



# Empty and Second Homes Council Tax Consultation

**HYNDBURN  
BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL TAX CHARGES TO EMPTY HOMES AND  
SECOND HOMES CONSULTATION FINDINGS**

## Introduction

The Government has introduced new legislation (*The Local Government Finance Act 2012*) which abolishes certain types of exemptions and changes the rules on discounts for empty and second homes. This means that Councils must choose what level of Council Tax discounts will apply to second homes and empty properties. Empty homes, especially long term empty homes, can cause problems and can be a drain on Council funds. The Council therefore proposes to reduce discounts and introduce charges for empty and second homes to encourage owners to bring them back into use as soon as possible.

As a result, the Council has developed a set of proposed changes to the current Council Tax discounts and exemptions.

The Council's proposals could mean some owners of empty homes may have to pay more Council Tax, for example:-

- Owners of second homes;
- Owners of empty homes;
- Owners of homes that will have been empty for 2 years or more at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013;
- Anyone who owns a home that is in need of or awaiting major works or structural repair and remains empty at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013.

The proposed changes were consulted on in the form of a survey that was posted out to owners of empty dwellings, second home owners and by email to online Citizen Panel members from the Hyndburn area very much targeted at people who would be impacted by the proposed changes. The survey has also been on the front of the Hyndburn Borough Council website for the past six weeks. All responses have been gathered by the East Lancashire Collaborative Consultation and Research Service (CRACS) based at Pendle Borough Council with this report being compiled by the Corporate Policy Team at Hyndburn Borough Council.

Across Hyndburn there are approximately 2,500 empty homes, with over 1500 of these being empty for over six months; with 1000 empty for over 12 months and 750 vacant for over 2 years.

The findings from the survey are described below:

Overall there was 129 completed responses with 71 respondents describing themselves as a Hyndburn residents with only 36 of these coming from Hyndburn residents who were not either the owner of an empty home or second home; 25 from someone with a second home in Hyndburn; 66 from someone with an empty home in Hyndburn; 29 being a private landlord in Hyndburn; and 8 from estate / letting / managing agents from Hyndburn.

## Summary Findings

The majority of respondents (61.7%) believe that empty homes cause problems in some neighbourhoods, with the highest response coming from Hyndburn residents. '*Vandalism and dumping of rubbish*' (84.4%), '*Can put potential purchasers / renters off*' (75.3%) and '*Reduction in house values*' (67.5%) were the three main problems identified with empty dwellings.

The response to the Council's proposals was mixed. Just fewer than 63% of respondents did not agree with the principle of using Council Tax charges as an incentive to encourage home owners to bring empty homes back into use, whilst 37.2% supported the proposals. This is not a surprise bearing in mind the consultation and responses were heavily weighted in favour of empty and second home owners or their agents (72%). Those respondents who

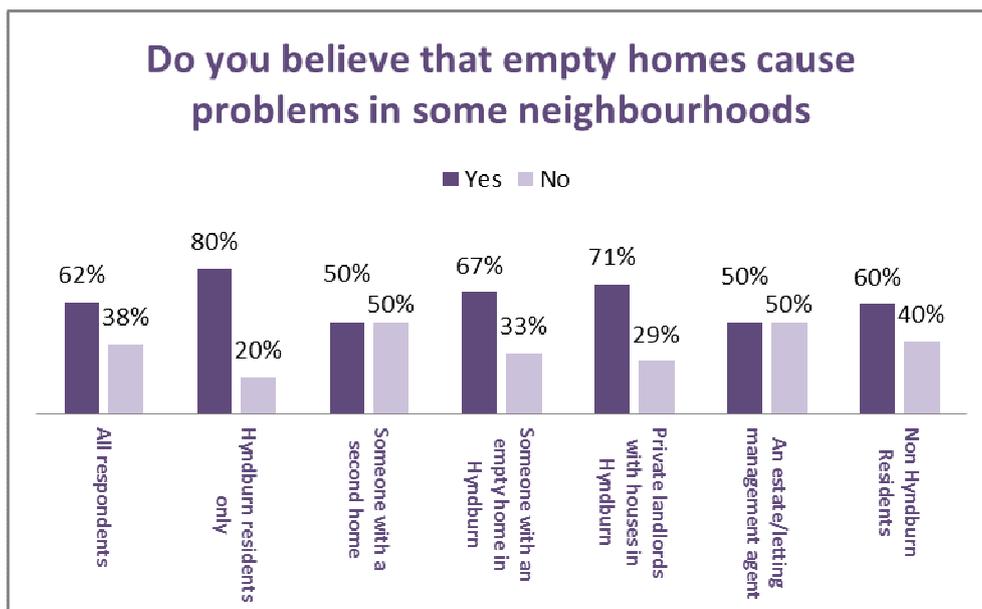
did not have an interest in empty and second homes (28%), a significant number (67%) supported the Council’s proposals to use Council Tax charges as an incentive to encourage owners to bring empty homes back into use.

