

## Council Tax Local Discounts & Premiums

### Appendix Consultation Responses

Category	Response	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not Answered
	Question						
A	How strongly do you agree or disagree that unoccupied and substantially unfurnished properties should be awarded a 100% discount for up to 3 months?	23 31.08%	<b>29</b> <b>39.19%</b>	6 8.11%	7 9.46%	9 12.16%	0 0.00%
A	How strongly do you agree or disagree that unoccupied and substantially unfurnished properties should be awarded a 50% discount	18 24.32%	<b>31</b> <b>41.89%</b>	6 8.11%	12 16.22%	8 10.81%	0 0.00%

	from 3-6 months?						
<b>B</b>	How strongly do you agree or disagree that unoccupied and substantially unfurnished properties should be awarded a 0% discount from 6-24 months?	13 17.57%	<b>15</b> <b>20.27%</b>	11 14.86%	18 24.32%	17 22.97%	0 0.00%
<b>C</b>	How strongly do you agree or disagree that unoccupied and substantially unfurnished properties which require or are undergoing major repair works or structural alterations to make them habitable should be awarded a	28 37.84%	<b>31</b> <b>41.89%</b>	3 4.05%	9 12.16%	3 4.05%	0 0.00%

	100% discount for up to 12 months?						
<b>D</b>	How strongly do you agree or disagree that the period of any exception from a charged premium due to exceptional circumstances should be increased from 6 months to 12 months then reviewed annually?	17 22.97%	<b>28</b> <b>37.84%</b>	18 24.32%	9 12.16%	2 2.70%	0 0.00%
<b>E</b>	How strongly do you agree or disagree with charging a council tax premium on second homes?	11 14.86%	19 25.68%	7 9.46%	11 14.86%	<b>26</b> <b>35.14%</b>	0 0.00%
<b>F</b>	How strongly do you agree or disagree with charging a council tax premium on	14 18.92%	<b>23</b> <b>31.08%</b>	4 5.41%	11 14.86%	22 29.73%	0 0.00%

homes that have been empty for one year or more?							
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#### **Additional Consultee Comments:**

I would like to see some real statistics which show the impact unoccupied properties and second homes is having on the local economy before introducing any changes.

A discount to allow renovation work would encourage more homes to be made available in the future for new residents, which is a good thing and improve the environment at the same time. So would charging owners of empty properties a premium to encourage them to sell the properties if they're not occupied.

What criteria would be used to establish what is and what isn't a second home?

I think there is a potential amongst some to assume that those who rent all make a profit all of the time. I like many landlords I took a haircut during the pandemic as my tenant had difficulty paying.

There are losses in renting and they can be considerable a more nuanced approach that works with private landlords to assist and encourage property back onto either the rental market or into the purchase pool would be a better approach, rather than a money seeking extractive policy. Delays in re rental can be due to tenant damage. so a degree of understanding could be afforded.

Having been in the invidious position of having to work 7 days a week to pay the mortgage whilst having my council tax raised on the property every time I paid off more of my mortgage, so as to give me the room to renovate and invest in the property delaying its completion. In my case I was given the choice of losing massively by being forced to sell the property unfinished or put up with the punitive tax.

I am a landlord. Mortgage rates, changes to tax law, it's becoming increasingly harder to break even, let alone make a profit. I've always accepted benefit claimants but believe if the council wish to continue good relations with landlords & keep homelessness to a minimum they need to make council tax more favourable. A property becomes empty, I'm instantly liable for council tax. Landlords should be given a min period of 6 mth if to re-let for repair works, advertising and tenant finding. If I put a property up for sale I am instantly liable. Finding a buyer, the legal process of selling a house can take between 6-12 mth. If landlords can prove a property is going on the market they should be given at least 12 mth free period. Sometimes if a property isn't generating much interest or low offers I have decided to re-let. The landlord should not have to repay any council tax free period. Second homes should not be charged if there are exceptional circumstances as outlined above.

Unoccupied properties should not be given any discount. If it is uninhabitable and then maybe upto a 50% discount for a specified time providing it is made habitable within that time frame.

While we dislike empty, disused, and potentially derelict properties we should consider people who wish to improve their property. I have been in the situation where a full refurb took two years during which time the property was uninhabitable.

There are cases where one tenant and next is more than 3 months, normally to improve the property including energy saving measures, so to make the changes proposed would have negative effects on energy conservation and climate change.

