


**STATUS: FOR INFORMATION REPORT**

<p>FOR:</p> <p><b>PLACE Scrutiny Meeting</b> <b>2 June 2026</b></p>	<p><i>(For Council Members – No Decision Required)</i></p>	 <p>The logo for the Vale of Glamorgan Council, featuring a stylized green mountain range above blue wavy lines representing water, with the text 'VALE of GLAMORGAN' above and 'BRO MORGANNWG' below.</p>
<p>DIRECTORATE</p>	<p>Place – Regeneration Team</p>	
<p>TITLE</p>	<p>Leading the Way with Empty Property work</p>	
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<p>Purpose of Paper</p>	<p>For Information (No Recommendations made or decisions required)</p>	

This paper is for information and update only and no decision is sought.

**1. Purpose of the Information Papers**

- The Vale of Glamorgan Council (VoGC) is committed to making the best possible use of existing properties: homes, commercial buildings and land to support strong, thriving and sustainable communities. Tackling empty properties is a key part of this Council-wide ambition. Regeneration leads the way with this work with a range of assistance targeted to property owner of a range of empty property types.
- This paper will outline the resource allocated to empty property work, outline of schemes on offer, note recent achievements and provide an overview of future plans and developments which are timely as a new Empty Property Strategy 2026-2030 is being finalised which will replace the previous Empty Homes Strategy to reflect the broader scope of the work being undertaken in order to maximise existing resource and reduce the negative impact that empty properties and unused land can cause.

**2. Background and Context to the resource and the development of the Council-wide approach**

- Bringing empty properties into use is key to supporting a number of Council objectives, to include the availability of housing stock, economic development, environmental sustainability and to make the Vale a visibly better place to live.

- Empty property work in the Vale has evolved over the years and this is due to the vision Place has had, the importance placed upon the work and officer dedication despite only having one Empty Property Development Officer [EPDO] based in the Regeneration team. This officer manages various funding schemes and other incentives on offer, undertake engagement work with empty property owners, to encourage action as well as some more general private sector housing work.
- The VoGC has achieved good results year on year with limited resource. Reference to Regeneration in this paper equates to work managed and delivered by the Empty Property Development Officer. (Further detail is outlined in section 3 and 4).
- The Regeneration team established a cross-Council Empty Property Working Group in 2018 which consists of representatives from all the relevant departments: Regeneration, Shared Regulatory Services (SRS), Housing, Building Control, Planning, Legal Counsel Tax etc, but now, this group is extended to Business Rates, Community Protection Officers and Placemaking/Neighbourhood Officers and jointly led by Regeneration and SRS.
- Regeneration developed an Enforced Sale Policy which was approved by Cabinet (19th July 2021) and then applied the policy and coordinated/completed the Council's first Enforced Sale of a long-term empty property in 2022/23 to recover debt having completed required works in default. This is supported by Welsh Government who set out a requirement for each Council to develop an Empty Property Enforcement Plan.
- It was recognised that it was additional enforcement resource was required to continue take enforcement action where required (e.g. neglected, long term empty properties) and a role of the Empty Property Enforcement Officer (EPEO) was created in SRS to work alongside the EPDP and the rest of the Empty Property Working Group members.
- This development shows how we have been leading change and shaping a new culture of working, one size does not fit all, and multi-disciplinary teams are required to maximise outputs and positive outcomes. SRS now work in partnership to the empty property work in the Vale of Glamorgan in being responsible for coordinating and implementing enforcement action.

### **3. Recent Key Achievements and Outputs (to Date)**

- The Vale of Glamorgan Council has been consistently amongst the top performing Councils Wales-Wide for bringing empty homes back into use.

Data Cymru collect data year on year:

EMH0001, the percentage (%) of empty homes (empty 6+ months) that have come back into use following Council action or engagement.

EMH0002 the percentage (%) of empty homes (empty 12+ months) that have come back into use following Council action or engagement.

