

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	7th March 2023
Title:	National Empty Homes Grant Scheme
Purpose of the report:	To gain approval to participate in named scheme
For:	Decision
Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:	Councillor Matthew Vaux, Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection

Ceredigion currently has approx. 800+ long term empty properties, during a time where there is a shortage of supply across the county.

Empty properties are a scar on Town's and surrounding villages, they are often expensive to remedy and contribute to the decline of an area but importantly are also an underused community asset when there is a shortage of Housing.

Last year the LA developed an Empty Property Action Plan with the aim of tackling this issue through a variety of measures.

Welsh Government have recently granted approval to deliver a national empty homes scheme, building on the previous success of the scheme delivered as part of the Valleys taskforce.

Welsh Government is committing £50m to this scheme, split equally over 2 years (2023-24 & 2024-25).

An indicative allocation for Ceredigion has been made available should participation be agreed, based on the number of empties for 2022/23 is £823,171.00 for 2023/24 and another £823,171.00 for 2024/25.

The expectation on each LA's is to provide a capital intervention at 10% of its indicative allocation, so for Ceredigion the maximum total costs are £164,634.20 over 2 years.

This funding opportunity provides scope for the LA to further promote the benefits of bringing back properties back into residential use.

The scheme will be run by RCT as the lead LA, where all applications will be made directly to them utilising the resources and skills, they have available following the successful delivery of the Valley Taskforce.

The qualifying criteria is set out within Appendix 2(A); however Ceredigion will be requesting a caveat within the arrangement to ensure a Local Connection aspect is inserted and needs to be met before any application can progress. This element has already been agreed with Welsh Government should the LA participate. The intention is to replicate the requirements for Affordable Housing as listed as the Local Connection criteria:

Residency Qualification

A local connection in that the applicant must at some time in their life have lived in Ceredigion or an adjoining town/community council area (or a combination of the two) for a continuous period of 5 years.

Or

A need to live in Ceredigion to substantially care for or be cared for by a close relative.

Or

A need to be in Ceredigion for employment purposes as a key worker on a full-time permanent basis.

Effectively Ceredigion is required to make funding available as above. Enter into an SLA with RCT, make capital grant payments to the lead authority when a successful application is made in line with the qualifying criteria. The matched funding element has been identified within the Capital programme.

Summary of the requirements on LA staff provision:

- Legal to agree terms of the SLA.
- Provide a link to RCT website for this scheme and promote.
- Direct all applicants to the site.
- Housing Services to identify a 'Single Point of Contact' to liaise with the Council Tax Service to establish length of time a property has been empty and ensure applicant meets Local Connection criteria.
- SPOC to link in with RCT to confirm eligibility of application is met.
- LA to appoint a surveyor for each property/application that is successful, with full cost recovery plus 1% for administration.
- SPOC to liaise with Ceredigion's Finance Services to ensure invoicing requirements within the SLA can be met, i.e. Invoice RCT on a monthly basis to re-coup surveyor costs alongside processing invoices from RCT on a quarterly basis to provide the 10% contribution up to the maximum intervention of £2,500 per application.

Scheme benefits:

- Potential to see over £1,800,000 being spent within the local communities and on local trades.
- Empty properties being brought back into use, as a result, increasing supply.
- Potential to mitigate some of the Phosphates issues restricting further developments.

Wellbeing of Future Generations:

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed?
If, not, please state why
Summary:
Long term:
Collaboration:
Involvement:
Prevention:
Integration:

Recommendation(s):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Members are asked to consider the proposal and confirm if they are in agreement for the LA's participation in the National Empty Homes Grant scheme and if so: 2. To enter into a Service Level Agreement with the Lead Authority for the delivery of the Scheme. 3. To provide the required £165k of matched funding (10%) from the Council's Capital Programme.
Reasons for decision:	To comply with the Democratic process
Overview and Scrutiny:	N/A
Policy Framework:	Corporate Strategy Housing For All: A Local Housing strategy for Ceredigion 2018 - 2023
Corporate Well-being Objectives:	Boosting the Economy, Supporting Business and Enabling Employment. Creating Sustainable, Greener and Well-Connected Communities.
Finance and Procurement implications:	A matched funding requirement of up to £165k across 2 financial years (23/24 and 24/25) would be required from the Council's Capital Programme.
Legal Implications:	Approve SLA with Lead Authority
Staffing implications:	Limited - Listed within report
Property / asset implications:	None
Risk(s):	None
Statutory Powers:	N/A
Background Papers:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix 1- Award of Funding Letter Appendix 2- Letter from Julie James MS Appendix 3- Integrated Impact Assessment
Corporate Lead Officer:	Donna Pritchard, Corporate Lead Officer: Porth Gofal

