

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**TUESDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2024**

## **ADDITIONAL PAPERS**

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## **COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2024**

### **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

#### **QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR J WINDRAM TO COUNCILLOR A WOODMAN**

“Residents on Haslyn Walk are worried that the project to address the parking issues is still outstanding and that another potentially wet winter is going to continue to blight their daily lives.

Can the portfolio holder provide an update and a timeline on the Haslyn Walk improvement project which will when completed help to address the flooding and parking problem along with a particular stretch of road?”

#### **REPOSENSE FROM COUNCILLOR A WOODMAN TO COUNCILLOR J WINDRAM**

“Both I and the shadow portfolio holder have been kept updated by officers on this scheme. Having experienced delays initially with procuring suitable contractors for this carpark improvement scheme, which will also alleviate flooding in the area, I understand that we are currently awaiting approval from for Leicestershire County Council Highways department to enable the scheme to commence.

LCC has committed to proving us with a response this week. As soon as the appropriate permissions are in place, residents will be notified and work will start. We are very sorry for the delay.”

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## **COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2024**

### **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

#### **QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR R SUTTON TO COUNCILLOR M WYATT**

“This Council refreshed its Empty Homes Policy in March 2022, including data showing 262 privately owned homes empty for a year or more at January 2022. Further, a consultation on Council Tax changes for Empty and Second Homes has just been launched that mentions 360 homes empty for a year or more, presumed to be based on Council Tax data and matching the 2023 figure published by 'Action Empty Homes.

I would like information on the number of empty homes for each year since 2021(including percentage increases) along with the number and community locations of those which have been brought back into use with NWLDC support, having remained empty for six months or more. I would like to understand what the Council is doing about empty properties, including the details of any policy changes, other than Council Tax increases, being considered to deal with the blight, waste and community cost of empty homes and details of the use of powers and enforcement actions tabulated in Appendix 2 of the policy.

Could the Portfolio Holder please provide me with the above information?”

#### **REPOSENSE FROM COUNCILLOR M WYATT TO COUNCILLOR R SUTTON**

“The number of empty homes across North West Leicestershire is a figure that continually changes not just from year to year but also day to day. To allow an easier comparison, figures have been provided on the number of empty properties as at 1 October each year.

01/10/2021 – 432 empty properties  
01/10/2022 – 465 empty properties  
01/10/2023 – 510 empty properties  
01/10/2024 – 582 empty properties

Attached is a document breaking these figures down in more detail and setting out the use of enforcement tools.

The Environmental Protection Team is notified about empty properties by the Council Tax Team. An initial assessment is undertaken based on the type of property, location and condition. This assessment determines the actions that the Council takes based on the Council's adopted [Empty Homes Policy \(2022\)](#).

The Council has a graduated approach to dealing with the properties. Initial contact is made with the owner via letter signposting the owner to the Empty Homes Officer for advice. If steps are not taken to deal with the issues identified, officers follow up with suggestions on how properties are brought back into use, or request plans for the property, or just initially a contact letter giving them the Empty Homes Officers details where appropriate. This can be followed by letters regarding possible issues, and asking for rectification of these, e.g. untidy land.

