

## REPORT TO CABINET

<b>Open</b>		Would any decisions proposed:			
<b>Any especially affected Wards</b> All – Northern Parishes for 2 <sup>nd</sup> Homes	Discretionary	Be entirely within Cabinet's powers to decide		NO	
		Need to be recommendations to Council		YES	
		Is it a Key Decision		YES	
Lead Members: <a href="mailto:cllr.chris.morley@west-norfolk.gov.uk">cllr.chris.morley@west-norfolk.gov.uk</a>			Other Cabinet Members consulted: Cllr Alistair Beales		
			Other Members consulted: Cllr Chris Morley		
Lead Officer: Jo Stanton, Revenues and Benefits Manager E-mail: <a href="mailto:joanne.stanton@west-norfolk.gov.uk">joanne.stanton@west-norfolk.gov.uk</a> Direct Dial: 6349			Other Officers consulted: Michelle Drewery, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer Alexa Baker, Assistant Director, Legal, Governance and Licensing		
Financial Implications YES	Policy/ Personnel Implications NO	Statutory Implications NO	Equal Impact Assessment YES If YES: Pre-screening	Risk Management Implications NO	Environmental Considerations NO
If not for publication, the paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Local Government Act considered to justify that is (are) paragraph(s): NA					

Date of meeting: 21 July 2025

### COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS AND PREMIUMS FOR EMPTY PROPERTIES AND SECOND HOMES: RESOLUTION FOR 2026/2027

#### Summary

Councils have discretionary powers to vary the discounts for empty properties, uninhabitable properties and second homes, and to charge additional premiums (levies) for long-term empty properties and second homes. This report summarises the current position and makes recommendations for the discounts and premiums for these types of property for 2026/2027.

#### Recommendations

- The following discounts and premiums are recommended to Council for 2026/2027:

Class A Second Homes Discount for 2026/2027:

- No reduction, i.e. a 0% discount;

Class B Second Homes Discount for 2026/2027:

- No reduction i.e. a 0% discount, plus
- An additional premium of 100%, which will only be applied subject to agreement being reached with Norfolk County Council by no later than 30 November 2025 to return a share of their additional revenue raised from the Second Home Premium of no less than the percentage allocation for 2025/2026

Class C Empty / Unfurnished Discount 2026/2027:

- 0% for both the initial and follow on periods

Long-Term Empty Property Premiums (Levy) for 2026/2027:

- 100% for properties empty between one and five years,
- 200% for properties empty longer than five years, and
- 300% for properties empty longer than ten years.

Class D Uninhabitable Properties for 2026/2027:

- 25% for 12 months starting on the day the property becomes uninhabitable; then:
- 0% once the 12 month period has expired;

2. Cabinet and Council note and consider the government guidance of November 2024 as included at Appendix D.

**Reason for Decision**

To ensure the discounts, premiums and exceptions policy for Second Homes and Long-Term Empty properties are agreed for 2026/2027.

**1. Summary**

- 1.1. This report outlines the proposed council tax discounts and premiums for second homes, long-term empty properties, and uninhabitable properties for the year 2026/2027. The proposed discounts and premiums aim to incentivise the use of empty properties and generate additional income for local services.

**2. Background**

- 2.1. Councils have powers to vary the nationally set council tax discounts for second homes, long-term empty properties and uninhabitable properties, and to charge premiums (levies) for long-term empty properties and second homes. These powers are discretionary and decisions in respect of these discounts and premiums must be ratified annually by full Council.
- 2.2. Allowing councils to vary the discounts and charge premiums for empty homes is intended incentivise bringing empty properties back into use by increasing the council tax charge for these properties. Allowing a higher charge for second homes aims to help local councils whose income (and ability to deliver services) is affected by the number of second homes in their area and allows them to raise extra income to fund their services.
- 2.3. The discretionary powers do not include changing the reduction for any property which is exempt from payment of council tax, for example where a resident has gone into care or where the owner has passed away and probate has not yet been granted. These properties continue to benefit from a full council tax reduction.
- 2.4. The Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023 extends council's discretionary powers allowing a premium of up to 100% to be charged for second homes in a council's area. We introduced the 100% premium for second homes from 1 April 2025. The premium was applied to over 3,000 second homes with an initial letter sent to customers in October 2024 followed by council tax bills in March 2025. Alongside this we included comprehensive information including links to meeting papers and recordings,

Frequently Asked Questions and Exceptions on our website at [www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/secondhomes](http://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/secondhomes).

