

Appendix 2 - Council Tax Premium Free Text Responses

Q 8 the Council is currently reviewing its premium scheme of 50% on long term empty dwellings. In your opinion what should the proposed level of premium be in Flintshire Please briefly explain the reason for your selections.

335 respondents answered this question, the responses are grouped below into themes.

| Q8 Response to Why Chose Level of Premium |
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| I think that in times of climate emergency, when it behoves us all to use and re-use the earth's resources carefully, the concept of second homes and empty dwellings is becoming an anachronism. We should use what we have; it's wrong to build further when an existing house could have been freed up onto the market. |
| Second homes should be discouraged and owners of long-term empty dwellings should be incentivised to make them available for families needing homes. |
| Long term empty dwellings have a negative impact on the local community and would be better utilised in improving better availability of housing |
| The additional premium has no impact whatsoever, serving only to alienate visitors/tourists to the county. The small number of houses used as holiday homes has no impact on the use of welsh, in fact, in many parts of the County one doesn't hear Welsh spoken at all. It could also be viewed as anti-English by people from over the border. |
| Because we live next door to a property that will have been empty for four years in march 2022. We have reported it and spoken face to face with a member of the empty homes team who have basically told us that they have seen worse and that there is nothing that can be done unless property actually falls apart. Why should normal council tax payers pay council tax when properties next door are deteriorating and lowering the value of other people's properties? |
| I have, for a very long time been worried about the number of long term empty houses across the UK As a whole and was disappointed to learn the number for Flintshire was so high! At a time when young and disadvantaged people are desperate for a decent place to live, Surely this situation is totally unacceptable? My own daughter and small granddaughter are currently in a let property, and she has been told she's not even eligible to be put on the Council list because it's a privately owned property? There are many many empty, run down properties in cities, towns and villages which could be retrofitted instead of more houses being built, even on flood plains! |
| To have empty homes in Flintshire is an absolute disgrace and increasing council tax in respect of empty homes will be an incentive for the owners to sell or let their properties. |
| Should help to deter people from owning properties used as 'second homes' or from keeping properties empty. |
| How can 2nd home owner bring these houses up to standard if they are paying 150%+ council tax rates. If they want them back available in the system. then a reduction in council tax would help for the first 12-18 months then maybe 150% rising to 200% after this time. |
| Second homes/empty dwellings have little or no positive impact on local communities, so should be subject to higher levels of tax. |
| It's obvious that current level of tax on empty property is not having the required effect of bringing these back into use. Perhaps a punitive level of tax will force owners of these properties into action as regards bringing them into the private rental sector. |
| Local properties should be for the indigenous population not for affluent non-residents |

Occasionally people purchase a dwelling with the intent to demolish it and seek planning permission for a larger amount of smaller homes on the same land. This is very unjust and leads to properties remaining unused for many years. These tend to be vandalised and even set on fire. I feel that more should be done at the point of sale and contracts signed to show that the property will be lived in for at least 11 months out of twelve. Local young people cannot afford to live in our towns as they are priced out of the market. I feel that increasing the long term empty homes tax should be to 100% to deter this kind of speculative buyer.

Not enough houses for sale or to let.

Think holiday home buyers who use as holiday let also have a negative impact I know many people who used to rent are now changing to this as it gives them more income and they don't pay council tax.

Sometimes the reason for unoccupied is not the owners fault

I was the owner of an empty property, approx. 3 years, having to pay the council tax did not help me get it renovated quicker, and it hindered me.

Need to make it more expensive to keep property empty than occupied or to sell it

It makes me sad to see properties sitting empty, especially when they become neglected. There is a housing shortage but houses are being built rather than using those we already have. It is wasteful.

People who can afford a second home or able to leave their property empty should pay a premium so that local residents are not put at a squeezed out of the market when trying to find good quality housing

The questions asked do not consider many other aspects & ways people live and pay for their accommodation. Or how efficient the management of collecting it is, what enforcement is carried out to recover outstanding debt

Do not reference the unpaid taxes and percentage recovery of unpaid debt

Do not consider local and incoming travellers. , People who sometimes pay one set of taxes yet have multiple homes occupied on 1 rate paying location with Chalets & Caravans also occupied

Do not consider itinerants who dwell in caravans, homes, chalets and pay no rates

Do not consider multiple occupations of many families in one dwelling

Do not consider larger homes under-occupied

Do not consider the lack of businesses in the area for locals to acquire the wealth to purchase and sustain housing

Do not consider other ways rather than increasing costs. Instead of resolving difficult issues.

Getting people to do their job and enforcing rules and regulations.

Empty homes need to be used, there are a lot of people on waiting list with Local Authorities and Housing Associations

I think you need to apply the 150% charge after 18 months so 100% after 12 months and then 150% after 18 months as owners may try to sort out the house.

Second homes- reduces the number of properties available for purchase/rent by local residents

inflates home prices/rent in popular rural/coastal areas

potentially reduces money spent within the community on local goods/services

owners would still expect refuse collection/policing/fire services/local initiative

communication improvements to be provided

Long term empty - depends on reason. Should have ability to set premium on reason

Those who can afford more, should pay more, especially when their actions have a negative impact on the community. It's a way to restore a bit of balance and fairness.

The pressures above also have an effect on the housing prices which are pushed up due to the current demand. This leads to challenges to first-time buyers and residents of Flintshire.

The private housing market needs properties at all levels. Long term empty properties attract anti-social behaviour/ give a negative view of an area/

The number of second homes in Flintshire is low - where they exist, visitors use and enhance tourist facilities and create upmarket communities. This is different in areas with huge numbers of second homes which do impact the dynamic of the neighbourhood.

There should be the ability to apply higher CT charges to long-term empty properties with maybe an element of discretion to reflect the varying reasons of why they are empty. Sometimes there are properties that few people want to buy, or probate issues etc. For other properties, incentives to use the property such as signing it over to a RSL for a set period of time, who will upgrade the facilities, should be introduced alongside higher CT charges.

please see comments in section 13 box

The impact of the 50% since 2017 started off working well as a number of empty homes were realised and this benefitted people waiting for homes, recently the emphasis has waned and there is no immediate deterrent to these empty homes owners to comply, so the action to raise the 50% should have the effect on them to renovate and let these homes to Flintshire residents

I firmly believe that empty properties should pay 100% duty on council tax. I also think that if a property has been empty for more than 5 years and not up for sale, the council should have the power to "compulsory purchase" that property at market value. These properties become an eyesore for future possible investment in a town. Also if tourists visit a town and see these properties, what will they think? Buckley town has this problem! Derelict property on Liverpool road by the Texaco Petrol station (been empty 20 yrs. plus) eyesore, Chester road near the station, vacant land left to overgrown, Mold road a derelict cottage by the Esso petrol station on the Wilf's. These properties will surely discourage any future investor in the town of Buckley!!

Buckley for one is under pressure for housing of all sorts, shapes and sizes. However, scattered around the town there are properties of high potential which have been empty and unused for years. They are owned by persons far away who are simply holding on to them as capital assets which appreciate in time. We also have a number of second home properties, which appear to be used only intermittently.

As I have already stated there are currently 2120 on a waiting list. These second homes delay these people on the waiting list an opportunity to get a home

Second homes imply that when in use the people who are there use FCC facilities.

Long term empty dwellings have little need for FCC facilities, but there should still be deterrents to having empty dwellings and financial penalties are a way of managing this.

They are not using any of Flintshire's services for which the council tax is there to pay for.

Empty properties in particular, but second homes additionally, reduce the availability of social housing, and houses available for first time buyers wishing to stay in the area. Owners of empty houses, and of holiday homes should be prepared to contribute more. Perhaps a 75% initial levy rising (with notice) to 100% in 2 years

Long term empty homes are a waste of resources when people are homeless. Ditto second homes.

Increase council tax to 100% above normal rate to induce home owner and landlords to give desperate families somewhere to live.

In my view FCC should take all possible steps to make more affordable housing available and to eliminate homelessness as far as possible. I can see no excuse for unoccupied property which could be used. While second home ownership would appear to be less of a problem in Flintshire than in other parts of Wales, increasing the premium would make a small contribution to wealth redistribution and help to finance local services.

Probate and renovation work can often take some time If it can be seen work is in progress charge should not be made even if long term. Why are bins not emptied when paying 50% extra charge - Not getting any services for full council tax paid then 50% on top for nothing.

There is only a small number of 2nd homes in Flintshire but these are mainly based in one area of Flintshire - around Talacre which impacts on the availability of homes for local people.

Empty properties should be made to be brought back into use after a certain length of time. An increase in council tax will push these owners to put them back in to use

Empty homes - It is not fair to group all empty homes into one basket from a Council Tax point of view. Some home will require refurbishment, some possibly major refurbishment. Increasing the tax on these properties is NOT going to help the owners with the associated costs of doing this work. Have you cross-referenced the property addresses with current planning applications or planning approvals? In my view increasing, or imposing a premium tax on empty properties is totally counterproductive to solving any housing needs in the County of Flintshire.

Second homes - I can imagine one argument being that someone buying a second home has deprived that dwelling being available for affordable housing in Flintshire. However, in the real world, housing market prices have risen over the last two years. The desire for people to buy and own their homes is stronger than ever and it is the market is driven by demand. This has raised the living standard in the communities, brought in a new income stream to the community and kept existing businesses open. The influx of people moving into an area has been attributed to retirement and commuting to present the most significant demand in rural housing markets. It has been reported (see the Welsh Government report on second homes - <https://gov.wales/research-second-homes-evidence-review-summary.html>) that local communities prosper as a direct result of 'new wealth' brought in to a community.

If there is a requirement for affordable housing - build new affordable houses which meets that criteria. Imposing a Premium Tax on second home properties will not solve the affordable housing issue.

Welsh language - I am a welsh speaker and I am proud that I have learnt the language, however, the exclusion of English speaking home buyers in Flintshire is not going to encourage more people to speak Welsh. This needs to be encouraged at the 'grass root' level through our schools. The proportion of adults wanting to learn Welsh is minimal compared to a strong education system in our schools, where even in English speaking schools Welsh should be a compulsory subject to GCSE level.

All Councils need to raise money - but in my opinion the main issue you are trying to resolve (local affordable housing) will definitely not be achieved by a higher tax on long term empty houses or second homes. If you think it is, you will not resolve the county's housing issue, but will create an even bigger problem with the local housing market.

In question 10, you have grouped two questions together which have differing answers. The number of second homes and empty houses are not linked. Therefore, the possible answers do not make any sense!

Second homes receive income to cover additional costs.

Owners of empty homes need to either sell them or rent them out. Empty homes can often look neglected. Increase in council May persuade owners to sell

I have said "no impact" for Questions 2-4 above as I believe that the current 50% enhancement negated any financial negative effect.

With regard to Q5 above, I have assumed that this question (like Qs 2-4) relates to Flintshire and I have answered as such. I believe there is a negative impact in primarily Welsh speaking areas of other Welsh counties.

For further comments see box below.

We purchased our property as a retirement home and spend a few days every week there until we retire in a few yrs. We spend our money in the community helping small businesses so feel it's unfair to pay the premium.

I think it's fair to charge council tax if you use a property as a second home because you are using council services for that property but I don't think it's fair for empty properties as long as you can prove the

property is empty and up for sale because in that case council services are not being used and the property is available to someone who might need a home to buy.

Due to bereavement of my late mother, I am being charged full rate of Council tax on the property that I am trying to sell. In spite of the Coronavirus pandemic that is still ongoing, Flintshire County Council have insisted on me paying the full rate of council tax on the property, that because of lockdown measures that have been in place reducing the chance of selling the property. I think in all honesty I think this is disgraceful, I am not a second property owner trying to make money, I am simply trying to sell the house and move on and yet FCC have been no help whatsoever, sending myself letters asking for money that I simply have not got. I think that due to the current global crisis with the pandemic, people trying to sell an empty house should not be penalised with the full asking rate of council tax.

There is an empty home on my street, it needs repairs and gets worse each year. It makes the whole street look unkempt. Whoever own these empty homes should be made to manage their upkeep or be persuaded to sell them on. There is no excuse for keeping a house empty long term.

If people can afford a holiday home they can afford to pay extra tax, a few hundreds of pounds will not make any difference to someone who can afford a second home, which are usually large and luxurious houses. Holiday homes do not contribute to local life and economy.

There are many reasons once occupied dwellings are now empty long term. A major reason could be that they are now no longer economically viable to refurbish and because of location virtually unsellable.

Some empty properties are used for other uses such a hosting local events, the grounds being used for charity purposes etc. Not all 'second-homes' should be considered equal and they can't be used as affordable homes so would not alleviate the housing problem. The extra taxation takes away from being able to use these funds to invest in the area and pay wages

My property is inherited. My family has owned the property in Flintshire since 1954. It is correctly classed as a second home but is neither long term unoccupied nor a holiday home. I inherited the property in 2003 and my family regularly use it, myself included since I am now retired. I am Welsh and grew up in the local community. It seems unreasonable and disproportionate to charge any premium for inherited properties which are regularly used. The Council should make an effort to distinguish between (a) long term empty properties (b) holiday homes and (c) inherited properties which are in regular use. Charging a premium for inherited properties has no relevance to bringing more properties into occupation. It is seen only as a cash raising opportunity.

And a distinction needs to be drawn between an inherited second home and one which was bought solely for holiday use. The former have ties to the community, the latter usually not.

As explained above, the two small barn conversions on my property have always and continue to supply accommodation needs. They cannot be defined as empty. I hence think it unjustifiable to charge any more for them than the 'normal' rate.

To consider doubling normal rates is an unjustifiable abuse of power, and irrational, illogical and wholly subjective.

If a property is classed as 'long term empty' it is probably due to financial restraints and imposing a further burden though Council Tax is counterproductive. An extra £1,000 is half the cost of a new kitchen or bathroom, the Council should be helping to bring houses back into use not hindering.

In my case, I have inherited my late parents' house and am in the process of preparing it for valuation and sale. This has been a lengthy process, mainly due to COVID-19, the lockdowns and restrictions on the collection and disposal of furniture and other items by various charities. My bill for both properties is rising from £383 to £619 per month which is massive and I believe unfair in the circumstances. I will inform you as soon as the property goes on the market as I understand that this should effectively lower the amount I am due to pay. I appreciate that an increasing number of second homes/empty properties in Wales is a

problem and does have consequences but my case is different. The property is empty because it is currently being prepared for valuation and sale.

I have been trying to sell my home for the last 4yrs after moving out, and I am asking less than market value for the property, and yet I am being told by potential buyers that it is still too high. I have had it with several different estate agents, with no joy, and I am now having to spend another £10,000, that I have had to borrow, to completely renovate it to try again to sell it.

During this time, it has cost me hundreds or even thousand's in extra council tax for something I have NO control over, and this should not be allowed. If it was left empty deliberately, and left in poor repair, then this might be a different issue, and would have made me do something about it, but this has never been the case, and so I have been punished by the council all this time, even though they have been kept informed that it is up for sale, and have been given proof of this on several occasions.

It is grossly unfair. My business suffers accordingly. The premium pre-supposes that the property is appropriate to be placed on the market when it is unsuitable for this due to its connection to my office premises.

Properties used as holiday homes bring regular visitors to Flintshire to boost the economy and use of the Welsh language whilst having hardly any effect on Council facilities- e.g. non regular use of bins, no education requirement etc. They are usually well kept and regularly visited, a benefit to neighbours.

The long term empty property is not using any of the statutory facilities that the council provides.

To encourage the owners to use or sell their dwellings

Increasing the council tax charge on long term empty properties provides no incentive at all to the home owner. They will be paying extra costs for services that they don't actually use. It would be far better to provide alternative incentives to encourage people to either sell or rent their property.

The circumstances as to why a property is long term empty aren't taken into consideration, Someone chooses to own a second home.

From my own experience as a first time buyer, renovating a property for myself,

If a property is empty due to needing work, especially in the light of the pandemic, 12 months may not be enough time to complete it, especially on a limited budget,

The premium won't convince someone who's property is in negative equity due to its condition to sell it, they're stuck paying up to twice as much for council tax (as in my case, single occupancy)

Using me as an example, I'm living with my parents, I'm not taking up another property, I plan on living in my house that's empty.

The premium is reducing my available income, forcing me to work more hours to pay for materials for work I haven't got time to do.

I have a holiday home. When I and my family visit we put money into the shops, pubs and all local facilities including restaurants and cafes. We do not use the bin collection service all rubbish including garden rubbish we take home with us. I therefore feel it is so unfair of the council to think as you obviously are thinking of raising the council tax even higher. My husband and I worked long hours at a very hard job to acquire this property we aren't wealthy so to increase the charges will hit us very hard to the point of having to sell the house. In our area there are many properties for sale so the usual "we are keeping a house off the market and depriving local people of housing" is way off the mark. We will be very upset to have to sell up but will have no other alternative but to do so.

Some properties are empty for very different reasons and the council treats these houses all the same which is wrong

a second holiday home is very different, if a person can afford to purchase a second home then they are quite likely to be able to afford the council tax premium

We originate from Mold and this property is our planned retirement house. Today we really do spend 50% of our time in Wales. We will likely move permanently in the next year or so. We totally agree properties in

Flintshire should not be left unoccupied long term but there should be some recognition where 2nd homes are frequently used which ours is. That said we would agree premiums are necessary but would also like to know if many property owners are not paying the premium when they should be.

To be fair to everyone in the local community

Long term empty dwellings are a real issue and I do feel owners of such properties should be taxed accordingly.

I do feel that properties of a certain band, say A-D are more likely the type that are in demand or social/affordable housing - higher rate tax bands are unlikely to be affordable for most, so I think the tax on second homes that are in the higher brackets is fine, the 50% should be the max in my opinion (on 2nd homes).

I currently pay council tax on a property that I live in. I have an empty house on my land in poor state of repair which I pay a premium. I don't think that I should be forced by any council to have to make a decision on an empty property that I own. It will either be demolished or a member of my family will take over ownership. I think the council should get their own house in order to make affordable housing for residents in Flintshire not rely on others and penalize them for not doing so

No charge if being updated this has been difficult this year to get trades and materials due to Covid

The situation at the moment is HEATING OR EATING, the way things are going, and it's only going to get worse. Increasing the premium, only makes life more difficult.

I understand the principle of charging extra for second homes and empty properties, but think it would be unfair to increase the percentage. As second home owners we contribute to the local economy when we visit the area and our use of the council services is minimal.

