

**COFNOD O BENDERFYNIAD WEDI'I DDIRPRWYO GAN
SWYDDOG
RECORD OF DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION**

Penderfyniad Allweddol | Key Decision ✓

PWNC | SUBJECT:

Housing Strategy and Investment: RCT to act as Lead Authority for the National (Pan Wales) Empty Homes Grant Scheme.

DIBEN YR ADRODDIAD | PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:

This report has been prepared to accompany the intended officer decision of the Director of Prosperity and Development as described below.

This report provides details on:

- Proposal for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCT) to act as Lead Authority for the National Empty Homes Grant scheme.

PENDERFYNIAD WEDI'I DDIRPRWYO | DELEGATED DECISION:

It is AGREED that:

- RCT acts as Lead Body for the National Empty Homes Grant Scheme as requested by Welsh Government and the additional costs incurred by RCT in this role shall be top sliced from the total grant.
- A Service Level Agreement be entered into between all participating Local Authorities in Wales to govern the National Empty Homes Grant Scheme.



Llofnod y Prif Swyddog
Chief Officer Signature

Simon Gale

Enw (priflythrennau)
Name (Print Name)

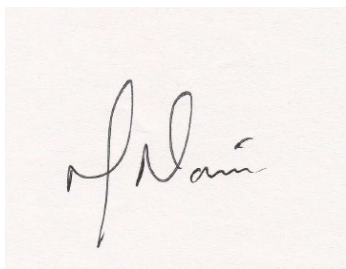
07.12.2022

Dyddiad
Date

Mae'r penderfyniad yn cael ei wneud yn unol ag Adran 15 o Ddeddf Llywodraeth Leol 2000 (Swyddogaethau'r Corff Gweithredol) ac yn y cylch gorchwyl sy wedi'i nodi yn Adran 5 o Ran 3 o Gyfansoddiad y Cyngor.

The decision is taken in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government Act, 2000 (Executive Functions) and in the terms set out in Section 5 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.

YMGYNGHORI | CONSULTATION



07/12/2022

LLOFNOD YR AELOD YMGYNGHOROL O'R CABINET
CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE

DYDDIAD | DATE

LLOFNOD SWYDDOG YMGYNGHOROL
CONSULTEE OFFICER SIGNATURE

DYDDIAD | DATE

RHEOLAU'R WEITHDREFN GALW-I-MEWN | CALL IN PROCEDURE RULES.

**A YW'R PENDERFYNIAD YN UN BRYN A HEB FOD YN DESTUN PROSES GALW-I-MEWN GAN Y PWYLLGOR TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU?:
IS THE DECISION DEEMED URGENT AND NOT SUBJECT TO CALL-IN BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:**

YDY | YES NAC YDY | NO√

Rheswm dros fod yn fater brys | Reason for Urgency:

.....

Os yw'n cael ei ystyried yn fater brys - llofnod y Llywydd, y Dirprwy Lywydd neu Bennaeth y Gwasanaeth Cyflogedig yn cadarnhau cytundeb fod y penderfyniad arfaethedig yn rhesymol yn yr holl amgylchiadau iddo gael ei drin fel mater brys, yn unol â rheol gweithdrefn trosolwg a chraffu 17.2:

If deemed urgent - signature of Presiding Officer or Deputy Presiding Officer or Head of Paid Service confirming agreement that the proposed decision is reasonable in all the circumstances for it being treated as a matter of urgency, in accordance with the overview and scrutiny procedure rule 17.2:

.....
(Llywydd | Presiding Officer)

.....
(Dyddiad | Date)

DS - Os yw hwn yn benderfyniad sy'n cael ei ail-ystyried yna does dim modd galw'r penderfyniad i mewn a bydd y penderfyniad yn dod i rym o'r dyddiad mae'r penderfyniad wedi'i lofnodi.

NB - If this is a reconsidered decision then the decision Cannot be Called In and the decision will take effect from the date the decision is signed.

AT DDEFNYDD Y SWYDDFA YN UNIG | FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

DYDDIADAU CYHOEDDI A GWEITHREDU | PUBLICATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATES

CYHOEDDI | PUBLICATION

Cyhoeddi ar Wefan y Cyngor | Publication on the Council's Website:- 08.12.22

DYDDIAD | DATE

GWEITHREDU'R PENDERFYNIAD | IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

Nodwch: Fydd y penderfyniad hwn ddim yn dod i rym nac yn cael ei weithredu'n llawn nes cyn pen 3 diwrnod gwaith ar ôl ei gyhoeddi. Nod hyn yw ei alluogi i gael ei "Alw i Mewn" yn unol â Rheol 17.1, Rheolau Gweithdrefn Trosolwg a Chraffu.

Note: This decision will not come into force and may not be implemented until the expiry of 3 clear working days after its publication to enable it to be the subject to the Call-In Procedure in Rule 17.1 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

Yn amodol ar y drefn "Galw i Mewn", caiff y penderfyniad ei roi ar waith ar / Subject to Call In the implementation date will be

14.12.22
DYDDIAD / DATE

WEDI'I GYMERADWYO I'W GYHOEDDI: ✓ | APPROVED FOR PUBLICATION :✓

Rhagor o wybodaeth | Further Information:

Cyfadran Directorate:	Prosperity and Development
Enw'r Person Cyswllt Contact Name:	Derek James
Swydd Designation:	Service Director
Rhif Ffôn Telephone Number:	01443 281115

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

KEY DELEGATED DECISION

**REPORT TO ACCOMPANY A DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF
PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT**

7th DECEMBER 2022

**PROPOSAL FOR RCT TO LEAD ON THE NATIONAL (PAN WALES)
EMPTY HOMES GRANT SCHEME**

**Author: Derek James, Service Director – Prosperity and Development
(Tel: 01443 281115)**

**APPENDIX A: WELSH GOVERNMENT NATIONAL EMPTY HOMES
GRANT SCHEME OFFER LETTER**

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report provides details on:

- Proposals for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCT) to act as Lead Body for the co-ordination and monitoring of the National Empty Homes Grant Scheme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 The request by the Welsh Government (WG) that the Council acts as Lead Body for the National Empty Homes Grant Scheme is agreed and that additional costs incurred by RCT in this role shall be top sliced from the total grant.
- 2.2 A Service Level Agreement be entered into between all participating Local Authorities in Wales to govern the National Empty Homes Grant Scheme.

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The availability of Welsh Government funding across Wales provides a significant opportunity to deliver Empty Property Grants, which will provide much needed affordable housing for people across Wales and further boost the local economy, providing job opportunities for local people and contractors.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Empty homes represent a wasted resource, financial expense and in many cases a missed opportunity to provide much needed affordable housing for people in Wales.
- 4.2 Prior to 2019, one of the interventions that the Council implemented to bring Empty homes back into use was its own Empty Homes Grant scheme. Utilising its own capital funding, a grant of up to £20,000 was available for residents who wished to renovate an empty property they had purchased.
- 4.3 In early 2019, with the establishment of the Valleys Taskforce (within Welsh Government), The Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport (at the time), in his capacity as chair of the Valleys Taskforce, considered new themes and priorities that the Valleys Taskforce could take forward. Given the success of RCT's own Empty Homes Grant, it was agreed that it could be taken forward as a regional project with RCT being asked to act as the Lead Body administrating the scheme for all eight Valleys Taskforce Local Authorities. £10m was committed to fund bringing empty homes back in to use.
- 4.4 As the lead body, RCT have and continue to monitor the delivery of the scheme across the Valleys Taskforce Local Authorities. RCT have provided reports and made financial claims to Welsh Government as well as made payments to the other local authorities. The responsibility for approving and managing all aspects of the grants has sat with RCT on behalf of the other local authorities, this process was enforced by a Service Level Agreement.
- 4.5 The Valleys Taskforce Empty Homes Grant scheme formally concluded in March 2021 however, due to the sustained impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, RCT will continue to administer/finalise the scheme until the 31st March 2023.
- 4.6 Despite the sustained impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, excellent outcomes have been achieved. As at the 30th November 2022, there are currently 478 valid applications across the VTF area, 259 (54%) of these applications are in RCT. 404 homes across the VTF areas have now been brought back into use of which 226 (56%) are in RCT. The remaining 74 homes across the VTF areas will be brought back into use by the 31st March 2023, ensuring that the grant outcomes are met. The current grant commitment is £6.9M of which, £4.9M (71%) is committed for RCT residents.

5.0 NATIONAL EMPTY HOMES GRANT SCHEME

5.1 Building on the success of the regional Valleys Taskforce Empty Homes Grant scheme model, colleagues within the Housing department of Welsh Government have explored how to scale up the Empty Homes Grant offer consulting with all Local Authorities in Wales for their input/feedback.

