

**Appendix 3 - Free Text Responses of the Public Consultation**

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## Q 8 Please briefly explain the reason for your selections in questions 6 and 7.

For reference:

Q 6 The Council is currently reviewing its premium scheme of 100% on second homes. In your opinion what should the proposed level of premium be in Flintshire?

Q7 The Council is currently reviewing its premium scheme of 75% on long term empty dwellings. In your opinion what should the proposed level of premium be in Flintshire?

The responses have been summarised into the categories below.

### Response Received in Support of the Premium on Second Homes

I feel this would make second homeowners either rent out their property or sell it. This would then help the people on long waiting lists. Or would increase revenue to local government
Second homes are an added advantage that should see an increase in 101% and 150% as these are not in permanent use above 151% is too high.
Hopefully encourage owners to use homes to help reduce housing shortage
Second homes are unnecessary, domestic houses are built to be lived in at all times, not just during a holiday period. The people living in them would be part of a community, they may work and shop elsewhere but their heart/body will remain in their community.
If homes are not used they bring little/no value to the local economy and Flintshire residents are denied opportunities for homes. Therefore, there should be a deterrent.
I believe that empty homes should pay the highest rate suggested to encourage those who own them to make use of them. I can see some benefit to having second home owners if those owners utilise their properties and engage with the local economy so I suggest the second to highest increase. If the second home could also be described as long term empty then the highest rate should apply.
There is a large demand for homes from resident people and so second homes especially for leisure use should be discouraged. People who can afford to have second homes should contribute more to council services or mitigate council tax increases for permanent residents.
For second home owners, rates should be raised significantly. Many are out of County home owners (non-resident in Flintshire for their main residence) - this should be reviewed to keep money within the Welsh economy. There should be a cut off limit of 2 years for empty properties - and then a hike to between 201% and 300%.
Second home owners, however, are decreasing the availability of homes for local people.
If people are rich enough to own a 2nd home then surely they can afford to pay council tax for both homes
The purpose of these premiums should differ for both types but should both rise to the maximum level. On second homes, the purpose is to reallocate additional funding from these luxury assets via the local authority.

<p>f people can afford second homes they can afford to pay higher council tax rates. If these homes are being used for short term rentals then they should be classed as business premises and possible planning permission given to see if a change of use is acceptable.</p>
<p>Q6 This should be done individually taking account of the use the second home and any benefit to the community</p>
<p>No one needs two homes, holiday homes have destroyed some Welsh communities and those who own them should pay a premium</p>
<p>Wales needs to stand up for itself many counties in England charge and many more abroad if people are rich enough to own a second home depriving locals make them pay or bugger off. Second home owners NEVER support the local community only line their pockets</p>
<p>6. In all likelihood, those able to afford a second home can afford to pay a higher rates. They have opportunities to earn income e.g. renting their second home, without contributing further to the local community. A second home is a choice, chose a second home, pay the higher rate.</p>
<p>Question 6: The richer holiday home owners will pay whatever council tax premium regardless, they can afford to. Those properties are usually of a high standard and out of reach price wise to working people with normal jobs.</p>
<p>If second homes include those which are lived in periodically, or let out as holiday homes, then owners should be able to afford to pay a council tax premium, particularly if they are generating income from the property.</p>

## Responses Received in Support of the Premium on Long-Term Empty Properties

Empty houses are an eyesore
the empty properties are sometimes a blight on the community given owners are letting some get into a very run down state. these properties could be updated and let out relieving some of the stress locals find in renting properties. Owners should either update them or sell to someone that would, even if this were the council or a housing association.
Empty dwellings are often unkempt.
In respect of long term empty homes if it meant homes which are not empty because somebody was, for example, long term in the hospital or similar situations, but rather that somebody was speculating on the price, and as well as there were quick planning permission turnaround (for example to turn an originally business property into residential and vice versa and other similar situation) I would charge even more than currently charged 75% to encourage the owners to put the property(ies) on the market (whether selling, renting anything).
Empty properties often are neglected and an eyesore for local people, attracting fly tipping and rubbish, and empty properties become over time become derelict, sometimes these properties are owned by building companies who really want to clear the site for new developments.
The purpose of these premiums should differ for both types but should both rise to the maximum level. For empty properties the purpose is to tip the balance in to making it more economic to bring them in to use than leave them empty, or to encourage them to be brought in to use earlier than they would be otherwise.
If properties are long term empty and the owners known then they should pay higher rate council tax or they should be renting the properties on a long term basis. If the owners are not traceable then the Authority should be looking at taking over the properties - renovating to an acceptable level and renting on a long term basis - any expenditure incurred can be recouped if and when the property is sold
Q7 Empty properties are a waste of a resource and higher rates might encourage letting or developing.
An empty property can have a negative effect on the surrounding area, especially if it is not maintained
6. Not their primary residence so don't get the full service from the council. I think 75% is fair to be fair. I actually don't have a problem with people having second homes in Flintshire. They still spend locally. And contribute to communities.
Second homes in Flintshire account for only 0.2% of the total housing stock. Taxing second homes in Flintshire has no relevance to increasing the supply of 'affordable housing' given such low numbers and the fact that the Council have no idea how many are indeed 'affordable' if they came on the market. Many are inherited properties, regularly used by those who grew up in Wales and their local communities. It is solely a punitive tax intended to raise extra cash - with minimal effort. By contrast long term empty properties can be a problem, and a premium would be appropriate.
7. A deterrent to leaving properties empty for long periods of time. This impacts local communities e.g. properties in poor condition, they become neglect. Of greater importance is these properties could be used in a different way to address

the significant and increasing homeless challenges. The increase in income to the Council could e.g. support homeless budgets which are significantly overspent.

As a permanent resident of Flintshire in full time employment who pays full council tax, I feel that we should not be subsidising others, especially when it feels like the less you work the more you get free. Owners of long term empty dwellings on the other hand, should pay more council tax as empty properties kill communities, become derelict if not kept well and can be repurposed instead of building cheap quality McDonald's houses that blight the area. They could help those who are in need of housing. Notwithstanding, increases are only warranted if councils spend wisely and not wastefully and most certainly not on vanity projects for a very small portion of society when fundamentals that benefit the greater part of society should come first .

if the council tax rate was increased it may then discourage people from leaving properties empty for a long period of time - as by them leaving properties empty this then has a negative impact on occupants who are living in that area and seeing the homes empty from day to day and in some cases when they are being left empty/un-occupied the properties are also left to go to rack and ruin and the gardens can become overgrown which also leaves a negative impact on residents seeing the said property day in day out.

and by increasing the council tax this may then force the owners of these properties to sell the properties/or rent them out save them being left empty.

People are in need of homes. An empty house is a waste. If left empty they can impact negatively on the area. Too many families are in temporary accommodation who could be housed in the empty properties once refurbished.

Because empty homes are a more negative aspect of the housing sector.

## Reponses Received with Concerns Regarding Premiums on Second Homes

<p>Because someone is lucky enough to able to own a second property doesn't mean they should be in all honesty fined, plus houses aren't selling so if you have an empty house from a deceased relative you can't sell why should they lose out as well</p>
<p>Why should people with 2nd Homes pay extra. They don't use services as much. Council need to stop wasting money and trying to get extra Money off second home owners or empty properties. They get enough money from residents and it is wasted.</p>
<p>6 - people shouldn't be unduly punished for having second homes especially given second home in Flintshire have little impact on additional cost to council services.</p>
<p>Second homes are not using the council's facilities</p>
<p>6 - Why charge somebody more than what a full time resident would be charged?</p>
<p>People have right to have a second home if they can afford it and even 100% C/T charge is more than enough considering that they hardly use the services 'for that property'. To charge an extra 'rich' tax is not fair in my opinion. or not fair to hide it under C/T.</p>
<p>Flintshire is hardly classed as a Coastal Location, so should not really have many people wanting second homes here?</p>
<p>I can understand why Flintshire CC has doubled the Council Tax for 2nd homes. I accept the need to raise additional revenue (albeit only a very modest amount) &amp; consider the current rate to be fair. However, I do not feel that further raising the Tax will lead to people selling their properties to bring more properties onto the market for local affordable homes.</p> <p>The number of 2nd homes is only 170 dwellings, while the number of empty properties is well over 4 times the number of 2nd homes. My family use our property often (about 50% of the year) and spend a considerable amount of money locally (shops, local tradespeople e.g. gardeners, plumbers, electricians etc etc). Empty properties have no occupants to contribute to the local economy unlike second homes but they pay a lower rate of Council Tax.</p>
<p>The number of second homes in Flintshire is very low (170). It is not an area where there is a problem of holiday homes pushing out long term residents or inflating house prices so as to prevent residents from buying properties. I am not aware of any evidence produced by the council to show any adverse impact of second homes.</p> <p>In my personal situation, the second home is a grade II* listed property which has been owned by my family since the 1980s. We have spent large amounts of money to convert outbuildings/stables into 11 cottages which we rent out for modest rents. At present the tenants benefit from the gardens and estate far more than our family. However, the repair of listed buildings is very expensive and despite the income from the cottages we inject significant funds into the estate to keep it running, employing local people.</p> <p>In recent years, high interest rates and increases in taxation on landlords (through the reduction in interest being allowed as an expense) have made the financial situation difficult. Meanwhile, we have to pay an additional £5000 of council tax in respect of the main house which I have not been able to live in as my main residence because of work commitments elsewhere. This simply takes money</p>

away from repairs to the listed buildings and the estate, to the detriment of the tenants. It also contributed towards delays in refurbishing a rented cottage because of a lack of funds.

Furthermore, the main house (to which the second home premium applies) is a large historic building which cannot in reality be let out and could not possibly constitute affordable housing. The heating and maintenance on the building are prohibitively expensive. The council tax premium therefore does nothing positive; it simply dissuades me from investing in the area (and maintaining 11 reasonably priced rental cottages on a historic estate), to the detriment of the local community. On the contrary, the area needs to encourage investment.

I would therefore suggest that, at a minimum, any second home premium should not apply to listed properties unsuitable for affordable housing.

Visitors use services and have a positive effect within local communities

WHEREAS our second home is well maintained and used by my family weekends and every school holiday as we have 3 foster children who benefit from being outside a city where they are schooled. I believe second homes with families who have foster children up to 18 or 25 if special needs, should be treated in same way as families who foster in Flint with the Flint CC, we should not be penalised as our holidays are therapeutic and it is too expensive to holiday abroad. 2 of our 3 children, all with special needs have been baptised locally and we play an active part locally in our community in Wales. There should be an exemption for families with foster children or children with an EHCP or SEND needs.

Some second homes are used approx. 6 weeks out of 52 leaving ghost towns and lost community. Not all empty properties are available or suitable to be let . I.e. owners in hospital long term due to lack of carers and care package . Working away for economic reasons

There is no correlation between increasing council tax and assuming the properties would no longer be vacant/used as holiday rentals and the placement of social housing or speaking Welsh. In fact it is extremely unlikely that these houses would be used for renting to social tenants. Many second homes are located in extremely rural settings and are large or have amenities that a social landlord would not provide. It is a completely different market. If the idea is to force these property owners to sell this is also a bad idea as the people whom you are trying to house would not be in a position to purchase said property. You will just end up going in circles or forcing more empty properties. There is also no correlation with speaking Welsh, since the use of the language has decided so much there is zero guarantee that if a house were let to a current resident of Wales that they would speak Welsh. Instead you should be focusing your energy on school/education/communities to build language skills. Housing is completely irrelevant and charging council tax to force owners to change their target market is not going to work.

The number of second homes in Flintshire is very small and I think, therefore, that this has a minimal impact on the housing situation. These properties should be reviewed for council tax increases on a case by case basis. For instance, in my case, the property is tiny and far too small for a family home having been built as a holiday home. I have a leasehold contract which does not allow subletting. When sold these properties are never bought by Welsh families due to their size, leasehold status and proximity to the sea despite their affordability. There should

be an occupancy threshold, for second homes, which dictates the amount of additional tax liability. My family and I spend nearly 7 months of the year in the property but, as I don't let it commercially, it's assumed that it's lying empty for long periods which it certainly is not. I contribute both socially and economically to the local community.

