

Empty Property Strategy Finding an empty property in Brighton & Hove

If you are interested in finding an empty property to buy or rent; either for your own use, to rent out or to develop and sell, the following information is designed to help you. The majority of empty residential properties in the City are privately owned and these notes relate to these properties (but some of the information will relate to a search for commercial property as well, and the empty property team will answer queries regarding empty council property is possible).

The council does not provide a list of empty residential properties but we do have a well developed and effective Empty Property Strategy which aims to work with both the owners of empty homes and those looking for an empty property.

Finding an empty property.

If you have a particular area where you are looking to buy, we suggest walking through that area and making a note of any addresses that appear empty to you. You can also contact local Estate Agents, Letting Agents, Auction houses and Property websites.

When you have identified possible addresses, call or e-mail us to see if we can help. We are happy to work through a list of properties and see if we have non-Data-protected information that we can provide. We can also write to owners direct with contact details for the interested buyer / developer, or a letter from the buyer / developer direct (forwarded by us). Email us at emptyproperties@brighton-hove.gov.uk

You can do a Land Registry search – www.landreg.gov.uk (charge applicable) - which may reveal the legal owner, although some properties are not registered and others may be out of date and show the owner as living at the address.

You can also check the register of planning applications, on the Brighton and Hove website [Planning Register](#). When a planning application has been made the owner's details (or an agent acting for them) are shown and this information is available to the public. Sometimes this may also give an indication as to why a property has remained empty, for example if the planning request has been refused and an appeal has been lodged.

It may also be worth writing a polite note and putting it through the door of the property itself – some owners regularly visit their property even if they leave it empty.

Do be aware though that some properties which appear empty may actually be occupied, even though they are in poor condition. If in doubt, please check with us first.

Please note – these properties are privately owned so the owners may choose not to sell.

Investors List

We hold a record of interested parties who are actively looking for property to buy / develop/ rent. To be added to this list please forward an email confirming your request to join this list to emptyproperties@brighton-hove.gov.uk. Selling the property is one of the options we generally advise owners of. If they are interested in selling, we will endeavour to email round all investors with details of the property on their behalf. We can also write to individual owners (where you have identified the property) enclosing your details or a letter from you direct if you prefer.

Commercial property / Pop up shops / Arts projects

Commercial property

For a commercial / social enterprise ventures seeking **commercial property** there is a commercial property database on the council's website: [Search our commercial property database](#) . This is in the Business and Trade section of the website – you may find other information of interest there as well. There are also specialist agents/auction houses that deal with commercial property.

Pop-up shops

The council no longer has a scheme dealing specifically with rental of short term space or pop-up schemes but the partner organisation we previously worked with – We Are Pop Up – are still operating a scheme at commercial rates. <https://www.wearepopup.com>

Arts projects

The search information in this leaflet can equally apply if you are seeking a building or a space for an arts project. The team that deal with arts and community projects within the council is [Arts & Cultural Projects Team](#) . There is also a contact for holding events on council land [Organising an event on council land](#)

VAT rates and empty properties

VAT rates for developing empty properties

There are **lower VAT rates** for developing empty properties. VAT reduces to 5% on certain costs (as opposed to 20%) if the property has been empty for over two years - or if the conversion is of a non-residential building to residential or - is providing more or less units, and reduces to 0% if empty for over ten years and for sale after completion. The empty property team can provide a letter confirming time empty. Conditions apply so please contact the local HM Customs and Excise office (Business Services and Taxes) for details / confirmation. National Advice Service : 0845 010 9000.

For further information about any anything contained in this factsheet or if you would like to speak to someone about your property search, please contact:

Empty Property Officer
Room 217
Hove Town Hall
Norton Road, Hove
BN3 4AH

Or for further advice please call **(01273) 293297 / 293035** or email

emptyproperties@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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You can request this information in another language.