

Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM34935  
Dyddiad / Date: 30th June 2016



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Councillor Mary McGarry  
Cardiff County Council  
County Hall  
Atlantic Wharf  
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Cardiff  
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Annwyl/Dear Mary

### **Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee 8 June 2016**

Thank you for your letter dated 8 June 2016 concerning the performance indicator PSR/004 – Bringing empty private sector properties back into use.

I can confirm that a series of meetings have been arranged between Sarah McGill, Director, Communities, Housing and Customer Services and Dave Holland, the Head of the Shared Regulatory Service (SRS).

The officers have begun discussing the precise allocation of roles following the creation of the SRS. While it is clear that responsibilities for Housing Strategy lie with the Communities Directorate and enforcement of the Housing legislation with the Shared Service, there are other aspects of service that need to be reviewed and allocated. The officers are thus engaged in a series of meetings to ensure there is a clear understanding of the various activities involved in delivering a successful programme of bringing private sector properties back into beneficial use.

You will be aware that some of these activities are statutory, whilst others are discretionary and in line with your Committee's suggestion, the officers will as part of this exercise undertake a cost benefits analysis to determine where the process can be improved or augmented, to create a more meaningful regime in tackling homelessness and property voids. I will ensure your committee is apprised of progress in these matters.

You also asked for some statistics on the current activities in relation to empty private sector properties. I am advised that in 2015/16, 43 properties were brought back into use, 4 of those through the houses into homes loan scheme.

#### **ATEBWCH I / PLEASE REPLY TO :**

Swyddfa Cymorth Y Cabinet / Cabinet Support Office, Ystafell / Room 518, Neuadd y Sir / County Hall  
Glanfa'r Iwerydd / Atlantic Wharf, Caerdydd/Cardiff, CF10 4UW  
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*Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg a byddwn yn sicrhau ein bod yn cyfathrebu â chi yn eich dewis iaith boed yn Gymraeg, yn Saesneg neu'n ddwyieithog dim ond i chi roi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennyh. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn creu unrhyw oedi.*

*The Council welcomes correspondence in English and Welsh and we will ensure that we communicate with you in the language of your choice, whether that's English, Welsh or bilingual as long as you let us know which you prefer. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to any delay.*



The number of long term vacant homes in Cardiff was calculated during the financial year 2015/16 to be 1,453. Among that number are properties that are being renovated, in the process of being let or sold and some in use as holiday or second homes and as such are not the subjects of any action.

Currently there are 242 active cases registered against the Council's empty property database; these are properties that could be bought back into use and doing so would improve the local community within which they are situated. Once a property has been registered against the database, an officer visits and owners are provided with options for bringing the property back into use and invited to engage with the Council in order to work toward a resolution. Of the 242 active cases registered on the empty property database, resourcing issues mean that not all of those properties are actively monitored on a continuing basis. Priority is being given to problematic, long term empty properties which are considered unlikely to be brought back into use without utilising compulsory purchase or enforced sale powers.

I am grateful for your comments on the report on the HMO licensing schemes and have conveyed your comments to the officers concerned.

Yn gywir  
Yours sincerely



**Y Cyngorydd / Councillor Bob Derbyshire**  
**Aelod Cabinet Dros Yr Amgylchedd**  
**Cabinet Member For Environment**