#### WELSH LANGUAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOL

This Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIS) tool enables RCT Council to consider the principles and requirements of the <u>Welsh Language</u>

<u>Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015</u> to ensure compliance with the <u>Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011</u>.

# Stage 1 - Information Gathering

**NOTE:** As you complete this tool you will be asked for **evidence to support your views**. Please see <u>Welsh Language Impact Assessment Guidance</u> for more information on data sources.

| Proposal Name:              | Empty Homes Strategy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Department                  | Housing Strategy & Investment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Service Director            | Derek James                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Officer Completing the WLIA | Peter Lewis                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Email                       | Peter.G.lewis@rctcbc.gov.uk                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Phone                       | 07745579506                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Brief Description           | The Empty Homes Strategy 2022-2025 sets out the approach Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC will take to address the issues relating to empty private sector homes as defined in paragraph 2.1 of the Draft Empty Homes Strategy (attached). The strategy was developed to promote the holistic Council approach, which is needed to tackle empty homes and to rejuvenate our communities. The draft strategy replaces the previous Empty Homes Strategy, which run from 2018-2022, and hopes to build further on its achievements. |
|                             | The purpose of the strategy is to develop a strong strategic approach to the problem and the overarching aims of the strategy can be outlines as follows:  • To develop partnerships and vehicles that will enable an increase in the scale of empty properties being brought back into use.                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |



|                                                                                       | <ul> <li>To maximise the use of current funding options and to identify future funding models to increase the number of empty homes that are brought back into use.</li> <li>To continue to use a wide range of interventions to ensure that all types of empty homes are targeted and enabled to be brought back into use, and monitor the outcomes related to these closely.</li> <li>To undertake further research in communities and evaluate existing approaches to understand why there are high numbers of empty properties, and then to identify possible approaches that could prevent homes from becoming empty.</li> <li>To identify and develop interventions for different market areas and types of housing to further diversify choice for the residents of RCT.</li> </ul> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Date                                                                                  | 01/09/2022                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Please outline who this proposal affects? (Service Users, Employees, Wider Community) | The Strategy will affect Service users, Employees and the Wider Community                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| What are the aims of the policy, and how do these relate to the Welsh Language?       | The Empty Homes Strategy forms a key element in the way that RCTCBC tackles the problem of empty properties within the Borough. Currently, there are 2894 empty private sector homes within RCT and a large number of which have been empty for 4 years or more. Empty homes represents a wasted resource in a time of increased housing need and a missed opportunity to provide much needed affordable housing.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                                                                                       | The Strategy acknowledges the need for good quality, energy efficient, affordable housing and that new build developments alone will not met this demand. Affordable housing is categorised as housing, which is provided for sale or rent at below open market prices and where there are mechanisms in place to ensure that it is accessible to those who cannot afford market housing. RCT Local Housing Market Assessment indicates that there will be a shortfall of affordable homes, which equates to 263 units of accommodation, per annum for the next 15 years.                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                                                       | Contained within the Strategy are five key strategic priorities, which aims to allow the Council to develop a strong strategic approach to the problem. Strategic priority 1-5 aims to develop partnerships and vehicles that will enable an increase in the scale of empty properties brought back into use, whilst developing funding options                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |



for owners of empty properties and residents of RCT. A multi-agency approach to the problem will ensure that all services involved are working in accordance to Welsh Language Standards.

The priorities reflect the need to proactively assist the housing market by focusing on the most problematic empty homes and offering advice, guidance and assistance to enable owners of empty properties to make the right choices. We will achieve this by drawing on best practice and identifying new funding models and opportunities. All literature, advice and guidance available for service users, staff or our partner groups is available and offered via a bilingual service in accordance with the Council's Welsh Language duties. Our newsletter, empty Homes Pack, Houses into Homes application and booklet, together with information and application forms for the Empty Property Grant, are all offered bilingually.