**Survey findings**

**Q1. Do you believe that empty homes cause problems in some neighbourhoods?**

All respondents	Yes	79 (61.7%)	No	49 (38.3%)
Hyndburn residents only	Yes	(80.0%)	No	(20.0%)
Someone with a second home	Yes	(50.0%)	No	(50.0%)
Someone with an empty home in Hyndburn	Yes	(66.7%)	No	(33.3%)
Private landlords with houses in Hyndburn	Yes	(71.4%)	No	(28.6%)
An estate/letting management agent	Yes	(50.0%)	No	(50.0%)
Non Hyndburn Residents	Yes	(60.4%)	No	(39.6%)

The majority (61.7%) of respondents believe that empty homes cause problems in some neighbourhoods; this is held higher by local residents (80%), private landlords (71.4%) and owners of empty homes (66.7%) when compared with owners of second homes (50.0%), estate and letting agents (50.0%) and non-Hyndburn residents with 60.4%.



**Q2. If you answered ‘YES’ to ‘Q1’ what sort of problems do you believe empty homes can cause?**

77 responses

	All respondents	Hyndburn Residents	Non Hyndburn Residents
Nuisance and anti-social behaviour	45 (58.4%)	(71.4%)	(56.3%)
Vandalism and dumping of rubbish	65 (84.4%)	(82.1%)	(87.5%)
A reduction in house values	52 (67.5%)	(89.3%)	(53.1%)
Drives households away	28 (36.4%)	(42.9%)	(37.5%)
Can put potential purchasers / renters off	58 (75.3%)	(85.7%)	(81.3%)

Those respondents who believed empty properties were causing problems in neighbourhoods believed ‘*Vandalism and dumping of rubbish*’ (84.4%), ‘*Can put potential purchasers / renters off*’ (75.3%) and ‘*Reduction in house values*’ (67.5%) were the three main problems identified by all respondents, whilst a ‘*Reduction in house values*’ (89.3%) was the highest response from Hyndburn residents and again ‘*Vandalism and dumping of rubbish*’ (87.5%) was the highest response received from non-Hyndburn residents.

**Q3. Do you own a second home in Hyndburn?**

122 responses

	Yes	No
All respondents	53 (43.4%)	69 (56.6%)
All Hyndburn residents*	(33.8%)	(66.2%)
Non Hyndburn residents	(54.5%)	(45.5%)

\*- Includes those Hyndburn residents who have indicated they might either have a second home in Hyndburn, an empty home in Hyndburn, be a private landlord in Hyndburn or an estate/letting/ management agent in Hyndburn.

122 respondents responded to this question with 53 stated they had a second home in Hyndburn. This is significantly higher than the 25 who stated they were someone with a second home in Hyndburn in the ‘About you’ section at the back of the questionnaire. The highest response came from those residents who have indicated they do not live in Hyndburn.

**Q4. Do you own or manage an empty home in Hyndburn?**

127 responses

All respondents	Yes	82 (64.6%)	No	45 (35.4%)
All Hyndburn residents	Yes	(50%)	No	(50%)
Non Hyndburn residents	Yes	(86.7%)	No	(13.3%)

Out of all responses 64.6% stated they either owned or managed an empty home in Hyndburn. Half of all Hyndburn resident respondents indicated they owned or managed an empty home in Hyndburn, whilst 86.7% of non-Hyndburn residents stated they owned or managed an empty home in Hyndburn.

**Q5. If you answered 'YES' to 'Q4' how long has it been empty?  
(Analysed by respondent's location – findings go downwards)**

80 responses ↓ Findings go downwards	<b>All respondents</b>	<b>All Hyndburn residents</b>	<b>Non Hyndburn residents</b>
0 – 3 months	7 (8.8%)	(14.7%)	(4.5%)
4 – 6 months	5 (6.3%)	(2.9%)	(9.1%)
6 – 12 months	15 (18.8%)	(20.6%)	(18.2%)
Over 12 months	19 (23.8%)	(23.5%)	(22.7%)
Over 2 years	34 (42.5%)	(38.2%)	(45.5%)

The table above shows those respondents who have indicated they own or manage an empty home in Hyndburn. Just under two thirds of the 'All Respondents' have indicated they have been empty for over 12 months, whilst 42.5% have been empty for over two years, this is slightly higher with the non-Hyndburn residents.

