

APPENDIX B: Empty Homes Action Plan (January 2019 – March 2020)

Empty Homes Action Plan: January 2019 – December 2019

Strategic Objective 1	To develop partnerships and vehicles that will enable an increase in the scale of empty properties being brought back into use				
Actions that will deliver this objective	Milestones/Sub Actions that will achieve the overarching Action	Measures of Success	Delivery Date	Responsibility	Progress
Establish an Empty Homes Operational Group (EHOG) to deliver the aims and objectives of the Empty Property Strategy	Seek approval for establishment of group and develop Terms of Reference and membership	Group set up and attended by members	First convened on 15/11/18	Housing Strategy	Empty Homes Operational group set up and chaired by Housing Strategy. Terms of reference and membership complete.
	Coordinate EHOG meetings every quarter in order to implement and monitor the delivery of the first year action plan	Key stakeholders embrace and deliver the strategic aims and objectives	Ongoing	Housing Strategy	5 meetings have taken place to date. The meetings have been a successful method of co-ordinating the aims and objectives of the strategy.
Liaise with speculative investors who wish to acquire properties within RCT to let to members of the public	Continue to organise the RCT Landlord Forum, setting agendas, booking venues for meetings and collating minutes.	The number of members attending the Landlord forums. Feedback from the landlords attending the meetings.	Ongoing	Housing Strategy	3 Forums have taken place with an average of 40 Landlords in attendance.
	Attend RCT Landlord Forum to present Houses into Homes loans scheme	Increase in the number of Houses into Homes loan applications	May 2019	Housing Strategy	104 grants have now been approved. 56 have been approved since April 2018.
	Maintain database of empty property investors	Increase in the number of empty property referrals to investors	Ongoing	Public Health and Protection	The number of referrals is not currently recorded.

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Strategic Objective 2					
To maximise the use of current funding and identify further funding models to increase the number of empty properties that are brought back into use					
Actions that will deliver this objective	Milestones/Sub Actions that will achieve the overarching Action	Measures of Success	Delivery Date	Responsibility	Progress
Identify and engage with empty property owners to investigate ways of returning empty homes back into use	To continue to provide Empty Homes Grants to assist owners to renovate long term empty properties by promoting the scheme through posters/fliers and the council website.	Increase in the percentage of empty properties brought back into use	Ongoing	Housing Strategy and Grants	During the financial year 2018/2019 102 empty home grant applications were received with 88 (86%) approved . By the end of the financial year, 61 (69%) of cases were complete, the remaining 27 cases were rolled over into the 2019/2020 programme
Deliver the Homestep Plus Scheme	To continue to work with United Welsh to deliver Homestep Plus scheme in CF37 area	Target of 24 properties purchased and sold under Homestep Plus Scheme	Ongoing	Housing Strategy	17 properties have been purchased and 16 have been sold to first time buyers.
	Explore opportunities to deliver Homestep Plus in other areas of RCT	Areas identified to deliver Homestep Plus	March 2020	Housing Strategy	May need to seek extension of scheme.
Identify suitable empty properties and buildings in town centres and key settlements that could utilise funding	Map empty properties in priority regeneration town centres	Empty properties in regeneration town centres identified	Dec-19	Housing Strategy	Empty properties have been mapped for Porth. All empty properties are mapped on MapInfo however this does not include commercial empty properties.
	Identify suitable funding opportunities for mapped empty properties	Analysis undertaken of potential funding for each empty property	March-20	Housing Strategy	

