

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 24 September 2026
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Place Scrutiny Committee
Item which the Chair has decided is urgent (Part I) (If yes, why)	Not applicable
Urgent Decision Procedure Used (If yes, why)	Not applicable
Item Type	Part I
Report Title:	Draft Empty Property Strategy 2026–2030
Portfolio Holder:	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Places Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities and Regulatory Services
Strategic Leadership Team:	Director of Place
Lead Officers:	Director of Place and Director of Environment and Housing

1.0 What is the purpose of this report?

- 1.1 This report provides Cabinet with an update on the development of the Vale of Glamorgan Empty Property Strategy 2026–2030. The Strategy has been developed to establish a clear framework for addressing the issue of long-term empty properties across the Vale of Glamorgan and to set out the Council's approach to reducing the number of vacant properties over the next five years. It reflects national housing priorities, local housing need and the Council's wider commitments to regeneration, community wellbeing and sustainable development.
- 1.2 The report seeks Cabinet approval to formally adopt the Empty Property Strategy 2026–2030 and its accompanying Action Plan. Approval of the Strategy will provide a strategic basis for future interventions and investment, ensuring a consistent and coordinated approach to bringing empty properties back into beneficial use and maximising opportunities to increase housing availability within the Vale of Glamorgan.

- 1.3 The Strategy sets out a comprehensive and coordinated approach to tackling long-term empty properties, recognising the significant contribution that existing vacant homes can make towards meeting local housing demand. By returning empty properties to occupation, the Council can increase housing supply without the need for additional land development, support housing affordability, improve neighbourhood appearance and contribute positively to community wellbeing. The Strategy also recognises the wider social, economic and environmental impacts of empty properties and seeks to address these through targeted interventions.
- 1.4 The Strategy proposes a balanced approach that combines proactive engagement, financial assistance and, where necessary, targeted enforcement action. It seeks to work constructively with property owners to identify barriers preventing properties from being brought back into use and to provide advice, guidance and support to encourage voluntary action. This includes promoting available grants, loans and incentives, whilst ensuring that enforcement powers remain available where properties have remained vacant for extended periods and are having a detrimental impact on local communities. The approach aims to achieve sustainable outcomes by encouraging property owners to take responsibility for the reuse and improvement of their assets.
- 1.5 The full Empty Property Strategy 2026–2030 is attached at Appendix A, setting out the strategic context, priorities and objectives that will guide the Council's work in this area. The supporting Action Plan which forms part of the strategy, details the specific actions, timescales, responsibilities and performance measures that will be used to deliver the Strategy's objectives.

2.0 What are the Recommendations?

	Recommendations – What and How?	Reason for Recommendation – Why?
2.1	That Cabinet notes the contents of the report.	To ensure Cabinet is aware of the Empty Property Strategy, its purpose, and its implications.
2.2	That Cabinet agrees and approves the Empty Property Strategy 2026–2030.	To formally adopt the Strategy as the Council's framework for tackling empty properties and increasing housing supply.
2.3	That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Environment and Housing and the Director of Place to implement the Strategy and Action Plan.	To ensure effective delivery and coordination across Council services and partners.
2.4	That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Environment and Housing and the Director of Place in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member, to approve future amendments.	To allow the Strategy to remain current and responsive to changing policy, funding and delivery requirements.

	Recommendations – What and How?	Reason for Recommendation – Why?
2.5	That Cabinet receives monitoring reports on progress.	To ensure transparency, accountability and effective performance management.

3.0 What is the background to this report?

- 3.1 The Council's previous Empty Property Strategy (2019–2024) has now reached the end of its intended delivery period, providing an opportunity to review achievements, assess emerging challenges and strengthen the Council's approach to addressing long-term empty properties. Since the adoption of the previous Strategy, economic conditions, housing pressures and legislative developments have evolved significantly, highlighting the need for a refreshed strategic framework. The new Strategy builds upon previous successes, incorporates lessons learned and establishes updated priorities and actions to ensure that the Council continues to make effective use of available powers, resources and partnerships to reduce the number of empty properties across the Vale of Glamorgan.
- 3.2 The Vale of Glamorgan continues to experience significant housing pressures, reflecting wider national challenges relating to housing supply, affordability and homelessness. Demand for suitable and affordable accommodation continues to exceed supply, with more than 7,000 households currently registered on the Council's housing waiting list. At the same time, increasing pressures on homelessness and temporary accommodation services have highlighted the need to maximise all available housing resources. Bringing empty homes back into occupation represents an important opportunity to increase housing availability, support vulnerable households and reduce pressure on existing housing services without the need for extensive new development.
- 3.3 Despite the growing demand for housing, over 750 residential properties across the Vale of Glamorgan are empty at any time, representing a significant underutilised asset. Long-term vacant properties can have a detrimental impact on local communities, contributing to neighbourhood decline, attracting antisocial behaviour and negatively affecting the appearance and vitality of surrounding areas. Empty homes may also deteriorate over time, becoming increasingly difficult and costly to return to use. The Strategy recognises that these properties represent an important source of potential housing supply and seeks to encourage and support their reoccupation through a combination of engagement, assistance and enforcement activity where appropriate.
- 3.4 Empty properties can have a particularly significant impact within town centres and local shopping areas, where prolonged vacancy can undermine regeneration efforts, reduce footfall and adversely affect the vitality and attractiveness of the local environment. Bringing vacant residential and mixed-use properties back into productive use supports broader regeneration objectives by improving the appearance of town centres, encouraging investment, increasing residential occupancy and helping to create vibrant and sustainable communities. The reuse of empty properties can also contribute to the growth of town-centre living, supporting local businesses and services through increased economic activity and footfall. As such, the Strategy forms an important component of the Council's wider placemaking and regeneration agenda, helping to maximise the use of existing buildings whilst enhancing the attractiveness, resilience and long-term sustainability of town centres across the Vale of Glamorgan.

3.5 The Empty Property Strategy 2026–2030 has been developed in accordance with relevant national, regional and local policy objectives. It supports the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 by promoting sustainable communities, better use of existing resources and improved wellbeing outcomes for residents. The Strategy also contributes to the Council's Corporate Plan and Vale 2030 ambitions by helping to increase access to safe and suitable housing, strengthen communities, support regeneration and make more effective use of the existing housing stock. Through its delivery, the Strategy will contribute to the wider objectives of creating thriving, resilient and sustainable communities across the Vale of Glamorgan.

4.0 What issues are there to be considered?

4.1 The Empty Property Strategy introduces a structured, evidence-based and prioritised approach to addressing empty properties across the Vale of Glamorgan. Recognising that resources must be targeted effectively, the Strategy focuses on those properties that have been vacant for extended periods, are having a detrimental impact on local communities or present risks to public health, safety or amenity. This targeted approach will enable the Council and its partners to maximise outcomes, achieve greater efficiency and ensure that intervention is directed where it can deliver the greatest benefit.

4.2 The Strategy is built around three core objectives which together provide a balanced and proportionate framework for addressing empty properties:

- Engaging and supporting property owners to encourage voluntary action and facilitate the return of empty properties to occupation.
- Undertaking targeted enforcement action where owners fail to engage or where properties continue to have a negative impact on local communities.
- Raising awareness of empty properties and promoting the social, economic and environmental benefits of bringing vacant properties back into use.

These objectives recognise that successful empty property work requires both support and intervention, tailored to the circumstances of individual properties and owners.

4.3 To achieve these objectives, the Council will utilise a range of interventions designed to remove barriers and encourage the reoccupation of empty properties. These include:

- Financial incentives, such as loans, grants and other funding opportunities, to assist owners with renovation, repair and improvement works where appropriate. Noting that scheme funding is finite and may be constrained by both available financial resources and geographic eligibility, with some funding opportunities targeted at specific localities within the Vale of Glamorgan rather than being available County-wide.
- Leasing schemes and partnership arrangements, enabling owners to work with housing providers, social landlords and other organisations to bring properties back into use while reducing the risks associated with private letting. Leasing Scheme Wales is currently awaiting roll out within the Vale of Glamorgan but should be active within the lifetime of the Strategy, subject to scheme renewal and duration.
- Statutory enforcement powers, including formal notices and enforcement action where necessary, to address long-term empty properties that remain neglected or where voluntary engagement has not achieved the desired outcome.

This graduated approach ensures that owners are offered support and assistance in the first instance, while maintaining the Council's ability to take robust action where properties continue to remain vacant without justification.

- 4.4 The Strategy adopts an evidence-led prioritisation model to ensure that available resources are directed towards properties that present the greatest need and opportunity for intervention. Factors such as the length of vacancy, physical condition of the property, impact on neighbouring residents, community concerns and the potential contribution to local housing supply will be considered when determining priorities. By focusing on high-risk and long-term empty properties, the Council can maximise the effectiveness of its activity and achieve the greatest positive impact for communities across the Vale of Glamorgan.
- 4.5 The Strategy recognises that successful delivery cannot be achieved by a single service area alone and requires a coordinated, corporate and partnership approach. Responsibility for tackling empty properties is shared across a range of Council services, including Regeneration, Shared Regulatory Service (Environmental Health), Housing, Planning, , Council Tax and Legal Services, alongside external partners such as Registered Social Landlords, community organisations and property owners themselves. Dedicated resource is in place in Regeneration to manage a range of funding schemes and general engagement as well as a dedicated resource in Shared Regulatory Service (Environmental Health) to manage and coordinate enforcement work. Effective collaboration, information sharing and joint working arrangements will be essential to ensuring that empty properties are identified, prioritised and brought back into beneficial use. This whole-system approach will support the efficient use of resources, improve outcomes for residents and contribute towards wider corporate objectives relating to housing, regeneration and community wellbeing.

5.0 How evidence has been used to inform the report, including the views of others?

- 5.1 The development of the Empty Property Strategy has been informed by a range of quantitative and qualitative evidence sources to ensure that it reflects local circumstances, identifies priority areas for intervention and responds to the needs of communities across the Vale of Glamorgan. Key evidence considered during the development of the Strategy includes:
- Council Tax data on empty properties, which has been used to identify the number, location and duration of vacant residential properties across the Vale of Glamorgan.
 - Complaints and enforcement records, providing insight into the impacts of empty properties on local communities, including issues relating to property condition, anti-social behaviour, environmental concerns and public safety.
 - Resident and stakeholder consultation undertaken in September 2025, which gathered views on the challenges associated with empty properties and sought feedback on potential approaches to bringing properties back into use.

Together, these sources have provided a robust evidence base to support the development of the Strategy and ensure that proposed actions are informed by both statistical information and local experience.

5.2 Engagement has been undertaken with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure that the Strategy reflects a coordinated and collaborative approach to addressing empty properties. This has included consultation and discussion with:

- Internal Council services, including Shared Regulatory Services, Regeneration Housing, Planning, Council Tax and Legal Services, to understand existing activity, identify opportunities for joint working and ensure alignment with wider Council priorities.
- External partners, including Registered Social Landlords and other housing stakeholders, to explore opportunities for partnership working, property acquisition, leasing arrangements and the delivery of housing solutions that can support the reuse of long-term empty homes.

This engagement has helped strengthen the Strategy and ensure that delivery is supported by those organisations and services with a role in bringing empty properties back into beneficial use.

