

Annex 1 – comments from the survey

NB – The comments below have been taken directly from the consultation responses. No corrections / amendments have been made to any of them.

I do not believe the Council will act fairly. I do not believe the Council will make a proper distinction between empty property and empty annexes. I do not believe the Council will help those who do not want to leave property in a poor state but have no funding to make repairs.

I don't feel that it's right. And I sure full of loopholes, that the people who should be effected itsnt

Does this include properties owned by the council? How do you propose to collect this tax from landlords/owners of properties who you are unable to contact or locate?

Charges should be re-considered for properties that have been removed from Council Tax by the Valuation Office. Some of the worst offenders for derelict and empty building are those that currently pay NO Council Tax at all and an increase of 50% will be an even bigger incentive for owners to make their properties physically worse in order to get an exemption.

Empty properties contribute to the rundown feel of a neighbourhood and can therefore add to anti-social behaviour (broken window effect). They are also a waste of a home - when we are crying out for more houses. It's always better in my opinion to reuse an existing property than build new ones. Renovating old homes and bringing them up to standards in terms of insulation and living condition also generates industry. A 50% additional council tax on empty homes - is likely to force landlords/homeowners to rethink leaving their property standing empty and therefore positively contribute to the health of a neighbourhood for all the reasons listed above.

Owners who leave their properties empty should be penalised financially. I think that the 50% additional council tax charge is a very good idea. Empty homes in Ramsgate, for example, make the town less attractive visually, attract vandalism, graffiti and fly tipping and mean that the properties are often poorly maintained. There is a housing shortage in Thanet, both in the privately rented and public housing stock, therefore, TDC should continue its policy of buying up empty properties in Ramsgate, Margate and Cliftonville and renovating them, to rent out.

I would like more action/ guidance for those who allow occupied properties to deteriorate.

Unless the property is the sole property of the owner and they are in hospital/care home etc, there should be some sort of charge made, although with no services being used a reduced charge should be adequate.

A few doors along from me a house is being left to fall into disrepair because the owner has gone into a care home and her family are reluctant to take and action, with an aging population and a need for homes for younger people in the area this is a real worry. Home owners should be motivated to ensure homes they gave responsibility for are maintained and used, this council tax premium is a great idea and could prompt many families in this situation to take positive action, freeing up homes for use and ensuring they are not neglected.

COUNCIL TAX IS FOR COUNCIL SERVICES - HOW CAN YOU DEMAND A TAX FROM EMPTY PROPERTY? IF THE PEOPLE DID WHAT YOU DO WE'D BE ARRESTED!

Thanet has more empty properties than the average nationally, and everything should be done to encourage owners to bring them back into use. Empty properties do no one any good, and there are far too many people without a decent home for properties to be left empty for no good reason.

Too many land, property developers sit on usable housing, they need to be forced into letting them, EG Freshwater have numerous empty flats in Arlington house, some have been empty for over thirty years, freshwater do not in any form contribute towards Thanet, they should be forced to let them, but i fear this Council will not do anything, and as they are the Freeholders TDC councillors should also foot part of the bill.,

I think if someone has a spare property which is empty unless they have a good reason! it should be put to good use.

It will be all too easy for any prudent property owner to avoid the additional charge by merely stating the property is occupied and putting forward a non-existent name. After a couple of years the "name then disappears without trace and the Council is unable to collect. Job done!

So long as the property is well maintained and secure, why should the council penalise a property owner, they are already paying full council tax.

I believe this should be extended to properties with boarded up retail unit/s where either 1. No attempt is being made to let the retail unit at a reasonable market rent or 2. The owner is not taking steps to change the use of the retail unit to residential if appropriate. I know there are difficulties getting improvements done when a landlord has no funds to get work done.

There are too many empty properties in Thanet and therefore this measure is a step in the right direction. Thanet is already too densely urban. We do not need or want any more new houses, rather we need to make better use of the existing housing provision. The road network in Thanet is already under strain and cannot support the addition of more cars which would inevitably result from building more houses.

Although discretion will need to be used for those who may have an empty property through bereavement (for example) which may be on the market but not selling.