Vacant and empty dwellings Kent Local Authorities 2015

Related documents

- Housing Stock
- Dwelling completions
- Homelessness
- House prices
- Affordable completions
- Rent Levels

Note: In this bulletin 'Kent' refers to the Kent County Council area which excludes Medway Unitary Authority

Further information

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This bulletin presents vacant and empty dwellings information for local authorities in the County of Kent for 2015. The data was published by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and collected from Council Tax records.

Empty property should be considered relative to how the housing market functions. Allowances must be made for a small amount of stock that will be empty due to people moving, away from home, in care or taking extended holidays, also some property will be temporary inhabitable because of being refurbished, renovated or involved with legal disputes.

Summary

- According to council tax records at the 5th October 2015 there were a total of 15,470 vacant dwellings in Kent (KCC area), in addition there were a further 2,910 vacant dwellings in the Medway Unitary Area.
- There were a total of 5,375 long term vacant dwellings in Kent and Medway (4,496 in Kent and 897 in the Medway council area). Long-term empty homes are those dwellings which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for over six months.
- The number of long term vacant dwellings in Kent increased by 38 properties last year. However, this follows six consecutive years of annual reductions.
- Long term vacant properties represent for 0.7% of the Kent housing stock. Below the national average of 0.9%

Summary

Vacant properties are recorded as being 'all' vacant properties and 'long term' vacant properties. Long term vacant properties are considered to be property that is known to be vacant or empty for 6 months or more. These are considered to be a better measure of judging the size and seriousness of the problem. It also offers most potential for targeting areas where there are a high number of properties and bringing them back into occupied accommodation.

'All' vacant or empty dwellings (Includes 'long term')

- According to council tax records at the 5th October 2015 there were a total 15,470 vacant dwellings in Kent (KCC area); 320 fewer properties than last year. This figure included all tenures (Local Authority, Housing Association and Private sector); although the majority of empty homes are privately owned (Table 1).

- At the local level across the county the number of vacant homes varied from 2,420 in Thanet district to 680 in Gravesham. This represents 16% and 4% respectively of the total vacant dwellings in Kent (Table1).

- The average for England for all vacant dwellings is 2.55% of dwelling stock. Kent (KCC area) is below the national average with 2.38%. However, three Kent districts (Dover, Shepway, and Thanet) plus Medway are above the national average (Table 3).

'Long term' vacant or empty dwellings

- Kent (KCC area) has seen an increase in the number of long term empty homes compared to last year, an increase of 38 properties (or +0.85%). This follows six consecutive years of annual reductions during which time long term vacants decreased by 3,181 (Table 2).

- There were 4,496 long term empty properties in Kent (0.7% of the total Kent housing stock) and a further 879 (0.8%) in Medway, making a total of 5,375 long term empty properties. This is below the national average of 0.9%. However long term rates vary across the county from Shepway with 1.27% of stock to Maidstone with 0.40% (Table 3).

- Most districts have reduced their long term vacant properties since 2008; some more successfully than others; Ashford by as much as 60%. In contrast to Tonbridge and Malling which has shown an increase in long term vacant property for three consecutive years. Five other Kent districts recorded increased long term vacancies compared to last year (Table 2).

- Thanet district has the most long term vacant properties with 731. Three Kent Districts account for 41% of the county's long term vacant properties: Thanet 731 (16%), Shepway 641 (14%) and Dover 478 (11%) (Table 2).

