



# STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Offices • Ebley Mill • Ebley Wharf • Stroud • GL5 4UB

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## Members of the Public's Questions to Council.

| Questions from Councillor Housden   |
|---|
| <b>Question 1:</b>  |
| Can the chair confirm the average turnaround time for all void properties across the 2021/2022 financial year?  |
| <b>Reply 1:</b>   |
| The overall turnaround time for properties let in 2021/22 was 77 days from keys being handed in, to the property being let to a tenant.   |
| <b>Question 2:</b>  |
| Can the chair confirm how many void properties we had within our stock in the last financial year that took longer than 30 days to turn around?   |
| <b>Reply 2:</b>   |
| 299 properties took over 30 days and 120 were let in under 30 days.   |
| <b>Question 3:</b>  |
| Following a resident query in Stonehouse, can the chair update me on the property 41 Chestnut Avenue? I would like confirmation on how long this has been empty & how many bedrooms does the property have?   |
| <b>Reply 3:</b>   |
| The property is a two bed bungalow with keys handed over on the 13 <sup>th</sup> December 2021. The property has had issues with the utility supply which have recently been resolved and works have recommenced within the past two weeks.   |
| <b>Question 4:</b>  |
| Can the chair confirm how many void properties we currently have within our Housing stock and how many bedrooms this equates to?  |
| <b>Reply 4:</b>   |
| Our current work in progress void properties of 86 represent 158 bedrooms made up of 30 one bed properties, 40 two bed properties and 16 three bed properties. This is within 11 of pre-covid levels of 75 with weekly fluctuations. Given the impact of Covid since March 2020, including very significant workforce pressures and shortages of materials, this is an incredible achievement. We should all be proud of the whole team of staff and contactors who have worked so hard to make this possible.  |
| <b>Question 5:</b>  |
| Can the chair confirm that we lost over £1m against our budget forecast as a council in the last financial year due to properties being empty, and repair and maintenance costs?  |
| <b>Reply 5:</b>   |
| The Budget Monitoring Report for Quarter 3 report to this committee shows that there is an expected pressure of £452k against the income budget for rents and service charges. The budget, which was put forward by Housing Committee in December 2020 and approved by Council in February 2021, included an assumption that void levels would return to pre-Covid-19 levels by April 2021. Unfortunately, we now know that the impact of Covid-19 has continued well beyond the start of the financial year and the anticipated void level was an underestimation. |



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Similarly, the impact of the pandemic on the development programme has also meant that anticipated rents from new build properties have not been received as quickly as had been expected, which has reduced income against the base budget. These assumptions have been revised in the budget setting process for the next financial year and so are not expected to have a long-term impact on the financial position of the HRA.

**Question 6:**

Given the vast figures in my previous question does the chair still believe that taking repairs and maintenance in house has either offered a saving or a better level of service?

**Reply 6:**

On the contrary the investment in our properties, reflected in a high-quality repairs and maintenance programme, is providing a better service to our tenants. Our voids work is due to be brought in house in April 2023 and I whole heartedly support this plan.

**Question 7:**

Can the chair confirm how many people do we currently have on the housing waiting list within the Stroud District?

**Reply 7:**

As of the end of the financial year there was 2965 applications on HomeseekerPlus with Stroud as their principal area. This number has been broadly consistent over the last four years and is in fact round 600 less than in the 2018-19. This reflects the ongoing hard work and commitment of all those staff working to support those at risk of becoming homeless. They deserve our full support and gratitude.