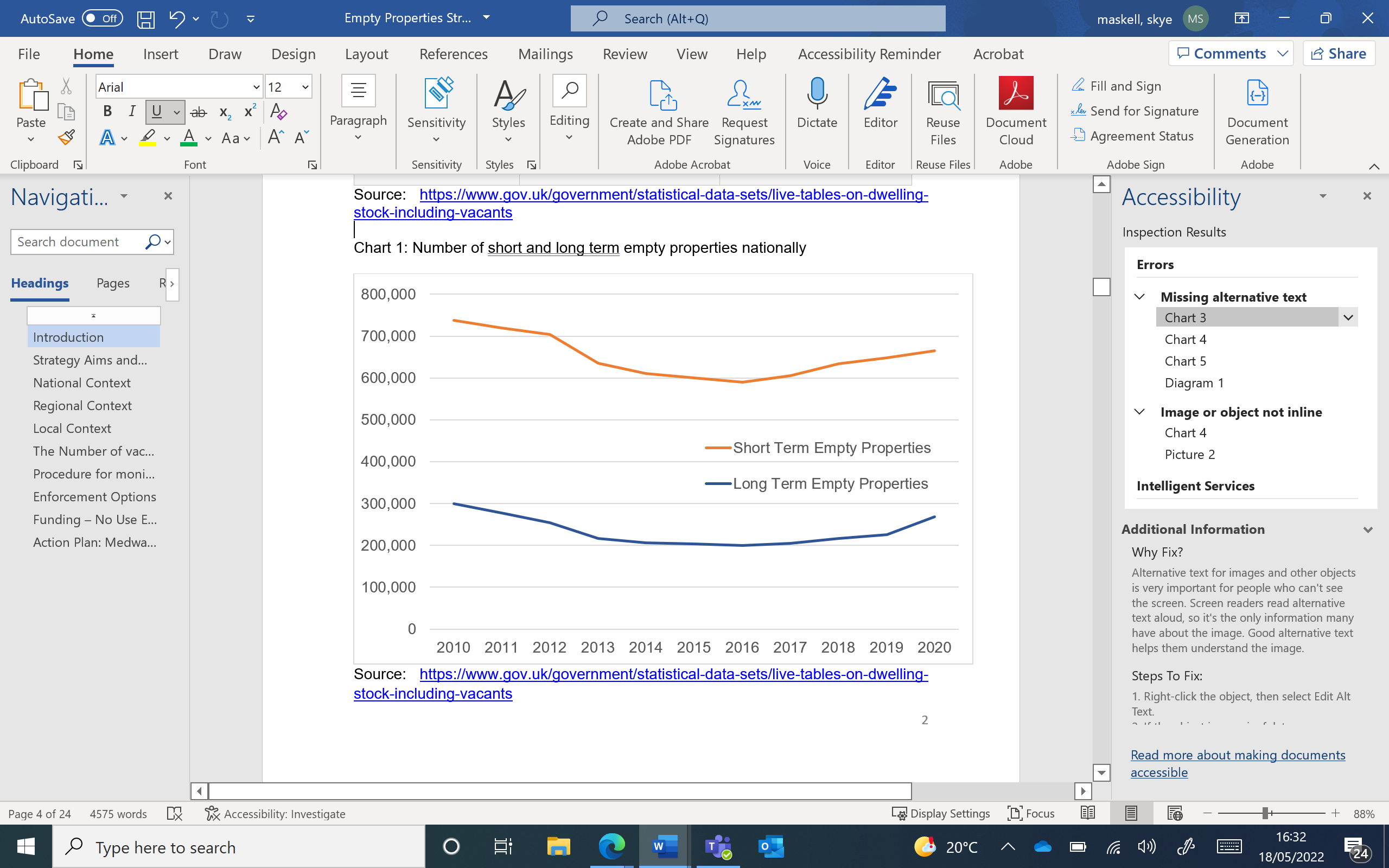
Table 1 and chart 1 show statistics published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and put the number of empty homes in England in October 2020 at 665,628. This represents a 2.6% increase on the previous year’s total. Of the 665,628 empty homes, 40.3% 268,385 were classed as long-term empty properties.

Table 1: Number of short and long term empty properties nationally

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Year | Short Term Empty Properties | Long Term Empty Properties |
| 2010 | 737,147 | 299,999 |
| 2011 | 719,352 | 277,529 |
| 2012 | 704,357 | 254,059 |
| 2013 | 635,127 | 216,050 |
| 2014 | 610,123 | 205,821 |
| 2015 | 600,179 | 203,596 |
| 2016 | 589,760 | 200,145 |
| 2017 | 605,891 | 205,293 |
| 2018 | 634,453 | 216,186 |
| 2019 | 648,114 | 225,845 |
| 2020 | 665,628 | 268,385 |

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>

Chart 1: Number of short and long term empty properties nationally



Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>

The latest 2018-based population projections identified that Medway’s population has steadily increased over the past 10 years. It is projected to be 280,040 in 2021 which is expected to increase by 8,732 (3.1%) to 288,722 by 2036 and 10,694 (3.8%) by 2040. This steady rise in the population has created a high demand for good quality accommodation for individuals and households.

Medway Council works in partnership with developers and registered providers to deliver new homes for market housing and a mix of affordable housing tenures. Table 2 below shows the annual dwelling completions over the period 2010/11 to 2019/20 and compares this with annual housing delivery requirements. This table shows that the level of delivery has been consistently below annual targets, and that this approach alone has not been sufficient in meeting the delivery target. Returning derelict and empty properties back into use will also assist Medway in meeting their annual housing delivery requirement.