Table 1

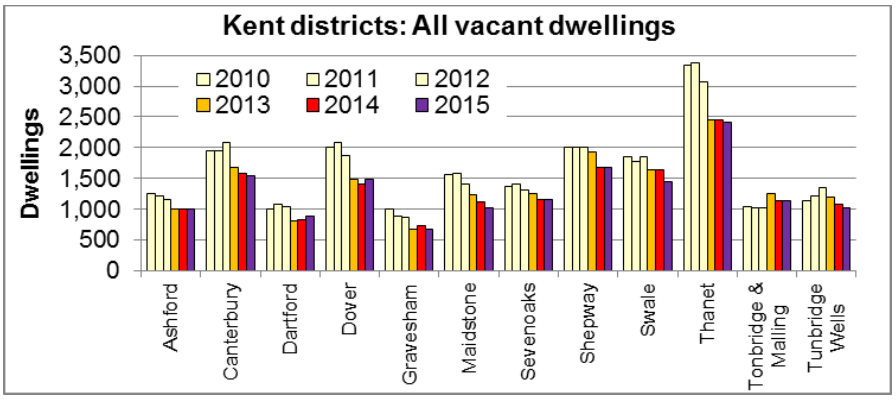
Kent: All vacant dwellings[1] by local authority district, England, from 2004

Source: Council Tax Base (CTB) return

	Date to which figures relate [2]												
	01-Nov **2004**	*10-Oct* **2005**	*09-Oct* **2006**	*08-Oct* **2007**	*06-Oct* **2008**	*05-Oct* **2009**	*04-Oct* **2010**	*03-Oct* **2011**	*01-Oct* **2012**	*07-Oct* **2013**	*06-Oct* **2014**	*05-Oct* **2015**	*% of Kent*
Ashford	1,096	1,262	1,443	1,431	1,306	1,228	1,246	1,221	1,163	997	1,007	1,008	*6.52*
Canterbury	1,819	2,041	2,079	1,995	1,962	1,879	1,941	1,955	2,091	1,678	1,584	1,544	*9.98*
Dartford	1,083	970	1,007	1,041	1,136	1,152	993	1,086	1,033	814	837	878	*5.68*
Dover	1,696	1,749	1,881	1,853	2,001	2,070	2,014	2,087	1,873	1,490	1,400	1,476	*9.54*
Gravesham	1,181	1,091	1,231	1,026	829	1,048	998	892	862	682	728	680	*4.40*
Maidstone	1,344	1,454	1,516	1,524	1,647	1,511	1,554	1,583	1,401	1,239	1,112	1,017	*6.57*
Sevenoaks	1,154	1,354	1,274	1,352	1,371	1,373	1,364	1,409	1,304	1,258	1,154	1,165	*7.53*
Shepway	1,700	1,793	1,908	1,967	2,025	2,045	2,001	2,003	2,004	1,939	1,676	1,683	*10.88*
Swale	3,912	4,062	3,800	3,774	1,910	1,932	1,845	1,784	1,845	1,633	1,634	1,442	*9.32*
Thanet	2,956	2,496	2,733	3,188	3,482	3,628	3,340	3,377	3,065	2,452	2,443	2,420	*15.64*
Tonbridge & Malling	1,058	1,099	1,205	981	1,269	1,127	1,035	1,016	1,030	1,258	1,139	1,132	*7.32*
Tunbridge Wells	1,053	1,190	1,429	1,284	1,258	1,314	1,142	1,208	1,341	1,200	1,076	1,025	*6.63*
Kent (KCC)	**20,052**	**20,561**	**21,506**	**21,416**	**20,196**	**20,307**	**19,473**	**19,621**	**19,012**	**16,640**	**15,790**	**15,470**	*100.00*
Medway UA	3,312	3,435	3,549	3,632	3,588	3,561	3,587	3,710	3,478	3,375	2,991	2,910	
Kent & Medway	23,364	23,996	25,055	25,048	23,784	23,868	23,060	23,331	22,490	20,015	18,781	18,380	
Shire Districts	296,576	311,311	321,576	327,662	344,066	291,506	282,226	280,634	278,583	256,139	246,249	241,607	
England	710,935	723,509	744,931	763,319	783,119	770,496	737,147	719,352	704,357	635,127	610,123	600,179	

1 Up until April 2013 dwellings undergoing major structural repairs for up to 12 months and those vacant for less than 6 months were eligible for a council tax exemption (Class A and C respectively). In April 2013 these exemptions were replaced with a new flexible discount which applied to all empty properties. Local authorities are now entitled to apply any level of discount from 0% to 100% to all empty properties. Where local authorities award zero discounts for empty properties there is less incentive for owners to report their property as empty. This could have led to some under reporting of some empty properties.

