

SOUTHWARK COUNCIL

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY MEETING)

WEDNESDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2024

LATE QUESTION WITH RESPONSE

1. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR VICTOR CHAMBERLAIN TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

On 13 November 2024 government statistics revealed Southwark had 2,531 empty homes across the borough.

Can the leader confirm how many Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs) or Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) the council has used to bring these homes back into use?

RESPONSE

Empty homes are an issue seen across London. Southwark's Empty Homes Action Plan, agreed at Cabinet in 2021, details the enormous effort our council puts in to bringing homes back in to use, including the deployment of our CPO powers.

Changes made to EDMOs by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat government in 2012 have made the process extremely difficult for local authorities. Councils must prove that a property is empty for more than two years, without gaps, and that it is a cause of anti-social behaviour or nuisance to the community at large. These onerous changes have made the threshold for homes to be considered "empty" by a First Tier Tribunal extraordinarily high – which is why there are so few examples nationwide.