



Consultation on Reviewing the Council Tax Premium Scheme for Long Term Empty Properties and Second Homes in Flintshire

July 2024

Introduction

The public were invited to submit their views on the current premium scheme and the level of premium.










The consultation was open for 12 weeks and was formed of 15 questions and was live from Monday 15th April 2024 to 8th July 2024.

215 full or partial responses were received either in English or Welsh to the consultation.

The responses are documented over the coming pages.

Responses included 12.56% who identified as existing long-term empty property owners and 15.94% who indicated they were existing second home owners.

1. From the list below please select the option(s) which best describe you. Please tick all that apply to you

| Answer Choices | | | Response Percent | Response Total |
|----------------|--|---|------------------|----------------|
| 1 | I am a permanent resident of Flintshire who currently pays Council Tax |  | 73.91% | 153 |
| 2 | I am a permanent resident of Flintshire who currently does not pay Council Tax |  | 0.97% | 2 |
| 3 | My main residence is in Flintshire, and I own a second home in Flintshire |  | 4.83% | 10 |
| 4 | My main residence is in Flintshire, and I own another long-term empty property in Flintshire |  | 9.18% | 19 |
| 5 | My main residence is outside of Flintshire, and I own a second home in Flintshire |  | 11.11% | 23 |
| 6 | My main residence is outside of Flintshire, and I own another long-term empty property in Flintshire |  | 3.38% | 7 |
| 7 | I am a Flintshire County Councillor |  | 1.93% | 4 |
| 8 | I am a Town or Community Council Councillor |  | 4.83% | 10 |
| 9 | Other (please specify): |  | 10.63% | 22 |



Almost 56% of respondents felt long-term empty dwellings had a negative impact on local communities





2. In Flintshire there are currently 616 long-term empty properties subject to the council tax premium. In your opinion, what overall impact do long-term empty dwellings currently have on local communities?

| Answer Choices | | | Response Percent | Response Total |
|----------------|-----------------|--|------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Positive impact | | 2.45% | 5 |
| 2 | No impact | | 30.39% | 62 |
| 3 | Negative impact | | 55.88% | 114 |
| 4 | I do not know | | 11.27% | 23 |



Only 23% of submissions indicated that second homes had a positive impact on their local community

3. In Flintshire there are currently 170 second homes subject to the council tax premium. In your opinion, what overall impact do second homes currently have on local communities?

| Answer Choices | | | Response Percent | Response Total |
|----------------|-----------------|---|------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Positive impact |  | 23.04% | 47 |
| 2 | No impact |  | 24.51% | 50 |
| 3 | Negative impact |  | 39.71% | 81 |
| 4 | I do not know |  | 12.75% | 26 |



Almost 49% of respondents feel that long-term empty properties and second homes decrease the availability of affordable housing in Flintshire, compared with only 3.4% who suggest they increase availability.

4. In Flintshire there are currently 2,088 people on the waiting list for social/affordable housing. In your opinion, what impact do long-term empty dwellings and second homes currently have on the availability of affordable housing in Flintshire?

| Answer Choices | | | Response Percent | Response Total |
|----------------|-----------------------|--|------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Increase availability | | 3.41% | 7 |
| 2 | Have no impact | | 37.56% | 77 |
| 3 | Decrease availability | | 48.78% | 100 |
| 4 | I do not know | | 10.24% | 21 |









Most respondents felt that an increase in the premium on second homes and long-term empty properties would have no impact on the opportunity to learn Welsh, or the number of Welsh speakers or have an impact on Welsh speaking communities.

5. Do you think an increase of the council tax premium on both long-term empty properties and second homes could have a negative/positive or neutral impact on:

| Answer Choices | Positive impact | No impact | Negative impact | I don't know | Response Total |
|---|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------|
| Opportunities to use Welsh socially? | 11.33% 23 | 61.08% 124 | 18.23% 37 | 9.36% 19 | 203 |
| Increase the number of people speaking or learning Welsh in Flintshire? | 10.78% 22 | 66.67% 136 | 11.27% 23 | 11.27% 23 | 204 |
| Use of Welsh language services? | 9.80% 20 | 66.67% 136 | 10.78% 22 | 12.75% 26 | 204 |
| Welsh speaking communities? | 11.82% 24 | 62.07% 126 | 13.79% 28 | 12.32% 25 | 203 |









67.3% of respondents felt that the premium for second homes should remain at the current level, be reduced, or not charged at all

| 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? | | | | |
|---|---|---|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Choices | | | Response Percent | Response Total |
| 1 | Should remain at the current level of 100% |  | 24.88% | 51 |
| 2 | Should be raised to between 101% and 150% |  | 7.80% | 16 |
| 3 | Should be raised to between 151% and 200% |  | 9.76% | 20 |
| 4 | Should be raised to between 201% and 300% |  | 15.12% | 31 |
| 5 | Should be reduced below the current level of 100% |  | 22.44% | 46 |
| 6 | Should not be charged |  | 20.00% | 41 |



