



Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 0315148
Date 30 March 2015

Empty Property List

Request:

Can I request you for the details/list of empty homes listed in Wolverhampton council. Mainly I am looking for residential properties which are empty for any reason and owned by council. Can I ask you the details of asking price, structural issues if any and the land they sits on.

Response:

The Council is refusing to provide lists of addresses of empty residential properties where the property is owned by individuals. In making such refusals the Council refers to the following exemptions contained within the Act:

Section 31(1)(a) Law Enforcement - where disclosure would prejudice the prevention of crime. The exemption contained in Section 31 (Law Enforcement), requires the Council to consider the public interest when weighing up disclosure or withholding the requested information. Whilst the Council recognises that there is a public interest in enabling empty properties to be brought back into use, the Council also recognises that there is a public interest in reducing potential criminal activity in empty properties, especially those owned by private individuals.

Section 40(2) Personal Data other than that of the requestor – where disclosure would breach the data protection principles contained in the Data Protection Act 1998– in relation to empty properties owned by individuals. Wolverhampton City Council has wider responsibilities and concerns regarding community safety. There is a risk associated with such a list entering the public domain due to the known link between empty property and anti-social behaviour. The Council's view is that any anti-social activity will be distressing for residents who live nearby, residents to whom the Council has a responsibility.

However, all Council owned properties (and private properties where the Council has intervened through compulsory purchase) are offered for sale through the councils appointed auctioneer CP Bigwood.

The latest catalogue can be found via the following link <http://www.cpbigwood.com/property/auction/34/future-auctions>

[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

It is not considered in the public interest under FOI to disclose details of private individuals relating to empty residential properties. However, if individual properties are identified, the Empty Property Team will contact the owner and pass on details of interested purchasers.

In terms of your request for number of commercial properties, the latest catalogue can be found via the following links:

<http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=3446&p=0>

<http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1870&p=0>