I bought a small terrace cottage in The Cottage was not fit for purposes and the lowest category of energy rating as well as had no roof, we could see up to the stars from the bedroom. The cottage had no heating system, boiler and was head to toe in damp. We received 12 months grace on the council tax and then was forced to pay £2800 to the council for the premium council tax WHISLT we spent 2023-to date making the cottage habitable for our family to live in. Whilst renting a property in Flintshire so to avoid being homeless, we have managed to save what we can and when we can to pay for the cottage renovation. This cottage is our ONLY sole property owned. We have not qualified for help in any direction to do with the renovation and have skimped and saved and paid for new materials and labour as we can afford it. This has taken over 12 months the to do. I'm sure you can appreciate the cost of living crisis as well as our current rental monthly bills have had to take a priority over our future home . Therefore it has taken us a little while to save and do what we can to it as we can afford it. As a result the cottage remained empty and uninhabitable, no energy rating and no bathroom, kitchen, running water etc.

When we had recently save almost £3000 for the Heating system to go in, so we could progress with the repairs and renovation, bringing the house up to standards for every rating (baring in mind we had NO HELP from authorised to do so). We were told that Flintshire County Council WANTED our savings off us for unpaid PREMIUM COUNCIL TAX. Therefore the £3,000 we had saved and worked hard to save in order to put a new system in, to make it habitable was TAKEN FROM US BY THE FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL.

I would ask what part of FAIR do you think this is?

You also state in a number of these questions about the value of the Welsh Language. As an indigenous resident of North Wales and a Welsh Speaker I would question the credibility of your motives and argue the way the local councils chose to favour the spending of our working tax funds on overseas "indigenous" cultures rather than looking after their own I.e. WELSH PEOPLE born and bred in WALES.

There are assumptions that second homes or vacant dwellings are taking away opportunities for affording housing. This position is misconceived. Flintshire Council Tax is already exorbitant. Second homes bring much needed income into traditionally poorer areas.

Second home owners put plenty back into the Flintshire economy i.e. shopping eating out using local shops and local amenities. We have had our second home for over 20 years so us our children their children and other family and friends have put an enormous amount of money back into Flintshire's economy. Yet we are penalised by having to pay at the moment 100% more than any of my neighbours. If you increase the council tax above the 100% then we shall be forced to sell. I am quite sure local people do not spend the same amount in the area as we do and that is all year round NOT just at holiday times.



<p>I own a second property within Flintshire. It has been up for sale for almost a year and due to the damage caused by the previous tenant the house can only be bought by a cash buyer hence the reason for it not selling. It is derelict and uninhabitable and I do not believe it is right that I pay 100% rates. According to Welsh Government guidelines I shouldn't. I think each property should be reviewed individually and the circumstances taken into consideration.</p>
<p>Second homes in Flintshire account for only 0.2% of the total housing stock. Taxing second homes in Flintshire has no relevance to increasing the supply of 'affordable housing' given such low numbers and the fact that the Council have no idea how many are indeed 'affordable' if they came on the market. Many are inherited properties, regularly used by those who grew up in Wales and their local communities. It is solely a punitive tax intended to raise extra cash - with minimal effort. By contrast long term empty properties can be a problem, and a premium would be appropriate.</p>
<p>I am unable to respond to these questions as they do not take all scenario's into account so any responses I provide will be biased. Although I understand the difficulties that 2nd homes can have on local populations, my situation as Trustee of a property in Flintshire is unusual. I can assure you that the property I look after is not suitable for habitation so has no impact on the local population housing difficulties.</p>
<p>2 ND home should be paid at normal charge</p>
<p>We would like to buy a property for our granddaughter, she can't afford to buy but don't want to be penalised buying a second home. We have 3 grandchildren and cannot just buy a home for one. To be fair our two grandsons who are 23 and 25 years of age are already on the property ladder.</p>
<p>Second properties in Wales are owned by people who wish to either retire or go to holiday in that area. They bring much needed income to shops, restaurants and pubs which are struggling to survive. Penalising second home owners is short sighted and a total capitalist approach which will not help any of the Council's housing issues.</p>
<p>Second homes are normally well maintained and periodically used by the owners, whereas long term empty properties, like one next door to us, are very rarely maintained at all and are a blight on our local village/neighbourhood.</p>
<p>I have lived in Flintshire all my life. I am a pensioner, I am Welsh speaking. I have an annexe on my house, and because we don't want a permanent resident living in such close proximity, we feel discriminated against by this unfair premium of 75%.</p>
<p>Higher tax may have an effect on properties available to Welsh people in holiday locations such as Snowdonia but has little effect in areas such as Flint which is not a desirable holiday home location</p>
<p>Second homes are normally more expensive than what locals can afford. So imposing increases in premiums and such will be detrimental as these properties will continue to be second homes and long term empty dwellings. You should focus more on how to bring more people into the local economy; people with these dwellings can afford to spend as well. Kill-off you wealthy visitors would simply kill-off the local economy. It's a lose-lose strategy.</p>
<p>Q6 There is a relatively small number of second homes in Flintshire. Few properties are bought as second homes for holidays in Flintshire or for holiday lets since Flintshire is not recognised as a county that attracts high levels of tourism. It is recognised more as an industrial county. The small number of second homes</p>

<p>are likely used to provide an income, supplement an income or bring about an alternative use for an otherwise disused building that may not be suitable as a primary residence. Some farmers have converted farm buildings to diversify and supplement income in an otherwise difficult and volatile industry.</p>
<p>A second home in Flintshire should be charged the same as every other home in Flintshire.</p>
<p>some areas rely heavily on tourism , if we drive the tourists away then the jobs go with them its common sense . build more houses is the answer , not fleece the second home owners who bring money into the economy.</p>
<p>As the property is not occupied continuously I do not receive as many benefits and services as full time residents. Therefore, even by paying at the normal standard rate (i.e. without any premium added) then I am helping to subsidise the services provided to the resident community. I therefore feel strongly that the premium is wrong and should be removed.</p>
<p>Many owners including ours come from families with Welsh roots and generations have lived in Flintshire. We travel to France to support Wales for the Rugby. With the house being empty the owners do not consume local council services, leaving greater access for residents to the NHS, use of less waste services and of utilities/ sewage. At the same time the owners provide employment to local trades e.g. gardeners and other trades people as the owner is not able to do these themselves. Regular visits are made to reconnect with their Welsh heritage and spending in local restaurants, markets, supermarkets and shops is higher than typical for a permanent resident. Work can force many Welsh people to reluctantly leave Wales. As families grow up and couples enter retirement, returning to Flintshire can be part of the plan and moving back to a bungalow that has been in the family since parents returned from fighting in World War 2 has many attractions. Being penalised for wanting to maintain roots in Wales is not fair. It feels that the council is trying to cut the ties of Welsh people not currently able to live in the country. The focus should be on building affordable housing rather than driving out people whose properties would not even be classified as affordable social housing.</p>
<p>I own a property in Flintshire which I visit at least 12 times a year. I contribute to local businesses and the community. I am not a UK resident and I feel I am penalised with the current council tax scheme. I would understand it if I lived in a coastal town.</p>
<p>People investing in your community bring in positive results. As much as I empathise and understand your want to give housing away as social housing all you will do is create ghettos reliant on welfare with no aspiration to leave them.</p>
<p>If a second home tax is increased it is more likely then to become a holiday rental or residential let &amp; will not resolve any local social/affordable housing list due to the type &amp; cost of these properties. People with a second home or holiday let generally bring more revenue to the area per visit. Some properties can also be inherited &amp; therefore families do not wish to sell &amp; have to look to alternatives such as holiday let etc. or maybe a family dispute as to why a property is empty.</p>
<p>I have read supporting on line information about the council tax premium. I would have liked to see data on how the application of the premium since 2017 has proved to be successful in achieving the objectives it is intended to support. For example, has the number of Long Term Empty properties remained the same, has it increased, or has it reduced since the premium has been applied? What is the rationale for basing a premium of 75 per cent on LTE properties while there is a</p>

higher premium applied to second homes? The 11 second homes in Hawarden are being charged more than the 35 LTE properties. It would have been helpful and interesting if there was an option for question 6 and 7 as follows " Do you think consideration for the level of council tax premium should include an option to review on a case by case basis?"

Long - term empty homes are more likely to be neglected whereas 2nd homes are more likely to be well maintained. It is more likely that long- term empty homes could be influenced by the council to "increase the supply of " affordable" homes. In Hawarden where we retain our original family home, we note 35 long - term empty properties and 11 second homes. Given my first statement, it is totally unfair that we are charged 100% premium whilst long - term empty are charged 75%. It is possible, though not certain, that the 'enforced' sale of long- term empty properties will assist 2,088 people on the waiting list, depending on a range of factors. The ' enforced ' sale of just 11 2nd homes would have nil effect since they will not be sold at a price 'affordable' to social housing clients, low income families or some, but maybe not all, first - time buyers. In terms of integrity, there has to be more justification for 100% premium than merely to "reduce the numbers". You cannot compare Hawarden with coastal resorts such as Abersoch in Gwynedd, although I would not be surprised if the number of Air BnBs and holiday rentals have a greater effect on housing supply even in Flintshire.

Every owner has different circumstances around the reason they have not been able to do something with an empty property, I'll health , financial around the way costs have doubled since Covid to modernise the property to bring it to the market. Also individual properties that need developing would not have any impact on social housing as the cost to rent such properties after the cost to restore them to a standard would be out of reach of most people applying for social housing. In our circumstances the should be no charge due to the fact Flintshire county council damaged the roof by sealing a traditional slate roof with flammable expanding foam which is all so toxic if heated (solar panels on next door roof fitted) can not move in

## Responses received with Concerns Regarding a Premium on Long-Term Empty Properties

<p>Long term empty dwellings can be due to death and trying to sell the property which is a lot for the relatives to take on over 75%. If long term and empty no services are required from the Council such as refuse collection so the current level should remain as 75%. The raised level does not meet the need when no requirement for services from the Council and other standing bills such as water, electric and heating are still having to be met until the property is sold or lived in.</p>
<p>Long term empty dwellings can achieve this status for several disparate reasons and really it depends on the reason as to why the level of property tax is imposed. e.g. Putting the house on the market at an unrealistic price (so it will not sell) should attract a higher rate of tax than a house with the price level aimed at a better aligned market level. A house where the sale is held up by Probate issues should not have a higher rate imposed as it is not the owners fault for non-progression. These reasons can be delicate and guidelines that can be sensibly overridden by human intervention should be employed.</p>
<p>A property that is long term empty is using no services so why should there be a charge? The property may be validly empty for such a long time, such as it has been left to a family member after death, or somebody owns it but can't afford to repair it. It seems silly to hit such people 'in the pocket' and charge them Council Tax.</p>
<p>With the last empty and inhabitable property it took us 2 years to renovate it plus 3 court cases on top of that due to rough traders who disappeared with the money they demanded before the work started. Delays were not intentional and sometimes it a case of waiting 6 months for a good and trusted trader. For year one we've had an exemption but during year two all the utility bills and tax were just another nail to the coffin to the extent that I am reluctant to do it again and bring a property from 1900 to a modern eco efficient state. In my opinion it should raise gradually every year rather than having the same level each year. Otherwise, we risk seeing more properties left abandoned, as the extensive renovations required for such buildings yield minimal profits, especially considering the significant effort involved.</p>
<p>For a first time buyer trying to afford to renovate an empty property, it may take longer than 12 months. They may not be able to afford to mortgage enough to cover all refurbishment, so may need to remain at home, whilst refurbishing month by month. This could take 2 years. For properties which have been empty long term, with no improvements taking place in current timeframe/past 12 months, then it should be a higher threshold. Similarly, people who need to move out to undertake renovations and stay with a relative in order to complete the works, there should be some reasonableness applied.</p>
<p>My empty property is a top floor flat, the changes to tenancy laws require a 12mnth contract &amp; 6mnths notice. I need to sell the property, so I felt unable to enter into new contract. I consider a reduction is fair, as the empty property makes no demands on any council services.</p>
<p>My long term empty dwelling is next door/attached to my primary dwelling. After the change in standards required for rental property the condition of my long term empty dwelling does not meet the minimum requirement. Because the property is in a conservation area I cannot afford the cost of modernising.</p>