Table 2: Dwelling completions 2010/11 to 2019/20

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Financial Year | Completions | Annual Housing Requirement | Annual shortfall/surplus |
| 2010/11 | 657 | 815 | -158 |
| 2011/12 | 809 | 1,000 | -191 |
| 2012/13 | 565 | 1,000 | -435 |
| 2013/14 | 579 | 1,000 | -421 |
| 2014/15 | 483 | 1,000 | -517 |
| 2015/16 | 553 | 1,000 | -447 |
| 2016/17 | 642 | 1,000 | -358 |
| 2017/18 | 680 | 1,000 | -320 |
| 2018/19 | 647 | 1,683 | -1036 |
| 2019/20 | 1130 | 1,662 | -532 |
| Total (10 years) | 6,745 | 11,160 | -4415 |
| Total (past 5 years) | 3.652 | 6,345 | 2,693 |
| Annual average (past 5 years) | 730 | 1,269 | -539 |

Source:<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/997714/LiveTable253.ods>

# Strategy Aims and Objectives

The aims of this strategy and attached action plan are to:

* Reduce the number of derelict and empty properties in Medway, through a coordinated approach working with internal and external agencies.
* To offer a comprehensive approach, utilising all resources available to bring properties back into use.
* To provide homes for Medway’s residents and lessen the adverse effect derelict and empty homes have on an area.

The objectives are as follows:

**Objective 1 – Identification**

Understanding where long term empty properties are located and who owns them working with internal and external agencies and teams.

* Create a database of long-term empty properties with owner’s details, recording what action the Council has taken on each property.
* Provide information on how to identify a potential empty property and the means of notifying the Derelict and Empty Properties Officer.
* Use Council tax data and other data sources to assist in identifying long term empty homes.

**Objective 2 - Support and Advice**

Developing a package of support and advice for empty property owners, promoting the service and encouraging owners of empty properties to bring them back into use without enforcement action.

* Contact and work with owners of long-term empty properties to bring them back into use, detailing what support is available to them.
* Maintain a list of interested parties who wish to buy empty properties in the area.
* Provide a grants/loan scheme to empty property owners to bring properties back into use to a satisfactory standard for habitation.
* Provide advice identifying the options available to the property owner on how to let or sell a property.
* Identify external agencies and companies that could assist an owner with the letting, sale or renovating of an empty property.
* Signpost empty property owners to other Council services like planning and building control.
* Identify potential properties to provide accommodation for people on the housing register or for use as temporary accommodation.

**Objective 3 - Enforcement**

Where necessary, use enforcement powers and compulsory purchase orders to tackle properties, where supporting empty property owners has failed to result in properties being brought back into use.

* Make use of enforcement powers and legislation to bring long term empty properties back into use.
* Use Compulsory Purchase Orders where other forms of enforcement have been unsuccessful in returning properties back into use

**Objective 4 - Partnership Working**

Explore all avenues open to the Local Authority, working in partnership with other agencies, to secure funding opportunities to bring empty properties back into use.

* Work with registered providers to identify opportunities to bring long term empty properties back into use as affordable housing.
* Work with Homes England to identify funding to bring empty properties back into use.
* Work with colleagues across the Council to identify empty properties and agree the most appropriate action to bring them back into use.
* Work with other Local Authorities and agencies like No Use Empty, to identify areas of joint working and potential sources of funding for bringing empty properties back into use.

# National Context

The Housing White Paper2, ‘Fixing our Broken Housing Market’ published in February 2017, highlighted the low level of housing completions, averaging at 160,000 new homes built per year since the 1970s. The report highlighted a need for 225,000 to 275,000 or more homes to be built per year to keep up with population growth and to start to tackle years of under-supply. Table 3 shows the level of national housing delivery over the past 10 financial years and the developing agent.

Table 3: Housing completions by developing agent.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Financial Year | Private Enterprise | Housing Association | Local Authorities | All  Dwellings |
| 2010-11 | 83,180 | 23,550 | 1,140 | **107,870** |
| 2011-12 | 89,120 | 27,460 | 1,960 | **118,510** |
| 2012-13 | 84,550 | 22,060 | 1,360 | **107,980** |
| 2013-14 | 89,630 | 21,790 | 910 | **112,330** |
| 2014-15 | 96,270 | 27,020 | 1,360 | **124,640** |
| 2015-16 | 111,350 | 26,470 | 1,900 | **139,710** |
| 2016-17 | 120,450 | 25,230 | 1,830 | **147,520** |
| 2017-18 | 131,730 | 27,170 | 2,020 | **160,900** |
| 2018-19 | 138,720 | 28,190 | 2,590 | **169,500** |
| 2019-20 | 141,110 | 32,330 | 1,810 | **175,250** |
| 2020-21 | 128,350 | 25,960 | 1,660 | **155,960** |

Source:<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1000437/LiveTable213.ods>

The government aims to reform the housing market and boost the supply of new homes in England. The paper committed the Government to:

* Plan for the right homes in the right places.
* Build homes faster.
* Diversify the housing market.
* Help people now.

Within the White Paper there is also a commitment to improving neighbourhoods by continuing to crack down on empty properties and supporting areas most affected by second homes. There is also a commitment to provide additional funding to Local Authorities through the New Homes Bonus scheme, which was launched in April 2011 and involves a grant being paid by central Government to Councils for increasing the level of housing. This bonus is for every additional unit delivered and is paid each year for a six year period. The bonus is based on the level of Council tax revenue raised for a new built unit, conversions and on any long-term empty home brought back into use. There is additional funding for providing affordable units. The funding is only given to Local Authorities for a net increase in units, placing an emphasis on Local Authorities to bring empty properties back into use. As of 2020/2021, Medway’s New Homes Bonus payments have totalled £36.7m since 2011/12. At a time when Local Government grant funding has been significantly reduced, this provides an added incentive to continue the Council’s work to bring empty properties back into use.

