

Councillor Question

2.3 Housing Reactive Repairs - combined budget £4,953,780

An overspend of some £200,000 is likely to arise... for Empty Properties.

Is this due to more empty homes being returned into the housing stock than anticipated? Or is there some other reason?

Officer Response

The extra costs have arisen, not due to the numbers of homes returned, but due to the quality of void properties returned to us this year, through evictions and the like. As a guide for budget purposes we normally work on an average spend per void at £2k, but presently our average spend has risen to nearly £3k per void. As an example of this we had one void in Burnthouse Lane which was left in such a state after eviction that we had to spend some £40k to put in back in reasonable habitable condition. So you can appreciate you don't need many of these before the budget is swallowed up.

In terms of what we recover from these erring tenants, well we do seek to recover some costs through our rechargeable repair system, however it is somewhat ironic that the larger the cost to recover the more difficult it is to do so, as the people who severely abuse property tend to be the ones who have no money to be able to pay back. In terms of more successful recovery, albeit at a lower level of cost, we do tend to be more successful in terms of recharging for rubbish left behind.