

# Draft Empty Homes Strategy 2019-2024

## Homes & Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 16th July 2019

Regeneration and Planning  
Vale of Glamorgan Council



# Draft Empty Homes Strategy 2019-2024

## What is an Empty Private Sector Home?

An empty property is a property liable for Council Tax, which has been unoccupied for a period of 6 months or more\*.

## How is Performance Measured?

Public Accountability Measure (PAM) 13: Percentage of empty private sector properties brought back into use during the year through direct action by the local authority\*.

(\*Source: WLGA (Data Cymru), Public Accountability Measures 2019-20: Guidance for local authorities)

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## Key issues

- If allowed to deteriorate an empty home can blight a whole street or community
- They can attract vandalism, fly-tipping and other criminal activity
- They can have a detrimental impact on the lives of local residents
- They are a source of complaint and put added pressure on both the emergency services and various Council teams
- They represent waste, but they also represent an opportunity
- We must make the best possible use of our existing housing stock in the private sector

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## The Current Picture (April 2019)

As at April 2019, of the 58,909\* residential properties in the Vale of Glamorgan, 846 private properties were standing empty for six months or more. This represents 1.4% of the housing stock.

**Table 1: Breakdown of Empty Homes by Length of Time Empty as at April 2019**

Length of Time Empty	No. of Empty Homes as at April 2019	%
10 years +	47	5.56
5-10 years	56	6.62
3-5 years	90	10.64
2-3 years	118	13.95
1-2 years	273	32.27
6 months to 1 year	262	30.97
<b>Total</b>	<b>846</b>	<b>100</b>

\*Source: Vale of Glamorgan Council (properties liable for Council Tax)

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**Table 2: Distribution of Empty Homes by Ward as at April 2019**

Ward	No. of Empty Homes (empty over 6 mths)	No. of Empty Homes (empty over 2 yrs)
Baruc	66	17
Buttrills	48	11
Cadoc	42	19
Castleland	50	23
Cornerswell	28	5
Court	32	11
Cowbridge	61	23
Dinas Powys	28	9
Dyfan	19	6
Gibbonsdown	14	5
Illtyd	58	23
Llandough	11	6
Llandow/Ewenny	22	6
Llantwit Major	56	16
Peterston-super-Ely	16	4
Plymouth	54	25
Rhose	32	12
St. Athan	25	7
St. Augustine's	77	32
St Bride's Major	30	13
Stanwell	24	11
Sully	30	14
Wenvoe	23	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>846</b>	<b>311</b>

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## Why do homes become empty?

- Normal process of buying, selling and letting properties
- The property is unsuitable to rent or sell due to its physical state and renovation work is beyond the budget of the owner
- The property is difficult to rent or sell due to the location
- Absent/untraceable owners
- Legal issues e.g. Probate of a Will
- Property holding e.g. inherited properties
- Owners choose not to engage with the Council

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## Strategic Direction (Considerations)

- Revise and refine the previous strategy (published in 2012) taking into account changes to housing policy and practice
- Opportunities for the Council to generate income and secure additional affordable homes
- Behind every home, there lies a different story requiring a bespoke solution
- When dealing with empty property owners, a voluntary way forward is always preferred (advice, assistance and incentives)
- The use of enforcement action as a last resort

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## Moving Forward (5 Key Aims)

- Assemble, maintain and improve the accuracy of empty homes data
- Provide advice, assistance and financial incentives to reduce the number of long term empty properties
- Promote the whole Council approach to tackling empty homes
- Prioritise empty homes for enforcement action
- Raise awareness of the empty homes issue



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## Next Steps

- Pre-Recess: Cabinet approves a consultative document, referred to Scrutiny Committee for consideration
- Post-Recess: public consultation exercise
- Further Cabinet report presenting the findings and to consider any changes prior to finalising for adoption
- Annual Review reported to Scrutiny Committee

**Thank you for listening**

**Questions and Comments**