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# Wigan's 5,000 empty homes

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Long unoccupied Brentwood, Wigan Lane

Published on Friday 7 September 2012 11:01

SHOCK figures revealing that Wigan contains no fewer than 5,000 empty homes have angered protestors against plans to create thousands more houses.

Several parts of the borough have been earmarked for new housing and business developments, many on areas of green belt land, after Government inspectors forced the Council to find room in the borough for an extra 2,500 properties on its core planning strategy for the years ahead.

But statistics from the GMB union reveal more than 5,000 homes in Wigan are currently unoccupied.

A spokesman for the M6 South of Wigan Action Group, who are opposing plans to develop green belt land in Winstanley and Hawkley Hall, said: "These figures are shocking. It does not make sense that the council plans to build houses when we don't need them and we have so many vacant already."

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"It is clear that the core strategy plans need to be reconsidered. Apart from the unnecessary housing developments, these areas have been identified as air quality polluted zones yet they want to build on them.

"The green buffer should remain green to keep the boundaries between Wigan and Ashton-in-Makerfield apart."

One resident of Hawkley Hall, near to where the Council proposes to build 1,000 houses, said the figures emphasise that plans to build new homes should be a last resort.

The unnamed resident, said: "Even if we were desperate for new homes these plans would not be the right thing to do.

"We don't need any more houses and these precious areas of green belt should not be built on.

"There are so many reasons already why the council needs to reconsider, such as standards of living for current residents, effects on the environment, not to mention the traffic chaos the new developments would bring."

But the Council finds itself between a rock and a hard place. It is under a legal obligation from central Government to earmark land for future development and its attempts to minimise the increase earlier this year simply resulted in an inspector's edict ordering the authority to go back to the drawing board and increase the quota by 2,500.

A total of 5,006 properties in Wigan borough are currently vacant with union bosses calling for tougher sanctions for private sector landlords who are maintaining homes with no tenants.

Paul McCarthy, GMB Regional Secretary, said: "That there are 130,978 empty dwellings in the North West at a time when there is acute pressure on the housing market signals that there are not enough penalties against leaving a property vacant."

Consultations between the council and residents of Hawkley Hall run until September 11. Any queries call the council's planning department on 01942 489223.

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**Taxpayer2**  
1:57 PM on 07/09/2012  
Rate: (0) (5)  
No matter how much people protest, if the council have made their minds up, they will go ahead and do it and always blame central Gvmt for their incompetent decisions. They are not working in the interests of the people who voted them in, only in their own interests, there must be a back-hander going to them from somewhere - they are corrupt, through and through!!

**jamesjoseph**  
12:54 PM on 07/09/2012  
Rate: (2) (11)


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**Weather for Wigan**  
Friday 07 September 2012 [5 day forecast](#)  
**Today** Cloudy  
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Wind direction: West  
**Tomorrow** Sunny spells  
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Wind direction: South west


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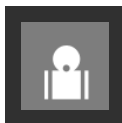
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They have an housing problem down south,and it has been created by the last labour government when they actively encouraged mass immigration to this country.I don't recall being asked my opinion on whether i wanted to share schools and medical care which we have worked and paid for,with the rest of the world.If i had been asked the answer would have been an emphatic NO.

1 reply



### The Thing

12:35 PM on 07/09/2012

Rate: (4) (5)

5000 houses currently vacant? This includes houses for sale and for rent. It includes people in hospital and long term care. It includes people working away for a few months.

But for some reason it is the fault of private landlords who 'maintain homes with no tenants'. How does a landlord make a profit from an empty house?

Exactly what is the union after here?

1 reply

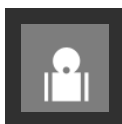


### Lomra Greener

12:00 PM on 07/09/2012

Rate: (2) (5)

If the council ' is under a legal obligation from central Government to earmark land for future development ', then why not allocate brown field sites? Better still, stop the compulsory purchase (theft) of good housing stock then demolishing it for schemes that do not happen. Try a bit of common sense, council planners.



### MUMMYOF2

11:53 AM on 07/09/2012

Rate: (0) (15)

Why the sudden need to build on local Greenbelt land ? Repair and use the existing empty houses.

Many Southern Councils are trying relocating their homeless " Up North "...

WednesdaySeptember 05, 2012   
Croydon Advertiser

Families asked to leave Croydon due to chronic housing shortage.....  
Being asked to leave Croydon is a proposition facing more than 400 families , who live in bed and breakfasts or guest houses.....  
The council has considered towns in Yorkshire, and has been offered housing in Manchester and Walsall.....

Is Wigan being considered also ?



### heyblondie!

11:15 AM on 07/09/2012

Rate: (0) (14)

I bet if investors and councils invested the money into some of these vacant homes they

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would look brilliant, real houses which are properly built, instead they prefer to cut corners and build these tiny dolls houses with rubbish materials.

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