Furthermore, the strategy supplements the Local Housing Market Assessment and the Local Development Plan in so much that it assists in the development of new affordable homes. The Local Development Plan includes planning policies and site allocations, which are used to determine planning applications. When determining planning applications, the local planning authority should take into account Technical Advice note 20: Planning and the Welsh Language.

It is documented that second homes in Wales and the lack of affordable housing can have a negative impact on the Welsh Language and on Welsh speaking communities, especially with regards to Welsh Medium Education. Through the Welsh Language Community Housing Plan, from 2023 the Welsh Government has given Local Authorities additional powers to increase council tax on second homes and long term empty properties, by up to 300%. If this option was applied them this would assist in helping local Welsh speaking residents access housing in their preferred localities.

# Welsh speaking communities, is something what also needs to be considered

Residents who are owners of empty properties, first time buyers and other residents hoping to obtain housing, local builders and building merchants/suppliers, home owners who benefit from Empty Property Grants. The wider community will also profit from the paybacks associated with bringing empty homes back into use. The various options available in RCT for grants and loans to assist homeowners bring empty properties back into use; will also aide residents who speak Welsh to access affordable housing by increasing the net housing supply.

The Strategy can therefore benefit everyone because all residents could find themselves living in a street or a community that is blighted by large numbers of empty properties. The strategy should only have a positive impact on any Welsh Language groups as the development of the Strategy and its associated working practices, will all abide by the Council's Welsh Language policy and standards, in particular in exercising the Council's policy on the distribution of grants (Standard 94) Equally, any partner organisations will be expected to operate



|                                                                        | in a manner that should reflect the high standards set in Local Authorities vis a vis the Welsh Language Standards. |       |       |  |  |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|--|--|--|
| Current linguistic profile of<br>the geographical area(s)<br>concerned | Census is a key source of information about the number of people who can speak Welsh. The 2011 Census               |       |       |  |  |  |
|                                                                        | Welsh Language Skills of Residents – (%)                                                                            |       |       |  |  |  |
|                                                                        | County Borough of Rhondda Wales Cynon Taf                                                                           |       |       |  |  |  |
|                                                                        | Can Read Welsh         18.9%         25.9%                                                                          |       |       |  |  |  |
|                                                                        | Can Write Welsh                                                                                                     |       |       |  |  |  |
|                                                                        | Can Understand Spoken Welsh                                                                                         | 24.5% | 33.4% |  |  |  |
| Other relevant data or                                                 |                                                                                                                     |       |       |  |  |  |

### Stage 2 - Impact Assessment

research

In this section you need to consider the impact, the evidence and any action you are taking for improvement. This is to ensure that the opportunities for people who choose to live their lives and access services through the medium of Welsh are not inferior to what is afforded to those choosing to do so in English, in accordance with the requirement of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Empty Homes Strategy 2022-2025, RCT Local Housing Market Assessment 2022.

Please note there is a separate impact assessment for Equality and Socio-Economic duty that must also be completed for policy proposals.

Remember that effects that are positive for some groups could be detrimental to others - even among Welsh language groups. Consider the effects on different groups. For example, a proposal may be beneficial to Welsh learners, but not to Welsh speakers.



#### Previous Welsh Language Impact Assessments can be found on Inform by clicking here. Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following? Does the proposal have any Describe why it will have a What action(s) can you take positive, positive/negative or neutral What evidence do you have to mitigate any negative negative or impact on the Welsh to support this view? impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? neutral language. impacts? **Positive** During the pandemic we have Increase in the number of Review how we have embraced embraced new methods of service users using online technology and provided working and new technology in tools to access services services that are innovative order to, initially sustain our through the medium of Welsh. during the Pandemic and service but subsequently to further enhance delivery enhance it. This has afforded us Both staff and service users methods and information in the opportunities to promote the are able to engage digitally Welsh Language. **Opportunities for persons** Welsh Language as more and have their service to use the Welsh language Develop digital inclusion skills service users access the requirements meet through across services as well as the Council's website, complete this method. e.g. staff, residents and visitors application forms, and obtain residents we are supporting. information online. All Council An increase in the supply of This will be linked into Digital The rights of Welsh speakers and affordable Communities Wales. We will websites and key partners' good quality, learners to use Welsh when websites have access to all housing which has been also work with local libraries. dealing with the council and for developed in accordance with services in the Welsh Language. community groups, schools and staff to use Welsh at Work The Council has responded to Council's colleges to deliver classes the Local service users needs by using Development Plan. The LDP through the medium of Welsh. new technologies to unlock the been produced has The Council will establish a ability to support people in new accordance to TAN20 and and innovative ways, therefore Planning Policy Wales. healthy development