It takes longer for an empty property to be brought back into use when council tax is charged more. It decreases the monthly budget to renovate and bring the property back into use. Flintshire should be encouraging of bringing the homes back into use rather than penalising.

The flat I own is above my shop and is being used as a stockroom.

I am currently renting a property, which I pay full council tax on, but I have recently inherited my late mother's house, which I also pay full council tax on, even though it's empty.

Our second home was obtained when we were unable to sell it when my mother moved
Family and friends stay in it which brings tourists to the area and therefore income
It would not be part of the local homes available for those in social housing as it did not sell
I am updating my Welsh language skills as a result of continuing to return to Wales

I live abroad, my Flintshire house is where I grew up, part of my identity. For the past 2 years I have been unable to visit, due to Corona and I am currently using my inheritance from my parents to cover running costs. I would like to rent the house out to friends to help me financially and to give foreigners the chance to discover this little known part of the country. This has been impossible, because of Corona. During this period, the house has been occupied by young local people, „housesitting “in return for rent free accommodation- the house has been making its contribution to socially affordable accommodation. I am happy to pay normal Council tax to support the community I grew up in, but feel strongly that I am being unfairly penalised by your proposed action.

I would agree that long term empty property is contributing to a lack of affordable accommodation, but holiday homes attract business from outside and bring money into the county.

There are too many buy to let landlords who do not vet the tenants - When I first moved to my house a block of 6 houses - 5 were owner occupiers now that is down to just 3.

You have not disaggregated LT empty homes from second homes in your policy making. 2nd homes make up only 20% of the total and have a different impact on local communities and the housing issues you are seeking to address. You have not given a breakdown of LT empty homes by privately owned versus social housing. I assume there are LT social empty stock held by the LA and RSLs.

You haven't given me an analysis of the impact of the 50% surcharge on housing in Flintshire since 2017. By now you should have a view of the impact of your policy and whether it has discouraged 2nd home ownership.

You give no separate figures for holiday homes/air bnb properties which from my local knowledge are far more numerous in my area of Flintshire than 2nd homes used by one family. Surely if you're going to have policies to prevent the housing supply scarcity in local communities you must address this issue too. From media reports in popular tourist destinations such as Cornwall locals are selling out to bnb landlords or doing it themselves. Local estate agents are encouraging this trend and pushing up house prices.

Recent research by Swansea University for the Welsh Government makes it clear that the impact of 2nd home ownership varies massively across Wales and that it is currently affecting 3 or 4 localities to the greatest degree. These are the traditional holiday areas including SW Pembrokeshire, Gwynedd, Anglesey and parts of Ceredigion. It is not a significant issue in other areas - including Flintshire.

2nd Homes

From your figures, 2nd home ownership in Flintshire affects about 0.2% of the county's housing stock - which is negligible. For this reason I don't see it having an adverse impact on local communities and on Welsh language speaking in Flintshire. For the same reason I also don't see it having an impact on housing availability.

If there are over 2000 families on housing waiting lists, obviously one key policy should be to increase the supply of new housing. This is constrained by government funding admittedly. But putting waiting list families in private rented accommodation encourages private landlords to buy more houses crowding out prospective home owners.

2nd home ownership isn't of a single type - for instance I grew up in Flintshire, have family locally and may well live here when my wife has retired. I use my 2nd home over 40% of the year. I contribute to local life and spend money locally. I don't speak Welsh fluently but most people in my village speak less Welsh than me! Flintshire is not a big Welsh speaking area.

Not all 2nd home owners are urban families who flit in and out of their rural retreat for a few weekends a year.

Keeping the 50% surcharge or increasing it becomes factored into the cost of ownership for families thinking of buying a second home. Only owners at the margins will be discouraged from owning a 2nd home. Bigger societal forces such as growing wealth disparity and the growing attraction for many people in access to rural living following the COVID pandemic are more important drivers of 2nd home ownership. In this context, council tax surcharges are not that significant. For the same reasons reducing it won't lead to a significant increase in 2nd home ownership rates. Creating a national park out of the Clwydian hills and Dee valley will encourage 2nd home ownership much more by altering people's perception of Flintshire as having beautiful countryside to be enjoyed.

Long Term Empties

Long term empty properties are by definition a negative influence on local communities and an inefficient use of resources and all measures should be used to bring them back into use. They can be a blight on local communities. A financial penalty through a council tax surcharge is one tool but Flintshire should use all the tools at its disposal to reduce these empties.

Second homes are looked after and lived in, the owner's bring income into the local community. Second homes are not necessarily holiday homes, In my case I'm Holywell born and bred, I inherited my mother's modest family home, that give me a place to frequently stay when coming home to visit family and friends which is at least twice a month.

Properties that are long-term empty will go to ruin and deteriorate, I can see how that has a negative impact on the area.

Long term empty homes and second homes are a blight on most communities. They deprive others of housing.

I moved two years ago from a Housing Association flat in Mold which I owned as a Leaseholder to an Almshouse Charity flat in Surrey. If I had moved into full time care I would not have been required to pay Council Tax. However, because of the technicality of my being a Charitable Almshouse Resident and not a Care Home Resident I have been required to pay Council Tax plus the 50% Premium for two years. Since my income is limited I have gone into debt through continuing to pay Council Tax (and Housing Association Maintenance Charges) without receiving any benefit from them whatever. At last I have managed to find a buyer for the flat, and completion is due this week. All proceeds from the sale will go to pay off the debt I have incurred in making payments in respect of the flat over the past two years. I am sure that this was not what the premium scheme was intended to achieve, and I hope that it will cease so that others in my position will not be unfairly penalized in the future.

I am a serving soldier and currently posted down south, I bought my first home July last year in Flintshire I am now being charged a 50 premium for having a second home I do not own a second home and been told by the tax office I am in a loop hole I cannot get out of

You have 2000 people waiting for housing yet the property I bought had been derelict for a number of years, because the people waiting for housing cannot afford to buy, I have currently spent £20,000 renovating my property over the last year, people waiting for affordable housing do not have this money that is why there is empty homes...

There needs needs to be an incentive for people with second homes to want to rent them out a reasonable price rather than a tax increase which is surely going to push them the other way?? There is no logic behind the tax premium

Second homes provide additional income to the area. Meals out, retail sales in the area and maintenance on a property which looking at the statistics may well be empty if it was not a second home. An empty property provides none of the above.

The present system is not flexible enough. The property I inherited was never going to be a long term empty property. The sale was held up for 3 years due to legal reasons but this was not deemed a reason for not paying a premium. Sometimes sales may not go through within a year which makes it unfair that the seller is penalized when they are actually trying to sell the house.

I do sometimes query why the council should have the right to interfere with private property but if they do, the circumstances involved should be taken into consideration.

Also, if the seller does not live in the area, they are not using the services paid for with the Council Tax so are paying huge sums of money for nothing.

Once again, it seems the easy targets are hit - the ones who are trying to act responsibly and are given further bills to meet.

I do not think the issue is as simple as using financial penalties to discourage long term empty or second home purchase with the assumption that stock could be released back to the local community to solve social or affordable housing waiting lists. The issue is having appropriate stock for the waitlist that can be managed within the budget of any resident that may take it on.

Tourism is a key economy within Wales and the Welsh culture (of which language is part) is central to that. Everything should be done to protect and grow that culture because of it's commercial and emotional value. However I find the inference behind question 5 a very dangerous one. It seems to assume that by allowing non-Welsh speakers to own property within Flintshire they may be having a detrimental impact on the growth of the Welsh language. For cultures to thrive they need to interact with other cultures.

In my opinion when you have worked hard all your life you should not be penalised for having more than the next person, in life we all make choices, some good some bad, but why should I who have worked all my life pay for someone who wants to lie in bed all day on their PlayStation or CHOOSE to take drugs, not everyone has mental health, but this now is the new bad back and the government need to get a grip on the situation

Stop punishing people for trying to get on in life, I will hazard a guess most of these empty properties are owned by people who work hard and try to improve their quality of life, I know because I am one of them my second property used to be my main residence it lay empty while I tried to renovate it (very awkward during covid pandemic) but all the time the council punishing me with this ridiculous premium

I have lived all my life in Flintshire and pay Council Tax. However, I find the whole system of taxing second homes very, very unfair. If it is to continue then each case should be subject to a mandatory review by another person not employed within the Council Tax department.

I am currently trying to clear out and renovate a property which I inherited, and I have also paid a substantial amount of Inheritance tax on the property. The house has huge sentimental value to me and my family and we do not want to sell it.

Finding the time to do this work whilst also employed is difficult, and I don't have the capital to pay tradesmen to do the work on the property, so the house has remained empty for a long time. The burden of the extra 50% Council tax has made the situation worse, and has contributed to the length of time the property has been empty. I intend to let the property in 2022. I don't think the local community has been hugely negatively impacted by my property remaining empty, and I hope to bring it back to permanent occupation soon.

I do feel that having a large number of second homes can adversely affect a community, especially outside of the holiday season, when properties are empty for several months.

Property on market for sale following a death, property sold subject to contract. property sold subject to obtaining planning consent to develop site to increase housing stock there is long delays in Flintshire planning department

In my opinion, long term empty houses would be more attractive for repair /returning to sale or letting if there less restraints on repair especially on listed buildings owners should be encouraged to refurbish and re-let.

There are empty houses and people needing homes, this is just a reasonable financial incentive to push the owners of vacant properties in the direction of using them. Failing that presumably the additional funds provided by this can be used to benefit communities?

Second homes bring in additional income into the county via the owners contribution to the community taxes. Tourism should be embraced and supported as it offers additional income streams to local businesses. As Flintshire is not a 'seasonal county' like Gwynedd, then the use of holiday homes supports the local economy all year around. This is one of the benefits of developing a tourism sector in Flintshire, which until fairly recently has been side-lined in place of industry in around Deeside.

In relation to empty properties - there needs to be a better look at why those properties are empty, rather than a carte blanche charging policy. In some cases empty houses will require planning permissions to upgrade, replace or extend to make the property worthwhile and fit for human habitation. Properties that sit along rivers and streams, in a time of climate change, need to have support from Flintshire to upgrade so that they can then be offered for rent. The age of the property needs to be taken into account with some lateral out of the box thinking could actually bring the property back into the housing market. This should involve a much more transparent discussion with property owners who would welcome help in making it easier to renovate and develop properties that are fit for habitation again. Often finances will be the biggest hurdle to overcome in trying to bring old vacant properties that have damp issues back into the housing stock. Without discussions with empty property owners on what options and financial support there is for helping restore properties to meet the stringent Landlord and Tenant Act regulations - properties will remain empty. In the advent of less council owned properties, all help should be made available to support property owners (advice and financial) to get the properties fit for the rental market. This would be a more supportive role and preferable to berating the owners of empty properties which is the current system by charging extra council tax. In addition empty shops in high streets should be viewed

as potential housing stock that offers life blood to the High Street. There are many empty buildings in town centres crying out for renovation/upgrade/change of use for residential opportunities which in many cases will be more appropriate, taking into account accessibility and community interests instead of pursuing owners of empty rural properties far away from amenities.

In other words Flintshire should consider how they work with different empty property owners on a case by case merit basis, taking into account location and what assistance can be provided to bring the empty property back into the rental arena or not. The process should be easy and understandable with easily explained options. Not all property owners have a choice as to why a building is empty - these are the issues that need to be analysed on a case by case basis. Although Flintshire has 605 empty properties on their books - in reality how many of these would be worthwhile (financially and location wise) in bringing them back into Landlord and Tenant occupation.

It shouldn't be a case of Flintshire thinking - we can charge more and get more, because not everyone can afford it and in many cases they may not be saleable either.

My property was charged premium for long term empty home straight away after I bought it because previous owner use all the exemptions for empty properties. It was not my fault that the house was empty for 2 years so why I have to pay premium council tax when I do not own it long term. Besides I bought it to rent not to keep for myself. Because of the pandemic I had to wait 6 months for planning department (that is Council) to make a decision to refuse my application for change of use from C3 to C4. Now I struggle to find builders to do just basic work to the house again because of the pandemic. Everything takes so long starting from the Council decisions to finding people to do the work, and then the same Council deciding to put premium on empty property. I think that Council does not care about personal circumstances, we are all put into the same basket

My late mum's property I now own. This is not going to be used as a second home in my case

I can only speak for my own family and my answers to the questionnaire reflect this. The property we have, in Talacre, is very small and would not accommodate a family. Initially we had a static caravan but, for several reasons, this no longer met our needs. We had many friends in the area and did not want to move far away. We were aware that second properties were becoming a problem in some Welsh towns and villages so we sought a property which we thought would not add to this problem. Our property is leasehold and we pay our ground rent to Talacre Holiday Homes. These properties were built as holiday homes hence the small size and when we initially started to look in the area they did not have residency throughout the year. The road is not adopted by the local authority so our lighting, road repairs etc. have to be paid by the residents. These costs, together with our ground rent, amount to over £1,000 per annum which could be prohibitive to many. In fact these properties can take some time to sell, the property next door took 3 years to sell and, in the end, was not purchased by a resident of Wales. They are not really suitable as social housing nor is it possible to use them as a holiday business. We have a contract with the freeholder which prevents us from letting our property other than occasionally to immediate family, neither are we allowed to sublet. We are retired and are at our property for about 2 weeks per month with the exception of December when we don't visit and July when we are there for the whole month. We are very much part of the community and help with events which take place at our local community centre. I am learning the Welsh language (some of my family originally came from Anglesey and I feel this is part of my heritage) I can't comment on any detrimental impact on the Welsh language as I don't know how many of the properties in question are owned by people from other parts of Wales. Additionally we always support local businesses so I don't think that our presence is reducing the property pool or detracting from the community. I understand, however, the reason for the premium and the need to raise money for social/affordable housing. In my opinion the current "one size fits all" is flawed and should be reviewed, although I realise that this would cause more work. Our property, and it's usage, is very different from a 3/4 bedroom property which, when built, was intended as a family home or is in a remote area where

young people cannot get a foothold in the property market and such properties are standing empty for months at a time. We don't really want to pay any premium at all but, given the situation, feel that up to 50% is reasonable in our case.

House was inherited in 2019 due to parental death, but Covid, lockdowns, closure of Wales to travel from England has made emptying house and getting it on market very slow. Also means that period of grace due to inheritance expired and Council Tax was increased on property because we weren't allowed into Wales. Hope to get on market soon, half-way through trying to recycle/donate everything to charities rather than just taking it to the dump.

Fully appreciate that empty dwellings detract from an area and community, and are antisocial when there is a shortage of property on the market.

It is the responsibility of the Council and the Welsh government to build more affordable social housing. Not all second home owners wish to rent out their home (which they may have inherited) to families etc. They may wish to sell.

As I was left the property after my father's passing and then Covid hit, so I could not get up to the property as I live in the Midlands, I am yet to decide what to do with the property

There are many and varied reasons as to why dwellings become and remain long term empty. It may be family/personal circumstances or, as in my particular case, a requirement for the property to be modernised to today's standard of living. This can require investment of a considerable amount of time and money. From experience, the 12 months exemption from Council tax (+50% premium) is helpful but sometimes the project involved cannot be satisfactorily completed in that 12 month window of opportunity. WAG and the Local Authorities need to take on board the complete distinction between second homes and long term empty properties. If I owned a second home as a property I spent some considerable part of my time living there (e.g. Holiday home) then I would expect to pay double the Council Tax compared to my main residence. I say this because I believe the impact of second home ownership in Wales on local communities is serious and well catalogued. That is not to say that Long Term Empty Properties do not also have an impact, albeit somewhat different in nature. Local Authorities would do well to incentivize rather than penalise the owners of this type of property to restore them as residential properties as quickly as is possible. The current system, as it stands, in my opinion, does not achieve this and, instead, has left Council Tax payers like myself, feeling let down.

Fairness for all

If people are already paying 100% they shouldn't be charged more for the pleasure of owning a second property.

If a property is empty for any reason then there is no drain on public services so why charge a premium on council tax? If it is a second/holiday home then the owners spend money in the locality when they visit, this helping local businesses.

If somebody can afford a second home they can afford to pay a premium for the privilege. Some long term empty properties are in a very poor condition and require a considerable amount of work and therefore finance. Making the owners pay a premium on top of normal council tax just increases the finance required to put the property into a habitable condition. The recent pandemic has also restricted the ability to continue work on many properties.

Second homes do not have a negative impact on the services that council tax pays for (you don't collect bins any more frequently). I would suggest that holiday goers have a positive impact on the services paid for by council tax. They bring revenue to Talacre.

While house is renovated council tax should be same as normal. House could then be let out. renovations take time ,covid has had impact on work .plaster hard to get etc.

We have been charge this twice for two separate dwellings.

The first was as we lived in a caravan while our house was being built. Once we moved into the new house, the caravan was sold. Unfortunately, because of Covid, the caravan was delayed being taken off site, so we were charged 150%. It was never going to be a home for anyone else to live in at the property, so it did not affect local housing and we were penalised because of Covid. I think that where the 'home' is never going to be used as an extra home in Flintshire because it is obviously an annex, then there should be no charge. The second time was because we bought a house to rent out. This house needed serious renovation and had been empty for some time. The previous owners had claimed the empty property relief but had done no work to make it fit for habitation. When we bought it we started renovation works straight away, but was still charged 150%. This was not fair as we were doing our best to make the house fit for the local rental market and maybe you should penalise the previous owners for claiming relief with no intention of renovating.

Maybe charge the same owners a long term empty property charge after 12 months, but if the house is sold, then the new owners should get the exemption again.

This will give better opportunities for local people who live and work in Flintshire to purchase properties

The use of second homes reduces the number of visitors staying in hotels and other tourist accommodation.

Presumably long-term empty homes are not those whose owners have recently gone into residential care or owners who have moved out of their home for extensive renovations of say not more than 18 months? On that basis, longer-term empty homes should be returned to frequent use, if not for the owner then for someone locally who needs a home.

I consider that the increase would make people consider whether it is viable to maintain a second home or keep an empty property and possibly make more homes available for the local population.

There is a need to reduce second homes and also to improve occupancy of empty properties in my opinion

People with second homes are reducing the number of houses available for local people.

Long term empty dwellings may go on the market sooner if the owners have to pay full tax on them and this would in turn make more affordable housing available.

