

Exchequer Services

London Borough of Bexley
Erith Town Hall
Erith, Kent
DA8 1TL



www.bexley.gov.uk

m/r 5791297

y/r

Date

2 October 2018

xxxx.xxxxxxxx@xxxxxx.xxx.xx

The person dealing with this matter is:

Gary Mitchell

Mr Joe Jarvis

Dear Mr Jarvis

Thank you for your request for information received on 4 September 2018 concerning: Please can you provide me with the following information under the Freedom Of Information Act 2000:-

- (a) addresses of empty residential properties that are within BEXLEY Borough Council area; and
- (b) the names of the owners of those properties referred to in (a).

This request is being handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I can confirm that the London Borough of Bexley holds the information you requested. However we are withholding that information since we consider that the following exemptions apply to it.

We consider that the absolute exemption set out in Section 40 (Personal information) subsection 2 applies to question b of the information requested. Therefore, we have decided to withhold the information.

We also consider that the qualified exemption set out in Section 31 (1) (a) (Law enforcement) applies to the information requested in question a, therefore, we have decided to withhold the information.

In applying this exemption, we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the interest in favour of disclosure.

Factors in favour of disclosure

- * Promotion of the re-use of empty properties

Factors in favour of withholding

- * Prevention of squatting and criminal damage which might occur if addresses of empty properties were in the public domain.
- * Withholding the data enables individuals and organisations to better protect their properties

In all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

You should also note that s144 of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 has made squatting in residential properties illegal and therefore a criminal offence.

This adds further weight to the exemption being applied to the disclosure of the requested information.

In all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

If you are unhappy with the way your request for information has been handled, you can request a review by writing to:

Complaint and Freedom of Information Officer
London Borough of Bexley
Civic Offices
2 Watling Street
Bexleyheath
Kent
DA6 7AT

Or by email to xxx@xxxxxx.xxx.xx

Yours sincerely

Gary Mitchell
Deputy Head of Exchequer Services
Exchequer Services