**Q6. Please indicate how fair you think our proposals on empty and second homes are by ticking one box on each line below**

All Respondents	Very Fair	Fair	Unfair	Very Unfair	Don't Know
<b>Proposal 1:</b> On empty homes undergoing structural repairs 50% of Council Tax will be paid for first 12 months and 100% will be paid after 12 months	18 (13.7%)	27 (20.6%)	31 (23.7%)	51 (38.9%)	4 (3.1%)
<b>Proposal 2:</b> On empty homes 50% of Council Tax will be paid for first 6 months, and 100% will be paid after 6 months	14 (10.8%)	26 (20.0%)	30 (23.1%)	60 (46.2%)	-
<b>Proposal 3:</b> For empty homes repossessed by mortgage lenders the Council Tax exemption will be abolished and 100% Council Tax paid	27 (20.8%)	32 (24.6%)	24 (18.5%)	33 (25.4%)	14 (10.8%)
<b>Proposal 4:</b> The Council will charge 150% of Council Tax for homes empty longer than 2 years	14 (10.9%)	20 (15.5%)	16 (12.4%)	78 (60.5%)	1 (0.8%)
<b>Proposal 5:</b> The Council will abolish the second home discount and 100% Council Tax to be charged	17 (13.3%)	29 (22.7%)	22 (17.2%)	55 (43.0%)	5 (3.9%)

The survey gave respondents the opportunity to indicate what they thought about each proposal with a rating from 'Very Fair' to 'Very Unfair'.

- **Proposal 1** - 34.3% of respondents indicated this proposal was fair with 62.6% stating this proposal as unfair.
- **Proposal 2** - 30.8% of respondents indicated this proposal was fair with 69.3% stating it as unfair.
- **Proposal 3** gained more fair responses with 45.3%, in comparison with 43.9% who indicated this proposal as unfair.
- **Proposal 4** was the least favoured proposal with 26.4% of responses indicating this as fair, but with 72.9% indicating this proposal as unfair.
- **Proposal 5** – 36.0% of respondents stated this proposal as fair, whilst 60.2% stated this proposal as unfair.

The above responses were from all respondents, whilst the table below looks at respondents from Hyndburn residents only.

Hyndburn Residents only *	Vey Fair	Fair	Unfair	Very Unfair	Don't Know
<b>Proposal 1:</b> On empty homes undergoing structural repairs 50% of Council Tax will be paid for first 12 months and 100% will be paid after 12 months	36.1%	30.6%	8.3%	22.2%	2.8%
<b>Proposal 2:</b> On empty homes 50% of Council Tax will be paid for first 6 months, and 100% will be paid after 6 months	36.1%	33.3%	5.6%	25.0%	-
<b>Proposal 3:</b> For empty homes repossessed by mortgage lenders the Council Tax exemption will be abolished and 100% Council Tax paid	38.9%	25.0%	19.4%	13.9%	2.8%
<b>Proposal 4:</b> The Council will charge 150% of Council Tax for homes empty longer than 2 years	30.6%	27.8%	13.9%	27.8%	-
<b>Proposal 5:</b> The Council will abolish the second home discount and 100% Council Tax to be charged	41.7%	30.6%	5.6%	19.4%	2.8%

\*- Dose not include those Hyndburn residents who have indicated they might either have a second home in Hyndburn, an empty home in Hyndburn, be a private landlord in Hyndburn or an estate/letting/ management agent in Hyndburn.

- **Proposal 1** – 66.7% of respondents indicated this proposal was fair with 30.5% stating this proposal as unfair.
- **Proposal 2** – 69.4% of respondents indicated this proposal was fair with 30.6% stating this as unfair.
- **Proposal 3** gained 63.9% fair responses, in comparison with 33.3% who indicated this proposal as unfair.
- **Proposal 4** was the least favoured proposal with 58.4% of responses indicating this as fair with 41.7% indicating this proposal as unfair.
- **Proposal 5** received most support with 72.3% of respondents indicating this as fair, whilst 25.0% stated this proposal as unfair.

The table below looks at respondents from non-Hyndburn residents only.

Non-Hyndburn Residents only	Vey Fair	Fair	Unfair	Very Unfair	Don't Know
<b>Proposal 1:</b> On empty homes undergoing structural repairs 50% of Council Tax will be paid for first 12 months and 100% will be paid after 12 months	5.5%	18.2%	32.7%	40.0%	3.6%
<b>Proposal 2:</b> On empty homes 50% of Council Tax will be paid for first 6 months, and 100% will be paid after 6 months	1.9%	18.5%	31.5%	48.1%	0
<b>Proposal 3:</b> For empty homes repossessed by mortgage lenders the Council Tax exemption will be abolished and 100% Council Tax paid	22.2%	25.9%	14.8%	25.9%	11.1%
<b>Proposal 4:</b> The Council will charge 150% of Council Tax for homes empty longer than 2 years	5.7%	9.4%	7.5%	77.4%	0
<b>Proposal 5:</b> The Council will abolish the second home discount and 100% Council Tax to be charged	0	18.9%	24.5%	52.8%	3.8%