Reporting Officer: Llyr Hughes, Corporate Manager: Housing Services

Date: 09/02/2023



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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

01 December 2022

Dear Derek

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

1. Award of Funding

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

2. Statutory authority

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

3. Interpreting the Conditions

Any reference in the Conditions to:

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

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

'Welsh Government Official' is to

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. Use of the Funding

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

5. Funding pre-conditions

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

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

6. How to claim the Funding

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

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

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

7. Your general obligations to us

You must:

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

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

8. Declarations

You declare that:

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

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

9. Notification Events and their consequences

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

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

10. Monitoring requirements

You must:

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

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

11. Audit Requirements

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

12. Third party obligations

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

13. Intellectual property rights and publicity

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

14. Information

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

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

15. Buying goods and services

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

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

16. Giving notice

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

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

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

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

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

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

17. Equality

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

18. Welsh language

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

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

19. Sustainable development

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

20. Welsh Ministers’ functions

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

21. General

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

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

22. How to accept this award of Funding

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

Yours faithfully



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

SCHEDULE 1 The Purposes

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

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

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

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

You will provide regular updates including at Operational Group meetings.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Third Party Grant Scheme

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SCHEDULE 2

The Targets

2022-23

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

2023-24 – 2024-25

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

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

Table 1: Indicative allocations per Local Authority

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

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

SCHEDULE 3

Notification Events

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SCHEDULE 5

Annual Statement of Grant Expenditure

Local Authority Allocation Certificate

End of Year income / expenditure report

a) Total grant received for 2022-23 £

b) Actual Expenditure £

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

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

Certificate of the Chief Finance Officer

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

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

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

Signature:

Date:

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

TWO SIGNATORIES ARE REQUIRED

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

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

_____ Name

_____ Job Title

_____ Date

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

_____ Name

_____ Job Title

_____ Date

Julie James AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref

17th November 2022

Dear Councillor

As you may be aware, I recently granted approval to deliver a national empty homes scheme, building on the previous success of the scheme delivered as part of the Valleys taskforce. Welsh Government is committing £50m to this scheme, split equally over 2 years (2023-24 & 2024-25).

My officials established a working group with 12 local authorities to develop the scheme. Each local authority was also invited to an individual meeting to discuss the scheme and 21 local authorities have subsequently met with my officials. I am really pleased with the level of enthusiasm and willingness to explore participation in the scheme.

I want to begin investing in the national Empty Homes Grant Scheme as quickly as possible and therefore am looking to launch the scheme in January 2023 to enable applications to begin to be processed leading into 2023-24. The main terms of the scheme are set out below:

- The property would need to be empty for 12 months to qualify for the grant;
- The applicant must live in the property as their main residence for 5 years upon completion of the works;
- Only one application per person;
- The maximum grant per application will be £25,000;
- Energy efficiency improvements will be a requirement as part of the works undertaken on the property;
- A minimum 15% applicant contribution will be required;
- Any other costs above the grant and contribution must be met by the applicant; and
- A notional allocation will be provided to each participating local authority based on the number of long-term empty properties in their authority for each financial year.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Julie.James@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Julie.James@gov.Wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I strongly believe that Empty Homes is a joint area of responsibility between Welsh Government and local authorities. With that in mind, and as with the previous Valleys Taskforce Empty Homes Scheme, in order for each local authority to participate in the scheme, I will be asking each local authority to make a financial contribution for each year of the scheme (2023-24 & 2024-25). This will be at an intervention rate of 10% of each local authority allocation.

With their experience of operating the previous Valleys taskforce scheme, it is our intention to appoint RCT CBC as the delivery lead on behalf of all the local authorities.

RCT will work with your officers to take this work forward. I would be very grateful if you could ensure that your officials and in particular your Council Tax departments, are committed to supporting this scheme through liaising with RCT when required.

To support the launch of this scheme later this year please could you confirm your local authority's intention to participate in the scheme by 30 November 2022 and provide contact details for the nominated lead for your local authority to HousingSupply@gov.wales

I look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your support and commitment to bring empty properties back in use.

Yours sincerely



Julie James AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Minister for Climate Change

WELSH GOVERNMENT INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Title of proposal:	National Empty Homes Grant Scheme
Official(s) completing the Integrated Impact Assessment (name(s) and name of team):	Robert Davis
Department:	Housing Supply - Homes & Places
Head of Division/SRO (name):	Stuart Fitzgerald
Cabinet Secretary/Minister responsible:	Minister for Climate Change
Start Date:	30 January 2023

SECTION 1. WHAT ACTION IS THE WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSIDERING AND WHY?