- 2.5. We received large volumes of customer queries regarding the premium, although the initial contact in October 2024 meant we were able to deal with many enquiries in advance of the council tax bills being sent. Queries ranged from applications for exceptions, questions regarding the regulations and requests for more information regarding the decision to charge the premium. The volumes of enquiries have now settled down and can be managed as part of the normal workload.
- 2.6. Section 3 of this paper sets out the recommended levels of council tax discounts and premiums for 2026/2027 which are a continuation of the amounts for 2025/2026. However the recommendation for the 100% Second Homes Premium is subject to an agreement being reached with Norfolk County Council to return to the borough a proportion of the extra income they receive from the premium to the borough, and on the borough's ability to set a balanced budget. More details are in section 6.
- 2.7. In November 2024 the government produced guidance on the implementation of the second homes premium (included at Appendix D) which Members should review, covering:
  - Numbers and proportion of long-term empty dwellings and second homes in the area,
  - Circumstances which may affect whether the dwelling can be used as a main residence,
  - Potential impact on local economies and the tourism industry,
  - Potential impact on the local community,
  - Potential impact on local services, and
  - Other measures that are available to councils to help bring empty dwellings back into use.
- 2.8. Section 4 and Appendix C set out the Policy for Exceptions to the premiums for long-term empty properties and second homes.
- 2.9. Section 5 considers the financial implications of charging the premiums and the impact on the council's taxbase and income.

### **3. Council Tax Discounts for Second Homes, Long-Term Empty Properties and Uninhabitable Properties**

The current discounts and premiums for long-term empty properties and second homes are shown at Appendix B. The recommendations for 2026/2027 are shown below and are a continuation of these discounts and premiums.

Property Type	Definition	Proposed Discount	Proposed Premium	Number on 1 June 2025
All Properties	All domestic properties on the Council Tax list			76,063
Class A and Class B  Furnished properties which are no-one's main home (commonly referred to as Second Homes).	<p>Class A properties have a restriction on occupancy for at least 28 days a year.</p> <p>Class B properties have no occupancy restriction.</p> <p>There are a number of exceptions to the Second Home Premium as shown in the table at 4.2.</p> <p><b>The premium is agreed subject to certain conditions being met</b></p>	0%	100%	<p>2,806</p> <p>Plus 480 properties subject to an exception</p> <p><b>Total second homes = 3,286</b></p>
Class C  Empty and unfurnished properties	Properties where there is no occupier and no furniture in the property. The charge depends on how long the property has been empty			
	Properties which are empty for under 12 months	0%	0%	1,118
	Properties which are empty and unfurnished for between 12 months and five years.	0%	100%	583
	Properties which are empty and unfurnished for between five and ten years.	0%	200%	107
	Properties which are empty and unfurnished for over ten years.	0%	300%	23
	<p>Empty and unfurnished properties</p> <p><i>These exclude any empty property which qualifies for an exemption from payment of council tax, including those where the resident is now in a care home or where the council tax payer has</i></p>			<p>1,901</p> <p>Plus 35 properties subject to an exception</p> <p><b>Total empty and unfurnished properties 1,936</b></p>

	<i>passed away and probate has not yet been granted.</i>			
Class D Uninhabitable Properties	Properties which are uninhabitable as they require, or are undergoing, work to their structure such as the roof, walls, floors, ceilings and foundations.  Once the 12 month discount expires these properties are treated as empty and unfurnished properties.	25% for 12 months	0%	81

#### 4. Exceptions Policy

4.1. Government published the regulations, guidance and further information relating the exceptions to the premiums at the start of November 2024. Delegated authority is in place for the Revenues and Benefits Manager, in consultation with the s151 Officer and Council Leader, to agree the technical guidelines for any exceptions to the premiums and the Exceptions Policy is included at Appendix C for information.

