

INFORMATION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	ENVIRONMENT HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE	5 SEPTEMBER 2017	7
EMPTY RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY POSITION STATEMENT			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

Previous reports have been presented to Members detailing the numbers of long-term empty residential properties. The most recent report was in September 2016 to the Environment, Health and Housing Committee. In recent years a number of changes have been made to the council tax discount regime in relation to empty residential property and members have asked for regular updates to monitor the effect of those changes. This is an update report to advise members of the latest position.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Revenues and Benefits Shared Service – Council Tax and property occupancy data.

LINK TO INFORMATION

[Empty Residential Property Position Statement - 5th September 2017](#)

WHY IS THIS INFORMATION BEING GIVEN TO THE COMMITTEE?

An annual update is provided to the Environment, Health and Housing Committee in September of each year.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact Kirstine Riding, Housing Services Manager – Kirstine.riding@fylde.gov.uk

EMPTY RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY POSITION STATEMENT - 5TH SEPTEMBER 2017

This is the background information to accompany the information item presented to members of the Environment, Health and Housing Committee at its meeting on the 5th September 2017.

Members have received previous reports to the former Policy Development Scrutiny Committees and Environment, Health and Housing Committee in September 2015 and 2016 to update the position on the numbers of long-term (i.e. greater than 6 months) empty residential properties in the borough. The term 'long-term empty' has referred to properties that have been empty for 6 months or more. This includes, for Council Tax purposes, a second type of empty property to include those that have been empty for 2 year or more. This information has taken account of policy changes that have been introduced for long-term empty properties.

The most recent change to Council Tax for long-term empty properties was introduced in April 2014. This change introduced a Council Tax Premium to be levied on properties that had remained empty for 2 years or more. The premium is an additional 50% of the Council Tax charge such that 150% of the Council Tax for the property becomes payable. The additional premium complements other council tax measures that require 100% of the Council Tax to be paid for months 6-24 of being empty. The effects of the various council tax changes on the number of long term empty properties can be seen in the table below:

Date	Long term empty	2 years+ empty
April 13	701	n/a
April 14	563	181
April 15	531	137
July 15	544	132
Oct 15	612	75
Dec 15	583	90
May 16	576	68
July 16	538	63
Sept 16	550	80
Dec 16	534	75
Apr 17	583	74
Jul 17	538	77

The table shows a significant and continuing reduction in the numbers of 2 years+ empty from April 2014 when the policy was introduced totalling a total reduction of 104.

Since October 2015 the reduction in the number of long-term empty properties has been more modest with an increase in December 2015 and September 2016. Numbers have now fallen to levels similar to those in October 2015.

At the meeting of the former Policy Development Scrutiny Committee of November 2013 members resolved that additional actions to deal with empty properties could only be taken within existing resources and actions the housing service can take are limited to complaints received from members of the public. In the financial year 2016-17 there were no such complaints.

In 2017/18, (31st May) one complaint has been received with regards to a property in St Anne's. Housing Services team visited the property and have written to the owner in June to request an update on the property. To date the owner has not replied to this letter. The complaint has been forwarded to Environmental Protection, Planning Enforcement and Building Control to ascertain if any action is possible by the Council. To date both Planning Enforcement and Environmental Protection have visited and no enforcement action is possible. Planning Enforcement also intend to contact the owner to advise that a complaint has been received.

Kirstine Riding, Housing Services Manager