Background

Empty homes are a blight and nuisance on our communities. Not only do they attract anti-social behaviour, pose environmental health problems and contribute to a general decline in their neighbourhoods, but they are also a wasted resource. This is particularly frustrating when housing is in short supply.

Local Government regulations define a home as “long-term empty” if it has been unoccupied for over 6 months. As the process of selling a home can take longer than 6 months, the figures for empty properties include houses that are on the market for sale. This can give a distorted impression.

Numbers of empty properties

For 2021-22 the overall number of long-term empty homes chargeable for council tax was **25,701**.

The latest council tax figures for 2022-23 have the overall number of chargeable long term empty homes in Wales as **22,140**, a reduction of 3,561 in the number from 2021-22.

(N.B. These figures only relate to those homes which are chargeable for council tax.

There are, in addition, a number of classes of properties which are vacant which are exempt from council tax e.g., property vacant on death; dwellings left unoccupied by students; properties empty and unfurnished; etc. In total, these categories amount to over 21,000 properties empty/vacant but exempt from council tax in each of the last 3 years. However, it is considered that the majority of these properties would only be vacant for less than 6 months and therefore would not qualify as long-term empty homes).

**The figures relating to council tax chargeable dwellings in 2021-22 and 2022-23 may have been influenced by COVID-19 and LAs’ assumptions about what would be happening to the housing market in the forthcoming year. The 2021-22 data is very different compared to previous years for short term exemptions for empty and unfurnished properties for example. As such it would be best not to concentrate on figures for one particular year affected by the pandemic.*

Purpose of the scheme

The scheme is designed primarily to assist local authorities to further increase housing supply and home ownership opportunities for people in Wales by bringing more empty properties back into use. Bringing long-term empty properties back into use will help to increase the supply of housing and extend choice, improve housing conditions and meet housing need. Through the investment of the scheme, it is anticipated up to 2, 000 homes will be brought back into use.

The scheme will not only benefit people who may not otherwise be able to access home ownership, but also supports the house building, repairs and maintenance industry, supply chains, economy and jobs.

A safe warm home has many benefits including playing an important role in ensuring occupants reach their full potential and have the opportunity to maintain good health. By improving the energy efficiency of the existing homes, the scheme will also help to ensure household bills for energy are minimised.

According to [research](#) undertaken by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) on behalf of the BRE Trust (2019 Briefing Report - The full cost of poor housing in Wales), in 2017-18, there were an estimated 238,000 dwellings with a Category 1 hazard in Wales, or around 18 per cent of the total housing stock, with the most common hazards relating to falls in the home, and the consequences of living in cold housing.

At the time, the cost to reduce the hazards in these poor homes to an acceptable level is estimated to be £2,455 per home, on average - a total cost of £584 million for the whole stock. This however is likely to have increased due to the recent cost increases in labour and materials.

If remedial works were undertaken 'up-front' to mitigate these Category 1 hazards, it is estimated that there would be a benefit to the NHS of some £95 million per year.

Therefore, by removing category 1 hazards from empty properties brought back into use, there would also be a significant financial saving to the NHS.

In addition, the scheme will contribute to the reduction of housing cost induced poverty and will also help to address mental and physical health issues, inequalities and improve life chances for those living in insecure, poor-quality accommodation. A secure, affordable, home has significant benefits for well-being and quality of life more generally.

Evidence from the [evaluation report](#) of the Welsh Government Houses into Homes scheme (2015) undertaken by Sheffield Hallam University also would suggest the following benefits will be realised to the wider policy area:

- provide an uplift in wider empty homes activities;
- help promote a greater dialogue between local authorities and owners of empty properties;
- help develop new partnerships with departments within local authorities, promoting better inter-departmental working around empty homes within local authorities in their region.
- help local authorities address strategic priorities in other policy areas including regeneration, neighbourhood renewal, public health, homelessness, affordable housing, housing needs, and training and employment.

SECTION 2. WHAT WILL BE THE EFFECT ON SOCIAL WELL-BEING?

2.1 People and Communities

Concerns have been expressed in some parts of Wales about young people and families being priced out of their local communities by high rental and purchase house prices. The proposed scheme will increase the supply of housing in communities by bringing additional properties back into occupation, therefore freeing up properties that were previously in use to reduce the demand for social or rented homes. This impact will have a positive impact on individuals and families, but the impact is likely to be moderate to minimal as there is a huge demand for social and rented housing in Wales. The scheme is available across Wales and so this positive impact will, in theory, not be restricted to certain geographical areas or certain groups.