providing Welsh speakers and



and

programme for Social Housing

assessing

by

Grant

learners with the opportunity to use the Welsh Language.

The Empty Homes Strategy aims to ensure that homeowners who have an empty property can access all our services, including funding options and further advice and guidance. This includes ensuring that Welsh speakers and learners, not only have access to, but also are given a pro-active offer to all available information in Welsh.

Through collaborative working with our partners, we will provide a holistic, person centred support effective officer with interventions where necessary. This will promote the Welsh Language and allow us access to a larger pool of staff in order to fully utilise their Welsh language skills. Where an individual requests to have a meeting in Welsh, we would adhere to standards 26/26A by utilising Welsh Language resources from our internal staff resources or alternatively arranging for a translator.

New multi agency approaches to the planning and commissioning of services to ensure that the Welsh Language is promoted.

ches prioritising schemes that are based on their accessibility to local facilities. This will include access to libraries, schools and colleges, which provided services in Welsh.

Develop training, updates and briefings to staff and providers to keep abreast of service developments, good practice, innovation and new practices via joint training sessions, **Empty Property Operational** Group meetings and local, regional and national forums. Some of our partners are already subject to the Welsh Language Standards, example, Cwm Taf Health Board and 6th form colleges. Equally, because the standards are strongest within RCT, then partner organisations would have to abide by these standards whilst working with us or if in receipt of social housing grants.

The empty homes information pack is already available in a bilingual format, but going forward we will ensure that



|                                                        |                                                                   | The Empty Property Operational Group, as "overseers" of the strategy, will take responsibility for ensuring compliance with Welsh Language Standards and ensuring that there is an understanding amongst all partner groups that there is a requirement to provide services in Welsh.  Any staff training provided will undergo an assessment on whether the training should be delivered in Welsh, where there is a need to do this and resources allow. |                                                                | applicants have an active offer of receiving the pack in Welsh.                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Stage 2 – Impact Assessme Will the proposed action aff |                                                                   | f the following?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                |                                                                                                        |
|                                                        | Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts? | Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | What evidence do you have to support this view?                | What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
| Numbers and / or percentages of Welsh                  | Positive                                                          | The Welsh Government's prime objective is to see the number of                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | In line with the Council's Welsh Language Promotional Strategy | 1                                                                                                      |



#### speakers

e.g Welsh Medium Education /
Study Opportunities. Links with
the Welsh Government's
Cymraeg 2050 Strategy /
RCTCBC Five Year Welsh
Language Strategy

people able to enjoy speaking and using the Welsh Language, reach a million by the year 2050. RCTCBC hopes to contribute and encourage this ambition by providing the conditions to facilitate an increase in the use of the Welsh Language in line with our 5 year Welsh Language Strategy.

This Strategy supports these goals, by ensuring, wherever possible, that Welsh speakers have access to warm, safe and affordable housing in a location that affords them opportunities to continue to use or learn the Welsh language. For example, our Housing allocation scheme, which supplements this strategy. gives priority to applicants who need to move to be nearer a child's school. (Where the need to move to a school has been recommended by the Director of Education).

All properties available for let are advertised via the Council's Choice Based Lettings scheme, which enables applicants to bid on properties which meets they needs. This means that

and our Welsh Language Standards, this strategy will ensure bilingual text (Welsh first) on all Council documentation.