2. Data for council tax base purposes are not taken on the same date every year and can vary slightly from year to year. The dates to which the figures relate for each year are given in the table at the top of each column.



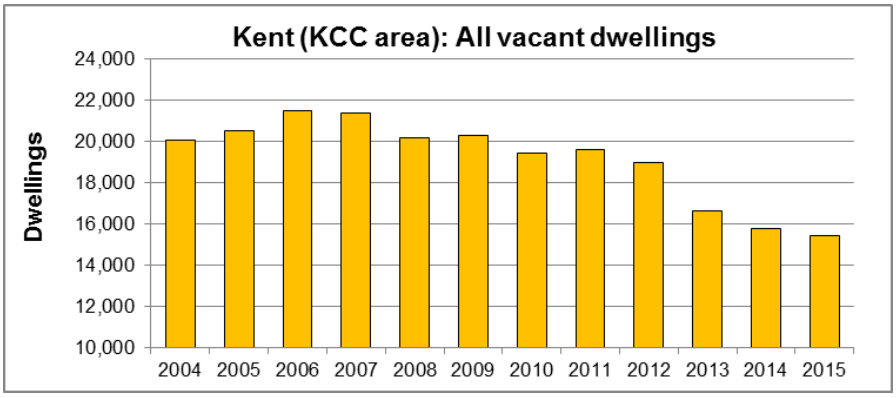


Table 2

Kent: Long term vacant dwellings[1,3] by local authority district, from 2004

Source: Council Tax Base (CTB) return

	Date to which figures relate[2]												
	01-Nov	*10-Oct*	*09-Oct*	*08-Oct*	*06-Oct*	*05-Oct*	*04-Oct*	*03-Oct*	*01-Oct*	*07-Oct*	*06-Oct*	*05-Oct*	*% of*
	2004	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	*Kent*
Ashford	416	559	498	567	617	533	484	504	449	307	250	247	*5.49*
Canterbury	577	735	678	635	722	642	679	640	733	489	403	396	*8.81*
Dartford	386	306	339	296	389	353	294	336	250	179	169	176	*3.91*
Dover	733	750	743	748	808	952	908	878	725	510	436	478	*10.63*
Gravesham	603	603	671	443	258	311	318	282	212	175	145	193	*4.29*
Maidstone	515	480	515	544	602	525	533	530	422	414	323	273	*6.07*
Sevenoaks	382	474	386	418	460	465	455	483	444	362	330	291	*6.47*
Shepway	635	675	678	721	806	740	771	767	766	766	608	641	*14.26*
Swale	805	889	688	671	742	712	639	619	617	491	405	439	*9.76*
Thanet	1,528	1,121	921	1,311	1,429	1,406	1,331	1,322	1,138	786	748	731	*16.26*
Tonbridge & Malling	255	325	309	269	317	308	252	247	246	272	307	355	*7.90*
Tunbridge Wells	337	432	488	489	489	531	430	449	426	396	334	276	*6.14*
Kent (KCC)	**7,172**	**7,349**	**6,914**	**7,112**	**7,639**	**7,478**	**7,094**	**7,057**	**6,428**	**5,147**	**4,458**	**4,496**	*100.00*
Medway UA	1,649	1,361	1,359	1,607	1,606	1,332	1,478	1,455	1,417	938	1,004	879	
Kent & Medway	8,821	8,710	8,273	8,719	9,245	8,810	8,572	8,512	7,845	6,085	5,462	5,375	
England	318,642	313,616	314,719	314,285	326,954	316,251	299,999	277,529	254,059	216,050	205,821	203,596	
Shire Districts	122,387	126,032	124,690	122,975	134,791	110,355	107,088	102,537	98,369	82,431	77,916	77,678	
Kent (KCC) 1 yr % change		*2.47*	*-5.92*	*2.86*	*7.41*	*-2.11*	*-5.14*	*-0.52*	*-8.91*	*-19.93*	*-13.39*	*0.85*	

1 Up until April 2013 dwellings undergoing major structural repairs for up to 12 months and those vacant for less than 6 months were eligible for a council tax exemption (Class A and C respectively). In April 2013 these exemptions were replaced with a new flexible discount which applied to all empty properties. Local authorities are now entitled to apply any level of discount from 0% to 100% to all empty properties. Where local authorities award zero discounts for empty properties there is less incentive for owners to report their property as empty. This could have led to some under reporting of some empty properties.

