

London Borough of Barnet
2 Bristol Avenue,
Colindale NW9 4EW
25 July 2022
Our ref: 8322513

Thank you for your request received on 24 June 2022, for the following information:

I am requesting a list of full addresses* for all residential buildings/properties that:

- 1. Are derelict or abandoned, or have been empty long-term, and are owned by Barnet Council.**
- 2. Barnet Council know of to be derelict or abandoned.**
- 3. Have been reported to the Barnet Council or building control section/counterpart as being derelict or abandoned.**
- 4. Have had a council tax reduction applied to the dwelling**
- 5. Are exempt from council tax payments.**
- 6. Have had the long-term empty council tax premium/empty homes surcharge applied to the dwelling.**

***Full address consists of:**

Building/Flat Number
Street Name
Town
City
Postcode

I require no personal information of private individuals, only the property address and postcode of the residential property (so that the Data Protection act is not broken (Data Protection Act 1998; section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000)), but you can list the information of properties that are owned by other parties, with their relevant contact details.

A spreadsheet with the data on will suffice.

We have processed this request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Response

I can confirm that London Borough of Barnet holds the information you requested.

However, we believe that the exemptions detailed below applies to some of this information and this is withheld.

Please see the Refusal Notice below.

I am requesting a list of full addresses* for all residential buildings/properties that:

1. Are derelict or abandoned, or have been empty long-term, and are owned by Barnet Council.

See exemption below.

2. Barnet Council know of to be derelict or abandoned.

See exemption below. Further information about bring empty properties can be found on our website: [Empty properties | Barnet Council](#)

3. Have been reported to the Barnet Council or building control section/counterpart as being derelict or abandoned.

See exemption below.

4. Have had a council tax reduction applied to the dwelling

See exemption below. There are currently 2,317 properties receiving a Council Tax reduction as they are classed as a second home.

5. Are exempt from council tax payments.

Barnet Council does not offer an exemption for empty properties, therefore the full charge is payable. There are currently 2,724 properties listed as being empty.

6. Have had the long-term empty council tax premium/empty homes surcharge applied to the dwelling.

See exemption below. There are currently 581 properties that are being charged the empty premium.

Refusal Notice

Section 31(1)(a) Law enforcement

We consider that the qualified exemption set out in Section 31 (Law Enforcement) subsection(1)(a) applies to the remaining information requested. Therefore, we have decided to withhold some of 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

- There is a public interest in being open and transparent in respect of public funds.
- There would be an interest to certain members of the public regarding the empty status of properties.
- Some local authorities may have disclosed similar information to that.

Factors in favour of withholding

- The information could be used to commit fraud.
- The disclosure of the information would breach GDPR
- All Local Authorities have faced significant cuts to their budgets in recent years and the Council believes that, by not disclosing this information, this would prevent any crime taking place rather than spending extra resources trying to detect and investigate whether crime has been committed, which would be in the public interest as those resources could be better used for the public good.
- Overall the Council considers that disclosure of the requested information would result in the need to implement disproportionate steps and additional expense to the public purse to counter an increased fraud risk that did not exist at present. It does not consider this to be in the public interest.
- Even if a significant number of local authorities have disclosed similar information to that requested in this case, it does not automatically follow that all public authorities should disclose that information.

In the Council's view it would not be in the public interest to expose it to such potential costs and expenses given that they would be funded from the public purse.

The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Further information

If you are interested in the data that the council holds you may wish to visit Open Barnet, the council's data portal. This brings together all our published datasets and other information of interest on one searchable database for anyone, anywhere to access. <http://open.barnet.gov.uk/>

Advice and Assistance : Direct Marketing

If you are a company that intends to use the names and contact details of council officers (or other officers) provided in this response for direct marketing, you need to be registered with the Information Commissioner to process personal data for this purpose. You must also check that the individual (whom you wish to contact for direct marketing purposes) is not registered with one of the Preference Services to prevent Direct Marketing. If they are you must adhere to this preference.

You must also ensure you comply with the Privacy Electronic and Communications Regulations (PECR). For more information follow this Link www.ico.org.uk

For the avoidance of doubt the provision of council (and other) officer names and contact details under FOI does not give consent to receive direct marketing via any media and expressly does not constitute a 'soft opt-in' under PECR.

Your rights

If you are unhappy with the way your request for information has been handled, you can request a review within the next 40 working days by writing to the Information Management Team at: foi@barnet.gov.uk. Or by post to Records & Information Management Service, Assurance Group, London Borough of Barnet, 2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, NW9 4EW

If, having exhausted our review procedure, you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you will have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF (telephone: 0303 123 1113; website www.ico.org.uk). There is no charge for making an appeal.