



# City of Westminster

Ms Harriet Bell

Policy and Strategy  
Westminster City Council  
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London  
SW1E 6QP  
**Telephone** 0207 641 3921  
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**Our ref:** 9959465

**Your ref:**

**Date:** 7 August 2019

Dear Ms Bell

## Freedom of Information Act 2000

Thank you for your recent Freedom of Information request. You asked to be provided with the following information:

- 1) Can the council confirm their current number of Long Term Empty Properties as of the 8th May (those domestic properties which have been empty for six months or older)*
- 2) What work is the council currently undertaking or planning to undertake around reducing their long term empty properties in 2019?*
- 3) During 2018 did you undertake any work around reducing your Long Term Empty Properties. If you did was this done using internal resource or a third party?*
- 4) If yes is the answer to question three, did the council review every single long term property*
- 5) Does the reduction of empty homes in the council area form part of your Housing strategy?*
- 6) Does the council have a budget in place to help support the reduction of empty properties?*
- 7) How much did the council spend on temporary accommodation during 2018?*
- 8) Does the council offer financial support /loans to Long Term Empty property owners to help them bring properties back into use?*

## Response

- 1. Can the council confirm their current number of Long Term Empty Properties as of the 8th May (those domestic properties which have been empty for six months or older)*

163 properties that have been empty for more than 2 years

- 2) What work is the council currently undertaking or planning to undertake around reducing their long term empty properties in 2019?*

If an enquiry is received about a poor quality empty property, a letter is sent to the owner asking if they have plans to bring it back into use. If any property is reported as a danger to public health or is unsafe, or is causing nuisance, enforcement action may be taken. No Council Tax discount is offered on empty properties and from April

2018 the council has charged an additional Council Tax Premium on those empty properties that are unfurnished and have been vacant for two years.

*3) During 2018 did you undertake any work around reducing your Long Term Empty Properties. If you did was this done using internal resource or a third party?*

See above

*4) If yes is the answer to question three, did the council review every single long term property*

*5) Does the reduction of empty homes in the council area form part of your Housing strategy?*

No

*6) Does the council have a budget in place to help support the reduction of empty properties?*

No

*7) How much did the council spend on temporary accommodation during 2018?*

The gross amount spent on temporary accommodation during 2017/18 was £47.5million. The net amount was £4.9million.

*8) Does the council offer financial support /loans to Long Term Empty property owners to help them bring properties back into use?*

No

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to:

Information Management Team  
64 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1E 6QP  
[foi@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:foi@westminster.gov.uk)

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Further information is also available from the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113 or 01625 54 57 45

Fax: 01625 524510

Web: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

I will now close your request as of this date.

Yours sincerely

Westminster City Council