There can be very valid reasons for empty dwellings and second homes. People should not be tarnished because of this. I think your question regarding impact on Wales's language is wrong as it is very leading - like you want people to say that it is detrimental. I'm Welsh and proud of that but unfortunately, even though I have tried I am unable to speak and read more than a few words - do I negatively impact my country? You should just have left people to make comments if they wanted to.

Empty homes/second homes reduce the availability of affordable homes to people in need and have a negative impact on local communities. Increasing the level of council tax on such properties would prove a disincentive to such property owners and increase the council's income for local services

To have unoccupied property in any area for a long term is severely detrimental on the basis that they attract anti-social behaviour and their upkeep is not always what you might want. To have empty or rarely used property in this area where we have a housing shortage beggars belief and therefore I feel at least full council tax should be paid and I would even prefer an extra charge for long term unoccupied

As long as second homes are well maintained I can't see it has an adverse effect on the community but the owners should pay a proportion of tax for the council services.

Long term empty does have an effect on the community as not maintained the same, gardens overgrown, trees overgrown and looks untidy next to well-maintained properties.

People who own second homes probably overall contribute positively to the local economy, however, long term empty houses and their owners probably don't.

Vacant properties have an impact on local shops as revenue is only for certain periods of the year instead of throughout the year. There is also an issue of vandalism if a property is left vacant for long periods and if derelict can encourage vermin. I feel there is no impact on the Welsh language as there is a large population of migrants that do not speak English and therefore would not learn Welsh.

Second homes should pay more council tax to discourage people taking properties from those looking for housing. Owners Long term empty dwellings should be penalised for council tax BUT it does depend on a) the reason for the long term b) what period defines long term

1. Make those that afford second homes pay for the privilege.
2. Apply more financial discipline to the present outmoded system of property ownership payment.

A very high premium would negatively penalise owners of properties that are empty through no fault of the owner.

I don't believe that owning a second property has a negative impact in this particular area where house prices are generally fairly low for the UK. As an accidental landlord who has tried to sell their 2nd property I feel it very unfair to have to pay a council tax premium on an empty property that I've been attempting to sell for less money than I bought it for just because it's been on the market for too long.

Houses which are left empty need to be forced back onto the market either through sale, or renovation and rented or sold. There are fair to many properties left empty and in states of disrepair that could be purchased by someone and renovated and put back into the market.

Holiday homes are purchased by people from out of the area and taken from the market for locals, this pushes up housing prices in certain areas.

In an age when there are too many people waiting for housing, it really upsets me to see empty homes. If these were available to purchase it may lead to those currently in social housing to consider buying homes and it may free up more social housing for those who need it.

Those with second homes really should be paying for the privilege of stopping locals from buying homes in their area.

I would prefer to see a 500% council tax surcharge on second homes.

Any empty home is an opportunity lost for a local person in need to have a place that they can call home. If the property is vacant without a valid reason I see no reason why the owner should not pay a large premium.

Second homes and holiday homes have a place in any area where tourism is part of the local economy. It is fair to assume that anyone who can afford to own such property also has the means to pay a premium to help support the communities that they enjoy visiting.

You assume those with 2nd properties in Flintshire are habitable and have an effect on housing waiting lists but when planning is asked to convert the property into homes you reject it....short sighted as there are only 167 then you should merit each circumstance individually without a "one size fits all" approach.

Given the numbers, the impact would appear to be minimal. The money raised would not appear to be meaningful either.

There should be a process where long term empty houses could be brought back into use.

I disapprove of second homes in principle.

Young generation are struggling to get local housing and forced into rental market

The Welsh economy relies heavily on tourism and people from other areas spending their hard earned cash in Wales. We need to attract new visitors into Wales and encourage them to invest in Wales. Putting a premium tax on second homes does nothing towards this and implies discrimination which is illegal. Please stop this discrimination and show a much more neutral position

Second homes: in a county where so many do not have a proper first home it seem unreasonable that a small minority of people who presumably are not residents in the county (?) are able to use all our facilities

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| <p>when they stay here. Charging this amount might also cause the second home owners to sell up and make their property available to those who need them more.</p> <p>Empty homes: others need these homes. Charging this rate of tax would be a significant incentive to sell up and make them available to those who need them.</p> |
| <p>Second homes reduce housing available for local residents ,many young families cannot afford a house where they have been brought up</p> |
| <p>Everyone who wants to own their own home should have opportunity to do so. Empty homes and second homes reduces this opportunity. The greater the number of homes not paying full council tax, the less money available to local authorities to provide important services. For all these reasons, empty homes and second homes should pay their full share of council tax. There can be time limited exemptions for homes which are going through probate or sale.</p> |
| <p>There are too many empty properties in the area, either because the owners do not use them as dwellings or because they are in need of renovation and the work is not being done. They become an eyesore and reduce the attractiveness of the area for other residents and potential residents.</p> |
| <p>Second homes and empty dwellings do not help local people onto the property ladder. But I don't think a charge should be made on property that is unoccupied and for sale as they are not using any amenities</p> |
| <p>Council tax has become disproportionate, a secondary taxation system to be topped up from instead of performing efficiently. A top up that not every working person contributes towards. A single person paying 75% is taxed disproportionately higher than a couple in the next door semi-property only paying 100% [at a rate of 50% each].</p> <p>Society has changed since the Poll Tax, we now have a far higher proportion of working taxpayers living in the same property, and this needs to be addressed in order to address the disparity of council tax "top-up" not falling equally.</p> <p>Yes keep the property banding, but set a rate for all, "X"% per working adult in each property, so a single person would pay 50% of a band D, two would pay 100%, three 150% etc. spreading the banded charge equally.</p> <p>Rather than concentrating on empty properties, think laterally, within the changed society there are adults who are escaping from contributing towards council tax, which if calculated could reduce the overall per person percentage rate and generate greater income.</p> <p>Simply taxing empty property's and second homes could well lead to more going on the market out of reach of the persons waiting on lists and reducing the rental stock at the same time.</p> |
| <p>The empty homes do not have an impact on services or facilities so if empty and not being used what is the rationale for charging for services which are not used?</p> |
| <p>Long term empty properties and second homes add nothing to the social coherence of local communities. Whilst I should not want them to be made "illegal" I do believe that they should be seriously discouraged and carry a heavy social premium to okay for the privilege.</p> |
| <p>The proportion of 2nd homes in Flintshire is distinct from long term empty properties and should be treated differently.</p> <p>Exemptions should continue to apply for properties for sale and to let.</p> |
| <p>These empty homes could be sold or used for social housing and second homes should be discouraged where there are long waiting lists for social housing</p> |
| <p>Increased council tax on currently empty homes should make the owners think harder about what to do with the property. The council used to have a compulsory improvement/short term rental scheme for empty properties and I would like to see this introduced to help people into affordable housing.</p> <p>I feel that if someone can afford a second home they should pay full council tax charges. Otherwise they are taking from the housing pool without contributing to the local economy.</p> |

A higher premium on long term empty dwellings might increase pressure on owners to resolve long term emptiness more quickly. This does not apply to second homes.

In my opinion if someone can afford to have more than 1 property then I think they should pay more taxes on all properties above their main one and I think it should be 100% above the standard rate for that band of property.

Because there are over 2,000 people on the waiting list and over 600 empty and not being lived in properties, I think the council should have powers to commandeer these property's or at the very least charge 100% council tax.

Make more cash available for social housing and reduce the waiting lists for social housing

People have different reasons for their property being empty, it's their property to do what they want with not the Welsh Government

With so many people in need of low cost housing every empty property should be brought up to standard and let.

The cause of people being on a waiting list for housing is the very poor record of the council and housing associations failure to build enough new homes. If you wish to get the list down then build more houses. If people have enough money to have a second home then they will just pay the extra with no benefit to the local community except a few extra pounds in the kitty, and the waiting list will be just as long. Perhaps the council should offer to buy long term empty homes from their owners at a fair price or get their fingers out and build more housing. Also they shouldn't write off council tax debt, and rent debt and instead they should chase debtors for what they owe, if they don't pay up then evict them and let the house to others who will pay their rent. The trouble at the moment is that some people think that the world owes them a living, I for one am fed up of paying to feed others kids, paying for their transport, and paying higher council tax whilst many others pay nothing at all.

I am not sure what you mean between Positive impact and Negative impact, but I do know that while we have all the empty property`s the waiting list for people is going to get longer.

Because of the negative impact.

Long term empty dwellings are no benefit for anyone who needs a home. If they are kept empty so the owners can make money as the empty home increases in value then they can pay a premium. If people can afford second homes then they can afford to pay a premium. There should be an appeals process for empty homes, e.g. if someone is working abroad and intends to return when the work is finished or in the armed forces based elsewhere then there may be some grounds for not charging the full premium, it would depend on the individual circumstances.

Next door to me property has been empty for over eight years garden overgrown, property in poor disrepair, outside boundary wall down, bringing house prices down in area ,talked to owner about wall he knocked down with jcb while clearing trees from front garden over a year ago no response from him

Difficult to define positive & negative impact as long term empty houses deteriorate & therefore neighbouring properties can be affected as well as reducing availability.

Second homes can have positive impact by bringing some income to local businesses but also negative impact in that reduce availability of housing stock for local people particularly if buying lower priced houses & therefore lower more affordable "tax bands

If can afford 2 homes should pay increased tax

Why should people who own second properties be penalised due to the local councils Flintshire (Labour) government inept councillors (Mark Tami) & co to provide housing for local people and ex veterans who are having to live on beachside benches they really need to get their act together when approving planning to make sure there are sufficient first time buyer low cost properties rather than approving planning to big building firms to build 4/5 bed properties that are selling in excess of £400,000 pounds

A premium should not be charged on 2nd homes as the owners make minimal use of council services, so the council is already gaining. The amount of 2nd homes in Flintshire is so small so as to not make any impact on the waiting list for affordable homes.

I have experienced a council levying a 200% premium on empty properties, most recently during the pandemic, when my tenant vacated the property of his own volition and compelled me by default to a deal of maintenance to restore the property to good order. I had let the property only because of difficulties in previously trying to sell it and being let down by a potential buyer.

Recently after a protracted period when all involved parties seemed to drag out the process I have successfully sold the property and am in the process of purchasing a replacement nearer my main residence.

I would live with a premium after a property has been vacant for 12 months , as long as there is a reset if the property becomes occupied once again

I feel the current charge is more than enough to charge people

The UK, including Wales is in a housing crisis. Encouraging people to give up second/empty properties will help this.

Anybody with a vacant property (and no valid reason for it to be empty) or with a second home can afford the increased Council Tax and the extra money can be put to good use by the Council.

The Welsh Government and Welsh local councils are trying to blame someone other than themselves for not investing in the basics for Welsh people, education, housing, the health service and jobs, do more to move Wales out of poverty and stop blaming others !!!

empty homes kill communities

We need Wales to be a vibrant living country, not a theme park.

Why should empty homes exist when there is a shortage of available homes? Total waste of houses.

Anybody who owns second/empty homes should be able to afford 100% premium. This may provide a stimulus for the owners to sell empty properties.

Second homes bring revenue to the local area. I suspect the increased spending in local businesses is more than revenue generated by a second home surcharge. Therefore I suspect that increasing the premium would in fact have a negative effect on the revenue spent in the local community, thus I don't believe a premium should be charged for a second home.

There is a desperate shortage of housing so any measures to discourage properties being left empty or being used as 2nd homes should be put in place.

If you can afford a second home you should be able to afford full council tax.

Hopefully it would encourage owners of empty dwellings to rent them out.

To me, dwellings are rarely empty long-term without good reason. The current level of 50% incentivises those that can to get a move on but above this amount could be penalising people unjustly. Although empty dwellings and second properties obviously have a negative effect on housing stock, this is by no means, the sole thing responsible for the waiting time for affordable housing.

I own a property that you currently class as a second home, as my main permanent residence is in Luton. However, the house in Flintshire is fully furnished and always has been since my mother's death three years ago. It is not an investment property or a holiday home. It has never been empty. It is not something that I will ever profit from in that sense. I accept that there are higher costs for insurance, but I object to the higher costs for council tax when I am not here all of the time. It is my second home, my family home, that I am intending to move back to and that I have always been clear with you that I would return to. COVID has delayed me selling my house in Luton, but that is currently on the market and as soon as that is sold, my house on Flintshire will be my only home.

I always object to the fact that second home owners are not a part of the community. I am very much part of this local community, I go to church here and I volunteer here. I do most of my food shopping here and

buy at least 50% of my fuel here. I go on holiday to other parts of north Wales more often than I holiday in other parts of the UK, so I hope that I have a positive impact on the local community and wider. As I am not here every weekend I also struggle to get my bins collected regularly, as drivers often don't bother to drive a few metres into our lane when I am here. Paying extra for an occasional and unreliable service is not good.

I understand that you have to charge more properties that are long term empty or hardly ever used, but I have never believed that I fitted into those categories.

I seem to have been caught out by the probate process - whilst even though you are generous in allowing free council tax periods during that time - you have penalised me for wanting to keep my family home ever since.

I only pay 75% of the full rate in Luton as a single person and had expected to do the same here as I divide my time quite equally as I work from home.

Some of these second homes may be able to be rented out if they are not used on a regular basis by the owners thus reducing the housing waiting list

If the council tax on second homes is made higher it will deter people from renting a property or the owners renting them out. Our area is a desirable one which borders England with very few people speaking Welsh therefore this will have no impact on the empty properties

I believe people are entitled to have as many homes as they can afford but should pay full rates on them. Holiday homes are limited as to the effect they have on the economic prosperity of an area. Towns can look miserable in areas where there are many second homes in winter. They receive the same services as everyone else when occupied so they should pay the same when unoccupied as the cost to the council doesn't go down because they are not there and using the property.

Many long term empty properties are the result of a family member dying and often the issue of probate takes several months before a property can be put up for sale. My family have had reason to look at purchasing housing in the last few months and many of the properties seem to need a lot of remedial work before the property can be lived in - or before a mortgage is granted. The premium may hopefully encourage the legatees to improve the property and perhaps rent it out or put on the property market. I do not have an issue with second homes requiring an additional premium but neither am I in an advantageous position of being a second home owner so this may come across as sour grapes. Be that as it may, I do believe that in many instances second homes remove the availability for local folk to purchase properties and in doing so keep the local housing chain moving.

Having a 2nd home is a luxury! Having an empty dwelling when people brought in the county are struggling to find houses where they have grown up is a disgrace!

Also it's killing the Welsh language! Place names and house names are being anglicised!

On this subject it's time for the council to propose all new builds use Welsh names!

If they are not up for sale or sold the council is getting no income so the rest of us have to pay extra

If these people can afford to buy holiday homes that are driving up the price of housing in Wales so locals cannot afford to buy or live in the area as the rental pricing goes too high to so they should pay for the full cost of leaving the house empty or profiteering by holiday letting it. Long term empty houses should pay in full as it is the owner's choice to leave empty as is most cases they do not want to spend. Money on them make them pay or if not sell to council to re home homeless people

In terms of second homes, it deprives people of purchasing their first home at affordable prices and secondly, owners of second homes do not contribute as much to the local community. We believe long term empty properties in the main, leave their property to become unsightly and in some cases affecting the value of homes nearby. Again there is a lack of contribution to the local businesses.

If people can afford a second home then they can afford to make a larger contribution to local services

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| <p>Long term empty properties can be empty for many reasons - the criteria should not penalise anyone for whom it is their only dwelling e.g. they may be ill and away from home for some time.</p> |
| <p>It is wrong to have homes standing empty, when so many people are on the waiting list for a home in Flintshire.</p> <p>Also, it is better to use housing stock that is already here, rather than build more.</p> <p>I think that people who have second homes here, should pay more into the local economy. I would rather local</p> <p>People had homes than visitors. I think that young people are competing with second home owners for homes, and several</p> <p>houses in the village where I live (Sychdyn) are now rented properties (also for holidays) , rather than being sold to young people who are trying</p> <p>To get onto the housing ladder. There is also an impact on the Welsh language and culture.</p> |
| <p>We are short of accommodation in Flintshire. Empty property should be used. Any empty property needs to be taxed fully and get it used.</p> |
| <p>Empty homes can sometimes spoil the appearance of a road , not always I agree , but I can think of one in my area where the house owners each side of it must be absolutely fed up as they are working really hard on their own properties and gardens.</p> |
| <p>Need for diversity (of housing occupiers) to prevent static entrenched communities.</p> |
| <p>Housing is needed for local communities. Holiday homes should be limited as they inflate house prices out of reach of local workers.</p> <p>Empty houses are a blight and remove housing stock.</p> |
| <p>If property (second home or empty dwelling) is not used then owners should be encourage to sell property or offer property to council as long term rent to support council with social housing scheme.</p> <p>An increase in council tax will help council to offer support to those families waiting for social housing.</p> <p>At present 167 isn't a big impact but this could increase causing problems for future first time buyers around the county who wish to stay local.</p> |
| <p>Holiday properties already pay a premium on top of council tax, but also encourage holiday spending that may be spent elsewhere if they are priced out of the county.</p> <p>The exceptions for long term empty appear to be acceptable but, not knowing the state of the property or the reasons why they are empty, make it difficult to comment in any meaningful way</p> |
| <p>Empty houses are an eyesore and pal need houses. Houses get left for too long then they just get torn down.</p> |
| <p>Housing is at a premium. Those who can afford a second home in the area can afford to pay the 100% premium. Long term vacant property should be used to house those in need.</p> |
| <p>The type of empty homes are most likely for holiday purposes and unlikely to meet social housing needs. Why should owners pay an extra premium? They are not using most of the services that are available for many weeks of the year and if they are then they should pay the same as everyone else.</p> <p>Why penalise second home owners just because they own a second property. Does it deter people from owning second properties or is it a money raising opportunity?</p> |
| <p>I live in a select area of Flintshire where there has been a 4 bedroom detached house empty for over 10 years. I have seen the negative impact this has on all the neighbouring properties and the occupants. What a crying shame!!! It's about time things changed.</p> |
| <p>Housing should be for the benefit of local people. Second home owners should pay more and long term empty property should be returned to the housing stock quickly.</p> |
| <p>Local residents are unable to buy properties due second home owners and property investors increasing the price of properties. First time buyers and local government workers unable to buy.</p> |

I do not believe second homes cause issues for the community. I do feel that long term empty properties do. This denies other people the opportunity to live in the local area.

How is a second home that is well kept an issue?

When there are plenty of rented homes which are of poor upkeep but being paid for by the disabled.