If the proposed change to rental properties to achieve an EPC rating of B or better was applied, many older properties would need major modification to achieve this level. If as well as the cost of the modifications, the council tax discount is also lost, owners may decide to sell the properties rather than face these high costs. If more property is required for those with lower income, and that property to be better prepared and in particular better insulated then the proposed changes should be reconsidered.

I pay full council tax on my property which is a second home. I maintain it to a high standard together with the garages which are in use for my cars.

I strongly believe that people who maintain their second home to a high standard should get a substantial reduction in council tax. Those people that do not maintain their properties in any way, shape or form, from a set date, should pay the full amount of council tax from the offset and not get any subsidies.

I do not have an email address, I have used my partner's.

The cost of materials, labour has shot up. This has impacted the delivery of refurbished homes.

Harsh

As a local developer, I advocate for eliminating council tax discounts. Planning and budgeting for the correct rate upfront can prevent the need for premium charges to offset revenue losses from discounts. In conclusion, I would advocate scrapping both the premium charge and discounts, opting for a standardised cost. For example 2-bedroom terraced home is now costing me more than my own 4-bedroom detached in Heapey, even after spending £30k in refurbishment costs, which feels wrong.

I own rental properties in the Chorley area and as a landlord the struggle to continue has increased year on year due to changing legislation!

The media is awash with stories regarding the very limited availability of rental properties and the onward escalating cost of rent this applies to prospective tenants.

Rather than continuing to squeeze cash from landlords attempting to run a barely profitable business why not help the situation and possibly alleviate the current woeful shortage of rental premises

this will in turn increase the availability of rental properties and reverse the exponential increase in rental costs.

Council Tax (CT) is to raise revenue towards services provided to a property and local infrastructure. Years ago, second homes attracted a discount for CT, as the owners were already paying their due elsewhere. I am happy to pay full CT, but do not see a case for this to be extended.

A case for this surcharge is to encourage housing supply. Yet in Whittle, where I retain my late parents' home in which I grew up, there has been an explosion of development in the last 30 years. Add to that Buckshaw close by, and it is clear there should be no supply issue in Chorley.

In some tourist hotspots, such as Cornwall and The Lakes, excess second home ownership can inflate prices and crowd out local people. This does not apply in Chorley which, fond as I am of my hometown, is hardly a holiday resort.

In short, I feel that for the Borough to implement the surcharge would be both unjustified by circumstance, and represent an unfair and somewhat punitive extra charge

These proposals would affect me, because I recently moved house, but had to complete on the new house before I could sell my previous home. My previous home is now empty and for sale, and I am doing my absolute best to get it sold, using excellent estate agents in the area.

However, the rise in interest rates has caused a slow down in the housing market, so chains are taking longer to form and completions have slowed down.

It is possible that my previous house may only sell in the summer of 2024, and I would have to pay full council tax under these proposals. There should be an exemption for second homes which are empty and for sale, provided that can be proved, and the home owner is actively marketing the property.

The majority of landlords want to provide quality housing at affordable rents. They are providing a service that is much needed in current times as minimal affordable housing is being built, stock of social housing is depleted to an all time low and mortgage rates are becoming unaffordable for many. They don't need more reasons to sell up and get out of the market ( EPC to band C, capital gains tax, being forced to allow pets and alterations to houses, mortgage increases etc.) or there will be no landlords and no quality housing left for people to live in. The proposed changes are encouraging to landlords who want to rent out their property as quickly as possible, unless

the previous tenants have rendered it uninhabitable (sadly this is too often the case- why don't we have the Scandinavian system of taking costs for repairs from tenant' salaries?) I would like a stated definition on what the council classes as a second home however in case this has changed.

Am more worried that the impact of charging less council tax for these properties will cause everybody else to pay more as the price is already ridiculous.

Consult with the homeowner in order to understand their circumstances as there could be financial problems, physical health problems, mental health problems or other issues that the council need to understand.

I believe that each case should be considered on its own merits. For example, if a landlord is trying to re-let or sell a property the 100% discount should last until the property is re-let or sold. And if an owner is unable to occupy a property due to building or renovation work, again, the 100% discount should be applied until the work is complete.

I have lived next door to an unoccupied and now uninhabitable property for the last 16years and am worried about how it affects the property value of my house. Earlier this year the owner made an effort to tidy the outside and talked about putting it up for sale at the end of May 2023. Nothing has changed and the house has been left again for months with no attempt as the owner wants more for the house than it is currently worth due to its state of disrepair.