5.2 As a result of the consultation with Local Authorities, Welsh Government put forward advice and recommendations to ministers who have agreed the following;

- £267k to be available to RCT during 22/23 to cover set up costs of the scheme.
- £50M to be available to all LA's over the next two years (23/24 – 24/25), this will also include RCT's management costs to lead the scheme.
- RCT is to be appointed as lead Authority on behalf of all participating LA's (pan Wales offer).
- A notional grant allocation is to be afforded to each participating Local Authority based on the number of empty properties in each Local Authority area. (The current allocation for RCT for the two years is £4.8m).
- All Local Authorities participating in the scheme will be required to provide a 10% match funding contribution. (This amounts to £480k for RCT, based on the current allocation).
- The maximum grant per application will be £25,000.
- Energy efficiency improvements will be a requirement as part of the works undertaken on the property.
- Grants will be available to owner occupiers, Community Housing Groups, Registered Social Landlords and Local Authorities with Housing stock.

5.3 WG have provided RCT with an offer letter (Appendix A) which sets out the terms and conditions of the Scheme as lead administrator. The Scheme will be led and administered by the Housing Strategy and Investment Service, supported by colleagues in Finance, Legal, ICT and Information Management. A management fee is available to be top sliced from the £50 million project budget to cover all additional costs borne by the Council in administering the project.

5.4 The next steps would be to agree a Service Level Agreement with each of the Pan Wales local authorities to formally establish the Council's role as Lead Body for this project. It is anticipated that the project will be operational from January 2023.

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment screening test has been complete and indicated that a full Equality Impact assessment is not required.
- 6.2 This document noted many positives as part of this proposal and no negative impacts have been identified through the screening process. A number of neutral impacts were identified, however this is due to the proposal not having any foreseen impact identified in the screening process. This EIA will be reviewed, monitored, and updated where needed should any impacts be identified in future.

7.0 CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1 A consultation exercise is not required.

8.0 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been completed and the main findings are as follows.
- 8.2 The introduction of the National Empty Homes Grant scheme by Welsh Government, (where it is recommended that RCTCBC act as lead authority for all Wales Local Authorities) will have a positive effect on the Welsh Language, Welsh speakers, and Welsh learners across Wales.
- 8.3 The grant will allow residents and Local Authority representatives to engage with the Authority through the medium of Welsh for the entirety of the grant process (should this be the applicant's/Local Authority preference) and all standard correspondence/promotional elements associated with the grant will be made available bilingually.

9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Welsh Government have confirmed that funding is available until 31st March 2025.
- 9.2 £50M will be available over a two-year period.
 - £25M for F/Y 2023/2024
 - £25M for F/Y 2024/2025
- 9.3 Match funding requirements for the grant is 10% for each local authority. The actual amount will vary dependent on the notional allocation sum allocated to individual Local Authorities. For Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, sufficient resources are available to ensure the match funding requirement is met, noting that based on the notional grant allocation for this Council of £4.8M, the match funding requirement will be £0.480M.

- 9.4 All additional costs of managing the scheme will be funded by top slicing the grant therefore, there are no additional financial resources required because of the recommendations in this report.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 Discussions have taken place with Legal Services and Finance to consider the legal implications and legislation, and it is considered that the arrangements and terms and conditions of this funding can be administered under the Council's lawful powers.

- 10.2 In addition, a Service Level Agreement will be put in place between RCT and each of the other participating local authorities across Wales. This will essentially pass on the accountability, risk and responsibility for the local delivery of projects to each of the participating local authorities and will also govern the grant monitoring and claim process. The SLA will pass on all relevant Welsh Government grant terms and conditions that sit with the overall grant approval.

11.0 LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 11.1 The National Empty Homes Grant Scheme will contribute to the delivery all three of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities of, People, Places & Prosperity. The Scheme will also assist the Council to contribute to three of the seven wellbeing goals that 'The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015' puts in place as follows:

1. A healthier Wales
2. A prosperous Wales
3. A Wales of cohesive communities

12.0 STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

- 12.1 The National Empty Homes Grant Scheme of strategic importance across the whole of RCT.

13.0 CONCLUSION

- 13.1 The National Empty Homes Grant Scheme will continue to provide an opportunity to bring empty homes back into use, creating much needed affordable housing, which will be a more economically viable option to new build, boosting the local economy and provide job opportunities for local people.

- 13.2 As requested by the Welsh Government, RCT are in a position to act as Lead Body for the National Empty Homes Grant Scheme, any additional

costs incurred to lead on the scheme will be funded by WG and top sliced from the total grant.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer: Derek James Tel: (01443) 281115

Appendix A – National Empty Homes Grant Offer Letter (WG to RCTCBC)



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Derek James
Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council
Council Offices
The Pavillions,
Cambrian Park,
Clydach Vale,
Tonypany,
CF40 2XX

01 December 2022

Dear Derek

Award of Funding in relation to the national Empty Homes Grant scheme

1. Award of Funding

- (a) We are pleased to inform you that your Application has been successful and funding of up to **£50,267,000 (fifty million, two hundred and sixty seven thousand pounds)** (“the Funding”) is awarded to you for the Purposes (as defined in Condition 4(a)).
- (a) The Funding relates to the period 01 September 2022 to 31 March 2025 and must be claimed quarterly in arrears in accordance with the timescales set out in the Indicative Payment Profile. If you fail to claim the Funding annually in full in accordance with the timescales set out in the Indicative Payment Profile any unclaimed part of the annual Funding will cease to be available to you.
- (b) This letter shall become effective on the date of signature evidencing acceptance by you as set out in the acceptance page below.
- (c) If you have any queries in relation to this award of Funding or the Conditions please contact the Welsh Government Official who will be happy to assist you.

2. Statutory authority

This award of Funding is made on and subject to the Conditions and under the authority of the Minister for Climate Change, one of the Welsh Ministers, acting pursuant to functions transferred under section 58A of the Government of Wales Act 2006.

3. Interpreting the Conditions

Any reference in the Conditions to:

'you', 'your' is to Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council, Council Offices, The Pavillions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale, Tonypany, CF40 2XX

'we', 'us', 'our' is to the Welsh Ministers;

'Welsh Government Official' is to

Robert Davis
Empty Homes Manager
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 1NA
Tel: 0300 025 5585
Email: robert.davis@gov.wales

or such other Welsh Government official as we may notify you.

'Project Manager' is to your project manager who is responsible for the day to day management of this award of Funding:

Lowri John
Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council,
Council Offices,
Sardis House
Sardis Road
Pontypridd
CF37 1DU

Tel: **07385034137**
E-mail: Lowri.john@rctcbc.gov.uk

'Application' is to your application to deliver the Empty Homes Grant scheme on our behalf dated 28 June 2022;

'Business Day' is to a day other than a Saturday, Sunday, Christmas Day, Good Friday or a bank holiday in Wales under the Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971;

'Conditions' is to the terms and conditions set out in this letter and the Schedules;

'Costs Incurred' is to the cost of goods and/or services you have received regardless of whether you have paid for them by the date of your claim;

'Costs Incurred and Paid' is to the invoiced cost of goods and/or services you have received and which have been paid for by you in cleared funds by the date of your claim;

'Notification Event' is to any of the events listed in Schedule 3;

'Indicative Payment Profile' is to the indicative payment profile set out in Schedule 4;

'Personnel' is to your management/employees and suppliers or any other person appointed or engaged by you in relation to the Purposes;

'Schedule' is to the schedules attached to this letter;

any reference to any legislation whether domestic or international law will include all amendments to and substitutions and re-enactments of that legislation in force from time to time.

4. Use of the Funding

- (a) You must use the Funding solely for the purposes set out in Schedule 1 (the "**Purposes**")
- (b) You must achieve the targets and outcomes set out in Schedule 2 (the "**Targets**").
- (c) Any change to the Purposes or Targets will require our written consent which must be obtained from us in advance of implementing any change. Please note that we are not obliged to give our consent but we will consider all reasonable written requests.
- (d) You must not use any part of the Funding for any kind of activity which in our opinion could bring us into disrepute, including but not limited to (1) party political purposes, (2) the promotion of particular secular, religious or political views; (3) gambling, (4) pornography, (5) offering sexual services, or (6) any kind of illegal activities.
- (e) You must not use any part of the Funding for: (1) purchasing capital equipment (other than as specified in the Purposes), (2) your legal fees in relation to this letter, (3) Costs Incurred or Costs Incurred and Paid by you in the delivery of the Purposes prior to the period referred to in Condition 1(b).