2. Data for council tax base purposes are not taken on the same date every year and can vary slightly from year to year. The dates to which the figures relate for each year are given in the table at the top of each column.

3. From 2004 to 2012, Long-term empty homes are those dwellings which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for over six months. Up until April 2013 local authorities could use their discretion to award these dwellings a discount of between 0% and 50%. Since April 2013 Local authorities can now set that level of discount anywhere between 0% and 100% and can also charge a premium of up to 50% on those properties which have been empty for more than 2 years.

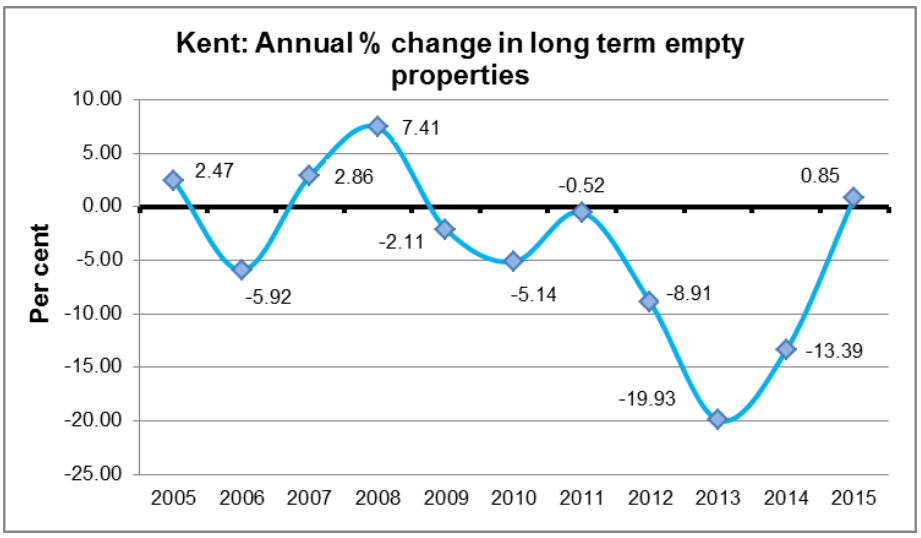
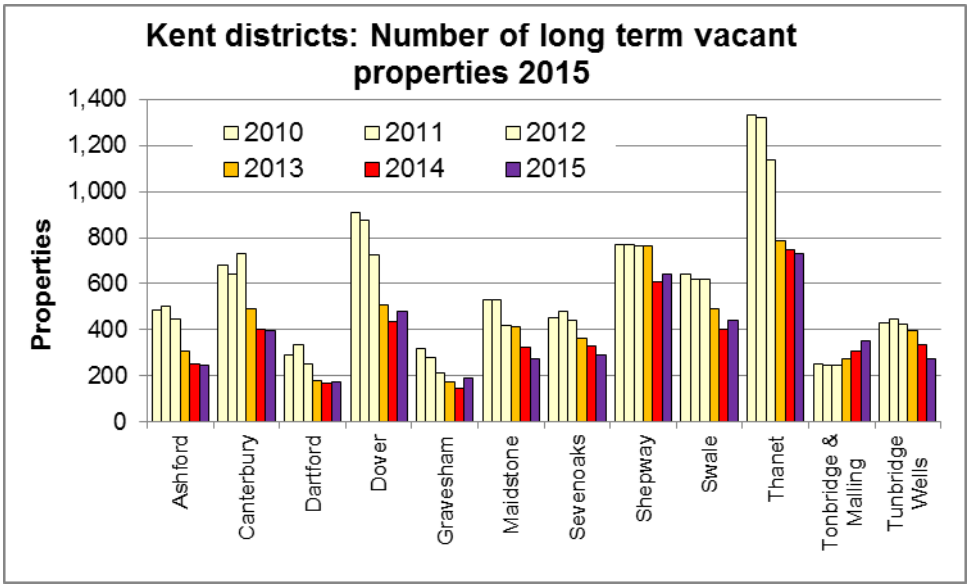