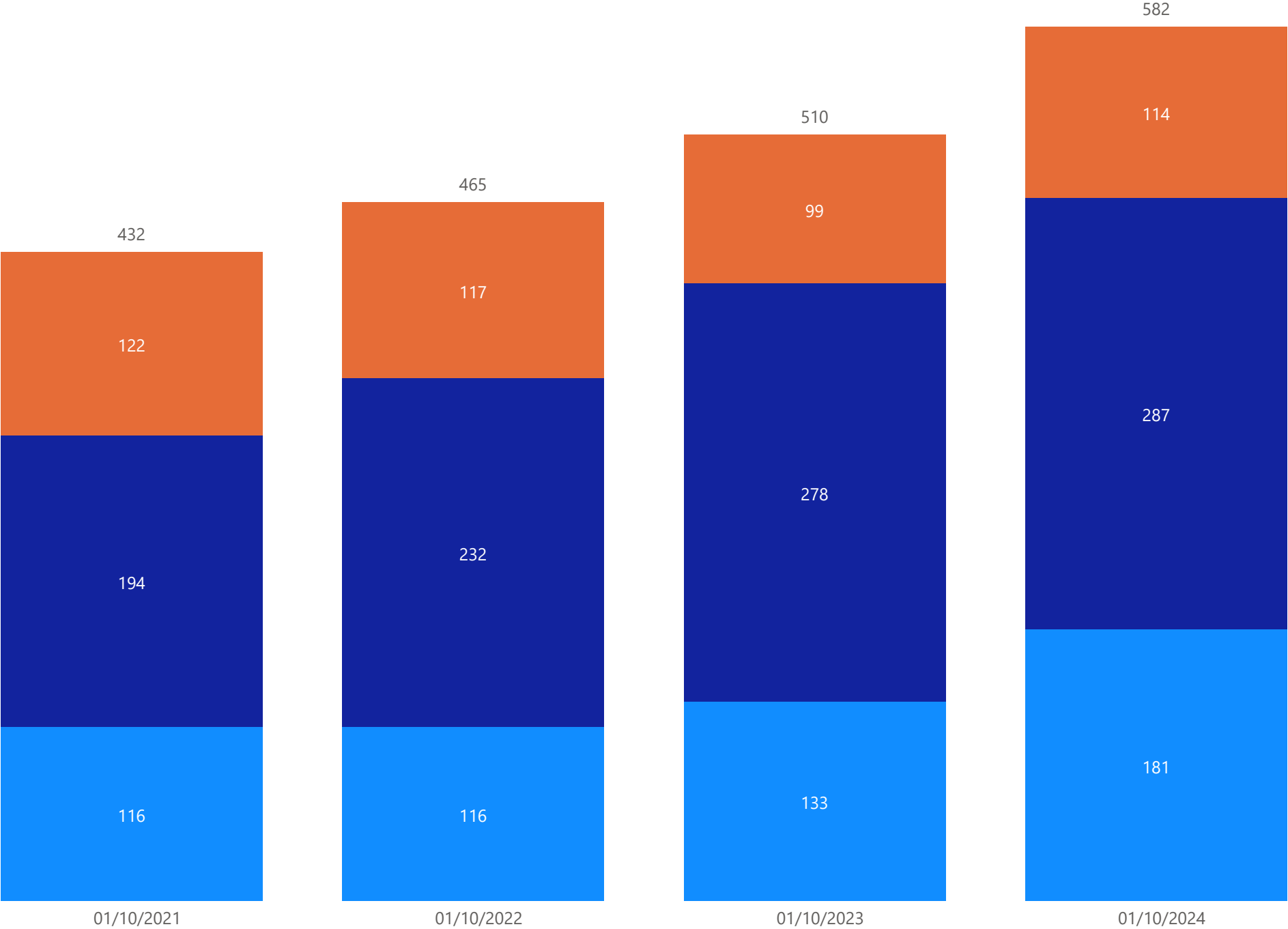
The Environmental Protection and Council Tax teams are currently working together on an additional process/policy that allows the Council to complete an Order for Sale, based on Council Tax Debt alone. This is different to an enforced sale. An enforced sale is another legal process that can be used to bring an empty property back into use by forcing the sale of the property and recovering any Council debt such as Council Tax Debt and Debts

associated with any works undertaken by the Council on the empty property. An Order for Sale however, can only be used when there is only Council Tax debt on an empty property.”