Increase in the number of staff and service users accessing Welsh language courses. RCTCBC will encourage staff and partners to enable staff to have access to Welsh Language courses and we will monitor this to ensure its effectiveness.

promote information through the medium of Welsh.

RCTCBC will review the number of new housing developments, which are near Welsh Medium schools and will work with colleagues in Education who are leading on the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

RCTCBC will work with our Registered Social Landlord partners to ensure that when property adverts provide details of local facilities and schools that they promote Welsh Medium schools first.

Promote Welsh language courses to staff and service users; particularly promote free Welsh lessons for 16 – 25 year olds, which will be provided by Welsh Government.

Work with the Welsh Language team to develop briefing notes to inform staff of the Welsh Language services that they need to offer customer/clients.



|                                     |          | applicants are able to research    |                          |                               |
|-------------------------------------|----------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                     |          | the area and ensure that nearby    |                          |                               |
|                                     |          | schools offer Welsh language       |                          |                               |
|                                     |          | education.                         |                          |                               |
|                                     |          |                                    |                          |                               |
|                                     |          | Developing the skills of staff and |                          |                               |
|                                     |          | service users will help to         |                          |                               |
|                                     |          | increase the numbers of Welsh      |                          |                               |
|                                     |          | speakers by ensuring training is   |                          |                               |
|                                     |          | offered in Welsh and by ensuring   |                          |                               |
|                                     |          | Welsh language, courses are        |                          |                               |
|                                     |          | promoted.                          |                          |                               |
|                                     |          | There is also a wider issue to     |                          |                               |
|                                     |          | consider when examining issues     |                          |                               |
|                                     |          | of affordability and access to     |                          |                               |
|                                     |          | housing. By restoring empty        |                          |                               |
|                                     |          | homes into use and therefore       |                          |                               |
|                                     |          | increasing the access of housing   |                          |                               |
|                                     |          | to local residents, this in turn   |                          |                               |
|                                     |          | would have a positive impact in    |                          |                               |
|                                     |          | terms of retaining Welsh           |                          |                               |
|                                     |          | speakers in their communities.     |                          |                               |
| Opportunities to promote            | Positive | All promotional material to        | ' '                      | _                             |
| the Welsh language                  |          | access funding options for empty   | brought back into use by | bilingual with both Welsh     |
| e.g. status, use of Welsh           |          | homes loans and grants and all     |                          | and English published in line |
| language services, use of Welsh     |          | promotional material relating to   | •                        | with the Welsh Language       |
| in everyday life in work and in the |          | the advice and assistance          | promotional material and | Standards.                    |
| community                           |          | offered to help owners bring their |                          |                               |
| Actively encourage and promote      |          | properties back into use, will be  | empty properties.        |                               |
| the use of our services in Welsh    |          | bilingual. An active offer will be |                          |                               |
| to see an increase in demand        |          | made to clients to use these       |                          |                               |
| over time                           |          | services in Welsh and to receive   |                          |                               |
|                                     |          | Welsh language materials.          |                          |                               |





# Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

# Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

|                                                                                                                                                   | Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts? | Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.                                                                                                        | What evidence do you have to support this view?                                                                                                                                                                  | What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Compliance with the                                                                                                                               | Positive                                                          | The development of this strategy will increase the Council's ability to deliver services through the medium of Welsh by:                                                                      | Increase in services through the medium of Welsh will be evidenced by the increase in the digitalisation of the service, which will be accessible bilingually.                                                   | Ensure that all services relevant to this Strategy are promoted bilingually with Welsh first.                                                |
| Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards e.g increasing or reducing the Council's ability to deliver services                                 |                                                                   | Considering the rights of Welsh speakers to use Welsh language when dealing with the Council and for staff members who wish to use Welsh at work. The                                         | Increase in the number of service users accessing grants and loans for empty properties in Welsh. The Strategy will be made available to                                                                         | Actively promote both Council services and services offered by key partners that are available in Welsh.                                     |
| through the Medium of Welsh.  Consider the rights of Welsh speakers to use Welsh when dealing with the Council and for staff to use Welsh at Work |                                                                   | development of bilingual services will allow staff members to utilise the Welsh language at work.                                                                                             | the public in Welsh.  The Council has already developed a Contract Strategy Document that includes a section                                                                                                     | There are currently active discussions taking place around how the empty property grant will be offered in the future, taking account of the |
|                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                   | The Council will procure services in line with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards, specifically Standards 76-80 which will allow suppliers to tender for a contract in Welsh if | on the Welsh Language<br>Standards that officers must<br>complete before inviting supplier<br>to tender for a contract. Officers<br>are required to list all the relevant<br>standards in this section to ensure | requirements of standard 94 (and 70-75) and how this may be affected if RCT are to offer the grant on behalf of all Welsh Local Authorities. |