5. Funding pre-conditions

- (a) We will not pay any of the Funding to you until you have provided us with the following information and documentation:
 - i) this letter signed by you;

- ii) A Service Level Agreement (SLA) between yourselves and the local authorities who are taking part in the scheme.
 - iii) any other information, document, opinion or assurance which we consider to be necessary or desirable (if we have notified you accordingly) in connection with this award of Funding or the Purposes or in connection with the entry into and performance of this award of Funding or its validity and enforceability.
- (b) Where you are required to provide information and documentation to us as evidence that you have satisfied a particular pre-condition, Condition or in support of a claim, the information and documentation must be in all respects acceptable to us. We reserve the right to reject any information and documentation which is for any reason not acceptable to us, and/or request any further or additional information and/or documentation in support of the request for Funding

6. How to claim the Funding

- (a) You may claim the Funding quarterly in arrears based on Costs Incurred by you in the delivery of the Purposes as detailed in the Indicative Payment Profile.
- (b) You must claim the Funding in accordance with the dates set out in the Indicative Payment Profile. You must claim the Funding promptly. We reserve the right to withdraw any part of the Funding that you do not claim promptly.
- (c) You must submit your claims for payment of Funding to the Welsh Government Official.
- (d) You must use our claim pro-forma (which is available from the Welsh Government Official) and attach the following information and documentation to each claim:
 - i) confirmation that you are operating in all respects in accordance with your constitution;
 - ii) confirmation that you have appropriate financial, risk and control systems in place before utilising any part of the Funding to provide a grant to or procure any goods or services from third parties;
 - iii) Provide monthly data reports using a reporting template that your Welsh Government official will provide to you;
 - iv) Provide annual end of year progress reports using a reporting template that your Welsh Government official will provide to you; and
 - v) Provide quarterly claim form as provided by Welsh Government.
- (e) We will aim to pay all valid claims as soon as possible and typically within 20 Business Days of receipt of a valid claim being made in

accordance with the provisions of this letter, and provided always that the Funding pre-conditions set out in Condition 5 above have been satisfied and that on both the date of the claim and the date the Funding is to be paid to you:

- i) the declarations made in Condition 8 below are true and correct and will be true and correct immediately after the relevant Funding has been paid to you; and
- ii) no Notification Event is continuing or might result from the proposed Funding.

7. Your general obligations to us

You must:

- (a) safeguard the Funding against fraud generally and, in particular, fraud on the part of your Personnel and notify us immediately if you have reason to suspect that any fraud within your organisation has occurred or is occurring or is likely to occur whether or not it relates to the Funding. You must also participate in such fraud prevention initiatives as we may require from time to time;
- (b) maintain appropriate procedures for dealing with any conflicts of interest in relation to the Funding whether actual, potential or perceived;
- (c) comply with all applicable domestic or international laws or regulations or official directives;
- (d) maintain adequate insurances to cover against the risks which may arise in connection with any property or any activity undertaken in delivery of the Purposes. We reserve the right to require you to provide proof of your insurance;
- (e) maintain appropriate financial, risk and control systems before utilising any part of the Funding to provide a grant to or procure any goods or services from third parties;
- (f) co-operate fully with the Welsh Government Official and with any other employee of the Welsh Government or consultant appointed by us to monitor your use of the Funding and your compliance with the Conditions;
- (g) inform us immediately if any of the declarations made in Condition 8 is incorrect in any respect or, if repeated at any time with reference to the facts and circumstances then existing, would be incorrect;
- (h) notify us of any funding received by you from any source which is procured or utilised in conjunction with the Funding to directly support the Purposes including but not limited to your insurance

provider (cancellation/business disruption insurance), the UK Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and/or any Welsh Government fund/scheme and any other funders. The intention of this Condition is to avoid any duplication of funding in respect of the Purposes.

8. Declarations

You declare that:

- (a) you have the power to enter into and to perform the obligations set out in the Conditions and you have taken all necessary action to authorise the entry into and performance of the obligations under the Conditions;
- (b) no limit on your powers will be exceeded as a result of claiming the Funding, or the grant of any security contemplated by the Conditions;
- (c) the entry into and performance by you of, and the transactions contemplated by, this letter do not and will not contravene or conflict with:
 - i) your constitutional documents;
 - ii) any agreement or instrument binding on you or your assets or constitute a default or termination event (however described) under any such agreement or instrument; or
 - iii) any law or regulation or judicial or official order, applicable to you;
- (d) no Notification Event is continuing or might reasonably be expected to result from the provision of the Funding and no other event or circumstance is outstanding which constitutes (or, with the expiry of a grace period, the giving of notice, the making of any determination or any combination thereof, would constitute) a default or termination event (howsoever described) under any other agreement or instrument which is binding on you or to which any of your assets is subject;
- (e) no litigation or arbitration or administrative proceeding is current or pending or, so far as you are aware, threatened, which has or could have an adverse effect on your ability to perform and comply with any of the Conditions;
- (f) you have disclosed to us all material facts or circumstances which need to be disclosed to enable us to obtain a true and correct view of your business and affairs (both current and prospective) or which ought to be provided to any person who is considering providing funding to you;

- (g) any information, in written or electronic format, supplied by you to us in connection with the Funding was, at the time it was supplied or at the date it was stated to be given (as the case may be):
 - i) if it was factual information, complete, true and accurate in all material respects;
 - ii) if it was a financial projection or forecast, prepared on the basis of recent historical information and on the basis of reasonable assumptions and was arrived at after careful consideration;
 - iii) if it was an opinion or intention, made after careful consideration and was fair and made on reasonable grounds; and
 - iv) not misleading in any material respect, nor rendered misleading by a failure to disclose other information, except to the extent that it was amended, superseded or updated by more recent information supplied by you to us.
- (h) you have discussed and agreed the Targets with us and you are confident that they are realistic and achievable;
- (i) there are no conflicts of interest in relation to the Funding whether actual, potential or perceived;
- (j) acceptance of this award of Funding will not result in duplicate funding in respect of the activities required to deliver the Purposes. This includes but is not limited to any payments received by you in relation to the effects of the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) from your insurance provider (cancellation/business disruption insurance), the UK Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and/or any Welsh Government fund/scheme and any funders;
- (k) You will be deemed to repeat the declarations in this Condition 8 on each date you may have any liability to repay the award of Funding to us, and by reference to the facts and circumstances existing on each such date.

9. Notification Events and their consequences

- (a) You must notify us immediately if a Notification Event has occurred or is likely to occur but we also reserve the right to notify you where we believe a Notification Event has occurred or is likely to occur.
- (b) We will either:
 - i) notify you that we, at our absolute discretion, consider the Notification Event is not capable of remedy; or

- ii) if we consider, at our absolute discretion, that the Notification Event is capable of being remedied, seek to discuss the Notification Event with you with a view to agreeing a course of action to be taken to address the Notification Event.
- (c) We will be entitled to take any of the actions listed in Condition 9(d) if:
- i) despite our efforts we have been unable to discuss the Notification Event with you; or
 - ii) we notify you that the Notification Event is not, in our opinion, capable of remedy; or
 - iii) a course of action to address and/or remedy the Notification Event is not agreed with you; or
 - iv) a course of action to address and/or remedy the Notification Event is agreed with you but you fail to follow it, or any conditions attached to it are not met (including without limitation the timescale for such course of action) to our satisfaction; or
 - v) the course of action fails to remedy the Notification Event to our satisfaction.
- (d) If any of the circumstances set out in Condition 9(c) occurs we may, at our absolute discretion, by notice to you:
- i) withdraw the award of Funding; and/or
 - ii) require you to repay all or part of the Funding; and/or
 - iii) suspend or cease all further payment of Funding; and/or
 - iv) make all further payments of Funding subject to such conditions as we may specify; and/or
 - v) deduct all amounts owed to us under the Conditions from any other funding that we have awarded or may award to you; and/or
 - vi) exercise any other rights against you which we may have in respect of the Funding.
- (e) All repayments of Funding must be made to us within 20 Business Days of the date of our demand.

10. Monitoring requirements

You must:

- (a) provide us with such documents, information and reports which we may reasonably require from time to time in order for us to monitor your compliance with the Conditions including:
 - i) case studies in the format provided by Welsh Government of completed funded schemes as requested;
 - ii) periodic reporting of data in a format provided by us;

- iii) establish and manage an operational group including holding meetings on at least a quarterly basis which the Welsh Government Official will attend.
- (b) meet with the Welsh Government Official and such other of our representatives as we may from time to time reasonably require
- (c) ensure that the Project Manager (or such other person as we may agree) together with any other person we may require attends all meetings with the Welsh Government Official.

11. Audit Requirements

- (a) You must:
 - ii) maintain complete, accurate and valid accounting records identifying all income and expenditure in relation to the Purposes;
 - iii) without charge, permit any officer or officers of the Welsh Government, Wales Audit Office or any UK subsidy enforcement body at any reasonable time and on reasonable notice (in exceptional circumstances, such as the prevention or detection of fraud, it may not be practicable to provide you with reasonable notice) being given to you to visit your premises and/or to inspect any of your activities and/or to examine and take copies of your books of account and such other documents or records howsoever stored as in such officer's reasonable view may relate in any way to your use of the Funding. This undertaking is without prejudice and subject to any other statutory rights and powers exercisable by the Welsh Government, Wales Audit Office or any UK subsidy enforcement body or any officer, servant or agent of any of the above;
 - iv) retain this letter and all original documents relating to the Funding until we inform you in writing that it is safe to destroy them;
 - v) provide us with an annual Statement of Expenditure in accordance with the requirements set out in Schedule 5.
- (b) Under paragraph 17 of Schedule 8 to the Government of Wales Act 2006 the Auditor General for Wales has extensive rights of access to documents and information relating to monies provided by the Welsh Government. They and their officials have the power to require relevant persons who control or hold documents to give any assistance, information and explanation that they may require; and to require those persons to attend before them for such a purpose. The Auditor General and their staff may exercise this right at all reasonable times.

