

Empty Homes Action Plan (2022 – 2025):

Progress Legend Green – complete Amber – ongoing White – Not started

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	Brief comment on Progress	Progress to date
Empty Property Operational Group (EPOG) to continue to meet on a quarterly basis and deliver the aims and objectives of the Empty Homes Strategy and action plan	Arrange and Diarise quarterly meetings.	<p>Monitoring of the action plan and key work aimed at reducing the number of empty properties.</p> <p>Key stakeholders embrace and deliver the strategic aims and objectives</p> <p>Produce relevant minutes and agendas</p>	Quarterly	Housing Strategy and Investment Service	<p>EPOG has been meeting on a quarterly basis</p> <p>Minutes and briefing notes are produced and distributed for comment</p>	
	Ensure that key performance indicators are achieved in line with the aims of the empty homes strategy.	Reduction in the number of long term empty properties	Annually in April	Housing Strategy and Investment Service	Continued reduction in the overall number of empty properties in RCT	

Liaise with speculative investors who wish to acquire properties within RCT to let to members of the public	Co-ordinate and deliver strategic interventions and enforcement to help bring properties back into use	Increase in the number/uptake of grant/loan applications. Decrease in the number of long term empty properties.	Ongoing	Housing Strategy and Investment Service	During the first year there have been 646 interventions delivered, which is above the provisional target of 400 per year	
	Continue to administer the Houses into Homes Loan	Increase in the number of Houses into Homes loans approved. Increase the number of empty homes being brought back into use	Ongoing	Housing Strategy and Investment Service	Since Oct 22, there has been 12 Houses into Homes Loans completed and 14 approved.	
	Continue to administer the Valleys Taskforce Empty Homes Grant Scheme	Increase the number of Valleys Taskforce empty homes grants Increase the number of empty homes being brought back into use	March 2023	Housing Strategy and Investment Service	467 homes were brought back in to use across 8 local authority areas (263 in RCT, 56%). A total investment of £8.6M was made (grant and client contribution) (£4.6M in RCT, 54%)	
	Launch and deliver the National Empty Homes Grant Scheme.	Increase the number of the National empty homes grants	February 2023	Housing Strategy and Investment Service	RCT is lead delivery authority for the National Empty Homes Grant Scheme.	

		Increase the number of empty homes being brought back into use			£50M approved over 2 years. £4.8M is allocated to RCT. 515 applications received – 200 in RCT.	
	Attend RCT Landlord Forum to present advice support and schemes that are available to bring empty homes back into use	Number of Landlords that attend and engage in the meetings Landlord forum newsletter published	Every 6 months	Housing Strategy and Investment Service	2 Landlord forums held over the past year with 40 landlords attending. Houses into Homes Scheme continues to be a very popular product, receiving over 500 landlord enquiries for the loan	
	Work with Regeneration team and liaise with private landlords	Increase in number of referrals from regeneration for joint approach to specific problem areas/properties.	Ongoing	Housing Strategy and Investment Service		

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	Brief comment on Progress	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.	<p>Increase in the percentage of empty properties brought back into use</p> <p>Increase in number of applications for our loan and grant offers.</p> <p>Reduction in the number of long term vacant properties</p>	Oct 22 and Ongoing	Housing Strategy and Grants	<p>Loans and grants continue to be successful products.</p> <p>12 Houses into Homes Loans completed and 14 approved totalling £4.4M</p> <p>467 homes were brought back in to use across 8 local authority areas (263 in RCT, 56%). A total investment of £8.6M was made (grant and client contribution) (£4.6M in RCT, 54%)</p> <p>515 applications (200 in RCT) for</p>	

				Robert Owen Community Bank	<p>the National Empty Homes Grant Scheme. £50M funding available over the 2 year period (£4.8M allocated to RCT)</p> <p>140 Home Improvement Loans completed totalling £1.8M</p>	
Deliver a new Homestep Plus Scheme	To continue to work with RSLs or develop an internal scheme to deliver a new Homestep Plus scheme in identified area – possible use of commuted sums	Target of 24 properties purchased and sold under Homestep Plus Scheme	Jan 2024-March 25	Housing Strategy and Investment Service	New proposals are being developed and a new method of delivery – funding options need to be identified.	

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	Brief comment on Progress	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	October 22 – October 25	EPOG and Public Health and Protection	Ongoing	
		Decrease in the number of complaints received regarding empty properties	October 22 – October 25	Public Health and Protection	Ongoing	
	Establish a more proactive and targeted approach to enforcement	Decrease in the number of empty properties	October 22 – October 25	Public Health and Protection	Ongoing	
Provide up to date advice and assistance to bring empty properties back into use	Review and update the Empty Homes webpage	Number of web page visits	December 2022	EPOG Housing Strategy and Investment Service	Web pages have been updated	
	Update the Empty Property Advice Pack for empty property owners	Number of empty properties brought back into use	December 2022	EPOG	New empty property advice pack produced. . Bi-Lingual empty property pack available	
	Promotion of Empty Property Advice pack	Empty Property Advice pack available on Council's webpage	December 2022	Housing Strategy and	Complete	

				Investment Service		
		Promotion of Empty Property Advice pack on Council's Facebook page	December 2022	Housing Strategy and Investment Service	Complete	
	Develop online reporting of an empty property	Number of empty properties reported on line via Council's website	Ongoing	Housing Strategy and Investment Service	On going	
Work with Council Tax to identify a targeted approach to bring empty properties back into use	<p>Include information on Empty Property Advice pack within the Council Tax mailshot</p> <p>Include information on loans/grants in c/tax mailshot</p>	Information included within mailshot	April 24	EPOG	Target for further mailshot April 24	

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	Brief comment on Progress	Progress
Share best practice with other local authorities/WG	Investigate benchmarking opportunities	Better understanding of empty property problem within RCT and neighbouring authorities	Ongoing	Housing Strategy and Investment Service	On going	
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	Ongoing	
		Increase in the number of empty properties brought back into use through interventions undertaken	Ongoing	Housing Strategy/Public Health and Protection	On going	
	Report empty property PI to Welsh Government	Benchmark performance at an All Wales level	End of each financial year	Housing Strategy	On going	
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 24 – March 25	Housing Strategy		

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	Brief comment on progress	progress
Explore opportunities for Area Based Regeneration	Identify next area to deliver the Health and Housing Action Area scheme (HHAA)	Area identified	Ongoing Dependent on funding	Housing Strategy	On going, funding opportunities are being explored, Penrhiwceiber has been identified as a potential HHAA	
Establish a more proactive and targeted approach to enforcement.	Develop working practices that deter owners from leaving empty properties vacant for lengthy periods	Increase in Council tax premiums.	April 2022 April 2023	EPOG	CTax increased for empty homes which has helped towards the reduction from 2,892 to 2,634	