| _                                    | 1        | 1                                    | T                               | ,                    |
|--------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|
|                                      |          | that is their wish. Additionally all |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | relevant standards will be listed    | the Welsh language requirements |                      |
|                                      |          | in the Invitation to Tender          | of the contract.                |                      |
|                                      |          | document so that our suppliers -     |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | when acting on our behalf or         |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | providing a service on our behalf    |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | - comply with our statutory          |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | responsibilities. Standard 94        |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | requires the Council to publish a    |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | policy on awarding grants – all      |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | grants the Council awards must       |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | consider how the proposed use        |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | will influence the Welsh             |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | language. This will ensure that      |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | any identified negative or neutral   |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | impacts are mitigated, therefore     |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | having positive outcomes for the     |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | language.                            |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | language.                            |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | Back-office services, such as        |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | complaints handling and , any        |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | correspondence, publicity,           |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | websites and phone services –        |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | •                                    |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | where these are procured or          |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | provided directly by the Council     |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | will be available in Welsh in line   |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          | with the Welsh Language              |                                 |                      |
| Transfer and 186 L.                  | D. de    | Standards                            | Occupation for the "            |                      |
| Treating the Welsh language, no less | Positive | See above for detail                 | See above for detail            | See above for detail |
| favourably than the                  |          |                                      |                                 |                      |
| English language                     |          |                                      |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          |                                      |                                 |                      |
|                                      |          |                                      |                                 |                      |



# Stage 3 - Strengthening the proposal

Having listed actions in section 2 which may mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts – please record below which ones you will imbed into the policy proposal and who will be responsible for them.

Also consider is the proposal necessary? Would it be possible to meet demand without any new developments? Could other existing provision be used? Where should the development be?

| What are you going to do?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | When are you going to do it? | Who is responsible?                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Review the services we currently provide with particular emphasis on how we have embraced technology and provided services differently during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will further enhance best practice by ensuring that we deliver information in the Welsh language.                               | TBC                          | Housing Strategy Officers Housing Grants Officers Environmental Health Officers Members of Empty Property Operational Group |
| Develop digital inclusion skills across services as well as for the residents we are supporting; this will be linked into Digital Communities Wales. We will work with local libraries, community groups, schools and colleges to deliver classes through the medium of the Welsh language.             | TBC                          | TBC                                                                                                                         |
| The Council will establish a vibrant development programme for Social Housing Grant by accessing and prioritising schemes based on their accessibility to local facilities. This will, include access to libraries, schools, and colleges (and other facilities) which provide Welsh language services. | Ongoing                      | RCT CBC Housing Strategy                                                                                                    |
| Develop training, updates and briefings for staff and providers to keep abreast of any service developments, good practice, innovation and new ventures via joint training sessions, Empty Property Operational Group meetings and local, regional and national forums.                                 | Ongoing                      | RCT Empty Property Operational<br>Group                                                                                     |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Ongoing                      |                                                                                                                             |



