

4 (C) Councillors - for Oral Reply – 18 October 2021

10. From Councillor Nicholas Bennett MA JP to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management	<p>If he will set out in table format the number of (i) residential, (ii) Commercial (including public sector properties) which have stood empty for –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 6 months to 1 year 2. 1 year to 2 years 3. 2 years to 5 years 4. 5 years to 10 years 5 more than 10 years <p>What is the longest time any property has remained empty; what action is being taken to bring these properties back into occupation; and how many are owned by the Council?</p>
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(i) Residential properties - Council Tax

Number of properties recorded as empty on the Council Tax register by band at the 7 October 2021 are shown below:

Band	6 months to 1 year	1-2 years	2-5 years	5-10 years	Over 10 years	Total
A	18	11	16	4	0	49
B	59	56	26	40	2	183
C	154	116	82	17	6	375
D	95	87	66	16	10	274
E	45	39	13	9	4	110
F	20	32	16	1	3	72
G	16	19	14	4	0	53
H	2	1	3	0	1	7
Total	409	361	236	91	26	1123

Note: properties recorded as empty over 2 years are subject to the Empty Home Premium

The longest a Council Tax property has been recorded as empty is 28 years.

The Council liaises regularly with Housing Association partners to ensure empty properties are let as quickly as possible. All Housing Associations have strict targets on void turnaround and publish annual performance statistics against their targets. These are also monitored and published by central government through the CORE data system. Where properties are vacant for an extended period, we do investigate with the housing associations to clarify the reason for this and ensure that, where possible, these homes can be brought back into use.

In addition to the work being undertaken with Housing Associations the Council also works with the owners of privately owned empty homes and offers assistance by way of grants and referrals to our contracted management services in order to bring these homes back into use.

As part of the Transforming Bromley Agenda, we are reviewing the alignment of the service with the Council's Regeneration Team and are currently in the process of going to advert for staff to work specifically upon empty homes services.

One residential property is owned by the Council and is being held for the Churchill Quarter redevelopment. The cost to bring it to temporary lettable standard is prohibitive.

(ii) Commercial Properties – Business rates

Number of commercial properties recorded as empty on the Business Rates register by property description at the 7 October 2021 are shown below:

Property Description	6 months - 1 year	1 - 2 years	2 - 5 years	5 - 10 years	Over 10 years	Total
Advertising Right and Premises	0	0	22	2	0	24
Bank and Premises	1	0	0	0	0	1
Bar and Premises	0	1	0	0	0	1
Beauty Salon and Premises	0	0	1	0	0	1
Betting Shop and Premises	0	1	0	0	0	1
Bowling Club and Premises	0	1	0	0	0	1
Business Unit and Premises	1	0	4	0	0	5
Cafe and Premises	2	0	1	0	0	3
Car Parking Space and Premises	5	10	12	0	0	27
Car Parking Spaces	1	1	0	1	0	3
Car Showroom and Premises	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cattery and Premises	0	0	1	0	0	1

Clinic and Premises	0	1	1	0	0	2
Club and Premises	1	0	0	1	1	3
College and Premises	0	0	1	0	0	1
Communication Station and Premises	0	0	2	5	6	13
Dog Grooming Parlour	0	0	1	0	0	1
Factory and Premises	2	2	1	0	1	6
Flower Sales Site	0	0	1	0	0	1
Garage and Premises	0	0	0	1	0	1
Gymnasium	0	1	0	0	0	1
Hairdressing Salon and Premises	1	1	0	2	0	4
Health Centre and Premises	0	1	0	0	0	1
Kennels and Premises	0	0	0	1	0	1
Kickboxing Centre	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kiosk and Premises	0	0	4	0	2	6
Land Used for Storage and Premises	0	0	3	0	2	5
Leisure Centre and Premises	1	0	0	0	0	1
Property Description	6 months - 1 year	1 - 2 years	2 - 5 years	5 - 10 years	Over 10 years	Total
Lock Up Garage	0	0	0	2	0	2
Market and Premises	0	1	0	0	0	1
Office Used as School and Premises	0	0	1	0	0	1
Offices and Premises	60	63	90	30	24	267
Petrol Filling Station and Premises	0	0	0	1	0	1
Playcentre and Premises	0	1	0	0	0	1
Public Convenience and Premises	0	0	1	5	0	6
Public House and Premises	0	0	2	1	0	3
Restaurant and Premises	3	4	5	0	0	12
Retail Warehouse and Premises	0	2	3	0	0	5
Scout Hall and Premises	0	1	1	0	0	2
Self Catering Holiday Unit and Premises	0	0	0	1	0	1
Shop and Premises	25	31	37	9	8	110
Sports Centre and Premises	0	1	0	0	0	1
Sports Ground and Premises	0	0	1	1	0	2

Stables	0	0	1	0	1	2
Storage Depot and Premises	0	0	1	1	0	2
Store and Premises	1	5	19	18	11	54
Surgery and Premises	1	3	4	2	0	10
Tennis Club and Premises	0	0	0	0	1	1
Theatre and Premises	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vehicle Repair Workshop and Premises	1	0	1	1	0	3
Warehouse and Premises	1	3	5	1	0	10
Warehouse, Office and Premises	0	0	1	0	0	1
Wine Bar and Premises	0	1	0	0	0	1
Workshop and Premises	1	6	12	2	2	23
Total	108	142	240	88	59	637

The longest a commercial property has been recorded as empty is 31 years.

The Council is actively working to reduce vacancies in the borough's commercial units through the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) top up funding that has recently launched for grant applications. This funding includes a grant stream for businesses to apply to specifically to take on currently vacant units.

One commercial property is owned by the Council, which is currently being marketed, and there are 3 that are currently under offer.