

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

### **COUNCIL HELD ON 14 December 2020**

#### **QUESTIONS from Peter Dobbs, a resident of Ashbourne, on Item 6; Corporate Plan Performance and Priorities.**

My question concerns the Pledge in the Corporate Plan section 'Prosperity' for reducing the number of empty homes in the District.

In the table on p27 of the agenda, final column, it says that 'since May, visits to all the empty homes on the council tax register have taken place.'

Could the Council state

1. How many homes were visited?
2. How many of those homes are in Ashbourne?
3. How many of those homes are paying Council Tax at all, and how many at a higher rate due to being empty for over 5 years?
4. Is the derelict building known as Victoria Court Flats on Buxton Rd (previously the Victoria Memorial Hospital) included in any of the above categories and if so which ones?

(This building is a burnt out eyesore that has been the target of multiple arson attacks).

#### **ANSWER**

Derbyshire Dales District Council no longer employs an Empty Homes Officer (a result of austerity measures) and the resources dedicated to inspections is limited as it has to be undertaken as part of other activities e.g. alongside the electoral registration canvass. The responses to the 4 questions from Mr Dobbs are:

1. 604 properties were visited between 25 June and the end of September.
2. Of those 604 properties, 58 were in the area covered by Ashbourne Town Council
3. Of those 58 properties in Ashbourne, all will be being charged council tax unless a discount or exemption has been identified and applied since the visit. None of them are being charged at a higher rate due to being empty for over 5 years, although 20 are being charged an empty homes premium due to being empty for more than 2 years.

4. Regarding the request for information relating to the derelict building known as Victoria Court Flats on Buxton Rd, the Council does not comment on the circumstances relating to individual properties, due to the Data Protection Act.