4.2. The exceptions apply to both the second homes premium and to the long-term empty levy from 1 April 2025. We have included further information and an application form on our website at [www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/premiumexceptions](http://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/premiumexceptions). 515 properties currently benefit from an exception and the breakdown is shown below:

Exception	Details	Number of second home exceptions awarded on 1 June 2025	Number of long-term empty exceptions awarded on 1 June 2025
Second homes with an occupancy restriction:	These do not have to pay the second home premium.	327	NA
Properties where probate has been granted but the property remains empty:	These properties will benefit from a six-month exemption after probate is granted and the second home or long-term empty premium will not apply until 12 months after probate is granted.	8	3
Properties for sale or let:	These do not have to pay the second home or long-term empty premium for 12 months from the date they are first marketed for sale or let.	104 (81 for sale and 21 for let)	21 (17 for sale and 4 for let)
Certain Job-Related properties including	These do not have to pay the second home or long-term empty	26	NA

Armed Forces accommodation:	premium if they are a second home because the council tax payer is living in Armed Forces accommodation. They also do not pay the second home premium if the council tax payer is required to live in another property as a condition of their employment contract.		
Caravan Pitches and Mooring	These do not pay the premium at any time	6	0
Discretionary Exceptions	Cases considered on an individual basis for removal of the Premium	9	11
<b>Total</b>		<b>480</b>	<b>35</b>

## 5. Financial Implications

### 5.1. Council Tax Base and Budget

5.1.1. The taxbase is a measure of how much council tax can be raised in our area and forms part of the budget setting process. Our taxbase includes the taxbases for the Parish and Town Councils, and forms part of the taxbase for Norfolk County Council and Norfolk Police.

5.1.2. The levels of council tax discounts and premiums affect our taxbase calculation. Any council tax discounts reduce our taxbase, as less council tax is being charged. The premiums increase our taxbase as more council tax is raised. The taxbase cannot be finalised until the discounts and premiums for the coming year, including the Council Tax Support scheme, have been agreed. Changes to the proposed taxbase will impact on the Financial Plan and the certainty of the budget setting process.

### 5.2. The Impact of the Long-Term Empty Levy and Second Homes Premiums

5.2.1. On 1 June 2025 there are 713 properties liable to pay the long-term empty premium (levy), adding 577 band D equivalent properties to the taxbase.

5.2.2. On the same date there are 2,806 second homes liable to pay the second home premium, adding 2,804 band D properties to the taxbase.

5.2.3. As 2025/2026 was the first year of the new second home premium a 30% sensitivity reduction was built into the taxbase calculation to allow for behaviour change and properties qualifying for an exception. The actual impact has been much lower and only **14.6% of second homes qualify for an exception**.

5.2.4. It is not possible to accurately calculate how many holiday let properties have moved from council tax to business rates. Owners of holiday accommodation cannot choose whether they pay council tax or business rates and must now meet stricter criteria to appear in the business rates list (more information is available here <https://www.gov.uk/introduction-to-business-rates/self-catering-and->

[holiday-let-accommodation](#)). The Valuation Office Agency are still reviewing properties to validate whether they meet the new rules which impacts on numbers, and there is also still natural movement between council tax and business rates.

5.2.5. On 1 April 2025 there were 1,076 self-catering properties in business rates, and on 1 June 2025 there are 1,075 properties.

5.2.6. The figures are monitored monthly and appear to have stabilised. **The estimated additional taxbase for 2026/2027, and therefore the extra income, is predicted to be in line with 2025/2026.** The figures and the sensitivity reduction will be reviewed when the taxbase is calculated for 2026/2027 in October 2025 when we have more data on the actual numbers of exceptions.