# NWLDC Total Number Of Empty Properties By Year

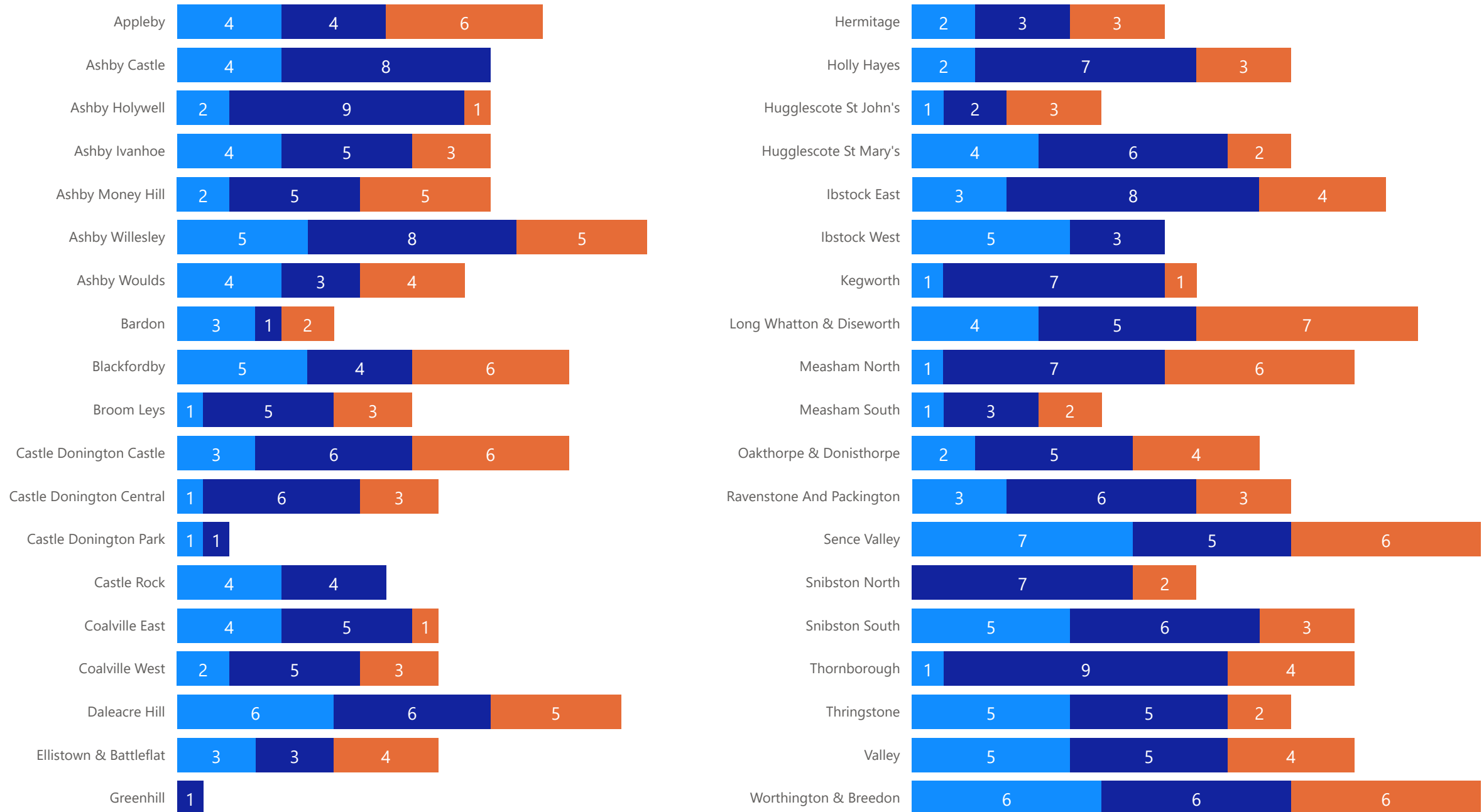
## Time Empty

- 1-2 Years
- 6-12 Months
- Over 2 Years