The National Policy Planning Framework 20213 (the NPPF) states that Local Authority planning policies and decisions should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this will help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained, and available sites could be used more effectively. As part of this approach, plans and decisions should support efforts to identify and bring back into residential use empty homes and other buildings, supported by the use of compulsory purchase powers where appropriate.

Homes England is the non-departmental public body sponsored by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. The agency’s primary aim is to accelerate and increase the number of new homes built, alongside the delivery of affordable homes through the Affordable Homes Programme.

The new Affordable Homes Programme 2021-20264 will provide grant funding to support the capital costs of developing affordable housing for rent or sale. The programme will be making available £7.39 billion from April 2021 to deliver up to 130,000 affordable homes by March 2026, all for delivery outside of London. The programme provides funding for bringing back long-term empty properties as affordable housing, either through purchase and repair or lease and repair. Medway Council will explore working in partnership with registered providers to secure funding to bring homes back into use.

# Regional Context

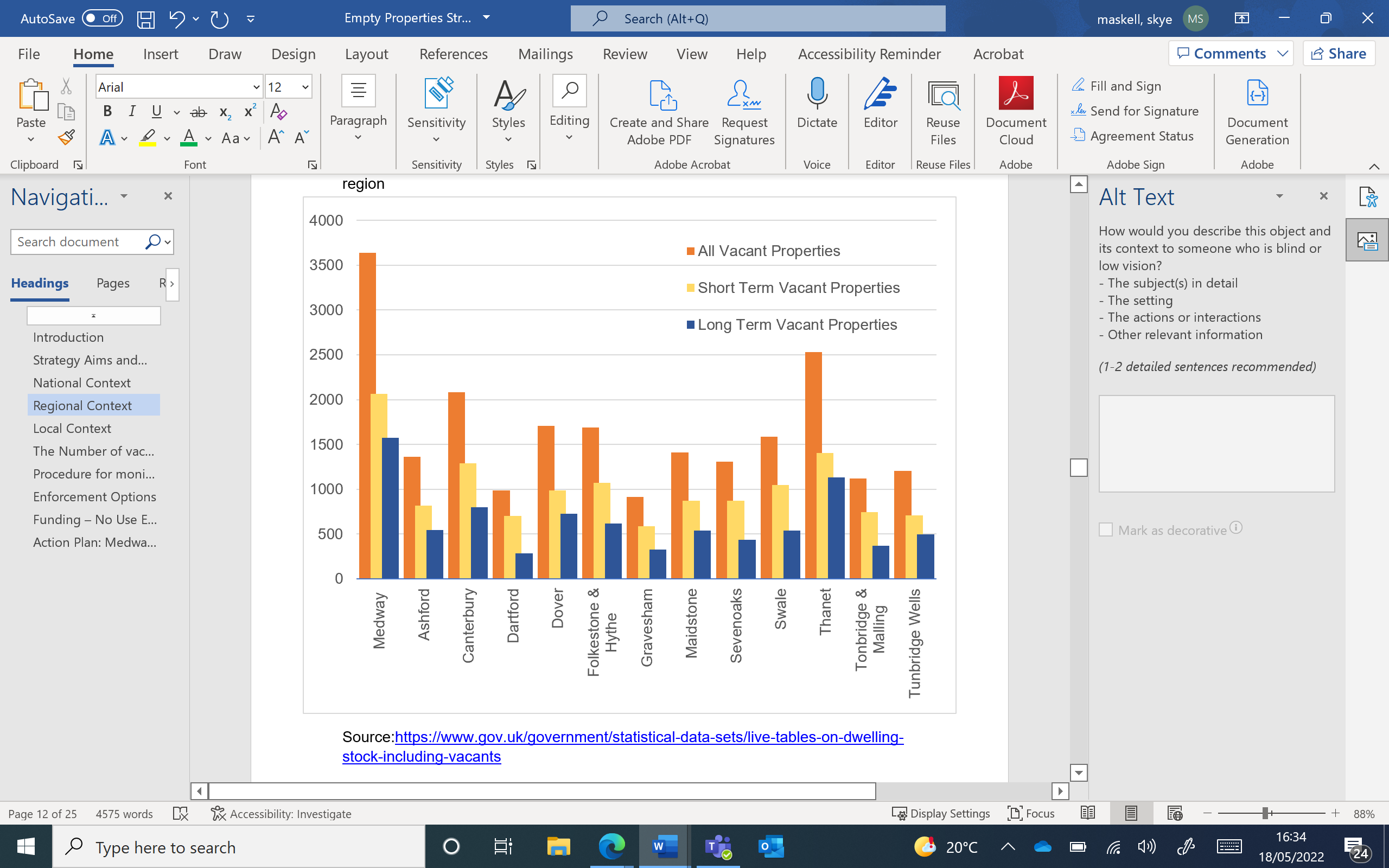
Table 4 and chart 4 show statistics published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for the Kent Region as of October 2020. The figures show the vacant property levels as a percentage of each Local Authority’s overall stock level. There was a total of 794,011 homes, with 21,024 empty homes, of which 6,768 (32%) were classified as long-term empty properties. Out of thirteen local authorities in Kent, Medway is reported to have the second highest number of long-term empty homes.

