

Report Title	EMPTY PROPERTIES
Meeting	Colne and District Committee
Meeting Date	14 th May 2026
Report Author	Simon O'Hara
Directorate	Housing & Environmental Health
Lead Executive Member(s)	Councillor Zafar Ali
Wards Affected	Boulsworth and Foulridge, Waterside and Horsfield, Vivary Bridge
Public. Part Exempt, or Fully Exempt	Public
Appendices (if any)	N/A

1. Executive Summary

To inform the Committee on the current position regarding unoccupied properties in the Colne District. There are a number of known vacant houses in the Colne and District Committee area. These houses are a wasted resource, attract anti-social behaviour and detract from the amenity and prosperity of the area.

2. Recommendations

That the Committee note the current position with empty houses in their wards.

3. Information: the Rationale & Evidence for the Recommendations

To ensure that empty residential properties across the borough are effectively managed, it is important that appropriate enforcement action is taken where necessary to support the re-use of vacant homes and reduce long-term inactivity within the housing stock.

Pendle Borough Council's Local Plan Core Strategy, adopted on 17 December 2015, identifies the need to address the challenges associated with redundant and low-demand housing. Tackling empty and under-used properties forms a key part of this approach and contributes towards creating a more balanced and vibrant housing market, offering a good mix of high-quality and affordable homes to meet local needs.

Across the borough, there are currently 1107 properties recorded for council tax purposes which have been empty for more than six months. This figure includes 172 properties that are listed as

second homes. In addition, 335 properties are exempt from council tax. Taken together, this equates to an overall vacancy rate of 3.5%. This is above the Lancashire average of 3.4% and also that of the national average for England, which stood at 2.7% in 2024.

Within the Colne and District Committee area, there are 229 residential properties that have been vacant for more than six months, alongside a further 35 properties classed as second homes. The combined total of 264 properties represents approximately 2.6% of the housing stock within the wards covered by the Committee. In addition, there are 81 properties in this area which are exempt from council tax. The table below provides a ward-by-ward breakdown of empty properties, categorised as second homes, vacant for over six months up to two years, and vacant for over two years.

Ward	Second homes (over 6mths)	Over 6 months to 2 years	Over 2 years	Total
Boulsworth & Foulridge	10	43	30	83
Vivary Bridge	7	45	27	79
Waterside & Horsfield	18	46	38	102
Committee Area Total	35	134	95	264

4. Implications

Colne and District has seen a rise in the number of empty homes; however, this increase reflects a wider trend across areas with similar housing stock, both regionally in the Northwest and England as a whole.

The Council's priority continues to be long-term vacant homes, which have the greatest impact on housing supply and neighbourhood conditions. Targeted action is being taken to secure their return to use. These powers are being used where appropriate and proportionate and include the use of Compulsory Purchase Orders and Enforced Sales procedures.

Members are asked to note that relevant case law indicates that the Council should only undertake visits and inspections of properties where an initial assessment—such as checks against Council Tax records—suggests that the property is unoccupied.

5.1 Financial Implications

As part of its approach to encouraging the re-use of empty homes, the Council applies Council Tax premiums for the following periods:

- Properties empty for **between 1 and 5 years** are subject to a **100% Council Tax premium**
- Properties empty for **between 5 and 10 years** are subject to a **200% Council Tax premium**
- Properties empty for **more than 10 years** are subject to a **300% Council Tax premium**

In addition, with effect from **April 2026**, the Council has introduced a **100% Council Tax premium on second homes**.

5.2 **Legal and Governance Implications - NONE**

5.3 **Climate and Biodiversity Implications – NONE**

5.4 **Human Resources Implications - NONE**

5.5 **Equality and Diversity Implications – NONE**

6. **Consultation - NONE**

7. **Alternative Options Considered – N/A**

8. **Statutory Officer Sign off** (please put an x in the relevant box below)

Section 151 Officer	X
Monitoring Officer	X

9. Background Documents

1. Pendle Council's Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted 17/12/15)

Contact Officers

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