# NWLDC Empty Properties on 1st October 2021 by Ward

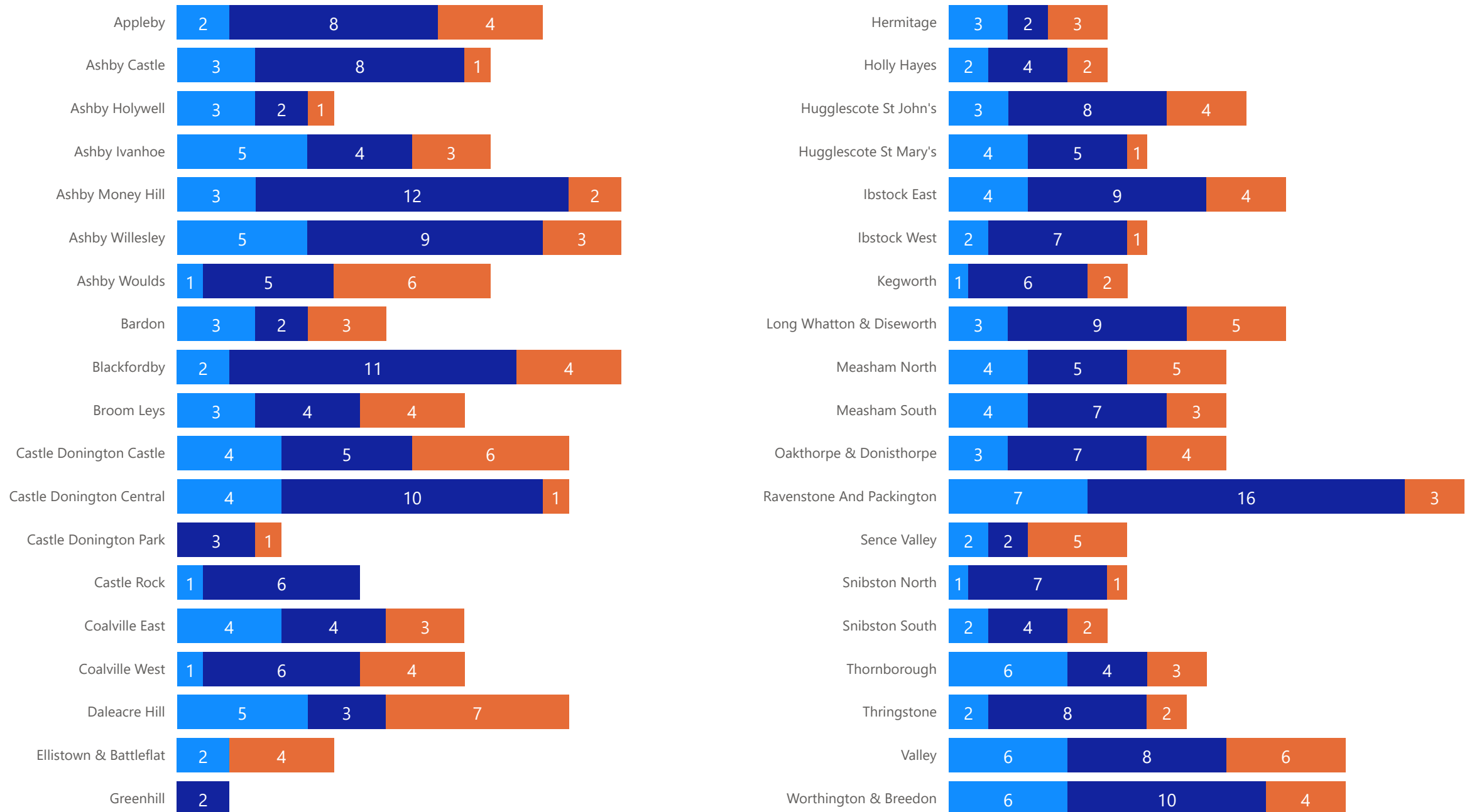
**Time Empty**  
● 1-2 Years  
● 6-12 Months  
● Over 2 Years