12. Third party obligations

- (a) Nothing in the Conditions imposes any liability on us in respect of any liability incurred by you to any third party (including, without limit, employees and contractors).
- (b) You must indemnify us against any liabilities, claims, proceedings, demands, losses, costs and expenses suffered or incurred by us directly or indirectly arising as a result of or in connection with any failure by you to perform fully or in part any obligation you may have to a third party.

13. Intellectual property rights and publicity

- (a) Nothing in the Conditions transfers to us any rights in any intellectual property created by you as a result of the Purposes.
- (b) You must acknowledge our support in relation to the Purposes. Such acknowledgement(s) must be in a form approved by us and must comply with the Welsh Government's branding guidelines.
- (c) You must provide the Welsh Government Official with details of all the acknowledgement(s) referred to in Condition 13(b) for our approval before any such acknowledgements are used and you may not use such acknowledgments without our prior written approval. We will endeavour to respond to all written requests for approval within 15 Business Days.
- (d) You agree that from the date of this letter until 5 years from the date of the final payment of Funding we may include details about your organisation and business, the Funding and the Purposes in Welsh Government promotional materials and you further agree to cooperate with our reasonable requests to achieve the production of such materials.

14. Information

- (a) You acknowledge that we are subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the "FOIA"), the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (the "EIR"), the Data Protection Act 2018 (the "DPA") and the retained EU law version of the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) (the "UK GDPR").
- (b) You acknowledge that we are responsible for determining in our absolute discretion whether:
 - i) to disclose any information which we have obtained under or in connection with the Funding to the extent that we are required to disclose such information to a person making a disclosure request under the FOIA or the EIR; and/or

- ii) any information is exempt from disclosure under the FOIA or the EIR.
- (c) You acknowledge that we may share any data you provide to us with fraud prevention agencies and third parties for the purposes of preventing and detecting fraud. Any personal data we collect will be managed in accordance with our Privacy Notice which is available to view here [Privacy notice: Welsh Government grants | GOV.WALES](#)

15. Buying goods and services

- (a) If you decide to buy any goods and/or services to deliver the Purposes, they must be purchased in a competitive and sustainable way so as to demonstrate that you have (i) achieved best value in the use of public funds, and (ii) complied with your conflict of interest policy at the relevant time.
- (b) We may from time to time request evidence from you to demonstrate your compliance with this Condition 15. Such evidence may take the form of evidence of your:
 - i) compliance with any procurement regulations, legislation or guidance in place from time to time to which you, or any person carrying out a business or function of the same or similar nature to you, is subject; or
 - ii) compliance with your procurement policy in place at the relevant time; or
 - iii) obtaining a minimum of three written quotations for the relevant goods and/or services.

You must supply such evidence to us promptly following our written request for such evidence.

16. Giving notice

- (a) Where notice is required to be given under the Conditions it must be in writing (this does not include email but may include a letter attached to an email) and must prominently display the following heading:

“Notice in relation to the national Empty Homes Grant scheme”.

- (b) The address and contact details for the purposes of serving notice under the Conditions are as follows

You: the Project Manager at the address stated in Condition 3.

Us: the Welsh Government Official at the address stated in Condition 3.

- (c) A notice will be deemed to have been properly given as follows:-
- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Prepaid first class post: | on the second Business Day after the date of posting. |
| By hand: | upon delivery to the address or the next Business Day if after 4pm or on a weekend or public holiday. |
| By email attachment: | upon transmission or the next Business Day if after 4pm or on a weekend or public holiday. |

17. Equality

You must have in place and apply equality policies covering employment, use of volunteers and provision of services, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

18. Welsh language

- a) The Welsh Government is committed to supporting the Welsh language and culture and The Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers Welsh language strategy (Cymraeg 2050) provides a vision for the growth and further development of the Welsh language.
- b) Where the Purposes include or relate to the provision of services in Wales, they must be provided in Welsh and English unless it would be unreasonable or disproportionate to do so. They must be provided in such a way as to not treat the Welsh language less favourably than English, in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.
- c) Where the provision of services forms part of the Purposes, you must act in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the aims of Cymraeg 2050. In practice, this will include the following:
 - i) Ensure that any written material produced, including digital material, is bilingual.
 - ii) Ensure that any signage is bilingual.
 - iii) Ensure that any training or public events are held bilingually.
 - iv) Actively promote and facilitate the Welsh language (including providing services and increasing opportunities to use the Welsh language) within funded activities.
- d) For general advice on providing services bilingually and for information on which organisations are able to support you, please

contact the Welsh language advice service “Helo Blod” on 03000 258888 or e-mail heloblod@gov.wales with your query.

19. Sustainable development

Your use of the Funding must contribute to the achievement of the Welsh Government’s well-being objectives contained in the Welsh Government’s Programme for Government. You must work in a sustainable way (sustainable development principle) in delivering the Purposes so as to ensure you are working in a preventative, integrated, long-term and collaborative way that involves people that reflect the diversity of Wales. Please refer to Schedule 1 for further information.

20. Welsh Ministers’ functions

You acknowledge that the Welsh Ministers have a range of functions which will continue to accrue and be amended and that decisions in relation to each such function are obliged to be taken in the light of all relevant and to the exclusion of all irrelevant considerations. You agree that nothing contained or implied in, or arising under or in connection with, the Conditions will in any way prejudice, fetter or affect the functions of the Welsh Ministers or any of them nor oblige the Welsh Ministers or any of them to exercise, or refrain from exercising, any of their functions in any particular way.

21. General

- (a) If at any time any of the Conditions are deemed to be or become invalid, illegal or unenforceable in any respect under any law, the validity, legality and enforceability of the remaining provisions will not in any way be affected or impaired.
- (b) No failure or delay on our part to exercise any power, right or remedy under the Conditions will operate as a waiver of any such power, right or remedy or preclude its further exercise or the exercise of any other power, right or remedy. The powers, rights or remedies hereby provided are cumulative and not exclusive of any powers, rights or remedies provided by law.
- (c) Any amendment or variation to the Conditions must be in writing and signed by us and you in the same manner as this letter (or as otherwise agreed by us in writing from time to time).
- (d) You may not assign or otherwise dispose of in any way your rights, benefits, obligations or duties under the Conditions.
- (e) Conditions 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, and 21(e) and such other Conditions which by implication need to continue in force beyond the final payment of Funding will so continue in full force and effect.

- (f) The award of the Funding is to you alone and no one else is entitled to make any claim in respect of the Funding or seek to rely on or enforce any of the Conditions.
- (g) In circumstances where you comprise two or more persons or bodies, the liabilities of such persons or bodies shall be joint and several and the default of one of such persons or bodies shall be deemed to be the default of all.
- (h) The Conditions and any disputes or claim (including any non-contractual disputes or claims) arising out of or in connection with it its formation or its subject matter are to be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of Wales and England as applied in Wales and the parties hereto submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of Wales and England.

22. How to accept this award of Funding

- (a) To accept this award of Funding you must sign and return a copy of this letter to the Welsh Government Official. None of the Funding will be paid to you until we have received your signed letter.
- (b) We must receive your signed letter on or before 15 December 2022 (within 14 days of the date of this letter), or this award of Funding will automatically be withdrawn.

Yours faithfully



Signed by:
Stuart Fitzgerald
Deputy Director, Homes & Places
Housing & Regeneration
under authority of the Minister for Climate Change, one of the Welsh Ministers

SCHEDULE 1 The Purposes

The Purpose of the Funding is to support you in the successful roll out of a national Empty Homes Grant scheme, (“the Scheme”), across Wales.

The Scheme offers applicants a grant of up to £25,000 to enable applicants to bring a property, that has been registered with the relevant council tax department as empty for a minimum of 12 months and is in their ownership, back into use. It supports the delivery of our investment priority to return empty properties into use, help regenerate communities, provide more choice and suitable accommodation for residents.

You will be responsible for the delivery and management of the Scheme operating in all participating local authorities.

You will ensure that a legal charge and restriction is secured against all properties that benefit from this funding. Such legal charge and restriction should be secured for a period of 5 years from the certification of grant aided work.

You will provide regular updates including at Operational Group meetings.

You will enter a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between yourselves and the local authorities who are taking part in the scheme. You will work with the participating local authorities to ensure they understand how the Scheme will operate and be managed within their areas, and what involvement will be required from them to support the successful delivery of the Scheme. You will also agree with the local authorities their mechanism for contributing their 10% match funding ahead of any claim being submitted to Welsh Government. You can begin delivery in those local authorities once you have received signed SLAs agreeing to the terms of the scheme for that area.