5.3 The evidence gathered through data analysis, service experience and stakeholder engagement has been used to:

- Identify priority properties using an evidence-based assessment of factors such as length of vacancy, property condition, community impact, complaints history and potential contribution to housing supply. The review has also identified vacant commercial and mixed-use properties within town centres, recognising their importance in supporting regeneration. Bringing these properties back into use can enhance the appearance and vitality of town centres, increase footfall, support local businesses and encourage investment. This approach ensures that resources are targeted towards properties where intervention can deliver the greatest housing, economic and regeneration benefits for the Vale of Glamorgan.
- Understand barriers to reoccupation, including financial constraints, ownership complexities, inheritance issues, lack of awareness of available support, difficulties accessing finance and concerns associated with letting or selling properties. Understanding these barriers helps ensure that interventions are proportionate and targeted to the needs of individual property owners.
- Design targeted interventions that address the specific challenges associated with empty properties, combining advice and support, financial assistance, partnership opportunities and enforcement measures where necessary. This evidence-led approach will help ensure that the Council's resources are used effectively and that actions are focused on achieving sustainable outcomes and increasing the number of properties returned to occupation.

Through the use of reliable evidence and ongoing stakeholder engagement, the Strategy establishes a strong foundation for delivering measurable improvements in housing availability, neighbourhood quality and community wellbeing across the Vale of Glamorgan.

6.0 Next Steps

6.1 Subject to Cabinet approval, the Empty Property Strategy 2026–2030 will be formally adopted as Council policy and published on the Council's website. Publication of the Strategy will provide a clear statement of the Council's commitment to tackling long-term

empty properties and will ensure that property owners, residents and stakeholders are aware of the Council's priorities, objectives and available support mechanisms.

- 6.2 The accompanying Action Plan will be implemented and monitored through the Empty Property Working Group, which will provide strategic oversight of delivery and ensure coordinated action across relevant Council services and partner organisations. The Working Group will be responsible for monitoring progress against agreed objectives, reviewing performance, identifying emerging issues and ensuring that actions remain aligned with wider housing, regeneration and corporate priorities.
- 6.3 As part of the implementation process, priority properties will be identified and targeted for intervention using the evidence-led prioritisation framework set out within the Strategy. This will enable resources to be focused on those properties that have been vacant for extended periods, are causing significant concerns within local communities or offer the greatest potential to increase housing supply. Consideration will also be given to vacant commercial and mixed-use properties within town centres, where bringing buildings back into use can support regeneration objectives by improving visual amenity, increasing activity and encouraging investment. A range of appropriate interventions will then be considered, including engagement, financial assistance, partnership solutions and enforcement action where necessary.
- 6.4 Further work will be undertaken throughout the lifetime of the Strategy to support delivery of its objectives and maximise opportunities to bring empty properties back into use. This will include:
- Engagement with property owners to better understand the circumstances surrounding vacant properties, identify barriers preventing reoccupation and provide tailored advice, guidance and support. The Council will continue to promote voluntary solutions wherever possible, encouraging owners to take positive action to return properties to beneficial use.
 - Review and consider amendments to the Council Constitution, to maximise powers and enable enforcement action to be taken by Shared Regulatory Services, in line with the Strategy, when appropriate and necessary
 - Development of funding opportunities including the exploration of use of the Empty Property Enforcement Loan Fund offered by Welsh Government to enable enforcement work to progress, as well as increase the range of options available to property owners and support the reuse of empty properties. This may include exploring external funding streams, loan and grant schemes, leasing arrangements and collaborative working with Registered Social Landlords, developers and other stakeholders. These opportunities will help address financial and practical barriers while increasing the number of properties returned to occupation.
- 6.5 In addition, the Council will continue to review data, monitor trends and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions to ensure that resources are targeted appropriately and that the Strategy remains responsive to emerging housing needs and challenges. Regular monitoring and reporting will support continuous improvement and help maximise the contribution that empty homes can make towards meeting housing demand, supporting regeneration and strengthening communities across the Vale of Glamorgan.

7.0 How does this report support the Vale 2030 and Reshaping?

Supports Vale 2030 priorities by:

7.1 Increasing access to safe and suitable housing

This report supports the Council's commitment to increasing access to safe and suitable housing by addressing poor housing conditions, tackling non-compliance within the private rented sector, and ensuring that residential properties meet the required health and safety standards. Through proactive intervention and enforcement activities, residents are better protected from hazards that can negatively affect their health, wellbeing and quality of life. Improving housing standards also helps to sustain existing housing stock and supports the availability of safe accommodation across the Vale of Glamorgan.

7.2 Strengthening communities and neighbourhoods

Effective regulation of housing standards contributes to stronger, more resilient communities by reducing issues associated with poorly managed properties, anti-social behaviour and environmental degradation. By working with landlords, tenants, partner agencies and local communities, the service helps create safer, cleaner and more attractive neighbourhoods where residents feel supported and able to thrive. Improved housing conditions can also enhance community cohesion and reduce inequalities experienced by vulnerable households.

7.3 Supporting regeneration and placemaking

The report supports wider regeneration and placemaking objectives by helping to improve the quality, appearance and sustainability of residential areas and town centres. Bringing long-term empty, substandard and underutilised properties back into beneficial use enhances local environments, increases confidence in neighbourhoods and encourages further investment. The reoccupation of vacant commercial and mixed-use properties within town centres can improve visual amenity, increase footfall, support local businesses and contribute to the vitality and vibrancy of key retail and commercial areas. Well-maintained and occupied properties play an important role in creating attractive places to live, work and visit, supporting economic growth and fostering pride in local communities.

Supports Reshaping Services by:

7.4 Promoting early intervention.

The actions outlined within this report emphasise prevention and early intervention by identifying housing issues before they escalate into more serious problems requiring significant enforcement action or support from other public services. Providing advice, guidance and targeted interventions at an early stage helps landlords and property owners achieve compliance and prevents avoidable harm to residents. Early engagement with owners of long-term empty residential, commercial and mixed-use properties can also support the regeneration of town centres by reducing vacancy, improving the appearance of key areas and encouraging properties to be brought back into beneficial use before deterioration becomes more extensive and costly to address.

7.5 Reducing demand on public services.

Improving housing standards has a direct impact on reducing demand across a range of public services, particularly health, social care and homelessness services. Safe and well-maintained homes contribute to better physical and mental health outcomes, reducing the likelihood of housing-related illnesses, accidents and crises. Early resolution of housing issues also minimises the need for costly interventions by partner agencies. In addition, bringing long-term empty residential, commercial and mixed-use properties back into beneficial use can support town centre regeneration, helping to reduce environmental complaints, anti-social behaviour and dereliction issues associated with vacant buildings.

This contributes to more vibrant and sustainable town centres, reducing the demand for reactive enforcement and community safety interventions while supporting wider economic and community wellbeing objectives.

7.6 Improving efficiency through coordinated working

The report demonstrates a collaborative approach to service delivery through joint working with internal departments, external partners and regulatory bodies. Sharing information, coordinating activity and adopting a multi-agency approach enables resources to be used more effectively, avoids duplication of effort and ensures that housing-related issues are addressed in a timely and efficient manner. This coordinated approach also supports the regeneration of town centres by aligning housing, regeneration, planning and enforcement activities to bring long-term empty residential, commercial and mixed-use properties back into beneficial use. In doing so, it helps improve the appearance and vitality of town centres, encourages investment and supports the creation of thriving and sustainable communities, while delivering best value for residents.

8.0 How does this support the Five Ways of Working?

8.1 Long-term: Increasing housing supply and reducing vacancy

This report supports the long-term principle by promoting the effective use of existing housing stock and reducing the number of vacant and underutilised properties. Encouraging the occupation or redevelopment of empty homes increases the availability of housing to meet current and future demand, whilst contributing to sustainable communities. Improving housing standards also helps to preserve the condition and longevity of the housing stock, ensuring that homes remain safe, suitable and available for future generations.

8.2 Prevention: Addressing issues before properties deteriorate

The report supports prevention through proactive engagement, inspection and intervention to identify issues at an early stage. Early action helps prevent properties from falling into serious disrepair, reduces risks to occupants and avoids the need for more extensive and costly enforcement measures in the future. By providing advice, guidance and targeted support to property owners and landlords, the service seeks to resolve problems before they escalate, resulting in better outcomes for residents and reduced demands on public services.

8.3 Integration: Aligning housing, planning and regeneration

The work outlined in this report contributes to a coordinated approach across housing, planning, regeneration and wider Council services. Improving housing conditions and regenerating town centres supports broader objectives relating to health, wellbeing, community safety, economic development and environmental improvement. By ensuring that housing interventions complement regeneration initiatives and planning priorities, the Council can maximise the benefits of investment and deliver improved outcomes for communities across the Vale of Glamorgan.

8.4 Collaboration: Working with partners and communities

The delivery of the actions within this report relies on effective partnership working with internal Council services, Registered Social Landlords, landlords, tenants, health services, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Natural Resources Wales and other key stakeholders. Collaborative working enables information sharing, coordinated interventions and the pooling of resources, ensuring that housing-related issues are addressed efficiently and effectively. This partnership

approach helps achieve shared objectives and delivers greater benefits for residents and communities.

8.5 Involvement: Engaging residents and property owners

The report supports involvement by encouraging engagement with residents, tenants, landlords, property owners and local businesses. Providing opportunities to raise concerns, seek advice and contribute to solutions helps ensure services remain responsive to local needs. This engagement promotes shared responsibility for maintaining housing standards and supports the regeneration of town centres by encouraging the sustainable reuse of long-term empty residential, commercial and mixed-use properties.

Resources

9.0 Finance

- 9.1 There are no immediate financial commitments arising solely from the approval and adoption of the Empty Property Strategy 2026–2030. The Strategy provides a strategic framework for addressing long-term empty properties and does not, in itself, commit the Council to additional expenditure beyond existing approved budgets. Any future funding requirements arising from specific initiatives, projects or interventions will be considered through the Council's established governance and budget-setting processes and will be subject to the availability of resources.
- 9.2 Delivery of the Strategy will be supported through a combination of existing resources, external funding opportunities and financial assistance mechanisms. These include:
- Existing Council resources, including officer time and expertise from services such as Housing, Shared Regulatory Services, Planning, Regeneration, Council Tax and Legal Services. A coordinated approach will help ensure that existing resources are used effectively to maximise outcomes and support delivery of the Strategy's objectives.
 - Welsh Government funding, where available, which may provide opportunities to support initiatives aimed at reducing the number of long-term empty properties and increasing the supply of homes. The Council will continue to explore and secure external funding streams to support activity wherever possible and minimise reliance on local resources.
 - Loan and grant schemes, which can help property owners overcome financial barriers that may prevent them from bringing empty homes back into use. Such schemes can support renovation, repair and improvement works, encouraging investment in properties that might otherwise remain vacant. The use of financial incentives can often provide a cost-effective means of increasing housing supply while reducing the need for more resource-intensive enforcement action.
- 9.3 The Strategy also seeks to maximise the use of existing housing stock as an alternative to relying solely on new housing development to meet demand. Bringing empty homes back into occupation is a cost-effective way of increasing housing supply, supporting regeneration and reducing pressures associated with homelessness and temporary accommodation. The reuse of vacant residential, commercial and mixed-use properties can also support town centre regeneration by increasing footfall, encouraging investment and strengthening the local economy. In the longer term, successful delivery of the Strategy has the potential to reduce demand on public services and generate wider economic and community benefits.

