

# Void ( Empty) Properties - What is the Council doing to bring them into use?

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# What is an empty home?

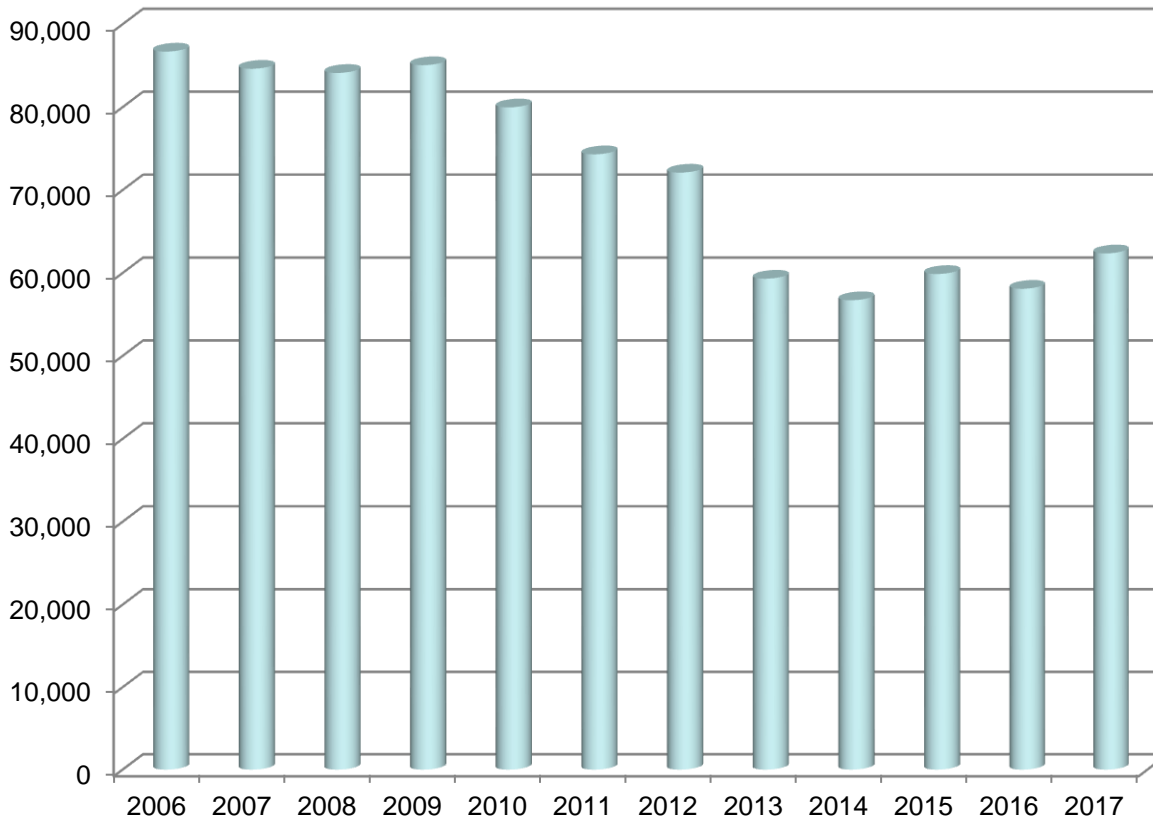
- A home left empty by a developer
- A 'buy to leave' property
- A home owned by an overseas investor
- A home awaiting demolition
- A flat above a shop
- A home which is a derelict building
- A second home
- A home subject to probate settlement
- A home which is for sale
- A home used for short term letting

# What is an empty home?

## Department of Housing, Communities....

- Council Tax Records
- A dwelling unoccupied for six months or more excluding...
  - ✗ owner is in hospital, prison, or care
  - ✗ repossessions
  - ✗ probate
  - ✗ 'second homes'

