

EMPTY HOMES IN ASHINGTON

Background

In October 2019 Northumberland County Council pledged to tackle the number of empty homes in Northumberland by taking advantage of changes in legislation which allowed them to charge more council tax on empty homes.

The press release can be read in the link below:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/News/2019/Oct/Council-to-tackle-number-of-empty-homes-in-county.aspx#:~:text=Northumberland%20County%20Council%20is%20to%20take%20advantage%20of,to%20bring%20their%20properties%20back%20into%20residential%20use.>

At that time there were 673 dwellings in the county empty for two years or more. Of these 152 were unoccupied and unfurnished for between five and ten years and 105 standing empty for ten years or more.

At a cabinet meeting on 8th October 2019, NCC agreed to use discretionary powers to implement the Empty Homes Premiums (EHP) to properties that have been continuously unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for two or more years. This would increase the EHP from 50% to 100% at +two years, 200% at +5 years and 300% at +10 years. The EHP is in addition to normal Council Tax.

The Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee received an update on Empty Homes on 2nd March 2022, with 290 Empty Homes reported in Ashington.

Proposal

To agree to write to Northumberland County Council Head of Housing and Local Protection, Philip Soderquest, copied to Portfolio Holder for Community Services, Cllr Colin Horncastle, and Leader Cllr Glen Sanderson, to request up-to-date information relating to the success of the strategy for dealing with long-term empty homes in Ashington.

Specifically, 1) how many homes are listed as empty for more than two years, five years and ten years, 2) how many have been brought back into use since October 2019, and 3) how many owners have been subject to discretionary powers and charged the Empty Homes Premium (EHP).