- **Proposal 1** – 23.7% of respondents indicated this proposal was fair with 72.7% stating this proposal as unfair.
- **Proposal 2** – 20.4% of respondents indicated this proposal was fair with 79.6% stating this as unfair.
- **Proposal 3** gained 48.1% fair responses, in comparison with 40.7% who indicated this proposal as unfair.
- **Proposal 4** was the least favoured proposal with 15.1% of responses indicating this as fair with 84.9% indicating this proposal as unfair.
- **Proposal 5** received most support with 18.9% of respondents indicating this as fair, whilst 77.3% stated this proposal as unfair.

**Q7. Do you agree with the principle of using Council Tax charges as an incentive to encourage home owners to bring empty homes back into use?**

129 responses

All respondents	Yes	48 (37.2%)	No	81 (62.8%)
All Hyndburn residents*	Yes	(43.7%)	No	(56.3%)
Hyndburn residents only**	Yes	(66.7%)	No	(33.3%)
Non-Hyndburn residents	Yes	(32.1%)	No	(67.9%)
Someone with Second Home	Yes	(24.0%)	No	(76.0%)
Someone with Empty Home	Yes	(24.6%)	No	(75.4%)
Private Landlord	Yes	(21.4%)	No	(78.6%)
An estate/letting management agent	Yes	(12.5%)	No	(87.5%)

\*- Includes those Hyndburn residents who have indicated they might either have a second home in Hyndburn, an empty home in Hyndburn, be a private landlord in Hyndburn or an estate/letting/ management agent in Hyndburn.

\*\*- Dose not include those Hyndburn residents who have indicated they might either have a second home in Hyndburn, an empty home in Hyndburn, be a private landlord in Hyndburn or an estate/letting/ management agent in Hyndburn.

Over two thirds of Hyndburn residents (**only**) indicated they agreed with the principle of using Council Tax charges as an incentive to encourage home owners to bring empty homes back into use. There was less support when looking at all respondents and those not from Hyndburn. When looking at responses from **all** Hyndburn residents who agreed with the principle the proportion of who was in favour dropped down from 66.7% to 43.7% in using Council Tax charges. Whilst the least favoured response came from estate/letting and management agents with 12.5% in favour of the proposals.

**Q8. To what extent, if at all, do you think our proposal to reduce discounts will encourage empty homes to be returned to use?**

	All respondents	All Hyndburn residents	Hyndburn residents <i>only</i>	Non-Hyndburn residents
A lot	20 (16.0%)	(20.6%)	(33.3%)	(9.6%)
A little	33 (26.4%)	(26.5%)	(33.3%)	(25.0%)
Will not encourage	51 (40.8%)	(32.4%)	(13.9%)	(51.9%)
Will discourage	12 (9.6%)	(10.3%)	(5.6%)	(9.6%)
Don't know	9 (7.2%)	(10.3%)	(13.9%)	(3.8%)

- 42.4% of all respondents indicated that the Council's proposals to reduce discounts will encourage empty homes to be returned into use. This opinion is significantly higher with Hyndburn residents only with 66.6%, whilst again lowest with non-Hyndburn residents with only 34.6% in support of this proposal.
- 40.8% of all residents stated the proposals will not encourage empty homes to be returned to use, with this opinion highest with the non-Hyndburn residents with over 50%.
- 9.6% of all respondents indicated it will discourage empty homes to be returned to use, this figure is similar across all respondent types.
- Overall 7.2% of all respondents stated they don't know whether proposals to reduce discounts will encourage empty homes to be returned to use, the highest proportion was with Hyndburn residents with 13.9%

**Q9. What positive impact, if any, do you think our proposals on empty homes and second homes will have on the following?**

	High	Medium	Low	No Impact	Don't Know
Registered Social Landlords / Housing Associations	27 (21.1%)	31 (24.2%)	21 (16.4%)	28 (21.9%)	21 (16.4%)
Private Landlords	28 (22.2%)	33 (26.2%)	26 (20.6%)	24 (19.0%)	15 (11.9%)
House Builders	22 (17.5%)	31 (24.6%)	28 (22.2%)	29 (23.0%)	16 (12.7%)
Homeowners	30 (23.6%)	25 (19.7%)	32 (25.2%)	30 (23.6%)	10 (7.9%)
Banks and Building Societies	21 (16.9%)	18 (14.5%)	30 (24.2%)	33 (26.6%)	22 (17.7%)

Respondents have indicated Private Landlords (48.4%), followed by Registered Social Landlords / Housing Associations (45.3%) will gain the most from these proposals, with Banks and Building Societies being affected the least amount.