Table 4: Numbers of empty properties and long-term empty properties in the Kent region

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Local  Authority | Stock Total | All Vacant Properties | % of  Stock | Long Term Vacant properties | % of Stock |
| Medway | 116,287 | 3639 | 3.13% | 1573 | 1.35% |
| Ashford | 55,101 | 1360 | 2.47% | 543 | 0.98% |
| Canterbury | 68,697 | 2083 | 3.03% | 796 | 1.15% |
| Dartford | 47,849 | 985 | 2.06% | 283 | 0.59% |
| Dover | 54,956 | 1709 | 3.11% | 725 | 1.31% |
| Folkestone & Hythe | 43,733 | 1688 | 3.86% | 619 | 1.41% |
| Gravesham | 73,489 | 915 | 1.25% | 326 | 0.44% |
| Maidstone | 50,947 | 1408 | 2.76% | 537 | 1.05% |
| Sevenoaks | 52,728 | 1308 | 2.48% | 435 | 0.82% |
| Swale | 62,769 | 1586 | 2.53% | 541 | 0.86% |
| Thanet | 67,903 | 2533 | 3.73% | 1129 | 1.66% |
| Tonbridge & Malling | 55,655 | 1117 | 2.01% | 370 | 0.66% |
| Tunbridge Wells | 51,813 | 1202 | 2.32% | 494 | 0.95% |

Source:<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>

Chart 4: Numbers of empty properties and long-term empty properties in the Kent region



Source:<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>

The remaining Kent Local Authorities all have substantially lower longer-term vacant property figures than Medway except Thanet. One reason for the significant difference in levels throughout the county is the No Use Empty Scheme, which has been in operation throughout Kent for over a decade. The scheme provides loans up to £25,000 per unit to bring empty properties back into use. To date the scheme has provided 340 Loans totalling £35.2 million in funding, resulting in 6,667 units being brought into use.

# Local Context

As of 2021, the projected population of Medway is 280,040, accommodated in 115,153 dwellings. In terms of tenure, 70% of units are in private ownership, 15% are privately rented, and 15% are affordable housing owned by the Council or registered providers. Of the 115,153 dwellings, 11.2% are 1-bed, 25.4% are 2-bed, 52.7% are 3-bed, 10.7% are 4-bed and above. Table 5 below provides a further break down by dwelling type and size.

Table 5: Dwelling stock by type and size

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Dwelling type/size | Current stock (%) |
| 1 and 2-bedroom house | 15.4% |
| 3-bedroom house | 50.2% |
| 4 or more-bedroom house | 10.2% |
| 1-bedroom flat | 9.6% |
| 2 or more - bedroom flat | 8.2% |
| 1-bedroom bungalow/level access | 1.0% |
| 2-bedroom bungalow/level access | 3.5% |
| 3 or more-bedroom bungalow/level access | 2.0% |

Source: 2020 Valuation Office Agency

The average house price in Medway has risen steadily over the last 10 years, with the last recorded drop in housing value being in 2008. The average house price in Medway remains below the regional average and those of its neighbouring boroughs. Average household incomes are also below the regional average and as a consequence, owner occupation is unaffordable for many households who instead are reliant on the private rented sector.

The private rented sector has seen a steady increase both nationally and locally as more households are unable to access the housing market. There is also significant pressure locally from households moving into the area from London and other higher value local areas.

As of December 2020, there are 1,196 households that have been accepted onto the Council’s social housing waiting list HomeChoice and 307 household in temporary accommodation. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2015 estimated that 744 units of affordable housing per annum would need to be delivered over the new proposed Local Plan period 2019-2037. The current affordable housing delivery target is 204 units leaving a shortfall of 540 units per year.

The Council is committed to meeting the housing needs of its residents and helping them where required to access suitable accommodation. Bringing empty properties back into use can help towards meeting this need as well as making best use of existing housing stock.

# The Number of vacant properties in Medway

Whilst the overall number of empty properties in Medway is below the national target of 1.6% (currently 1.35%), the Council is committed to taking action to bring empty properties back into use, as they are recognised as having a serious impact on the viability of communities, blighting neighbourhoods with the potential for anti-social behaviour to occur. Empty properties are also a wasted resource and when brought back into use can contribute to an increase in the supply of housing. Bringing empty properties back into use has proven to have social, economic, and regenerative benefits for the areas affected.