The Funding must be delivered in line with the scheme eligibility criteria, including any individual eligibility criteria for each LA which will be agreed with Welsh Government prior to applications being processed in that area.

Up to £267,000 of the Funding can be used for staffing and administrative costs to deliver the Scheme on our behalf during 2022-23. In addition, up to £50,000,000 will be allocated from 2023-24 to 2024-25 to provide grants to owner-occupiers, Registered Social Landlords, Community Housing Groups and Local Authorities (“the Beneficiary”) and for staffing and administrative costs. Notional allocations will be made to each local authority each year based on the number of empty properties in each local authority area. This information will be provided by Welsh Government officials to you.

Should a Beneficiary wish to dispose of their property whilst your legal charge remains in place or if a property remains unoccupied for 6 months or more

following the payment of the grant to the Beneficiary then the grant provided must be repaid in full to you.

If a grant is repaid to you up to 31st March 2025, then such money may be recycled and paid to another Beneficiary in accordance with the Scheme. Any local authority contribution is explicitly for use within that local authority area. If any grant is repaid after the 1st April 2025 then you must inform the Welsh Government Official and discuss its repayment to Welsh Government and the relevant local authority as appropriate.

Third Party Grant Scheme

The purpose of the Funding is for you to provide grants to owner-occupiers, Registered Social Landlords, Community Housing Groups and Local Authorities (the “Beneficiaries”). The maximum amount of grant per Beneficiary is £25,000 per property and must be used by the Beneficiary for the Empty Homes Grant Scheme (the “Scheme”).

Up to £50,000,000 has been provided for the purpose. The funding must also fund the staffing and administration fees for 2023-24 and 2024-25. Expenditure for staffing and administration must be agreed with Welsh Government in advance.

You are responsible for managing all grants to Beneficiaries and ensuring that all necessary procedures and processes are put in place before any grant is awarded.

You must undertake appropriate due diligence before awarding any funding to a Beneficiary.

You must undertake a comprehensive “subsidy checklist” assessment of the Scheme to ensure that it complies with the UK Subsidy Regime. You must also consider the Subsidy implications of each individual grant and obtain such documentation and information from the Beneficiary as is necessary to demonstrate your compliance with the UK Subsidy Regulation.

You must put in place appropriate grant terms and conditions ensuring that they are in line with and, not in conflict with any of the requirements set out in these Conditions.

You must agree a clear purpose for each grant and how you will measure the Beneficiary’s success in delivering those purposes. You must agree SMART targets with the Beneficiaries.

In accordance with Condition 10, we may from time to time request information about the Scheme and any grant paid under the Scheme. The information you provide must comply with your Application. Any failure by you to provide satisfactory information will be deemed a Notification Event.

Nothing in this Schedule shall relieve you of any of your obligations to us as set out in these Conditions.

SCHEDULE 2

The Targets

2022-23

- You will put relevant scheme processes in place including sufficient resource to manage the scheme by scheme launch in January 2023.
- You will liaise with individual LAs and provide draft SLAs to each local authority no later than January 2023.
- You will ensure that an SLA is in place with each participating local authority prior to any applications being processed through the scheme.
- You will start to process applications from January 2023.

2023-24 – 2024-25

- All grant funded works should result in an energy efficiency improvement to each property.
- The energy efficiency works undertaken in each property should be reported separately and provided to Welsh Government.
- We expect the funding to result in up to 2,000 properties being brought back into use through the scheme, based on the maximum grant level being applied to each grant awarded.

The indicative allocations for each local authority in Table 1 below are based on the assumption that each local authority participates in the scheme:

Table 1: Indicative allocations per Local Authority

Local Authority	No. of empty properties (2022/23)	Allocation 2023/24*	Indicative allocation 2024/25*
Blaenau Gwent	798	£901,084	£901,084
Bridgend	1101	£1,243,225	£1,243,225
Caerphilly	1023	£1,155,149	£1,155,149
Cardiff	1395	£1,575,203	£1,575,203
Carmarthenshire	2259	£2,550,813	£2,550,813
Ceredigion	729	£823,171	£823,171
Conwy	686	£774,616	£774,616
Denbighshire	789	£890,921	£890,921
Flintshire	865	£976,739	£976,739
Gwynedd	1349	£1,523,261	£1,523,261
Isle of Anglesey	340	£383,921	£383,921
Merthyr Tydfil	550	£621,048	£621,048
Monmouthshire	605	£683,153	£683,153
Neath Port Talbot	1060	£1,196,929	£1,196,929
Newport	1015	£1,146,116	£1,146,116
Pembrokeshire	1322	£1,492,773	£1,492,773
Powys	952	£1,074,977	£1,074,977
Rhondda Cynon Taf	2121	£2,394,986	£2,394,986
Swansea	1701	£1,920,732	£1,920,732
Torfaen	422	£476,513	£476,513
Vale of Glamorgan	749	£845,754	£845,754
Wrexham	309	£348,916	£348,916
Total	22,140	£25,000,000	£25,000,000

***Indicative allocations based on annual empty property statistics and subject to reduction to include administration costs and therefore subject to change.**

SCHEDULE 3

Notification Events

The Notification Events referred to in Condition 9 are listed below:

1. repayment of any part of the Funding is required in accordance with any relevant legislation;
2. you fail to comply with any of the Conditions;
3. the Funding, in full or in part, is not being used for the Purposes;
4. you fail to achieve any or all of the Targets;
5. there is unsatisfactory progress towards completing the Purposes, including meeting the Targets;
6. you fail to provide information about the Purposes requested by us or any UK subsidy enforcement body or any of its auditors, agents or representatives;
7. we have reason to believe that you and/or any of your Personnel are involved in fraudulent activity or have been involved in fraudulent activity [whilst the Purposes are/were being carried out];
8. we have made an overpayment of Funding to you;
9. there is a duplication of funding in respect of any part of the Purposes. This includes but is not limited to any payments received by you in relation to the effects of the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) from your insurance provider (cancellation/business disruption insurance), the UK Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and/or any Welsh Government fund/scheme
10. any declaration made in Condition 8 is, or proves to be, incomplete untrue or misleading, incorrect in any respect or, if repeated at any time with reference to the facts and circumstances then existing, would be incorrect;
11. there has been a modification (qualification, adverse or disclaimer) to the auditor's opinion on your financial statements;
12. an event or circumstance has occurred and is outstanding which constitutes (or, with the expiry of a grace period, the giving of notice, the making of any determination or any combination thereof, would constitute) a default or termination event (howsoever described) under any other agreement or instrument which is binding on you or to which any of your assets is subject;

13. a moratorium in respect of all or any of your debts or assets or a composition or an agreement with your creditors is agreed, applied for, ordered or declared;
14. you stop or suspend payment of any debts or are unable, or admit in writing your inability, to pay your debts as they fall due;
15. the value of your assets is less than your liabilities (taking into account contingent and prospective liabilities);
16. you commence negotiations, or enter into any composition, compromise, assignment or arrangement, with one or more of your creditors with a view to rescheduling any of your indebtedness (because of actual or anticipated financial difficulties);
17. any action, proceedings, procedure or step is taken in relation to you in relation to:
 - (a) the suspension of payments, a moratorium in respect of any indebtedness, winding up, dissolution, administration or reorganisation (using a voluntary arrangement, scheme of arrangement or otherwise); or
 - (b) a composition, compromise, assignment or arrangement with any of your creditors; or
 - (c) the appointment of a liquidator, receiver, administrative receiver, administrator, compulsory manager or other similar officer in respect of you or any of your assets.
18. a statutory demand is issued against you;
19. you cease, or threaten to suspend or cease, to carry on all or a material part of your business;
20. there is a change in your constitution, status, control or ownership and/or your external auditors resign;
21. you fail to comply with any statutory reporting obligations which are applicable to you (including, but not limited to, filing requirements at Companies House, the Charity Commission, the Financial Conduct Authority);
22. there is any change, whether permanent or temporary, in your shareholders, directors, trustees or partners and/or Personnel which may affect your ability to deliver the Purposes;
23. any event occurs or circumstances arise which in our opinion gives reasonable grounds for believing that providing the Funding and/or the

continuation of the arrangements contemplated by this letter could bring us into disrepute;

24. any event occurs or circumstances arise which in our opinion gives reasonable grounds for believing that you may not, or may be unable, to perform or comply with any of your obligations under the Conditions.

SCHEDULE 4
Indicative Payment Profile
(refer to Conditions 5(b), 6(a) and (b))

If you fail to claim the Funding annually in full in accordance with the timescales set out in this Indicative Payment Profile any unclaimed part of the annual Funding will cease to be available to you.