| RCTCBC will ensure its key partners provide and promote information through the medium of Welsh.                                                                                      |           | RCT Empty Property Operational Group      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                       | Ongoing   |                                           |
| RCTCBC will review the number of new housing developments which are near a Welsh Medium School                                                                                        | ongong    | RCTCBC Housing Strategy & Investment Team |
|                                                                                                                                                                                       | Ongoing   |                                           |
| Promote Welsh language courses to staff and service users, particularly free                                                                                                          | 31.gomig  | RCTCBC Housing Strategy &                 |
| Welsh lessons for 16-25 year olds provided by the Welsh Government.                                                                                                                   |           | Investment Team                           |
| weish lessons for 10-25 year olds provided by the weish Government.                                                                                                                   | On main m | invesiment ream                           |
|                                                                                                                                                                                       | Ongoing   |                                           |
| Ensure that all material relating to empty homes loans, grants and advice or support are bilingual with the Welsh promoted before the English.                                        |           | RCTCBC Housing Strategy & Investment Team |
|                                                                                                                                                                                       | Ongoing   |                                           |
| Ensure that all services relating to empty homes, including promotional literature, newsletters, application forms and information leaflets are promoted bilingually with Welsh first |           | RCTCBC Housing Strategy & Investment Team |
| Simily With Wolch mot                                                                                                                                                                 | Ongoing   |                                           |
| Actively promote both Council services and services offered by key partners that are available in welsh                                                                               |           | RCTCBC Housing Strategy & Investment Team |
|                                                                                                                                                                                       |           |                                           |

If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible to implement, please explain why. Give sufficient detail of data or research that has led to your reasoning.

| What was identified?                                                                                          | Why is it not possible?                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Offering all services in accordance with the Welsh language standards                                         | Not all of the Council's partners are required to comply with the Welsh language standards; however, we will encourage our partners who aren't subject to the standards to promote the Welsh language whenever practical to do so. |
| Offering housing that is in a location that affords people the opportunity to continue to use or learn Welsh. | Housing is a limited resource and there is not enough affordable housing to satisfy the needs to every applicant on our waiting lists or aspiring to buy or rent. For example, if affordable housing was not available near a      |



| Welsh language school, then the Council would have difficulty affording   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| people the opportunity to continue to use/learn Welsh.                    |
| However, we will work with registered Social Landlords and our other      |
| partners, to ensure that when a property is available to let, then the    |
| advert includes information on the location of the nearest Welsh medium   |
| school and it is placed before information on English language schools.   |
| The home to school transport requirements are enhanced further within     |
| RCT, and Educational services assist all pupils to attend the school of   |
| their choice in their catchment area. RCTCBC go over and above the        |
| requirements of the school transport policy by helping to ensure that all |
| pupils can attend the school of their choice in their catchment area,     |
| whether they choose a welsh or English school.                            |



# Stage 4 - Review

For all policy proposals, whether it is a Significant Key Decision or not, you are required to forward this assessment to Welsh Language services – <a href="mailto:welshlanguageofficer@rctcbc.gov.uk">welshlanguageofficer@rctcbc.gov.uk</a> and the Consultation and Engagement team – consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk in the first instance for some initial guidance and feedback.

As part of the Welsh Language, Equalities and Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment Process all proposals that fall within the definition of Significant Key Decision should present at the Officer Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your report is finalised and published for SLT/Cabinet approval.

If this proposal is a Key Strategic Decision please forward your completed (Stage 1>6) impact assessment, policy proposal/report and consultation report to <a href="CouncilBusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk">CouncilBusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk</a> for an Officer Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. <a href="See our guidance document">See our guidance document</a> for more information on what a Significant Key Decision is.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable Welsh language considerations wherever possible. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below in collaboration with the relevant departments.

