

# CABINET MEMBER DECISION



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

## Decision:

**That approval is granted for the following changes in respect of long term empty dwellings:**

**2019/20 increase premium charge from 50% to 100% for long term empty dwellings over 2 years**

**2020/21 increase premium charge to 200% for long term empty dwellings over 5 years**

**2021/22 increase premium charge to 300% for long term empty dwellings over 10 years**

### (1) **Details of Decision**

To seek approval to amend the Council Tax chargeable amounts in respect of long term empty dwellings accordance with legislative changes contained in Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018.

### (2) **Considerations/Evidence**

The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018 makes changes to the premium levels for empty properties that are introduced over the next 3 financial years.

### (3) **Reasons for Decision:**

Billing authorities in England have the power to increase council tax in respect of dwellings which have been 'unoccupied and substantially unfurnished' for a long period of time. This is known as the 'empty homes premium'. It is for the billing authority to decide whether to levy an empty homes premium.

In England, billing authorities can currently charge up to 150% on dwellings which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for over two years. New legislation has been introduced that allows increases from 2019-20 onwards.

Currently a discount of 100% (i.e. no Council Tax charge) is awarded for the first month on any unoccupied and substantially unfurnished property, followed by a 25% discount for a further five months. After this a full 100% charge applies if it remains unoccupied and substantially unfurnished. Any dwelling that remains unoccupied for more than two years then incurs a premium charge of 50% Council Tax.

New legislation is now introduced that comes into effect from 2019/20 financial year that allows the following:

- 100% premium (i.e. extra) for substantially unfurnished dwellings empty for 2-5 years
- 200% premium (i.e. extra) for substantially unfurnished dwellings empty for 5-10 years (commencing in 2020/21)
- 300% premium (i.e. extra) for substantially unfurnished dwellings empty for 10+ years (commencing in 2021/22)

For information the table below shows the number of properties in SK that as at the time of the report fall into one of the above categories.

<b>Empty period</b>	<b>Number of empty dwellings</b>
2-5 years	100
5-10 years	31
10+ years	28

The primary objective of the premium charge is to encourage the property owners to proactively seek occupancy of the residential property in order to help maximise occupancy of the housing stock in the district. Introducing premiums to our Council Tax charges is one tool in delivering this objective.

It is recognised that applying the charge is a discretion that the Council has and in specific circumstances officers will take into consideration the Government guidance which is contained at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/council-tax-empty-homes-premium>.

The necessary communication and notifications will be issued to property owners in advance of the new charging arrangements in order to ensure those affected by the change are given notice.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

**(Any conflict of interest declared by any other Cabinet Member consulted in relation to the decision to be recorded).**

NONE

## **Dispensations**

(Any dispensation granted by the Monitoring Officer in respect of any declared conflict of interest to be noted).

NONE

## **Decision taken by:**

Name: Councillor Adam Stokes  
Cabinet Member for Finance

**Date of Decision: 21 January 2019**

**Date of Publication of Record of Decision: 22 January 2019**

**Date decision effective (i.e. 5 days after the date of publication of record of decision unless subject to call-in by the Chairman of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or any 5 members of the Council from any political groups):**

**30 January 2019**