55.1% of replies felt that the premium for long-term empty properties should remain the same at 75%, be lower, or not charged at all

| 7. 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? | | | Response Percent | Response Total |
|---|--|---|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Choices | | | | |
| 1 | Should remain at the current level of 75% |  | 12.20% | 25 |
| 2 | Should be raised to 100% |  | 17.07% | 35 |
| 3 | Should be raised to between 101% and 200% |  | 12.20% | 25 |
| 4 | Should be raised to between 201% and 300% |  | 15.61% | 32 |
| 5 | Should be reduced below the current level of 75% |  | 19.51% | 40 |
| 6 | Should not be charged |  | 23.41% | 48 |





Q8 asked respondents to briefly explain the reason for their selections in questions 6 and 7.

The full free text responses are detailed in Appendix 3 - Free Text Responses of the Public Consultation.







A majority of those responding felt that the level of premium for long-term empty properties should not increase the longer it remains unoccupied.

9. A premium becomes payable for a long-term empty property after it has been vacant for 12 months – unless it qualifies for an exception. Do you think that the level of the premium charged should increase, the longer a property remains continuously empty?

| Answer Choices | | | Response Percent | Response Total |
|----------------|-----|--|------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Yes |  | 43.84% | 89 |
| 2 | No |  | 56.16% | 114 |







Most respondents (52.7%) indicated that an increase in the premium would reduce the number of second homes and long-term empty properties in Flintshire with only a minority of 4.9% feeling it would increase the number.

| 10. If the premium were to be increased, what impact do you think this would have on the number of second homes and long-term empty properties in Flintshire? | | | Response Percent | Response Total |
|---|--------------------------------|--|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Choices | | | | |
| 1 | The number would increase |  | 4.88% | 10 |
| 2 | The number would stay the same |  | 28.78% | 59 |
| 3 | The number would decrease |  | 52.68% | 108 |
| 4 | I do not know |  | 13.66% | 28 |

24% believe that an increase in the premium on long-term empty and second properties would decrease house prices in Flintshire, however, 45.1% felt an increase in premium would have no impact.

11. What impact do you think an increase in the council tax premium on long-term empty properties and second homes could have on house prices in Flintshire?

| Answer Choices | | | Response Percent | Response Total |
|----------------|-----------------------------|--|------------------|----------------|
| 1 | No impact |  | 45.10% | 92 |
| 2 | A decrease in house prices |  | 24.02% | 49 |
| 3 | An increase in house prices |  | 9.80% | 20 |
| 4 | I don't know |  | 21.08% | 43 |








Of those completing the consultation who are current owners of second homes or long-term empty properties in Flintshire, the most common action that they would undertake is to sell the property. 43 respondents provided an explanation of why they selected “other”. These responses are in Appendix 3 - Free Text Responses of the Public Consultation

| 12. 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. | | | Response Percent | Response Total |
|--|---|--|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Choices | | | | |
| 1 | No action, I would pay the premium | | 6.03% | 12 |
| 2 | Sell the property | | 10.05% | 20 |
| 3 | I would move into the property myself | | 4.52% | 9 |
| 4 | Rent the second home | | 3.52% | 7 |
| 5 | Refurbish the property to a habitable standard and rent it out | | 3.02% | 6 |
| 6 | Not applicable - I do not own a second home or long-term empty property in Flintshire | | 51.26% | 102 |
| 7 | Other (please specify): | | 21.61% | 43 |






31.2% of replies indicated that they felt that an increase in the premium above the current levels would have a negative impact on their local community, slightly higher than the 29.3% who felt it would have a positive impact.

13. In your opinion, what impact would an increase - above the current premium level - have on your local community.

| Answer Choices | | | Response Percent | Response Total |
|----------------|--|---|------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Positive impact |  | 29.27% | 60 |
| 2 | No impact |  | 23.41% | 48 |
| 3 | Negative impact |  | 31.22% | 64 |
| 4 | I do not know |  | 14.15% | 29 |
| 5 | Not applicable - I am not a resident of Flintshire |  | 1.95% | 4 |



A high percentage of responses indicated that they felt that there were circumstances where they felt the premium should be waived. 133 respondents provided further free text response regarding the circumstances they feel the premium should be waived and these responses can be viewed in full in Appendix 3 - Free Text Responses of the Public Consultation

| 14. 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 | | | Response Percent | Response Total |
|--|------------|---|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Choices | | | | |
| 1 | Yes |  | 66.01% | 134 |
| 2 | No |  | 19.70% | 40 |
| 3 | Don't know |  | 14.29% | 29 |

90 respondents provided further comment which can be viewed in Appendix 3 – Free Text Responses of the Public Consultation.

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

| Answer Choices | | Response Percent | Response Total |
|----------------|---------------------|------------------|----------------|
| | Open-Ended Question | 100.00% | 90 |