

Vacant and empty dwellings Kent Local Authorities 2016

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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 2016. 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 3rd October 2016 there were a total of 16,009 vacant dwellings in Kent (KCC area), in addition there were a further 2,763 vacant dwellings in the Medway Unitary Area.
- There were a total of 5,816 long term vacant dwellings in Kent and Medway (4,999 in Kent and 817 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 503 properties last year. This is the second consecutive increase following six years of annual reductions.
- Long term vacant properties represent 0.76% of the Kent housing stock. Below the national average of 0.84%

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 3rd October 2016 there were a total 16,009 vacant dwellings in Kent (KCC area); 539 more 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 2,532 in Thanet district to 778 in Gravesham. This represents 16% and 5% respectively of the total vacant dwellings in Kent (Table1).
- The average for England for all vacant dwellings is 2.49% of dwelling stock. Kent (KCC area) is below the national average with 2.44%. However, five Kent districts (Canterbury, Dover, Sevenoaks, Shepway, and Thanet) are above the National average. Medway (2.44%) is also below the national average (Table 3).

'Long term' vacant or empty dwellings

- Kent (KCC area) has seen an increase of 503 long term empty homes compared to last year. This is the second consecutive increase following six years of annual reductions during which time long term vacant property decreased by 3,181 (Table 2).
- There were 4,999 long term empty properties in Kent (0.76% of the total Kent housing stock) and a further 817 (0.72%) in Medway, making a total of 5,816 long term empty properties. This is below the national average of 0.84%. However long term rates vary across the county from Thanet with 1.35% of stock to Dartford with 0.43% (Table 3).
- Since the recent highs of 2008 all districts, bar one, have reduced the number of long term empty homes. However compared to one year ago four districts have reduced long term vacant property while eight recorded an increase. Medway UA also recorded a reduction. (Table 2).
- Four Kent Districts account for more than half (53%) of the county's long term vacant properties: Thanet 899 (18%), Dover 624 (12%), Canterbury 599 (12%) and Shepway 547 (11%) (Table 2).

Table 1

Kent: All vacant dwellings by local authority district

Source: Valuation Office Council Tax Base (CTB)

	Date to which figures relate													% of Kent
	01-Nov	10-Oct	09-Oct	08-Oct	06-Oct	05-Oct	04-Oct	03-Oct	01-Oct	07-Oct	06-Oct	05-Oct	03-Oct	
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	
Ashford	1,096	1,262	1,443	1,431	1,306	1,228	1,246	1,221	1,163	997	1,007	1,008	973	6.08
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	1,683	10.51
Dartford	1,083	970	1,007	1,041	1,136	1,152	993	1,086	1,033	814	837	878	921	5.75
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	1,564	9.77
Gravesham	1,181	1,091	1,231	1,026	829	1,048	998	892	862	682	728	680	778	4.86
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	1,039	6.49
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	1,232	7.70
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	1,773	11.08
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	1,336	8.35
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	2,532	15.82
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	1,131	7.06
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	1,047	6.54
Kent	20,052	20,561	21,506	21,416	20,196	20,307	19,473	19,621	19,012	16,640	15,790	15,470	16,009	100.00
Kent 1 yr % chg		2.54	4.60	-0.42	-5.70	0.55	-4.11	0.76	-3.10	-12.48	-5.11	-2.03	3.48	
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	2,763	
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	589,766	
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	240,587	

Note:

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. 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.