10.0 Workforce

- 10.1 Delivery of the Empty Property Strategy will be supported through existing staffing resources and collaborative working arrangements across the Council and with external partners. Key roles involved in the implementation of the Strategy include:
- The Empty Property Development Officer, who will lead on engagement with property owners, promote available assistance and incentives, provide advice and guidance, and coordinate efforts to bring vacant properties back into use through voluntary means wherever possible. This role will also support the identification of opportunities for partnership working and funding applications.
 - The Empty Property Enforcement Officer, who will lead on investigations and formal action where voluntary engagement has not been successful. The postholder will utilise relevant legislative powers to address problematic long-term empty properties and ensure that enforcement action is proportionate, consistent and targeted towards those cases having the greatest impact on local communities.
 - The Multi-Agency Empty Property Working Group, which will bring together representatives from relevant Council services and partner organisations to coordinate activity, share information and oversee delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan. This collaborative approach will help ensure that resources, expertise and interventions are aligned to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Together, these roles and partnership arrangements will support a balanced approach that combines engagement, support and enforcement to maximise the number of empty properties returned to beneficial use.

- 10.2 Whilst the Strategy is intended to be delivered primarily through existing resources and established partnership arrangements, there may be instances where additional capacity is required to manage complex enforcement cases. Such cases can involve extensive property investigations, ownership tracing, legal proceedings, compulsory purchase activity, works in default or coordination with multiple agencies and stakeholders.
- 10.3 The Council will continue to monitor workloads, demands and emerging priorities throughout the implementation of the Strategy to ensure that sufficient capacity is available to deliver its objectives effectively. Where necessary, opportunities will be explored to utilise external funding, specialist support or additional temporary resources to address particularly complex or resource-intensive cases. This will help ensure that enforcement activity remains effective while maintaining progress across the wider empty property programme.
- 10.4 This Strategy also promotes a co-ordinated and preventative approach that encourages early engagement with property owners which seeks to resolve barriers to reoccupation at the earliest opportunity, balanced with enforcement actions when required to deal with long-term problematic empty properties.

11.0 Legal and Equalities

- 11.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken and is attached at Appendix B. The assessment has considered the potential impact of the Empty Property Strategy 2026–2030 on individuals and groups with protected characteristics in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty.

- 11.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from the adoption of the Empty Property Strategy 2026–2030. The Strategy provides a strategic framework to guide the Council's approach to bringing long-term empty properties back into beneficial use and does not, in itself, commit the Council to any specific enforcement action or statutory intervention.
- 11.3 The implementation of individual actions within the Strategy may, however, give rise to legal considerations on a case-by-case basis. These may include matters relating to property ownership and title investigations, procurement and contractual arrangements, information sharing and data protection requirements, statutory housing and environmental legislation, consultation obligations, partnership agreements and the use of formal enforcement powers. The Council will ensure that all interventions are undertaken in accordance with relevant legislation, policies and procedural requirements.
- 11.4 Where formal action is proposed, including the use of statutory notices, works in default, enforced sale procedures, compulsory purchase powers or other legal remedies, appropriate legal advice and support will be obtained to ensure that decisions are robust, proportionate and legally compliant. This approach will assist in managing legal risk, safeguarding the Council's interests and supporting the effective delivery of the Strategy's objectives.

12.0 Key Contacts

12.1 Who are the primary officers to contact with any comments and/or queries on the report?

Lead Officers: Will Lane, Operational Manager, Shared Regulatory Services wlane@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk Phil Chappell, Operational Manager, Regeneration Management PRChappell@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk	Democratic Services Officer: Matthew Swindell, Cabinet and Committee Services Officer, mlswindell@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk
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Appendices

Appendix A – Empty Property Strategy 2026-2030
Appendix B – Equalities Impact Assessment

Background Documents

None.

Empty Property Strategy

2026 - 2030



Unlocking the potential of empty properties

Foreword

The Vale of Glamorgan is changing, and as a Council we are reshaping how we work so we can respond to the significant challenges facing our communities. Tackling empty properties is an important part of this change. By working earlier, smarter and together, we can make better use of the homes we already have and help create thriving, sustainable neighbourhoods across the Vale.

This Empty Property Strategy has been shaped by what our residents and partners have told us. It reflects the issues raised through engagement and consultation, building on our commitment to prevention, fairness and long-term improvement. Empty properties affect everyone, they can undermine confidence in an area, contribute to antisocial behaviour and place pressure on public services at a time when demand for housing continues to grow.

The strategy sets out the role the Council and its partners will play in returning empty properties to use, alongside the resources, powers and processes available to support this work. Our approach focuses on early intervention, proactive engagement with owners, targeted financial assistance and, where necessary, proportionate enforcement. By combining these tools, we aim to reduce the number of long-term empty homes, support regeneration, strengthen communities and help ensure that everyone in the Vale has access to a safe and suitable place to live.

This strategy forms part of our wider ambition for the Vale — an ambition rooted in partnership, prevention and a shared commitment to improving outcomes for all.



Signature Here

T Baker

Director of Environment & Housing

Signature Here

Marcus Goldsworthy

Director of Place



Empty Property Strategy 2026-2030

Contents:

Foreword.....	2
Executive Summary	6
Chapter One: Introduction and Strategy Overview.....	8
1.1. Introduction.....	8
1.2 Growing Our Impact.....	9
1.3 Scope of the Empty Property Strategy.....	10
1.4 How the Strategy was Developed.....	11
1.5 Empty Property Action Plan.....	11
Chapter Two: Strategic Context and Corporate Objectives.....	12
2.1 Creating Great Places to Live, Work and Visit	12
2.2 Respecting and Celebrating the Environment	12
2.3 Giving Everyone a Good Start in Life.....	13
2.4 Supporting and Protecting Those Who Need Us.....	13
2.5 Being the Best Council, We Can Be.....	13
2.6 How This Strategy Supports the Vale's Vision.....	13
2.7 The Well-being of Future Generations.....	13
Chapter 3: Understanding Empty Properties	15
3.1 Definition of an Empty Property.....	15
3.2 Unbanded Properties.....	15
3.3 Priority Focus of the Strategy.....	15
3.4 Council Tax Premiums.....	16
Chapter 4: Causes, Challenges and Reporting of Empty Properties.....	17
4.1 Reasons Why Properties Become Empty.....	17
4.2 Tracing Property Owners.....	18

4.3 Problems Associated with Empty Homes.....	19
4.4 Spotting the Signs of a Long-Term Empty Property.....	20
4.5 Reporting an Empty Property.....	21
4.6 How Empty Property Complaints are Handled.....	21
Chapter 5: Why Bring Empty Properties Back into Use.....	23
5.1 Local Context.....	23
5.2 Increasing Housing Supply.....	24
5.3 Town Centre Regeneration.....	24
Chapter 6: Our Approach.....	25
6.1 Proactive Engagement.....	25
6.2 Financial Incentives and Assistance.....	26
6.3 How We Prioritise Empty Properties for Enforcement Action.....	27
6.4 Determining the Best Course of Action.....	29
6.5 Challenges in Progressing Complex Cases.....	30
Chapter 7: Measuring Performance.....	30
7.1 Performance Indicators	30
7.2 Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation.....	31
7.3 Contact Us.....	32
7.4 Accessibility.....	32
Appendix 1: Action Plan.....	33
Appendix 2: Enforcement Options Available to Tackle Empty Properties.....	41

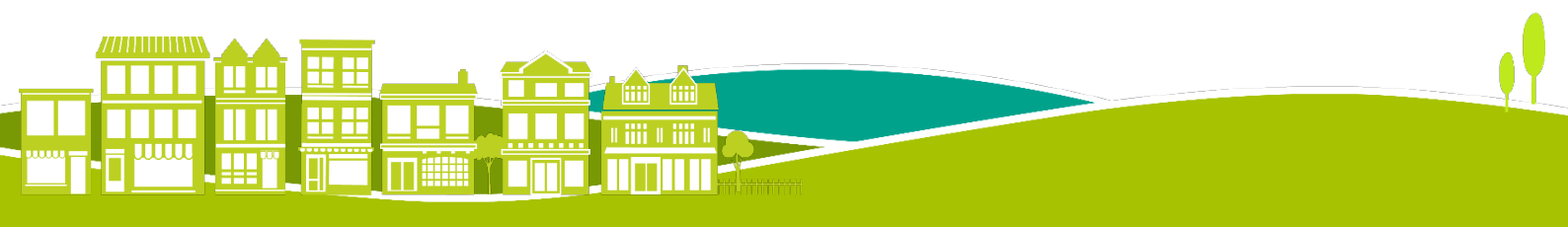
Empty Property Strategy 2026-2030

Executive Summary

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is committed to making the best possible use of its homes, buildings and places to support strong, thriving and sustainable communities. Bringing empty properties back into use is a key part of this ambition. It offers a practical and cost-effective way to increase housing supply, support regeneration, reduce environmental impact and improve the appearance, safety and confidence of neighbourhoods across the county.

This Empty Property Strategy sets out a clear, solutions-focused framework for how the Council will continue to tackle empty and under-used properties in a proactive, coordinated and proportionate way. While the Council recognises the ongoing pressures facing the local housing market and the challenges associated with long-term vacancy, this Strategy is firmly focused on action — supporting property owners, using effective tools and working in partnership to unlock the potential of existing buildings and land.

Over the past 12 months, the Council has made strong progress in addressing empty properties, demonstrating the value of early engagement, joined-up working and targeted intervention. The Vale of Glamorgan Council consistently plays a role in bringing over 10% of empty homes back into use year on year, largely through engagement and offers of assistance and amongst the best performing Councils in this regard. These achievements provide a strong foundation for the next phase of delivery and demonstrate that focused, consistent action can deliver meaningful results for local communities.



Building on this momentum, the Strategy establishes clear objectives to guide delivery:

Objective 1: Engage and Empower Empty Property Owners

The Council will provide early advice, clear information and practical support to help owners bring empty properties back into use. Engagement will be proactive, collaborative and solution-focused, recognising the diverse reasons why properties become empty and tailoring support accordingly.

Objective 2: Prioritisation and Targeted Enforcement Action

Resources will be focused on the properties that cause the greatest harm (not sure harm is the right word – welcome alternatives) or present the greatest opportunity for housing supply and regeneration. An evidence-based risk assessment framework will be used to prioritise intervention, with proportionate enforcement action taken where voluntary progress cannot be achieved.

Objective 3: Raise Awareness and Build Understanding of Empty Properties

The Council will continue to raise awareness of the impact of empty properties and the benefits of bringing them back into use. This includes improving public understanding of how to report empty properties, increasing visibility of the support available to owners, and maintaining clear and accessible communication.

The Strategy will be delivered through a coordinated, corporate approach. Dedicated Empty Property Development and Enforcement Officers will work closely with services across the Council — including Regeneration, Planning, Building Control, Council Tax, Housing and Legal — as well as with external partners. Early intervention will be supported by a range of financial incentives and assistance, including loans, grants and leasing arrangements, alongside clear advice and guidance.