# Empty homes in London



# ‘When is a ‘Dwelling not a ‘Dwelling’



Commercial



Uninhabitable

# 1,565 homes empty for less than 6 months



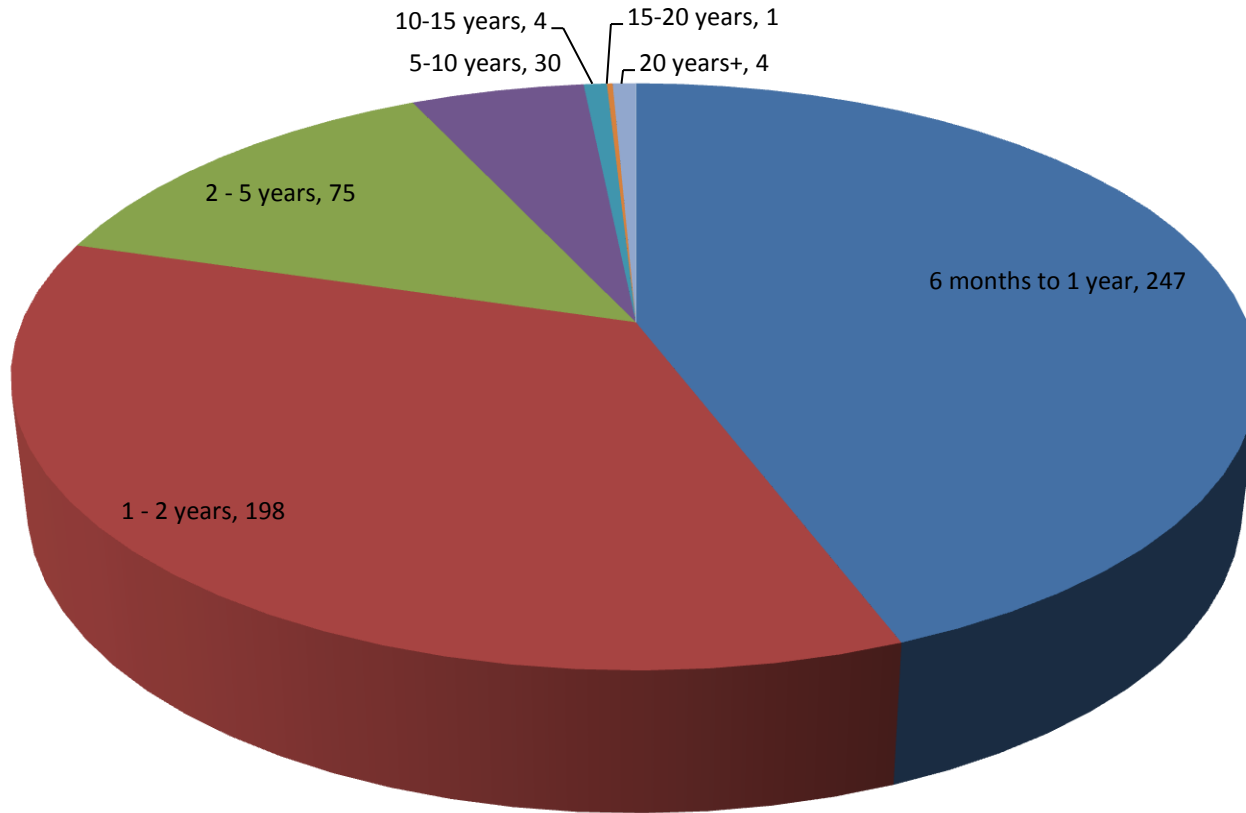
An aerial photograph of a modern high-rise apartment building with a curved facade and glass windows. The building is situated on a riverbank, with a city skyline visible in the background under a clear sky. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm glow. The building has multiple balconies with glass railings. The text is overlaid on the image in white boxes with blue text.