Chart to accompany table 2



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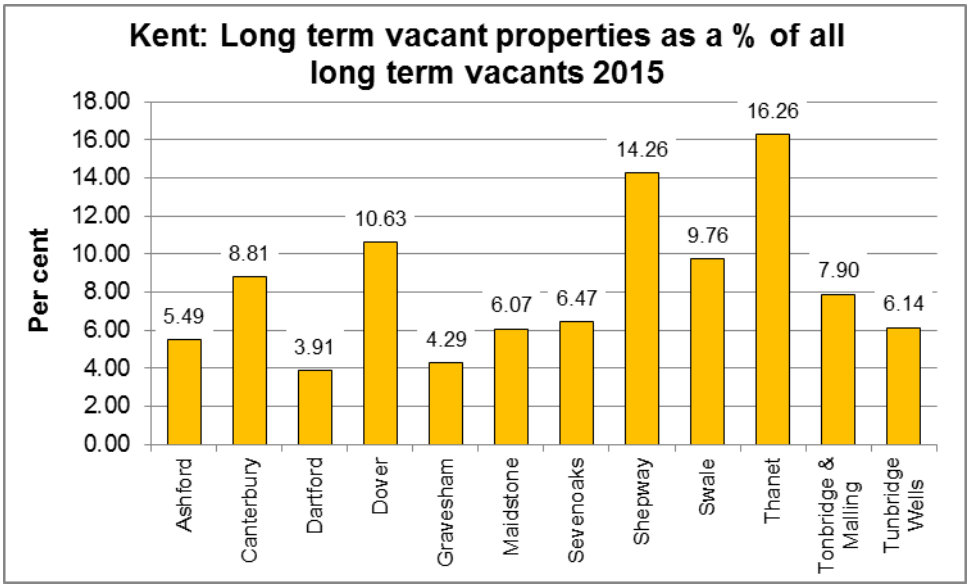
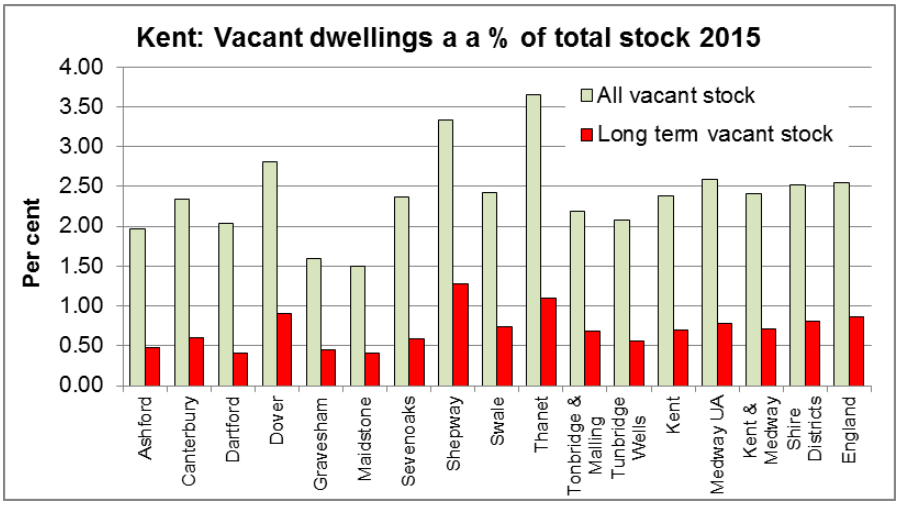