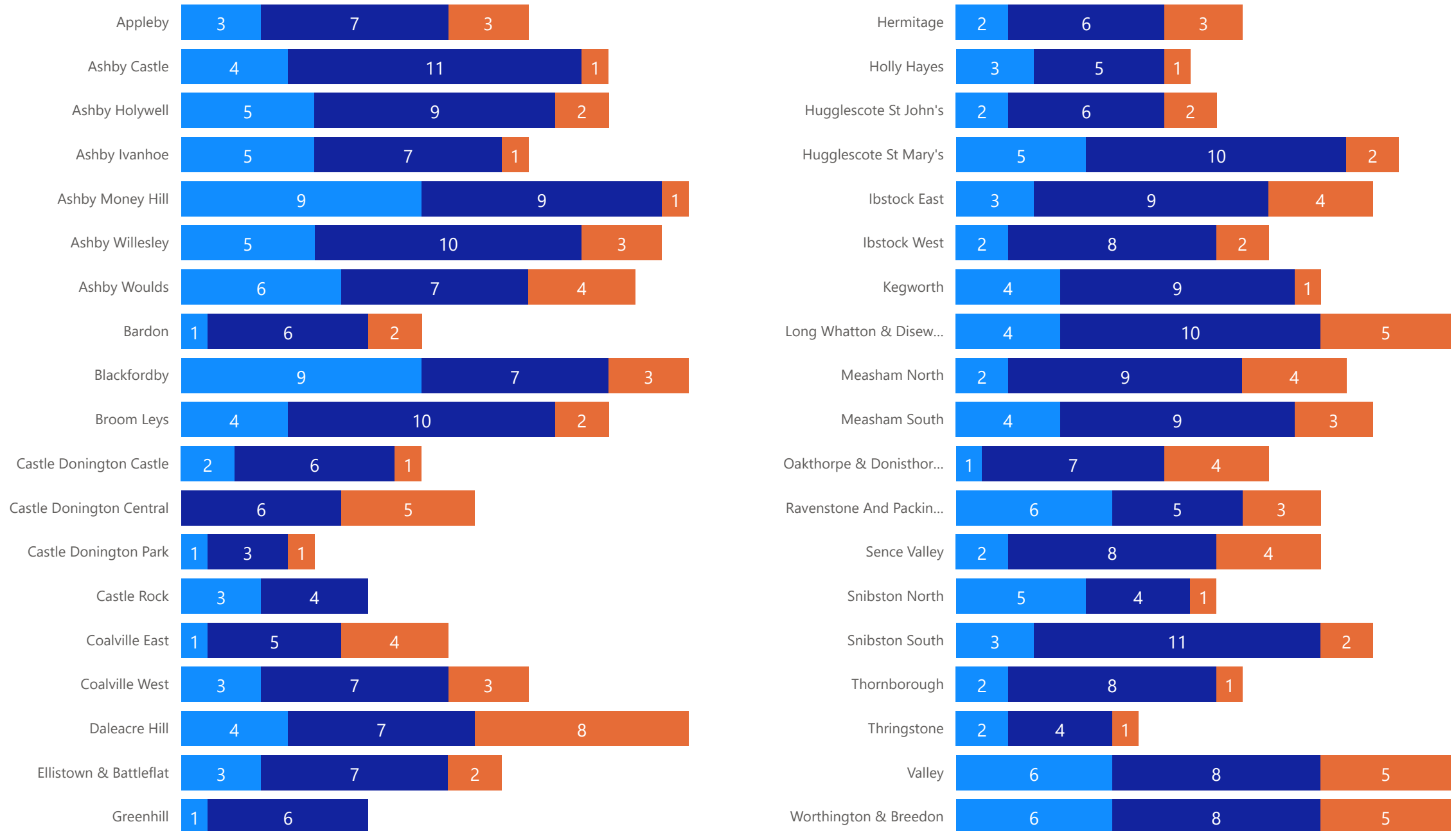
# NWLDC Empty Properties on 1st October 2022 by Ward