**Q10. Please comment if you feel that the Council's proposed changes will affect any particular individuals or groups more than others and, if so, how you think we may address these.**

***See Schedule 1***

**Q11. Please add any additional comments to support your responses on our proposed changes or any alternative options you would like us to consider and your reasons.**

***See Schedule 2***

**ABOUT YOU**

Are you responding to this consultation as: *(respondents could select all that apply)*

A Hyndburn resident	71
Someone with a second home in Hyndburn	25
Someone with an empty home in Hyndburn	66
A private landlord with houses in Hyndburn	29
An estate / letting / managing agent in Hyndburn	8

**Gender:**

<b>Male</b>	76 (60.3%)	<b>Female</b>	50 (39.7%)
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**Age:**

<b>Under 18</b>	0	<b>18-34</b>	25 (18.9%)	<b>35-60</b>	74 (57.4%)	<b>61+</b>	29 (22.8%)
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**What is your religion:**

Christian	64	Muslim	24	Other	8	None	17
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**Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months:**

Yes, limited a lot	7 (6%)
Yes, limited a little	21 (18.1%)
No	88 (75.9%)

**What is your sexual orientation:**

Heterosexual / straight	99 (98.0%)
Lesbian / Gay	1 (1%)
Bisexual	1 (1%)

**Have you undergone or do you plan to undergo a permanent change of gender role / identity?**

Yes 1 No 100

**What is your ethnic group?**

White or White British	84 (75.7%)
Asian or Asian British	23 (20.7%)
Black or Black British	1 (0.9%)
Mixed or multiple ethnicities	2 (1.8%)
Other ethnic group	1 (0.9%)

**Schedule 1 – Comments on proposed changes (specific comments copied from questionnaires)**

All the above categories except for homeowners are businesses and so in the need of enhancing profit will process their properties as quickly as possible without the threat of enhanced council tax rates
Another money making scheme that all this is
Due to the socio-economic type of council tenant leads to a high turnover of tenants in properties in Hyndburn. This in turn leads to having being empty (cleared & cleaned) & in some instances renovations required.
Elderly people placed in residential care. Council should be able to compulsorily acquire for full market value after 12 months being empty.
Executors who are doing all they can to sell the property
For people like myself who use the 2nd home in Hyndburn to visit my mother in care in Burnley. I consider this a very punitive tax and totally unfair. Little or no services are used by me even 50% is an unfair sum to pay.
Generally people who owns a property which is empty, that it is because they do not have money to upgrade the property. Thus what measures you will propose will not make any difference.
Have only heard of this and licensing of houses in Hyndburn. This is just a way of making money for the council.
Homeowners will suffer as some private landlords will rent to a less desirable tenant. Private landlords may reduce rents and so lessen the housing benefit burden. House prices will fall again as more privately owned rental properties are on the market for sale.
Hopefully the proposed changes will deter unscrupulous landlords
Houses are empty whilst major refurbishment work is undertaken to try and improve the poor housing stock in the area - now that work may not be carried out and a tenant rushed into a poor house
Houses that have been damaged by floods etc out of homeowners control. And the rate which the work is completed is not down to homeowner, but insurer.
I am in the strange position of not yet being able to live in my house as I have to live in the house provided as part of my job. I have however to provide myself with a house for when I retire which I hope to do next February
I believe that if properties are empty for 1 year you should give 6 months exemption, 6 months @ 25%, 12 months - 24 months - 50% after 2 years charge 100%
I do not think in the current economic climate the proposed changes will have a positive impact on anyone.
I don't think the proposals will affect individuals. The fundamental issue is that anyone that can afford to own a second home should be able to afford to pay Council Tax that is due on it.
I feel it is very unfair to penalise someone for having moved out of the area but who is unable to sell a home in the area because it is not a great place to live in.
I feel these changes will affect property developers that are renovating derelict our house's in very poor condition, 12th month rate relief is a huge help when money is having to be spent elsewhere!!
I have a property but can't afford to get it ready for renting. I'm waiting for this new scheme to kick in.
I have been unable to sell my deceased parents' home since 2009. I have also been unable to sell the retirement flat I bought with my savings they moved into for end of life care. This is because Accrington is depressed as is the location of the other flat. I have three properties including my own I have to maintain two of which are empty one is 200 miles from my home. This is not a business this is a drain on my income. Upping the price people such as myself have to pay in not going to help or encourage them to sell. Only economic improvement job creation and social integration of the different ethnic "ghettos" in Accrington will help sell it.
I think the council needs to differentiate more between empty homes and those undergoing renovation. Money in the latter instance may be tight.
I think the very old could have problems and hope that they will be given assistance if this is so.