5.2.7. Both the long-term empty levy and second home premium numbers exceed the figure used for the 2025/2026 council taxbase and the Financial Plan. Any excess income creates a surplus on the Collection Fund to be realised in 2026/2027.

<b>Taxbase Implications</b>	<b>Long-Term Empty Properties</b>	<b>Second Homes</b>
Total Properties	713	2,806
Band D equivalents	577	2,804
Band D used in Taxbase and Financial Plan	535	2,161
Difference to Taxbase	+42	+643

<b>Financial Implications</b>	<b>Long-Term Empty Properties</b>	<b>Second Homes</b>
Band D equivalents	577	2,804
Council Tax Band D	£2,318.63	£2,318.63
<b>Income Raised</b>	<b>£1,337,850</b>	<b>£6,501,436</b>
Income raised based on Taxbase	£1,240,467	£5,010,559
Difference to Estimates	+£97,383	+£1,490,877

<b>Shares of Total Income</b>	<b>Long-Term Empty Properties</b>	<b>Second Homes</b>
	<b>£1,337,850</b>	<b>£6,501,436</b>
Norfolk County Council (75.7%)	£1,012,999	£4,922,787
Norfolk Police (14.2%)	£190,323	£924,899
Borough Council (6.6%)	£88,206	£428,647
Parish / Town Councils (3.5%)	£46,322	£225,105

## 6. Negotiations for the return of income from Norfolk County Council

6.1. The recommendation to charge an additional premium for second homes is subject to agreement being reached with Norfolk County Council by no later than 30 November 2025 to return a share of their additional revenue raised from the Second Home Premium of no less than the percentage allocation for 2025/2026.

6.2. Norfolk County Council receive over three-quarters of the additional income raised by the Second Homes Premium. An agreement is in place for 2025/2026 only for Norfolk County Council to return 25% of this income to us. The Council Leader and

s151 / Deputy s151 Officers will continue to press for a further agreement for 2026/2027.

- 6.3. If an agreement cannot be reached by 30 November 2025 the premium will not be charged.

## **7. Hardship Applications**

- 7.1. We can consider reducing or remitting a council tax bill on the grounds of hardship and delegated authority already exists to deal with these applications under our existing Council Tax Discretionary Relief Policy:

*Delegated authority be given for individual hardship applications made under s13a Local Government Finance Act 1992 be determined by the Revenues and Benefits Manager in consultation with the Council Leader and the relevant Ward Member/s where appropriate.*

- 7.2. Any customer experiencing hardship due to our decisions to vary the council tax discounts or charge a premium can make an application for their council tax charge to be reviewed. We have allowed 20 discretionary exceptions for 2025/2026.

## **8. Other Statutory Requirements:**

- 8.1. The following statutory requirements are also noted as part of the Council Tax Discounts Resolution:

8.1.1. That any period of occupation of fewer than six weeks shall be disregarded when calculating the maximum period of a reduction or the start date of a premium – this is a statutory requirement and prevents a fresh discount being claimed or the premium being removed if a property is only occupied for a short period of time.

8.1.2. In accordance with Section 11A(6) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as enacted by Section 75 of the Local Government Act 2003 and the Local Government Finance Act 2012, these determinations shall be published in at least one newspaper circulating in West Norfolk before the end of the period of 21 days beginning with the date of the determinations. This is a statutory requirement for us to publish a Public Notice once the decision is made.

## **9. Policy Implications**

- 9.1. This is a continuation of an existing policy and confirms the existing levels of discount and premiums for second homes and long-term empty properties for 2026/2027.

## **10. Personnel Implications**

- 10.1. None

## **11. Environmental Considerations**

- 11.1. None



## **12. Statutory Considerations**

12.1. The powers to reduce and remove the nationally set discounts for long-term empty properties, second homes and uninhabitable properties are laid out in the Regulations, however any decision is at the discretion of the Council. Any decision to vary these discounts must be ratified annual by full Council.