Where engagement is not successful, or where a property poses a significant risk to public health, safety or amenity, the Council will take a targeted and proportionate enforcement approach. This ensures that action is focused where it is most needed and in the wider public interest.

Progress will be measured through nationally recognised performance indicators and monitored through the Empty Homes Working Group, ensuring transparency, accountability and continuous improvement.

By returning empty properties to use, this Strategy will help meet housing need, support regeneration, protect the environment and strengthen community wellbeing. It forms an important part of the Council's wider ambition to create great places to live, work and visit, and to ensure that existing assets are used positively for the benefit of current and future generations.

1

Chapter 1: Introduction and Strategy Overview

1.1 Introduction:

The Vale of Glamorgan is entering a period of significant change. The Council has committed to reshaping how it works so that it is better placed to respond to the pressures facing our communities and the organisation itself. As part of this wider transformation, we have taken a fresh look at the challenges created by long term empty properties and the impact they have on the wider housing system and economic development. This has included a full review of our previous 2019–2024 Empty Homes Strategy to identify how we can respond more effectively to emerging pressures, overcome barriers that prevent progress, and strengthen the way we work across services.

The previous 2019–2024 Empty Homes Strategy has now come to an end, and its expiry provided a timely opportunity to reassess our approach. As part of this redevelopment, we engaged directly with residents, empty property owners and community organisations to understand their experiences and priorities. Their insights highlighted the issues that matter most: access to good-quality housing, pride in local neighbourhoods, and support for those who are struggling. Alongside this engagement, we reviewed our own performance and identified where we need to

strengthen our approach, work differently and collaborate more effectively to deliver better outcomes.

Across the Vale, the need for additional market and affordable housing continues to grow. At the same time, more than 750 homes remain empty, properties that could provide safe, secure accommodation for individuals and families who urgently need it. Empty homes can quickly become a source of concern for neighbours and communities, contributing to local decline and placing additional pressure on Council services. Addressing this issue requires a coordinated, proactive and corporate approach.

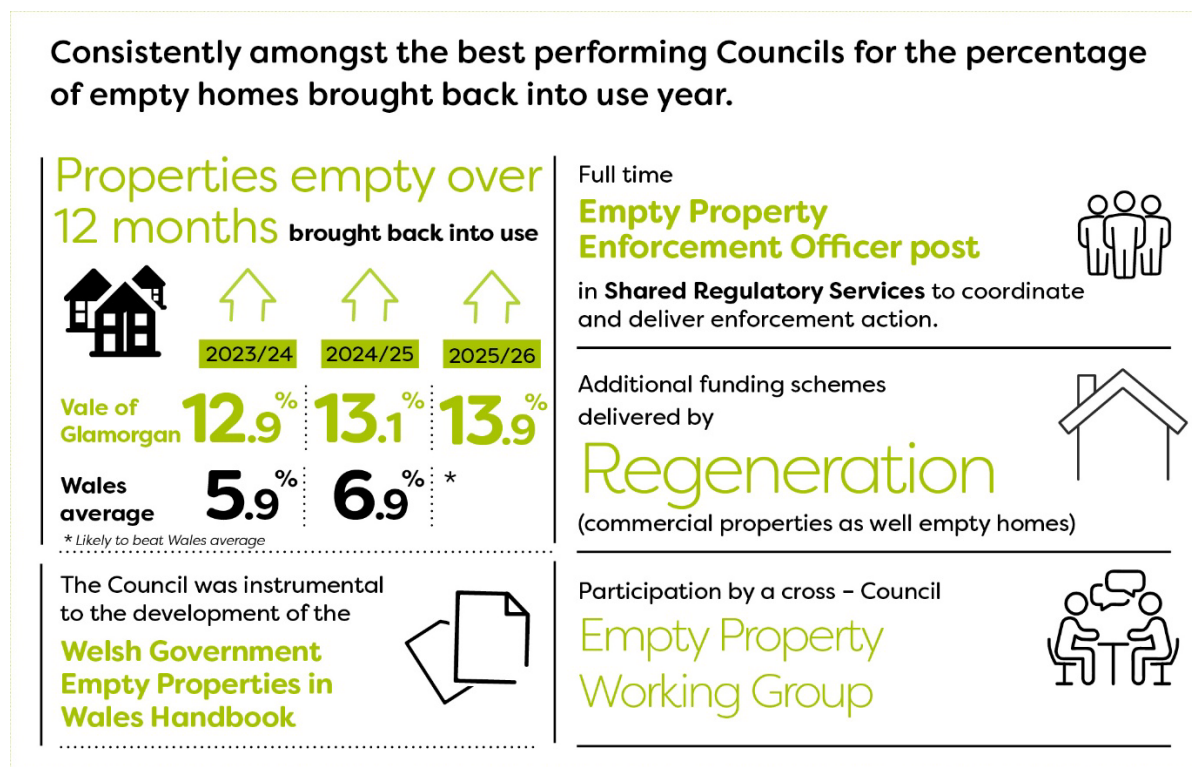
This strategy sets out how the Council will work with partners, property owners and local communities to reduce the number of long-term empty properties and bring them back into use. It outlines the tools and powers available to the Council, the support we can offer to owners, and the steps we will take to ensure empty properties contribute positively to the Vale's housing supply.

The strategy has been shaped by a Consultation undertaken in September 2025, which provided valuable insight into the barriers faced by owners, the concerns of residents, and the opportunities for more effective partnership working. Building on the progress made through the 2019–2024 Empty Homes Strategy, this updated approach introduces new methods, stronger enforcement options and a clearer focus on prevention.

The strategy will be monitored throughout its lifetime and formally reviewed in 2030 to ensure it remains relevant, ambitious and aligned with the Council's wider priorities.

1.2 Growing our impact:

Good outcomes have been achieved since the last strategy (Empty Homes Strategy 2019-2024) was published which have helped pave the way for the development of this renewed broader scope strategy:



1.3 Scope of the Empty Property Strategy:

The Empty Property Strategy sets out how the Vale of Glamorgan Council will deliver its objectives by coordinating both proactive and reactive work to address empty properties across the area. Through the combined efforts of the Empty Property Development Officer and the Empty Property Enforcement Officer, the Strategy provides a comprehensive approach to tackling vacancy and under-use.

For the purposes of this Strategy, **‘empty properties’** include a broad range of sites and buildings, such as:

- Private sector residential dwellings
- Buildings with potential for residential accommodation
- Commercial premises suitable for full or partial residential conversion
- Commercial properties intended to remain in commercial use

- Listed buildings
- Vacant land with redevelopment potential
- Properties located within town centres and key placemaking areas

By encompassing this broader definition, the Strategy supports the Council's wider ambitions to reduce long-term vacancy, enhance community wellbeing, promote the sustainable reuse of buildings, and contribute to regeneration and placemaking priorities across the Vale.

1.4 How the Strategy Was Developed:

The new Empty Property Strategy has been produced by the Empty Homes Working Group, bringing together expertise from across the Council and partner services. The group includes representatives from Shared Regulatory Services, Regeneration, Building Control, Planning, Council Tax, Conservation, Housing and Legal. This collaborative approach ensures that the strategy reflects a wide range of professional perspectives and supports a coordinated, corporate response to tackling empty homes across the Vale.

1.5 Empty Property Action Plan:

Feedback from residents, property owners and partner services, along with a review of our previous strategy, showed the need for a clearer and more focused way of organising our work on empty properties. The new Empty Property Action Plan frames our approach going forward, guiding the work we do and how we do it.

The plan is built around three core objectives:

Objective 1: To Engage and Empower Empty Property Owners

We will provide clear information, practical support and early advice to help owners bring their properties back into use.

Objective 2: Prioritisation and Targeted Enforcement Action

We will focus our efforts on the properties that cause the greatest impact on communities, using evidence to guide decisions and applying enforcement where needed.

Objective 3: To Raise Awareness and Build Understanding of Empty Properties

We will improve awareness of the empty homes issue, promote the benefits of bringing properties back into use, and use a multi-platform communications approach to inform and reaffirm the support available.

The full Action Plan is set out in **Appendix 1** and will be reviewed and monitored throughout the lifetime of this strategy.

Chapter 2: Strategic Context and Corporate Objectives

2

Tackling empty homes is closely connected to the Council's broader ambitions for the Vale and contributes directly to the priorities set out in [Vale 2030: Strong Communities with a Bright Future](#). The work outlined in this strategy supports the delivery of several key objectives and strengthens the Council's wider approach to housing and regeneration.

2.1 Creating Great Places to Live, Work and Visit



Returning empty homes to use increases the availability of safe and affordable housing, strengthens neighbourhoods and supports thriving, resilient communities. Residents have told us that empty properties affect how they feel about their local area and addressing them is an important part of building places people are proud of.



2.2 Respecting and Celebrating the Environment

Reusing existing buildings reduces the environmental impact associated with new development. Renovating empty homes



creates opportunities to improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and support the transition to net zero by 2050.



2.3 Giving Everyone a Good Start in Life

Children and young people benefit from stable, secure homes. Reducing the number of empty properties helps prevent housing instability and supports better health, education and wellbeing outcomes.



2.4 Supporting and Protecting Those Who Need Us

By increasing the supply of suitable accommodation, the Council can provide earlier support to residents at risk of homelessness, reduce crisis interventions and help people access the right services at the right time.



2.5 Being the Best Council, We Can Be

This strategy reflects the Council's commitment to continuous improvement, transparency and partnership working. Tackling empty homes requires collaboration across departments and with external partners, and demonstrates our ambition to deliver high-quality, customer focused services.

2.6 How This Strategy Supports the Vale's Vision:

Bringing empty homes back into use:

- Increases the supply of safe, affordable housing
- Revitalises neighbourhoods and town centres
- Reduces environmental impact through reuse
- Supports decarbonisation and energy efficient living
- Strengthens community wellbeing and resilience

2.7 The Well-being of Future Generations

This strategy also reflects the national well-being priorities set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. By adopting these principles, it strengthens the Vale's contribution to a more sustainable, resilient and cohesive future.

Long term:

Returning empty homes to use increases the supply of sustainable, good quality housing and supports long-term community resilience. It reduces the need for new development, protects local character and contributes to the Vale's long-term housing, environmental and economic goals.

Prevention:

Addressing empty properties early prevents neighbourhood decline, reduces the risk of anti-social behaviour and avoids properties falling into further disrepair. Increasing the availability of suitable homes also helps prevent homelessness and housing instability.

Collaboration:

Delivering this strategy depends on strong partnership working across Council services and with external organisation., including housing associations, community groups, and property owners. These partnerships ensure that support, advice and enforcement activity are coordinated, consistent and effective.

Involvement:

The redevelopment of the strategy has been shaped by engagement with residents, empty property owners and community organisations. Their insights have informed our priorities and guided how we deliver the strategy, ensuring that local voices remain central to decision-making.

Integration:

This strategy supports a wide range of the Council's priorities by increasing housing supply, strengthening community wellbeing, reducing environmental impact and supporting the regeneration of local places. This joined up approach reflects the Council's commitment to integrating services and aligning efforts across multiple departments.

