

Request Details - FOI5962

I am researching empty homes and would like to find out information about empty properties in your local authority. Please supply me with the following information under the Freedom of Information Act.

1. How many empty dwellings were there in your local authority on 31st March 2011?
2. a) What is the current total number of empty dwellings within your local authority where demolition is, or was, planned?

b) Out of these, how many are:
 - Privately owned
 - Owned by the council
 - Owned by housing associations
 - Owned by any other public body
3. a) What specific measures do you use to safeguard empty dwellings from risks (such as squatting)?
b) How much has it cost, in the last financial year, to secure council-owned empty dwellings from risks (such as squatters)?
c) How much do you spend per property to secure against these risks?
4. How many empty dwellings that were owned by your local authority have been transferred to another organisation under your control within the last two years?

I would like the information to be emailed to me at alicefoi@tigeraspect.co.uk. If you are unable to email some of the information, please send hard copies marked for my attention to 5 Soho Square, London, W1D 3QA.

If you are able to supply some of this information more quickly than other items, please supply each item as soon as it becomes available. I would be most grateful if you could let me know roughly when I might expect to start receiving information.

Please can you acknowledge receipt of this request?

Response Details - FOI5962

Please find herewith the following:

I am researching empty homes and would like to find out information about empty properties in your local authority. Please supply me with the following information under the Freedom of Information Act.

1.How many empty dwellings were there in your local authority on 31st March 2011?

As at 03 April 2011 there were 6102 Long Term Empties (this is where properties have been empty for more than 6 months)3678 Unoccupied Furnished Properties.

Exemption Class A -H

CLASS A - Under / requires structural repair 176

CLASS B - Charity 2

CLASS C - Empty & Unfurnished 4575

CLASS D - Liable Person detained 29

CLASS E - In hospital / res care 451

CLASS F - Owned by the estate of a deceased person 1747

CLASS G - Occupation prohibited 5

CLASS H - Religious occupation 22

2.a) What is the current total number of empty dwellings within your local authority where demolition is, or was, planned?

b) Out of these, how many are:

-Privately owned

Birmingham City Council only record applications to demolish private properties. The number of applications received for 2009/2010 was 109. The figures for 2010/11 will be reported during October 2011.

- Owned by the council

Answer =273 as at the end of Aug 2011

-Owned by housing associations

-Owned by any other public body

Birmingham City Council do not hold this level of Management information and this would be more accurately ascertained from the individual RSL/ Housing Associations

3.a) What specific measures do you use to safeguard empty dwellings from risks (such as squatting)?

In line with Birmingham's Empty Property Strategy 2007-12 the City's Empty Property Team have a range of enforcement powers in particular Sec 29 of Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 which is served upon owners of privately owned empty properties which are being accessed by unauthorised entry. Work is carried out in default should the owner not comply with the legal notice to prevent further access being gained.

In regard to those properties that are empty and awaiting demolition we supply and fit security screens and perma screens, drain down tanks etc and isolate all services, in some cases this extends to removal of all internal metal and pipe work and the provision of physical on site security guards and for communal areas we use anti climb paint and fencing.

For properties being repaired and relet the repair contractor, in conjunction with housing management, will determine the type of security to be used dependant on the level of risk. Security measures may include, but not limited to, metal or polymer screens, alarms, net curtains or No additional security is used where it has been determined that there is minimal risk.

b) How much has it cost, in the last financial year, to secure council-owned empty dwellings from risks (such as squatters)?

For those properties scheduled for demolition the cost to secure properties in the last financial year was £68,722

For properties to be relet the cost of security is not identified separately as it forms part of the overall cost of the void repair works.

For all other properties the cost was £101,719 - £18.53 per void

c) How much do you spend per property to secure against these risks?

For those properties scheduled for demolition the cost for fitting security is approximately £1630 per property dependent on its size

For properties to be relet see above

4) How many empty dwellings that were owned by your local authority have been transferred to another organisation under your control within the last two years?

No empty dwellings have been transferred to Tenancy Management Organisations within the last two years.