# Empty retail unit in Stirling costs council nearly £19,000



A retail unit situated in the heart of Stirling city centre has faced an extended vacancy that has financially impacted Stirling Council, costing nearly £19,000 since its inception. The shopfront, located on Maxwell Place, has remained largely unused since its construction in 2016, with only one tenant occupying the space for a brief period.

The unit is part of a larger £6 million development that includes several ground-floor commercial units and 53 affordable housing units above, strategically located near Stirling railway station. However, despite the potential that such a prime location might offer, the retail shopfront has been empty for cumulative periods amounting to over eight years, as reported by The Courier.

Stirling Council disclosed to The Courier that it has expended a total of £18,881.03 in public funds on this shopfront. An email, obtained through a freedom of information request, sent in November 2017 and directed to various council personnel, described the retail space as “effectively uneconomic to rent out”. This correspondence highlights concerns regarding the viability of potential tenants, suggesting that comprehensive re-fitting costs would dissuade businesses, such as barbershops, from leasing the unit. The email indicated that the council may need to undertake additional works linked to housing in order to mitigate the financial burden related to the vacant unit.

In response to these challenges, a proposal to fit out the space specifically as a barbershop was put forth in February 2017, receiving approval by October 2018. However, the actual fit-out was delayed due to procurement issues, with the completion of the work only achieved around two years later. In October 2020, the establishment Barber Red & Co opened its doors in the newly refurbished space but made the decision to vacate in early August 2021. The business owner, Ed Kavanagh, cited the need for a “smaller more suitable premises in Stirling” as the rationale behind this move.

Currently, the unit on Maxwell Place is still listed as available for lease on Stirling Council’s website, with an initial rental price set at £13,000 per year, excluding VAT. Subsequent years of occupancy would see this price increase to £14,000 in the second year and £15,000 in the third year, with a proposed rent review in the fourth year. If the unit had been occupied consistently since its construction, the council would have anticipated income in excess of £100,000. Instead, given its prolonged vacancy, the financial outcome has skewed heavily towards a loss.

A representative from Stirling Council commented on the situation, stating, “This business unit was previously occupied but was vacated by the tenant in August 2021. Negotiations with a new tenant are progressing towards conclusion.” This statement suggests efforts are ongoing to find a new tenant that would help alleviate the financial strain from the empty unit.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/5219598/maxwell-place-stirling-empty-shop-unit/> - The article at this URL corroborates the claim that a retail unit in Maxwell Place, Stirling, has been largely vacant since 2016, costing the council almost £19,000.
* <https://www.stirling.gov.uk/business-and-licences/property/properties-for-lease-draft/unit-3-52-maxwell-place-stirling/> - This page supports the information about available retail units in Stirling, including details about leasing options and the condition of such properties.
* <https://www.zoopla.co.uk/for-sale/commercial/details/56726102/> - This listing on Zoopla indicates that retail premises are available for sale in Maxwell Place, Stirling, which shows the current market conditions and property listings in the area.
* <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/business-environment/business/5153477/stirling-empty-shops/> - The article discusses the broader issue of empty retail units in Stirling city centre, providing context for the challenges faced by vacancies like the one at Maxwell Place.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This URL is the original source providing the context and information about the retail unit's history, vacancy, and financial impacts.