Chapter 3: Understanding Empty Properties

3

3.1 Definition of an Empty Property:

For the purposes of this Strategy, and in line with the Council's reporting requirements to the Welsh Government, an empty property is defined as a private sector residential property that is liable for Council Tax and has remained unoccupied for a period of six months or more.

Please Note: Certain empty properties are exempt from Council Tax. Further details on exemptions are available on the Council's [website](#).

3.2 Unbanded Properties

In addition to properties that are liable for council tax, the Council also monitors and intervenes in cases where properties have been unbanded by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA). These properties are often in a state of severe disrepair, partially demolished or derelict and represent some of the most challenging cases the Council deals with.

3.3 Priority Focus of the Strategy

While the Strategy covers a wide range of property types, its primary focus is on bringing empty private sector residential properties back into use. The Council will prioritise intervention where empty homes are:

- Inactive in the housing market
- Unlikely to return to use without Council involvement
- The subject of valid complaints from the public, partners, or Councillors
- Empty for more than six months
- Long -term empty properties in our town centres and key sites



3.4 Council Tax Premiums:

In the Vale of Glamorgan properties that have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a continuous period of more than 12 months, are classified as long-term empty properties. To encourage owners to return these properties back into use, the Council applies a Council Tax premium, in accordance with powers detailed in the Housing (Wales) Act, 2014.

Since 1st April 2024, a premium of 100% is applied to properties that have been empty for more than 12 months, resulting in a Council Tax charge equivalent to twice the standard rate. Where a property has been vacant for two years or more, the premium increases to 150%. Properties that have remained empty for three years or more are subject to a 200% premium, meaning the Council Tax charge is three times the standard rate.

There are certain exemptions to the premium that apply. For further information please refer to the Council Tax guidance listed on our [website](#).



Alternatively, enquiries can be submitted directly to Council Tax team by completing the online enquiry [form](#).

Chapter 4: Causes, Challenges and Reporting of Empty Properties

4

4.1 Reasons Why Properties Become Empty:

Across the Vale of Glamorgan, properties become and remain empty for a wide variety of reasons. Through sustained engagement with owners, partners and local communities, the Council has developed a clearer understanding of the factors that contribute to long-term vacancy, these include:

- **Transitions In Ownership:** can naturally result in temporary periods of vacancy as properties move through the processes of sale, probate or letting.
- **Poor Physical Condition:** Properties that are challenging to rent or sell due to their physical condition, requiring renovation beyond the owner's financial capability.
- **Challenging Marketability:** Properties located in areas with limited facilities, or inadequate infrastructure become more difficult to rent or sell.
- **Regulatory Challenges:** Regulatory requirements, including planning and building control processes, can add complexity for owners seeking to undertake works or change the use of a property.
- **Changes In Personal Circumstances:** Older property owners may move into care or support accommodation and choose not to sell, resulting in their properties remaining vacant either temporarily or for the long term.
- **Legal Complications:** The legal process to resolve ownership issues can be lengthy. For example, where ownership is unclear or disputed following the death of the previous owner, action can be delayed for extended periods.
- **Abandonment:** Where owners cannot be traced or are unwilling to engage.
- **Property Holding for Investment Purposes:** Where owners retain the asset vacant in anticipation of market gains or redevelopment opportunities.
- **Surplus Ownership:** Where partners co-habit and individuals own more than one property, the second home becomes unused.

- **Adjoining Business Premises:** Where the property is adjoined to a business premises and the owner chooses not to let or sell for operational reasons.

Understanding these complex circumstances enables the Council to tailor its support, guidance and interventions. This insight strengthens our ability to take a proactive and coordinated approach, helping to reduce the number of empty homes and support the successful reoccupation of properties across the Vale.

4.2 Tracing Property Owners

Identifying and contacting the legal owner of a long-term empty property can present as a significant barrier to bringing homes back into use. In some cases, ownership details may be unclear, outdated or disputed, and without local authority intervention these properties are likely to remain vacant for the long term.

To address this, the Council uses a range of methods to trace and engage with property owners, ensuring that every reasonable effort is made to establish contact. These approaches include:

- Reviewing official records such as Council Tax data, Land Registry information, probate records and the electoral register
- Engaging with the local community, including neighbours, local councillors and others who may have knowledge of the property or its ownership
- Issuing public notices, including advertisements in local newspapers, inviting the owner or anyone with relevant information, to come forward
- Requisition for Information – Using Section 16 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982. This enables Local Authority to request ownership details from all those with an interest in the property
- Appointing a professional tracing agent when all other reasonable attempts have been exhausted; this is used only as a last resort

If after all reasonable efforts, the owner remains untraceable, all correspondence will be served directly on the empty property, to ensure the Council can continue to progress any necessary action.

4.3 Problems Associated with Empty Homes

Property owners have a duty to ensure that vacant homes do not pose a risk or become a source of nuisance to the wider community. When properties are left empty for long periods, the impact can be significant and far-reaching affecting owners, neighbours, the Council, emergency services and the wider environment.

Property Owners:

Empty properties deteriorate more quickly than occupied ones. Even a short-term vacancy can escalate into a costly and unsightly issue if left unmanaged. Owners remain financially responsible for maintenance, repairs and any resulting damage. Over time, the property may lose value, become harder to bring back into use and present a growing burden that becomes increasingly difficult to address.

Neighbours and Local Communities:

Long-term empty properties can undermine the appearance and confidence of an area. They may become visually unappealing, attract vandalism, anti-social behaviour or unauthorised entry, and in some cases contribute to damp or structural issues affecting adjoining properties. These concerns often lead to understandable frustration among residents who want to see their neighbourhoods remain safe, attractive and well-maintained.

Common impacts include:

- Reduced property values for nearby homes
- Increased risk of pests and vermin
- Greater likelihood of vandalism and anti-social behaviour (i.e. graffiti)
- Opportunities for trespass, squatting or other illegal activity
- Fly-tipping and illegal waste disposal
- Damp or structural issues affecting neighbouring buildings

The Council:

The Council receives complaints from residents concerned about the condition or impact of empty homes. Investigating these issues requires staff time and resources across several service areas, which may need to intervene to address matters such as pests, disrepair, environmental health concerns, planning or building control issues,

or damage to neighbouring properties. Persistent vacancy places additional pressure on public services and diverts resources from other priorities.

Emergency Services and Community Safety Partners:

Police, fire and community safety teams may be called to deal with incidents linked to empty properties, including arson, trespass, squatting, vandalism or theft. These call-outs increase the burden on essential services and can divert attention from other urgent community needs.

The Environment:

Bringing empty properties back into use supports the Council's wider commitment to '*Respecting and Celebrating the Environment*'. Making the best possible use of existing housing stock is more efficient and sustainable than relying solely on new development. Reusing vacant properties reduces pressure on land, minimises waste, and helps protect the natural and built environment. Long-term vacancy, by contrast, can contribute to environmental decline, missed opportunities for sustainable regeneration, and a poorer quality of place for local communities.

4.4 Spotting the Signs of a Long-Term Empty Property:

Long-term empty properties are often easily identifiable, especially when they show signs of neglect or deterioration. Some of the most common indicators include:

- A noticeable build-up of unopened post behind the front door or in external letterboxes.
- An overgrown garden or unmaintained outdoor area, including the accumulation of refuse or fly-tipped waste.
- Vermin/Pests
- Visible signs of disrepair, such as broken windows, damaged roofing, or internal damage.
- The property being boarded up or otherwise visibly secured.
- Lights left on continuously with no signs of anyone visiting over an extended period.

If several of these signs are present, it is likely that the property has been vacant for a significant period. Reporting such properties enables the Council to investigate and take appropriate action to encourage their return to use, helping to improve local housing availability and enhance the appearance and safety of neighbourhoods across the Vale.

4.5 Reporting an Empty Property:

As part of this strategy, the Council is committed to making our services more accessible and ensuring that residents have clear opportunities to raise concerns. To support this, a new Digital Reporting Tool has been introduced, enabling members of the public to report issues associated with empty properties in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The tool offers a quicker and more accessible way for residents to contact the Empty Property Enforcement Officer of any suspected long-term vacancies or any related problems.

Please note: The Council will not investigate anonymous complaints submitted through this service.

4.6 How Empty Property Complaints are Handled:

When a complaint is received, the matter is referred to the Council's Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) department, where it is allocated to an Officer for investigation. Common complaints include issues such as refuse accumulation, disrepair issues (e.g. dampness) or unauthorised access.

Where complaints fall outside the remit of SRS, the matter may be escalated to other Council departments. For example, Building Control/Planning.

The Council's investigative approach is twofold: it addresses any immediate public health or safety concerns, while also working with the property owner to identify long-term solutions that can return the property to use. Officers will always seek to resolve issues informally in the first instance, encouraging owners to take voluntary action wherever possible.

However, where cooperation is not forthcoming, or where a property poses significant risk, formal enforcement measures may be pursued. These actions can include the

serving of legal notices. If compliance is not achieved, the Council may initiate prosecution or undertake necessary works in default, with all associated costs recovered from the owner.

Please Note: While all reports are taken seriously, the Council is not able to pursue enforcement action in every case. Each submission will be assessed on its individual merits, with priority given to properties that pose the greatest risk to public health, safety or amenity. Wherever possible, the Council will seek to work collaboratively with property owners, encouraging voluntary action before considering formal action. As a result, addressing empty property issues can be complex and time-consuming, and some cases may take several years to resolve.

Further detail on how enforcement decisions are made can be found in Section **6.4 Determining the Best Course of Action.**



Chapter 5: Why Bring Empty Properties Back into Use

5

5.1 Local Context¹:

The Vale of Glamorgan is experiencing significant and growing pressure on its housing market. A combination of complex and interrelated factors is contributing to this strain, including:

- Rising levels of homelessness
- Increased demand for social housing
- A severe shortage of affordable homes - with around 85% of the Vale classified as rural, high house prices in these areas create substantial pressure on affordability
- Private rented sector costs that exceed Local Housing Allowance rates, making many properties unaffordable for local residents
- An aging population, reducing the rate at which properties become available.

The scale of demand has increased sharply. In February 2024, around 6,200 households were on the Council's waiting list for social housing. By September 2024, this had risen to 6,930, and by early 2025 the number had reached 7,217 households. Baruc, Buttrills and Castleland, areas within Barry, are among the most in-demand locations.

Homelessness presentations have also risen. Between March 2024 and March 2025, 1,275 people approached the Council for assistance, reflecting the wider pressures facing households across the county.

While demand for housing continues to far exceed supply, a significant number of empty homes remain across the Vale. Returning these properties to use will not, on its own, resolve all of the county's housing challenges, but it can make a meaningful contribution by:

- Increasing the overall supply of accommodation

¹ [Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026](#)

- Helps reduce pressure on the Common Housing Register
- Supports the Council's wider efforts to respond to homelessness
- Makes better use of existing housing stock
- Contributes to the sustainability and vibrancy of local communities

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is committed to exploring innovative solutions to increase the supply of housing and will make the most of opportunities to work with partners, property owners and local communities to achieve this.

5.2 Increasing Housing Supply:

A key priority for the Council is to increase the supply of housing across the Vale. This includes not only bringing long-term empty properties back into use but also maximising the potential of underutilised buildings as a source of additional homes.