The scheme will also positively impact communities by transforming empty properties which can be a blight and nuisance on communities and attract anti-social behaviour, pose environmental health problems and contribute to a general decline of communities.

2.2 Children's Rights

Due regard has been given to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Living in poor quality housing can be detrimental to children and young people's health and wellbeing. In particular, the physical quality of the home is key to a child's life chances and will affect their ability to study and thrive. The proposed scheme will enable us to help to provide an adequate stock of housing which will play an important role in increasing the quality and affordability of homes. This will help protect potentially vulnerable families and children.

Housing plays a critical role in supporting young people and low-income families to achieve better outcomes. Living in poor quality housing can be detrimental to children and young people's health and wellbeing, with effects lasting into adulthood. In particular, the physical quality of the home is key to children's life chances and will affect their ability to study and thrive. Improving the supply and quality of housing will also make an important contribution to reducing health and educational inequalities.

Having a settled and secure home is also important for parents. Without this, they are less likely to secure training and long-term employment opportunities, which in turn affect their income. They are therefore more at risk of living in poverty.

This scheme is one of a number of housing options available in the market sector and therefore a Children's Rights Impact Assessment has not been completed.

2.3 Equality

Consideration has been given to the Welsh Ministers' duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination,

harassment and victimisation as well as to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share characteristics and those who do not.

The scheme is available across Wales to all groups and is not considered to have any negative implications for people with protected characteristics.

The assessment is available at **annex A** below.

2.4 Rural Proofing

Concerns have been expressed about young people and families being priced out of their local communities by high rental and purchase house prices. It is recognised that there are specific problems in relation to housing supply in rural communities, where due to limited supply, there may be relatively few dwellings available for local people on modest incomes. There is also the potential for areas with particular problems as a result of high numbers of second homes; Welsh Government has a separate strand of work tackling this issue and, as part of this, there is an obvious link between the impact of empty and second homes.

It is also acknowledged amongst Housing Associations and the development industry as being more complex and more expensive to build new homes in the National Parks and in rural areas where planning consent can be complex to obtain.

According to the '[Welsh Housing Conditions Survey 2017-18: Energy Efficiency of Dwellings](#)', Dwellings in rural areas tend to be less energy efficient than dwellings in urban areas.

According to the 2020 Future Generations [report](#), rurality can also compound housing supply issues, due to tourism, agriculture, or residents buying second homes, making it difficult for people in rural areas to buy housing.

House prices are also often higher in rural areas and there is sometimes competition for properties with second homeowners.

By bringing back more existing properties back into use in these areas, it will help these communities to continue to exist and thrive.

This scheme should help increase the supply of housing in rural areas but by utilising existing properties and as such a full Rural Proofing Impact Assessment is not required.

2.5 Health

A good quality, safe and warm home is a key factor in a healthy life. A home that is free from damp, is warm and is in a safe environment enables families, individuals and children to thrive.

As supported by the 2021 Welsh Government [report](#) 'Implementing the Socio-economic Duty: A review of evidence on socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome', the physical features of housing can also impact on mental health as families try to cope with the stress of living in cold, damp conditions.

Mental illness is commonplace; one in six adults experience a problem or diagnosable mental health issue at any given time. Effective care and support for people with mental health problems helps to ensure their independence and social inclusion. A stable situation in respect of an individual's home or accommodation is important as otherwise it can lead to, or worsen, social exclusion and risky behaviour. Mental health problems and mental illness can cause significant problems, some of which can lead to losing a place to live. The prevalence of mental health problems among the population – from relative minor to serious – is increasing. There is growing recognition of this increase, and of the need to help people so that problems, if they occur, can be prevented from becoming more complex and more costly in terms of treatment and impact. There is good evidence that poor quality housing and housing-related problems can all cause mental health problems or, for some people, make existing problems worse.

Those living in bad housing are disproportionately at greater risk of poorer general health, low mental wellbeing and respiratory problems including asthma and breathlessness.

A secure, affordable, home has significant benefits for people's mental and physical health, well-being and quality of life more generally.

Age related groups, income related groups, groups who suffer discrimination or other social disadvantage, and geographical groups will benefit from the Scheme as more accommodation is made available.

Good quality affordable housing supports healthy lifestyles, with, for example, good heating systems, space for family life etc. Communal spaces enable people to socialise and to have the benefits of a healthy outdoor life. This living environment can contribute to positive mental health and a reduction in stress.

Properties that have been empty for more than 12 months are generally recognised to often be in a poorer physical condition and to have less efficient heating and energy conservation measures. Poor housing conditions can have a negative effect on health outcomes on all, and particularly for children and older people, as well as those with particular health conditions (e.g., respiratory disease).

