

**Extract from letter sent to Philip Soderquest, Head of Housing & Public Protection (31<sup>st</sup> March 2022)**

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.

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 had 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. We understand that 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.

Ashington Town Council would like to request up-to-date information relating to the success of the strategy for dealing with long-term empty homes in Ashington.

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?
3. How many owners have been subject to discretionary powers and charged the Empty Homes Premium (EHP)?
4. Is the strategy working, and what else is being done?

**Answers from Private Sector Housing Officer (14<sup>th</sup> October 2022)**

1. There are **118 homes** listed as empty for more than **2 years**, **18 homes** listed as empty for more than **5 years**, **9 homes** listed as empty for more than **10 years**.
2. There have been **85** empty properties brought back into use, in Ashington **since October 2019**.
3. All **145 properties** empty more than **2 years** have been charged the empty homes premium.

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The following additional questions were asked on behalf of Cllr Pauline Thompson:

4. Can you further calculate the empty homes listed below into wards of Ashington, likewise for those brought back into use?
5. Can you further advise those landlords of empty homes listed, that can be grouped into categories? Private Landlords, Advance Northumberland, Bernicia, other?