One significant area of opportunity is the conversion of vacant or underused space above commercial and retail premises. These spaces are often overlooked despite offering considerable potential, particularly for creating smaller units suited to single person households. Making better use of such spaces supports more efficient land use, enhances town centre vitality and helps meet the growing demand for affordable accommodation.

5.3 Town Centre Regeneration:

Building on the regeneration work already undertaken, the Council is prioritising schemes that reduce the number of vacant, under-utilised and redundant sites or premises within town centres. A key focus is to support town centre diversification by encouraging more sustainable uses for empty sites and buildings, including residential, leisure and key community services.

This approach aligns with the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns agenda, which emphasises the importance of revitalising town centres by increasing footfall, supporting local businesses and creating vibrant, mixed-use places. By bringing empty properties back into productive use, the Council aims to support job creation and economic growth, tackle poverty, and increase both the supply and quality of the housing offer.

Chapter 6: Our Approach

6

To deliver the objectives of this strategy, the Council adopts a proactive and strategic approach supported by dedicated resources. Early intervention is central to this, enabling Officers to engage with owners promptly, encourage meaningful action, prevent properties from remaining vacant for extended periods and supporting the sustainable reuse of empty properties.

6.1 Proactive Engagement:

The Council undertakes proactive work to identify empty properties before they deteriorate or begin to affect the wider community. This forward-looking approach enables early engagement with owners, supports timely intervention, and helps prevent properties from falling into disrepair or becoming a source of nuisance.

Empty homes are identified for proactive targeting in accordance with Data Cymru's nationally recognised definitions. [See Chapter 7]

Baseline data is identified at the beginning of each financial year, to measure performance and progress annually. Properties are prioritised in accordance with the length of time they have been empty.

Proactive activity includes routine monitoring, data analysis, cross service intelligence sharing, and direct outreach to owners of properties that appear vacant or underused. Building positive, collaborative relationships with owners and developers is central to this work.

The Council provides tailored support, guidance and education, including proactive 1:1 meetings with empty property owners to understand individual circumstances, explore all available options and agree the most appropriate way forward.

To support this, a range of initiatives has been developed, including:

- Annual Empty Homes Survey – enabling the Empty Property Development Officer to work proactively with owners to support the reuse of properties.
- Annual Mailout – providing up to date advice, guidance and information on available support.

- Empty Property Information Pack – a detailed resource outlining assistance schemes and key information for owners.
- Regularly Updated Web Content – ensuring accessible, current information on the Council's website.
- Empty homes assistance can be requested via an online form on the [Empty Property Housing Loans and the Empty Homes Grants](#) webpage. which includes information and contact details
- Assistance for commercial properties can be accessed via the [Empty Commercial Properties](#) webpage.
- Social Media Campaigns – delivered in line with the Council's empty property communications plan to raise awareness and promote support.
- Attendance at Landlord Forums – offering informal opportunities for landlords to speak with Council Officers, seek advice and receive signposting.
- Collaborative Working – sharing best practice and aligning approaches with other Council departments and neighbouring local authorities.
- Engagement with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) – identifying opportunities to bring empty properties back into use through trusted housing partners.

6.2 Financial Incentives and Assistance:

The Vale of Glamorgan is committed to supporting the return of empty properties to productive use. To assist owners in taking early, positive action, the Council provides a range of targeted support measures designed to help bring properties back into occupation. Current assistance available includes:

Empty Property Landlord Loan: Interest free loans are available to assist owners in carrying out essential repairs or improvements that will enable a property to be sold or rented. Loans can be used for works to residential properties or commercial buildings, including projects that involve converting or subdividing a property into self contained flats.

Empty Property Owner-Occupier Loan: Interest-free loans are available to owners who wish to occupy an empty property. The loan can be used to undertake essential repairs or improvements required to make the property suitable for reoccupation.

The National Empty Homes Grant Scheme: Grant assistance is available to owners who wish to occupy an empty property. The funding should be used to undertake essential repairs or improvements required to make the property suitable for reoccupation.

Town Centre Loan Scheme: The loan is available for empty commercial buildings within town centres. Its purpose is to transform buildings, to enhance building frontages together with the upgrade of vacant commercial floor space to bring it back into beneficial business use.

Please note: Funding availability and eligibility criteria may change over the course of the strategy's implementation.

In addition to the above, property owners may be eligible to reduced VAT on renovation work on properties empty 2+ years which can be qualified with a letter from the Council confirming the empty status.

The most up to date information on financial assistance schemes is published on the Council's [website](#).

6.3 How We Prioritise Empty Properties for Enforcement Action:

Tackling empty properties is a complex and resource intensive challenge. To ensure that time and resource is used efficiently and strategically, the Council applies a targeted, evidence based framework to prioritise intervention. This approach enables Officers to focus on properties that present the greatest risk to the community or the highest potential for positive reuse.

The data on empty properties is reviewed to identify residential properties that have been empty for extended periods and prioritise action.

When a complaint is received, these properties are risk assessed to determine their priority for further action.

Please note: When resources allow the Council will carry out proactive inspections in line with the empty property action plan – **Appendix 1**.

Higher concern is typically given to properties that meet one or more of the risk assessment criteria:

- Length of Vacancy: Higher priority is assigned to properties that have remained unoccupied for over 12 months with greater priority given to longest empty [3+ years] in a measurable targeted way.
- Outstanding Debt: Includes Council Tax arrears or other charges registered against them such as enforcement or works carried out in default.
- Condition of the Property: Visible signs of disrepair, structural deterioration, or internal damage.
- Complaint History: Properties that have been the subject of multiple complaints to departments such as Planning, Building Control or Environmental Health.
- Enforcement History: A previous record of formal enforcement action by the Council.
- Environmental Neglect: Issues such as overgrown gardens, fly-tipping, pest infestations, or vermin activity.
- Anti-Social Behaviour: Reports of vandalism, graffiti, unauthorised access, squatting, or other criminal activity linked to the property.
- Strategic Location: Properties situated in areas of high housing demand or within key regeneration zones, including town centres.

Each property is assigned a score based on these factors. Properties with the highest score are prioritised for enforcement or intervention. This approach ensures decisions are proportionate, transparent, and aligned with broader regeneration goals.

To maximise impact and ensure efficient use of available resources, the Council prioritises the top 20 highest-scoring properties for targeted action. This list is routinely reviewed, updated to reflect new information and successful interventions, and is also discussed within the Empty Property Working Group to ensure wider cross departmental oversight and that efforts remain focused where they are most needed.

6.4 Determining the Best Course of Action:

In the first instance, the Council will seek to resolve issues relating to empty properties through informal engagement and cooperation with owners. Officers will apply a range

of proportionate interventions, escalating in severity depending on the level of risk posed and the responsiveness of the owner. These interventions may include:

- Providing tailored advice and support
- Proactively identifying and inspecting empty properties
- Administering available financial assistance schemes

However, where owners cannot be traced, where extensive efforts to encourage progress prove unproductive, or where there is an imminent risk to health and safety, the Council may have no option but to pursue a statutory course of action.

Statutory interventions available to the Council include:

- Serving formal notices
- Carrying out works in default
- Securing properties
- Initiating enforced sale proceedings
- Pursuing compulsory purchase orders *where appropriate.

Further details of these statutory provisions can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

Where an owner is unwilling to engage or is untraceable, the Council may also obtain a legal warrant to facilitate entry for inspection or to undertake works in default.

It should be noted that the Vale of Glamorgan Council is unable to enforce a sale against every property. Enforced sale is reserved for the most severe and exceptional cases, where all other avenues have been exhausted and the public interest clearly justifies such action.

When formal action is being considered, the Council's Empty Property Working Group may play a key role in the decision-making process. The group periodically reviews each priority case and discusses the most appropriate and proportionate course of action to take in relation to the property.

6.5 Challenges in Progressing Complex Cases

It is important to acknowledge that the Vale of Glamorgan continues to face ongoing challenges where high priority empty properties fall into significant disrepair, yet

owners take steps to avoid enforcement by ensuring there are no ongoing public health risks or outstanding debts. While this may limit the immediate grounds for statutory intervention, it can significantly restrict the legal options available to the Council. Although we recognise the complexity and constraints of such cases, this does not deter the Council from its commitment to sustained engagement, targeted intervention and collaborative working to bring these properties back into use in line with our strategic objectives.

Chapter 7: Measuring Performance

7

7.1 Performance Indicators

The Council's performance in tackling empty homes is assessed using two nationally recognised indicators defined by Welsh Government and reported annually to Data Cymru. These measures allow performance to be compared consistently across Local Authorities in Wales and demonstrate the direct impact of local authority intervention.

EMH0001 – Percentage of Empty Private Sector Properties Brought Back into Use (6+ Months Vacant)

This indicator measures the proportion of private sector homes that have been vacant for more than six months and are brought back into use during the financial year as a direct result of Council action. It is calculated using:

- The number of empty private sector properties returned to use through Council intervention, and
- The total number of private sector properties that had been vacant for more than six months as of 1st April.

EMH0002 – Percentage of Empty Private Sector Properties Brought Back into Use (12+ Months Vacant)



This indicator focuses on the proportion of private sector homes that have been vacant for more than twelve months at the start of the financial year. It reflects the Council's impact on the most challenging long-term empty properties and is calculated using:

- The number of long-term empty private sector dwellings brought back into use through Council action, and
- The total number of such properties vacant for more than twelve months as of 1st April.

All relevant departments (e.g. Council Tax, Regeneration, Planning) will be required to submit timely and accurate data to support the annual Welsh Government return. The Empty Property Development Officer will lead the coordination of this process, ensuring that information is collected consistently, reported appropriately, and used to inform future service planning and delivery.

7.2 Ongoing monitoring and evaluation:

Progress against this strategy will be monitored through the Empty Homes Working Group, which meets quarterly and is jointly chaired by the Empty Property Development Officer and the Empty Property Enforcement Officer. These meetings will review delivery of the strategy and monitor progress against the action plan, ensuring that activity remains on track and responsive to emerging issues.

Data on progress against the action plan will be maintained and made available to the relevant Scrutiny Committee as required. This will ensure that performance can be reviewed, achievements recognised, and any areas needing further action or resources identified.

7.3 Contact Us:

As part of our commitment to being the best council we can be, open, accessible and focused on delivering high-quality services, we welcome any questions or feedback about this strategy.

If you have any queries about the Empty Property Strategy, or would like further information on the support available to owners, landlords or residents, please contact us by email: emptyproperties@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

7.4 Accessibility:

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is committed to ensuring that our information is accessible. This strategy has been published in Welsh and English on our website <https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/Housing/Empty-Homes/Empty-Homes.aspx> and is also available in hard copy.

If you require this information in a different format like accessible PDF, large print, easy read, audio recording or braille please contact the Council by using the contact details listed below:

- Email: C1V@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01446 700111

Appendix One: Action Plan

To optimise the re-use of empty properties within the Vale of Glamorgan, increasing the availability of homes for rent and ownership while supporting wider regeneration, strengthening communities and making better use of existing buildings.