<p>Refurbishment of properties not previously suitable for habitation - whether for sale or for rent - should be encouraged. The current policy does not encourage refurbishment and there is a danger that empty homes will remain just that - empty and uninhabitable.</p>
<p>Unfair to further penalise empty home owners if they are genuinely trying to sell.</p>
<p>Money is very tight right now, but we need to move on empty properties, so increasing the premium, make sense. However exception should be made where the property is subjected to probate, which can take years to resolve.</p>
<p>Long term empty are probably waiting to be sold ( like the one I am having to pay c/ tax for , I already pay council tax on property I live in , now have to pay also on my parents empty property whilst on the market)</p>
<p>When I was moving out of a rental into a new rental with a months cross over period between homes the new home I was moving into had been a long term empty and was not allowed an exemption on whilst we did the move over, we could not apply it to the old house as we were living there and so spoke with the FCC and was told not only will we be required to pay two council taxes (expected) but we also had to pay a premium. It's this side of the premium that needs to be revised as I think it's absurd for tenants to pay a premium on a council tax whilst they have the switch over month</p> <p>Also - council tax already costs a fortune and from what I've read online the council haven't been meeting their requirements/targets for things like recycling collections and faced fines. Now suddenly the recycling centres are shut twice a week and weekly home collections are hit and miss - yet somehow our council tax has hiked up a scary amount this year. The roads are diabolical and we aren't seeing were all this money is going. Things are getting worse but the cost is going up and so I really don't see what a premium will make a difference in when the council tax is so high anyway.</p>
<p>Long term empty properties will not use any of the council services so no charge should be levied. If these/ second properties were brought back onto the market there is saying that those waiting for affordable/social housing would be able to afford to buy or rent them</p>
<p>Empty home should be reviewed depending on circumstances if a person passes away and the family need time to empty etc</p>
<p>Question 7: Regarding long term empty properties, I think it should be down to the individuals circumstances. See comments below.</p>
<p>I am being charged the premium when the property I own is my only residence and in process of being renovated and I am residing with my relatives I would not class this as long term empty.</p>
<p>Empty dwellings should not be charged in cases such as family having to sell a home after a death or because a loved one is in a care home.</p>
<p>My deceased Mothers house has been sold Twice and fell through due to the selling chain. As the financial climate is causing sales of houses. The house is sold Subject to contract again and hopefully it will be sold. The council should look individually at each property and assess the rates accordingly. My Mother was a tax payer and it is very upsetting going through this whole process. An exemption is required until the property is sold</p>
<p>In principle I agree with the incentive to bring a longstanding empty home back into use, but mindful of unduly punishing those who genuinely have these aspirations</p>

but are inadvertently punished by the system. For instance, the 12 month 0% premium for major work and renovations should reset once the property purchased (if the allowance has been previously taken at the location) and perhaps extended if reasonable steps have been taken to bring to property back into use

Many landlords who purchase and improve the poor housing stock in Flintshire do so for business purposes however it has a positive impact on the surrounding businesses supplying materials as well as offering work to local tradesmen. With Flintshire being so close to Chester it is subject to the economy of Chester and as such people require commutable properties to the well paid jobs; allow property improvement on empty properties to be exempt.

The situation is different with long-term empty properties. I think it depends on the circumstances, i.e. if a property remains empty with no plans to let out or sell or renovate, this is depriving someone from living in it. An empty property in this case has a negative impact on the housing situation and should be subject to a premium. However, if a long-term empty property is undergoing renovation before letting out or selling, then either a premium should be lower, or not charged at all.

In the case of an inherited/empty property which is being actively marketed for sale should not be charged a premium. In the current housing market, it can take a long time to sell a property and it would be unfair to the owner to be charged a premium during this period. Also, if the owner does not live in the area, they are not entitled to use any council facilities, such as recycling centres etc, and are already paying the basic rate of council tax despite this.

The empty properties I am aware of are large empty rundown properties tied up by businesses with no incentive to renovate due to legislation so I don't see why council tax premiums would make a difference especially to number of Welsh speakers (which is surely education not housing) or those on a waiting list who would not be able to reside in such properties

I am improving the home slowly and cannot afford to do as much due to the high council tax. The sooner the house is finished the sooner I can move in here. By not being here all the time I'm not using roads so less pollution, nor using the council services which I have to pay so much for.

## Feedback Supporting the Premium on Both Types of Dwelling

<p>As the Council Tax Premium scheme is supposed to be used as a tool to bring houses back into use, it would seem obvious (and available evidence in Flintshire supports this) that increasing the premium encourages this. As such, it would be logical to increase the premiums on both second homes and long-term empty properties to 300% in order to maximise the impact of the policy.</p>
<p>If people can afford 2 homes, they should pay an extra charge for taking away availability for residents within Flintshire who are struggling to own their own homes.</p>
<p>People should be discouraged from having second homes and long-term vacant properties as they push house prices up by increasing demand, and push locals out of the area by making it harder to find and afford to buy or rent a place to live. This means fewer people consistently contributing to the local economy, fewer Welsh speakers, and families living further apart than they want.</p>
<p>Why on earth should these properties pay any less when there is a shortage of affordable housing within Flintshire?</p>
<p>If a home is secondary or long term empty then the owner is possibly more likely to pay a premium. This can help reduce the load on other council tax payers who have been subject to rises in recent years. It also provides incentive to reduce these empty or secondary properties.</p>
<p>Scandalous there are people needing homes whilst there are empty properties. Second homes hollow out communities. We are lower paid in Flintshire so second homers drive up prices and stop young locals being able to afford decent homes. We can't keep building new on green fields, need to release the empty.</p>
<p>The increase needs to be significant but not outrageous</p>
<p>Bring these properties back to use it would lessen the impact on homeless numbers, encourage Flintshire residents to stay in Flintshire, increase revenue for the council, more residents would spend more in local shops and businesses than holiday makers,</p>
<p>With the current housing issues there shouldn't be empty properties, charging more might change peoples minds about leaving them empty.</p>
<p>This would bring more dwellings into the open market and should in turn reduce prices and increase availability.</p>
<p>Mae angen rhyddhau tai ar gyfer pobol sy'n eu hangen. Os codir y gost, mae pobol yn fwy tebygol o ryddhau'r eiddo ar y farchnad. Eiddo gwag ddim yn les o gwbl ir gymuned am rhan fwyaf or flwyddyn. <b>Housing needs to be released for people who need it. If the cost is raised, people are more likely to release the property on the market. An empty property of no use to the community for most of a year.</b></p>
<p>The number of long term empty properties indicates that this is currently having a negative impact on the housing situation. The owners of empty properties are making no contribution to the local economy and should, therefore, be expected to pay more, especially if the properties are becoming derelict and an eyesore. If these properties are suitable family homes perhaps enquiries could be made as to why they're neither sold nor rented, if this could be addressed their availability could have a very positive impact on the situation.</p>
<p>Increase council tax for those who can afford second homes/can afford to keep a house empty. This will subsidise services as a whole for everyone else.</p>

<p>Some second homes are also rented out... e.g. Airbnb. This should allow the local authority to charge it as a business. Checks could be made on Airbnb. Empty properties for sale or where the occupier is in a nursing home (etc) should be exempt. Buildings awaiting renovation or just empty, where owned by a company or individual who leave them empty to increase sale prices or to hold as stock for future use should pay a premium.</p>
<p>Owners of both types of home should be encouraged to rent out these properties and then the tax could be lowered.</p>
<p>It would encourage owners not to keep the dwelling empty and provide vital housing for those in need in the county.</p>
<p>I think it should be raised on second homes, in relation to the size of the property &amp; if it's just used as a holiday home &amp; not rented out &amp; I think if it's raised to 100% on empty homes, it will stop properties being bought &amp; just left empty, without any work taking place, which impacts on neighbours &amp; community</p>
<p>Unfortunately costs in every area are increasing. I think this needs to be reflected in the costs charged in these situations. These homes are valuable to the community and in an ideal world would be available.</p>
<p>There are so many people desperately needing a home. There is no need for anyone to own a second home. They usually have more than enough income to stay in a hotel when they visit which would have the dual effect of assisting the economy more and releasing much needed homes for those without.</p>
<p>Empty properties are wasted properties, they look unsightly, can lead to vandalism or squatters, gardens become overgrown and can cause problems for neighbours. Everything possible should be done to try and get the properties back into occupancy.</p>
<p>Long term empty properties have a negative impact on local communities.</p>
<p>Local children struggle to grow up and move into their own homes in the area because of lack of availability. Long term empty houses fall quickly into disrepair and impact on the surrounding area. They should be actively discouraged</p>
<p>Homes are meant to be lived in. Welsh people are being priced out of the market as second home buying pushes the price out of their reach. Then left empty most of the year. Let them holiday in caravans or hotels and holiday parks, thus boosting the Welsh economy</p>
<p>It will reduce the negative impact on the amount of empty properties and enable local young people to have access to affordable housing</p>
<p>Increasing costs on empty dwellings will encourage landlords or owners to ensure their empty homes are occupied. Increasing costs on holiday homes will discourage people from purchasing thereby increasing the housing stock for local people. It will also help keep housing costs down so first time buyers are not pushed out of the market.</p>
<p>Often not he's properties are 'luxury' items. i.e. not actually necessary for the owners. This is unfair whilst so many cannot afford or even find one property for themselves and/ or their families.</p>
<p>No available houses to rent or buy because people are leaving them empty with no incentive to do anything about it. Increasing the charges may encourage them to either rent out or sell</p>
<p>I think long term empty houses look awful, it's stood empty for years, when someone should be living in it, or think if council tax was higher, it would</p>



encourage people to sell and not hold on to properties, I don't think it would have much of an impact on holiday homes , as they can obviously afford it , to the detriment of locals
Should not be made totally unaffordable therefore trial slight increase unless you wish to reclaim empty properties - there would be a cost to this.
There needs to be an increased deterrent in respect of second homes, and a greater concentration of the minds of owners of long-term empty properties to dispose of them.
Second homes benefit from the same services. Could have positive impact on the waiting list. Could generate more available homes for local residents, i.e. first time buyers.
Discourage second homes. LT empty homes are a disgrace when people don't have homes.
Q7 Raising Council Tax premium for long-term empty homes is unlikely to encourage owners to make necessary repairs to make an empty property suitable for rent/sale.
Keeping properties from prospective buyers is damaging to the local economy. The housing ladder is difficult enough to get on in these times, and we should be doing more to ensure that people who could otherwise afford a house are not stuck in a relentless loop of paying rents priced at multiple times the cost of a mortgage.
Houses need to be brought back into use. Increasing the tax premium will encourage people to sell their empty & second homes to those who need houses.
For me, as the owner of what Flintshire County Council describe as a 'long term empty dwelling', there is a clear distinction between a 'second home' and a 'long term empty dwelling'. On that basis, the levels of council tax levied through the so called 'premium scheme' need to be varied according to circumstance.
Everything has gone up in price so might as well increase it.
A planned increase over a couple of years to the maximum allowed on both
Empty properties need to be made available as soon as possible given the severe housing shortage. I understand some properties may be undergoing refurbishment but where they are just left empty is has a negative impact. Second homes are a luxury and only being used part of the year has a negative impact on the places where they are. It also means local residents have lost the opportunity to purchase that property
If second homes are not being used all the time and with empty homes, then it causes interest from many strangers to the community. People stopping and looking etc. If, like the empty house opposite me, it has been ignored for almost 3 years, it becomes unsightly, untidy. Obviously empty and attracts the wrong kind of interest from strangers.
To ultimately increase number of houses available for those that do not have them

## Feedback with Concerns Regarding the Premium on Both Types of Dwelling

<p>It's a choice to have a second home, or have an empty one, the affordable housing situation will not be affected by these minor tax rises but seen as a petty statement</p>
<p>I think the percentage should vary depending on the situation. My mother's property is currently empty as she is living in a nursing home. I am desperate to sell this as I am responsible for its maintenance, however, I have to wait for the courts to grant permission. Percent should be determined based on individual circumstances.</p>
<p>'Should not be charged' unless circumstances have been reviewed. You take no account of pre-existing factors. Example. In our case, a main house plus annex, on the same meters and services and same courtyard. Mortgage is through Halifax. This is the Halifax's position to avoid eviction processes of tenants in event main mortgage is not paid, they will not remove or reconsider that. Your current policy does not consider such situations, ignoring them simply increase tax burden, without any opportunity for the owner to rent out / reclaim costs commercially.</p>
<p>I feel charging a premium on long term empty and second homes is profiteering and on second homes could have a negative effect on businesses that rely on tourists as if these homes were sold up less visitors would come and holiday makers are more likely to spend more money in the area than people who live here</p>
<p>If the property is empty it's not costing FFC nothing so no need to charge anything.. It's absolutely outrageous to even think about changing people so much. An where does this money go? Road tax goes on roads does it?</p>
<p>My understanding is that the Welsh Government are trying to encourage the development of empty homes to a satisfactory standard for occupation, by charging an unreasonable amount of Council Tax has an adverse effect in that it makes it unaffordable to carry out necessary repairs to then either sell the property or rent it out to provide affordable housing. I am in the process of selling my second home and am struggling to afford the Council Tax</p>
<p>My second house was flood damaged and the insurance company has taken over 18mths to undertake work. This is through no fault of mine yet I have to pay 75% rate on a property my son can't yet live individual cases should be considered as to why property is empty. The second home was my family home which was inherited and my son will live there once its finished. Giving access to the housing ladder. Without this he could not afford a home of his unindividual cases again should be considered.</p>
<p>An across the board increase does not identify for each individual circumstance. Most of the second homes are used and punishing owners by charging higher levels of tax does not work. In most cases local people would not buy them as they are priced above what they can afford. Remember most of the time it was locals that sold them to the present owners. they did not say I will sell it at a very low price for local people !</p> <p>My property has an annex that the previous owner registered as another address to avoid paying Council tax on the remainder of the then in build larger part of the property. the valuation office said it was classed as another house and so the council now charges me two lots of council tax one at lower band and one at a</p>

higher band. Other people have annexes and only pay one Council tax. My annex is never rented and is not a second home, it is used by us as part of our home everyday and yet we still have to pay two lots of council tax it costs me over a third of my pension. I can't afford to knock it down and we need the use of the property which also helps our son who suffers from mental illness and at times has to come and live with us for his recovery and care. It's all very frustrating and costly. The Council are not interested and blame the valuation office.