**1,264 Second Homes**

**190 for between 5 & 10 years**

**19 for more than 10 years**

# 559 Homes have been empty for more than 6 months





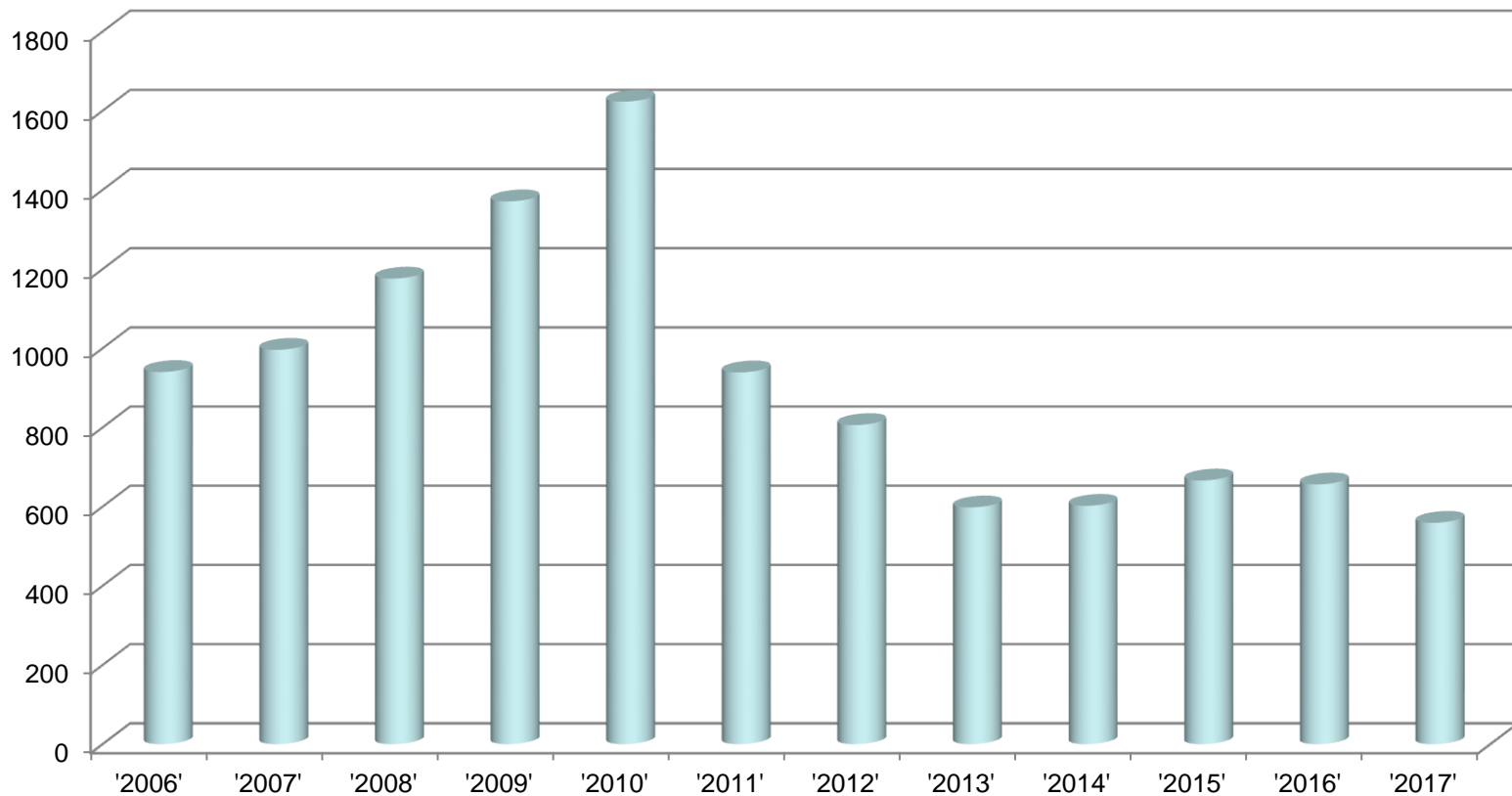
# Council Tax

- Empty Homes – 1.5 x CT after 2 years
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Homes – Standard Council Tax

Chancellors Autumn 2017 budget:

“I want to address the issue of empty properties. It can't be right to leave property empty when so many are desperate for a place to live. So we will give local authorities the power to charge a 100pc council tax premium on empty properties.”

# Empty homes in Tower Hamlets



# Who owns empty homes?

Of the 39 homes empty in November 2017 for more than five years :

<b>Private ownership</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Registered company: letting and operating real estate</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Registered company: Development of building projects</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Gateway Housing Association</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Poplar Harca</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Genesis Housing Trust</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Salvation Army</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>No longer empty</b>	<b>7</b>

# What brings homes back into use?

- 3% - enforcement action
- 11% - the threat of enforcement action
- 6% - grant aid
- 58% of properties were brought back into use using a combination of advice and guidance.

**And.... Market forces**



**What is the council doing?**

# Casework

- Housing Strategy and Private Housing investment Team
- Caseloads – consistent engagement with owners, Council tax, planning and enforcement
- Advice, information, assistance is key
- Mail-outs to owners
- CPOs considered but not recently used
- No use of EDMOs

# Empty Homes Grants

In return for letting through housing options at LHA rate for five years :

- Up to £20,000 for one bedroom
- Up to £25,000 for two bedrooms
- Up to £30,000 for three bedrooms or more

# Compulsory Purchase Orders

- **Town and Country Planning Act 1990** - to facilitate the development, redevelopment or improvement on or in relation to the land and buildings
- **Housing Act 1985** - for the provision or improvement of housing. Can only be used as a last resort: “*a compelling case in the public interest*”

**Substantial unrecoverable costs *in addition to the market value of the property***



# EDMO Amendment Order 2012

- Council must demonstrate:
  - Anti-social behaviour
  - community support for EDMO
  - Empty for at least two years
- three months' notice before interim order
- Interim EDMO of twelve months before
- Final EDMO - strict cost recovery limits

# Questions?



# Housing Act 2004: Empty Dwellings Management Orders

- First-Tier Tribunal can authorise an interim EDMO if dwelling empty for six months; and
- no reasonable prospect of it becoming occupied in the near future

Where consent to letting cannot be obtained, the interim order may be replaced with a final EDMO

# Coalition view on EDMOs:

‘These draconian and heavy-handed state powers have allowed councils to seize private homes in perfect condition, including their fixtures and fittings, just because the homes have been empty for a short while.

The Coalition Government is standing up for the civil liberties of law-abiding citizens. Fundamental human rights include the right to property’

Eric Pickles..**2011**