I don't think he should have council tax relief for all these years on a property that has been left to rot and is an eyesore in the neighborhood.

I am also concerned about the use of the house going forward, if the council are involved would it be then used for social housing which may result in small children living there in a quiet neighbourhood of older pension age people.

Changes should not be retrospective. Owners already have finance and works scheduled under the policy as is. Changes to the policy to properties already in the system is grossly unfair .

Consideration could be made for residents of Chorley in the application of council tax premiums and or discount. I am a Chorley resident, both properties are in Chorley i already pay 2 council taxes to Chorley Council, full council tax for the house I reside in and 75% Council tax on the property under renovation.

The change from 2 years to 1 year before premiums are applied as a long term unoccupied property I must strongly disagree. Not all these properties are owned by developers using contractors. To renovate a property in spare time and weekends in what would be 12 months before premiums are applied is a big ask.

I believe that 2 years as per the policy now strikes the right balance for property owners to complete works and then sell on or rent out before premiums are applied.

Currently I have a small house in the Chorley area that is classed as second home. It is not a "holiday home" and I do not make money from it, in fact I spend a lot locally. I live about 40% of my time at the property and I intend to sell my main property and move to Chorley in another two years when my Children will also move from my main home and my personal circumstances will change. I realise that I am extremely fortunate to be able to live like this at the moment but I am not rich and can only just about manage the full council tax on the property at the moment. To charge an additional 100% premium would be very difficult. I would like the consultation to understand that there are many reasons for a second home, including difficult personal circumstances and work and we are not all buying second homes for Airbnb or to holiday a few weeks of the year in Chorley (but it is lovely which is why I am slowly moving there permanently).

Our view is the house should not be subject to a Council Tax premium because it is in daily use by us and the extended family. The property and garden is contiguous with next door. There is no detriment to the community.

I have recently been made homeless and cannot find a property in the area I now live in and which I am settled. I am having to move completely out of the immediate area and this is distressing me. With so many empty properties people in my position would find it much easier to find accommodation in their immediate area.

There needs to be discretion on the premiums charged above the standard rate so as not to have the opposite effect it's intended to have and deter owners from keeping/obtaining properties that can be sold or added to the private rented sector.

The issue of managing to upgrade a property to be fit for sale or fit for renting can be difficult if, for instance, someone inherits a house on the death of a family member but doesn't have the capital to refurbish it in one go or there are other circumstances that mean a dwelling can't be made habitable / available in the short term. We all know legal matters, as an example, can drag on for years sometimes so penalising someone for that situation would be unfair. Other issues could be down to protected wildlife being in residence and similar.

In my case, as a landlord who decided to sell my 'second property' - a sale price was agreed but 4 months after that sale price was agreed, my buyer pulled out of the sale meaning that not only have I incurred solicitors fees, I have to (and still am having to) pay council tax on an empty property through no fault of my own. What I am saying is that properties can be empty for numerous reasons but the council policy does not always reflect those reasons.

Councils do not take into account the personal situations of the home owner. New laws came in for landlords. For me it was not worth the risk or the expense, as I spent a great deal of money.

Something which is ignored, that is of the difference between a professional landlord who owns multiple properties, and that of an Expat for example, who has just a single property and are keeping that for when they return. I am on a 12 month revolving contract, you never know when that will end.

We have had to vacate our property because of fire damage. We were initially informed we would be out for 6 months, it's been 18 months now and looking like being a further 6 months. It seems very unfair that we should pay Council Tax on our empty house when we are trying so hard to get back in as soon as possible.



The question missing is whether properties being rented out as air b&b should be charged a premium. Second properties are likely being used for work when a member of the family works away from home. The difference is air b&b use not second homes that are not being rented out.

Form also does not work properly - council also need to test things! Unable to add phone number as value needs to be 0-9 :-)

Need to consider whether empty properties up for sale in determining whether a 0% Council Tax rebate is appropriate. Ours has been for sale >12 ms. Increase in interest rates has led to sale falling through twice. It's unfair to levy a premium/remove the discount because the property is unoccupied

I support a premium for properties which are vacant and the owner is doing nothing to get the property occupied/sold as this does not support the reduction in the chronic housing shortage.

Leaving my fully furnished home unoccupied already means that I don't qualify for the single persons discount as I am a pensioner resident in France. I am not using ANY Chorley council services when my home is unoccupied. It seems unjust to charge this. I can't sell my house as I will be returning to live in it in 2026. As a homeowner I should have the option to freely decide what to do with my property. At present I could not afford double Council Tax.