Homes that are long term empty following a death that are up for sale and uninhabitable houses shouldn't be charged

I have lived in Flintshire for 30 years but I have a house near my family I will be moving back near them in the future when my friend who is in her 80s goes into care. but because I have a house somewhere else I am told I have to pay extra council tax .my house is not a long term empty property as I am in it regularly

There needs to be some flexibility in the housing market. Buying and selling houses can take time and do not always match up.

Paying twice as much as other householders is quite enough given that I only have a second home in my home town of because I am unable currently to live there permanently until my commitments in Liverpool cease. Then I will live there full time so I can be near my sister and friends in my old age and hopefully be buried in the Cemetery with the rest of my family.

I am being penalised for trying to stay close to my roots in a village where my parents lived for over 70 years and my sister for her whole life.

I purchased my property with a plan of living permanently in my house in due course but I may have to abandon it and sell up as it is becoming too expensive.

This will have a huge impact on my plans to have a support network close at hand as I get older.

This is an unfair tax and an unfair means of the council gathering more income. Council tax is to pay for local services and not to subsidize housing. There no-one in these empty homes and hence there is not a proportional increase in the use of services than a home with multiple occupants.

The rental laws in Wales are extremely punitive to landlords and that alongside the tax arrangements for lettings mean that those who choose to privately let are at a disadvantage. The responsibility of finding affordable homes does not lie with private landlords.

I feel particularly home that are empty due to renovation should not be charged this premium. We are under doing major renovation which means our property is uninhabitable. This premium causes unnecessary additional stress and worry about finances due the additional expense. I feel there should be bimonthly checks to see that it is being renovated. It is not that the property is empty and no progress being made.

Individuals who have worked hard in order to be able to embark on purchasing a property of which may require extensive renovation are penalised greatly if the renovations exceed one calendar year.

Those whom are embarking upon extensive renovation may not retain the lump sum of funds required to complete the renovation work - therefore do so 'bit by bit' in order to complete the property to a habitable standard.

Thus by charging a premium of 75% it further depletes a home owners funds in completing the renovations within a timely manner.

<p>There are valid reasons for a property to be empty for which your limited exemptions cannot be applied.</p>
<p>Second homes are inevitably rented out to visitors to Flintshire. We have hired such to accommodate our large family joining us for Christmas and holidays, thus providing assistance to us and also valuable income to the location.</p> <p>The second home premium on 12 months is an arbitrary figure that does not suite all. Some people who are renovating a property require longer for completion. Others may take less. Could the Council not monitor progress and charge accordingly.</p>
<p>Council tax on a house should be the same regardless if lived in , empty or second home. Second homes bring huge economic income into Wales . Focus on reducing people on benefits who have multiple children just the a bigger house . Stop penalising people who want to make a living out of bringing tourism to Wales. Also if someone owns a property and leaves it's empty that up to them .</p>
<p>Both the long term empty dwellings and the second homes should be allowed to contribute to the community, the same as their neighbours. So why are they the charged more when they are not putting a drain on the Council Services.</p> <p>Effectively, the Council are being paid the full Council Tax or 175% or 200% for a small amount of services used and the Council appears to think it is "fair" to charge even more on the properties that are draining there services the least. This seem to be totally unjust.</p>
<p>Each home should have to pay council tax and therefore if you own two homes you should be required to pay council tax on both properties.</p> <p>I think there should be a further reduction to council tax on empty properties as many people and families find a property empty through unavoidable circumstances and therefore it is unfair to have to pay council tax an a property that is empty.</p>
<p>My long term empty property is totally uninhabitable as a result nobody wanted to buy it despite its low sale price at the time ,even these people who are supposedly desperate to get on the housing ladder, the council couldn't even fill these houses at one time due to lack of services and amenities etc.,</p> <p>I purchased the property with the sole intention of getting it back into an inhabitable condition as time and funds allowed even though the amount of money required to do that exceeds the retail value of the property in real terms, and financial bullying by Flintshire council is not going to improve that situation. In my eyes there is a massive difference between someone who is trying to resurrect a derelict property</p> <p>In a non-sought after area and a second home on the coast either way it should not be used as an easy revenue earner for the council. The council should be looking at its own housing stock where there are empty houses that again nobody wants to live in because they don't like the area ,and the houses that have been allocated to someone, and they don't even live there and are either sub letting or keeping them as a fall back.</p>
<p>It takes me a long time to renovate houses because I do much of the work myself, around one day a week (I work full time)but I do use contractors to 'speed up' progress when I can afford it.</p> <p>I estimate that council tax I have paid over the four years I have been working on the house is around £6k.</p> <p>If I had not had to pay this I would have engaged more contractors to do some of the work and it would have paid for about 21 days of work - roughly 4 working</p>

weeks a month.

So as a consequence I have had to do the work at 1 day per week which means your tax added around 20 weeks to the completion time,

I am not alone in this so if your claimed intention to charge extra tax on empty houses so they are made available more quickly is clearly not working so to use that as a justification (for punitive tax rates) in future will be a fiction.

One other point I would like to add is that you are asking empty house owners to a pay a punitive tax for services they barely use and further, I couldn't even get a permit to use my pickup to dump waste at the local recycling centre - further adding to costs (about £300 for an extra skip), equal to another days work I couldn't afford to pay for.

Just consider this - it is just like one of you decision makers going into a shop, paying extra for something but then not getting it. I am pretty sure you would have something to say about that.

On the matter of second homes, you say Flintshire has 170 with 2088 waiting for an affordable house. Clearly forcing the owners to sell these houses is not going to make a big impression and besides have you actually bothered to check how many of these 'second homes' would be affordable or in areas where these people want to live?

On a final point when I finally looked to sell the house I renovated (a two up two down terrace house) I had zero interest from locals but lots from people who work in Liverpool, Chester or Manchester.

So the idea that local Welsh speakers will buy these houses is clearly not going to work out is it - it'll be incomers from England.

Second homes and long term empty properties cost the council less than occupied properties due to the property not using services such as refuse collection. Yet they are being charged more than permanent residents for services they either do not use or use infrequently.

Second homes and long term empty properties will also have little to no impact on the number of people on waiting lists for social or affordable housing. Those on the waiting list for social or affordable housing are unable to purchase property on the open market, and so are unlikely to be able to purchase any of the second homes / long term empty properties should they become available to buy. The solution to the social housing crisis appears to be more government funding and councils investing funds in the right places, not penalising other members of the community.

The council tax premium also creates a hostile environment for tourists and discourages those who wish to invest in the community from doing so. Considering the Welsh economy is reliant on tourism for business, it seems counterproductive to drive away second home owners through ridiculous premiums on property.

Second homes bring income in to the community e.g. a holiday home when the occupiers visit or if they rent it out to other holiday makers.

The standard council tax rate should be more than adequate to cover expenses for the council. There may be less local services used if the property isn't always used e.g. bins aren't put out every week.

Long term empty properties are more of an issue but again don't drain public resources so there should be a small deterrent to encourage the property to be used but it doesn't need to be increased.

The premium for second homes and long term empty is stifling the available money for improvements to the properties that could bring them back to habitable condition. It is purely a money making scheme the council uses because they squander money on people who do not and will not work.

this is just another way in which the council raises money Flintshire should be helping owners not fining them, to bring long term empty back into use

We understand the need for the council to levy a premium, however 100% is already high £318 per month and wish to plead for the rate to remain the same.

The number of 2nd/empty homes is so insignificant in the Flintshire area that the charge will have no significant impact on the availability of affordable housing and as such can only be viewed as a tax on perceived wealth, particularly as the users of these homes already receive little in terms of services for the council tax that they pay. The owners of empty or 2nd homes are entitled to choose to own and use those properties in that way without penalty.

Are successful people not allowed a second home in Wales? Do you not like it? Do you want to discourage wealthy people from investing in our area? Wealthy people are hard-working, successful and take great care of their local area. They're an asset, they help to improve our areas. They have money to help make the area better and they are not stupid people. Do we want to scare them off and deter investment? Do you prefer lower class people in the area? How about travellers? Would you prefer them in the area? How does this affect the value of our properties?

Number 7 is a very bad idea in my opinion. Yes, we want long term empty properties back into use, this is a good idea, but it's not as simple as simply slamming the owners with a tax and hoping that somehow, the property will then be liveable and free for use! Long term empty properties may be empty for one or many of many very valid reasons. Just because it's long term empty does not mean that one is simply holding onto a good property for no reason. Valid reasons may be; costs of bringing the property up to date, there could be legal issues. A massive one is that a team may buy a property to "do it up". Why should such investors be penalised for this? Its absurd. What I'm saying is that properties should be addressed individually along with circumstances and then some plan to be determined.

I cannot believe this is even a thing. If someone wants to buy a house, with their money, money that have been taxed on already, whether it's empty or not they should NOT be charged. It is NOT the publics/home owners responsibility to help with "affordable housing" we are not employed by the government. It's getting like North Korea. Controlled and ridiculous.

these properties are not costing the council anything as they are not using any of the costly services.

we already pay far too much council tax and the idiot councillors spaff it all up the wall. we need less councillors wasting our money and more benefits for us who live here.

I don't believe penalising people who want to be a part of Wales is the right thing to do. There are far more opportunities to be had by welcoming people. There should be more language learning opportunities a pride in the country to share. I think a long term empty property needs some investigation - a know a few properties that are derelict so is not great for anyone if it was freed up. These questions are v generic, we live outside the U.K. for employment at the moment

and have retained a home in Wales where are family live. We return to support our elderly families. Every situation is different, we don't make money we want to have a home in Wales to return to one day. We actually need more affordable housing and more planning penalising people who can bring money into the country just doesn't make sense. Having said that I do realise some parts of Wales and U.K. do require some management but not Flintshire.

To act as a deterrent.

The above questions do not show some of the struggles some individuals are having paying not only a second council tax but also an increased tax on an empty property. I'm sure you appreciate everyone's circumstances are different and not all and they should be treated so. Not all second homes are purchases and left as holiday homes etc. Some are inherited and with family disputes/ lack of funding to make them habitable. By increasing council tax fees in some cases this will just push back the willingness and lack of cash to carry out the work. I have never missed a council tax payment as I believe they are fundamental to the local community. I am a great charity supporter and help out locally wherever I can. However in cases like this I have to question the council and ask, Is a blanket 100% increase for everyone a fair approach for people trying to the correct thing

Existing prices and percentages remain high enough at the current rate and area.