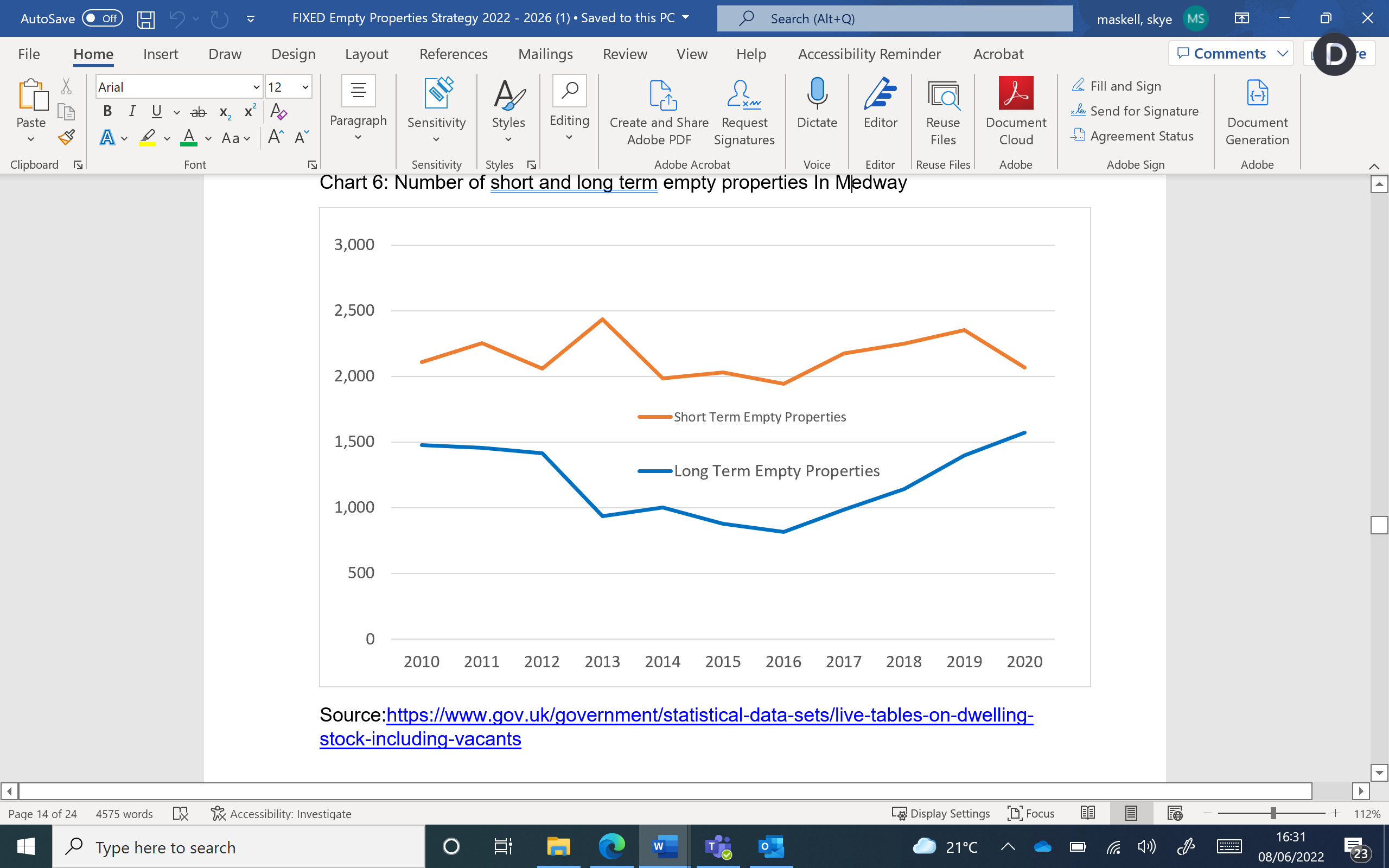
Using the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government’s live tables data, there are currently 1,573 long term vacant for 6 months or more privately owned properties and 2,066 short term vacant for less than 6 months properties in Medway. Table 6 and chart 6 show a clear increase in empty properties in both categories over the past 3 year period and without action this trend will continue upwards.

Table 6: Number of short and long term empty properties In Medway

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Financial Year | Short Term Empty Properties | Long Term Empty Properties |
| 2010 | 2,109 | 1,478 |
| 2011 | 2,255 | 1,455 |
| 2012 | 2,061 | 1,417 |
| 2013 | 2,437 | 938 |
| 2014 | 1,987 | 1,004 |
| 2015 | 2,031 | 879 |
| 2016 | 1,946 | 817 |
| 2017 | 2,175 | 986 |
| 2018 | 2,249 | 1,144 |
| 2019 | 2,351 | 1,398 |
| 2020 | 2,066 | 1,573 |

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>

Chart 6: Number of short and long term empty properties In Medway



Source:<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>

Using Council Tax records a more in-depth local snapshot can be provided, in addition to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government’s live tables data above. Table 7 overleaf, identifies the number of empty properties by ward areas and provides a more detailed breakdown for the length of time they have remained empty.