- Our proactive approach with periodic communications, surveys issued and range of assistance on offer, enables the Council to set high targets for these performance measures (in relation to other Councils) of 10% which are met and exceeded year on year (since 2018/2019) and the Wales average achieved is usually around half of that achieved by the VoGC.

- Data on EMH0002 below focuses on properties empty over 12 months and less transitional type scenarios demonstrates the outputs achieved:
  - 2023-2024 12.9% properties brought back into use within the VOG (Wales average: 5.9%).
  - 2024-2025 13.1% properties brought back into use within the VOG (Wales Average 6.9 %). To note, the VoGC was the best performing Council in Wales during this period.
  - 2025-2026 13.9% properties brought back into use within the VOG. Wales national performance data is yet to be confirmed. As well as bringing empty property back into use, the work also generates a net increase in dwellings via funding for the conversion and subdivision of existing properties.
- The Council was invited to share best practice to support the development of Welsh Government [Handbook](#) on Empty Properties in Wales and was instrumental to its development to confirm processed, engagement efforts and assistance on offer. The published document featured a development supported by Regeneration in the VoGC as a successful Case Study - a redundant hotel that has now been subdivided into 9 homes. The loan for the sum of £245,000 was close to the maximum loan possible for the scheme and understood to be the highest loan administered under the scheme Wales-wide.
- We have recently widened the scope of financial assistance to include the [Town Centre Loan Scheme](#) to help tackle long-term empty Commercial units in the Town Centres and support regeneration. Visits were conducted to externally assess the empty properties in the 5 primary shopping districts across the Vale and assistance was targeted. The first loan was approved in May 2026, whilst further expressions of interest are in the pipeline at the time of this report. Continuous targeting efforts via multiple communication methods are ongoing.
- In addition, Regeneration maintains a Database of empty commercial units to be let and for sale in the VOG which enable businesses to utilise for suitable premises.
- In-person and well attended Empty Property Working Group, meetings are held every quarter and Chaired by the EPDO and the EPEO in turn, to help reflect the differing work areas and partnership working approach.

#### 4. Current Position and Activities

Regeneration issue Periodic Empty Homes Surveys and assistance letters to advise of the range of assistance to include [Empty Property Housing Loans and Empty Homes Grants](#):

- **Property Loans Scheme**- Loans of up to £35,000 per unit (loans from £3,000 to £250,000) for the renovation or creations of dwellings so that buildings and units can be brought back into use. A Welsh Government recyclable funding pot, £3.2 used to date from the original £1.626M in 2012 No loans are at any known risk of not being repaid which means that this assistance offer can continue - as loans are repaid, new loans can be issued.

No. of <b>residential units</b> created from empty/derelict/ underused properties/sites. i.e. total units brought into use or back into use as a result of the loan scheme	103
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- **Empty Property Grant Scheme** (Rhondda Cynon Taf is the lead administrator of this Welsh Government funded Scheme who work with Delivery Councils). Grants are up to £25,000 for applicants to occupy their own homes that are long-term empty and deemed uninhabitable. The EPDO manages all the delivery requirement, make property owners aware of the assistance, confirm initial eligibility and arrange surveys to be completed as required at various stages (Surveying work is commissioned but as all the surveying fees are refundable as part of the scheme so the model adopted is the best one in the economic climate).

Over 50 grants have been approved and issued to improve long-term empty properties so that they can be occupied. This scheme was just a 2-year scheme 2023/4-2024/2025 but it has been extended, and the Vale of Glamorgan Council was one of the Councils driving the roll-out from the outset.

- **Guidance and assistance** - This includes letting and selling options and relevant signposting (e.g. Council buy backs of ex Council properties, Leasing Scheme Wales)
- **Reduced VAT letters on renovation work** (for properties empty 2+ years)
- **Town Centre Loan Scheme** - Assistance of loans £30,000 - £300,000 targeted at owners of empty commercial units in the town centres. The ground floor commercial space must be brought back into use as a minimum.