| Welsh Language Services Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Date<br>Considered | Brief description of any amendments made following Welsh Language Services feedback |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. This Welsh language impact assessment carefully considers the various ways in which the Empty Homes Strategy will have an impact upon the Welsh language and the opportunities to use and promote in in RCTCBC. There is a clear understanding here of the relevant Welsh language standards, and the relationship between housing and ensuring a thriving Welsh-speaking community, and necessary actions are clearly set out. Welsh Language Services would encourage you to consider the following to further strengthen the assessment: |                    |                                                                                     |
| <ol><li>Note that discussions have already taken place with<br/>staff in relation to the Empty Homes Grant to ensure<br/>these are administered in line with the standards.</li></ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                    |                                                                                     |



| <ol> <li>Emphasise where there are opportunities for us to make and active offer of services/materials in Welsh, with the aim of maximising the use of the language amongst speakers and more confident/experiences learners.</li> <li>Acknowledge the link between housing and Welsh as a community language – perhaps this is not so pressing an issue in RCT but it would be good to note that there are wider concerns regarding this that we can help address even on a small scale.</li> </ol> |                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Officer Review Panel Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Date<br>Considered | Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 23/09/2022         | Greater stress given on the positive outcomes achieved by bringing properties back into use and helping to ensure that Welsh speakers stay within the communities of their choice.  Stage 3 – Relevant officers identified with specific responsibility for making sure that Welsh Language requirements and policies are not only adhered to but actively so.  Emphasise the importance that any offer of help is given on a proactive basis for Welsh speakers/learners. |
| Consultation Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Date Considered    | Brief description of any amendments made following consultation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

# Stage 5 - Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing



# How and who will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the proposal?

The adoption of the Empty Homes Strategy will be supplemented by the Action Plan, which has been in place since 2018 at the implementation of the previous strategy. The Council will monitor, steer and review the progress of the Strategy via the Empty Property Operational Group, which meets every quarter or when necessary. Monitoring and outcomes in line with the action plan will be a standing item at these meetings.

Whilst a formal review of the Strategy will take place evert two years as a minimum, the actions identified in this impact assessment will be reviewed more frequently because many of the actions outlined are ongoing.

A key commitment of the Empty Property Operational Group will be to improve the information that is collected across all strands of investment, using empty property loans and grants to support those who are looking to bring their properties back into use.

# Stage 6 - Summary of Impacts for the Proposal

Provide below a summary of the impact assessment, to include some of the main positive and negative impacts along with an overview of actions taken since the impact assessment to better contribute to more positive impacts. This summary must be included in the Welsh Language Considerations section of the SLT/Cabinet report template. It is not suitable to only write 'please see full report at Appendix x' in the body of the report. The impact assessment must be published alongside the report.

A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been completed and the main findings are as follows -

The Empty Homes Strategy and its aims and objectives will have a positive effect on the Welsh language, Welsh speakers and Welsh learners, and any plans or developments that stem from the Strategy will fully comply with the Welsh Language Measures and the Welsh Language Standards.

The vision for the Strategy is to enable owners of empty properties to bring them back into use for the benefit of residents of RCT and those wishes to live here; this will enable people to have access to good quality housing and to be able to stay within their local communities. This vision is facilitated by offering grants, loans, advice and guidance and where necessary enforcement action. We aim to provide high quality



support to people whether they aim to rent or sell their empty property and we further aim to utilise all available technology, ensuring effective delivery of our service and providing person centred support.

All of the Strategies aims will promote the service through the medium of the Welsh language and we will ensure that all information is produced bilingually and is accessible in Welsh. When offering our services vis a vis empty properties, we ensure that all specialist needs are taken into account, including how the service user requests to engage with us. We will further focus on training and developing the Welsh language skills of our staff by encouraging them to take up Welsh language courses or to utilise their existing skills.

| Stage 7 – Sign Off                  |                          |                                                     |                                                                            |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|
| Name of Officer completing the WLIA | Peter Lewis              | Service Director Name:                              | Derek James                                                                |  |  |
| Position                            | Housing Strategy Officer |                                                     | Is implemented with no amendments                                          |  |  |
|                                     |                          | I recommend that the proposal: (Highlight decision) | Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined         |  |  |
|                                     |                          |                                                     | Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on the Welsh language |  |  |
| Signature                           |                          | Service Director Signature                          |                                                                            |  |  |
| Date                                |                          | Date                                                |                                                                            |  |  |

