

**ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**

**POLICY AND RESOURCES**





4.11 A significant majority (65%) believed that consultancy support, such as an Empty Business Property Officer, would be valuable. Key support functions included local knowledge, advice and guidance, and a property matching service.







- b) Consultancy support, an Empty Business Property Officer to support businesses or business property owners to bring properties back into use. Providing
  - 1. Knowledge of all available business grant schemes
  - 2. An empty property and business matching service
  - 3. Provide advice, guidance, project management support to businesses going into empty properties.
  - 4. Other consultancy support, please state
  - 5. Is consultancy support required. Please tick yes or no
- c) Any other incentives or support measures that would encourage empty business properties to come back into use? Please state

#### 4. Community impact:

- 1. What additional support would community organisations require to bring vacant properties back into use?

#### Next Steps

We will carefully analyse the feedback received and report on findings. We will consider routes for funding beneficial options and use this to guide future actions and policies.

We genuinely value your input, and your participation in this consultation will play a vital role in shaping the future of our area. Together, we can unlock the untapped potential of our empty business properties and build a stronger, more prosperous community.

Thank you in advance for your time and contributions.

If you would be willing to contribute to future policy development in this area please leave your name and contact details below;

Please see Data Privacy Notice [Consultations - Privacy Statement | Argyll and Bute Council \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

#### **Background:**

The NDR (Scotland) Act 2020 stated that from 1 April 2023, empty property reliefs will be devolved to Local Authorities with relief for unoccupied property only available at the discretion of a local authority through local relief powers. The Council agreed that the current reliefs as set by the Scottish Government should be continued to 31 March 2024 to give the Council time to consider what it might want to do in terms of a new scheme that should incentivise business owners to bring empty properties back into use.

Argyll and Bute is home to 305 vacant business properties that, if brought back into use, have the potential to invigorate our communities, create employment





**APPENDIX 2 –**

**CONSULTATION FEEDBACK ON EMPTY BUSINESS PROPERTIES IN ARGYLL  
AND BUTE**



**Version1  
18 SEPTEMBER 2023  
FERGUS WALKER  
REVENUES AND BENEFITS MANAGER**

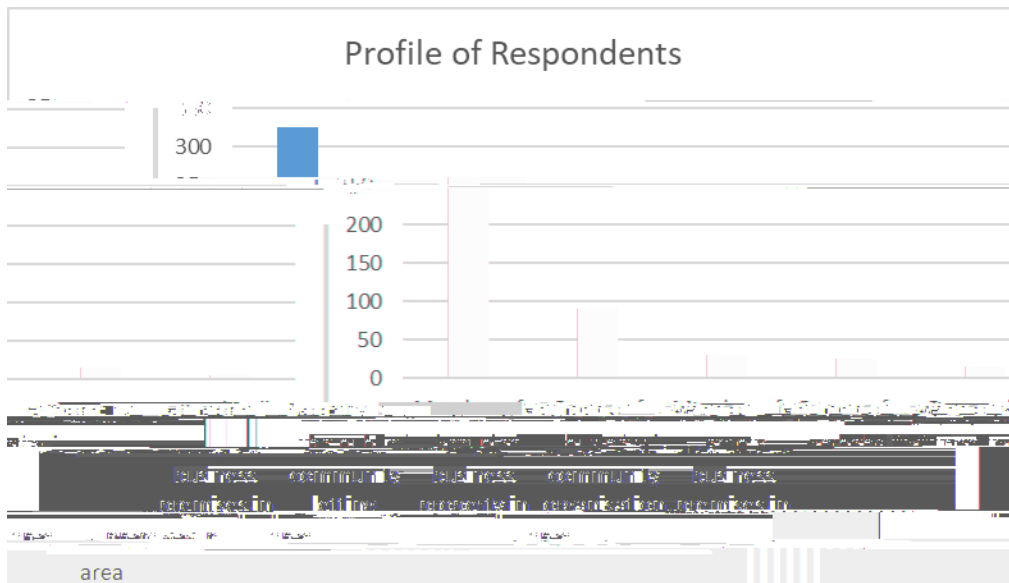




## 2. STAKEHOLDER PROFILE OF RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION

The table and chart below shows the profile of people who took time to respond.

I am:	No.
Member of the public	326
Owner of occupied business premises in area	90
Member of business community letting premises in area	30
Owner of an empty business property in area	25
Responding on behalf of community organisation	15
Someone tried to let a business premises in area	15
No details	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>506</b>



The majority of those responding classified themselves as interested members of the public, 64.4% 326 responses. A further 17.8%, 90 responses, were from people who own occupied business premises in Argyll and Bute. Approximately 10.9% were either members of the Business Community letting premises or they were owners of empty business premises in the area.

Circa 5.9% classified themselves as either someone who had tried to let an empty business premises in the area or responding on behalf of a community organisation. There was only a handful of people, 1%, who did not classify themselves on their returned form.





Rent Level Too High	244	46	20	10	6	3	
Potnetial Rates liability too high	213	58	19	5	5	3	

From the table it is clear that both rent levels being too high and potential non-domestic r



profitability.

13. **Inheritance Tax Uncertainty:** Uncertainty regarding inheritance tax treatment for certain businesses is mentioned as an issue.

- f) *a hub for local music and arts*
- g) *Other, please state*

**8.**





- interior and exterior aspects.
12. **Penalising Building Neglect:** Suggested penalties for neglect and misuse of properties.
  13. **Appealing External Appearance:** Encouraging appealing storefront appearances.
  14. **Permitting Creative Shopfronts:** Allowing artists to develop imaginative shopfronts without extensive permits.
  15. **Discounted Utilities:** Exploring agreements with utility companies to provide discounted utilities during the initial rental period.
  16. **Demolition Grants:** Financial incentives for demolishing vacant buildings when appropriate.
  17. **Subdivision of Units:** Suggestion to subdivide larger units for more flexible occupancy.
  18. **Double Council Tax Reduction:** Extended reduction or removal of double council tax during renovation.
  19. **Private Water Supply Assistance:** Providing help for properties with private water supplies.
  20. **Recognition of Seasonality:** Acknowledging the impact of seasonality on businesses.

## **11. RESPONSES TO QUESTION 3B – CONSULTANCY SUPPORT/EMPTY PROPERTY OFFICER FOR OCCUPYING VACANT BUILDINGS**

Question 3b) floats the idea of the provision of consultancy support such as an Empty Business Property Officer to support businesses or property owners to bring these properties back into use.

local knowledge re the sort of support being available to stakeholders about empty properties. Similarly 71% would want advice and guidance and a matching service was a good idea according to 57% of stakeholders. This would match empty properties to the people who may register an interest re taking them on.

### **13. QUESTION 4 COMMUNITY IMPACT**

- 1. What additional support would community organisations require to bring vacant properties back into use?*

The feedback on "Community Impact" highlights key themes, emphasising financial support, knowledge and guidance, collaboration, incentives for property owners,