

# **Council Tax discount policy for renovated empty properties**

## **The purpose**

This policy is intended to offer an incentive to owners of empty homes to return them back in to use and ensure they make a positive contribution to the Borough's housing market. The policy will seek to relieve property owners from the burden of paying Council Tax during the period that the property is undergoing renovation. The renovation works will be aiming to bring the property up to a decent standard of repair and thereafter be occupied as a household's main or principle residence.

## **Eligibility Criteria**

The property must be,

1. In a state of disrepair that includes the presence of significant or multiply category 1 hazards as defined by the Housing Act 2004.
2. Currently vacant and has been in a vacant state for a minimum of 12 months.
3. Unfurnished.
4. Occupied as a household's main or principle home within a period of six months from the date of issue of the schedule of works.

The renovation works must be,

1. Completed within a period of six months and the property occupied as describe in point 4 above.
2. Completed to the Council's Gold Accreditation Standard (Appendix 1).
3. Defined and set out by an appropriate officer of the Council in a schedule of works that is issued to the owner. Renovation work cannot start until the schedule of work is received.
4. Signed off as complete and satisfactory in line with the issued schedule of works by an appropriate officer of the Council at the end of the renovation period.
5. Include all relevant safety certificates such as a Gas Safety Certificate and an Electrical Condition Report. If required Building Regulations Approval.

The property owner must,

1. Not have any Council Tax debts or other arrears owned to the Council on the property relevant to this discount or any other property in their ownership.
2. Be intending to rent the property out once renovated or reside in the property themselves as an owner occupier.
3. Be a licensed landlord if they have any rented properties in their management and/or ownership in any of the Council's designated areas for selective licensing.
4. Be a member of the Council's Good Landlord and Agent Scheme or be actively working towards membership.
5. Have no outstanding disrepair cases on any rented properties in their management and/or ownership.
6. Provide proof of ownership

7. Provided an intended owner occupation or intended lettings certificate.

### **The procedure**

1. The property owner will apply to the Council on the relevant application form.
2. The Council will respond within 10 working days to confirm whether the property and owner are eligible for the discount scheme.
3. If the property and owner are eligible for the discount scheme the Council will contact the owner within 5 working days of this notification to agree an appointment for the Council's Technical Officer to carry out a schedule of works for the property.
4. This schedule of works will be issued to the owner 10 working days from the property inspection and this date of issue will be the start of the six month period within which the property must be renovated to a satisfactory standard, approved by the Council and occupied as a household's main or principle home.
5. If the property requires planning permission then the date of the permission will be the start of the six month renovation and occupation period (*This will only apply if the permission is granted after the schedule of works is issued*).
6. Once the owner is satisfied that the renovation works are complete and the property is occupied they will contact the Council's Empty Homes Team to notify them and agree an appointment for the Council's Technical Officer to inspect the works.
7. Following this inspection the Council's Technical Officer will contact the owner within 5 working days to notify them whether the renovation works are satisfactory and meet the Gold Accreditation Standard.
8. If the works are satisfactory and the property is verified as occupied the Council's Empty Homes Team will liaise with the Council Tax Department to determine the application.
9. If the Council are satisfied that all the component parts of the process have been complied with the Council Tax department will notify the owner that the discount is approved and process the discount.