I was in receipt of a house which I inherited. It was in a poor state of repair and I did not have funds to renovate at the time. If I was charged council tax in a period when I could not put the house into a habitable state
I would very much like to sell my property which is up for sale but can't so it looks like I am going to be penalized for it not selling "very unfair"
If receipts can be produced for property repairs council tax should be reduced (modernising empty houses that is)
In my case I intend to live in the property. However, as to keep costs down much of the work I am doing myself. Also when workman let you down delays of 6 or even 9 months often slow down the project.
Instead of putting more expense onto Builders, Landlords, Developers you need to help them. This will only increase the burden in an economic climate that is already decimated.
It is already in private landlord's interests to fill their properties to receive rental income. These proposals along with selective licensing merely raise money for the council
It may put couples like ourselves off buying at auction. If they know 100% council tax applicable our aim is to rent out ASAP as and when we are able to finish refurbish property.
It will affect all owners of second homes and empty properties and is yet another excuse to extract money for no real return when in many cases a long term empty property is in need of improvements that would benefit from grants
It will affect all, make the cuts in the Benefits sector instead
It will affect anyone who has had to relocate due to work, and who is paying both rent and a mortgage.
It will affect me, in that I have no income and am finding it very difficult to pay any council tax charges, let alone, a massive increase.
I've bought next door to renovate to the same high standard as my own. But charging me twice when I only live in one, I think it would be very unfair as these days we are taxed on everything else!
None. I think discount should never have been offered.
Not realistic - landlord licencing + reduction is housing benefits mean its difficult to find tenants who stay!!!
Only the council will benefit
People do not leave their home EMPTY for the fun of it, It is left empty either 1) waiting to sell 2) waiting to rent 3) waiting for change of application for use 4) construction work
People trying to make a living which is hard at the moment.
People who are actively trying to sell or let seem to be unfairly punished by the imposition of Council Tax after 6 months of the property being empty. In the current market it is not reasonable to expect the property to be let or sold within the 6 months. This period needs to be extended or abolished completely if the owner can provide cogent evidence of active marketing for sale or letting.
People who move out of their home, to look after disabled relatives in their homes.
Persons who live many years in Hyndburn and have a good record of paying council tax should not be punished if they are preparing a home for retirement ie Adapting to disability needs which they may not afford in one year.
Private landlords
Private landlords renovating property at will discourage renovation as no income + increased charges
Should give Grant to empty house Council Tax should be no Tax on empty home
Stay as you are
The changes are unfair to homeowners actively seeking to sell a property who have reduced asking price several times but are still unable to sell through no fault of their own.
The house is being renovated slowly as we can afford it and an increase in Council Tax will slow this work down.
The proposals will certainly affect people on low incomes who own a second property - adversely, as they already pay Council Tax for where they live. Address this by not introducing the proposals!

The whole proposal is atrocious in reality the scheme for bringing empty properties back in to use is just an excuse for the government to loot the people and make life more difficult than what it already is.
This is another tax squeeze which will devalue the property market. Landlords who can't fill their houses won't suddenly be able to fill them just because of council tax. Instead they will get rid at low prices and devalue
This is clearly another dig at Landlords and yet another poor thought up idea by the government to generate more income and revenue for themselves. Will put off potential investors and will have a serious negative impact
This will have a major effect on all individuals or groups and again it's the wrong people again being penalized for other wrong doing people with the wright people having to pay - usually the ones that are working.
Very unfair as my 2nd home is for our retirement in Hyndburn investing in our area
We have a property in Woodnook that is in negative equity due to failed regeneration schemes and this has been an on-going political issue that has now caused more damage by continually proposing different schemes that never materialise.
We were the victims of a burglary and arson attack - it took the insurance company over 6 months to start the work and almost 12 months until we could move back. This should be considered.
Will affect people working abroad who wish to retain a home in the UK. It is not correct that such people should pay for 100% of services which are not consumed. Would propose a discount in such circumstances
Well I think people on benefits will struggle to pay extra costs and then get into financial difficulties then getting properties repossessed as a result of the Councils actions
Will impact adversely on Landlords who try to keep their priorities up to date and tidy. 1. What time allowance will be made for when houses are being sold/bought or there is a change of tenant? 2. This seems a very narrow approach
Will negatively impact the area, as Landlord will "have" to fill house (otherwise lost him extra in council tax) with whatever tenants he can find. These are likely to be unemployed and wouldn't normally be considered for renting
Your ideas will promote rushed and ill-considered renovation in areas in great need of investment. If houses are derelict then please go ahead with your plans. Where a homeowner can demonstrate progress - even if slow – please take into consideration.
Your proposals will affect people that have acquired property through the death of a relative, & want to keep this property for their children.