Im a landlord, we only have property empty if we are doing a re-furb to bring an old property up to date and make it rentable or because a tenant has trashed an already good property. We work as quickly as poss to get the property turned around and ready for rent/sale again. Regards second homes/air bnb property, I don't think these should be eligible for Council tax as they are small businesses and bring people to the area who spend money Chorley

The question responses seem strange. Strongly agree and agree are in different positions. Is that deliberate?

We have a broken country. Whilst our young people cannot afford decent housing then every effort should be made to remove people's property when as owners they dont live in the uk and no-one should be allowed more than 1 property.

Earning profit is fine but not at the expense of our current population.

Proposals would lead to less investment in county. It's much administration, pople will let for a short period and restart empty period etc.

I think there should be 100% discount for 6 months, or 12 months for major refurbishment.  
After 6 months then full charges should apply.

As a property landlord i am currently struggling financially with all the current legislation and costs associated, and although i keep my rents well below the local average anymore financial penalties will either drive me out or i will have to raise my rents inline with local rates, so whilst i agree with some of your proposals i cant agree with any that affect me negatively.

I feel the proposals are good but n need discounts for longer for renovations and unoccupied properties

I feel there should be exemptions for property company's that are trying to get houses refurbished . They should not be penalised for this. They need encouragement not discouragement to grow the propertys to better living conditions.

I don't think anyone leaves a home empty for no reason.  
Charging more tax on a second home is not going to encourage anyone.

I do think that increasing discounts on empty properties for a long period is good because people are doing work on their properties which can take longer than initially thought.

Landlords and owners selling their property have very little control on exactly when a tenant takes up occupancy or when a sale falls through and both these situations can lead to a property being vacant for extended periods. It is dependent on economic and market forces.

I suggest that where a residential property is 'between tenants' (but is being advertised), or a residential property is in the process of being sold, it would be simpler and easier to understand if you gave 100% exemption for the period and significantly reduce the administrative workload.

However I agree that where an empty and unfurnished property is not advertised as for let or for sale, ie it is simply vacant/abandoned then a levy would encourage the owner(s) to sell and achieve your objective.

The discounts should be minimal and for very short periods.

Council tax should be maximised.

These owners or developers continue to demand local services so they must pay.

Anyone land or house banking should pay a premium.

Bring house stock into use speedily.

As a landlord, empty exemptions assist us in being able to complete works on a property and return it to occupation in between tenancies. We feel some of the proposed changes will be very beneficial to allow us to do turnovers swiftly, and purchase empty properties that are in need of repair with intent to return them to a rentable standard.

The reason that I am writing to you is to entreat the council to consider a special case for second homes that form part of a close care community. Perhaps the best way to illustrate my point is to outline my father's situation. He lives near London independently, with the help of a full time daily visiting carer. He has a second home at The Court in Buckshaw Village, a care community which offers as much

or as little assistance/catering as the residents require, which he uses in order to be able to live independently when he makes extended visits to see me, and which was also purchased with a view to his moving there permanently when his current arrangements become inadequate as he becomes more frail and visually challenged. Elderly people are frequently encouraged to make provision for the time when they cease to be able to live independently, and the purchase of a suitable property in a community like The Court when it becomes available, is an attractive proposition for the avoidance of having to settle for something less desirable under a crisis situation when independent living suddenly becomes non-viable, frequently following an accident or other medical problem. People who plan this in advance by purchasing a suitable second property affording appropriate care and assistance, should not be penalised by excessive Council Tax charges, and should perhaps be considered as a special case for discount, particularly as this pre-planning will often avoid putting a burden on over-stretched local Council and private residential care facilities.

Charnock Richard Parish Council are happy to leave the decision on these matters to the professional officers at Chorley Council.

Please see comments from Whittle-le-Woods Parish Council below:

It was agreed that there should be no penalties for those properties subject to probate.

The Parish Council are concerned that when a home owner dies probate can take some time, and therefore the penalties of paying Council Tax should consider this.

Wheulton Parish Council make no objection to the proposed changes to the Council Tax Local Discounts and Premiums Policy.

Response from Bretherton Parish Council

Q4 Agree

Q5 Agree

Q6 Agree

Q7 Agree

Q8 Agree

Q9 Strongly Agree

Q10 Agree

Q11

More background information on the current situation and some facts and figures would have been helpful.

I would like to confirm the support of the Police and Crime Commissioner for the proposed changes to policy