2.6 Privacy

Will the proposal involve processing information that could be used to identify individuals?

The National Empty Homes Grant scheme will be administered on behalf of the Welsh Government by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) and therefore will not involve Welsh Government processing information that could be used to identify individuals as the scheme is not administered by the Welsh Government. All data received from RCTCBC will be anonymised.

The assessment is available at **annex B** below.

SECTION 3. WHAT WILL BE THE EFFECT ON CULTURAL WELL-BEING AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE?

3.1 Cultural Well-being

Access to good quality, affordable housing enables, families, children and individuals to flourish. Participation in the scheme is available to all local authorities across Wales. Some of the applicant eligibility of the scheme are that the home being brought back into use through the scheme must be in Wales, must be the applicant's only home and the applicant must live in that property as their only place of residence for a minimum of 5 years.

3.2 Welsh Language

In some parts of Wales, including Welsh speaking communities, people can encounter difficulties in finding an affordable home due to high house prices. It has been suggested this can be to the detriment of the Welsh language. Ensuring there is adequate availability of affordable housing for local people in their communities is a particularly important way of helping rural Welsh speaking communities to continue to exist and thrive.

The proposed scheme will be delivered by a local authority on behalf of WG and despite their own requirements to meet Welsh Language Standards including the need to prepare a plan to promote the Welsh language, it will be a requirement of the grant that certain standards are met, including providing a bilingual service and producing all documentation / marketing in both Welsh and English.

The assessment is available at **annex C** below.

SECTION 4. WHAT WILL BE THE EFFECT ON ECONOMIC WELL-BEING?

4.1 Business, the general public and individuals

According to an [evaluation report](#) of the Welsh Government Houses into Homes scheme (2015) undertaken by Sheffield Hallam University, figures show that for every £1 spent on renovating property as part of the scheme, £1.67 is generated for the economy. This is further supported by Scottish Government figures which show that every £1 spent on renovating property in Scotland generates £1.60 for the economy.

In addition, a required 10% investment from local authorities and a minimum 15% contribution of the overall cost of works from the applicant (private sector leverage) will result in significant additional funding being levered in as part of the proposed scheme.

Aside from the wider investment, a number of perceived economic benefits are considered likely through the implementation of the proposed scheme, as set out below:

Impact on owner occupiers

Owner occupiers who benefit from the scheme could benefit financially by being in receipt of grant to undertake the works. This scheme is open to all applicants that meet the scheme criteria and therefore does not benefit one particular individual or group over another.

There may also be a financial benefit in the uplift in value of the property as a result of the works undertaken (see impact on house prices below).

According to the [briefing report](#) 'The full cost of poor housing in Wales' 2019 provided by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) on behalf of the BRE Trust, a number of potential additional benefits of provided funding to bring empty properties back into use include:

- A reduction in maintenance costs
- A reduction in energy and running costs
- A reduction in carbon emissions
- Insurance premiums may be lower

Impact on general public / communities

There is no impact envisaged on the general public, except that this scheme may impact on house prices and therefore benefit people who live in the proximity of the property (see impact on house prices below).

Impact on house prices

The scheme is expected to result in an increase in capital value to the property and neighbouring properties.

An [evaluation report](#) of the Welsh Government Houses into Homes scheme (2015) undertaken by Sheffield Hallam University provided evidence that empty homes can have a detrimental impact on the surrounding local community. For instance, they can become a

focus for anti-social behaviour and crime (such as vandalism, arson, squatting and fly tipping). As a result, evidence suggests empty homes can reduce local house prices by up to 10 per cent* based on the assumption that up to 2 houses either side (4 properties in total) would see a potential benefit.

** Two figures are widely quoted by local authorities across the UK regarding the impact of empty properties on the value of neighbouring properties. Many local authorities quote a 10 per cent figure. Others reference an estimate attributed to The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors that empty homes can devalue adjoining homes by as much as 18%. We presumed a reduction in value of 10 per cent for the nearest four properties.*

Impact on local businesses

Completing works to bring empty properties back into use has a positive economic impact on the Welsh economy. This is in the form of demand for goods and services, both directly from suppliers and indirectly within the intermediate supply chain. The economic impact can be measured through output expenditure and full time equivalent (FTE) jobs supported.

An [evaluation report](#) of the Welsh Government Houses into Homes scheme (2015) undertaken by Sheffield Hallam University evidenced a large majority of redevelopments under the scheme involved a local contractor, suggesting that the majority of expenditure bringing empty properties back into use would remain in the local economy.

