

Empty Property Consultation Evaluation

Total number of responses 13

0 were owners of empty, unfurnished property within the District

1 were undergoing major repairs

0 were subject to probate, emergency situation or owner in hospital or residential care

1 were owners of second homes within the district

Question	Response Rate	Additional Comments Received	Council response
Do you agree that the draft Empty Property Strategy clearly explains why empty properties are a priority for the council?	Strongly Agree 8%  Agree 31%  Neither agree or disagree 38%  Disagree 15%  Strongly disagree 0%  Prefer not to say 8%	N/A	15% of the respondents did not find the strategy clearly explained why empty properties are a priority to the council.  77% of respondents either had no opinion or where satisfied that the strategy was clear.
'Do you agree with the Council's approach to identifying and prioritising empty properties?	Strongly Agree 8%  Agree 61%  Neither agree or disagree 8%	N/A	69% of respondent where supportive of the Council's approach to identifying and prioritizing empty properties

	<p>Disagree 15%</p> <p>Strongly disagree</p> <p>Prefer not to say 8%</p>		
<p>Do you agree with the Council's approach for providing help and assistance to owners of empty properties?</p>	<p>Strongly Agree 8%</p> <p>Agree 45%</p> <p>Neither agree or disagree 31%</p> <p>Disagree 8%</p> <p>Strongly disagree</p> <p>Prefer not to say 8%</p>	N/A	<p>53% of respondents were supportive of the provision of financial support to encourage empty properties to be brought back into use.</p>
<p>Do you agree with the Council's approach to enforcement when appropriate to deliver the strategy?</p>	<p>Strongly Agree 15%</p> <p>Agree 39%</p> <p>Neither agree or disagree 15%</p> <p>Disagree 8%</p>	N/A	<p>54% of respondents were supportive of the council approach to enforcement when dealing with empty properties.</p>

	<p>Strongly disagree 15%</p> <p>Prefer not to say 8%</p>		
<p>Do you have any other comments on the Council's draft Empty Property Strategy?</p>		<p>If empty properties are due to rents which are too high the council needs to adjust rates so small businesses can thrive in a difficult market - the more businesses in the high Street the better it is not a good policy to have empty high street properties it brings the tone of the town</p> <p>The Council have no right to force owners of empty property to sell at, presumably, below market price.</p>	<p>The empty property strategy is focused on encouraging residential properties back into use to meet the demand for housing in the district.</p> <p>Enforcement such as compulsory purchase would only be considered as a last resort where a property was deemed to be having a significant detrimental impact on the local surrounds or community.</p>
<p>Proposal 1 – Removal of one months council tax discount</p>	<p>Strongly support 15%</p> <p>Support 23%</p> <p>Neither agree or disagree 23%</p> <p>Disagree 0%</p> <p>Strongly disagree 23%</p>	<p>It's a dictatorship approach. The Council have no right to force people to sell.</p> <p>Nor should there be Council tax payable on these properties because there are no residents, therefore Harb DC are not providing any sort of service to these properties whatsoever</p>	<p>There is more support for properties being liable for full council tax from day one than against the proposal at 38%</p> <p>Some argue that empty properties do not use council services so charging a higher rate is unjustified. However the council tax is used to fund other agencies such as police and fire and rescue service by their nature empty properties are at higher risk of arson and/or anti social behaviour</p>

	Prefer not to say 15%		Exemptions for properties undergoing probate or actively being marketed for sale will be available.  Need to have a balanced approach and consideration of individual circumstances.
Proposal 2 - Empty 1-5 years – double standard council tax (200%) • Empty 5 – 10 years – triple standard council tax (300%) • Empty 10 years or more – four times standard council tax (400%)	Strongly Support 23%  Support 15%  Neither agree or disagree 31%  Disagree 0%  Strongly disagree 23%  Prefer not to say 8%	It's a money grabbing exercise  If a property has been empty long term there needs to be investigations as to the reason- if the person is in long term care etc it is not right that they be charged for the extra council tax - try are not using the council services - however of it is a business or tax avoidance situation this needs to be dealt with legally. The people/companies who are deliberately leaving properties empty will be difficult to pursue.  Daylight robbery for nothing in return  Objection to applying Council Tax Premium on properties that are going through sale and are actively being marketed for sale	38% or respondents were supportive of this proposal.  It is recognized that there needs to be scope for discretionary exemptions outside of the statutory exemptions for cases where the property is subject to probate or the occupier going into care or facing financial hardship for example.  Some argue that empty properties do not use council services so charging a higher rate is unjustified. However the council tax is used to fund other agencies such as police and fire and rescue service by their nature empty properties are at higher risk of arson and/or anti social behaviour  Overall, whilst there is support for the idea of encouraging owners of empty properties to bring them back into use, some believe that the proposed premiums are too much.
Proposal 3 –	Strongly Support 23%	Argue that it is unfair to penalize second home owners who do not use	There was no clear consensus for the introduction of second home premiums

<p>Double council tax for second homes</p>	<p>Support 8%</p> <p>Neither agree or disagree 23%</p> <p>Disagree 8%</p> <p>Strongly disagree 23%</p> <p>Prefer not to say 15%</p>	<p>council services as much as primary residents</p> <p>Due to the small number of second homes identified in the district could each one be assessed on a case by case basis.</p> <p>Need to have a clear definition of what a second home is.</p> <p>They believe it is a draconian and penal approach which penalizes hard working families who have a second home.</p>	<p>with a mixture of support and opposition for this proposal in equal amounts</p> <p>The comments highlight the complexity of the issues in maximizing the availability of housing within the district but also considering the other benefits that second home owners could contribute to the local community.</p> <p>Some feel that targeting second homeowners is unfair as they have worked hard to afford these properties</p>
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Equalities Assessment

**Equalities - Respondents per question**

	25 to 29	30 to 44	45 to 59	60 to 64	65 to 79	I wish not to declare my age	Not stated	Total Respondents		
<b>Age (years)</b>	1 7.7%	1 7.7%	2 15.4%	2 15.4%	4 30.8%	2 15.4%	1 7.7%	13 100.0%		
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>				<b>Prefer not to say</b>	<b>Not stated</b>	<b>Total</b>		
	6 46.2%	4 30.8%				2 15.4%	1 7.7%	13 100.0%		
<b>Physical/Mental Condition or illness lasting or expected to last 12 months or more</b>						<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Prefer not to say</b>	<b>Not stated</b>	<b>Total</b>
						2 15.4%	8 61.5%	2 15.4%	1 7.7%	13 100.0%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>White - White British / White Other</b>					<b>Prefer not to say</b>	<b>Not stated</b>	<b>Total</b>		
	10 76.9%					2 15.4%	1 7.7%	13 100.0%		