I feel that second homes and long term empty homes are a blight on local communities for many reasons and the number of such properties should be reduced.

My main property is in Blackpool but I have a second home in Ewloe. The sole purpose of this second home is because I work at Airbus. During the week it is fully occupied by myself and only empty of a weekend. I do not believe that I should pay a premium because it is a work related second home, it is in constant use during the week throughout the year and I'm bringing money into the area.

I would imagine that most second homes and long term empty dwelling, if made available, wouldn't fall under the affordable housing bracket so increasing the premium wouldn't help this situation.

I believe that people that have lived in a village/town in Wales for some time should have the right to buy a property that is vacant or for sale - in preference to a buyer wanting to use it as a second home or holiday let

Not sure what should be done for empty properties. I suspect there cannot be a single answer as there will be different reasons why they are empty.

My main reason is that hopefully council tax could then be reduced from it's at present unacceptable high rate.

Giving ordinary working class people and pensioners who have only one home scraping by, to have a stress free life worrying where the funds are coming from to subsidise these people. Rant over!!

There is a shortage of affordable housing

Flintshire is not subject to 2nd or holiday homes that effect the local community as much as other Welsh areas. It is an excuse to raise Council Tax and I have no 2nd property or other connection/interest in this scheme that affects me.

Increased taxation level is an unimaginative attempt to solve a problem that will only eventually be solved by engaging with the property owners.

If people can afford a second home, then they can ensure they provision for the full council tax cost.

Reduced because empty houses and households are not utilising the services provided by the County - bin collections, schools etc.

I was born in Flintshire 75 years ago and was educated here and I have worked here as a teacher for all of my working life. Even though I live in a small rural village some 15 miles from the English border I rarely hear Welsh being spoken. Because Welsh is very much the minority spoken language I can see little reason why the presence of unoccupied properties should affect the prevalence of the language. Sad though this is it is nevertheless a fact of life. I learnt Welsh as a second language but rarely get the opportunity to practise my Welsh.

I am more concerned about those properties used solely as holiday rental businesses when such use can avoid the payment of council tax at all. Those used as second homes are contributing to the local economy via council tax and supporting local shops and the hospitality industry. Empty properties contribute nothing except council tax.

It is unfair that houses should remain empty when there is a shortage of accommodation for people who need somewhere to live.

These properties damage local communities and make it harder for local people to find housing, either because it is not available or because it has become too expensive. The council's first duty is to its residents.

Empty homes should be sold or made available to rent. Hopefully, a large increase in council tax would persuade owners to do this.

The problem of long term empty dwellings and second homes is nationwide (UK). There is an acute housing shortage in Wales (including Flintshire) and these long term empty properties could be put to positive use if they were put on the market for sale. An increase in Council Tax will encourage that - and produce more income until they are sold. Second homes are often in picturesque or popular locations. These distort the property market as they are bought at premium prices which puts them beyond the reach of local people.

Those with second home have the financial ability to pay full council tax. If you can afford another property, you should pay the same fees as you are receiving the same facilities as everyone else. Empty homes, again long term empty home those have them have made the choice. Therefore should be charged 100%

The number is relatively low.

This would be incentive second home ownership and leaving properties empty for people in most income brackets. These properties should be available for local people to buy and live in permanently. This would also benefit the environment by fewer new homes being built losing less land to development and maintaining habitats.

I am a sole home owner/occupier and dutifully pay my council tax via D/D. An empty property that could be occupied is a waste of vital residential resources and the community might benefit if brought back in to use. Not just any use, but say for a family who can add to the overall wealth of the community and our council area.

The premium should be abolished. To relate it to opportunities for Welsh speakers or affordable home seekers is a complete non sequitur. It is a tax of envy. Second home owners bring much needed economic activity to the area connected to both the fabric of the property and their everyday requirements whilst they are here. As second home owners they much more likely to be better off and will spend a greater amount in both maintaining their second home and feeding and entertaining themselves when they are here. Flintshire will be missing an opportunity for advancing its cause if this tax continues for the sake of political doctrine.

Long term empty properties are likely to be subject to estate or probate considerations in many instances - do you really think it just or appropriate to tax these bereaved owners? Instead, why not rebate Council Tax paid for properties which are quickly returned to the local stock, say within two years of probate being granted. If property is being held back for planning reasons deal with it by improving the planning process. For the record, I don't have a second home and never had, I don't have a long-term empty property, and never had.

If you can afford a second home you should have to pay full council tax. This tax should be considered when buying a second home. If you can't afford the council tax, don't buy a second home.

If empty dwellings have to pay full council tax it hopefully would encourage owners to let out the dwellings.

If people can afford to buy second home then they can afford to pay full rates for services

The purchasing of second

Homes reduces availability for local people to live in their localities especially in rural settings.

Those who wish have the privilege/benefit of a second home should be prepared to pay a "premium", the money from which can go to help providing affordable homes for locals.

If I have to pay an additional 50% or more on a building that requires work on, then I won't be able to afford to do the work so the building will remain empty longer.

A second dwelling that is occupied should not be charged more whilst an empty dwelling is a property that could be occupied by someone and perhaps should carry a slightly heavier premium.

Make owners consider making use of empty property

Second homes are a luxury, and people should pay a premium to help offset the reduced housing stock they create. There is also no reason to own a house and it remain empty for long periods. Again, a financial disincentive is really the only way without special powers to CPO these properties.

We need to maximise the income and people with second homes it empty homes can obviously afford it. With empty homes it could make landlords let them out or sell them hence increasing the supply.

I think an exemption should be made for people who have to go into long term care.

The empty home period should be reduced to something like 6 months (or less) where the person lives elsewhere- abroad

Dwellings not occupied represent a reduction in the availability of homes for the community. We need to only build sufficient homes to house everyone and second homes and empty houses puts pressure on the Council to ensure more homes are built than are needed. We need to retain as much open space as possible and not turn them over to unnecessary building, something that also increases the effect on the environment and the climate...

At present the empty property is up for sale at an affordable price. If the council need more affordable housing why not buy properties like this or help those in need to buy. I rented to council tenants for many years and think it's unfair to now charge extra tax when we want to sell. Maybe the tax system should be reviewed for circumstance of property being empty.

Q3 Second homes have a positive impact as they bring additional spending to the County. Second homes have a negative impact as they increase the value of homes above what is affordable by local residents.

Q5 With 2120 residents on a waiting list, their families will be using/learning Welsh in school which has no impact. The 167 holiday homes would have a limited negative impact if they only use English.

I have a house that is for sale. The council could buy the property or help someone in need of affordable housing to buy it. I rented the house to council tenants for many years and don't think it's fair to charge me extra tax while on the market.

Second homes bring income to the county with increased revenue to spend. Empty home do not bring income into the county.

IT IS MORALLY WRONG FOR HOMES TO LAY EMPTY WHEN SO MANY LOCAL PEOPLE NEED A HOME.
SECOND HOMES HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON OUR COMMUNITIES AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE.
WALES IS BESET WITH THE PROBLEM OF SECOND HOMES AND LANDLORDS WITH LARGE PORTFOLIOS PURCHASING THE SMALL TERRACED PROPERTIES TO RENT OUT, WHEN ONCE THESE WERE AFFORDABLE HOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

I understand the reasoning for applying a council tax premium on many long term empty homes, to encourage them to be put back into the housing stock. However properties should be assessed and the premium applied when appropriate. I was in the position of leasing a pub in Flintshire but because the flat above the pub was not large enough for our family, nor was it in a suitable state of repair, we decided not to live at the pub, but to remain living in our existing home. Under the terms of the pub lease we were not allowed to sub-let the flat and the layout meant we couldn't use it as a B&B. After 12 months the flat above the pub was deemed long term unoccupied and we had to pay the CT premium. We were already paying an extortionate amount of business rates and after a while both these charges together contributed to us giving up the pub because it just wasn't profitable. Please consider the property and the circumstances and consider if the premium is fair before imposing the extra cost.

150% council tax after 1 year is incredibly unfair when planning is taking over 1 year and paying extra council tax has delayed the project due to more money spent on tax and less money spent on renovation. financial pressure encourages people to work much faster putting more pressure on in safe practices

The question is, why are these long-term empty properties empty? Do you know who the owners are and are they local?

Long-term empty properties (as opposed to second homes) should be taken into council ownership and used for social housing.

I fully support the principle of discouraging people from using or disposing of empty properties but the premium should not apply if a property is being actively marketed for sale.

I have recent experience of trying to sell a retirement flat (as Executor for the deceased owner and not in Flintshire) and was shocked at how difficult it was to sell, even at a vastly reduced price. No doubt other properties would present similar challenges and the owner/seller should not be penalised through a Council Tax premium

Second homes are a luxury and in our area not contributing to the health or wealth of our county. They remove housing from the grasp of local people seeking to stay and work within the locality they were brought up in.

Empty homes are often held by families with deep local connections.

Many generations have been brought up in the area and very often since the building was first lived in. The current owners may well have a desire to assist their family members achieve affordable housing within their locality.

If a local resident leaves their property to a relative with a view that the building should provide housing for their relative's offspring, thereby providing family continuity within the area and providing affordable housing for the youngsters then the family looking after the property shouldn't be penalised.

I had to move from Sir Fon to Flintshire back in the 70's when property was quickly being bought up as holiday homes and the areas I was brought up in have very few locals left. I have family left on the island who have no choice other than to pay heavy rent or leave their home area.

We have a responsibility to look after our local residents and their offspring both with regard to housing and work availability.

It is incumbent on our leaders in the local society, wherever that is, to help as much as possible to achieve this.

Those people who can afford to purchase second homes for holidays or occasional use bring nothing to local communities. Occasional use of local shops perhaps but they still enjoy the provision of council services. I believe that an increased contribution to 100% would enable increased support for council services for schools and full time residents.

We Moved from the area just over 12 months ago, however, it has taken the 12 months just to get plaster on the walls due to a national shortage of materials. This has been affected by Covid-19 and brexit.

We have not allowed the property to stand empty for any other reason, We told the council that it was being renovated, if as stated above, if there is a genuine attempt to sell the property but the renovations are taking longer than the current 12 months there should be a review if its realistic to charge an extra 50%-100% of the council tax.

As soon as we have the property in a good standing to be sold we will sell.

I am classed as having a second home but this is not really the case. Sadly my dad passed away in which 2019 and I was left the house.

We applied for planning permission to put an extension on so we could move in to it and sell the home I am living in now.

Due to Flintshire Planning been so slowly and then us going in to lock down with COVID it was only February this year 2021 that we had our plans passed.

There is no kitchen or bathroom in the house and no gas or electricity so why should be paying council tax?????

I am now having to pay two lots of Council Tax through no fault of my own and it is crippling me I am not on a massive salary and it is a struggle.

All the reasons listed above. There is a housing crisis in the UK which is due to a number of factors, but the large number of housing units that are unavailable to those who need homes has to be a significant factor. I personally would like to see that nobody owns a second home while there are people who are homeless or forced to live in inadequate accommodation, but I realise that this is untenable. I also see increasing acres of green land being swallowed to build new homes in areas where good quality houses are sitting empty for much of the time. I recognise that this is less of a problem in Flintshire than in other areas, but the figures provided for this survey show that second homes and in particular long term empty properties are a significant factor here too. The least the owners of these properties can do is to make an increased contribution to the costs of housing local residents, and if it helps to discourage the ownership of these properties so much the better.

When a house has been bought and paid for by the occupant, who then passes that property on to a family member, it should not have to pay extra council tax. As the property is empty, it is not even getting the services for which council tax is being paid at the fixed rate.

Higher tax would encourage productive use of property.

I do not feel empty or second homes have a positive impact upon the community. It will also be a way to reduce empty properties as well as raise more funds for essential services.

Long term empty dwellings do not help anyone so By charging extra Council Tax it will deter owners from keeping them empty. Some investors may just be hoping to make a quick profit.

But I do think that the Council should consider specific circumstances for a property remaining empty and make due allowance in genuine cases.

You are going on about Social Housing. People who have worked hard and purchased private properties do not want Social housing near them

You are also aware that arrears are mostly from Social housed people so put your house in order and make sure people pay their debts and stop trying to subsidise your inadequacy by trying to get more money from people who pay their bills

Second homes are a luxury and should be treated as such.

Empty homes should have rate increased over time up to the max 100% over time

Prices have risen making it impossible for Welsh people to buy houses as others are offering more money.

2/ Long term empty usually poor condition, encouragement required to bring them back into use, rental or sold, and rental could be via council intervention.

3/ so few second homes not to be an issue, usually kept in good order, renovations by locals bringing extra money in area, don't use full range of services i.e. bins, health care, schools etc. but pay into. Many of the cheaper places have been for sale a long time, locals haven't bought them despite being keenly priced so don't believe it's an issue

4/ Question worded poorly, should be split into long term then second homes. Long term empty isn't good, hence no repeal when Law of property act updated re adverse possession, council should make contact with owners encouraging selling or rental or lease to council for some of the homeless. Again second homes are not high in number, many in holiday areas that were cheaper but people can't buy no matter how cheap if they have no regular job, investment needed for jobs so locals can afford houses plus more council housing needs to be built

5/ Don't see either as an issue in Flintshire, many locals don't continue the language, however if long term empty back I. Use it'd give families homes so kids will do better at school. Second home users will often try and learn the language if their neighbours speak it as neighbours are genuinely friendly , it's certain aspects of news on second homes that stirred up hatred, i.e. Governments blaming second home owners on their policy failings on house building and jobs. Abandoned property owners aren't there to get the hate message. It doesn't go down well when locals aren't housed when needed yet councils bear the cost of looking after immigrants as locals see this as they've been forgotten and are on the street when

immigrants get housed and looked after, yet Governments blame it all on second home owners, some areas may have issues but Flintshire has such a low number it surely can't be an issue.

6/ Extra charges for very little service seems unfair but most would probably be ok with a small charge, if too high it will make owners change to business rates and pay nothing to council and little to Government, the lady close to me isn't rated for council tax in her let bungalow, most second home owners are not rich, some inherit a family property, others save very hard and go without to afford their second home, using locals for works required.

7/ Long term empty really needs to be brought back into use so continue to charge and if not got one already get an empty homes officer on the case!

If you can afford a 2nd home, you should be able to pay for its up keep and the associated costs. That includes council tax, council tax is not just about collecting bins, the money is also for the local area, schools, and the local environment etc. It is not fair that those who live permanently in the local area have less money coming into the area through council tax due to it being someone's second home.

Long term empty properties should also not disadvantage the local community by bring in less money into the area. Those houses would be better used to accommodate people on housing waiting lists.

There is no evidence to suggest that charging second home owners an additional premium is likely to free up stock for rent or purchase (as first homes). In addition the additional monies provided are not adequately ring-fenced for creation of new affordable property, nor are the sums of money thus provided likely to make any significant impact on the need for same. Frankly it appears to be merely a political device by the Welsh Government to pretend that it is doing something about the housing crisis and is effectively just a tax.

No interest has been taken on why people own second homes and how they use them. There may be very good reasons on an individual basis for this and to impose this tax retrospectively is particularly unfair. More effort should be placed on identifying where local housing needs are particularly acute and needing attention, with a view to working with those communities to free up land at agricultural land values (plus a small premium) for the creation of new affordable housing and facilitate planning consent. To fail to do so merely underlines that this mechanism is simply a cash cow for local authorities.

The situation regarding long term empties is different, although the understanding of why the situation exists is equally missing. At least there is time for such individuals to prepare to meet the costs or make other arrangements. Since there MAY be evidence that empty homes are a source of disrepair and unsightly in the community, some 'encouragement' to get the owners to rectify this may be useful

Depending on the reason for the empty property - they should be let out to help reduce the waiting list for affordable housing

I currently pay a premium rate on an empty property of £243 which I have to pay until the property is sold. It is not a 2nd home so I get no benefit from the property. 2nd homes can recover their bills by renting out properties and so should be charged more to balance out the payments for people like myself that has no choice but to pay this premium.

These homes are depriving local people the chance of acquiring a home. Empty houses can bring the area down and if not maintained can attract vermin etc. and also squatters

I believe that second home or holiday homes bring much needed money into the community.

Is not fair to charge additional money for a second home, our boy is disabled and need adopted holiday house. To find one in UK cost a fortune why is much easier for us to have a second home close to our main house.

With regard to second homes, to be able to provide an accurate answer to the impact they have on affordable housing in Flintshire it would be useful to have a breakdown of the council tax banding of these properties. If they are the lower type banding, i.e. affordable to purchase and rent, then they will have an impact on affordable housing, however, if they are in the higher bands I do not think they would have an

impact as someone on a low income would not be able to afford to buy or rent them. For the higher bands, this would be an opportunity for the council to receive additional income in the form of council tax payments, but the people using them as a second home would probably not be using Flintshire's services, such as schools, waste collection etc.

With regard to empty homes, it depends upon the reason why they are empty. Some may be empty due to death of a relative but due to legal problems, they may be unable to sell or rent the property and by increasing payments for these people it may cause them to become destitute. Some may be empty due to long term sickness, for example previously occupied by single person who has a stroke and needing to go into respite care, again this would cause significant distress having additional expenditure on top of any fees for care. If however the property was empty out of choice then the owner should be made to pay council tax on it. It's not just privately owned houses though that are empty, I have seen such houses boarded up on council housing estates in Holway and the strand) and so Flintshire need to get their own stock in order too!

167 properties in Flintshire are second homes out of a total housing stock of approx. 70,000 - this equates to a mere 0.24%. Such a tiny proportion, perhaps one home in this village and two homes in another village for example, can have absolutely no impact on the sustainability of local communities. This is unlike some Welsh counties, such as Gwynedd, where over 10% of the housing stock comprises second homes and Long term empty properties are in many cases, neglected and poorly maintained and are a blight on the local community. Second homes tend to be far better maintained and cared for. The two groups of properties should be treated quite differently for taxation purposes.

Keep the English 2nd home owners out of Wales and allow Welsh locals to buy affordable properties in their own villages/towns similar to policies adopted in the Lakes.

Stop penalising people who are genuinely trying to make and improve a home for themselves by adding an additional % to further slow the process of completing i.e. apply common sense not greed

second homes raised to 100% as they are using the facilities available bins etc. - reduce empty dwellings as they are not using facilities available

Second homes may be used for people who work locally where their families live or work further afield. I think it would be unfair to discriminate against hard working people.