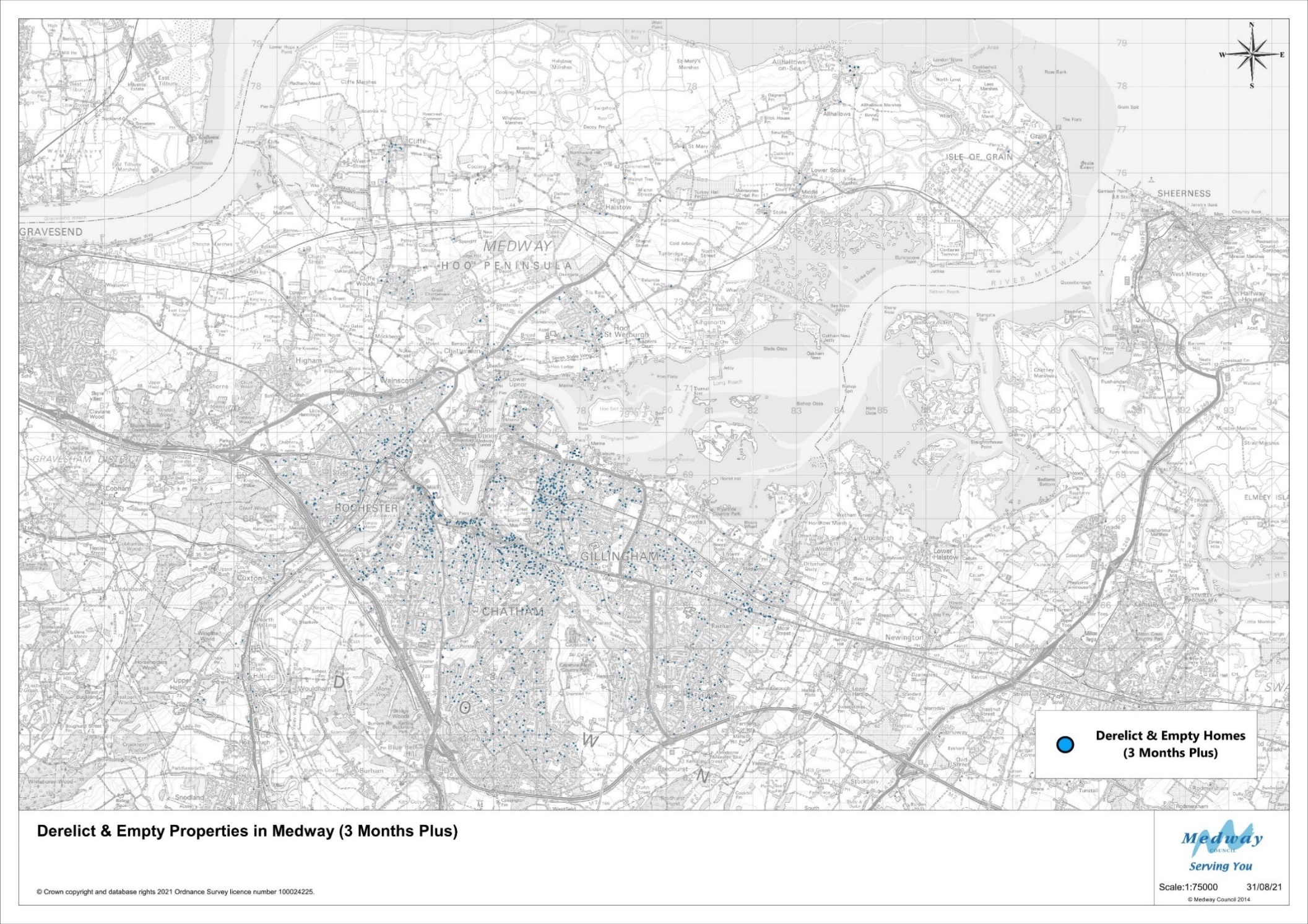
Although River Ward has the highest number of long-term empty properties, this area has been subject to several large-scale regeneration schemes over the past 10 years and as a result 138 units in this area have never been occupied and are awaiting sale or rent. Excluding River Ward most longer-term empty units fall within the following wards Gillingham North, Gillingham South, Luton and Wayfield and Chatham Central, These longer term empty properties are detrimental to residents as they may be a magnet for crime, antisocial behaviour and urban decline. These factors can drive down property values and make an area undesirable, leading to even more properties becoming vacant.

Map 1 on page 13 uses the Council Tax vacant home data and shows all properties vacant for 3 months or more located in Medway.

Table 7: Vacant properties by ward

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ward Areas | Empty under 3 months | Empty  3 months-2 years | Empty  2-5 years | Empty  5+ years | Total |
| Chatham Central | 54 | 130 | 23 | 6 | 213 |
| Cuxton and Halling | 8 | 17 | 5 | 2 | 32 |
| Gillingham North | 95 | 197 | 26 | 11 | 329 |
| Gillingham South | 73 | 128 | 34 | 7 | 242 |
| Hempstead and Wigmore | 8 | 14 | 3 | 1 | 26 |
| Lordswood and Capstone | 10 | 52 | 2 | 1 | 65 |
| Luton and Wayfield | 38 | 111 | 45 | 9 | 203 |
| Peninsula | 19 | 59 | 28 | 9 | 115 |
| Princes Park | 12 | 30 | 5 | 1 | 48 |
| Rainham Central | 10 | 38 | 4 | 5 | 57 |
| Rainham North | 28 | 40 | 7 | 3 | 78 |
| Rainham South | 21 | 45 | 6 | 1 | 73 |
| River | 63 | 234 | 32 | 11 | 340 |
| Rochester East | 41 | 60 | 11 | 3 | 115 |
| Rochester South and Horstead | 21 | 33 | 19 | 0 | 73 |
| Rochester West | 33 | 86 | 25 | 4 | 148 |
| Strood North | 33 | 72 | 21 | 5 | 131 |
| Strood Rural | 23 | 41 | 4 | 6 | 74 |
| Strood South | 36 | 61 | 16 | 3 | 116 |
| Twydall | 35 | 39 | 5 | 6 | 85 |
| Walderslade | 5 | 28 | 5 | 4 | 42 |
| Watling | 11 | 35 | 5 | 2 | 53 |
| Total | 655 | 1,550 | 331 | 100 | 2658 |