Instalment number	Maximum amount of instalment	Earliest date for claim	Last date for claim	Documents which must accompany claim pro-forma
2022-23				
1	£267,000	01 April 2023	30 April 2023	Claim form Monthly Data report Annual statement as per condition 11(a)(iv)
2023-24				
2	£25,000,000 (instalments quarterly depending on costs incurred in period)	Q1 - 01 July 2023 Q2 – 01 October 2023 Q3 – 01 January 2024 Q4 – 01 April 2024	Q1 - 31 July 2023 Q2 – 31 October 2023 Q3 – 31 January 2024 Q4 - 30 April 2024	Quarterly Claim form Monthly Data report Annual End of Year progress report Annual statement as per condition 11(a)(iv)
2024-25				
3	£25,000,000 (instalments quarterly depending on costs incurred in period)	Q1 - 01 July 2024 Q2 – 01 October 2024 Q3 – 01 January 2025 Q4 – 01 April 2025	Q1 - 31 July 2024 Q2 – 31 October 2024 Q3 – 31 January 2025 Q4 - 30 April 2025	Quarterly Claim form Monthly Data report Annual End of Year progress report Annual statement as per condition 11(a)(iv)

SCHEDULE 5

Annual Statement of Grant Expenditure

Local Authority Allocation Certificate

End of Year income / expenditure report

a) Total grant received for 2022-23 £

b) Actual Expenditure £

Grant to be reclaimed by the Welsh Ministers (a-b) £

I confirm that the agreed aims and objectives have been met.

Certificate of the Chief Finance Officer

I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that:

- the Information given above is correct and that all expenditure correctly records actual amounts incurred by the authority in relation to the Purposes and costs approved by the Welsh Government as being eligible under the grant;
- Activity was carried out against the agreed aims and objectives in accordance with the Award letter and associated Terms and Conditions of the grant;
- Systems and Controls were in place to ensure that the grant was used solely for the Purposes for which it was given, whether spent directly or passed to other organisations;
- No claims have been made for other funding from the Welsh Government or any other body in respect of the expenditure shown on this statement; and
- Monitoring arrangements were in place to ensure that implementation progressed as recorded on any agreed Delivery plan.

I have attached a qualification report outlining why I am unable to certify the above.

Signature:

Date:

Position: Chief Finance Officer / Director of Finance(please delete as appropriate)

TWO SIGNATORIES ARE REQUIRED

We declare we are duly authorised to accept the award of Funding for delivery of the national Empty Homes Grant scheme and the Conditions relating to the Funding.

An authorised signatory of **Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council** Signature

Name

Job Title

Date

An authorised signatory of **Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council** Signature

Name

Job Title

Date

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM INCLUDING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

(Revised March 2021)

Please refer to the current Equality Impact Assessment guidance when completing this document. If you would like further guidance please contact the Diversity and Inclusion Team on 01443 444529.

An equality impact assessment **must** be undertaken at the outset of any proposal to ensure robust evidence is considered in decision making. This documentation will support the Council in making informed, effective and fair decisions whilst ensuring compliance with a range of relevant legislation, including:

- Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010.

This document will also contribute towards our duties to create a More Equal Wales within the

- Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015.

The [‘A More Equal Wales – Mapping Duties’](#) guide highlights the alignment of our duties in respect of the above-mentioned legislation.

SECTION 1 – PROPOSAL DETAILS

Lead Officer: Lowri John

Service Director: Derek James

Service Area: Housing Strategy & Investment

Date: 03/08/2022

1.a) What are you assessing for impact?

Strategy/Plan	Service Re-Model/Discontinuation of Service	Policy/Procedure	Practice	Information/Position Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.b) What is the name of the proposal?

National Empty Homes Grant Scheme & recommendation that RCT act as Lead Authority administrators for all 22 Local Authorities.

1.c) Please provide an overview of the proposal providing any supporting links to reports or documents.

The availability of Welsh Government funding (£50m over two years) across Wales provides a significant opportunity to deliver Empty Property Grants, which will provide much needed affordable housing for people across Wales and further boost the local economy, providing job opportunities for local people and contractors.

The Welsh Government have requested that the Council acts as Lead Body for the National Empty Homes Grant Scheme and any additional costs incurred by the Council in this role shall be top sliced from the total grant.

1.d) Please outline where delivery of this proposal is affected by legislation or other drivers such as code of practice.

N/A

1.e) Please outline who this proposal affects:

- Service users
- Employees
- Wider community

SECTION 2 – SCREENING TEST – IS A FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT REQUIRED?

Screening is used to determine whether the initiative has positive, negative or neutral impacts upon protected groups. Where negative impacts are identified for protected groups then a full Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Please provide as much detail as possible of how the proposal will impact on the following groups, this may not necessarily be negative, but may impact on a group with a particular characteristic in a specific way.

Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and foster good relations between different groups. Please take an intersectional approach in recognising an individual may have more than one protected characteristic.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Age (<i>Specific age groups i.e. young people or older people</i>)	Positive	The grant does not assess age as part of the grant eligibility criteria and is therefore open to a wide spectrum of ages. Specific qualitative feedback has been provided from some (younger) first time buyers however, who have noted that had the grant	Applicant feedback.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		not been available they would not have been able to afford the home they have purchased / been able to complete the necessary works to make it safe and secure.	
Disability <i>(people with visible and non-visible disabilities or long-term health conditions)</i>	Positive	<p>The grant does not assess disability as part of the grant eligibility criteria and is therefore open to all residents/members of the public. The Empty Homes grant however, (provided the works at the home are suitable) can be utilised in conjunction with a disabled facilities grant which can positively impact on a disabled individual.</p> <p>The grant application form also provides an opportunity for individuals to note/identify the need for reasonable adjustments (should they wish) and if any adjustments are noted, these will be considered and reviewed for implementation. This area was developed following customer feedback.</p>	Data records & applicant feedback.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Gender Reassignment <i>(anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth including non-binary identities)</i>	Neutral	This characteristic is not assessed as part of the grant eligibility criteria and is therefore open to all residents/members of the public.	
Marriage or Civil Partnership <i>(people who are married or in a civil partnership)</i>	Neutral	This characteristic is not assessed as part of the grant eligibility criteria and is therefore open to all residents/members of the public.	
Pregnancy and Maternity <i>(women who are pregnant/on maternity leave)</i>	Neutral	This characteristic is not assessed as part of the grant eligibility criteria and is therefore open to all residents/members of the public.	
Race <i>(ethnic and racial groups i.e. minority ethnic groups, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers)</i>	Neutral	<p>This characteristic is not assessed as part of the grant eligibility criteria and is therefore open to all residents/members of the public.</p> <p>Should the Authority receive a request from an applicant/potential applicant to access & complete the form in a different language, this request would be considered & hopefully it would be possible to</p>	

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		support as the Council are members of the Wales Interpretation and Translation service (WITS). The request would need to detail further ongoing support with language and communications also throughout the grant process however, the Housing Strategy department would be guided by WITS.	
Religion or Belief <i>(people with different religions and philosophical beliefs including people with no beliefs)</i>	Neutral	This characteristic is not assessed as part of the grant eligibility criteria and is therefore open to all residents/members of the public.	
Sex <i>(women and men, girls and boys)</i>	Neutral	This characteristic is not assessed as part of the grant eligibility criteria and is therefore open to all residents/members of the public.	
Sexual Orientation <i>(bisexual, gay, lesbian, straight)</i>	Neutral	This characteristic is not assessed as part of the grant eligibility criteria and is therefore open to all residents/members of the public.	

In addition, due to Council commitments made to the following groups of people we would like you to consider impacts upon them:

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Armed Forces Community <i>(anyone who is serving, has served, family members and the bereaved)</i>	Neutral	The grant is open to all residents/member/groups of the public. The Housing Strategy & Investment service could look to work with the Council's Armed Forces Liaison Officers to signpost/advertise to veteran groups.	
Carers <i>(anyone of any age who provides unpaid care)</i>	Neutral	The grant is open to all residents/member/groups of the public.	

If the initial screening test has identified negative impacts then a full equality impact assessment (section 4) **must** be undertaken. However, if after undertaking the above screening test you determine a full equality impact assessment is not relevant please provide an adequate explanation below:

As the introduction of a national Empty Homes Grant scheme (where it has been recommended that RCT act as Lead Authority for all Local Authorities in Wales), has either a positive or neutral implication on the Public, a full equality impact assessment is not required. The grant eligibility criteria focuses on the house rather than the individual and is therefore open to all.

Are you happy you have sufficient evidence to justify your decision? Yes No

Name: Lowri John

Position: Valleys Taskforce Empty Homes Grant Coordinator

Date: 03/08/2022

Please forward a copy of this completed screening form to the Diversity and Inclusion Team.

PLEASE NOTE – there is a separate impact assessment for Welsh Language. This must also be completed for proposals.

Section 3 Socio-economic Duty needs only to be completed if proposals are of a strategic nature or when reviewing previous strategic decisions. Definition of a 'strategic nature' is available on page 6 of the [Preparing for the Commencement of the Socio-economic Duty](#) Welsh Government Guidance.

SECTION 3 – SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY (STRATEGIC DECISIONS ONLY)

The Socio-economic Duty gives us an opportunity to do things differently and put tackling inequality genuinely at the heart of key decision making. Socio-economic disadvantage means living on a low income compared to others in Wales, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services.