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Strategic Objective 3					
To continue to use a range of interventions to ensure all types of empty properties are targeted and enabled to be brought back into use and monitor the outcomes related to these closely					
Actions that will deliver this objective	Milestones/Sub Actions that will achieve the overarching Action	Measures of Success	Delivery Date	Responsibility	Progress
A commitment to use appropriate enforcement powers where suitable	Develop an enforcement approach to deal with owners of empty properties who do not voluntarily engage in the opportunities available to bring their properties back into use	Increase in the use of enforced sales, compulsory purchase and empty dwelling management orders and a subsequent reduction in the number of problem dwellings within RCT	March-20	EHOG	11 properties have had enforcement notices served since priority empty property visits have taken place. There are a further possible properties which are being considered.
		Decrease in the number of complaints received regarding empty properties	Ongoing	Public Health and Protection	Report needs to be set up to record this.
	Establish a more proactive and targeted approach to enforcement	Decrease in the number of empty properties	March-20	Public Health and Protection	The target set by the group was to deliver interventions within the first year to 171 (25%) of the long-term empty properties. Target has been exceeded with 276 (40%) receiving targeted intervention.
Provide up to date advice and assistance to bring empty properties back into use	Establish an Empty Homes webpage to include an empty property market place where sellers can advertise and buyers make direct contact	Number of web page visits	March-20	EPOG	Meeting to be set up with Marketing and Customer Service Teams

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	Produce an Empty Property Advice Pack for empty property owners	Number of empty properties brought back into use	Nov-19	EPOG	First draft of pack has been produced and is currently with Design and Print for minor amendments.
	Promotion of Empty Property Advice pack	Empty Property Advice pack available on Council's webpage	Dec-19	Housing Strategy	
		Empty Property Advice pack available on Empty Homes webpage	March-20	Housing Strategy	
		Promotion of Empty Property Advice pack on Council's Facebook page	Dec-19	Housing Strategy	
	Develop online reporting of an empty property and a dedicated empty property inbox	Number of empty properties reported on line via Council's website	Marc-20	Housing Strategy	

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Strategic Objective 4	To undertake further research in communities and evaluation of existing schemes to understand why there are a high number of empty properties and identify possible solutions that could prevent properties from becoming empty				
Actions that will deliver this objective	Milestones/Sub Actions that will achieve the overarching Action	Measures of Success	Delivery Date	Responsibility	Progress
Share best practice with other local authorities/WG	Investigate benchmarking opportunities	Better understanding of empty property problem within RCT and neighbouring authorities	March-20	Housing Strategy	
	Roll out of Empty Homes Grant to Valleys Task Force	Number of empty home brought back into use across the 9 LA's that make up the Valleys Taskforce	October 2019 – launch month	Housing Grants	Announcement made by the Deputy Minister on 30 th October to launch the scheme.
Maintain and monitor the Empty Property database	Record and report on the number of empty properties brought back into use through direct action by the Council	Increase in the number of interventions undertaken	Ongoing	Housing Strategy/Public Health and Protection	In 2018/2019 RCT brought a total of 213 (7.4%) empty homes back into use, directly from Council intervention, performing 2.8% above the National Welsh Average . This is a 2% increase on the previous year.
		Increase in the number of empty properties brought back into use through interventions undertaken	Ongoing	Housing Strategy/Public Health and Protection	National benchmarking data for 2018/2019 also ranks RCT 1st in Wales for the number of empty homes brought back into use and 6th in Wales for the percentage . This is an improvement from the 2017/2018 data that ranked RCT 2nd place for

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					the number of empty homes brought back into use and 8th place for the percentage .
	Report empty property PI to Welsh Government	Benchmark performance at an All Wales level	Ongoing	Housing Strategy	Council tax records show that between 2017/2018 and 2018/2019, the number of empty homes across the borough has reduced from 3,556 to 2,885 , a reduction of 671 properties.
Identify the reason why the number of empty properties remains relatively static in RCT	Undertake research to identify the reasons why the same number of empty properties become empty in certain areas	Solutions identified to target the trend of properties becoming vacant	March-20	Housing Strategy	

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Strategic Objective 5	To identify possible solutions that could prevent properties from becoming empty and also develop interventions for different market areas and types				
Actions that will deliver this objective	Milestones/Sub Actions that will achieve the overarching Action	Measures of Success	Delivery Date	Responsibility	Progress
Explore opportunities for Area Based Regeneration	Identify next area to deliver the Health and Housing Action Area scheme	Area identified	March-20	Housing Strategy	