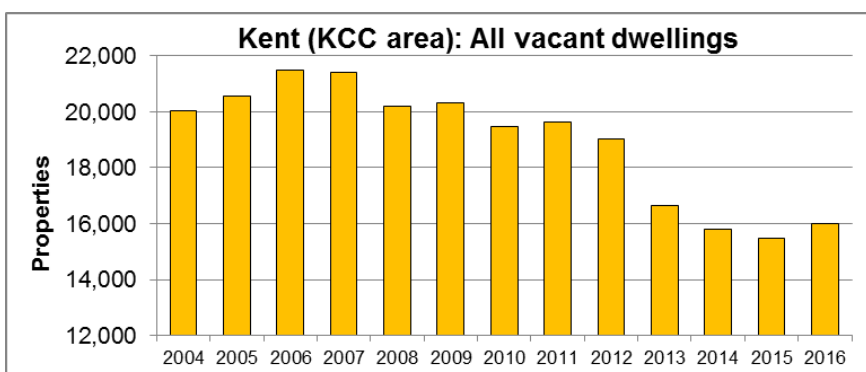
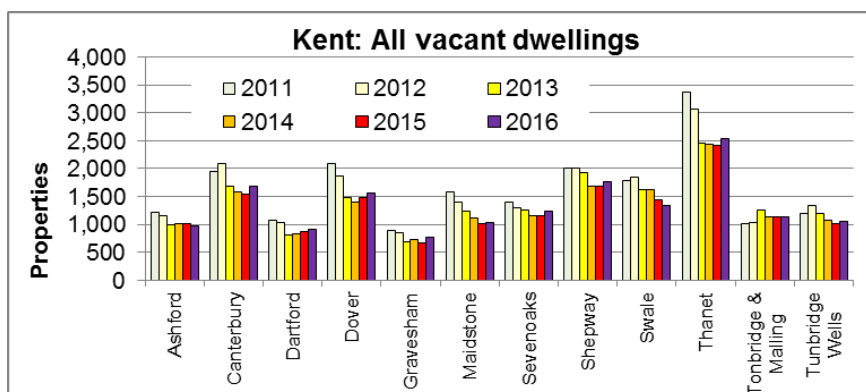


Table 2

Kent: All long-term vacant dwellings by local authority district

Source: Valuation Office Council Tax Base (CTB)

	Date to which figures relate													% of Kent
	01-Nov	10-Oct	09-Oct	08-Oct	06-Oct	05-Oct	04-Oct	03-Oct	01-Oct	07-Oct	06-Oct	05-Oct	03-Oct	
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	
Ashford	416	559	498	567	617	533	484	504	449	307	250	247	240	4.80
Canterbury	577	735	678	635	722	642	679	640	733	489	403	396	599	11.98
Dartford	386	306	339	296	389	353	294	336	250	179	169	176	188	3.76
Dover	733	750	743	748	808	952	908	878	725	510	436	478	624	12.48
Gravesham	603	603	671	443	258	311	318	282	212	175	145	193	204	4.08
Maidstone	515	480	515	544	602	525	533	530	422	414	323	273	306	6.12
Sevenoaks	382	474	386	418	460	465	455	483	444	362	330	291	379	7.58
Shepway	635	675	678	721	806	740	771	767	766	766	608	641	547	10.94
Swale	805	889	688	671	742	712	639	619	617	491	405	439	291	5.82
Thanet	1,528	1,121	921	1,311	1,429	1,406	1,331	1,322	1,138	786	748	731	899	17.98
Tonbridge & Malling	255	325	309	269	317	308	252	247	246	272	307	355	346	6.92
Tunbridge Wells	337	432	488	489	489	531	430	449	426	396	334	276	376	7.52
Kent	7,172	7,349	6,914	7,112	7,639	7,478	7,094	7,057	6,428	5,147	4,458	4,496	4,999	100.00
<i>Kent 1 yr % chg</i>		2.47	-5.92	2.86	7.41	-2.11	-5.14	-0.52	-8.91	-19.93	-13.39	0.85	11.19	
Medway UA	1,649	1,361	1,359	1,607	1,606	1,332	1,478	1,455	1,417	938	1,004	879	817	
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	200,145	
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	77,684	

Note:

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). 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.