## Other Comments

I think a different approach should be taken i.e. length of time a property is empty say 12months after this time it must be rented out either by the owner or leased by the council
The council service we receive is a shambles. I have moved from Salford to here and I honestly cannot believe we don't even have bins for recycling. I was a big recycler in England, now I cannot be bothered.
Hard questions to answer- need to see what the value of the current payments are and what this pays for. A breakdown is needed in order to determine if this covers the current cost.
Another tax upon more tax. When will it end?
I believe there is a difference between a second home and in my case an empty property I have inherited and trying to renovate to bring it up to date with current legislation to allow it to be rented.
Society has changed, we have more working adults living together / living at home and yet only one CT is paid, single people although discounted are disproportionately charged. A fair system would be to amalgamate the two systems, Poll and Council, so each adult in a property pays a charge, but this is banded. So, a sole person in band D pays 50, 4 in band D pay 200, single in A pays 20, and 4 pay 80. This would provide a more accurate representation of society change and a fair system for all.
I am not sure why a tax is applied to people who can freely buy property. The council are responsible for the lack of housing.
I am living in a property with my partner who I look after 24/7 as he is partly disabled .We are unable to get back to my property in Flint.
Charges for second homes should be in proportion to the services that can be accessed.
I personally think council tax is quite high in Flintshire



**Q12 - 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.**

Individual circumstances must apply and any one of the above list may be appropriate.
If I was a second home owner I would be working to bring it into the private rented sector.
Flintshire CC need to get a lot better at examining the reasons why the properties are empty. A more balanced view is necessary to ensure duplicate taxation is applicable.
I don't have an option to change my situation as I am trying to sell the 2nd property as an executor
If FCC was more responsive with planning permission maybe it wouldn't be empty
See question 8
I have been updating my second home in order to sell it, it is currently on the market
Impossible to say. Many factors might affect what we would do but we would probably choose one of the 1st 3 options.
We have been trying to sell our property since September 2022 when Liz Truss set her new budget. At least 4 sellers have withdrawn because of mortgage problems etc. at the moment we are in a chain awaiting to complete the sale.
Pay until foster children with special needs not at home and move in ourselves.
I would need to increase the amount I charge thus leaving less money from visitors to the community. I would also have less personal income to invest locally since we only let the property a few times per year.
Sell it, but this is not a good thing in my opinion. The original owner is likely to be punished. The buyer then has a liability from the council. It's damaging as it deters investment, and that slows down money being pumped into our area.
I would have to turn it into a holiday let to make it pay for itself until I can live there permanently.
Demolition of the property.
Despite the prohibition on the lease I would rent it out just enough to cover the increase
As stated previously I am trying to sell the property. I could not afford to pay a higher premium and my circumstances should be reviewed individually
Dispute the increase if the property was already on the market for sale.
Move a friend in free of charge
Really don't know - possibly have a breakdown from the stress this is causing me!!!!
Vote for a change of Councillors
Increasing the premium is purely a revenue earning stream in wanting properties like mine recommissioning you should be assessing the properties and any that you can't be mortgaged should pay no council tax or at least the standard rated council tax, instead of bullying people into selling.
I was looking to buy another house to renovate but I wont be now. What is going to happen is derelict empty homes will remain unsold and fall into further ruin and probably be demolished to save paying your tax. One other possibility is the sale

prices could go down to reflect the punishing tax rates but all contractors will do is add the cost of that tax back onto the sale price.
I'm getting it ready to sell anyway. If the empty house didn't need renovation, I'd have just moved in and sold my current house.
I would love to refurbish my property to rent it out but I have to use the money to pay the council tax. It is the law of diminishing returns
I am not sure now, our dream was to move there taking early retirement
If I could afford a second home, I could afford the increase - unless of course it was something inherited.
I really don't know. It would be very difficult. I don't want to sell the property, because I think someone far richer than me, probably from England, would buy the property.
This would potentially put already struggling law abiding families in Flintshire into even more debt. This would also slow down the time and empty pockets to allow needed work on the properties to make them fit to sell or rent
I am not prepared to give this answer because my situation is subjective to our situation. I have no feelings or opinions on empty houses. It's all a big money making ploy from the council as far as I'm concerned and I say that through personal experience of being penalised. I have one empty property in need of full renovation and repair to make it habitable. Yes I was charged £2800 for premium tax. It's in just and it's discrimination
I am a home owner with planning permission for a holiday let on an outbuilding to provide me with a pension - if council tax premiums were increased when the holiday is completed I would sell up and leave the County, though my family have lived in the area for 33 years.
decrease the premium
Possibly rent or sell
Struggle to pay until property sold in current difficult market.
I am the executor and have to sell
I would take no action, but remain very unhappy about having to pay the premium. My family has owned this house for over 70 years and has contributed to the local economy and community, to different extents, throughout this time. It seems grossly unfair to me that people like myself should be penalised in this way when we never have, nor never will, seek to make a profit from our ownership.
Property is up for sale and has been for eight months. Its price has been reduced but has still to sell. No further action possible.
Reduce spending on employing people, visit less and spend less in the local area to offset any increase.
Unclear at this stage. Would review circumstances.
I would consider the impact. Flint's council should be prepared to consider impacts on a case for case basis. Also the council would need to have evidence to support how applying a premium (and potentially increasing it) to my property is supporting the objectives.ng
Serious consideration would be needed, in terms of the integrity of such an increase. Selling would not help the waiting list at all.
Unfortunately the cost for redevelopment of an empty property have more than doubled in the last 2 years and banks are reluctant to lent money for such developments when the cost of the council taxes can be doubled or trebled while the work in in progress

Can not live in due to Flintshire county councils actions

As explained above, my property is a large listed building which requires extensive repairs, renovations and maintenance and could not realistically be rented out. If I sold the estate, 11 rented properties would be lost from the market and employment would be lost for those working to maintain the properties.

**Q14 - In the event a property becomes subject to the long-term empty premium, do you think there are any circumstances where it should be waived?**

Houses not selling
Some reasons are mentioned above at 8. The general flow of the action should be towards getting the property occupied long term.
In the event of death and if the property is empty to be refurbished. A time limit on refurbishment can be set for 12 months before charging 75%
Reasonable length for refurbishment where the house is intended to become the main residence.
Difficulty selling or renting property
If the property is for sale
Dementia care home resident
If a house is inherited by family following the death of the owner and the family cannot sell the property in-time. As long as they can prove that they are trying to sell the property, it should be waived.
As I have described my situation above.
If they already pay council tax on the property, I don't think they should pay extra. What is the logic of doing that...???
If the owner was owner occupiers and is now in residential care
Properties which are in probate
As suggested above, if reasonable commitment and efforts by the owner shows they are working to bring the building back into use
As described above in point 8. Mortgage conditions pre-existing.
If there are extreme issues, i.e. owner has dementia and delay in accessing ownership deeds/transfers. If the owner is in the middle of selling but there are delays on the chain or issues with sale outside of the remit of the owner.
As referred to in 8.
Similar to the previous scenario, the renovation is still in progress due to unforeseen circumstances or delays caused by unfair traders who needs to be monitored better.
Delays in granting probate, property can't be sold
yes, if there was a planning permission in place and pending the decision. But only after the FCC had all the requested information and the 'delay' was the FCC decision making process rather than that the owner was extending all the periods by not providing the requested information or asking for unreasonable extension etc.
If someone is receiving care or caring for someone else
I don't think it should be increased as there are many reasons a property could be empty long term from a sick or elderly person having to go into care or through work commitments that could take you out of your area for a couple of years but you wish to return plus many other reasons
If someone is trying to renovate a property for their own use or to let it but are being delayed by planning applications preventing them from starting that work: no premiums should be charged in these cases as I understand they are where I live

in Denbighshire e.g. my neighbour working on a low wage living with his sister wanting to renovate a small property for and by himself but could not start work due to delayed planning applications, he was forced to pay a high CT premium and eventually just had to sell the property because he could not afford the CT premium on his low wage.
under probate
If the owner can show genuine enthusiasm in selling and is asking a realistic price for the property.
As detailed above - first time buyers/people with no other property who are trying to afford to improve a property with plans.
Bereavement, trying to sell
I'm waiting on yourself for planning. It's taken over 2 years
All long term empty dwellings should be inspected by the council to ascertain the condition of the property and suitability for rental.
If the property is being renovated for re sale or rental market as renovations can be costly and red tape takes time.
If the property is not suitable for renting If the pressure on owner to manage the rental is too difficult.
When renovations under insurance claims take longer than anticipated and are out of control of the property owner.
Further to the above our property has been on sale and we have reduced the price fan confirm this. At NO time has the no-sales been our holdup. At present we have a buyer who is very keen to buy but is held up in a chain. We have tried very hard, by reducing the price etc. to sell the property. WE are both pensioners living and having to pay Council Tax on both properties is making life a little difficulty. At no time have we held up a sale but current trading is difficult. The current buyer agreed a price and indicated no chain was required, but since agreeing has change his mind. We agreed to the change in order to keep our sale going. We think there ought to be help for people in our position.
Individual circumstances should be considered instead of an across the board increase or tax.
there has been an empty property degrading in our street for almost 4 years, far too long in my opinion
if the property is inherited and uninhabitable
if the house is derelict / uninhabitable, for sale
House being sold due to death if occupier...very annoying to pay for unused services whilst house is being sold.
Legal wrangling
I don't know what current exemptions there are, but I would say properties where an owner is in care or nursing home long term, may impact the elderly persons mental health if they feel they have to sell before ready to.
When being actively redeveloped for social housing only.
Where the property is up for sale following the death of the owner
If a property is for sale and reasonable attempts have been made to sell. If the property is empty due to ill health of owner who is in temporary care and the long term outcome is unknown.
I am a pensioner and at the moment I want to stay to see what friends I have left in the area before I sell

Death, sickness, circumstances such as actively trying to sell or rent. If the house is well maintained.
If it is for sale or let
If it has been bought by a new owner and they are refurbishing it prior to moving in
Yes, some common sense needs to be put into the decision. Is the owner trying to do something about it? Are they spending money on it? Are they trying? Do they understand? It's damaging punishing someone who is working hard, or is innocent. Remember that somehow, this person become owner of this property. It's not your property - it's their property for a reason, and just because someone owns something that isn't being used does not mean that you have a right to take it from them. Help them! If you start punishing owners, you start to damage work ethics and many other things.
Ownership dispute With solicitors / land registry
long term improvement of the property
If the house is empty because the owner is in a home it should be waived because paying for a care home is expensive enough without other expenses making a care home unaffordable.
A barn on my farm was once occupied. It is now empty and has been used for storage for the last 25 years. It is not a suitable property for large expenditure on the major renovation needed to make it habitable. As far as I can work out the only option will be demolish a stone barn and replace it with a storage shed.
When it is ongoing refurbishment and cannot be sold, despite being on sale
Yes, if the owner is in long term care and has no relatives, time should be given to allow social services/legal teams etc. to deal with the situation.
-Extensive renovations for individuals whom are doing it sectionally if the funds are not readily available to do so
As stated previously each property and the circumstances surrounding the property should be assessed individually
All cases should be reviewed case by case with clear guidelines. Consider using a committee to review cases to ensure a democratic view. We need to focus more on people and what's best for the community rather than a tick box exercise
When trying to be sold following bereavement.
Medical issues (care home etc), delays by on planning, legal issues beyond owners control.
As previously mentioned, if a property is inherited but is being actively marketed for sale, given the current housing market, the premium should be waived. Also, the basic rate of council tax should be reduced for owners of these properties who do not live in the area and are not entitled to use any local council facilities.
if it needs doing up, the problem comes , as it is too expensive to do up and to find someone to do it
Some refurbishment programmes can be long drawn out - particularly where planning permission is involved. The sale of such a property cannot begin until all work has been completed and then it is at the mercy of market conditions.
If person is hospitalised
There are probably circumstances relating to health or family circumstances so it should be an option.
Some properties are empty due to the owners being in care/ nursing homes and whilst they are still alive nothing can be done with the property

Always waived. Absolutely ridiculous this is even a thing. Do NOT penalise home owners for the Flintshire council or UK government not being able to sort out their own issues when it comes to housing. We already pay TAX for this!
If empty due to the owner passing away and probate etc being protracted then the premium should not apply
Outlined above, when the house has been inherited and a sale is planned
For instance, should a person have to go into care but there is a strong probability that they will be able to return to their property.
I don't think undergoing renovation is a reason for them not to pay the premium. And renovation should, realistically, only take a matter of months not years.
if owner intends to sell the property but is not yet ready to put it on the market
Complex cases of ownership.
See note 8
This should be based on individual circumstances and the council should investigate these instead of applying basic rules. In my circumstance, as a Trustee, I do not own the property within the woodland and also I do not feel it is suitably habitable for individuals. I would welcome an opportunity to demonstrate this.
In all cases it's up the owner of a property if they live in it or not
Os ydi rhywun yn derbyn ty gan aelod o deulu sydd wedi marw, ac yn cymeryd amser i benderfynu beth i wneud gyda'r ty ayyb <b>If someone receives a house from a deceased family member, and takes time to decide what to do with the house etc.</b>
Under genuine renovation which may be experiencing difficulties
If people can't afford repairs to properties how do you expect them to pay a premium? Just another tax on people who support themselves
After 12 months there's no excuse for not sorting out. Its neglect
Maybe someone passed away and there are legal reasons it can't be sold.
Only while actively being sold or rented
Waiting for deceased persons estate to be sorted out
where property has been left to more than 1 family member and difficult to sort affairs and where renovations are taking place
If someone is very sick and needs to live with a relative or a care facility to recover then it should be waived
Family bereavement or circumstances
If struggling to sell the property
If, like the house opposite me, the lady was sectioned, so maybe initially while legal matters are sorted it should be waived. However nearly 3 years on and being told that she will never come home any waiver should be rescinded at the point that decision was made by the medical professionals.
Family or probate dispute following bereavement of owner. Long term sickness of owner. Owners that have to reside elsewhere for longer term employment contracts.
Long term ill health, owner incapacity with no power of attorney in place although maybe a 'charge' could be put on the property when the time comes.
If it can be shown that genuine efforts are being made to sell or let the property.