12.2. The powers are contained in the following Legislation and Regulations:

- Sections 79 and 80 of the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023,
- The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018,
- The Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (England) Regulations 2003, the Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012,
- Sections 11A, 11B, 11C and 11D of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, and
- Section 75 of the Local Government Act 2003

## **13. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

13.1. The Pre-screening Equality Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix A.

## **14. Risk Management Implications**

14.1. None

## **15. Declarations of Interest / Dispensations Granted**

15.1. None

## **16. Background Papers**

16.1. None.

## Stage 1 - Pre-Screening Equality Impact Assessment

For equalities profile information please visit [Norfolk Insight - Demographics and Statistics - Data Observatory](#)

Name of policy/service/function	Council Tax Discounts and Premiums for Empty Properties and Second Homes: Resolution for 2026/2027				
Is this a new or existing policy/service/function? <i>(tick as appropriate)</i>	New		Existing	√	
Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened.  Please state if this policy/service is rigidly constrained by statutory obligations, and identify relevant legislation.	The policy sets the level of discounts and premiums (levies) for empty properties and second homes for 2026/2027  The powers to vary the discount are contained in regulations, but the decision to do so is at the discretion of the council.				
Who has been consulted as part of the development of the policy/service/function? – new only <i>(identify stakeholders consulted with)</i>	N/A – Existing Policy				
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>				
<p>1. Is there any reason to believe that the policy/service/function could have a specific impact on people from one or more of the following groups, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service?</p> <p>Please tick the relevant box for each group. NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.</p> <p><b><i>If potential adverse impacts are identified, then a full Equality Impact Assessment (Stage 2) will be required.</i></b></p> <p><i>*For more information on health inequalities please visit <a href="#">The King's Fund</a></i></p>		Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure
	Age			√	
	Disability			√	
	Sex			√	
	Gender Re-assignment			√	
	Marriage/civil partnership			√	
	Pregnancy & maternity			√	
	Race			√	
	Religion or belief			√	
	Sexual orientation			√	
	Armed forces community			√	
	Care leavers			√	
	Health inequalities*			√	
	Other (eg low income, caring responsibilities)			√	
<p><b>Please provide a brief explanation of the answers above:</b> The Policy does not affect Equality Communities</p>					

Question	Answer	Comments
2. Is the proposed policy/service likely to affect relations between certain equality communities or to damage relations between the equality communities and the Council, for example because it is seen as favouring a particular community or denying opportunities to another?	No	The policy will not affect equality communities
3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?	Yes	<p>It will apply more to communities where there are higher numbers of empty properties and second homes but will not impact communities because of any equality issues or protected characteristics.</p> <p>It will have a positive impact on people on a low income as the additional income contributes towards the council's budgets and provision of local services, including housing and homelessness prevention.</p>
4. Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions? If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section	No	<p><b>Actions:</b></p> <p>There is no impact on any equality community or any specific group with a protected characteristic. The council has a Discretionary Relief Policy and can reduce a council tax charge in exceptional circumstances or if a person is suffering financial hardship.</p> <p>In addition there are exceptions for certain Armed Forces Accommodation supporting the Armed Forces Covenant.</p>
		<p><b>Actions agreed by EWG member:</b></p> <p><b>Alison Demonty</b></p>
<p><b>If 'yes' to questions 2 - 4 a full impact assessment will be required unless comments are provided to explain why this is not felt necessary:</b></p> <p>The policy is intended to encourage owners to bring empty properties back into use, and to raise additional income to help fund local services. It and will affect communities more where there are significant numbers of second home and empty properties.</p> <p>The policy will therefore impact on communities, rather than individuals, and is not linked to any equality issues or protected characteristics.</p> <p><b>Decision agreed by EWG member: A Demonty 08.07.25</b></p>		

5. Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?	No	Please provide brief summary:	
Assessment completed by: Name	Jo Stanton		
Job title	Revenues and Benefits Manager		
Date completed	9 June 2025		
Reviewed by EWG member		Date	08.07.25

