

# INFORMATION ITEM



REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE	6 SEPTEMBER 2016	11
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 about the numbers of, particularly, long term empty residential properties. The most recent report was in September 2015 to the Environment, Health and Housing Committee. In recent years a number of changes have been made to the council tax scheme in relation to empty residential property and members have asked for regular updates to monitor the effect of those changes. This is the latest report to advise members of the effects of the changes.

### SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Director of Development

### LINK TO INFORMATION

Attached

### WHY IS THIS INFORMATION BEING GIVEN TO THE COMMITTEE?

The information is being given to members because of a request to do so from previous Policy Development Scrutiny Committees and Environment Health and Housing Committee on the 5<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact: Kirstine Riding - [kirstine.riding@fylde.gov.uk](mailto:kirstine.riding@fylde.gov.uk)

## EMPTY RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY POSITION STATEMENT

4<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2016

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 4<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

Members have received previous reports to the former policy development scrutiny committees and Environment, Health and Housing Committee in September 2015 to update the position on the numbers of long term (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. It now includes, for council tax purposes, a second type of empty property that has 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 property 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 number of long term empty properties is presented in the following table;

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
June 16	552	59
July 16	538	63

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 122. Since April 2014 the reduction in the overall number of long term empty property has been more modest with an increase from July to Oct 2015, from since numbers have fallen to figures similar to April 2014.

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 2014-15 there were no such complaints and in 2015-16 only one complaint has been received.

The complaint was in relation to an empty property with broken windows and a target for children in the area and a boarding notice was served by Environment Protection. The property has since been sold and the property completely renovated and it is now occupied and in good condition. The Housing Team have received 2 other complaints about empty properties but following investigations these were both occupied.

**Kirstine Riding, Housing Services Manager 27<sup>th</sup> July 2016**