Owners of long term empty properties need the encouragement to sell or renovate and rent out. They don't benefit anyone whilst being empty and long term become derelict and hotspots for squatters and vandals

Given the social housing crisis at the moment and the number of families on the waiting list to be housed; it is sickening that there are a wealth of empty properties and second homes sitting empty for the majority of the year. People using Wales as a holiday destination should be supporting the community and the Welsh economy by utilising hotels and local guest houses rather than buying up property and stopping young Welsh people getting on the property ladder. This is more of an issues in more "touristy" parts of Wales but the outcomes are the same and they are negative for the people of Wales.

I feel that in the present housing shortage to have properties left empty is unfair to local people who cannot find or cannot afford accommodation. Empty properties, which are often not well maintained make towns and villages look rundown.

We own a small terraced cottage in Holywell. This has been repaired and renovated using local craftsmen and materials. The property is tiny and has steep twisting stairs. It is not a property that would be suitable for families or accessible or anyone with mobility problems. Our main home is in Nottinghamshire, our daughter married a Welshmen and they have two children who are fluent Welsh speakers. We bought this property in order to spend time with our grandchildren. It is not a holiday property. We spend money in the local area and support local schools. We do not however use any great amount of local services yet we

pay more in Council tax for this property than we do for our main property where we spend a larger part of our time. This does not seem fair to us.

This property has never been vacant for 12 months. I do not regard this as a second property or holiday home. Indeed this is my family home where I was actually born. The longest this property has been vacant was during the pandemic lockdown when I was not allowed to enter Wales.

Before applying the premium have to be checked the reasons why the property is empty.

There are hardly any houses for people to buy who are local.

Renting out homes as holiday let's also needs looking into.

Owners of a second home in areas of the country where it negatively impacts the local population (increased house prices and less availability of housing to the indigenous population) should generate a higher contribution to that area. Long term empty accommodation deteriorates which has negative impacts (from a health and safety perspective as well as aesthetically not to mention the waste of housing space)... a higher rate of contribution from the owners should prompt them to either do something about it or at least penalise them for not doing anything about it.

Not all long term empty are second homes, if a property is attached to a business and would not be used as a house again why you would have to pay the premium. If you inherit a home due to bereavement and it doesn't sell you have the premium added.

Should not be charged....IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES. There needs to be clear distinction between habitable second homes lying empty and homes, such as mine, which are quite uninhabitable, having been extensively vandalised over the last few years. The bungalow, built c.1925, was already quite unsuitable for letting when we inherited it on the death of my father and it is some years now since I first instructed an architect with a view to rebuilding as the property has a major structural fault and underpinning the foundations is prohibited by a TPO on an oak tree whose canopy extends partially over the building. Several sets of plans have been drawn up in discussion with FCC Planning Department and a full Planning Application submitted over a year ago. I realise that the Covid19 pandemic can reduce the operational efficiency of public bodies but, as a pensioner mostly reliant on basic State Pension, I already struggle to meet the monthly Council Tax fee of £262. Hence my suggestion that the levy on uninhabitable properties should cease once real steps have been taken and continue to be made to bring a property to habitable status.

if a person through no fault of their own inherits a property for e.g. from their parents it is disgraceful that they should have to pay such a high premium simply because the property is empty it appears to me that the councils in wales see this as a money grabbing exercise in order to fund their incompetence in their management of housing issues and are simply taking the easy option

Long term empty properties need to have a reason for being empty. If they are not used at all, they should be considered for residency.

I am proposing to purchase a flat which will be used to help our family, who now have a small child. They live in a small cottage and both work to make ends meet. We need somewhere to be able to come from southern UK to be able to help them at times.

A second home needs to have a purpose, or let out. If our needs are met, we would certainly aim to let it for local people.

People should have the right to do what they want with a property they own. Not tax on tax on tax.

I inherited my property when my mother died. My father built it and I grew up in it. The neighbours all watched me grow up there. I have a great deal of affection for the property and the area, and I am usually at the property once a month, work permitting. For all the Council Tax I pay in Flintshire, I don't even get my bin emptied.

It's not my fault it was decided to sell off Council Houses. That's the problem.

The pandemic has changed our mobility. For almost two years it has been impossible for next-of-kin of a deceased Flintshire resident to travel there safely to clear an empty house and put it up for sale. This is not the time to make things even more difficult by imposing unnecessary fees. The ordinary council tax should suffice, especially since empty houses are not using the facilities supplied by the council such as rubbish collection. In my case, a friend of my late brother's has been staying at the house on a regular basis to mow the lawn and check on the house, so it is not long-term empty.

It is the property that is being taxed not the people that live in it or their circumstances, so why should anyone property be taxed more than another in the same band.

This format does not allow for individual circumstances so I have responded as it applies just to us. It does not even differentiate between second home owners who profit through rent and those like us who don't. There is a big difference between second homes in Flintshire and those in coastal, holiday areas in Gwynedd and Anglesey. There is also a difference between long term empty properties that may be in poor repair and 'second homes' that are not. In our case we have kept my late mother's bungalow in Hawarden for the time being. It is not rented out and the time will come when we will sell, even though we might prefer not to. It is already unfair to charge us a 50% premium as we only use refuse collection services occasionally. To charge a further 50% would be immoral. Clearly we would not be prepared to continue as a "cash cow" for the council. 605 long term empty homes need a different approach to 167 'second homes', quite a small number across the whole county. As things stand, the fact that we continue to own this property makes no difference to the amount of Welsh spoken in the area, has no bearing on 'affordable' or social housing and does not affect the character of the community. Trying to make all properties and areas fit into these categories is unacceptable.

It is not fair on council tax payers who are financially supporting owners of second or empty homes. Lost revenue could be utilised for the benefit of Flintshire residents.

Mitigating circumstances should be rigorously investigated

If we are fortunate to invest in an empty property which is unoccupied and neglected, surely whilst undergoing improvements both externally and internally, why we should be penalised by paying 50% over and above any council tax whatsoever!

If the external works are dealt with in the first instance surely this is for the better of the Flintshire area and maybe I would highly recommend the following;

0 % in year 1, then 50% year 2, to an absolute MAXIMUM 75% year 3 to year 5 as the property is NOT using local authority services then more interest would be given to these empty properties.

Second homes are used by people who can afford to have a second home in North Wales for personal reasons such as Welsh roots and the intention to return to Wales.

Second homes are rarely in the category of affordable houses.

I live next door to a property that has been empty for almost 4 years and has fallen into a state of disrepair. Its appearance is a blight on the neighbourhood and presents an environmental hazard as rats from the property have encroached onto my own property.

Also, there is a large tree in the front garden, the roots of which are lifting my block-paved drive and also present a danger to the stability of my property's foundations.

We have tried to get some action on this problem but so far nothing seems to get done.

Our late mother left our family home, in Hawarden, to my sister and me. We both lived there full time until our 20's, visited and stayed regularly over the last 40 years. We have owned the house since 2018. All the family spoke Welsh. Hawarden remains a largely non-Welsh speaking area. Our home is not a 'second home' in the sense of a holiday home, we don't allow anyone else to stay, nor do we raise income from the house. Nor is it long-term empty. Due to the pandemic, and the restrictions on travel at certain times, we have been unable to visit or stay as long as we would have under normal circumstances. There is no rationale for applying a premium to a home of this kind which does nothing to negatively impact on the

area or the community, doesn't help with increasing affordable homes, or support the Welsh language. The council has discretion to vary its thinking on this and should consider far more nuanced categories of property and should consider far more nuanced exemptions.

2nd homes and empty properties remove needed properties for local communities. This can lead to inflated house prices as availability is less.

Second homes are fully furnished.

Long term empty - I can't afford to bring my property up to standard, saving hard as can't get a lone. Sadly the council tax is eating into my savings setting me back.

Second home owners bring revenue to Flintshire and Very often improve run down properties. Whereas long term empty properties are very often a flight on the community in which it is situated.

long term empty do not access CC infrastructure, whereas second homes do when occupied

It would deter home Indra from leaving their properties sensory for long term nd normally thee re ones that end up in disrepair and Na eye sore on local communities s

I don't think Flintshire second home sis bad of. A problem as other local neighbouring authorities

Still awaiting a response from my letter dated 6th July 2021 Acc Ref 800363621 with regards to your second home policy

The charge is limiting available funds to bring the properties back into use.

You are frustrating the property owner by applying this charge.

How much additional revenue has the Local Authority made by charging this 'tax'?

What has the Local Authority used this money for and has it made a difference to the issue?

I would recommend consultation with the owners of long term empty properties to establish the reasons why, and the forward plan as in many cases they are undergoing renovation, it could financial, or illness or recently the pandemic causing supply difficulties. I would also class long term as over 10 years. As for second homes there are ready for use at any time.

Long term empty and second homes are a total different entity. The council class them the same when they're not.

I would also suggest if the properties have been abandoned they should be auctioned off as they stand.

Whoever owns the property and if it has been empty for a long period of time obviously has no intention of either renting or selling it should pay the very top premium council tax if not more in my opinion.

An increase will provide extra revenue for local use

The welsh government have repeatedly failed to build affordable housing across Wales, question 4 illustrates this...

"4. In Flintshire there are currently 2,120 people on the waiting list for social/affordable housing. In your opinion, what impact do long-term empty dwellings and second homes currently have on the availability of affordable housing in Flintshire?"

The impact is negligible, The reason for people waiting to be housed is government failure to build affordable housing, if they are going ahead with this

Charge anyway, will they spend the proceeds on affordable housing? Probably not.

If the properties are low value they need to be used, if possible for social purposes.

If they are very high value the owners should not escape paying. However if the properties are remote or would suit the tourism business further consideration should be used.

Long term empty homes and second homes are skewing the housing market and making it more difficult for locals, especially younger locals, to remain here.

Greedy second home owner's hoards properties when there aren't enough to go around. Tax them till the pips squeak, 100% is not enough.

Flintshire Council need to sort themselves out and address the issue of how long it takes to fill a vacant council house.

Flintshire need to urgently address the circa £5m they have failed to collect in Council Tax arrears.

Flintshire need to engage in addressing the issue of creating more affordable housing stock (private and Council) instead of blaming or targeting so called second home owners.

Flintshire need to publish how much Council Tax they have lost and include in this survey by introducing the premium and property owners moving their property out of domestic rating.

Many reasons for owning second homes its unfair and greedy to charge more than local residents

I think 50 per cent premium on 2nd homes and empty homes is sufficiently punitive to prompt these owners into feeding such homes back onto the market to house those in need of a roof over their heads.

If people can afford the luxury of a second home then they should also expect to pay a premium towards the wider community to which they only stay in part time, because if the property was a permanent residence the wider economy would benefit year round and this needs to be compensated for. Empty properties should incur a premium to incentivise owners to bring them back into use or sell them on.

Rich vs Poor

Pay the same as we all do

If you can afford a second home, you can afford to pay full council tax, why should a second home owner be treated differently?

Empty properties empty for over 12 months unless for sale, could house the people on the waiting list.

Why has there been two council houses empty for nearly 6 months on Inglefield Avenue in Conchs Quay

Second home owners have the opportunity to use all services offered, including parks, refuse services, medical emergency services, etc. The local authority needs to raise funding from all of the residents, if we choose to buy property here, we should contribute.

Too many young people are being driven out of the towns and villages they grew up in due to the affordability of housing. The building of new housing estates is not least the solution.

Charging for empty buildings only removes funds from their owners and does not get the buildings back in use.

Second home ownership shouldn't be a penalty or seen as a social evil or penalised.

People work hard to own second homes. They are places of retreat and needed income for some.

Why should they be penalised for being fortunate or working hard.

The council should release more land for affordable homes to be built.

The council should legally define a value in pound sterling for what is affordable and it should legally require developers to provide at least 20% of their developments at that price or lower.

NOT charge private owners more money.

The 163 or so second homes in Flintshire are not going to fill the housing shortage... at all. It's a tiny proportion of the number of luxury houses built each year... Not even 2%.

So why are they being targeted. These bring in jobs in tourism where used as summer lets and holiday lets.

They bring people to wales to enjoy the culture and the country. All targeting second homes is doing is pushing people away from wales.

FCC should reduce council tax on empty property. To allow the owners to invest in their property and not in paying the bills.

There are not enough affordable homes, and even people that can afford nice ones struggle to find one

The single person allowance is only 25% and some struggle to pay it as not everyone receives benefits. If a home is empty - it should attract the full tax. If it is a second home - the owners will be better placed to contribute the full amount of council tax. Especially if they rent it out we should think more about the people who live in and contribute to the local economy

Empty houses should be used to facilitate bringing down the high level of people on the waiting list for affordable housing.

Premium on second homes is allowed to be charged on chalet properties where planning permission says they cannot be used as a residential property but can be occupied any time through the year. Such holiday properties should be excluded from second home premium (as static caravans are) as they could never be part of housing stock.

I have an empty property in Flintshire with it being long term empty. I am struggling enough as it is and to pay the tax that is double I am leaving my family with no heating and less food in order to pay it. It's in a dilapidated state as it is.

I live in a tiny village which has at least 4 holiday lets/ 2nd homes. These properties are taking affordable rental properties off the market so there is limited availability.

Both these subjects have a negative impact on the ability and opportunities for young people especially together onto the housing ladder and remain in their place of birth close to family. Second home ownership in particular will impact on cost of housing in some localities again to the disadvantage of local residents and can impact on the viability of local services.

Case by case basis. Not all homes are empty by choice... delays in probate resolution for example.

Your questions are leading questions to fit an agenda/ narrative of inadequate social housing of your making. Perhaps you shouldn't have sold off your stock all those years ago and especially at below market value rates. First refusal for sitting tenants yes, but at market value. Hence why you now have a major problem.

We have a 2nd home in Flintshire and it has remained empty a lot longer than usual due to Covid, lockdown etc. preventing works. The whole property has needed a total strip out to renovate and again, as this takes time, coupled with lockdown, we feel the 50% should not have been charged and waived. The extra tax is crippling those who want to get an empty home up to a saleable standard.

The premium merely serves as a financial penalty rather than encourages properties to come into use etc.

Long term empty properties have no influence on affordable housing. There are also many reasons why a property may remain empty which the current system makes no allowance for.

Rather than penalised long term empty owners should be incentivised to make them available. If the true aim is to reduce the no. Of empty properties then incentivise this. For example if brought back into use with 12 months Council Tax refunded

PLEASE SEE SECTION 13

We bought our present property some 47 years ago and spent many enjoyable times there. The property was derelict and condemned and the only living things were some sheep. We spent 3 years modernising the cottage and the surrounding area without altering the appearance or size. We have improved the area and everybody is extremely friendly.

The couple next door had always lived in the area and we asked them if they cared us being there. They were delighted to have us live next door.

For many years we spent every weekend and holiday there until you stopped us going to Wales due to Covid.

We always use local labour, bought all the furnishings and carpets and always shop locally for all our food and other requirements. Therefore we are giving to Wales and not taking away. We have many friends in the Area, in fact our daughter's main friends. Are in Wales as she grew up with them.

some empty properties are been renovated by the owners and an increase of 50% after the first 12 months is a lot of money that could be used on the renovation the people who use homes as holiday homes should pay at least 100%

I don't believe that a premium charge should be made as the facilities are not used 50% more than other households.

Unlike local authorities in West Wales in Flintshire we do not have the number of second homes that they have so they do not present the same problems they do in those areas e.g. where many or most of the

houses are holiday homes which are unoccupied for much of the year and young local people are priced out of the market by those from more prosperous areas who are able and willing to pay inflated prices for a second home.

Similarly with only 6% of Welsh speakers in the county, the presence of holiday homes occupied by mainly English speakers does not dilute or adversely affect the Welsh language except in a few village locations in the county where the proportion of Welsh speakers is higher.

Obviously, those who buy and own second homes are wealthy enough to run two homes and are therefore wealthy enough to afford paying additional Council Tax on their second home and are obviously quite prepared to do so. In addition they receive local services when they are in residence and because they are not in residence 24/7 they are not making any substantial contribution in support of other local businesses and services. A 50% premium has been applied in the past and I think that this should be increased not to 100% here. 60 or 65% would be more appropriate.

Many are bought as holiday homes and are let on that basis the owners do not pay Council tax at all because they are part of the hospitality business and not subject to Council tax at all which cannot be right since the owners and occupiers are not paying anything towards the provision of the local services those using them benefit from such as road repairs and maintenance, street lighting, refuse collection etc.

We have lived for some 47 years in the same property in Flintshire and the original property had been empty for some considerable time and was derelict and in extremely poor condition, the only inhabitants being a few sheep.

We spent 3 years repairing the cottage and maintained its style, size and appearance

We bought all our furnishings, furniture, building materials and goods locally helping the local community and Wales.

We asked the Welsh couple who lived next door (semidetached) if they minded us living next door as 2nd home owners and they were delighted to have some company/neighbours and we help each other...

Our daughter grew up there and has many friends who she keeps in touch with and visits.

People should be allowed to own a home for whatever reason they want it is a free country and not up to yourselves what they should do with something that they have bought with their own money, in particular the charge for an empty home being refurbished is completely wrong. If a property takes longer than 12 months to be refurbished there are usually circumstances causing this most people want to have an income for their property or to occupy but you charging ridiculous amounts of money for council tax where services are not even being used at that property is wrong, that money could be used to bring the property into use sooner.

Holiday homes are often bought by well off people who only stay in them for a small part of the year. I think this is a bad thing as the part time occupants contribute only for a short time in the year to the local area. And as there is a housing shortage in the country any housing should not be for holidays for people that can afford 2 houses!

Homes are to be lived in

Why penalise people for whatever reason their house is empty. If its holiday home money into the area will be lost it's none if council business did privately owned homes and they not using services I'd they not here and as more empty homes why should they be charged down or using services. There could be many reasons the houses are empty. Go charge big house builders more money.

As my wife and I have only our NHS pensions and my Wife also in receipt of her DHS (OAP) pension. Currently we find it difficult to afford our renovation program and to suggest increasing our current 50% "Premium" to 100% will only cause us further personal hardship and delay in completing our renovation program and thereto delaying/preventing our move into our bungalow in Caergwrle.

It has always annoyed me to have to pay. My Flintshire home is the ONLY one I own. If I lived there, I would have a reduction on my Council Tax. I am not using facilities all the time, Police etc. so why should I pay so much more? I get so cross about it.