You already have some waivers, such as people in hospital or under NHS care. Considerations should be given to the circumstances surrounding the property being empty. The Council does not know what, why, how an empty property has come about and what position the family/owners are in - but does the Council care????
Waiting for the property to be sold due to hold ups
The owner becomes ill. Family bereavement. Financial issues have affected the renovation e.g. impact of inflation or loss of income. The owner has a residence in Flintshire where they pay full council tax.
The property might well be under a long term refurbishment scheme.
Owner in residential care or hospital stay
If the owner makes an under taking to renovate the property to allow it to be rented.
Where a property requires total refurbishment, this would probably encourage more people to get more houses up to standard and back on the market, maybe even putting a realistic time scale in as a clause to encourage progress.
Due to planning issues if fault of FCC
When it could be demonstrated that work was genuinely ongoing on its restoration.
I have no issue paying normal council tax on the property after having the "furnished" and "unfurnished" exemptions which were generous and I'm grateful for. As an only child and unmarried, I am trying to do everything myself with the property I inherited from my late parents. It was full to the brim with stuff and took so long to sort through, incredibly time consuming. At the moment, I am decorating and tidying up to get it on the market. I have stress and anxiety issues after looking after my late parents - I was up there everyday after work and at weekends for four years helping. My relations live further afield or are elderly and I work full time on shifts in Cheshire so it's just me. It's slow going and incredibly frustrating by myself but I am trying. The 100% mark up I'm currently paying just gives me more stress. Whilst paying this, I can't afford to pay tradesmen to speed up the process so it's a vicious circle.
If a person has inherited the property, depending on personal circumstances, 12 months is not enough time to deal with legal matters, sort out the property and sell it before the premium starts. In this instance, the premium should be waived.
Probate that takes a while to go through House isn't up to a living standard and needs work or planning permission
Where the property is genuinely undergoing a major refurbishment with the intention of improving the property. There is not always a limitless amount of cash to fund the refurbishments required and excessive council taxes.
Flintshire do not know and are not interested why the property is empty, The council tax is high enough without adding more on, the council should help people not fine them with added costs
if it is having a refurb but there could be other good reasons
If I were placed into a medically induced coma and was revived 14 months later, what would my reaction be to an increase – not so simplistic is it.
when the idiots in the council are fit for purpose and can do the job we pay them to do only then count it be fair to consider paying a single penny more.
For inherited property



When the property is the person's only residence but is temporarily not habitable .

If it was up for sale but hadn't sold for sometime,

I have set out our circumstances in a previous question.

There are several people in similar circumstances in This area. We all feel we are paying far too much council tax already, and are not getting value for our money.

As stated above - if the person in charge of the council tax are tenants it should ABSOLUTELY be waived.

I appreciate the opportunity to address the issue of the long-term empty property premium. In my opinion, there are indeed circumstances where the 100% council tax on empty properties should be waived.

My sister and I inherited our late grandmother's property several years ago. Unfortunately, due to differing views, my sister has been unwilling to sell or invest in making the property habitable. Despite these challenges, we have always paid the council tax in full and on time, even as it increased significantly due to the long-term empty status of the property.

I am currently attempting to purchase my sister's share of the property so that I can undertake the necessary repairs to either sell or rent it out. However, the financial strain caused by the increased council tax is hindering my ability to make these essential improvements. The situation is beyond my control, and it feels punitive despite my compliance with tax obligations over the years.

Given these circumstances, I believe the council should consider waiving the 100% premium in the following situations:

**Inheritance Issues:** When a property is inherited and co-owners have conflicting interests that prevent timely sale or renovation.

**Financial Hardship:** When the increased tax burden impedes the owner's ability to fund necessary repairs and improvements.

**Active Efforts for Resolution:** When the owner is actively seeking solutions, such as buying out co-owners or selling adjacent land to fund repairs, but faces delays due to external factors like slow planning processes.

In my case, if the property were 100% in my name, I could proceed with the required work to make it habitable again. The property needs significant renovation to bring it to a sellable or rentable standard. Additionally, I have been attempting to sell an adjacent plot of land to finance these efforts, but the planning process has been slow and unhelpful.

Waiving the premium in such scenarios would not only provide relief to property owners striving to improve their properties but also contribute positively to the local community by reducing the number of long-term empty homes.

Thank you for considering my perspective. I look forward to a response that takes into account the unique challenges faced by property owners in situations similar to mine.

If a property is well kept and has been kept for a reason such as distress or an adverse effect to mental health and not for any personal gain this should be taken into consideration

As above I am not writing it all again. Please see my personal circumstance.

Properties become empty long-term for many reasons. I don't think raising the premium would ensure they would be inhabited any sooner, but more likely put financial pressure on the owner.
As stated above, where a family is trying to sell a home due to a death or loved one in a care home.
The tax is not fair or equitable at all and should not be imposed.
I cannot get back to my property because of my circumstances now You are increasing
I think we need more detail. Deceased person, lack of funds to renovate
As we are selling the property for a deceased person and I am the executor. I just need the sale to go through. If the council can help that would help alleviate the worry and anxiety.
If it is being refurbished
Or previous tenants have damaged property and it requires works
All the time -it shouldn't be applied.
Depends on peoples situations
If the property has been inherited from a bereavement, there is usually an upkeep period where the house cannot be sold due to possessions/repairs/renovations required. A deferred long-term empty premium of an additional 12 months would serve not to penalise people who have obtained property in this way.
I regularly maintain the garden and exterior of the property so that it does not negatively impact on the local community. This should be recognised.
In contrast a property in the same street has been partly demolished by a 'professional developer' and has created a blight on the community but avoids paying any council tax as the property is uninhabitable. This loophole needs to be closed.
It should not exist at all.
When the owner visits the property at least every month and stays at least 1 night at every visit.
On the face of it, I would think it makes more sense to apply an increased premium to LTEs than to second homes. However, as for second homes, I think the Council should be prepared to consider on a case by case basis.
As the owner of a 'long term empty property' that is currently subject to an extensive renovation programme, involving a substantial financial investment, that will improve the property and bring it up to modern standards, the imposition of the council tax premium has been, for me at least, nothing more than a financial penalty, a tax grab I'm sorry to say. I pay Council Tax on the property I live in now, and receive the council/police services etc in return. For the long term empty property I receive absolutely nothing in return in terms of council/police services, no bins or recycling collected as I don't generate any waste there. The idea that I could modernise a property in 12 months given the work required, and subsequently, the costs involved, is, frankly, insulting to say the least. I would have had no problem paying a Council Tax on the long term empty property if levied proportionately to the situation, but that is obviously a bit too much to ask of you lot in County Hall, to come up with a fairer solution, rather than a blanket imposition.
One would need to know the circumstances behind each property.

Each property should be looked at individually not just an increase across the board.

We're Flintshire county council has damaged the property and put financial burden on us till sorted

Listed properties often take much longer to renovate (because of the necessary consents which can be delayed by the council) and are more expensive to renovate. Exceptions should be provided where repairs are being carried out to listed properties.

If it were being considered (within a set time frame) to be developed into affordable housing

**Q15 - We welcome any other comments or suggestions you may have regarding council tax premiums on long term empty properties and second homes.**

<p>Increasing the premiums will either increase the amount of properties available as people will sell or let out their empty properties or second homes, or they will choose not to do this and the Council will increase the amount of tax taken, which can be reinvested into social housing. Increasing the premiums is a no-brainer.</p>
<p>The impact of changing the from the current charging structure will be minimal, both to property availability (1% of the total number of properties in Flintshire) and the level of income FCC receives.</p>
<p>Councils charging 300% are doing it from nothing but spite to the owners.</p>
<p>The amount of houses you are allowing to be built mostly over priced unaffordable housing for the normal working person that should be bringing you in more council tax money so why rob other people for it who are lucky enough to be able to own a second home etc. It's the council's fault we have no social housing, you sold stock without building and sell land off to rich building companies who build houses in excess of 400 thousand pounds so it's your fault we have no social housing</p>
<p>The amount percentage extra should be prominent on the invoice as should the pounds amount. It should also show what the following years amount will probably be, together with a full explanation of why it is being done.</p>
<p>To be able to afford a second home an increased Council Tax rate should will be accepted. For long term empty properties it is usually empty for a reason and finance may be the reason to getting it completed to be lived in so an increase in council tax premium could increase pressure of finance not readily available. When you a left with a property after a relative passes away you are not always in the position to pay Council Tax on your own property and the property that is awaiting refurbishment to be sold.</p>
<p>I think empty properties i.e. housing should be taken over by the council and rented to families on the waiting list but only if the owner refuses to take action</p>
<p>Pressure should be made so the courts make decisions to allow family members to sell properties in a timely manner. I have been waiting over 3 years for permission from the courts so I can sell my mums home. I did not want to rent the property but had no idea the process would take so long.</p>
<p>I don't think there should be extra charges. Local Government bodies should manage the money they get more wisely.</p>
<p>Council should use powers available to them to ensure properties are kept in good repair and in a liveable condition.</p>
<p>The issue is 'why are the houses empty long term'.</p> <p>Forcing further tax burden on existing taxpayers within the county, making their ability to invest / renovate / make ready to rent or sell, is counter productive in the long term. Those owners will have less to spend in Flintshire overall. Unless it is purely a second home for holiday and vacation purposes from persons living outside of the county.</p>
<p>For properties undergoing renovation:  year 1- 0%- during first year renovation  year 2- 0%-25% a the officer's discretion whether it's a reasonable delay or not</p>

year 3- 25%-50%

For empty properties where no renovation takes place 75%-100% at officer's discretion e.g. 75% if just inherited and awaiting green light for sale, 100% if it's all ready to proceed with sale and no renovation take place.

This way you will make sure landlords are still interested in renovating properties and they will do it quick. You will also free up much quicker properties being on hold in hand of unexperienced 2nd home owners and encourage them to put it on the market.

I think an increase in second homes will have a negative impact, as a family we have a second home that we share with other couples (Friends and Family) We have had this home for around 20 years plus. We have really grown to know that community, we respect and feel part of it. To increase the premium charged will just mean that we are no longer able to afford it and inevitably be forced to sell. This will not be bought by a local but another richer person that will turn it into another holiday house. It will then go from being occupied by the same group of people that know, love and contribute to the area regularly to either a house that is never occupied or different people each week of the month. It is a con to make more money and a way to penalise good people that want to have some nice holidays.

In respect of the influence on local communities (Q 10 and Q13) I am not sure that there are so many houses, mainly empty properties, that the increased C/T would massively impact the FCC income and as far as the empty houses were concerned again that would have only a slightly positive impact on the local community as if the property was redone and then occupied the place/town would definitely look nicer. Again if there were build HMOs that might resolve the issue for a lot of homeless people but whether it would then have a positive impact on the community I am not so sure

I think it is just another way to profiteer off people and not to increase availability of affordable housing if that was the case then all new housing estates that the council give planning permission on should be 70% of them being affordable housing

Generally increase the premium as much as possible but have clear transparent/advertised rules for discretion .

F.C.C Empty Homes should have powers to intervene as soon as empty homes are becoming derelict, unsafe, creating an eyesore in the village and impacting on neighbouring properties.

Enforcement should be undertaken to seize properties where owners have left property empty long term. Conservation/preservation of historic buildings should be enforced if properties are neglected long-term - this would incentivise bringing them back into good state of repair/preserving the heritage of the area.