✓ Please tick to confirm completed EIA Pre-screening Form has been shared with Corporate Policy ([corporate.policy@west-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:corporate.policy@west-norfolk.gov.uk))

## Appendix B

### Council Tax Discounts and Premiums where local decisions on discounts apply

Class	Start	End	Discount / (Premium)	Council Tax Charge	Time Limit
Second Homes	<b>Nationally set discount</b>		<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>None</b>
	01/04/1993	31/03/2004	50%	50%	None
	01/04/2004	31/03/2013	10%	90%	None
	01/04/2013	31/03/2016	5%	95%	None
	01/04/2016	31/03/2025	0%	100%	None
	01/04/2025*		(100%)	200%	None
Empty and Unfurnished properties	<b>Initial Empty Period</b>				
	<b>Nationally set discount</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>6 months</b>
	01/04/1993	31/03/2013	100%	0%	6 months
	01/04/2013	31/03/2017	100%	0%	3 months
	01/04/2017	31/03/2019	100%	0%	1 month
	01/04/2019		0%	100%	None
	<b>Follow On Period</b>				
	<b>Nationally set discount</b>		<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
	01/04/1993	31/03/2008	50%	50%	Ongoing
	01/04/2008	31/03/2009	10%	90%	Ongoing
	01/04/2009	31/03/2013	50%	50%	Ongoing
	01/04/2013		0%	100%	Until LT Empty
Uninhabitable Properties	<b>Nationally set discount</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>12 months</b>
	01/04/1993	31/03/2013	100%	0%	12 months
	01/04/2013	31/03/2017	50%	50%	12 months
	01/04/2017		25%	75%	12 months
Long Term Empty Properties	<b>Nationally set discount</b>		<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>-</b>
	01/04/2013	31/03/2019	(50%)	150%	After 2 years
	01/04/2019	31/03/2024	(100%)	200%	After 2 years
	01/04/2024		(100%)	200%	After 1 year
	01/04/2020		(200%)	300%	After 5 years
	01/04/2021		(300%)	400%	After 10 years

\*Excluding certain classes of property where the premium does not apply



**Policy for Exceptions to the  
Council Tax Premiums for  
Second Homes and Long-Term  
Empty Dwellings  
Coming into force 1 April 2025**

## **1. Executive Summary**

The Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023 gives councils powers to charge a council tax premium (or levy) for certain types of property (dwelling) in its area. The properties are those which are furnished but no-one's main home, commonly referred to as Second Homes, and properties which are unfurnished and unoccupied, known as Empty Properties.

The government has also introduced regulations laying out certain circumstances where the premium or levy does not apply. This Policy includes these statutory exceptions along with further locally agreed exceptions.

The exceptions apply from 1 April 2025.

The power to decide the guidelines for the exceptions to the premiums is given under Delegated Authority as below:

### **CAB89 – Cabinet 15 Jan 2024, Council 31 Jan 2024**

Cabinet Report para 4.1.5:

Delegate authority to the Revenues and Benefits Manager, in consultation with the s151 Officer and Council Leader, to agree the technical guidelines for any exceptions to the premiums imposed by central government.

## 2. Definitions

Dwelling	Residential property which is the subject of the council tax charge
Empty Dwelling	<p>Any dwelling shown in the Council Tax Valuation List which is unfurnished and unoccupied.</p> <p>A Long-Term Empty Dwelling is one which is unfurnished and unoccupied for six months or more.</p> <p>A Long-Term Empty Dwelling will pay the additional Levy once it has been unfurnished and unoccupied for 12 months or more.</p>
Exempt Dwelling	Any dwelling which qualifies for an exemption from payment of council tax under the provisions of the Council Tax (Exempt Dwellings) Order 1992 (as amended)
Liable Person	The person(s) who is responsible for paying the council tax under the council tax regulations; normally the person(s) whose name appears on the council tax bill
Long Term Empty Dwelling Levy	An additional charge of 100%, 200% or 300% of the amount of council tax payable for the period where the property meets the definition of a Long-Term Empty Dwelling and has been unoccupied for 12 months or more. The actual amount of the Levy depends on how long the dwelling has remained empty.
Relevant Transaction	Transfer on sale of the freehold, or of the leasehold for a term of seven years or more
Second Home	Any dwelling shown in the Council Tax Valuation List which is furnished but is unoccupied and no-one's main home
Second Home Premium	An additional charge of 100% of the amount of council tax payable for the period where the dwelling meets the definition of a Second Home.