4.2 Public Sector including local government and other public bodies

Impact on the National Health Service (NHS)

Category 1 hazards are identified through the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS or the Rating System) which is a tool used to evaluate the potential risks to health and safety from any deficiencies identified in dwellings ([Housing Health and Safety Rating System Operating Guidance - February 2006 Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: London](#)).

The underlying principle of the HHSRS is that any residential premises should provide a safe and healthy environment for any potential occupier or visitor. To satisfy this principle, a dwelling should be designed, constructed and maintained with non-hazardous materials and should be free from both unnecessary and avoidable hazard.

According to research undertaken by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) on behalf of the BRE Trust ([2015 Briefing Report; The cost of poor housing to the NHS](#)), the cost of poor housing to the NHS (based on the first-year treatment costs to the NHS of leaving people in the poorest 15% of the housing stock in England) is £1.4 billion per annum.

When the definition is expanded to include all homes which have a significant HHSRS hazard, this figure rises to £2.0bn per annum, for England. This figure is estimated to equate to £2.5bn for the United Kingdom.

This is, in fact, expected to be higher as it does not account for minor hazards, however, it is clear that the continued raising of housing standards in both the existing and new housing stock will also accrue health benefits, which the NHS and society as a whole will benefit from.

According to [research](#) undertaken by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) on behalf of the BRE Trust (*2019 Briefing Report; The full cost of poor housing in Wales*), in 2017-18, there were an estimated 238,000 dwellings with a Category 1 hazard in Wales, or around 18 per cent of the total housing stock, with the most common hazards relating to falls in the home, and the consequences of living in cold housing.

At the time, the cost to reduce the hazards in these poor homes to an acceptable level is estimated to be £2,455 per home, on average - a total cost of £584 million for the whole stock. This however is likely to have increased due to the recent cost increases in labour and materials.

If remedial works were undertaken 'up-front' to mitigate these Category 1 hazards, it is estimated that there would be a benefit to the NHS of some £95 million per year.

Remedial works to mitigate Category 1 hazards would pay for themselves in reduced NHS costs within six years. The costs of improving cold homes are some of the most expensive, but also the most effective in reducing costs to the NHS.

These costs represent first year treatment costs to the NHS alone, following an accident or illness related to housing. The annual cost to the NHS represents around 10% of the full economic cost to society of leaving people in unhealthy housing in Wales, which is estimated at £1bn per year. The payback to society if remedial work were undertaken 'up-front' would be around six months

A breakdown of the common Category 1 hazards and the savings for each is provided in the table below:

Table 7: The costs, and benefits to the NHS, of reducing HHSRS Category 1 hazards to an acceptable level, Wales 2017-18.

Hazard	Total cost to mitigate hazard (£)	Savings to the NHS per annum if hazard mitigated (£)	Payback (years)
Excess cold	197,738,955	41,280,093	4.8
Falls on level surfaces	36,520,670	16,639,713	2.2
Falls associated with stairs and steps	103,926,228	15,967,003	6.5
Falls between levels	103,421,010	8,968,744	11.5
Damp and mould growth	48,622,769	3,028,167	16.1
Fire	25,723,000	3,608,665	7.1
Other (combined)	68,246,506	5,789,115	-
Totals	584,199,138*	95,281,500	6.1**

*This is the total number of category 1 hazards multiplied by the average cost to mitigate all such hazards. It assumes that all required remedial work is undertaken up front and so removes the double counting of costs where repair work/energy improvements mitigate more than one hazard

**Pay back years = Total cost to mitigate hazard/Total savings to the NHS

In summary, by removing category 1 hazards from empty properties and bringing them back into use, there would be a significant financial saving to the NHS.

Impact on local government and other public bodies

Aside from the cost savings to the NHS, the proposed scheme will provide an additional means by which local authorities can reduce the number of empty properties in their areas, whilst also increasing housing supply. This will further contribute to reducing issues such as homelessness as the increase in stock will have a knock-on effect on the housing supply chain, enabling more people access to affordable housing.

A number of local authorities have, however, highlighted a risk of lack of resource / staffing to administer the scheme and therefore this could potentially impact on the ability of the LAs to participate in the scheme, or have a knock-on effect on other schemes / priorities. This will be mitigated by regular dialogue between WG and the participating LAs, including exploring options on how the impacts could be reduced / removed.

The scheme has a positive impact on the delivery of public policy, such as planning policy and housing policy. It supports the delivery of homes needed to deliver against the estimates of future housing need, prepared by Welsh Government statisticians.

Some of the problems associated with empty homes will also require the local authority, the Police or the Fire Service to take actions that may not be recoverable from the property owner. Therefore, the reduction of empty properties will help to reduce this impact.

