

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

**County Council
15 July 2021**

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Iain McIntosh, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning and Economic Regeneration

SUBJECT: Question from County Councillor Gwilym Williams

With regard to the current pandemic evictions from peoples homes have been suspended, this is going to come to an end shortly.

Can the portfolio holder inform me and members what provisions including numbers of properties that are available for the likely increase when this restriction is lifted? Do not include in the numbers properties that are under repair or improvement.

Response

Housing Services uses a range of options to try and help people avoid the loss of their home. This includes advice and support; for example, maximising income from the social security system to help make rent payments, the payment of Discretionary Housing Payments to help pay rent, and direct intervention and negotiation with landlords. When it is simply not possible to prevent the loss of a home, the Council is able to draw upon a range of resources to secure accommodation for people who may become homeless as a consequence of their landlord evicting them from their home. This includes Council-owned properties, homes owned by housing associations and helping people find accommodation provided by private landlords.

It is difficult to predict how many homes will be available to let at any moment in time, as the availability of such properties is dependent upon existing tenants moving to different homes. On average, based on figures for 2020-2021, circa 58 social housing properties are let each month, including to people who are or at risk of becoming homeless. In addition, a further 170 properties are currently being used as temporary accommodation for people while they wait for permanent homes that suit their long term needs to become available.

Each month the Council itself, based on data for the past year, has circa forty tenancy terminations creating void properties available to relet. At present (28.06.21) the Council has thirty-eight void homes available for letting to new tenants on either an introductory or secure tenancy and six void homes held for use as emergency temporary accommodation by homeless households.

Increasing the number of homes available to people who may become homeless is challenging, as there is high demand for all homes across all tenures and of all types in Powys. The majority of homeless demand is from smaller households needing homes with one bedroom. Just 6% of all homes in Powys have one bedroom – that figure includes homes designated for accommodation by older people.

The Council and housing associations have a confirmed development programme of 401 additional affordable homes 'in plan' (with a further 188 'in reserve') due to start work over the next two years, with the Council alone on target to add 250 new homes by 2025. A combination of new development, acquisition of properties for social rent, and enhanced resources for homelessness prevention will help the Council meet the challenges that may arise following the ending of the eviction moratorium.