There should be no premium whatsoever

I've had to answer : 'do not know' as the question is too complex to give an answer.

My second home was my family home left to me when my parents died. I allow my son to live there giving him a chance on the property ladder. Why should I pay above the rate for council tax. Its not used for financial gain or a holiday let.

The following gives our personal reasons for owning a 2nd home in Flintshire. The term second home does not fully reflect how we view and use our home, we consider it to a on a par with the other home we have. I realise this personal

account will not sway the Council decision but simply shows that people do have strong albeit personal reasons why they might own a 2nd home in the county. I am of Flintshire stock & was born and raised there. All my family & most of my friends still live in the county. Our 2nd home was my mother's home on a small estate near Queensferry where she lived until her death a few years ago. I have always spend a considerable amount of time in Flintshire throughout my entire life but my specialist job meant I had to move away for employment reasons. Until my mother died I spent over 50 % of my time there providing her with help and support. Currently I provide help and support for an elderly relative and also assist a disabled person both living in the locality. The property is still occupied for about 50% of the time by myself or members of my family and I have hopes of returning to live there as a permanent home at some time in the not too distant future. We put money into the local economy (e.g. using shops and local tradespeople).

We accept that in general, second homes can have a detrimental effect but this is primarily (but not exclusively) in areas where a very significant number of properties are 2nd (holiday) homes and where this disproportionate amount of 2nd/holiday homes are in tourist areas in Welsh speaking areas.

We believe our circumstances are completely different. Our modest property is not in a tourist area 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 100% premium is fair. It should not be raised or reduced but wonder why long term empty properties pay less Council Tax than we do.

In principle we agree that long term empty property and second homes should be taxed but when the property has been on the market for some time and the sellers hare trying very hard to sell there should be some help for them.

Common sense should be used. Locals can not afford to buy them due to low wages in Wales. People will sell there property for the highest price they can achieve, often sold by locals to incomers who will and can pay the asking prices. The whole system is a mess. Councils will be happy to take extra taxes for the property's, taxation is not the way to solve this problem, If they are renting then a tax should be applied, is that not covered by income tax on extra earnings or business income. I don't know the answer, however an increase of tax to 300% will lead to selling of properties ,drive down prices that can still not be afforded by locals. Lots of extra income for FCC. An overall loss for tourism revenue in Wales.

If house is empty no council tax should be paid.

I expect the increase in taxation on people who own second homes will help to pay for all the people getting free housing for doing nothing. Very utopian.

Please exempt all families where there are foster children or families with disabilities and where the child receives DLA or PIP if over 16 or child has EHCP or SEND needs as these holidays are essential and going abroad is not affordable. If you put up the council tax we will still have a second home but have less money to spend locally. We have annual family membership for the Greenfield Heritage Centre, membership of North Wales wildlife trust, life members of The Welsh mountain zoo, signed up in North Wales in Talacre with life membership of RSPB get children an annual membership. Also we work with rangers in Talacre maintaining natterjack habitats and do beach clean ups etc.. also my husband gives 2 local churches free PAT tests and one local charity shop. Our children are beginning to pick up spoken Welsh as a second language. 2 of the children were

baptised in our local church of Wales. If we had to pay even more we would have to spend less. Our children during Covid followed weekly online services from the church in Wales. We all have a strong affinity with Flintshire and try to put in more than we take out. A traumatised child will have better MH and educational outcomes with regular holidays and it would not be possible without our Flintshire second home as the children need to have a permanent base because they have SEND needs. Our home is inspected annually too by our foster children's social worker.

Please lower them everyone in Wales is struggling at the moment

If used for visiting relatives or as holiday lets, short term rentals are bringing money into our economy. Due to visiting tourist spots, local shops, restaurants, pubs etc. We should appreciate that. They also do not cost more in terms of council tax costs and this it is not an appropriate charge to increase. If you have an issue with social housing you should look to solve the issues forcing people into social housing to begin with, look to the root causes to reduce this number, not to a hopeful but unrealistic bandage. There is no correlation between the two groups especially for second homes, they are highly unlikely to become let to social tenants or for that population to purchase them. To build language skills you need to invest in education and communities not housing.

I will not invest in Wales again. I will not do up a property again in Wales because I think you punish hard work and successful people, and praise those who do nothing.

I bought an old wrecked cottage to do up. Do you think it fell on my lap? It didn't. I worked my balls off for years. Unlike others who wasted money on Sky, new Mercedes, brand new iPhone or whatever, I didn't. I saved my money and lived off the likes of Asda Essentials baked beans. When I saved up enough, me and a friend bought a cottage to do up, thinking it would be a great idea. I thought it would make money and bring an old property back into use.

It did make money, and it did bring it back into use, but you also punished me for it. You tried to charge me £3,200 per year council tax. The Welsh government charged SDLT and so on. I made money, but the biggest beneficiary in my opinion was FCC and the Welsh government.

Why do you punish hard-working people? Do you not like hard workers? Don't you like investors? Don't you want anyone to be successful? Should they go to live in England?

So you want more properties, but you also want to punish investors? Who will do up your properties now? I don't know, but it won't be me! Many other investors feel the same way. In my opinion, you discourage work with your regulations.

I fear the general attitude is that second homes are owned by avaricious people trying to make money out of properties that could be used by others.

I am a Flintshire woman to my core and have always tried to remain close to my heritage and to spend money to assist the local economy.

I do not think selling my house will assist the problems of young people trying to find homes locally. There are several unsold houses on the estate upon which I live in Caerwys, with more to be built in the next couple of years.

Of the people who have purchased the new houses I am the only one with

connections to Caerwys was hoping to end my days back where I came from but I fear you may make this impossible.

I have always spent most weekends and holidays in Flintshire together with my children so they could be brought up as close to their grandparents as possible. I wanted them to be aware of their heritage.

I feel penalised by the premium tax. I feel it should have stayed at 50 percent extra.

There should be options and guidelines available. At the moment the rules are black or white. This is not helpful.

I think I covered this earlier. I believe that the tax premium I pay is already a little high for the type of property but I do understand the need to bring in funds to the council. However I think that the premium on long term empty properties is about 30% too low.. A large tax increase is clearly designed to bring second homes and empty properties onto the market to increase affordable and social housing availability. In the case of second homes this is not necessarily the outcome, some were just built as tiny holiday homes! You really should look at the property to assess if its sale would improve the situation.

I think that the impact of second home owners on the communities in Flintshire depends on how much the person becomes involved with the community in terms of being a good neighbour and participating in or organising community events. Many second home owners also make an effort to read and speak a little Welsh and, at least, to pronounce place names correctly.

Although, as you are going to the trouble of issuing this questionnaire, I guess that the decision has already been made to make a blanket increase.

Abolish the council tax premium for those whom are embarking upon extensive renovations to their properties.

Retain it for individuals whom are purchasing 'second homes' in order to discourage individuals whom are finding it challenging to purchase properties within an area of which they may have been reared

Council tax bills are increasing every year and already substantially higher, charging a high premium on top of this seems unfair.

Swingeing Council Tax premiums can only produce a negative effect on the availability of property for sale or to let - much of which is funded by private capital. Local authorities should consider why more new homes are not being built in their area, as surely that is the way to solve the housing shortage - not this sticking plaster approach. Unless this is politics of envy!

On the face of it looks simple but I think it is not a one size fits all, consideration should be given to the impact on the community, is it always negative? Are all second homes in areas where housing is needed, where people want to live, are there local services, GPs, schools and facilities etc, Do second homes provide benefits to local businesses and GPs i.e. people pay tax but probably use few services.

What level of tax will force people to sell, would it just be richer people who bought the properties? Does the council have the funds to turn properties into affordable housing?

Although I appreciate this consultation I also query if it is morally defensible to effectively fine people to force them to move?

Long term empty property's in my opinion are more of a problem than second homes. People coming to their second home spend money in the local



community, they use local tradespeople when work is required to be done on the property.

If the rates were raised to a level that made the owners sell their homes, this would just cause an issue with more long term empty properties.

Just for the record here, my home in Flintshire is where I was brought up, I'm a fluent Welsh speaker and still speak to the older generation in the village in Welsh. As far as second homes causing a reduction in the Welsh language, maybe it's due to an influx of people who are not of Welsh heritage moving into the area, these people are probably employed in Cheshire/ Merseyside but property is cheaper in Flintshire.

This is a draconian and unfair tax.

Once second homes are rented out the tax should be decreased, this may already be the case but it's not stated.

It appears that the Flintshire County Council (FCC) is intensely focused on preserving the Welsh language, potentially at the expense of prioritizing affordable housing for local residents.

Flintshire's proximity to England might naturally result in a lower prevalence of Welsh speakers compared to areas like Gwynedd. It's a common belief that second homes reduce the proportion of Welsh speakers; however, the same could be said for the arrival of non-English primary language speakers. Turning away Ukrainian refugees is, of course, not an option, nor is preventing people from purchasing second homes for the Polish community. Therefore, it raises the question: what is the issue with English people desiring to buy holiday homes in Wales?

The objective here seems unclear. If the intention is to increase the Council Tax, then it should be done straightforwardly without justifying it as a means to discourage ownership and prevent the dilution of Welsh speakers and Welsh identity.

Personally, the percentage of the Welsh-speaking community is of no concern. It should not be the council's priority.

Some dwellings become second homes by default , not intent. It is difficult to identify if 12 months will be sufficient for a property renovation and even with the best of intentions the 12 month period can overrun.

It should be noted that people who renovate property in Flintshire are themselves investing their own capital to complete the project and thus improving the housing stock. If the process becomes too onerous this process will become less and less thus reducing badly needed investment for the area.

Tourism brings lots of money into Wales second home tax will reduce this , as I said previously if a home owner wants to leave a property empty they shouldn't be charged a premium that's their choice . There wouldn't be the numbers of people waiting for the council to house them if the rules were stricter people think they are entitled to everything they can get whilst not working a day.

The extra council tax from these properties should be all or in part, given for the benefit of the community in which the property is located.

Don't use this as a means to get more funds to take more asylum seekers who would put a massive further strain on our local community. Our council services are already deteriorating rapidly!

They're a blight and the council should be actively doing something about this
Some property is an eyesore laying empty. Encouraging squatters and drug users. Also many cannabis farms found in empty property. One backed onto me. Neighbours hadn't a clue what was going on. Bedroom lights used to go on 10:30 on a Wednesday and Sunday night for twenty minutes or so, stupidly we thought someone was checking the property.
Please check on the state of empty properties some are left to decay and cause effects on other properties
There are in total 786 properties that we are talking about. I believe there are far too many properties empty but this impacted by elderly in Nursing Homes etc. The second homes are very low. Could there be an incentive to help elderly people rent out there homes if they are unable to go home. I feel it's a very delicate problem because I'm sure lots of elderly would not want to give up their homes
I wonder how you know properties are empty long term. If direct debits are in place and there is money in the bank accounts then payments for direct debits will continue probably.
Empty properties should pay after 3 months not 12.
The sooner this review is concluded, the better. Where opportunities exist to increase income, they should be taken, thus lessening the burden on others.
WILL YOU ACTUALLY READ ANY OF THESE COMMENTS??? There are two questions to consider regarding empty and second homes:- 1. Do these properties use more of the Council Services than a property that is occupied full time? Answer - No!!!! so effectively they are less of a burden. 2. Why is it that Councils are charging this extra Council Tax then? It is suggested, to force those houses to be let, to reduce the Council's housing problem. In all the time that this extra charge has been going on, can the Council honestly that this method has been effect and why are they not trying to sort out their housing problem for themselves instead of putting huge amounts of stress both physically and financially on the Home Owners who are willing and should be allowed to pay the same Council Tax as their neighbours.
Stop thinking on how you can raise extra money to fund your badly run council and take your heads out of the sand. Second homes bring far more benefit to the communities than social housing will ever do. The majority of second homes are too big to service your family housing needs and the running costs of these homes will cost you far more to subsidise a tenant living in them as they will have to claim more benefits. You can't keep on taxing the wealthy to pay for the needy. Allow the building of more appropriate flats/small houses which will be efficient to run for these families rather than increasing a tax to fund a badly run council.
As you have probably gathered I am totally against penalising people who have made an effort in life to then get discriminated against those that think the world owes them a living, council tax as far as I am aware is to fund the services that are available to everyone not a stick to solve the problems associated with the housing shortage in a lot of cases people who have sold houses for holiday lets have actually increased the wealth of locals who have housing in those communities. If the Welsh government is trying to force people not to buy second homes perhaps they should legislate who you can sell your home to not punish the people who legally buy them in good faith.