Questions 2 and 4. Over the past three years or more there have been several long-term empty Flintshire County Council owned properties locally to our property. Perhaps FCC can begin by assessing how the empty properties they own impact on communities, the housing waiting lists and the affect the general appearance the of their empty properties and the unkempt area around the property has on the locality and house prices!

Question 5. The Welsh Language must be protected and promoted at every opportunity. Why it is that new property developments within Flintshire are designed by, constructed and managed by companies from outside Wales and those new properties are not restricted to the SHARP Scheme, but will be offered to applicants outside of the local area and Wales? What evidence can Flintshire County Council provide that they are actively contributing to limiting the impact on the loss of the Welsh language?

Question 6. An increase in premium for Second Homes would help to make their purchase a less attractive option and would help to prevent the "swallowing up" of affordable homes for our young local people.

Question 7. The case of each Long-Term Empty property should be considered on an individual basis, with an assessment of the circumstances and reasons why the property has remained empty being made prior to the charging of an additional poll tax premium. Sometimes there are circumstances beyond the property owner's control which can delay, hinder and prevent the property from being offered for sale or rent. When modernisation and renovation is required to make the property an attractive sale or rental option and a substantial amount of money is being invested by the property owner in such works, the charging of an additional premium on the Poll Tax is not helpful and counterproductive in assisting a property owner in their endeavours to bring onto the sale/rental market a up to standard, ready to move into and comfortable family home.

Long-term empty properties can often be the subject of probate, which can be a lengthy process with a timescale outside the beneficiary's control and until such time as probate is granted the beneficiary/new property owner's hands are tied. Following Granting of Probate it may be that the new property owner will retain the property to offer on the rental market and in doing so will renovate and modernise the property and it may be necessary to employ tradesmen to carry out all the necessary works. The sourcing of good, reliable trades people can be a lengthy process in normal times, however, over the past two years due to the Coronavirus Lockdowns, both national and local, large sections of our working calendar has been lost, with scheduled start dates for works to be undertaken having to be reviewed and delayed. Not only has this had an impact on the timescale to complete necessary works, but so too has the lack of available materials and the considerable price increase for such materials.

All the above matters are relevant in establishing why a property is still empty and should be taken into consideration if the local authority is prepared to demonstrate sympathy for a home owner with a genuine desire to endeavour to provide a comfortable family home. The additional Premium only serves to penalise those who have a genuine desire to provide accommodation of a high standard and a home in which it is hoped a good tenant will wish to live for many years. The charging of this additional Premium not only hinders property owners financially, but must surely promote and encourage the hurried introduction of properties onto the rental market, which may lack the approved standard of accommodation, as property owners hope to avoid the increased premium charges.

- The questionnaire appears to be carefully crafted in keeping with the Council's own policies.
- The questionnaire almost implies that second-home owners, etc. are exclusively responsible for the area's possible housing problems, which could just as easily be owing to previous ineffective Council policies.
- It may be helpful if the Council defined more clearly the relationship it sees between housing policies and linguistic ones. (See 13.)

My main property supports three businesses each of which access the main drive. Yard, outbuildings and land of the property. Our insurance company insists the property is inhabited at night. This has happened without fail. Because my husband has Alzheimer's disease and is unsafe in an isolated property he lives at Brookside Farm which is a long term rental property owned by ourselves. However, his condition is deteriorating and it will necessitate twenty four hour care in the foreseeable future which creates a problem for me for which as yet I have not found a solution. It is my intention, eventually to live, full time at the Galchog and re rent Brookside Farm.

My husband's diagnosis coincided with the fact that Brookside Farm could not be let out because we discovered it was possible to touch the unearthed cable that feeds the top end of Village Road, Northop Hall from a bedroom window. Despite being prioritised by Scottish Power for replacement it took nearly three years to happen.

Galchog is unsuitable for family occupation because it is dangerous and requires a comprehensive renovation scheme. It is too isolated and difficult and unsafe to access by foot.

Sometimes people have specific reasons for not selling or renting out their long term empty property, if the property is in a good state of repair and does not devalue or have a negative impact on the street it is located on by being in a poor state of repair as is sometimes the case with occupied properties with scruffy tenants who dump rubbish why should they pay any more than the normal council tax rate.

If a property is not a second holiday home it is not depriving anyone of an affordable home especially if it is not in a desirable holiday location and located in a normal town, also if it is long term empty it has not been used for profit through rentable income which could justify the extra council tax charge

The premium is unfair as it discriminates against local Welsh residents and penalises them for owning a property in a village where they grew up as a child, attended the local village school and remained in Flintshire for secondary education.

If a home owner lives within Flintshire and also has a second property within Flintshire, they are already paying council tax twice to Flintshire County Council. It is therefore unfair for Flintshire residents to be charged further. It is understandable if home owners that have their primary residence in another county or country are charged the premium to a certain extent as Flintshire County Council does not receive a primary home tax payment.

My property band would not come within the affordable housing bracket and therefore unfortunately would not be of benefit within any affordable housing schemes.

Older properties cost more to maintain, with wages lower in Wales, it is a further penalisation to local residents that own a second property. The premium therefore reduces the amount of money that can be spent on the property to maintain it resulting in a negative impact to the local economy and small businesses within it.

There may be good reasons why a property is long term empty, extensive rebuild due to a fire being one. This is the case with my property. After a fire on September 21st, 2020 the property required an extensive rebuild, including new back door and all windows to the rear, extensive redecoration due to smoke damage and extensive re plastering. This work could not be completed in the twelve months allowed, due primarily to the dilatory efforts of the builder and to their own incompetence.

This house is not a second home for me or anyone else, but an investment property to provide me with extra income, which I need as an O.A.P. Details follow in a letter.

FOR HOLIDAY HOMES AND LONG TERM EMPTY PROPERTIES IN DIFFERING COUNTIES TO THE MAIN RESIDENCE, THERE MAY BE AN ARGUMENT FOR A PREMIUM ON HOLIDAY HOMES. BUT FOR LONG TERM EMPTY PROPERTIES IN THE SAME COUNTY ANY PREMIUM IS RIDICULOUS. I AM ALREADY PAYING TWO FULL COUNCIL TAXES AND GETTING NOTHING EXTRA IN RETURN REGARDING SERVICES. IF THE COUNCIL WERE REALLY SERIOUS IN REDUCING EMPTY HOUSES PERHAPS THEY COULD LOOK TO PURCHASE THEM

My long term empty dwelling will be lived in by a family member when they move back permanently to North Wales from South Wales, which is where they currently work and live.

The answers to some of the questions above with regards to long term empty properties all depend upon the location of the properties, the category of housing stock into which the property(ies) fall(s) and the circumstance surrounding the individual property; some long term empty properties may need to be redeveloped and modernised; not all long term empty properties may be suitable for social / affordable housing.

Second Home properties may also not be appropriate for social / affordable housing.

I was born and brought up in Flintshire, went to school in Flintshire, and have since moved away to attend university and take up subsequent employment some distance away. I am now part self-employed with business interests in Flintshire which provide employment for a number of local people. Although my main residence is outside Flintshire I have inherited property in Flintshire and stay in Flintshire when attending to my business interests there. As I work in two places it makes sense to have accommodation in both places, and I should not be penalised for such. I provide employment in Flintshire and I spend money in Flintshire, which should be encouraged, not discouraged. If council tax costs on property in Wales increase as indicated and ownership becomes more prohibitive then running a business in Wales becomes less viable. This would damage the prospects of investment and employment in the County and Principality. Council tax is supposed to be a tax for services provided by the council – not a stick to punish the householder with. Empty properties and second homes use fewer services than main homes, so cost the council less to serve – so should have less council tax levied, not more. All premiums for these properties should be scrapped. Council tax should be removed altogether and indefinitely from empty properties which are undergoing, or waiting for, renovation.

The proposals to charge any premium, let alone 100% premium for second or empty homes is a disincentive to investment and employment in the Principality and would be damaging to its growth prospects. This is an attack on the business and visitor economy. These homes are unlikely to become available to those requiring affordable accommodation, so would not help the county or country's housing concerns. The Principality should concentrate on building more affordable accommodation, not attempting to pursue an undemocratic policy which was not voted for by the Welsh electorate.

My property had a tenant for 8 years they left and since then due to COVID I have not been able to get another tenant although one is expected soon. My property is available to rent for local people, and whoever is renting the property is contributing to the local community. Therefore I find the financial penalty unfair.

I think the issue around affordable housing is to do with how local and central government prioritise and plan their strategic budgeting and priorities especially in relation to affordable housing.

I feel that second homes are a problem for local people who are looking for an affordable property as it's quite likely that a number of second homes will fall into this category. Although it should also be taken into consideration that waste and recycling removal will be less as the property is not occupied 100% of the time. I do also appreciate that a lot of people with second homes bring all their supplies with them and this obviously affects the local economy. But I don't feel that they should be charged above the band that the property falls into.

As far as long term empty properties are concerned I think these are a different matter. I do own a property that falls into this category. Again the property is not producing waste that needs collecting and also the property does not generate vehicular traffic in the surrounding area. I feel that this type of property should be inspected to ascertain its potential prior to a levy being imposed. In my own case the property is in need of a total refurbishment which I intend to do in the future, The property is not now, and after refurbishment, certainly would not be in the affordable housing bracket. A feel that a fair rate to charge would be 75% of its band.

Individual circumstances should be taken into account as to why someone needs or uses a second home. I was born and brought up in Flintshire and, although I now live a considerable distance away, for many years until recently I was identified by Flintshire County Council as the primary carer for an elderly widowed and childless relative who was housebound and needing care. On their behalf I liaised with social services and care and health agencies, and did shopping and attended to various needs. My relative's house was too small to accommodate me on my frequent visits, and it was appropriate for me to stay in a property which was identified as a second home. Under these circumstances it is wholly unfair and inappropriate to apply a penalty of any premium to the council tax.

If a second-home owner has a genuine reason for needing a home in Flintshire, such as providing care or having business interests locally, then no council tax premium should be levied.

There are not enough council dwellings in Flintshire that's because they decided to sell those years ago. So now anyone else has a second dwelling gets penalised. The council have spent thousands on things like the band stand etc. that never gets used only by people who choose to sit there at night and drink!!

Weithiau mae tai yn wag am fwy na 12 mis oherwydd bod y preswylwyr efallai mewn cartref gofal ac yn methu mynd yn ôl i'w tai am gyfnod. Mae gwahaniaeth rhwng eiddo gwag hirdymor ac eiddo gwag am resymau dilys. **Sometimes houses are empty for more than 12 months because residents may be in a care home and are unable to return home for a while. There is a difference between long-term empty properties and empty properties for valid reasons.**

Q 11 If you are the owner of a second home or long-term empty property in Flintshire, what action would you be likely to take if the premium was to be increased. Those 67 that selected "Other" included

| | |
|---|----|
| Use it as a business | 4 |
| Use as holiday let | 4 |
| Would continue renovations but extra charge will hamper the speed | 8 |
| No single answer | 4 |
| Already trying to sell the property | 6 |
| Demolish the property/merge with existing | 5 |
| Cause financial stress | 3 |
| Press planning for quicker decision | 2 |
| Sell and invest somewhere else | 1 |
| Challenge/lobby the decision | 3 |
| Miscellaneous | 27 |

Q13 We welcome any other comments or suggestions you may have regarding council tax premiums on long term empty properties and second homes.

185 people provided various additional comments

I am not aware if this premium also applies to commercial property? If not, I think it should. Also, personally, I think the premium should only apply to EMPTY property and NOT second homes.

"A family member of mine bought a house last year, applied for a 12 month council tax exception due to major work required to be carried out, which was accepted.

The 12 month exception has now elapsed, due to COVID the major work was not completed, until the 13th month now the council have placed the 50% premium on the council tax. Which I think is not acceptable."

Where was the money from council house sales spent?

A lot of second homes are left vacant most of the year, these could be lived in by people desperate for a home. Empty properties are liable to deteriorate and either be broken into or end up with vermin problems.

As I said above. A premium might work in the short term but owners need to be encouraged to retrofit their properties and /or sold to the councils concerned. Surely grants could be made available?

There should be a premium of 50% after 6 months increasing to 100% after 12 months especially since property sell very quickly at present.

"What help is available to 2nd home owners who rent out these properties and the tenants don't pay. I have had a disgraceful service from the Flintshire County Court..." "Due to covid" usual excuse for poor service.

I understand you're trying to raise more money and you have run out of options because you have cut services beyond belief but seriously, get someone with an entrepreneur's mentality to run that council or you destined to fail. "

"I agree with the exemption period for empty properties - people often need time to deal with a property they may have inherited for example, or may have recently moved out of due to a new relationship. They may need to clear the property or make repairs to the property prior to marketing or renting out. Usually a 12 month period would be sufficient for them to make a decision on what to do with the property and to carry out the necessary work. These could be looked at on a case by case basis to allow for difficult cases (eg legal issues, vulnerable owners) to be given additional time if needed.

For second properties/ holiday homes - the area could benefit from the additional council tax income to make up for the loss of income usually generated by a permanent resident (spending in local shops/ pubs restaurants etc.)

I am not sure that empty properties and second homes have a direct impact on Welsh language. The implication is that the property owners are non-welsh speakers, which is not necessarily true. "

"This is another additional tax.

Change the rules. Fail to pay and there are consequences that are enforced.

Double the Council Tax on empty properties

No thanks

Doesn't matter what rate is set if the owner of the property cannot be traced. Take ownership of property and rent it out yourselves

The County Council themselves need to act on their own properties and not have any type of property empty for long periods. Example is 10, New Shop Parade, Greenfield. Disgraceful, the Council have not refurbished if unable to sell. Make it more attractive to buyers or for rental.

My personal experience is as a single person who purchased an uninhabitable empty house in Flintshire in a very poor state of repair with the intention of refurbishing and then moving into it as my main residence (and selling my current home). I am on a tight budget and therefore will be doing the majority of the work myself which I estimate will take in the region of 2.5 - 3 years. My thoughts are that, for people in my situation, the premium is actually hindering / delaying my attempts to bring the property back up to a habitable standard. I pay council tax at my current main home + will now have to pay an additional 150% council tax on renovation property. I feel this is overly harsh especially as I am single and not even using any of the service that the council tax fund. I feel the premium is in fact a barrier that may put others in my situation off the idea of trying to renovate empty properties. Additionally, I feel properties that are being renovated to be used as main residences should be treated very differently to holiday homes (for which I think the premium is reasonable). My suggestions are that the premium should not apply to people in my situation for up to 3 years. In fact I feel that you should consider extending the class an exemption to people in my situation as long as we can demonstrate that works are still ongoing. A final suggestion regarding the class A exemption is that the current rules seem totally unfair - If the class A exemption has already been used on the property prior to purchase then any new owner does not qualify, surely they deserve a 'clean slate' and full exemption term to help them take on required works

My thoughts are described in question (8)

I think after 5 yrs. the council should have the right to Compulsory purchase empty properties at market value, if the owners are not prepared to improve them for rental or sale.

Second homes and empty houses are disliked by most permanent residents and deeply resented by those seeking a home of their own

Ask first why it is empty? Has the property become too big to handle? Will it cost too much to bring up to rental standard? If it is not going to be for sale then look at helping get it back onto the rental market? If an older resident owns the property they probably

do not want to update it but also don't want to sell it, help them to bring it up to rental standard and supply tenants then no one will be on our housing list.

Persuasion is always better than compulsion: can FCC find ways to encourage owners of empty properties to bring them back into occupation?

Bins should be emptied. If work is being carried out should be checked then no premium. Reasons for being empty should take into consideration circumstances better and be more lenient

In my opinion you are trying to resolve an issue from completely the wrong end. You have wrongly focused on a negative and inappropriate solution, rather than a positive one, in which you are trying to raise additional money for the County by proposing to apply an increase to the housing tax. This is wrong and very short-sighted.

"I give our reasons for and comments about our owning what we believe is a second but not a holiday home in Flintshire. I am of Flintshire stock & was born and raised there. All my family & most of friends still live in the county. Our 2nd home was my mother's home on a small estate near Queensberry where she lived until her death a few years ago. Until she died I spent 50 % of my time there. While I spend less time there now (this has been affected by Covid) we still spend considerable amount of time in the bungalow & I have hopes of returning to live there as a permanent home at some time in the not too distant future. During my frequent visits to Flintshire I visit and help to care for infirm relatives and friends, this is a significant reason for keeping our Flintshire property. We have been honest in classifying our property as a 2nd home. We have been advised that we should register the bungalow as a business (for letting out as a holiday home to family and friend 'paying' to use the property) as this would confer financial benefit to us rather than incurring the penalties of paying enhanced council tax. We have not done that.

We accept that in general, second and, more especially holiday homes, have a detrimental effect but this is primarily but not exclusively due to the detrimental effects on the Welsh language and the driving up prices in popular tourist locations. We believe our circumstances are completely different. Our modest property is not in a tourist area, we believe we are not depriving locals of the opportunity to own their own home and, as far as the Welsh language issue is concerned, we have considerably more Welsh (written & spoken) than virtually anyone in the area where our 2nd home is situated. We feel that the current 50% premium is fair. It should not be raised or reduced."

As stated above, there are exceptions that are not currently taken into consideration, I feel this is poor on FCC behalf. I do not want to hold onto my late mother's property, yet I am being penalized by FCC because of the pandemic that has slowed the whole house selling process.

It would be a help to understand if and how a change of use could be made.

The Council should explain more clearly how it justifies charging any premium for second home inherited properties which are regularly occupied. Why should families be penalised for continuing to occupy homes which they have inherited?

Continue present level of premium on long term empty second homes.

"If a property is classed as 'long term empty' it is probably due to financial restraints and imposing a further burden though Council Tax is counterproductive. An extra £1,000 is half the cost of a new kitchen or bathroom, the Council should be helping to bring houses back into use not hindering.

More effort could be made to check on empty properties to see if the council could assist in bringing them back into use."

Thank you for asking for my response. I am concerned about the premium and the effect it has had on me personally. I will inform you immediately when the property is put on the market as I have been lead to believe that this should mean that I will have to pay less going forward.

"I believe it would have a negative impact on the owners, as they would have less money to try and either sell or maintain the property while it is empty. The idea of taking more money off people for things out of their control is beyond the joke, but this seems to be how the local council's like to screw people over, be hitting them when things are already hard.

The true housing shortage in Flintshire does not provide any justification for the premium. In truth the premium is seen as merely Flintshire attempting to increase its revenue with the premium being directed elsewhere than the homeless.