### **3. Exceptions to the Council Tax Second Homes Premium and Long-Term Empty Dwelling Levy**

The Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings and Consequential Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024 include the circumstances in which the second home premium or empty dwelling levy does not apply.

The premium and levy will not apply to any dwelling which is classed as an Exempt Dwelling.

The exceptions are summarised below and the table should be read in conjunction with the detailed criteria in the regulations.

Class	Reason	Premium this Applies To	Period of Exception	Qualifying Conditions	Evidence Required
E	The liable person lives elsewhere in Armed Forces Accommodation	Second Homes Empty Dwellings	Whilst the qualifying conditions are met	The dwelling would be the sole or main residence of the liable person if they did not live elsewhere in Armed Forces accommodation.	Proof of address and residence in Armed Forces Accommodation
F	The dwelling is an annexe which forms part of a single dwelling, and is used by the resident as part of their sole or main residence	Second Homes Empty Dwellings	Whilst the qualifying conditions are met	The dwelling is an annexe which forms part of the liable person's sole or main residence and is being used as part of their main residence. This does not include any annexe used as a second home, or where the other part of the property is a second home.	Proof of use and site visit if necessary.

G	The dwelling is being actively marketed for Sale	Second Homes Empty Dwellings	12 months from the date the dwelling is first placed on the market	<p>The dwelling must be marketed for sale at a price that is reasonable for the sale of the dwelling, or an offer has been accepted and the sale is awaiting completion.</p> <p>A further exception will not apply unless there has been a Relevant Transaction.</p>	<p>A current contract with an Estate Agent for the sale of the dwelling.</p> <p>Marketing information, including Sales Particulars and online listings.</p> <p>A current Energy Performance Certificate (or proof of a recent application for one).</p> <p>Details of any viewings or offers in respect of the dwelling.</p> <p>Comparable sales prices achieved for similar properties to demonstrate the asking price is reasonable.</p> <p>Information regarding any sale agreed for the dwelling.</p>
---	--	---------------------------------	--	--	---

H	The dwelling is being actively marketed for Let	Second Homes Empty Dwellings	12 months from the date the dwelling is first marketed for let	<p>The tenancy terms, conditions and rent must be reasonable for the letting of the dwelling, or an offer to rent has been accepted but the tenancy has not yet started.</p> <p>A further exception will not apply unless the dwelling has been let on a tenancy granted for a term of six months or more.</p>	<p>A current contract with a Lettings Agent for arranging the rental of the dwelling.</p> <p>Details of the type of tenancy the dwelling will be let under.</p> <p>Comparable rental prices for similar properties to demonstrate the rent is reasonable.</p> <p>Details of where the dwelling is advertised for let.</p> <p>Information regarding any agreed letting to a tenant.</p>
---	---	------------------------------	--	--	--

I	Probate has been granted but the dwelling remains empty	Second Homes Empty Dwellings	12 months from the date probate is granted	<p>The dwelling fell into exemption Class F (Empty Awaiting Probate), remains empty after a grant of probate has been made, and the estate remains the liable party for council tax.</p> <p>The dwelling will receive an exemption from payment of council tax for six months after probate is granted.</p> <p>A further exception will not apply unless there has been a Relevant Transaction.</p>	<p>Copy of the grant of Probate.</p> <p>Confirmation that the estate is the liable party for council tax and that the property has not been assented or passed over to another person.</p>
J	The dwelling is a Job-Related Dwelling	Second Homes	Whilst the qualifying conditions are met.	The liable party must also be liable for council tax at the occupied rate for another dwelling, and be required to occupy that property as a condition of their employment.	<p>Address of second property.</p> <p>Contract of employment confirming the requirement to live elsewhere.</p>
K	The dwelling is a Caravan Pitch or a Boat Mooring	Second Homes	Whilst the qualifying conditions are met	The dwelling is a pitch occupied by a caravan, or a mooring occupied by a boat.	Site visit if required