**Schedule 2 – additional comments to support your responses on our proposed changes or any alternative options you would like us to consider and reasons**

Anything to improve the way some landlords operate must be welcomed
As long as this is not just another money grabbing scheme most of it will be fair especially second home owners.
Being the owner of an empty property in Hyndburn which was left to me by a relative, its. Now been empty for 2 years+ because of the condition. Of the property and lack of funds. The property is now being refurbished.
Council tax is for services used, Policing, drainage. Roads etc. What services does an empty house use. None! This is just another way of taxing people at a time when they cannot afford it.
Empty homes should have no charge so people can spend that money on the home to bring it back in to use.
Empty homes undergoing structural repairs should be exempt from council tax for 3 months
Empty houses are unoccupied because its not easy to rent them out as they aren't many people who want to move into smaller towns with little amenities on offer, also owners find it difficult financially to renovate and refurbish.
Every case is individual and the reasons of why the property is unoccupied should be addressed. The priority should be empty retail/other business premises

<p>Further regulation on the mixing of rental and owner occupier property. When mixed rental properties with a regular turnover or tenants destabilises the neighbourhood. The house prices for homeowners are adversely affected as there are conflicting market forces in play. The general presentation of an estate is adversely affected by a high proportion of rental property. Absentee landlords and letting agencies only care about the profit and give no consideration to the community.</p>
<p>I agree passionately that tax should be fair and am happy to pay my share. Where houses are not on the market/up for rental and individuals or users are not making an effort to shift them this may serve as an incentive. For those of us already doing everything we can (and having reduced the price of the property by £60K; I think I'm doing everything I can); they should not be any further penalty. Owning the property is already penalty enough. The council should not take blanket measures but consider these things on a case by case basis. I do think that in order to sell houses more quickly focus should be put on improving the economic climate of the area rather than simple penalisation however. I realise the whole country is in depression but Hyndburn seems to be worse than most places. I now live in the South for employment.</p>
<p>I also renovated and split my house into two and sold another. These have improved the neighbourhood and pushed the value of surrounding houses up. You have now gained an extra council tax from splitting the property into two.</p>
<p>I believe Council should work with owners to fund repairs and then put the property in use with local people, like they do in Essex Council! That is only cheapest options for owners and local Council!</p>
<p>I believe that there are quite large differences between landlords having homes empty and personal home owners. All should be treated on a case by case basis.</p>
<p>I do not live in my house because Hyndburn Council has been responsible for an amazingly dramatic decline in the Peel Park/ Barnfield Ward. Buy the house call it New Woodnook as it now awful.</p>
<p>I feel that there is a difference between someone who has an empty home per se and someone who is trying to sell their property + fill the home. The collapse of the housing market due to the banking system.</p>
<p>I have bought a very derelict cottage, after 12 months the work to renovate it, is coming closer to completion. The neighbours have been so supportive &amp; helpful &amp; are so pleased. That the house is now going to improve their house.</p>
<p>I own 2 properties - some years ago they were both broken into and completely trashed - my agent has told me there's absolutely no point having them re-furbished as it's very likely that the same will happen again due to the area.</p>
<p>I strongly disagree with proposed charges and think there will be no positive impact for the residents of Hyndburn. It will be difficult for people to pay this rise along with the other rising costs of living and low income workers.</p>
<p>I think empty house's or undergoing works shall not have to pay any Council Tax.</p>
<p>I think paying 50% council tax is practical and affordable. I don't agree that empty property is a problem.</p>
<p>I think that paying 50% of council tax for an empty property is more than enough. Any increases as proposed would cripple me financially - where would I get the extra money from?</p>
<p>I think you should leave things as they are, with empty properties paying half council tax. This is just another proposal by another greedy government to skim money off hard working people in order to pay for their mistakes.</p>
<p>I'd support the Council's moves to reduce the amount of discount it gives to anyone with a second or empty home so long as the additional money is used to support the delivery of services to the people of Hyndburn.</p>
<p>If a property is "for sale" or "let" then there should be no or 50% charges.</p>
<p>If an empty home is being kept in good repair and is actively in the process of being sold increasing council tax will only act as an added burden. Effectively a fine.</p>
<p>If an empty house can be proven to be having work done then it should be exempt from/ reduced from TAX!</p>
<p>If you own a house then expect to pay Council Tax on it. Any discount only reflects what the whole community. Pays, and I am sure that this will help the Council with funds.</p>
<p>If you wish to help bring properties back to health, treat each house individually assess circumstances. Give advice, help with grants? Low interest loans etc. VAT rebate on materials. Encourage don't discourage.</p>
<p>In my case my uncle was on pension credit and paid no council tax. I have spent in excess of 20k to make the property saleable but people cannot sell so cannot buy at present.</p>
<p>It is a stupid money grabbing idea, it's people like us that are buying these run down homes, and making them good fit to live in. And sometimes when you have a few it takes a bit longer for them to be done up.</p>
<p>It would be better to work with the council rather than feeling punished to make them money</p>
<p>It would be good if the council would buy my property and then it would be habitable and cause me no money problems.</p>

