

## NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Viran Patel

Request-507048-  
4c1f35f2@whatdotheyknow.com

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

Contact Officer:

Direct Line:

Email

Date:

FOI051618

Garry Melding

01462 474216

[FOI2@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:FOI2@north-herts.gov.uk)

17th August 2018

Dear Mr Patel,

**Information request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000**  
**FOI051618 – List of vacant properties.**

Thank you for your request for information received on 06th August 2018.

Your request has now been processed and the information that we hold is attached at the bottom of this letter.

Further information explaining the Council's process for responding to information requests is available in our reception or on our website. If you have any queries regarding the process or your request, please do not hesitate to contact me.

If after receiving our full response, you feel dissatisfied with the information provided, or you disagree with a refusal decision, you have the right to ask for a review of the decision with the Council. We will accept review requests up to 60 days after our response. After that date we consider the case closed.

Review requests should be addressed to the Information & Asset Team Manager at North Hertfordshire District Council, Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth, Herts, SG6 3JF or emailed to [FOI2@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:FOI2@north-herts.gov.uk)

It is important that you include the above FOI reference number on all correspondence related to this request.

If following a review by NHDC you are still dissatisfied with the Council's response, you can contact the Information Commissioners Office for guidance or to make an appeal at:- Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire. SK9 5AF  
Telephone: 0303 123 1113 (or 01625 545745 if you would prefer not to call an '03' number, or +44 1625 545745 if calling from overseas) [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

Thank you for your request.

Yours sincerely

Garry Melding  
**Information & Asset Officer**

**FOI051618 – 17/08/18**  
**List of vacant properties**

**Request:**

I would like to know a full list of Vacant Properties held by your organisation and any of its subsidiaries.

If possible their market value for sale or to let, whether they would be considered for a community asset transfer, if not then whether they are for sale or to let. In a clear and easy to read format. It would be supportive if the property is for sale or to let that it is listed on here too: <https://e-pims.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/government-property-finder/Home.aspx> and that you inform us of this intention or such listing in the request.

In the previous case in *Voyias v IC and LB Camden* (EA/201v1/0007), the requesters asked for substantially similar information, and the judge favoured disclosure. I appreciate the circumstances here are quite different, but the same principles should apply.

I understand there is a risk that your empty properties would be targeted by squatters should this the list of empty properties be public, but this is a very slim risk. The prejudice to law enforcement should be real, likely and substantial, as per *Hogan v the ICO* and *Oxford City Council*. I can assure you that my request is not sent in order to cause trouble for the authority, it is predominantly for my own research, with publication as part of campaigning materials. I am concerned at the sale of public assets, not a not an advocate for their illegal occupation. I would also say that I cannot imagine the disclosure of this list of properties to significantly affect a squatting problem that pre-existed my interest in the organisation. Overall the prejudice to law enforcement is very slim, and not severe. Since 12 months will be the time that this information will be released onto this site, unless others request this information separately. The requester is not liable for any issues that may arise in between or after.

It is in the public interest and transparency that this information is made publicly available under the public sector duty under the equality act allowing people to know of this information and make use of it under the Community Asset Transfer scheme and under the Human Rights Act Article 11 enabling the community to gather and make decisions on the allocation of such assets.

**Response:**

**Vacant Property<sup>1</sup> as at 15<sup>th</sup> August 2018**

Royston, Hertfordshire	
<u>Property</u>	<u>For Sale or To Let?</u>
Office, Barkway Street	No
Public Convenience, Barkway Street	No
Public Convenience, Kneesworth Street	No
Hitchin, Hertfordshire	
<u>Property</u>	<u>For Sale or To Let?</u>
Air Weapons Club, Fishponds Road	No
Market Flat, Churchgate	No
Market Office, Churchgate	No
Pavilion, Cadwell Lane	No
Pavilion, St John's Road	No
Pavilion, Woolgrove Road	No
Public Convenience, Portmill Lane	No

<sup>1</sup>Vacant Property is defined by the author of this document as follows:

*Buildings that:*

- *Are empty of people, including the public, North Hertfordshire District Council staff, tenants, licensees, ejusdem generis. The buildings may be visited by District Council staff and third parties under the instruction of the District Council, for example internal or external surveyors; and*
- *Are empty of chattels such as furniture and boxes ejusdem generis. The buildings may include landlord fixtures or tenant fixtures left behind by previous tenants or licensees; and*
- *Are unaffected by a right to exclusive occupation or possession by any party other than North Hertfordshire District Council; and*
- *The previous tenant or occupier, where previously let or licensed, has handed over the keys to North Hertfordshire District Council as owner or head landlord.*

NB: Properties in which North Hertfordshire District Council is the owner or head landlord, which are leased or licensed out by the District Council, and which otherwise fall within the definition of Vacant Property above are not included in the table.