ACTION What are we going to do?	WHAT WE WILL DO How are we going to do it?	BY WHOM?	BY WHEN?	MONITORING / MEASURE / TARGET
Continue to coordinate the Vale of Glamorgan Empty Property Working Group to deliver the aims and objectives of the Empty Property Strategy.	Maintain regular in person meetings of the Empty Property Working Group, chaired jointly by the Empty Property Development Officer (Regeneration) and the Empty Property Enforcement Officer (Shared Regulatory Services). Members include representatives from Planning, Building Control, Housing, Council Tax, Business Rates and Legal. Meetings will focus on implementing and monitoring the strategy, sharing intelligence, and supporting wider regeneration priorities across the Vale.	All members of the Working Group.	Quarterly 2026-2030.	Group continues to meet in person; consistent attendance; actions progressed; contribution to regeneration outcomes evidenced.
Continue active participation in regional empty property networks to support shared learning, strengthen partnership working and enhance regeneration outcomes across the Vale.	Maintain active membership in key regional housing and empty property forums, including the Southeast Wales Empty Property Working Group. Attend scheduled meetings to share best practice, explore innovative approaches used by neighbouring authorities, and discuss emerging challenges. Use insights gained to inform policy, improve service delivery and support regeneration priorities within the Vale.	Empty Property Development Officer Empty Property Enforcement Officer.	Ongoing 2026-2030.	Number of meetings attended.

Continue to coordinate annual reporting on empty property performance and achieve string results .	Prepare an annual performance report detailing the number of empty properties brought back into use as a direct result of Council intervention. All relevant departments (including Housing, Council Tax, Regeneration and Shared Regulatory Services) will provide timely and accurate data to support this process. Maintain a comprehensive empty property database informed by Council Tax records (updated each April) and ongoing monitoring of actions, communications and enforcement activity. Log all enforcement action across the Council	Led by the Empty Property Development Officer. Supported by all members of the Empty Property Working Group. Empty Property Enforcement Officer	Annually	Annual report submitted to Data Cymru. Council Tax empty property data received twice per year. Internal database maintained and updated to evidence performance against national indicators. Meet and exceed annual targets
Objective 1: To Engage and Empower Empty Property Owners We will provide clear information, practical support and early advice to help owners bring their properties back into use.				
Annual review of Council Tax reports on Empty Homes and establish the baseline of empty homes for the year.	Determine empty residential properties as at 1st April each year and form a database to be targeted during the year, highlighting longest empty and sharing with SRS	Empty Property Development Officer	Annually	Establish baseline to measure annual progress
Obtain periodic data on Empty Commercial units (Business Rates) in the Town	Determine empty properties in each primary shopping area. Target assistance e.g. Town Centre Loan Scheme to owners of empty properties.	Empty Property Development Officer	Ongoing	Proactive communication issued each year

Centres and target assistance.				(letters and emails)
Continue to issue annual communications to empty property owners with clear information on available support and assistance.	Send an annual letter to all identified empty property owners, providing up to date guidance, links to financial assistance schemes, and details of the support available from the Council. This will encourage early engagement and empower owners to take positive action.	Empty Property Development Officer	Annually	Letters issued each year. The number of owners responding or seeking support.
Continue to update the Empty Property Information Pack to ensure owners receive accurate, relevant and up to date guidance.	Review and amend the Information Pack whenever changes occur in policy, legislation, financial assistance schemes or internal processes. Ensure the pack remains clear, accessible and reflective of current support available to help owners bring empty properties back into use.	Empty Property Development Officer	Ongoing	Information Pack updated as required.
Continue to review and update the Empty Property webpage to ensure owners can easily access the latest information and support.	Conduct periodic audits of webpage content to ensure accuracy, relevance and accessibility. Update information to reflect current policies and financial assistance. Work collaboratively with Shared Regulatory Services and other departments to ensure cross-linking and consistent messaging. Monitor webpage links to ensure full connectivity.	Empty Property Development Officer Supported by Communications	Ongoing	Webpage reviewed and updated regularly All links functional Increased traffic and owner engagement recorded.
Deliver the Welsh Government Leasing Scheme to provide owners with a secure and supported route	Promote and deliver the Leasing Scheme, under which the Council leases suitable private sector properties for 5–20 years, offering owners guaranteed rental income at Local Housing Allowance rates. Assess all properties to ensure they meet required standards. Provide	Housing Solutions Team.	Ongoing	Number of properties inspected; number of properties enrolled into the

to bring empty properties back into use.	tenants with high-level support to help sustain their tenancy and reduce the risk of repeat homelessness.			scheme; number of properties successfully tenanted.
Continue to strengthen working relationships with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to support the leasing or purchase of empty properties for use as social housing.	Maintain and develop agreements with local RSLs to encourage the leasing or purchase of suitable empty properties. Continue to share information on potential opportunities identified through surveys, owner engagement and the empty property database. Attend the Strategic Housing Forum to exchange updates on development activity and partnership opportunities. Enforcement action may support the freeing up of plots of land and larger properties to be used by RSLs	Empty Property Development Officer Supported by Housing Solutions Empty Property Enforcement Officer	Ongoing	Properties referred to RSLs if viable and not leased/purchased by the Council.
Continue to provide support to the delivery of the Property Acquisition Policy by exploring feasibility and assisting where appropriate.	Support Housing Development by identifying suitable empty properties, sharing intelligence and assisting with feasibility work. Work with the Council to support their but back programme as well as RSL partners to explore opportunities for purchasing properties for social housing or temporary accommodation.	Empty Property Development Officer Supported by Housing Solutions	Ongoing	Number of properties identified Number of acquisitions supported Evidence of joint working.
To consider launching regular in-person open-surgery sessions to provide	Consider introducing a scheduled, appointment-based system at the Vale Civic Offices, offering face-to-face support with relevant officers. Appointments will be triaged to ensure owners receive the most appropriate	Empty Property Development Officer and Empty Property	Ongoing – First session to be held in 2026.	Number of appointments booked and attended.

dedicated support to empty property owners.	guidance. Promote the service through digital channels to raise awareness. Review the frequency of sessions regularly to ensure they align with demand and available resources.	Enforcement Officer Supported by all members of the Empty Property Working Group.		
Objective 2: Prioritisation and Targeted Enforcement Action We will focus our efforts on the properties that cause the greatest impact on communities, using evidence to guide decisions and applying enforcement where needed.				
Introduce a digital reporting system to improve how residents report empty properties and associated issues.	Develop and implement an accessible digital reporting tool that allows residents, partners and internal teams to report empty properties, nuisance issues and concerns directly to the Council. Promote the system through the Council's communication channels to increase visibility and encourage community reporting. Ensure reports feed directly into enforcement workflows to support prioritisation and timely	Led by Empty Property Enforcement Officer Supported by ICT and Communications.	System developed and launched by 2027; ongoing improvements to 2030.	Digital reporting system operational Number of reports received
Utilise the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns Empty Property Enforcement Fund to support enforcement action on high impact long-term empty properties.	Identify long term empty properties causing significant community impact and assess their suitability for enforcement action using the Transforming Towns Enforcement Fund. Consider options such as Works in Default, Enforced Sale or Compulsory Purchase Orders on a case by case basis. Prepare funding applications where appropriate and ensure alignment with regeneration priorities	Led by Empty Property Enforcement Officer Support from Legal Services.	Ongoing, 2026–2030.	Number of funding applications submitted

Proactive site visits on properties empty over 3 years. Reduce the risks and hazards associated.	Carry out risk assessments on properties empty 3+ years (where no plan/engagement evidenced) and log on Tascomi. Check whether outstanding debt etc.	Empty Property Enforcement Officer	Ongoing	Risk Assessment including mitigating actions. i.e No of advisory / Enforcement letters
Conduct proactive joint street view surveys of key town centre areas to identify commercial and residential properties with regeneration potential and determine properties that may warrant enforcement action.	Carry out coordinated walkabouts in town centre areas involving relevant departments such as Regeneration, Conservation, and Shared Regulatory Services. Identify vacant, underused or deteriorating properties that may benefit from financial support packages. Use the findings to inform targeted engagement with owners and prioritise properties for intervention. Risk assessments completed on long-term empty properties with no known plans.	Empty Property Development Officer Empty Property Enforcement Officer	Ongoing, as and when resources allow.	Number of surveys completed; number of properties identified with regeneration potential; follow up actions initiated with owners.
Enforced Sales and Compulsory Purchase Orders if appropriate/applicable	To take enforcement action which will lead to Enforced Sales and Compulsory Purchase Orders to ensure long-term solution	Empty Property Enforcement Officer	Ongoing	Reporting on enforced sales and CPOs
Objective 3: To Raise Awareness and Build Understanding of Empty Properties We will improve awareness of the empty homes issue, promote the benefits of bringing properties back into use, and increase visibility of the support available.				

Explore and establish a working relationship with probate genealogists to trace owners of long-term empty properties where ownership is unidentifiable.	Initiate engagement with Fraser and Fraser and explore additional genealogist services to support complex owner tracing work. Develop a secure and compliant data processing agreement to enable safe information exchange. Establish an internal referral process for complex or cross service cases to improve coordination and speed of resolution.	Empty Property Enforcement Officer	April 2027	Percentage of successful ownership traces. Number of long - term empty properties contacted where ownership was previously untraceable.
Explore the feasibility of introducing a digital newsletter for individuals with an interest in empty properties.	Develop and pilot a digital newsletter for subscribers, providing updates on support packages, new initiatives, performance highlights and success stories. Assess interest, engagement levels and resource implications to determine long term viability.	A collaboration between the Empty Property Enforcement Officer and the Empty Property Development Officer Supported by all members of the Empty Property Working Group.	Initial feasibility work by 2027; ongoing if adopted.	Newsletter developed and issued (if feasible). Subscriber numbers and engagement levels monitored.
Develop a communications plan to promote all aspects of empty property work across the Council.	Create a coordinated and effective communications plan led by relevant departments, outlining key messages, campaigns and engagement activities. This will include:- Promoting the Empty Property Strategy across all target stakeholders	Communications Team Empty Property Development Officer Empty Property Enforcement Officer/Shared	Plan in place for the duration of the Strategy. Reviewed annually.	Communications plan An increase of engagement with empty property services.