Table 3

Kent: Vacant dwellings as a % of total dwelling stock 2015
Source: DCLG

	Number of dwellings, as at 1 April 2015								
	Local Authority (incl. owned by other LAs)	Private Registered Provider	Other public sector	Private sector (P)[1]	Total stock (P)[1]	**Total all vacants** (From Table 1)	*% of LA*	**Total long term vacants** (From Table 2)	*% of LA*
Ashford	5,050	2,250	0	43,910	51,210	1,008	*1.97*	247	*0.48*
Canterbury	5,170	2,420	30	58,260	65,880	1,544	*2.34*	396	*0.60*
Dartford	4,250	1,700	0	37,180	43,130	878	*2.04*	176	*0.41*
Dover	4,400	2,520	0	45,550	52,470	1,476	*2.81*	478	*0.91*
Gravesham	5,710	1,610	40	35,300	42,660	680	*1.59*	193	*0.45*
Maidstone	40	8,640	0	59,350	68,040	1,017	*1.49*	273	*0.40*
Sevenoaks	0	6,500	30	42,600	49,130	1,165	*2.37*	291	*0.59*
Shepway	3,380	1,930	300	44,790	50,400	1,683	*3.34*	641	*1.27*
Swale	10	8,230	0	51,350	59,580	1,442	*2.42*	439	*0.74*
Thanet	3,070	4,830	230	58,090	66,220	2,420	*3.65*	731	*1.10*
Tonbridge & Malling	0	8,080	370	43,410	51,850	1,132	*2.18*	355	*0.68*
Tunbridge Wells	30	7,190	0	42,220	49,440	1,025	*2.07*	276	*0.56*
Kent	**31,110**	**55,900**	**1,000**	**562,010**	**650,000**	**15,470**	***2.38***	**4,496**	***0.69***
Medway UA	3,010	4,870	300	104,440	112,620	2,910	*2.58*	879	*0.78*
Kent & Medway	34,120	60,770	1,300	666,450	762,620	18,380	*2.41*	5,375	*0.70*
Shire Districts	436,950	867,320	26,310	8,263,910	9,594,350	241,607	*2.52*	77,678	*0.81*
England	1,643,000	2,452,000	55,000	19,393,000	23,543,000	600,179	*2.55*	203,596	*0.86*

(P) = provisional
1 Figures for the total dwelling stock and private sector are estimates and are expressed to the nearest ten. Local Authority and other public sector stock were reported by LA's in the Local Authority Housing Statistics return (LAHS) and include non-permanent dwellings. Some authorities have indicated that the data reported for other public sector stock may be based on partial information and so reductions in these data items may reflect lower data quality rather than real changes
Private Registered Provider here refers to registered providers of social housing (previously known as Housing Associatons or Registered Social Landlords). Figures include all self-contained units and bedspaces as at 31st March 2013, as collected in the Homes and Communities Agency's Statistical Data Return.



In this bulletin statistical Information on vacant dwellings in Kent and England at local authority level is drawn from council tax information published by the Department of Communities and Local Government.

All vacant dwellings (all tenures) including long term vacants
Source: council tax base (CTB) - statistical release:
https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/increasing-the-number-of-available-homes/supporting-pages/empty-homes

Data for council tax base purposes are not taken on the same date every year and can vary slightly from year to year. The dates to which the figures relate for each year are given in the table at the top of each column.

Long-term empty homes are those dwellings which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for over six months and, at local authority discretion, can be subject to a discount of between 0% and 50%.

Empty housing
Source: House of Commons standard note:
http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=7&ved=0CFEQFjAG&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.parliament.uk%2Fbriefing-papers%2Fsn03012.pdf&ei=c5b0UoaLCo2rhAey4YHYBQ&usg=AFQjCNGXTRVFHOFjTxhNDEs-AnYu-eCA-w

Empty housing
Source: The Homes and Community Agency
http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/ourwork/empty-homes

Use of the Data

This bulletin is one of a series on different topics. The data is used for a variety of purposes; generally as evidence and intelligence to monitor and support Kent County Councils (KCC) business performance. The information is also used to support KCC projects, policies and initiatives such as in the formulation of policy, monitoring resources, answering questions, queries and benchmarking against other authorities.