



Neuadd y Sir / County Hall, Llandrindod, Powys, LD1 5LG

QUESTIONS AT ANY TIME TO CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Question From:	County Councillor Jake Berriman
Subject:	Resourcing the effort to tackle empty properties and to implement the approved Action Plan
Question To:	County Councillor Aled Davies Portfolio Holder for Finance and Transport

Question:

As someone with a background in planning and housing, it was a great pleasure to note the approval, by Cabinet earlier this month, of the Empty Property Action Plan, developed in collaboration with the Welsh Government.

The approval of the Plan means that the Powys Council will be eligible to draw on the £15.2m fund made available through the Welsh Government's Empty Property Management Fund, to bring long-term empty properties back into productive use. With the high levels of homelessness and long waiting lists for houses that residents face this is to be applauded, but such a plan requires proper resourcing if it is to be more than policy window-dressing.

By my rough calculations, based on the 993 homes identified in Powys as having been empty for longer than 12 months and thus attracting the 150% council tax Premium @ an average Band D Council tax of about £1,400, that equates to an additional revenue stream of almost £700, 000 available to Powys Council annually since agreeing to apply Section 139 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) Sections 12A & 12B, from 1st April 2017.

Can the Cabinet Member please advise whether any, and if so how much, of this additional revenue, has been ringfenced, or has been earmarked for ringfencing, to employ adequate staff to implement and actively pursue this and any previous delivery plans, as I suspect was originally envisaged when the application to apply the surcharge on empty homes was rightfully introduced?