	Continuing to communicate (with owners' consent) positive case studies via all appropriate media channels to promote the work achieved. Proactively promotion of support, guidance and financial incentives and assistance. Communicate successful enforcement actions where appropriate/applicable.	Regulatory Services Supported by all members of the Empty Property Working Group		
Reintroduce landlord support/information service and create opportunities for developers and empty property owners and in turn, reduce housing need waiting lists.	Introduce landlord drop-in sessions to provide regular opportunities for private landlords, developers and empty property owners to receive updates on legal and regulatory matters, share experiences and engage with Council services and partnership networks. Targeted communications to highlight support schemes, financial assistance and regulatory standards to be met.	Housing Solutions	To launch in 2026-27 ongoing to 2030.	Number landlords attending drop-in sessions Attendance levels recorded Increased take-up of the Vale Assisted Tenancy Scheme and the Leasing Scheme etc

Appendix 2: Enforcement Options Available to Tackle Empty Properties

Local authorities have a range of enforcement powers to address the negative impact of long-term empty properties. The key legislative tools include:

- **Environmental Protection Act 1990 – Section 80** Abatement Notices can be served under section 80 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in respect of statutory nuisances caused by a property's structure or associated land.
- **Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 – Section 4** enables the Council to serve Notices on the owner of the land to ensure the premises are free from rodents.
- **Building Act 1984** Can be used to address structural defects, dangerous buildings, or defective drainage at empty properties.
- **Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 – Section 29** Enables Councils to secure empty buildings against unauthorised access if they are open to entry and pose a risk.
- **Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – Section 215** Where a property's condition adversely affects the amenity of the neighbourhood, a notice can be served requiring improvement works.
- **Housing Act 2004 – Part 1: Housing Health and Safety Rating System** Provides powers to assess residential properties for 29 potential hazards and take enforcement action where Category 1 hazards are present.
- **The Law of Property Act 1925 – Enforced Sale** Where a local authority has incurred recoverable costs (e.g. through default works) and secured a financial charge, it may enforce sale to recover debt.
- **Housing Act 1985 – Section 17: Compulsory Purchase Orders** Allows local authorities to acquire properties in order to provide housing accommodation.
- **Housing Act 1985 – Section 265: Demolition Orders** Enables the Council to order the demolition of properties deemed unfit for habitation and beyond reasonable repair.
- **Housing Act 2004 – Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs)** Subject to tribunal approval, these allow Councils to take over the management (not ownership) of empty residential dwellings in order to bring them back into use.

Equality Impact Assessment

If you are developing a new policy or process - or reviewing an old existing one - and your proposals affect people, then you are in the right place. It is essential that you start an equality impact assessment (EIA) early on when you are developing your proposal. Doing so helps ensure that your proposals are inclusive, fair, and responsive to the diverse needs of residents and service users. Failing to complete a timely and robust equality impact assessment can have serious consequences, including legal challenge, your proposals being stopped, and substantial costs. A robust assessment not only protects our organisation, it strengthens our proposals and builds trust with the communities we serve. If you need any support filling out this form please contact Nicola Hinton nhinton@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk . Please do not click 'Submit' until you are completely satisfied with your responses.

Introduction

1. What are you assessing? *

Empty Property Strategy 2026–2030

2. Who is responsible? (Name) *

Helen Pembridge

3. Who is responsible? (Job Title) *

Team Manager Housing Enforcement and Pollution Control Shared Regulatory Services

4. Who is responsible? (Team) *

5. Manager *

Will Lane and Phil Chappell

6. Date of start of assessment *

7/16/2026



About Your Proposal

7. What is the purpose of the proposal?

The purpose of the Vale Empty Property Strategy is to reduce the number of long-term empty residential properties across the Vale, bringing vacant homes back into beneficial use to meet local housing need, support sustainable communities, improve neighbourhood amenity, and reduce the negative impacts associated with empty and derelict properties. The strategy seeks to work with property owners through advice, support, incentives and, where necessary, enforcement action to encourage the reoccupation of empty homes and maximise the use of existing housing stock.

8. Why do you need to put it in place?

The Empty Property Strategy is needed to address the impacts of long-term vacant residential and commercial properties across the Vale of Glamorgan. The strategy aims to bring empty properties back into beneficial use, increasing housing supply, supporting town centre and community regeneration, enhancing neighbourhoods, and making better use of existing buildings. It provides a clear framework for supporting property owners and taking enforcement action where necessary to achieve these outcomes.

9. What are the intended outcomes of the proposal?

The intended outcomes are to increase housing supply by bringing empty properties back into use, reduce long-term vacancies, improve communities, support housing need and regeneration,

promote sustainable development, encourage positive action by owners, and ensure proportionate, evidence-based enforcement.

10. Who does the proposal affect? *

Note: If the proposal affects lesbian, gay, homosexual, or transgender people, ensure you explicitly include same-sex couples and use gender neutral language.

Residents, Empty Property Owners, Landlords and Developers, RSLs, Local Businesses, Town Centre Users, Those in Housing Need and Council Services involved in Housing, Regeneration and Enforcement.

11. Will the proposal affect how other organisations work?

No

12. Will the proposal affect how you deliver services?

The proposal will compliment and improve on those services improving communication and accessibility.

13. Will the proposal impact on other policies or practices?

We do not envisage it having any negative impact on others policies or practices, but hope that it will help us achieve our goals and targets.

14. How will you achieve the proposed changes?

By adopting a corporate approach and working with partners to tackle the problems associated with empty properties.

15. Does the proposal assist or inhibit our ability to meet our public sector equality duty to eliminate discrimination;

advance equality; and foster good relations?

This assists in our public sector quality duty by contributing to improving the supply of Housing and through a robust communication plan making information and services more accessible.

Evidence

What evidence is available for you about the needs of people with different characteristics to evaluate your proposal? Where are the gaps in the evidence?

16. Local data and public engagement *

You may want to consider the Let's Talk about Life in the Vale findings and the Vale's population needs assessment. Also use this section to detail any public engagement that has been undertaken to support you in developing and evaluating your proposal.

Public consultation and engagement were undertaken during 2025 with residents, empty property owners, community organisations, the Empty Property Working Group, and relevant Council services including Housing, Council Tax, Planning, Building Control, Regeneration, Legal Services and Shared Regulatory Services. There was a relatively low response to the consultation from Empty Property Owners and we would therefore look to open feedback channels for continuing engagement throughout the life of the strategy.

17. National data and research *

You may want to consider the Equality and Human Rights Commission's 'Is Wales Fairer 2023' Report, and other information such as the the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, Census etc.

The Strategy is informed by Council data on empty properties, housing demand, homelessness, social housing waiting lists and performance relating to empty homes, together with consultation feedback from residents and stakeholders. It has been developed within the context of relevant legislation and policy, including the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Equality Act 2010, Welsh Government guidance on empty homes, local housing priorities, and the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Is Wales Fairer? report, which highlights the impact of housing inequalities on disadvantaged and protected groups across Wales. Consideration has also been given to Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation data, particularly housing, income, employment, community safety and physical environment indicators, to identify communities experiencing higher levels of deprivation and housing need. The evidence highlights ongoing housing pressures, increasing inequality and the significant opportunity presented by more than 750 empty homes across the Vale of Glamorgan. Bringing these properties back into use can increase housing supply, support homelessness prevention,

improve neighbourhood quality and community wellbeing, and contribute to more equal housing outcomes for residents across the Vale.

Wellbeing: In parts of the Vale of Glamorgan, long-term empty properties can have a detrimental impact on local neighbourhoods by contributing to visual decline, attracting anti-social behaviour and reducing residents' sense of pride and safety. Bringing these properties back into use can help improve the appearance and vitality of communities, increase access to stable housing, support homelessness prevention and contribute to social, economic and mental wellbeing. This supports the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 goal of creating healthier, more resilient and cohesive communities.

Equality: The Vale faces increasing housing pressures, including demand for affordable housing and rising levels of homelessness. The Equality and Human Rights Commission's *Is Wales Fairer?* report highlights that housing affordability, housing quality and housing insecurity can disproportionately affect disabled people, older people, low-income households and some ethnic minority communities. Returning empty homes to occupation can increase the availability of housing and help improve access to suitable accommodation, supporting more equitable housing outcomes across the Vale.

Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD): WIMD data helps identify areas of the Vale experiencing relatively higher levels of deprivation and housing need. In particular, the housing, income, employment, community safety and physical environment domains provide evidence of the wider impacts associated with vacant and deteriorating properties. Using this information enables the Council to target resources and interventions towards communities where bringing empty homes back into use is likely to deliver the greatest social, economic and environmental benefits.

Impact

What is the likely impact of your proposal on individuals with the following characteristics? State whether the impact is negative, differential or positive.

18. Age *

Consider in particular young people and older people

Positive

Bringing empty properties back into use can increase housing supply, reduce housing pressures and improve access to suitable accommodation for younger people, families and older residents, helping to meet housing needs across all age groups.

19. Disability *

Positive

Bringing empty properties back into use can increase the availability of accessible and suitable housing, improving housing options for disabled residents. The Council will continue to provide

information, support and reasonable adjustments through accessible communication channels where required.

20. Gender reassignment *

Ensure policies explicitly include same-sex couples and gender neutral language.

Neutral No Adverse Impact has been identified The strategy applies equally regardless of gender identity.

21. Marriage and civil partnership (discrimination only) *

Neutral

No differential impact has been identified

22. Pregnancy and Maternity *

Positive

Increasing the availability of suitable housing may benefit people who are pregnant or have young children. Improved housing availability may support family wellbeing and housing stability.

23. Race *

A race is a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship) ethnicity or national origins. A racial group can be made up of more than one distinct racial group, such as Black British.

Positive

The Strategy is intended to benefit all residents equally. Increasing housing supply and reducing housing pressures may help improve access to accommodation across diverse communities.

24. Religion or belief *

Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief.

Neutral

No adverse impact has been identified

The strategy applies equally regardless of religion or belief

25. Sex *

Positive

The strategy provides equal opportunity for all residents to benefit from improved housing availability and regeneration activity.

26. Sexual Orientation *

Ensure policies explicitly include same-sex couples and gender neutral language.

Neutral

No adverse impact has been identified.

27. Socio-economic considerations *

Socio-economic disadvantage can be disproportionate in both communities of interest and communities of place – think about how this leads to further inequality of outcome and how intersectionality can exacerbate this. Changes are minimal beyond the change in provider and should have no impact on any communities.

Positive

By bringing empty properties back into use, the Strategy can increase available housing, support homelessness prevention, reduce pressure on social housing, improve neighbourhood quality and resilience, and help meet the needs of vulnerable households across the Vale of Glamorgan.

28. Welsh language *

How does your proposal ensure that you are working in line with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011), to ensure the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language, and that every opportunity is taken to promote the Welsh language (beyond providing services bilingually) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

Neutral/Positive Strategy available in both english and welsh, services, communications and public information will continue to comply with the welsh language standards.

29. Human rights *

Positive The Strategy supports access to adequate housing, community wellbeing, and the development of safe and sustainable neighbourhoods through fair and proportionate decision-making. Any enforcement action will be undertaken lawfully, proportionately and in accordance with relevant legislation and Council policies.

Going Forward

Please do not click submit until you are completely satisfied with your responses.

30. What, if anything, can be done to promote a positive impact? *

The Council will maintain proactive engagement with property owners, promote available grants, loans and support schemes, work with housing partners and Registered Social Landlords, raise awareness through communication campaigns, ensure information remains accessible, target interventions where they can deliver the greatest community benefit, and monitor delivery and outcomes through established performance and governance arrangements.

31. What, if anything, can be done to limit any negative impact? *

No significant negative impacts have been identified. To minimise any potential unintended consequences the Council will The Council will take a proportionate, evidence-based approach, supported by ongoing engagement, accessible communication and performance monitoring.

32. Is there a need for more favourable treatment to achieve equal outcomes? (disability only) *

No

33. Overall will the impact of your proposal be positive, negative or neutral? *

Positive

34. How will you monitor progress in delivering your proposal and its impact on citizens? *

The Equality Impact Assessment will be reviewed alongside the implementation of the Empty Property Strategy, with progress monitored through performance reporting, stakeholder feedback and engagement, Empty Homes Working Group oversight, and periodic reviews of the Strategy and Action Plan.

35. Approved by (name) *

Will Lane

36. Job Title *

Operational Manager

37. Date of Approval *

7/22/2026



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