**Time Empty**  
● 1-2 Years  
● 6-12 Months  
● Over 2 Years



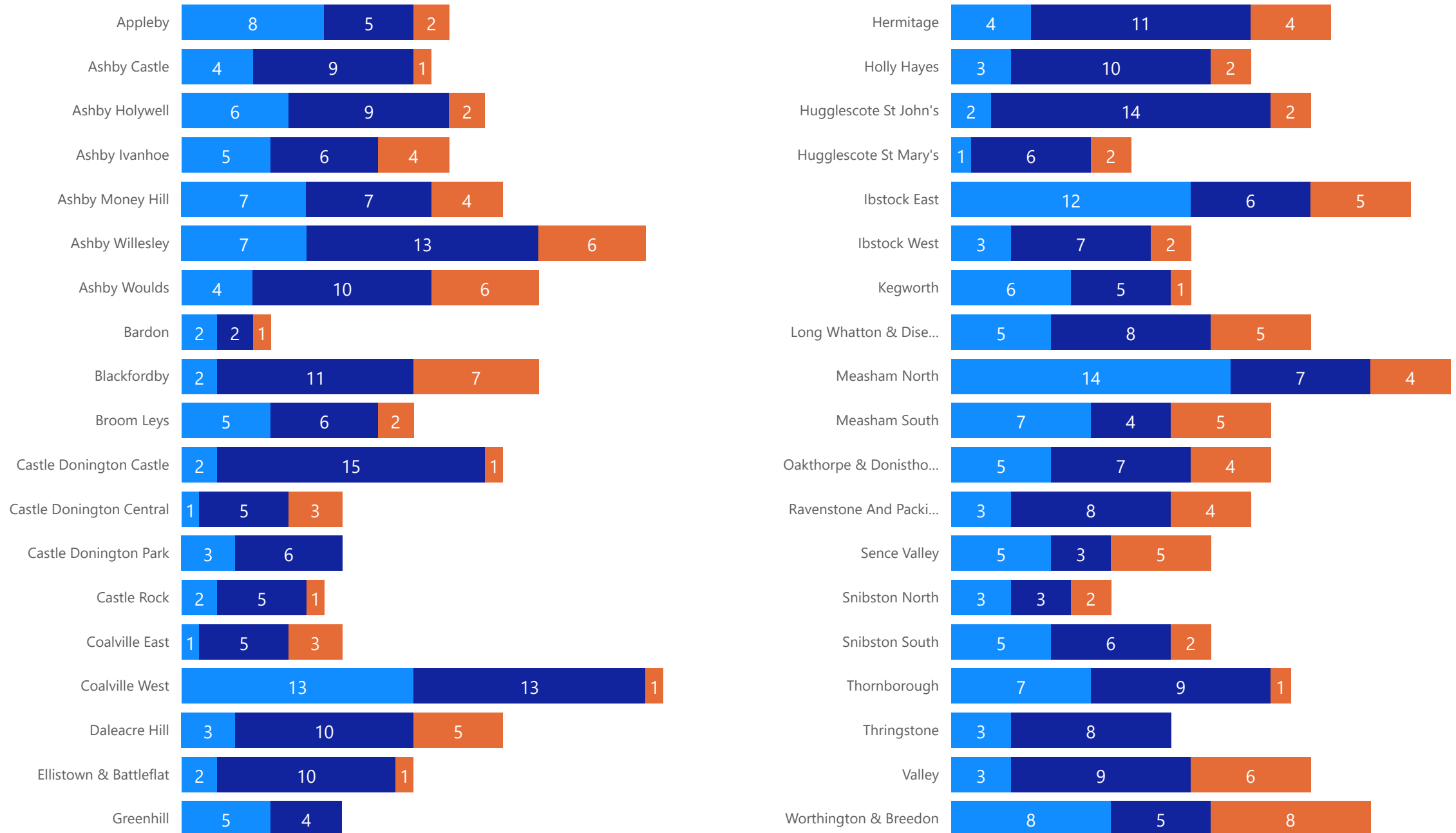
# NWLDC Empty Properties on 1st October 2023 by Ward

**Time Empty**  
● 1-2 Years  
● 6-12 Months  
● Over 2 Years



# NWLDC Empty Properties on 1st October 2024 by Ward

**Time Empty**  
● 1-2 Years  
● 6-12 Months  
● Over 2 Years



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## **COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2024**

### **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

#### **QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR P MOULT TO COUNCILLOR M WYATT**

“I am interested in the issue of public health funerals, in terms of the overall trend, if there is a cost to the council and whether the authority recover the costs by civil debt proceedings. Could the portfolio holder please provide me with this information?”