Source: Medway Council Tax Records



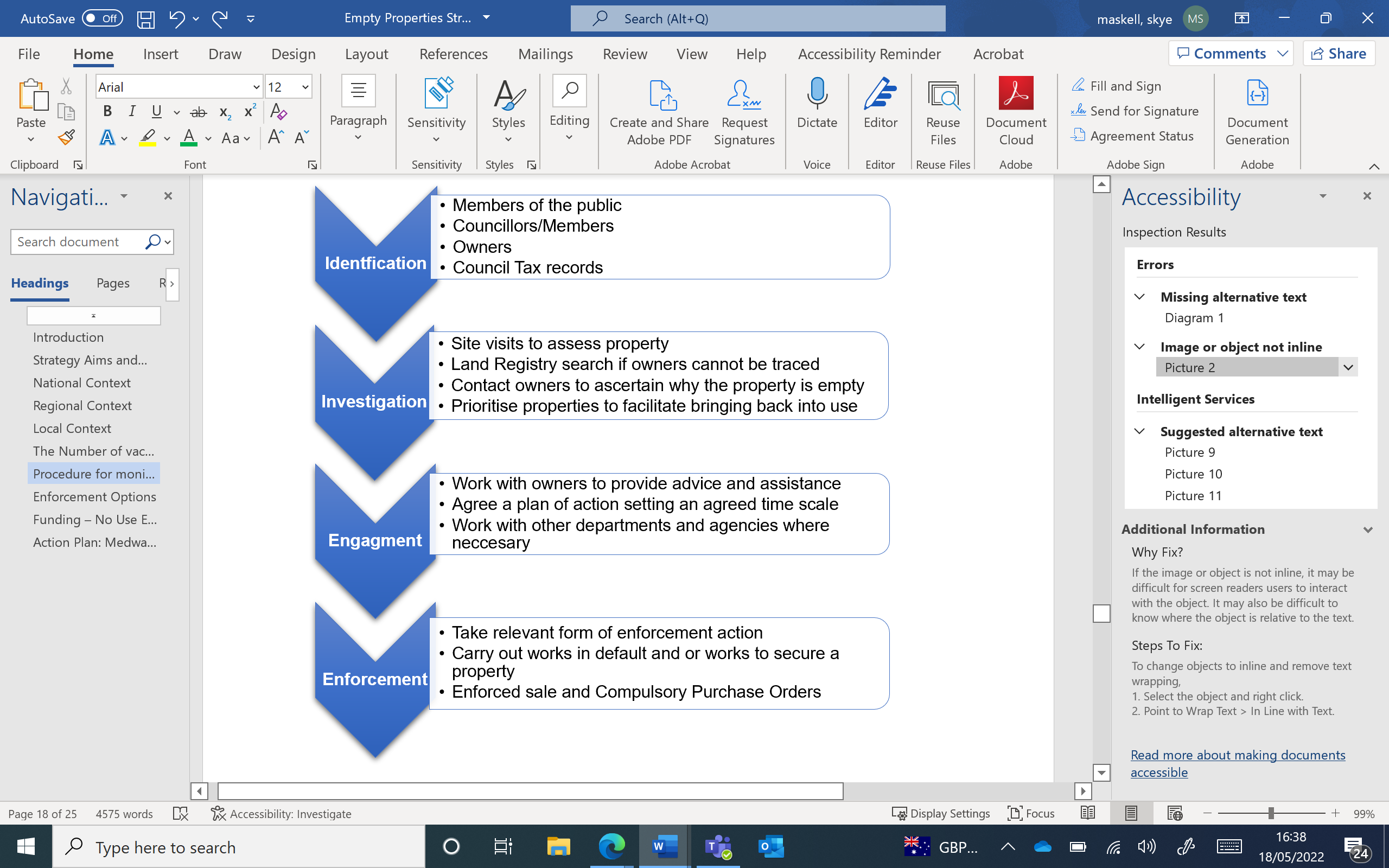
# Procedure for monitoring and dealing with Empty Properties

The identification, monitoring and enforcement action of empty properties within Medway will be dealt with by the Council’s Derelict and Empty Properties Officer. Flow chart 1 outlines the process in dealing with such properties.

Once a property has been identified, an inspection will take place to determine if the property is vacant and if its condition warrants the use of the Council’s powers. The first stage of action will be to identify and contact the owner, to ascertain why the property is empty, and what their plans are to return it to use. Based on the response from the owner, this will determine the next stage of action, which may range from providing information and advice informally, to taking enforcement action, carrying out works in default or proceeding to enforce a sale or compulsory purchase of the property.

In addition, by monitoring the type of intervention taken and the outcome, this can inform the effective allocation of resources in the future.

Flow Chart 1: Empty Properties Enforcement Procedure



# Enforcement Options

The Council will always attempt to work with the property and or landowner, but when this has not been possible or successful, it will consider the appropriate use of enforcement actions to bring an empty property back into use. The Council has a variety of powers available to it under various pieces of Legislation to assist in this function.

* **Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) –** Allows the Local Authority to obtain land or property without the consent of the owner.
* **Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – Section 226 –** Allows the Local Authority the compulsory acquisition of land for development and other planning purposes.
* **Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – Section 215 –** Allows the Local Authority to issue a notice to the owner of land or a property where it adversely affects the amenity of the area. The notice will specify what works the owner is required to address. If the owner fails to comply with the notice the Council may prosecute the owner of the property for non-compliance with the notice and undertake the works in default and make a charge against the property.
* **Housing Act 2004 – Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO) – Empty dwelling management orders** allow Local Authorities to take control of and manage a private residential property that has been empty for a long period where the owner has failed to bring it back into use.
* **Law of Property Act 1925 – Enforced Sale –** Allows the Local Authority the right to force the sale of an empty property to recover any costs incurred in dealing with the associated property.
* **Building Act 1984 – Section 77 and 78 –** Allows the Local Authority to issue a notice to the owner of a property when it represents a danger to the public, also allows the Local Authority to carry out works in default if required.
* **The Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions act 1982 – Section 29 –** Allows the Local Authority to prevent unauthorised entry to a property or prevent a building from becoming a danger to public health.
* **Housing Act 1985 – Section 265 -** If a property is dilapidated and it is not financially economical to bring it back into use, a demolition order can be served by the Local Authority.