Please consider these additional vulnerable groups and the impact your proposal may or may not have on them:

- Single parents and vulnerable families
- Pensioners
- Looked after children
- Homeless people
- Students
- Single adult households

- People living in the most deprived areas in Wales
- People with low literacy and numeracy
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- People misusing substances
- People of all ages leaving a care setting
- People involved in the criminal justice system

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<u>Low Income/Income Poverty</u> <i>(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)</i>	Positive/Negative/Neutral		
<u>Low and / or No Wealth</u> <i>(enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future)</i>	Positive/Negative/Neutral		
<u>Material Deprivation</u> <i>(unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.)</i>	Positive/Negative/Neutral		

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<u>Area Deprivation</u> <i>(where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport))</i>	Positive/Negative/Neutral		
Socio-economic background <i>(social class i.e. parents education, employment and income)</i>	Positive/Negative/Neutral		
Socio-economic disadvantage <i>(What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged)</i>	Positive/Negative/Neutral		

SECTION 4 – FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

You should use the information gathered at the screening stage to assist you in identifying possible negative/adverse impacts and clearly identify which groups are affected.

- 4.a) In terms of disproportionate/negative/adverse impacts that the proposal may have on a protected group, outline the steps that will be taken to reduce or mitigate the impact for each group identified. **Attach a separate action plan where impacts are substantial.**

No negative impacts have been identified through the screening process. A number of neutral impacts were identified, however this is due to the proposal not having any foreseen impact identified in the screening process. This EIA will be reviewed, monitored, and updated where needed should any impacts be identified in future

- 4.b) If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible, please explain why they are not possible.

To confirm, no negative or adverse impacts have been identified. This EIA will however, be reviewed, monitored and updated where needed, should any impact be identified in the future.

- 4.c) Give sufficient detail of data or research that has led to your reasoning, in particular, the sources used for establishing the demographics of service users/staff.

Whilst previous Empty Homes Grant schemes have not necessarily been solely available for first time buyers, many applicants, who are first time buyers provide comments/feedback to staff at the end of the grant process, offering thanks. Often the positive feedback has outlined that not only would works not been able to have been completed without the grant but that they would not have been able to get on the property ladder and become homeowners without the grant, due to the price of homes in this day and age. Any feedback provided is shared with the wider team, managers, and Head of Service to celebrate success.

- 4.d) Give details of how you engaged with service users/staff on the proposals and the steps taken to avoid any disproportionate impact on a protected group. Explain how you have used feedback to influence your decision.

Both written and oral feedback from customers (applicants) has been utilised to further develop the reasonable adjustments that the Service can offer. Largely written feedback is provided either via e-mails to staff/via customer satisfaction survey once the grant has completed (NB, it is not a requirement (it is optional) for individuals to complete/return this information to

the Authority. Customer feedback is invaluable to the department to better understand our residents and how we can further improve the Service/s we offer.

4.e) Are you satisfied that the engagement process complies with the requirements of the Statutory Equality and Socio-economic Duties?

Yes

No

SECTION 5 – MONITORING, EVALUATING AND REVIEWING

5a) Please outline below how the implementation of the proposal will be monitored:

During weekly meetings with Head of Service for Housing strategy & Investment.

5b) When is the evaluation of the proposal due to be reviewed?

At the end of each F/Y (April 24 & 25).

5c) Who is responsible for the monitoring and review of the proposal?

RCTCBC in conjunction with WG Officials.

5d) How will the results of the monitoring be used to develop future proposals?

Should any other opportunities of external funding / RCT have further capital investment for its own Empty Homes Grant scheme, the results of monitoring will be considered & analysed and best practice included in any new schemes / lessons learned applied to new schemes.

SECTION 6 – REVIEW

For all policy proposals, whether it is a Significant Key Decision or not, you are required to forward this assessment to Diversity and Inclusion team – equality@rctcbc.gov.uk 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 impact assessment, policy proposal/report and consultation report to CouncilBusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for an Officer Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. See our guidance document 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 equality/Socio economic considerations wherever possible. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below in collaboration with the relevant departments

Diversity and Inclusion team Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
Hannah Davey – Senior Inclusion & Diversity Officer	August 2022	This proposal did not need to attend an Officer Review Panel. However the team worked with the Diversity and Inclusion team officers to receive the following feedback and implement changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider utilising WITS for any request made for accessing the application/grant process in a different language• Added note for qual vs quant data for feedback from first time buyers.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added note that reasonable adjustments was developed further following feedback from applicant/resident.
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation
N/A	N/A	NA
Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
N/A	N/A	N/A

SECTION 7 – 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 Equality 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.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and the main findings are as follows:-

An Equality Impact Assessment screening test has been complete and indicated that a full Equality Impact assessment was not required.

This document has noted many positives as part of this proposal and no negative impacts have been identified through the screening process. A number of neutral impacts were identified, however this is due to the proposal not having any foreseen impact identified in the screening process. This EIA will be reviewed, monitored, and updated where needed should any impacts be identified in future.

SECTION 8 – AUTHORISATIONS

Lead Officer: Lowri John

Name: Lowri John

Position: Valleys Taskforce Empty Homes Grant Project Co-ordinator

Date: 02/12/2022

I recommend that the proposal:

- Is implemented with no amendments
- Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined
- Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on protected groups or socio-economic disadvantage

Head of Service/Director Approval: Yes

Name: Claire Hutcheon

Position: Head of Housing Strategy & Investment

Date: 02/12/2022

Please submit this impact assessment with any SLT/Cabinet Reports.

WELSH LANGUAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOL

This Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIS) tool enables RCT Council to consider the principles and requirements of the [Welsh Language Standards \(No.1\) Regulations 2015](#) to ensure compliance with the [Welsh Language \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#).

Stage 1 – Information Gathering

NOTE: As you complete this tool you will be asked for **evidence to support your views**. Please see [Welsh Language Impact Assessment Guidance](#) for more information on data sources.

Proposal Name:	National Empty Homes Grant Scheme
Department	Housing Strategy and Investment
Service Director	Derek James
Officer Completing the WLIA	Lowri John
Email	Lowri.John@rctcbc.gov.uk
Phone	07385034137
Brief Description	Following recommendations by the Welsh Government, RCTCBC to act as Lead Administrators for a Pan Wales Empty Homes Grant scheme, on behalf of all Wales Local Authorities over the next three years.
Date	01/02/2022
Please outline who this proposal affects? (Service Users, Employees, Wider Community)	Service Users, Employees, Wider Community

<p>What are the aims of the policy, and how do these relate to the Welsh Language?</p>	<p>In line with Housing Strategy & Investments 'Housing Investment Policy' where the purpose of the policy is to identify priorities for housing capital investment, the discretionary empty homes grant forms part of a financial assistance offer that the Council has available to residents to ensure their home is safe to live in, is energy efficient and helps maintain their health and wellbeing.</p> <p>The National Empty Homes Grant scheme will follow on from the successful Valleys Taskforce Empty Homes Grant scheme, where the regional delivery model was led by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council on behalf of eight other Local Authorities. Rather than another regional model, the Welsh Government now want to move to a national model where it has been recommended that Rhondda Cynon Taf will act as lead administrators of the scheme, on behalf of twenty-two Local Authorities.</p> <p>The grant process will offer a bilingual service in accordance with the Council's Welsh Language duties and ensure that the grant process adheres to the Welsh Language Standards.</p>
<p>Who will benefit / Could the policy affect Welsh language groups? If so, list them here.</p>	<p>Members of the public (pan-Wales) / future/potential grant applicants.</p>
<p>Current linguistic profile of the geographical area(s) concerned</p>	<p>Every ten years the nation sets aside one day for the Census, a count of all people and households. The Census is a key source of information about the number of people who can speak Welsh. The 2011 Census indicated that on the 27th March 2011, Wales had 3.1 million usual residents of which, one fifth/19% (562,000) over the age of three could speak Welsh.</p> <p>In assessing Welsh Language skills (can speak, read, or write Welsh) the top three Local Authorities with the highest averages includes Gwynedd at 67%, Isle of Anglesey at 57% and Ceredigion at 49%. The three lowest Local Authorities noted are Torfaen and Newport at 11% and Blaenau Gwent at 9%. The all Wales average is 21% and 14 Local Authorities in Wales fall below this average (including Rhondda Cynon Taf at 15%).</p> <p>The Annual Population Survey for the quarter ending December 2021, reported that 32% of respondents living in Wales said they could speak Welsh. This can be further broken down (per Local Authority) to the data contained in the table below:</p>

	All aged 3 or older (1)	Yes, can speak Welsh	No, cannot speak Welsh	Percentage of people who say they can speak Welsh (2)
Wales	3022900	892200	2128700	29.533829
Isle of Anglesey	67500	42600	24700	63.282132
Gwynedd	118900	89600	29100	75.461813
Conwy	111300	42600	68700	38.28847
Denbighshire	91300	36200	54900	39.728765
Flintshire	151700	36200	115200	23.905206
Wrexham	136000	36100	100000	26.517786
Powys	127100	34300	92800	27.005524
Ceredigion	73700	43500	30100	59.105657
Pembrokeshire	122200	37500	84700	30.669515
Carmarthenshire	175800	93400	82400	53.121231
Swansea	237300	44200	192900	18.652135
Neath Port Talbot	137400	30200	106900	22.009779
Bridgend	137000	23700	113300	17.297025
Vale of Glamorgan	124100	22900	101200	18.475161
Cardiff	360500	101800	258200	28.274165
Rhondda Cynon Taf	230600	48300	182300	20.941044
Merthyr Tydfil	57600	11200	46400	19.460886
Caerphilly	175300	45300	130100	25.813829
Blaenau Gwent	66400	9700	56700	14.632531
Torfaen	89000	14800	74200	16.585739
Monmouthshire	89600	17900	71700	19.938147
Newport	142600	30200	112000	21.261669

Other relevant data or research	N/A
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Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

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.