"Just because people own a second home does not mean they can afford an increase- I am keeping my family home, which my mother paid council tax on throughout her life, for the continued use of my family so that we can all continue to benefit from my Welsh heritage and culture and to keep open the option of returning to live there in future.

I use a fraction of the services used by my neighbors and so save the council money, and yet pay through the nose for the privilege.

The number of properties being discussed will hardly raise significant extra funds and smacks more of taxing those who might appear to be better off rather than significantly increasing social housing."

With the current Welsh legislation that all Landlords and their agents are required to be licensed there is an increased burden on them to ensure all the i's are dotted and all the t's are crossed. At present this costs in the region of £280 for courses and licenses. Therefore there is no incentive for landlords or agents to rent out properties at the lower end of the market where there would be no profit and end up most of the time when a tenant leaves it ends up as a loss making enterprise. My last tenant left with damages equating to just over £1000 of which I managed to recoup £400.

"We have been charged for long term empty properties while renovating a house. We had the 12 month council tax holiday but this was in the height of the pandemic.

The Main reason for the project being delayed was due to the very slow (12months) decision and correspondence from Flintshire conservation officer because the property is listed.

Seems a very unfair way of raising revenue on a young family with 2 children under 2 living in a house with 1 bedroom and 1 box room. It's not as if we did not want to live in the property. The only reason we were not in was because of the conservation officer and we are then finically penalised for his in ability to do his job! "

I have voiced my opinion earlier in this survey!!!!!!

Our home needed substantial refurbishment and we used lots of trades and suppliers in North Wales. We'd like it recognised we have made, and continue to make, a good contribution to the local economy in North Wales.

I have stated previously around why I think you should not charge a premium around second homes that are in a bad state of repair it is up to the individual what they do with their property. I'm sure we live in a society where freedom of what we want to do with our own property is up to the individual and should not be led by a local council

Sometimes it takes a while to get planning and building passed!

Depends on the individuals circumstances

I was disappointed that no concession was made to second home owners when we could not use our property for 7 months during the recent pandemic and were, therefore, not using any council services.

If it was rented out where would keep some of my stock. Access is through the shop which would be impossible.

"There is no evidence the cost of property is rising and that empty property or second homes add to the lack of social housing. Indeed property remains hard to sell

It appears this policy is just a way of councils adding to their income unjustly"

Corona times have been difficult. I have been denied access to my house and charged a premium for unused services. I have accepted this as socially necessary. To choose this time to threaten me with even higher costs, makes me feel angry and helpless. I can understand that people leave homes empty especially if you have neighbor harassment - we have thought out that we leave the property, take the roof off and then fill it with concrete so it is not habitable

"Flintshire should separate out the 3 connected but distinct issues in the supply of housing of

1. 2nd home ownership levels

2. Private landlords - especially air bnb/holiday lets

3. Long term empty properties

You need to clearly understand the drivers behind each issue and use a variety of tools to manage and influence them. Council tax surcharges are a blunt instrument which work better in the case of long term empty properties than 2nd homes.

Beware the law of unintended consequences- the surcharge of 2017 led a neighbour whose parents had owned their 2nd home since the 1960s to sell the house. It sold to a couple from outside Wales. How did that help the local community wanting local homes and to protect the Welsh language?

I saw the 2017 surcharge decision as opportunistic - it wasn't needed then or now. And it raised very little for the general fund.

A second home currently pays more council tax than residents. Yet it brings income into the local area. But costs the council far less, for example- fewer refuse collections. Less traffic damage to roads.

People might need at least up to 2yrs to complete renovation, as not everyone can afford few thousand every month to complete the property, and have it completed in 12 months.

I will state my own case. I have lived in my current property for twenty-six years. My wife and I extended the house so that my wife's elderly parents could live with us. My father-in-law lived with us for eighteen years. Before he died we were visited by a surveyor from the Council Tax department, who decided that we were occupying two homes, being our house and a 'flat'. The result of this is that we have had to pay a second-home premium tax on the 'flat'. This is despite the fact that the 'flat' can only be accessed by first entering our house via a single lockable external door; the bedroom of the flat is one of the rooms within our own house (which it has been for two-hundred years). If we turn off our water, the flat has no water; similarly, gas. The electricity meter for our entire property - house and 'flat', is within the flat itself so that, technically, if someone were to turn off the power in the flat we would have no power in our house. Within our house the entrance to the 'flat' is from our own utility room. The surveyor classed this as the flat kitchen because it once had a gas-ring fitted. This was rarely used by anyone and was removed several years ago because it was dangerous when in the proximity of people with dementia. But, we are still paying Council Tax. The situation is further complicated by the fact that my wife and I are now in our seventies. We have bought a bungalow to move into next year, when building modifications have been carried out. In order to avoid a second-home premium on this property also, we have allowed friends to live in it temporarily, otherwise we would have had to pay two second-home premiums. We have appealed our Council Tax assessment for the 'flat', but the matter seems to drag along very slowly. So, our current situation requires an answer to a very appropriate question - How do we go about selling two properties, with

two amounts of Council Tax, rather than one? Who is going to want to buy 'two' properties?

"I answered 'I do not know' on questions 10 & 12 as I feel empty properties and second homes should be treated differently.

Second homes used for holidays are a luxury, and their owners should pay a premium for the privilege of owning one.

Empty properties remain empty for different reasons, and owners should be helped and encouraged to bring their property back into permanent habitation, not burdened with increasing Council Tax bills."

This Premium Tax is a "Political Tax" introduced by the Welsh Government and it is wrong. Welsh speakers can't abide the English wanting to live in Wales, they only accept the English when they spend money in Wales.

Property owners should be encouraged to refurbish and relist or sell. However properties owners should be allowed to refurb in a cost effective manner. I know of a couple of properties in another county that have been listed grade 2 this has discouraged the owner from refurb as the cost would be well in excess of £100k and considerably more than the end value.

Tax them till the pips squeak.

"Pandemic makes much more difficult to make long term empty houses habitable.

People's circumstances differ so not everyone with empty house does not want to rent it,

Affordability issues to make the house rentable."

As previously mentioned I would review the current "one size fits all" situation. Second homes can fall into different categories (some are simply not suitable to be family or even retirement homes) and empty properties can take a long time to sell through no fault of the vendor. I would also look at "loopholes" for example people who let their property for the minimum amount of time to avoid a premium. Additionally some people avoid the premium as it is their only property in the UK but they spend over half the year in a property abroad.

What qualifies for an exception? We didn't get one during a pandemic & access ban !It's a different situation if you're a landlord and making money, as the property was left to me in a will, I feel I shouldn't have to pay as I'm not making any money

On a personal note, given that I have paid the premium 150% Council Tax on my Long Term Empty Property for the last 2 years following the 12 month exemption period, I would carry on paying Council Tax on this property whether it stayed the same, increased or decreased. I feel that the current system is not fit-for-purpose and I respectively suggest that WAG and the Local Authorities end the conflation and

confusion around Second Homes and Long Term Empty Properties. I want to modernise the long term empty property that I own in order for a family to live there - I never had a time limit for this work to be completed and the imposition of the Council Tax 50% premium has not changed my approach in any way. It has just annoyed me as it has many other people in the same position as myself. I see it as a tax grab, nothing more and I doubt whether it has helped speed up the system. In that sense it has been counter-productive.

I would leave rates as they are and chase up arrears in other areas.

An empty property has no impact on anyone other than the owner and therefore the owner should not be penalised. The council should only intervene where a property falls into disrepair and could become dangerous.

Maybe use the money from Council Tax premiums to give grants to people attempting to repair and refurbish empty properties.

I can't afford the cost of refurbishment of the long term empty property.

"I think that you need to keep an eye on people claiming exemptions for renovations and if they are not renovating then the exemption should be taken away from them.

I also think that caravans should not be included."

Housing is scarce at this time and empty homes and second homes has a negative impact on local people who live and work in Flintshire

N/A

This is a sensible move and should be implemented as soon as possible. There is an urgent need to increase the availability of affordable homes to rent in all communities and I believe that appropriate action should be taken to discourage second homes and properties remaining empty for longer than a relatively short period without good reason

We have a couple of properties that have remained totally unoccupied since they were built in my village. The property was presumably purchased as an investment. This does nothing for the local area and quite frankly I feel that compulsory purchase should be an option when perfectly good houses are left empty for long periods.

Increased premiums could be put back into the community to ensure local shops and amenities stayed open.

Unless the money raised from the council tax premium can be shown to have demonstrable effect on the community it will naturally become unnoticed.

"Question 9 should be chargeable by the owner immediately.

Houses should not be able to be left to rack and ruin"

There are far too many empty homes in the whole of North Wales, and too many locals being priced out of the housing market. I think a more concerted effort is required by local government to stop so many second homes being purchased, by making sure that there is a very heavy surcharge on buying a second home. These second homes do nothing to help a community and local services.

You cannot include empty homes and second homes under the same banner, they should be dealt with as two separate issues. Second homes are a much needed tourism boost and should not be the subject of political bias.

"This is a good initiative. I can see no downside in it for Flintshire council taxpayers who do not own an empty or second home or for the homeless in the county. It should lead to more homes becoming available to those who most need them

Is there any way the money raised could be used to assist those without a home to afford to buy or rent one in the county? This would also show that the initiative is a principled one, not one simply aimed to raise more money for the council (Although I know you need more money for essential services.)"

People who buy property and land as investments to make themselves richer should pay more...property developers are pushing up house prices. .And local young people have virtually no chance of getting on the property ladder, we have seen this happen all over the country and it's not right,

See item 8

"Because a house is empty - what makes you think you could make use if it as part of local authority housing???"

It might be unsuitable and not owned by the local authorities so how will it help you rehouse anyone???"

Just do it

"There are only 772 empty properties of which a mere 167 are holiday homes. This seems such a small number to make much difference at all to the number of affordable homes which are available.

I am concerned that this has simply turned into a way for the local authorities to bring in more money, without causing any change.

How, in fact, have these numbers changed since 2017? Has the 50% premium actually made a difference to the numbers of properties involved?

Alternatives? A licence to own a second home with a limit on numbers of licences available and a lower premium is a possibility. Note that second home owners still pay gas, electricity and water standing charges and pay council taxes for all other services.

Perhaps also, more 'affordable homes' might be built, with a restriction on sale only to permanent residents, might be part of the answer.

Second home owners will simply pay any excess and it will cause resentment among owners and possibly competition between authorities as to where might be cheapest to buy a second home.

A relative recently died although leaving a will it was with the solicitor who had gone out of business, it took a long time to sort out not helped by the thought of council taxes being paid on the property.

It will not make any difference to waiting lists

I think the increase of council tax premiums on us old age pensioners for what we get back is a rip off.

There will be some circumstances when an empty home should not incur an extra premium, see above.

Revenue from Increased premiums could be offered to long term empty homes as loans or grants for incentives to restore/renovate properties which could then be offered as rental properties to people on waiting lists

get a grip, totally political to blame someone for the poor direction the Welsh government

Static caravans are second homes, those who let them out make a huge amount of money. They should pay full council tax too.

"I think that you need to consider the different nature of second homes.

Someone like me trying to hold down a full time job and run two properties, in order to eventually move back to Wales after a family death, is not the same at all as someone keeping a vacant property empty or using it for profit as a holiday home, or a very occasional holiday property for their own use only. "

If you put charges up too high it will deter both the owner from renting/refurbishing a property with the extra cost in many cases being passed onto the renter who cannot afford to pay it as well as the rent therefore the property will stay empty

The long term empty houses option should include not a minimum of 12 months empty but one to pay 100%fee straight away if it is cost g them money they will either do up the property and rent it do up the property and live in it or will not spend the money and sell it all are the most beneficial for the area the longer there e. Pty the faster they look a mess

We do not see any negative points, only positive for local people who currently cannot afford properties in their local community. We believe it should never have got to the point we are at.

"I think that empty properties make an area look uncared for. If homes are lived in permanently, the owner is more likely to

Invest in the upkeep of the property. "

There needs to be collaboration with other 21 local authorities all agreeing the same policy. We value the tourists and they have a place in our community if they have a positive impact. Increase in empty or second home could lead to job losses, school closure, and lack of suitable properties for new first time buyers if current situation become unmanageable.

With the relatively small number of properties involved I don't think that making them pay more would make any meaningful difference to the finances for Flintshire CC

I don't however agree with your policy that if you buy a house that was empty you are still charged these premiums. That's what happened to me and it's not my fault the previous owner left the property empty. Also council has too many house that are in disrepair and people are waiting a year to get in them because they have needed work and they just sat empty. This is happening to s friend of mine now

Should be the same as occupied properties

It all depends on how wisely the money is invested or is it likely to be frittered on unnecessary councilor's expenses.

I feel increasing the premium will impact the area and force some local people who have owned second homes for 30+ years to sell.

Re Question 9, I bought a derelict house in Flintshire in 2013 as a permanent home and requested a suspension of council tax whist refurbishment took place. This was refused as it had already been claimed once. I was very angry, as I felt the previous reduction had nothing to do with me. This needs to be reviewed

There may need to be different council tax rules for long-term empty properties as compared to second homes. Second homes inflate house prices and decrease the housing stock available for local residents or people who wish to move to the area permanently (egg for employment reasons).

Scrap them for this county. They do not affect any community in Flintshire and just a money making excuse.

I think that new buyers should have a set time to bring the property up to standard from the date they purpose the property and the clock reset for them. So even if a property has been empty for 2 years if it is sold on the new buyers should be given the time and opportunity before the costs increase.

"The questions in this survey are not easy to understand and could be more clearly explained.

The council needs to take as much action as is legally allowed to force second home owners to make their properties available for those who need them. Empty second homes are not acceptable."

Please support your residents. Houses are for living in. They should not be used as an investment, nor as a means for getting richer.

"There wasn't an option to reduce the length of time before empty dwellings were required to pay the 50% premium. I think it should be 6 months.

Counties such as Gwynedd are bringing in 100% council tax on second homes, you risk second home owners buying in Flintshire if we are not in line with neighbouring scenic counties. "

We all need public services and the council has a duty to all its tax payers to spend wisely but also generate income wherever legally possible.

I have answered 'Negative impact' to question 12 because to have this tax at all, let alone increase it, will discourage investment and spending within the county - instead it will be spent elsewhere in the UK or overseas. We should be encouraging this inward private investment.

Why should full rate payer's subsidies second home owners especially if they live outside the area?

The premium should be required as a lump sum payment at the beginning of the financial year so as to increase its impact. There should be no facility for the 10 months payment scheme

I feel any money raised by extra premium should be allocated towards funding new affordable housing and also find it unrealistic that there are only 172 holiday homes in Wales

Long term empty properties decline in their standard as they are often not being looked after - this is a particular problem if the property is attached to another as this can affect the neighbour. Houses not lived in can also be a target for vandalism though thanks fully this is rare where I live.

Tax should maybe looked at on more of a case by case basis.

SECOND HOME PREMIUMS SHOULD BE INCREMENTAL - (YEAR ON YEAR INCREASE)

Please just humanely consider each individual situation before applying an additional charge like the CT premium, consider the circumstances and the reasons for a property being unoccupied. Yes there are exceptions but they are not wide enough.

The present loophole where owners can avoid the payments should be closed. They should all pay.

The two categories are completely different and should be treated as such. No premium should apply to a property that is being marketed for sale, although I appreciate this may not be a straightforward matter to assess.

"Increase second homes tax premiums to very high levels, at least 100% above current tax level.

There should be no increase on empty homes owned by families residing in Flintshire. They should only be required to pay the normal property tax designated to the building as if it was occupied."

Long term empty properties could be reviewed on an individual basis. We upgraded a 1950s ex-council house to contemporary standards and the project took five years. To pay extra council tax whilst we were using our savings to improve the property would have been difficult.

"I don't know how you can expect people to pay out all this money, people are not made of money.

I wanted to be living in my 2nd house with in twelve months of applying for planning and selling the home I am now living in, That would then take me away from being a 2nd home owner"

A few holiday homes in a thriving village are ok, a lot of holiday homes in a small village kill off village life and services egg schools shops.

Please see above answers

By increasing Tax premiums it would certainly encourage owners to let / refurbish or sell the property but genuine exceptions to me should be fairly considered.

"For long-term empty, compulsory purchase after 5yr.

For second home's 50% of sale gains go to local government. "

"Again second homes and long term empty have been lumped together, I had a long term renovation, the local trades were slow and took ages, it was an absolute nightmare to get trades, 12 months wasn't enough and that's with me wanting to move in as soon as, extra payments would have been most unwelcome given it's probably cost more than the bungalow is worth to bring it up to standard as everything is so expensive, too high could deter empty properties being bought back into use. Re 11, I would not be happy but pay, I had no choice to move into my property unfinished because local trades hadn't finished, messed up the wet room and had to take it out and redo, still not right but because of the extra charge I could afford to wait so living in an unfinished property and the wet room isn't safe as it should be, it was fitted as I'm disabled, so I think 12 months isn't enough for renovation for some people. In South Derbyshire they give 3 months from empty (12 for major renovation) but 3 isn't enough to sort a property if selling or renting so people are unfairly being charged through no fault of their own.

Charging over 50% would put most second home owners into difficulty and force them into business rates, empty long term (as in years) I'm guessing won't care as if they've abandoned a house long term letting it deteriorate they probably have enough to pay, if not this is where the empty homes officer comes in. Communication, fairness and common sense on individual peoples circumstances is a must, remembering rules are for the obedience of fools and the guidance of the wise.

With second homes if charges are increased they may not be used as much or spending in local shops maybe cut, less pub dinners , drinks and general shop spending, for those that don't go onto business rates. Also other maintenance maybe hit so the properties become less well maintained and look tatty and tired, not good for the area.

The second home is only empty whilst work is being undertaken on this to bring it up to a standard to rent out. Once ready our second home is rented out. Additional charges may slow this work down

It is clear that other Council areas in Wales are approaching this subject from a heavily political angle to deflect from their own poor performance in terms of serving the affordable housing needs of their communities. I hope that Flintshire resists the temptation of apparent 'easy' money.

The increase would help support the local communities where people struggle to find places to live and allow building on land suitable for affordable housing. People who are making money out of communities as 2nd homes should pay extra as they are already able to afford to purchase in 1st place. Empty properties that are for sale should be exempt as I have had 3 buyers drop out just as sale was about to proceed and it make it difficult to maintain all the bill and Council tax after 12 month at a premium rate. The internet allows properties to be searched to see if they are on the market.