L	The dwelling is subject to a Planning Condition preventing occupancy	Second Homes	Whilst the qualifying conditions are met	<p>The dwelling must have an occupancy restriction imposed by a planning condition for one of the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preventing occupancy for a continuous period of at least 28 days in one year,</li> <li>• Specifying it may only be used as a holiday let, or</li> <li>• Preventing it being occupied as someone's sole or main residence.</li> </ul>	Copy of the Planning Permission containing the restriction on occupancy or specifying the dwelling cannot be used as a main home or must be used as a holiday let.
M	Uninhabitable Dwellings	Empty Dwellings	12 months from the date the property becomes uninhabitable	<p>The dwelling is one which falls in Class D – i.e. it is one which qualifies for a reduction as it is uninhabitable.</p> <p><i>Note – this council currently awards a 25% discount for 12 months to uninhabitable dwellings and they will not be subject to the long-term empty property levy during the qualifying period.</i></p>	Evidence that the dwelling requires or is undergoing work to its structure to render it habitable, including work to the walls, floors, ceilings, foundations or roof.
Z	Unoccupied Furnished Residential Lets	Second Homes	Whilst the qualifying conditions are met	The dwelling is one which is furnished and is let on an assured shorthold tenancy (or equivalent) to occupants who occupy the dwelling as their main home. The exception applies for the days when the property is unoccupied.	Evidence that the former tenant used the property as their main home, and proof that the property is being marketed for let on an assured shorthold tenancy (or equivalent).

- 4. Other Circumstances**  
The discretionary powers to reduce or remit council tax liability under s13(a) Local Government Act 1992 still apply and are contained in the council's Council Tax Discretionary Relief Policy.
- 5. Applications**  
The liable person may be required to complete an application form to apply for an exception to the premium or levy, unless we decide we are able to apply the exception without one.
- 6. Evidence**  
We may ask for any reasonable evidence to support an application for an exception to the premium or levy. Failure to provide this is likely to result in an application being unsuccessful.
- 7. False Information and Fraudulent Applications**  
Any attempts to commit fraud through false statements and fraudulent applications for an exception are taken extremely serious and we may take further action against anyone attempting to defraud the council tax system.  
  
Sanctions include a penalty of £70 for first offence, and £280 for each second and subsequent offence, and prosecution under the Fraud Act 2006.
- 8. Appeals**  
The decision not to apply an exception can be appealed. In the first instance an appeal should be made in writing or by email to the Revenues and Benefits Manager, clearly stating why the appeal is being made, and providing evidence.
- 9. Equalities Implications**  
A Pre-Screening Equalities Impact Assessment is included at Appendix A.
- 10. Reference Documents**  
The Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023  
  
The Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings and Consequential Amendments)(England) Regulations 2024 (Statutory Instrument 2024/1007)  
  
Cabinet Report of 15 January 2024 and minutes of the Council Meeting 31 January 2024

## 11. Version Control

Policy name	Second Homes Premiums and Long-Term Empty Levies– Policy for Exceptions			
Policy description	Policy detailing the exceptions to the additional premiums for certain council tax properties			
Responsible Officer	Jo Stanton, Revenues and Benefits Manager			
Version number	Date formally approved	Reason for update	Author	Review date
1.0		Policy Creation	Jo Stanton	1 January 2026



## **Appendix D: Government Guidance on the implementation of the Premiums**

(attached as a separate document for Dem Services to insert)