Empty Homes Fund Application Form

This application form is for property owners to outline their proposals to bring an empty home back into residential occupation within the district of South Kesteven. Please note grants from the council can only be used to support capital related repair costs to the property. Grants are not available to support revenue costs such as estate agent fees related to sales or letting, or insurance costs. Please post your completed application form to: **FAO: Mrs T Plumb, Housing Solutions, Freepost GM48, Grantham, NG31 7BR**	Your application must be received by **28th February 2012**. Your application should be received in hardcopy with your written signature at the end of the form. This application form can be requested from the Council or can be downloaded from the Councils website www.southkesteven.gov,uk The form can be found on the Councils website under the entry for 'Empty Homes' on the A-Z list of services. If you have any difficulty in completing this form, please email: **t.plumb@southkesteven.gov.uk**

Empty Homes Fund Applicant Details: Title: Mr/Miss/Mrs/other…… First name: ……. Last name: ……. Company name (if applicable): …….. Postal address: …… …….. …….. Postcode: ……. Telephone number: ……. Mobile number: …….. Email: ……. Are you the owner of the empty home? Yes ☐ No ☐ If not, please explain how you relate to the property: …… …….. ……..	Empty property details: Address: …….. …….. …….. Postcode: ……. Number of bedrooms: …….. Property type: (please delete as appropriate) house/bungalow/flat/other ……. What was the approximate date your property become empty: / / . Signed: …… Date: ……. **PLEASE NOTE THAT EMPTY HOMES FUNDING IS SUBJECT TO AN INTERNAL SURVEY BEING CARRIED OUT BY THE COUNCIL OR ITS REPRESENTATIVES**

Conditions of the Fund

The Council will carry out a survey at the property following an application.

Commitment to carry out necessary repair work must be evidenced at the time of the application.

The property must be brought back into use within 12 months of the fund payment.

The Council will require that the property is available for letting purposes and the tenant placed in the property shall normally be nominated from the Council's Housing Register for a period of 3 years at a rent not exceeding the Local Housing Allowance level for that type of property in the relevant area at the time of the grant award.

A Local land Charge will be placed on the property for a period of 12 months from release of the fund.

The fund is to be fully repaid if the property is not occupied within the 12 months of the fund payment.

Future use:

If it is your intention to let the property for at least 3 years taking into consideration the above conditions please complete the following:

1. I agree to the council nominating a tenant?

   Yes ☐ No ☐

2. I agree to charge a rent not exceeding the Local Housing Assistance Rates in the South Kesteven area for a period of 3 years?

   Yes ☐ No ☐

3. I would consider renting to people in receipt of Housing Benefit from the Council?

   Yes ☐ No ☐

If you wish to add any comments please use the space provided:

……
……
……

Repair cost

What is the estimated cost of bringing the property back into use meeting the Decent Homes Standard? £_____

If the fund is made available to you, a Local Land Charge will be placed on the property for 12 months; you will need to bring the property back into use meeting the Decent Homes Standard within that period.

Please provide the following details.

Repairs Required	Estimated Cost of Repairs	Available funds from your own resources (We may require evidence before the grant can be awarded.)	Amount sought from the Council's Empty Homes Fund **(Max £3000)**
	£		
	£		
	£		
	£		
	£		
	£		
	£		
	£		
	£		
	£		
	£		
Total cost	£	£	£

The council's Housing Strategy has three priority objectives, these are:

1. Increasing the supply of affordable housing
2. Preventing homelessness
3. Improving housing condition.

Please explain how you think the council's funding will contribute to these objectives should you be awarded a grant from the Council's Empty Home Fund:

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Please note the Empty Homes Fund is a discretionary scheme operated by the Council and has only limited funds available. Each application will be judged on its merits and the Council retains the right to both determine and turn down applications as it sees fit.

As our customers are all different with different needs and although we cannot promise to fit everything we do around everyone's individual needs, we can try to make some things easier and better. This is why we are asking all applicants to complete this questionnaire and return this to us in a prepaid envelope.

The information that you give us will be used solely by SKDC in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. If you have any questions or queries relating to the Empty Homes Fund, or if you need help or require assistance filling the application form in, please contact us.

