

# STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

## Questions to Portfolio Holders

### Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel

2 October 2019

#### Question from Councillor Yates:

**Q1.** Whilst we are encouraged to see that action is being taken to bring empty properties that appear on the Council Tax list back into timely use, what actions are being taken to address the empty and derelict properties that are missing from the Council Tax list - the properties that are hidden in plain site, and blight our communities?

#### Response - Councillor Bowen , Portfolio Holder for Communities

*"I know that Cllr Yates will be aware of the Council's Empty Property Strategy and I understand the he has met with Officers to discuss empty properties within his ward. I would encourage all Members to raise with Officers any similar properties that are causing concern within their ward.*

*The Council takes a robust approach to addressing empty properties in the District and, more recently, has engaged with an external company to undertake a review of empty properties over 6 months, which involves an initial canvass followed by an inspection if required. Following completion of this review, the Council intends to issue a questionnaire to the owners of those properties that remain empty to understand the reasons why the properties are empty and look to support them where possible in bringing those properties back into use.*

*In reference to properties you refer to as 'not on the list', I assume this relates to properties that have been awarded an exemption. For example, where a prohibition order has been served which restricts people residing in the property on health and safety grounds. These properties would not appear on the empty property report, but would appear on the exemption report, which we could also circulate to Councillors to review for their ward. We only remove properties from the Council Tax list when we are notified by the Valuation Office to do so – for example where a property has been demolished or changed use to a Business premises and so is added to the Business Rates listing.*

*Finally, I am aware that there is commitment in the Committee work programme to provide an Empty Property Update at a future meeting to ensure further discussion on this important issue for the Council."*