Premiums will bring in some more money for you (especially if you don't provide any services in return) but I don't think it will help you with your apparent objectives - providing more affordable homes and increasing the use of the Welsh language. In my experience an attractive county like Flintshire is no different to an English one near big cities - the people who move in are commuters and they always end up displacing the locals whatever language they speak.

Regarding long term empty properties, again it should be down to ones circumstances providing there's a plan to renovate or sell.

The holiday homes situation needs a long term plan rather than just hiking up the council tax. Families earning £100,000+ between them won't flinch about paying premiums. Those who do or might be forced to sell will stand to make an incredible amount of money on the sale. Why not tax this too? Perhaps like a capital gains tax with a high percentage which would make tens of thousands of pounds each time. This money could be put towards building more affordable homes.

Get the empty homes scheme working properly

Second homes such as holiday homes bring in people who are spending money in local shops and restaurants

We spend the majority of weekends in our home, we contribute to the local economy, shopping locally using our local pub, supporting local tradespeople, and we do enjoy being there and part of our community. Our neighbours have grown up with us, we feel part of our community. We celebrate our birthdays, special days and Christmas there, including doing our Christmas shopping. We arrived after the war, our property is prefabricated being two wooden chicken sheds joined together in an L shape, one of the last of its kind. Our property has no saleable value, (its only the plot of land it is sat on), could the premium be a sliding scale depending on the property in question? There are 5 generations who love to spend time there. The property isn't worth anything, but to us with our age ranges from 8 months to 86 years its the world. Please be lenient when considering the next few years rate, or consider introducing a sliding scale

OK here's one, if the property's aesthetics fell below that of your stock in looks and maintenance, then a levy could be looked at. If an owner is maintaining and looking after their property in excess of what a tenant does, then that's a positive

we need to see a massive increase in benefits from the council, we already pay far too much and they cant even fill a pot hole. don't get me started on the absolute stupidity of 20mph, they all need sacking, and their pay returned retrospectively,

actually for the sake of public safety the entire council should stop making up new ideas as they have proven to always be wrong until they can prove to us they can actually do anything right.

I don't believe Flintshire is a tourist area with second home problems. Perhaps focus on council buildings and council land to provide starting homes for those on a list. Often the empty or second properties are not suitable, too old or subject to planning restrictions, remote or too large to be useful as home for those on the waiting list. I imagine that if they could be renovated at a profit people would have already done it so it looks like an easy way for the council to get money but not solve a problem. All the houses, old pubs, warehouses etc that are empty have often been left to fall into ruin and most are owned by businesses so I don't see Flintshire in the same category as Abersoch for example. Money and projects to help restore may be more useful? If they were to be sold to the council for example?

I inherited my 3 bedroom childhood home in Hawarden and currently use it as a 2nd home, visiting at least one weekend a month and often more. This enables me to keep in touch with my wider family and enable myself and my own family to maintain our Welsh heritage. Whilst using the home I place little burden on council services, using essentially only waste collection services, yet boost the local economy.

I do not see why any council tax premium should apply to a property that has always been owned by my family and continues to be used as such. Considering that there are only 11 second homes in Hawarden I cannot believe that my not occupying the home on a permanent basis has any negative impact on housing in the area, given that at the time of writing there are 41 three bedroom homes for sale in the Hawarden area. I believe that the imposition of any council tax premium can only be considered to be a tax on perceived wealth and that the fact that only 1.1% of properties fall into this category means that a premium will have very little impact whatsoever on the availability of affordable housing.

It would be interesting to know what impact the introduction and increase of the premium charge has had on the total numbers since its introduction, and that this should have been published as part of this consultation. In addition, given the small number of properties involved I would question whether the cost of administering the premium charge is worth the additional amount collected. In addition, considering there are far more empty properties than 2nd homes, and that these properties are far more likely to be made available for sale I would question why the premium charge for these is less than 2nd homes.

In some areas, such as Lleyn and Ynys Mon, there are many second homes owned by wealthy English families, they may be detrimental to the local communities, and a premium on the council tax may be justified. However this is not the case in this area of Flintshire. Also, many of the second homes are luxury properties, not affordable housing.

Looking at individual cases rather than a blanket approach and assuming that all second home owners are holiday homes or landlords. Some people are struggling in the position they have found themselves in by no fault of their own.

Inheritance Issues: When a property is inherited and co-owners have conflicting interests that prevent timely sale or renovation.

Financial Hardship: When the increased tax burden impedes the owner's ability to fund necessary repairs and improvements.

Active Efforts for Resolution: When the owner is actively seeking solutions, such

<p>as buying out co-owners or selling adjacent land to fund repairs, but faces delays due to external factors like slow planning processes.          Planning Support: Having local planning department support and help to make thing move quicker.</p>
<p>personal circumstance and area should be taken into consideration</p>
<p>Have you done your background research as to what will happen with increasing premiums? From the questions above, you have not. You might end up killing off Flintshire economy as you will not be bringing fresh ideas and wealth into the region. Time do more research into why you are doing this. Build more affordable houses should be your focus because a real effect would be house price drop and that will affect ALL properties.</p>
<p>It is unfair and unjust to penalise and discriminate against a resident who has purchased a slow property in Flintshire and needs to save their funds to make the home habitable. How can we save and make it habitable when the council demand £189 plus 300% per month for tax????</p>
<p>More information is needed to understand why homes are empty long term with support provided to the owner to ensure they are inhabited as soon as possible (either for rent or sold-on).          A better understanding of second home owners is needed. Flintshire cannot be compared to Pembrokeshire or the Llyn Peninsula where second homes have a bigger impact on local communities creating ghost towns out-of-season, and inflating property prices. Flintshire does NOT have high levels of tourism, so levying high council tax premiums would cause a lot of pain for the individual and not provide much additional income for the Council.</p>
<p>In relation to Q11 and the impact on house prices in Flintshire should the premium be increased - I think it has the potential force more housing onto the market but the market value will remain unchanged. It won't necessarily create more affordable housing for local people, only people who can afford deposits will be in a position to buy, although it may provide more opportunity for a circular market through people moving up the property ladder and releasing more affordable housing onto the market.</p>
<p>There should not be a penalty for people who freely wish to buy homes in Wales as either a residential property or a second home.</p>
<p>You are increasing the premiums for your own benefits. Not taking into considerations of the owner of the property.</p>
<p>The Council should focus on building affordable housing and not give planning permission to 5 bedroom homes in locations that are prime for affordable housing. This would increase revenues and build communities, rather than trying to alienate a small percentage of people who own second homes. These people bring revenue streams into the communities and are a reduced burden on the Council's services.</p>
<p>This is our only property in the U.K. it is our home in our hearts, we're from Wales we come back to belong to our communities and care for our families - this legislation is turning our families away from Wales, we'd have to probably sell and put our roots down elsewhere. We are portrayed as money grabbing wealthy second home owners when this just isn't the case, we don't earn an income and in fact help contribute to the community and economy. If you don't want us here we'll leave and find somewhere more welcoming, devastating as that short sighted decision might be.</p>

Maybe the council could offer to buy them and rent out. Or offer some aid/help in each individually case
I really couldn't give an answer to this question Never owned another property
I see the increase of council tax for long-term empty and second homes as a boon. Rural communities should not be used to serve as housing stock for the nearby towns and cities, but should be a desirable, close-knit community as they were 20-30 years ago.
Once a 'long-term empty property' is placed up for sale, no council tax should be due. No services are being used. House sales are very difficult in the current economic situation.  Charging 1% property owners more for council tax will make no difference to many of the questions you have asked above. You need to look in more detail why certain areas are high (e.g. Llanas a) before forcing changes on all.
What difference has been made to overall numbers since premium charges introduced?
This feels like discrimination against Welsh people who find that they are currently unable to live in Wales. The property encourages our children to visit frequently and experience the Welsh culture rather than spend more time travelling to other countries.
Flintshire is my historical home county and whilst I currently live abroad, I own a second home (via inheritance through my parents) in the county and is used/lived in every five to six months for periods of one or two months at a time when I return. The property is also used by my immediate family members in between therefore has people visiting the property frequently.
Shouldn't be penalised
Don not agree with them. I'm not happy that I have to pay for the people without jobs to live happy live.
The survey is flawed in that it treats empty homes and second homes the same. They are not. Empty homes contribute nothing to the community or economy, whereas second homes do. Consequently questions 10, 11 & 12 will provide inaccurate results and should have been split into separate questions - those for empty homes and those for second homes.  What is the purpose of the premium policy? What is it trying to address?  1. Is it to release more houses into the market housing and private rented housing sector?  An analysis of the table of properties paying the premium shows that overall 1.1% pay; of that 0.86% are empty homes; and 0.23% are second homes. If (1) is the purpose then the issue seems to be mainly of empty homes as these provide nothing for the local community or economy. So if the premium is to be increased it should be on empty homes in an attempt to bring them back into beneficial use. Flintshire Local Plan policy STR1 identifies that the Plan will seek to provide 7,870 new homes to meet a housing requirement of 6,950 homes, through the application of a flexibility allowance of over 13%. Consequently, the Council's own

policy provides for the houses that are likely to be needed over the plan period, indeed more so.

As the percentage of second homes is so low compared to the existing housing stock, it is probably appropriate to lower the premium as it achieves little. If that is considered not possible then where the premium is now set for second homes, is probably reasonable. Tackle empty homes as they are the real problem, as they represent 78% of properties paying the premium.

2. Is it to stop holiday & second homes in popular tourist areas adversely affecting local communities?

Is there any evidence that this is happening in Flintshire? It seems the percentages of such homes in most settlements/wards is so low that it probably is not. Furthermore, the recent changes to the planning use classes will prevent this happening, as the Council is able to control changes from market homes to holiday/second homes.

If there is evidence of adverse impact then the premium could be increased, but only for properties in those popular tourist locations - not in the main towns.

3. Is it to raise money to put into the Council pot to be spent on other services such as social care?

If so, this is a very inefficient way to do so. Central Government or the Welsh Government need to do more to help local authorities to meet the challenges of today.

4. Is it to help people looking for affordable social housing? If so it will achieve little. What will address this problem is more Council/Housing Association homes. Conclusion – leave the premium for second homes at current levels (or reduce it) and put it up for empty homes.

My parents bought our home in Hawarden Both our parents have now sadly died and left the family home to my sister and I. We have contributed to your previous consultations on the council tax premium. We are disappointed that Flints council (like other councils in Wales) choose a fairly blanket approach to applying the premium. My sister and I, both Welsh speaking, are choosing, while we can, to keep our much loved family home and to support Hawarden. It is therefore disappointing to see that the longevity of our home ownership and the specific circumstances applying to us do not even merit an exception whereby our council tax contribution could be reduced somewhat. We continue to be baffled as to how applying an ever increasing premium is compatible with the council being able to achieve the stated objectives associated with the premium.

Sort this situation out rather than parroting Welsh Government edicts. I get the problems with long term empty properties as know one wants houses standing empty for any length of time. I've no doubt that FCC has a fair portfolio of empty properties itself, I doubt whether they will be subject to the premium. I can honestly say that the imposition of this premium has made absolutely no difference to the length of time my property will remain empty, all it has done is added cost to the job, money that ironically could have been spent on the renovation that may well have shortened the length of the work! A more carrot than stick approach is

required, rather than a constant look at your bottom line and where you can extract money the most easily.

It is difficult to answer some questions since some apply to long- term empty only and in others they are 'lumped together' with 2nd homes. Please add the following as intro to no 8 : Long - term empty properties are more likely to fall into disrepair whilst 2nd homes are more likely to be well-maintained. The sale of LTE homes, could possibly, if purchased by the council for example, assist in reducing the waiting list. If sold privately however, there is no guarantee. In Hawarden, where my sister and I retain our family home, we note.....

We have had a lot of work done on the bungalow, using local craftsmen, and when we are there, we support local businesses. Whilst we are Welsh speakers, Hawarden is not a Welsh - speaking area and our ownership of a property has no effect .

Since the Welsh senydd brought this ruling in no one has published any figures as to how many empty properties have come onto the market or how many second homes have been sold. But the cost of renting a property has gone up by 30%.

I recommend Flintshire work with the home owner more closely to try and get the property back in to use instead of trying to force action by financial means and burden families

I do not consider that the format of this questionnaire is very helpful. It uses simplistic questions that encourage answers that have no evidential basis.

None