# Funding – No Use Empty Scheme

Medway Council is currently running a trial of Kent County Council’s No Use Empty Scheme. The primary aim of the No Use Empty Scheme is to improve the physical urban environment in Kent, by bringing empty properties back into use as quality housing accommodation and to raise awareness of the issues surrounding empty properties, highlighting the problems they cause to local communities. The scheme has operated throughout Kent for over a decade providing over £40 million in loans to bringing back into use over 7,000 units.

Loans are available to owners of empty properties where they do not have the necessary funding or access to it to bring the property back into use. These loans can cover various types of work, such as:

* Disrepair or structural issues.
* Damp and mould growth.
* Electrical rewiring.
* Thermal upgrading such as windows.
* Boiler work and insulation.
* Improvements to kitchens or bathrooms.

Currently, the Council offers Loans up to £25,000 towards 100% of the total cost of the eligible works. The following conditions are attached to the grant:

* The property must have been empty for at least 6 months.
* Not meet the decent homes standard
* Upon completion of the works the property will be rented out at an affordable rent and the Council will have nomination rights to the property, until the loan has been fully repaid
* The property must conform to all planning and building control regulations
* All works must be carried out and completed by registered builders.
* Any loan given will be secured against the property and a charge on the property will be put in place.
* All loans are awarded on a discretionary basis and are subject to availability and policy review.

For more information or to apply for an empty property loan please visit [www.no-use-empty.org.uk](http://www.no-use-empty.org.uk)

**Reduced Auction Sales Rate**

As part of the No Use Empty Scheme Clive Emson’s auction house offer a reduced fee for selling vacant properties at auction. For more information or to apply for the reduce rate please visit [www.cliveemson.co.uk](http://www.cliveemson.co.uk)

**Links to referenced documents**

1. <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7671/CBP-7671.pdf> “Tackling the under supply of housing in England”

2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fixing-our-broken-housing-market> Housing white paper ‘Fixing our Broken Housing Market

3.<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf> National Planning Policy Framework

4. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-affordable-housing-funding> Affordable Homes Programme 2021 to 2026

# Action Plan: Medway Council Derelict and Empty Homes Strategy 2022-2026

**Priority 1 – Identification -** understanding where long term empty properties are located and who owns them working with internal and external agencies and teams

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ref:** | **Priority objective** | Target Date | Monitoring Period April 2022-23 | Monitoring Period April 2023-24 | Monitoring Period April 2024-25 | Monitoring Period April 2025-26 | Comments/Status |
| **1.1** | Create a database of long-term empty properties with owner’s details, recording what action the Council has taken on each property. | April 2022 |  |  |  |  |  |
| **1.2** | Provide information on how to identify a potential empty property and the means of notifying the Derelict and Empty Properties Officer. | April 2022 |  |  |  |  |  |
| **1.3** | Use Council tax data and other data sources to assist in identifying long term empty properties. | Ongoing |  |  |  |  |  |

**Priority 2 - Support and Advice –** developing a package of support and advice for empty properties promoting the service and encouraging owners of empty homes to bring their property back into use without enforcement action.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ref:** | **Priority objective** | Target Date | Monitoring Period April 2022-23 | Monitoring Period April 2023-24 | Monitoring Period April 2024-25 | Monitoring Period April 2025-26 | Comments/Status |
| **2.1** | Contact and work with owners of long-term empty properties to bring them back into use detailing what support is available to them. | Ongoing |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2.2** | Maintain a list of interested parties who wish to buy empty properties in the area. | April 2022 |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2.3** | Provide a grants/loan scheme to empty property owners to bring properties back to a satisfactory standard for habitation. | Ongoing |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2.4** | Provide advice identifying the options available to the property owner on how to let or sell a property. | Ongoing |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2.5** | Identifying external agencies and companies that could assist an owner with the letting, sell or renovating of an empty properties | Ongoing |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2.6** | Signpost owners to relevant services such as planning and building control | Ongoing |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2.7** | To identify potential properties to provide accommodation for people on the housing register or used for temporary accommodation. | Ongoing |  |  |  |  |  |

**Priority 3 - Enforcement –** Where necessary use enforcement powers and compulsory purchase orders to tackle properties where supporting empty property owners has failed to result in properties being brought back into use.

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| **Ref:** | **Priority objective** | Target Date | Monitoring Period April 2022-23 | Monitoring Period April 2023-24 | Monitoring Period April 2024-25 | Monitoring Period April 2025-26 | Comments/Status |
| **3.1** | Make use of enforcement powers and legislation to bring long term empty properties back into use. | Ongoing |  |  |  |  |  |
| **3.2** | Use Compulsory Purchase Orders where other forms of enforcement have been unsuccessful in returning properties back into use. | April 2022 |  |  |  |  |  |

**Priority 4 - Partnership Working -** Explore all avenues open to the Local Authority working in partnership with other agencies to secure funding opportunities to bring empty properties back into use.

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| **Ref:** | **Priority objective** | Target Date | Monitoring Period April 2022-23 | Monitoring Period April 2023-24 | Monitoring Period April 2024-25 | Monitoring Period April 2025-26 | Comments/Status |
| **4.1** | Work with Registered Providers to bring long term empty properties back into use as affordable housing. | Ongoing |  |  |  |  |  |
| **4.2** | Work with Government agencies such as Homes England to identify funding to bring empty properties back into use. | Ongoing |  |  |  |  |  |
| **4.3** | Work with colleagues across the Council to identify empty properties and agree the most appropriate action to bring them back into use. | Ongoing |  |  |  |  |  |
| **4.4** | Work with other Local Authorities at agencies like No Use Empty to identify areas of joint working and potential sources of funding for bring empty properties back into use. | Ongoing |  |  |  |  |  |