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 by [clicking here](#).

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?
Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language e.g. staff, residents and visitors The rights of Welsh speakers and learners to use Welsh when dealing with the council and for staff to use Welsh at Work	Positive	1.) As a result of the digitalisation of the Valleys Taskforce Empty Homes Grant application (which will form the basis of the National scheme) & embracing technology during the Pandemic to continue providing services, this has been an opportunity to promote the Welsh language	1.) Number of users using accessing the Councils (Empty Homes Grant) webpage and applications received/submitted through the medium of Welsh. 2.) Both staff and people in the community can engage digitally and	1.) Review how we have embraced technology and provided services differently during the COVID-19 pandemic and further enhance these by ensuring we deliver information in the Welsh language.

		<p>as people accessing the Council's website and other key partners' websites have access to services in the Welsh language.</p> <p>2.) The Council will respond to service users' needs by ensuring there are specific Welsh speaking staff (L5) recruited. This will provide Welsh speakers and learners an opportunity to use the Welsh language at all points during the grant process directly via the Housing Investment (grants) department.</p> <p>3.) Through working collaboratively with our partners (other Local Authorities & Welsh Government) who are also subject to the Welsh language standards and therefore obligated to provide services in Welsh.</p> <p>4.) Where an individual (public or Local Authority officer) requests to have a meeting in Welsh, we would adhere</p>	<p>actively have their needs met through these methods.</p>	<p>2.) 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 (local, regional and national).</p>
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		<p>to standards 26/26A by utilising Welsh Language resources from our key partners (where possible) or alternatively arranging for a translator to be available.</p> <p>5.) Training (both language and policy) will be provided as well as an assessment on whether the training should be delivered in Welsh (where there is a need to do this and resources allow).</p>		
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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?
<p>Numbers and / or percentages of Welsh speakers e.g Welsh Medium Education / Study Opportunities. Links with the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy / RCTCBC Five Year Welsh Language Strategy</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>1.) The Welsh Government's ambition is to see the number of people able to enjoy speaking and using the Welsh language to reach a million by the year 2050, RCTCBC hopes to encourage this ambition by providing the conditions to facilitate an increase in the use of the Welsh language in line with the RCTCBC 5 year Welsh Language Strategy. This Strategy will support these goals by ensuring, wherever possible, that Welsh speakers/learners have access to housing in a location that affords them the opportunities to continue to use/learn the Welsh language.</p>	<p>1.) In line with the Council's Welsh Language Promotional Strategy and our Welsh Language Standards, this strategy will ensure bilingual text (Welsh first) on all Council documentation.</p> <p>2.) 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.</p>	<p>1.) RCTCBC will ensure its key partners provide and promote information through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>2.) Promote Welsh language courses to staff.</p> <p>3.) 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.</p>

		2.) 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.		
<p>Opportunities to promote the Welsh language e.g. status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work and in the community</p> <p>Actively encourage and promote the use of our services in Welsh to see an increase in demand over time</p>	Positive	<p>1.) All promotional material for the grant will be bilingual.</p> <p>2.) Improved access to the Council's website and partners' website will provide an opportunity to promote the Welsh language</p>	1.) Number of users using accessing the Councils (Empty Homes Grant) webpage and applications submitted through the medium of Welsh.	1.) Ensure that all material is bilingual with both Welsh and English published in line with the Welsh Language Standards.

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?
<p>Compliance with the Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards e.g increasing or reducing the Council's ability to deliver services through the Medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Consider the rights of Welsh speakers to use Welsh when dealing with the Council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>1.) The development of this grant scheme will increase the Council's ability to deliver services through the medium of Welsh (specific Welsh Language (L5) officers to be recruited.</p> <p>2.) Consideration to 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 grant process offers bilingual services that will allow staff members to utilise the Welsh language at work.</p> <p>3.) Back-office services, such as complaints handling,</p>	<p>1.) 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.</p>	<p>1.) Ensure that all grant elements/processes are promoted bilingually with Welsh first.</p> <p>2.) Actively promote both Council services and services offered by key partners that are available in Welsh.</p>

		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 Standards		
Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably than the English language	Positive	See above	See above	See above

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 how we have embraced technology and provided services differently during the COVID-19 pandemic and further enhance these by ensuring we deliver information in the Welsh language.	September 22	LJ/CH
Develop training, updates and briefings to staff and providers to keep abreast of service developments, good practice, innovation and new practices	Ongoing (January 2023 – March 2025) (Expected project lifespan).	LJ

RCTCBC will ensure its key partners provide and promote information through the medium of Welsh.	Ongoing (January 2023 – March 2025) (Expected project lifespan).	LJ / Operational Group Officers (LA representatives).
Ensure that all material is bilingual with the Welsh provide before the English	Ongoing (January 2023 – March 2025) (Expected project lifespan).	LJ
Ensure that the Grant is promoted bilingually with Welsh first.	Ongoing (January 2023 – March 2025) (Expected project lifespan).	LJ
Actively promote both Council services and services offered by key partners that are available in Welsh.	Ongoing (January 2023 – March 2025) (Expected project lifespan).	LJ / Operational Group Officers (LA representatives)
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 housing in a location that affords people the opportunity to continue to use/learn the Welsh language.	Housing is a limited resource and homes are not identified by the Local Authority for the purposes of the grant. Local Authorities can therefore not guarantee that housing will be available near a Welsh Language school for example.	

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 – welshlanguageofficer@rctcbc.gov.uk 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 CouncilBusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for an Officer Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. [See our guidance document](#) 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 Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Welsh Language Services feedback
<p>This is a detailed impact assessment, which lists many of the intended positive impacts this proposal will have on the Welsh Language.</p> <p>Welsh Language Services encourage you to consider further the following -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- How the new policy on Welsh language considerations when awarding grants might maximise the strategy's positive impacts on the Welsh language.- How we plan to ensure compliance with Welsh Language Standards when undertaking collaborative work.	August 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Further (brief/indicative) note to be included re: 'Local Connection' element that some Local Authorities (not all) might want to include as part of the grant eligibility criteria for their Local Authority area.

- How we capture linguistic/educational background of those presenting to the service in order to offer Welsh medium services from the outset, and plan Welsh medium offer for the future		
Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
N/A	N/A	N/A
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation
N/A	N/A	N/A

Stage 5 – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

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

Whilst a formal review of progress and an evaluation of the impact of the grant scheme will take place every year as a minimum, the actions identified in this Impact Assessment will be reviewed more frequently as many are ongoing in terms of making sure updated information is available bilingually and continuous development of staff and service users' skills.

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 introduction of the National Empty Homes Grant scheme by Welsh Government, (where it is recommended that RCTCBC act as lead authority for all Wales Local Authorities) will have a positive effect on the Welsh Language, Welsh speakers, and Welsh learners across Wales.

The grant will allow residents and Local Authority representatives to engage with the Authority through the medium of Welsh for the entirety of the grant process (should this be the applicant's/Local Authority preference) and all standard correspondence/promotional elements associated with the grant will be made available bilingually.

In addition to the above, some Local Authority areas will introduce a 'Local Connection' element to their eligibility criteria for applicants to be able to apply for the grant. Some Local Authorities have noted concerns around buyers out of area having the capital available to support with purchasing and undertaking necessary works, ultimately resulting in local owners missing out on funding, and keeping properties vacant for longer. The 'Local Connection' criteria will enable some Local Authorities to ensure that local residents, are prioritised.

Commented [LJ1]: Lisa/Steffan – yw hwn yn OK?

Stage 7 – Sign Off

Name of Officer completing the WLIA	Lowri John	Service Director Name:	Derek James
Position	Valleys Taskforce Empty Homes Grant Project Coordinator	I recommend that the proposal: (Highlight decision)	Is implemented with no amendments
Signature			
		Service Director Signature	



	<i>L. John</i>		
Date	02/12/2022	Date	02/12/2022