**Empty Property Strategy 2026-2030** The Strategy will be rolled out in the coming weeks/months following Cabinet approval. This strategy is jointly owned by Place and SRS.

## 5. Challenges, Risks and Mitigations

- Our resource is limited (in Regeneration 0.8 post). Investigating cases/properties and completing due diligence prior to approving financial commitments and delivery of the entire process can be time-consuming as well as all the reporting required on the work areas. Efficiencies are made where possible (digital application form etc). Despite technological developments with digital form etc, the majority of empty property (home) owners prefer to complete surveys etc on paper.
- Options are being explored to strengthen enforcement powers and financial resources to support SRS activity relating to empty properties.

## 6. Future Plans and Next Steps

- SRS will explore utilise the Transforming Towns Enforcement Fund which is offered by Welsh Government alongside ways to strengthen/extend enforcement powers.
- Continue to utilise methods that have worked well and build on them.
- Notifications of funding streams by 2030 may be a turning point and inform outreach efforts and assistance on offer going forward. Repayment to Welsh Government of the Empty Property Loan is scheduled by 31/03/2030. Repayment of a portion of the Town Centre Transforming Town Loan 31/03/2031. The Assistance will be determined if new funding

initiative are offered, successful schemes extended etc. Roll out new schemes as funding is offered etc by Welsh Government etc.

## **7. Engagement and Communications**

- To develop an ongoing communication programme for Empty Property related work
  - To share some good news stories to include performance results and recent examples of successful schemes (with relevant consents).
  - Following Cabinet approval of the Empty Property Strategy 2026-2030 over the coming months, it will be published and there will be a communication programme to raise awareness of the strategy. This will include the following:
    - Circulation to Councillors and Cabinet members
    - Social media utilised to raise awareness.
    - Letters to empty property owners advising of the new strategy.
    - Strategic Housing Forum and Overarching Strategic Housing Forums
    - Opportunities for Member awareness or involvement (if appropriate)

## **8. Financial and Resource Context (High-Level)**

- Welsh Government funded schemes are managed by Regeneration:
  - £1.626M Property Loans: A recyclable pot (a mix of loan £878.8K and grant £754.8K funded) which are managed well to ensure that the grant element of the funding will remain to continue to be re-used once the loan funding has been repaid to Welsh Government.
  - £1.9M Town Centre Loan Scheme, a new scheme that has started to be allocated.
- Resources
  - EPDO in Regeneration: 0.8 role
  - EPEO in SRS: Full time roleNo new financial commitment is requested.

## **9. Conclusion**

This paper is to highlight Regeneration's outputs and scope of work with regards to empty properties and to inform of recent successes and highlight efforts to promote cross-Council work including SRS to help facilitate positive outcomes across the board.

This paper is provided for information only.

Dated: 20/05/2026

## 10. Appendices (relevant webpages etc)

<https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/Housing/Housing-Loans/Empty-Homes-Loans-and-Empty-Homes-Grants.aspx>

<https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/Housing/Empty-Homes/Empty-Homes.aspx>

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/working/urban\\_regeneration/Empty-Commercial-Properties.aspx](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/working/urban_regeneration/Empty-Commercial-Properties.aspx)

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2026-01/empty-homes-handbook-part-2.pdf>

Consistently amongst the best performing Councils for the percentage of empty homes brought back into use year.

### Properties empty over 12 months brought back into use



2023/24

2024/25

2025/26

Vale of Glamorgan

12.9%

13.1%

13.9%

Wales average

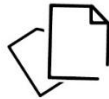
5.9%

6.9%\*

\* Likely to beat Wales average

The Council was instrumental to the development of the

**Welsh Government Empty Properties in Wales Handbook**



Full time

**Empty Property Enforcement Officer post**



in **Shared Regulatory Services** to coordinate and deliver enforcement action.

Additional funding schemes delivered by

**Regeneration**

(commercial properties as well empty homes)



Participation by a cross - Council

**Empty Property Working Group**