4.3 Third Sector

No impact other than potential benefits to those organisations who support low-income households due to the increase in wider supply of housing.

4.4 Justice Impact

No impact.

SECTION 5. WHAT WILL BE THE EFFECT ON ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING?

5.1 Natural Resources

5.1a How will the proposal deliver one or more of the National Priorities in the Natural Resources Policy (NRP)?

The Scheme will use existing resources, i.e., already built properties, to help deliver increase the supply of housing in communities.

5.1b Does the proposal help tackle the following national challenges and opportunities for the sustainable management of natural resources?

There is a requirement, as part of the scheme, for each successful applicant to make energy efficiency improvements to the property as part of the works.

5.2 Biodiversity

See annex E below.

5.3 Climate Change

Climate change has been identified as one of the biggest threats facing our future generations. We need to reduce our emissions through decarbonisation action (5.3a) and to adapt to the impacts of climate change by increasing our resilience (5.3b).

5.3a Decarbonisation

There is a requirement, as part of the scheme, for each successful applicant to make energy efficiency improvements to the property as part of the works.

Where applicable, this will also complement other existing funding schemes, such as the Welsh Government NEST scheme where individuals in receipt of certain means-tested benefits may be able to access free energy efficiency measures.

5.3 b Adaptation

How (either positively or negatively), and to what extent (significant/moderate/minimal impact), will the proposal affect ability to adapt to the effects of climate change?

Positive but minimal impact – see previous answer.

5.4 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

N/A. The scheme has no potential impact as it will be applicable to existing properties only.

5.5 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

N/A. The scheme has no potential impact as it will be applicable to existing properties only.

5.6 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

N/A. The scheme has no potential impact as it will be applicable to existing properties only.

SECTION 6. SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY WHAT WILL BE THE IMPACT ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE?

6.1 The Socio-economic Duty.

Although the scheme is not designed to support those who are socio-economically disadvantaged directly, it will increase the supply of housing in communities by bringing additional properties back into occupation, therefore freeing up properties that were previously in use to reduce the demand for social or rented homes to assist those most in need of safe, warm, secure, affordable housing.

In addition, where evidence of income tested benefit can be provided, we will consider the mandatory 15% applicant contribution to be waived for applicants in financial hardship.

Age related groups, income related groups, groups who experience discrimination and/or social disadvantage, and geographical groups will benefit from the Scheme as more accommodation is made available.

SECTION 7. RECORD OF FULL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS REQUIRED

Impact Assessment	Yes/No	If yes, see
Children's rights	No	
Equality	Yes*	Annex A
Socio-economic Duty	Yes	Annex D
Rural Proofing	No	
Health	No	
Privacy	Yes	Annex B
Welsh Language	Yes*	Annex C
Economic / RIA	No	
Justice	No	
Biodiversity	Yes*	Annex E
Climate Change	No	
Strategic Environmental Assessment	No	
Habitat Regulations Assessment	No	
Environmental Impact Assessment	No	

SECTION 8. CONCLUSION

(Please note that this section will be published)

8.1 How have people most likely to be affected by the proposal been involved in developing it?

A working group with local authorities from each region of Wales has been established to develop the scheme. This ensures that the scheme is developed to enable it to support local authorities to further reduce the number of empty properties in their areas. As part of the development, the Welsh language requirements were considered and documents to be provided to local authorities will be provided in both English and Welsh.

8.2 What are the most significant impacts, positive and negative?

The scheme is designed primarily to assist local authorities to further increase housing supply and home ownership opportunities for people in Wales by bringing more empty properties back into use. Bringing long-term empty properties back into use will help to increase the supply of housing and extend choice, improve housing conditions and meet housing need. Through the investment of the scheme, it is anticipated up to 2,000 homes will be brought back into use.

The scheme will not only benefit people who may not otherwise be able to access home ownership, but also supports the house building, repairs and maintenance industry, supply chains, economy and jobs.

A safe warm home has many benefits including playing an important role in ensuring occupants reach their full potential and have the opportunity to maintain good health. By improving the energy efficiency of the existing homes, the scheme will also help to ensure household bills for energy are minimised.

As referenced in the [research](#) undertaken by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) on behalf of the BRE Trust (2019 Briefing Report - The full cost of poor housing in Wales), in 2017-18, there were an estimated 238,000 dwellings with a Category 1 hazard in Wales, or around 18 per cent of the total housing stock, with the most common hazards relating to falls in the home, and the consequences of living in cold housing.

At the time, the cost to reduce the hazards in these poor homes to an acceptable level is estimated to be £2,455 per home, on average - a total cost of £584 million for the whole stock. This however is likely to have increased due to the recent cost increases in labour and materials.