<p>Its very unfair for people to pay Council Tax twice for second homes. No-one likes to keep empty properties. Usually hardship that limits people to spend on homes, this will make things worse.</p>
<p>Landlords are being squeezed too much with the ridiculous level of licensing fees, they would be advised to sell for that reason alone. Add another charge in and you will force some landlords out of business and HMRC loses</p>
<p>Landlords are getting no help or support with renting properties, times are hard and this will just put more. Pressure on the matter. Some landlords are trying to put properties back onto the market after bad tenants etc.</p>
<p>Landlords focus will simply be on re-listing not finding good tenants - to avoid c/tax liability - council needs to work with houses/landlords in poorer areas.</p>
<p>Landlords should be registered and their properties maintained at a decent standard. They are responsible for some areas becoming slum areas.</p>
<p>Leaving things as they are - people should only pay Council Tax once for where they live!!</p>
<p>Many people purchase homes to line in, and renovate themselves - charging council tax slows down the process.</p>
<p>Most landlords or people owning another home intending to sell it or rent it out will wish to do so a.s.a.p. In current climate it can take a long time - not due to owners fault, but owners will be penalised by these proposals.</p>
<p>My house is currently empty whilst on sale, the additional charges will leave me financial difficulties and is unfair whilst the property market is so poor</p>
<p>People like myself have had their empty home on the market for nearly 12 months but no buyers. Banks are not lending money and people being made redundant. The housing market is flat.</p>
<p>Please target the owners of derelict or abandoned properties. Please consider that Council Tax discounts (and charges for compulsory Landlord legislation in some areas) will cause some landlords to scale back</p>
<p>Please try and exercise fairness when deciding how much to charge people.</p>
<p>Reducing fly tipping and burglaries of empty properties would help properties to be of a higher standard and therefore tenanted quicker and by a better class of person</p>
<p>Structural repairs - if these are taking +1 year this suggests a financial struggle in which case these changes will only make things harder. I hope this will not reduce the quality of already poor privately rented properties in a rush to get them re-let.</p>
<p>Take priority for people in severe hardship and financial difficulties but the council are heartless so I know they will charge extra with no thought for the little person.</p>
<p>The house has been undergoing extensive building repairs since the death of parent it is nearly finished now and the finished project - will benefit the area also unable to move as quickly as we would like because of depression.</p>
<p>The house is kept in a tidy state and recently been re-roofed. And does not lower the tone of the 'neighbourhood.</p>
<p>The properties in Woodnook should have some regeneration money implemented to raise the standard of housing and decrease high turnover of rental tenancies which breaks down the community and increases anti-social behaviour and lack of positive input into the area. This is also damaged by landlords buying properties at a low cost and not keeping/ regulating their condition to a minimum standard for tenants. We hope council tax increase and the new landlord licensing scheme will have a positive impact.</p>
<p>The proposals should be shelved until the property market picks up and first time buyers are enabled to get a first foot on the property market by buying low cost older properties.</p>
<p>The whole monetary system was based on false principles and fake form of control by the ruling class, all taxation amounts to nothing more than theft.</p>
<p>There are many unused commercial properties in the borough for instance the Church Commercial pub these are being left to rot. It is high time that the owners ( if they can be traced ) are punished for lumbering the rest of the population with eye-sores and should be made to pay full tax on these properties. Just think for a moment. If you were a stranger wanting to invest in the borough and on your way in to town you drove past those properties would you invest in Hyndburn or would you just turn round and drive out because of the signs of dereliction. ?</p>
<p>We are struggling to afford to be able to do the renovations that are needed on our 2nd property, you should offer grants etc, not charge more! How are we supposed to afford it now, you're encouraging people to get into debt</p>
<p>We have an empty property + have been trying for 6 months to find a suitable tenant with little success.</p>
<p>We live across from two properties that are owned by Express Gifts. They have been empty for 10+ years and cause no end of problems. We are constantly asked by people who would be interested in living in one of them - the other has been allowed to go to ruin.</p>
<p>What a bad idea!! If I could get a tenant and fill the house - why wouldn't I?? Do you think they are empty out of choice??</p>
<p>Will affect people like me - a clergyman - living in a 'tied' house who have bought the 'empty' house for retirement</p>

Will not be able people to pay, property will be viewed as a thing to be avoided and will result in more empty property.

With selective licensing being introduced in 2012 landlords have got a lot to deal with, and to try and get this introduced for 2013/14 would be asking too much there has been too much in such a short period of time.

You have already decided what you are going to do. Make everybody pay council tax.