

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

**County Council
22nd February 2018**

**REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Jonathan Wilkinson, Portfolio Holder
for Housing and Countryside Services**

SUBJECT: Question from County Councillor Phil Pritchard

Can you please advise me what was the average length of “void” (i.e. the time when a council house is vacated by one tenant, and is occupied by a new tenant) in the last year before the contractors Kier took over, and what is the average length of time for voids since this contractor has taken over?

For information I have a number of properties in Welshpool that have a void of many months, some over 12 months, and one to my knowledge over three years!!

Response

The average number of days taken to re-let an empty council home across the County, in the 12 months prior to July 2017 (the date when HOWPS became responsible for housing responsive repairs) was 95.7 days.

The average number of days taken to re-let a property in the 7 months prior to the establishment of HOWPS increased to 101.9 days, and in the 7 months since HOWPS has become responsible for the delivery of the repairs service, this has increased to 103.1 days.

In Councillor Pritchard’s ward the average number of days taken to re-let an empty property was 107 days in the 12 months prior to July 2017, and this has reduced to 105 days in the 7 months since HOWPS became responsible for the delivery of the repairs function.

It needs to be borne in mind that not all empty properties can be turned around quickly and that HOWPS do not handle the works to all empty properties. Some properties require major works of improvement to achieve the council’s letting standard, some require major structural works and some are identified as being suitable for a change of use, such as adaptation. These voids tend to be handled outside of the usual void process.

This is illustrated by an analysis of the 8 properties which are currently empty in Councillor Pritchard’s ward:

- 3 have been returned to the Housing Service by HOWPS and are in the process of being let,
- 3 are with HOWPS for works prior to being relet,
- 1 is in the process of having major works of adaptation undertaken to it to meet the needs of an identified family. This includes the construction of an extension. This property has been vacant since February 2017, as the works require detailed design work, planning consent and contract management outside of the arrangements with HOWPS
- 1 property has had a new heating system and sprinkler system installed, to comply with fire safety requirements.