I believe that listed building in particular should be exempt from the premium as the owners are already spending money on maintaining these treasured buildings.

"It's important to define second homes. To me these are properties which are not used as a business, but a property purely used as a home for the owner to visit whilst on holiday.

Properties such as holiday lets which are used purely as a business, (some only have planning permission to use for holiday accommodation and not residential) should NOT be included in the definition of a second home as it is a genuine business and should be treated the same as other businesses.

I think it is also important to have a varied housing stock, rather than purely concentrating on affordable housing. More expensive housing will bring in income for the council, and allow people to move up the ladder enabling affordable housing to become available."

"In the context of second homes in Flintshire, the imposition of the council tax premium is unfair and unreasonable.

As previously mentioned, there are only 167 second homes across the county and as such, are most unlikely to have a negative impact on the communities in which they are situated.

Therefore, owners like ourselves, who have improved and continue to maintain their properties should only have to pay the standard rate of Council Tax like everyone else. Other, than the benefit of street lighting and refuse collection, we do use any other Council services. We, like others, see ourselves as being used as a cash-cow for another income stream."

I CAN ONLY COMMENT ON LONG TERM EMPTY THESE QUESTIONS ARE APPLIED TO BOTH EMPTY AND SECOND HOMES WHICH ARE SO FAR APART SO THIS DOES NOT GIVE A FAIR REPRESENTATION TO LOCAL. SECOND HOMES IN WALES ARE A BONE OF CONTENTION

Perhaps if Flintshire county council sorted out their planning that would probably help matters - dealing with the planning department is a nightmare

As per above comments

If people have second homes in the area for holidays then a premium would be acceptable in my opinion, but people who have had a property left as part of a will then in my opinion I think that is totally unfair. If the property was the only asset left with no cash it falls on family to cover all costs as in funeral and keeping the house in good repair until sold

In addition to my comments under Question 8, I feel strongly that, as in my case, where unnecessary expenditure has been incurred due to unreasonable delays by Council Planners or misinformation concerning, for example, a TPO that had been imposed but subsequently rescinded without notifying the property owner (resulting in expensive and unnecessary tree surgery), an appropriate element of past Council Tax levies should be refunded or, at least, a moratorium be granted on further payments.

Council tax premiums should be abolished forthwith it is an unfair tax which in my opinion is no better than theft

"If the council can make decisions on why properties are left empty long term and able to do something about it, the situation would improve.

It's just another unjustified money making tax for the council.

I wonder if we would be in this position if it had been decided not to sell off Council Houses. It is crucial that more affordable housing is made available in Flintshire, and I welcome the new developments at Sealand, for instance. My grandparents lived in a

council house that is now a private residence. Why is it a private residence? Why should I pay for a housing shortage? Build more homes!

My late brother's house would not classify as social/affordable housing, so I doubt very much that it contributes to the lack of affordable housing. The house is not long-term empty, as a friend of my brother's visits it twice a month to ensure it is tidy and the lawn is mowed, and stays two to three days.

It appears that Councils are targeting one small sector to try and find a solution to their housing problems. Instead of diverting the attention onto a sector, where people are paying their Council taxes and contributing to the local community, the Councils should be looking at their own Buildings and assets to provide affordable housing. Stopping targeting one area of the community; the people who have second homes do contribute to the local area, often far more than a full time resident and they are not using local council services that are already stretched; those who have empty properties are more often trying to update them, again contributing to the local area, before selling them on or renting them. Why penalize people who are paying their fair share and not needing to use already depleted council services. This practice is wrong, wrong, wrong and Councils should rethink this bias ways.

"I can only reiterate - different approaches are needed for long term empty properties and ' second homes'.

- Different approaches are needed for ' second homes' that are rented out and those that aren't making a profit;

- Different approaches are needed for holiday, coastal areas;

- The 50% premium is already unfair given the minimal use of services;

- An additional 50% would-be immoral and would amount to 'legalized robbery';

- whether we keep or sell the property makes no difference to the amount of Welsh used in the area, the amount of social or'

Affordable ' housing, or the character of the community."

I think if a property can't be habitable within 3 years then a compulsory purchase order at the purchase price should be implemented.

When we were able to visit our second home, we would go out to eat at restaurants and visit all tourists' sites and spend as much as we liked to help the local shops. With the lockdowns of the past two years, we have been prevented from visiting our second home but have continued to be charged in full for council tax.

"I have outlined some suggestions above. In this consultation, the council has not provided its own assessment of what difference premiums make in reality nor has it demonstrated how premiums contribute to the problems councils are trying to solve. I think that a premium is the wrong word to describe what is intended. I think it is an additional tax or levy.

"The property was left to me for my children, I have paid the increased charge for the last two years and it is crippling! The property is uninhabitable, no heating, no kitchen, no bathroom and an outside toilet, it is literally a shell yet still I had to pay the increase the council. unable to get a loan I save so that the work can be completed in one go, the council tax eats into my fund which really doesn't help it moves the finish line further away.

New properties have been built near to me, the value of their homes much greater than mine, yet in my band and paying the same as me. Yet Flintshire Bands would put them in a higher band due to value. How can that be? With more new homes and people moving into Wales from far surely this is where the council should be making an increase, putting these into the correct band.

Second homes are making it impossible for the younger generation within communities to get on the property ladder."

"Personally I would set the premium at 250% which would really make empty property owner think long and hard as to why they are leaving them vacant.

I live in Gwespyr and we have councilor or possibly ex councilor who owns a property in the village which has been vacant for over six years, the current policy has done nothing to make him feel with this total eyesore."

"It seems empty properties are being penalised, they should pay but not an extra 50 or 100%.

Second homes should however pay at least half. "

Second homes are proportionally very small in number to the overall housing stock

"The charge is limiting available funds to bring the properties back into use.

You are frustrating the property owner by applying this charge.

How much additional revenue has the Local Authority made by charging this 'tax'?

What has the Local Authority used this money for and has it made a difference to the issue?"

I myself has been a subject of premium tax on a partially occupied home whilst renovating the property throughout the pandemic. I would also like to know if empty commercial properties (some have houses on the land) are also subject to the same premium - thanks

In my case any increase in council tax premium would reduce the amount of money I would have available to spend in local shops and for local services

Tax them more, if they can afford to let the property stay empty then penalise them heavily as people need social housing badly in these tough times, which will only get worse in time.

"Probably treat each property on its own unique merit.

I'm sure ""one size doesn't fit all""

Maybe the local community leaders should have a big say based on their local knowledge.

Has anyone looked at reinstating?

The once opulent living spaces above the shops in most High Streets?"

Better services for the vast majority who are full-time occupants in Flintshire.

"I purchased this property in 1986.

As I had to move away for work my mother moved into the property and lived there until she passed away.

I have spent a great deal of money refurbishing the property and have been unable to visit due to COVID rules.

I do not wish to rent the property as it is intended for my retirement in a few years' time. It might prove difficult to get a tenant removed. We use the property for visits to see family. Paying 100% would have a massive impact on my salary as we are also paying to keep the electricity on and heating costs so it doesn't fall into disrepair."

Flintshire need to get in the real world and stop this failed policy. It is apparent the biggest issue that is driving house prices up in Wales the affluence within the Welsh communities from those who come from those originally from the traditional Welsh Communities - ask the estate agents who are selling the properties who is paying the higher prices for these properties. Welsh property prices have gone up the highest in the UK during the last 12 months, its nothing to do with alleged second home owners. I would double the premiums on both, there is enough holiday accommodation in Wales! Second home owners can afford the premium and empty homes get a reduction if put into the rental sector.

Look at yourself as landlords

The more you charge the more the owner will charge if ever rented in future to get cost back therefore preventing some persons from renting. I would reduce charges & encourage owners to rent at lower premiums by guaranteeing rent & covering any damage caused.

Raising the premium would not reduce the number of 2nd homes, but it would increase the income raised. Charging for parking in Wepre Park for visitors by way of parking meters with permits for locals or disabled would be helpful.

The council should consider whether it has the power to force landlords to bring long term empty properties back into good repair.

The focus should not be on long term empty property but on the building of actually affordable homes by developers... 20% below market price isn't affordable in any way.

The council tax system shouldn't be used for social engineering or to discriminate against a fortunate few. It shouldn't penalise second home ownership.

WHY are properties left empty for years? If you don't live in the property- let someone else have use of it. Especially if it's run down and blights the area. If you can afford a second home - you can afford the council tax. We need to restore village communities where neighbours look out for each other - not strangers coming in as and when they feel like it.

Holiday chalets that have planning permission allowing them to be used throughout the year but not allowing them to be used as residential property need to be included in exclusions from the second home premium charge as there is no impact on housing stock availability. It is unfair for Chalet owners to be treated as though they are removing houses from local housing stock when they could never be used as residential property as they are on a holiday park with specific planning permission.

"I have an uninhabitable long term empty property and I can't afford the council tax with it being double.

My young children are without food and heating in order to pay the double council tax
"Perhaps you should survey the 605 owners as to why they are empty for so long - probably mortgage covenants prohibiting it or elderly family members who own but can't live without assisted living as examples and then actually see what the root cause is rather than this unfair and biased approach.

Also these second homes and empty dwellings are being scapegoated for lack of foresight and poor policy implementation. Charging owners more does not make the village/town better regardless of the additional premiums charged, as you don't target the money back to the residential area its specifically from so you are misleading the public.

I would just like to clarify I own one property and pay council tax. This issue does not affect me. It's just poor leadership historically."

Please reconsider a tax break to those who were trying to renovate during lockdown. Many months delay has been caused and projects have been delayed despite expectancy to still find the extra council tax

"I am not in good health and wish to decide my options in the near future. The news that a review of the Premium Scheme is to take place comes as no surprise to me, due to how this once great country has become, for those like myself who provide for our futures and not become a drain on Governments and Councils. Whilst I agree there are people who are in difficulty, those like me are punished by the State to provide for those who chose not to provide for themselves, but instead, play the Benefits System and that is why the word `punished` applies.

During my schooldays I underwent several operations that involved both lungs, resulting with my having 50% capacity ever since. Despite that I worked for 59 years in Full employment, but the emphysema that developed over the years finally caught up with me, so I gave up working well past when I reached the official retirement age.

With regard to all the above, I now find I am at risk of further depletion of Savings and Pension. This I contend is a very `great official injustice` and also to the other people facing your review. The total number of properties under review must be tiny considering the thousands of properties within Flintshire CC boundaries.

I hope you will take into account the above, for those of us who think of the future and have taken appropriate action in the year past.

As a second home owner we are contributing to the economy of Wales.

"No allowances are given for genuine home owners who have purchased/inherited property and are renovating to make the dwelling habitable and which will become the main residence. Also given the fact that any building works have been greatly impacted by Covid-19 I think the current system is unfair.

Councils would be aware of anyone who is genuinely make home improvements as plans/building regulations would have to be approved by you."

Whilst the charge of a Council Tax premium is not the entire answer to getting these empty properties turned around, sold, made habitable and let to those in need of housing, I think it does help and is therefore a useful tool in the box to achieve this. I have at least four long term empty properties in my own Ward and they are a nuisance to those living in neighbouring properties and the untidiness if they affect the property values of those neighbouring properties. Despite attempts by the Empty Homes Officer to work with the owners and offering help with grants to refurbish them and get them sold or made habitable for letting, the owners have shown reluctance to co-operate and they remain empty and a nuisance. This has convinced me that we do need to increase the premium above the current 50% and indeed to raise it every couple of years for those who are still not prepared to co-operate and sell their properties or rent them out. It is really unethical in my book to allow such properties to continue unoccupied when

we have so many families, couples and individuals homeless locally and nationally. This would be a great help in enabling us to tackle the homeless problem which besets so many.

The question is already answered

As stated above it is an unfair charge as people sometimes take longer than anticipated to refurbish a property, why do you think you should decide how long it should take? Some people refurbish properties as a hobby, on a weekend or evenings and sometimes things crop up that take more time or cost more money than you thought and you are penalising people for that, the money you are charging could be used to finish the property off. Maybe consider a visit to the property after 12 months to see how it is progressing then visits every 3 months or so to see if progress is being made or ask people to send progress photos to make sure they are actually doing the work instead of just a big charge.

Firstly understand more about why the property is empty. My daughter was renovating for 2 years and living with us and has to start paying for an inhabitant house.

"To place ""Long term empty properties"" in the same category as ""second HOME"", is to say the least incompatible.

A ""second home"" is furnished and therefore able to be lived in, at any time day or night, weeks or months.

A ""long term empty property"" will be empty for any number of reasons.

In our case, (as an example) due only to our limited funds in achieving our renovation goals. To be frustrated with the threat of ever increasing costs of building materials, the continuing covid restrictions and the consequences therein and now with the possible increase in our Council tax from 50 to 100%.

Delaying completion of our renovations to our bungalow by?? Months!"

I just wish I could talk to someone face to face who would understand and listen but nobody will!!!!

"It has been stated by Flintshire County Council that there are currently 2,120 people on a waiting list for social/affordable housing and yet Flintshire County Council have not sought to reduce this figure by renovating their current property assets which they own and which remain empty and unkempt!

There are two Flintshire County Council owned shops in Mostyn, both of which already have established living accommodation on the first floor. The ground floor is of the same size as the first floor and could easily be converted into living accommodation, with an entrance via the existing door into the shop at the front of the property. Both shops could provide four self-contained flats, both of which could have parking near to the property on the existing Council own land. However, Flintshire County Council to

date have chosen NOT to utilise these already LONG-TERM EMPTY properties, which they own and presumably do not generate any income for the authority! Perhaps Flintshire County Council should answer their own question of ""What impact do these long-term empty properties have on the community?""

These shops have remained unoccupied, with the frontage unkempt for over 3 plus years and over the past 12 months a council owned bungalow has remained vacant, following the resident leaving. The interior of the property was in very good order and presumably could be made ready for a new tenant without much effort on the part of Flintshire County Council, and yet it has remained empty for a year when there is an obvious demand!

It is obvious that Flintshire County Council need to address the long-term empty properties in their ownership, before seeking to further penalise tax payers doing their best for their potential future tenants.

"To a certain extent the tax premium is a housing policy which conceals a degree of mild harassment towards second-home owners and empty property owners and, furthermore, being of doubtful effectiveness, in turn leads one to suspect a degree of tax collection eagerness, in addition to asking oneself the question: ""Is this the only way of solving Flintshire's housing problems?"" And this, very quickly, followed by: ""Do the second-home owners - many with Welsh connections - pull up stakes and cross the Dee?"" Be careful not to suggest what you may not really mean.

In a bilingual area or nation, if an authority wishes to encourage outsiders to integrate linguistically, it is essential to actively avoid identifying the bilingual nature of the country with other social or economic issues."

"My two properties are within one mile of each other and so neither are holiday homes. Some one sleeps in both properties each night.

I think there should be more categories to cover council tax rates. Firstly, those supporting businesses should qualify for a reduced rate. Secondly, those qualifying as second/holiday homes should warrant a higher band council tax. Thirdly, those classified as empty houses should qualify for financial assistance of some kind. Fourthly, it should not be assumed that all empty properties are suitable for family occupation. A comprehensive, independent assessment is required. "

"Perhaps you should look at the area the second home is in, is it depriving anyone of affordable housing because it is in a desirable holiday location , does it have a negative impact on the area by being scruffy and unkempt and if it generates a profit for the owner. Perhaps you should give a council tax discount to people who have to live next to scruffy tenants with unkempt houses who cause a nuisance and dump rubbish everywhere

Individual circumstances should be taken more into consideration"

Council tax premium should not be charged on local Welsh ownership on two properties within the same county. Local people cannot afford to buy properties when they are on the market and increasing the premium would only encourage wealthier paid individuals from across the border to move into the area, thus impacting on a loss of culture, language and heritage in our villages.

I support the Council in their desire to fill long term empty properties. Such a policy can only strengthen small communities, in particular. Though I do not think the Council tax level has a large bearing on the intentions of second homeowners, they can usually afford to pay any increase. Though properties may be unintentionally long term empty for other reasons as described above. These properties should not incur an extra charge

Looking after your own family has to be the only option.

"Council Tax is payable for the provision of a range of services such as education, refuse collection, sports & leisure facilities, libraries, etc. ; police, fire brigade, ; town and parish councils.

The owners of long term empty properties cannot avail themselves of the benefits provided by council services as they are not residents so to impose any additional premium in addition to the basic council tax band is wholly unfair and inequitable - why pay a large after tax amount of money for nothing? The addition of any premium adds insult to injury as it is merely increasing the amount of the subsidy and a diversion of personal resources that could be applied to improve the property. COVID has also resulted in at least a minimum 18 month delay on projects.

This is in complete contrast to the second home properties , where the owner (resident - if a holiday let) can enjoy the services provided and can clearly afford to pay either out of their own pockets (or holiday let income)!!"

"In addition to my previous comments, regarding council tax premiums on long-term empty properties / second homes I would suggest the following:

For second homes, if the home-owner has business connections to Flintshire and contributes to the local economy by being employed, or providing employment, and / or spending locally, no council tax premium should be levied as these home owners already contribute to the local economy and local community. If a council tax premium drives away these second-home owners this will be detrimental to the local economy and local community.

For long-term empty properties it is better to offer a carrot of encouragement in the form of grants and tax relief to refurbish these properties and bring them back to habitable use than to make a stick of premium council tax to beat the owner with. Council tax should be removed completely from these properties during the refurbishment process. Encouraging refurbishment in this way will bring positive benefits to the local

community; punishing the owner by increasing the council tax premium will not necessarily bring any change, so will add nothing locally.

Neither second homes, nor empty properties are likely to add to the council's stock of affordable housing if relinquished by their owners.

I have to pay the premium even though it is not a second home which is unfair therefore people in my situation should not be treated in the same way as those with second homes.

As I have said earlier, individual circumstances should be taken into account as to why someone needs or uses a second home in Flintshire. If a second-home owner has a genuine reason for needing a home in Flintshire, such as providing care or working or having business interests locally, then no council tax premium should be levied. As someone who grew up in Flintshire I regard this as my home as much as anywhere else, and I spend considerable time in the county on business and family matters. I would like to extend my business interests in Flintshire, but need a home to stay in – which is not necessarily my main residence – in the county to facilitate this. Any council tax premium would be a deterrent to this, and detrimental to the local economy and community.