Chart to accompany table 2

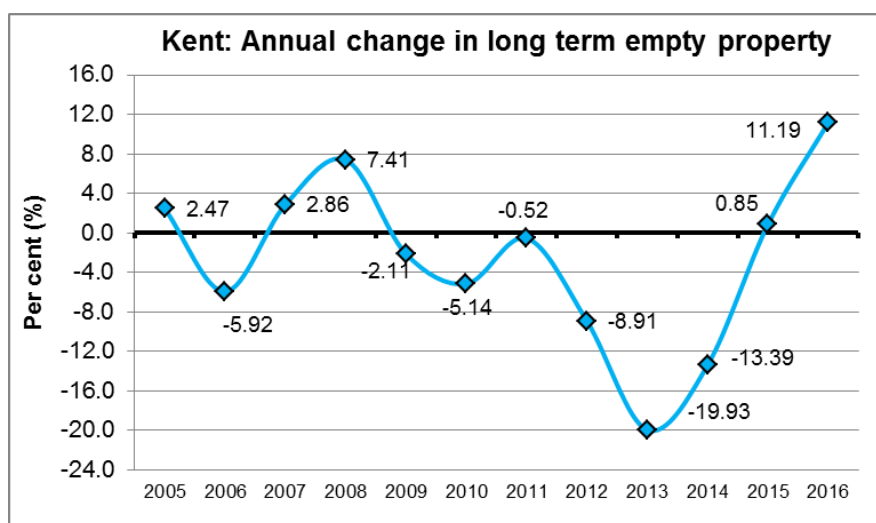


Chart to accompany table 2

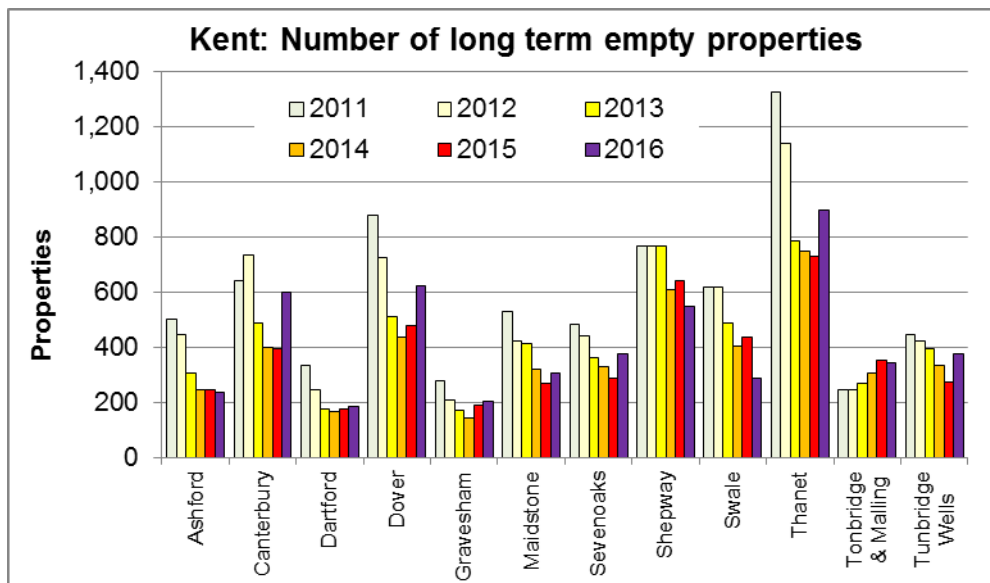


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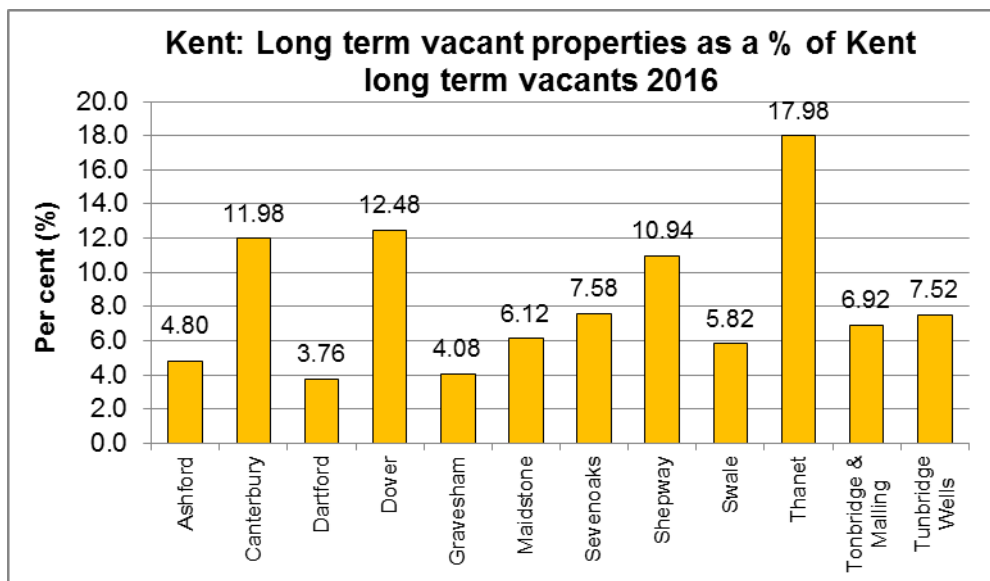