#### **RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR M WYATT TO COUNCILLOR P MOULT**

“Public health funerals are provided by local authorities for people who have passed away and have no next of kin, or who’s next of kin, relatives or friends are unable or unwilling to make the necessary arrangements for a funeral. They are designed to protect public health and are important in ensuring that all individuals are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their circumstances.

The Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 places a statutory duty on local authorities to arrange for a burial or cremation where no suitable alternative arrangements are being made. Where there is money in the estate, this is used to cover as much of the cost of the funeral as possible. This can be via money found at the property, selling assets or claiming money from bank accounts.

The figures for the last four years are:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of funerals</b>	<b>Total cost</b>	<b>Total amount recovered</b>
2021	5	£6612.00	£4,290.34
2022	5	£7309.00	£4,449.75
2023	6	£5862.00	£2,931.00
2024 – to date	5	£5750.00	£1,450.00

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## **COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2024**

### **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

#### **QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR A MORLEY TO COUNCILLOR N RUSHTON**

“Given the government's plans to introduce legislation to reset the audit backlog, could the portfolio holder please explain how the council is positioned to meet the backlog date for the financial year 2023-2024?”

#### **REPOSENSE FROM COUNCILLOR N RUSHTON TO COUNCILLOR A MORLEY**

“The revised backstop date for the 2023/24 Statement of Accounts is now 28 February 2025. Prior to the statement on 30 July 2024 by the Minister for Local Government and English Devolution, the backstop date for the 2023/24 financial year was 31 May 2025. The Council had intended to publish the unaudited Statement of Accounts by this initial backstop date. Consequently, preliminary discussions were held with the external auditor, Azets, to outline a high-level timetable.

However, due to the Government’s decision to advance the deadline, the Council is unable to meet the revised backstop date. This is because the requirement to set a balanced budget for 2025/26 coincides with the period for preparing the Statement of Accounts. Given the significance of this task, it is not feasible for the same group of staff to manage both tasks simultaneously.

Following discussions with our new external auditor, Azets, the Council's S151 Officer has written to inform the Government of this issue, as requested in the letter from Catherine Frances, Director General for Local Government and Public Services dated 20 September 2024.

The Council aims to publish the unaudited Statement of Accounts 2024/25 in May 2025 and has discussed the practicalities of this timeline with Azets. The Council is currently awaiting further guidance from the Government regarding the next steps.”

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## **Council Procedure Rules – Motions and Amendments**

### **What members can do**

- When seconding a motion, a member may reserve their speech until later in the debate (rule 15.3).
- Members may only speak once on a motion or amendment whilst it is being debated (rule 15.5, 15.5.1).
- Members may also move a further amendment if the motion has been amended since they last spoke (rule 15.5.2).
- Members can exercise a right of reply, raise a point of order or make a personal explanation during debate (rule 15.5.4, 15.5.5 and 15.5.6).
- Members can speak on the main issues if their first speech was on an amendment (rule 15.5.3).
- The mover of a motion has a right of reply at the close of debate on the motion, before it is put to the vote (rule 15.15).
- The mover of a motion has a right of reply at the close of debate on any amendment (rule 15.16).

### **What members can't do**

- Members cannot make a speech until a motion has been seconded (rule 15.1).
- Members cannot speak again whilst a motion is being debated, except to exercise a right of reply, raise a point of order or make a personal explanation (rule 15.5).
- Members cannot speak for more than 5 minutes without the consent of the Chairman (rule 15.4).
- The mover of a motion may not speak on an amendment, other than to exercise his right of reply (rule 15.16).
- The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the close of debate (rule 15.17).

### Motions and Amendments – Flowchart