This allows us to capture the ethnicity of people and put it on Flare without it having to be anonymous.

A. White	B. Mixed	C. Asian or Asian British	D. Black or Black British	E. Chinese or Other Racial Group
British ☐	White & Black Caribbean ☐	Indian ☐	Black Caribbean ☐	Chinese ☐
Irish ☐	White & Black African ☐	Pakistani ☐	Black African ☐	Other Racial Group ☐
Roma/Gypsy ☐	White and Asian ☐	Bangladeshi ☐	Other Black ☐	
Traveller of Irish heritage ☐	Other Mixed ☐	Other Asian ☐		
Other White ☐				

ABOUT THE FUND

The maximum available fund is **£3000.00** per property it's aim is to assist property owners in bringing their empty home back into use and to provide a source of god quality rented accommodation for those in need.

Eligible Properties

Eligible properties must have been **unoccupied** and **unfurnished** for at least 6 months from the date of the application. The vacant period is to be evidenced by council tax bills showing the relevant exemption.

Eligible applicants

Eligible applicants must be owners of the empty property or people representing the owners' interest (such as executor of wills). The following conditions apply:

- Consideration to nomination from the Housing Waiting List
- Rents will be set at no higher than Local Housing Allowance Rates for a period of 3 years
- The council will carry out a survey at the property
- Commitment of work must be evidenced prior to funds being released
- The property when completed will meet the Decent Homes Standard
- The property must be brought back into use within 12 months
- A Land Registry Charge will be applied to the property for a period of 12 months from release of the fund

If an empty property has a potential buyer who wishes to apply for the fund with the intention to let out the property, the council will use discretion in these cases; however an additional condition will apply:

- Exchange of contract must take place within an agreed period.

Eligible cost the Fund could pay for

Capital repair cost to the property, for example:

- Material costs
- Contractor's labour costs.

Ineligible costs not to be paid for by the Fund

Professional fees not related to the labour or materials of the improvement work, for example:

- Estate agent fees
- Surveyor fees
- Architect fees

Other Ineligible costs

- Works expected to be covered by a standard building insurance
- Repairs to sheds outbuildings or appurtenances.
- Works on land drainage
- Where works have been completed at the time of enquiry

Assessment Criteria

1. **The council will assess each application according to the following criteria:**

What might be a realistic length of time to bring the empty property back into occupation? (The council is particularly interested in properties that can be brought back into use within a 12 month period).However, we would not exclude properties that may take slightly longer, if the owners can show a positive commitment in working with the Council to bring them back into use.

2. **What is a realistic amount of resource required to bring the empty property back into use?**

If the Fund is not sufficient to improve the property and bring it back to a habitable standard, we would be expect the owners to be committed in making additional resources available to complete the project themselves.

3. **What is the owner's commitment to bringing the property back into use?**

The Fund aims to assist owners with a positive commitment to bringing the property back into use. Some owners may have already invested a significant amount of time and money improving the empty property, (the council can offer successful applicants some financial assistance to help them start/complete the planned work by way of this funding).

4. **Is there likely to be demand for such a property once brought back into use?**

The council are particularly interested in properties that are likely to attract a high demand on the rental market from the general public. This is usually dependent on the property size, type and location, for example, a 2 bed terraced property near the centre of town is likely to attract a higher demand than a 2 bed property in a remote location.

5. **Once brought back into use, how would this property contribute to the Council's priority objectives outlined in it's Housing Strategy?**

The objectives are:

- Increasing the supply of affordable housing
- Preventing homelessness
- Improving housing conditions

6. **Assessment process**

Following the closing date for Empty Homes Funding, all applications will be assessed and a short list of properties will then be identified, the Council will contact the owners to carry out inspections at these properties before making final decisions on granting successful applications.

Summary

The Policy gives financial assistance to private landlords and owners to improve housing conditions within the district.

The Policy promotes landlords and owners responsibility to repair and improve housing conditions by offering grants and referring people to other available assistance.

Legal and financial advice

Applicants should seek their own legal advice regarding the Local Land Charge which will be placed on the property and their own financial advice regarding the fund.