Table 3

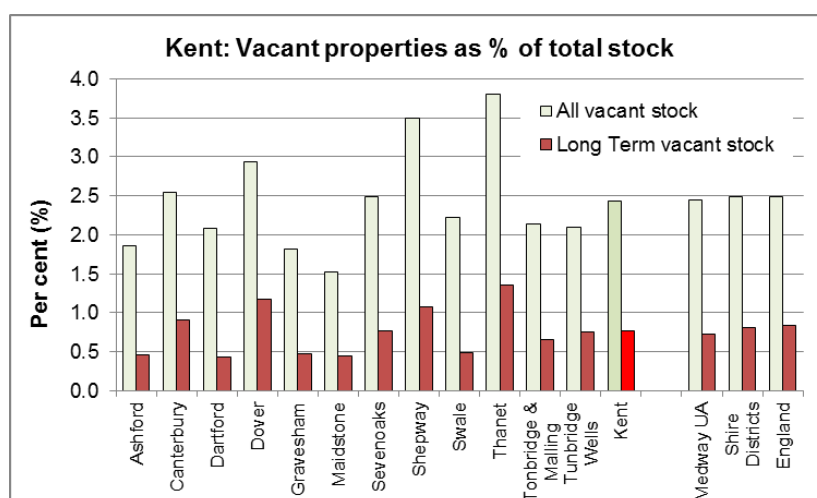
Kent: Vacant properties as a % of total dwelling stock 2016

Source: DCLG (Stock) and VOA (C Tax vacants)

	Dwelling stock, as at 1 April 2016					Total All vacants (From Table 1)	% of LA	Total Long Term vacants (From Table 2)	% of LA
	Local Authority (incl. owned by other LAs)	Private Registered Provider	Other public sector	Private sector (P)	Total stock (P)				
	Ashford	5,030	2,400	0	44,800				
Canterbury	5,150	2,440	30	58,560	66,180	1,683	2.54	599	0.91
Dartford	4,230	1,700	0	38,170	44,100	921	2.09	188	0.43
Dover	4,380	2,580	0	46,250	53,210	1,564	2.94	624	1.17
Gravesham	5,700	1,690	50	35,400	42,840	778	1.82	204	0.48
Maidstone	40	8,810	0	59,710	68,560	1,039	1.52	306	0.45
Sevenoaks	0	6,530	30	42,990	49,550	1,232	2.49	379	0.76
Shepway	3,380	1,990	300	45,050	50,720	1,773	3.50	547	1.08
Swale	10	8,240	0	51,920	60,170	1,336	2.22	291	0.48
Thanet	3,020	4,750	230	58,570	66,570	2,532	3.80	899	1.35
Tonbridge & Malling	0	8,110	350	44,310	52,770	1,131	2.14	346	0.66
Tunbridge Wells	30	7,190	0	42,660	49,880	1,047	2.10	376	0.75
Kent	30,960	56,420	1,000	568,390	656,760	16,009	2.44	4,999	0.76
Medway UA	3,020	4,910	300	104,950	113,170	2,763	2.44	817	0.72
Shire Districts	434,440	876,490	24,580	8,343,160	9,678,680	240,587	2.49	77,684	0.80
England	1,612,000	2,494,000	57,000	19,569,000	23,733,000	589,766	2.49	200,145	0.84

Note:

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. 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.



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 vacant properties

Source: council tax base (CTB) - note:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/council-tax-empty-homes-premium>

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&usq=AFQjCNGXTRVfHOFjTxxNDEs-AnYu-eCA-w>

Empty housing

Source: The Homes and Community Agency

<http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/ourwork/empty-homes>

No Use Empty – Kent County Councils empty property initiative.

<https://www.nue.org.uk/>

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.