If remedial works were undertaken 'up-front' to mitigate these Category 1 hazards, it is estimated that there would be a benefit to the NHS of some £95 million per year.

Therefore, by removing category 1 hazards from empty properties and bringing them back into use, there would also be a significant financial saving to the NHS.

In addition, the scheme will contribute to the reduction of housing cost induced poverty and will also help to address the mental and physical health issues associated with poor quality

housing and tackle inequalities and poor life chances associated with living in insecure, poor-quality accommodation. A secure, affordable, home has significant benefits for well-being and quality of life more generally.

Evidence from the [evaluation report](#) of the Welsh Government Houses into Homes scheme (2015) undertaken by Sheffield Hallam University also would suggest the following benefits will be realised to the wider policy area:

- provide an uplift in wider empty homes activities;
- help promote a greater dialogue between local authorities and owners of empty properties;
- help develop new partnerships with departments within local authorities, promoting better inter-departmental working around empty homes within local authorities in their region.
- help local authorities address strategic priorities in other policy areas including regeneration, neighbourhood renewal, public health, homelessness, affordable housing, housing needs, and training and employment.

8.3 In light of the impacts identified, how will the proposal:

- **maximise contribution to our well-being objectives and the seven well-being goals; and/or,**
- **avoid, reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?**

The scheme works towards the 7 goals and 5 sustainable development ways of working as set out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 by contributing towards a healthy and more equal Wales. This is demonstrated by the clear health benefits of having a good quality home which is affordable and located in a safe environment. Investing in housing supply contributes to local economies, creating and supporting jobs and training opportunities as well as improving people's health, wellbeing and quality of life.

The scheme will be run by a local authority who will have their own systems in place for avoiding, reducing or mitigating any negative impacts. Welsh Government will provide guidance to this effect.

8.4 How will the impact of the proposal be monitored and evaluated as it progresses and when it concludes?

There will be regular monitoring of scheme progress and updates will be provided on a quarterly basis to a monitoring board which will be established. Data provided from these will be compared to the national data on the number of empty properties. All information will be collated to provide an annual evaluation of the ongoing success of the scheme.

SECTION 9. DECLARATION

Declaration

I am satisfied that the impact of the proposed action has been adequately assessed and recorded.

Name of Senior Responsible Officer / Deputy Director:
Stuart Fitzgerald, Deputy Director, Homes & Places Division

Department:
Housing and Regeneration, EPS

Date:
30 January 2023

FULL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

A. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1. Describe and explain the impact of the proposal on people with protected characteristics as described in the Equality Act 2010.

Housing plays a fundamental role in everyone's life. Homes and the communities in which they are located directly influence our access to key social and economic opportunities and they affect our wellbeing.

According to the 2021 [report](#) Implementing the Socio-economic Duty A review of evidence on socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome, socio-economic disadvantage can result in long-term inequalities of outcome, including a greater chance of living in less than adequate housing

The National Empty Homes Grant Scheme has been developed to address the need to support individuals and families who would like to purchase / move into an existing home but need financial assistance to bring the property up to a liveable standard.

In January 2019 the Welsh Government published updated estimates of housing need and demand. These estimates were produced independently by Welsh Government statisticians under the principles of the Code of Practice for Statistics and were informed by a stakeholder group including representatives from Welsh local authorities and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA).

It is estimated that on average, between 6,700 and 9,700 additional housing units will be required annually in Wales during 2018-19 to 2022-23, with a central estimate of 8,300. This will address newly arising households as well as those households who are in existing need. In June we have published additional information on housing need by tenure. Under the central estimate, an average of approximately 4,400 market housing units and 3,900 affordable housing units would be required each year from 2018/19 to 2022/23.

These estimates suggest that on average, under the central estimates, 53% of additional housing units should be market housing with the remaining 47% affordable housing (intermediate rent or social) throughout 2018/19 to 2022/23.

By bringing more existing, empty properties back in use, the scheme will boost the supply of housing in the market sector, which in turn can take some stress off the Private Rented Sector and the social rented sector.

Record of Impacts by protected characteristic:

It is considered that the programme will have only positive impacts on protected groups and on community cohesion by providing additional affordable and market housing opportunities.

Protected characteristic or group	What are the positive or negative impacts of the proposal?	Reasons for your decision (including evidence)	How will you mitigate Impacts?
Age (think about different age groups)	All individuals accommodated under the scheme will be positively impacted, but there may be a higher positive impact on children and older people as research suggests they are most effected by poor living conditions in terms of negative impacts on their health.	<p>Good quality housing, providing a safe, warm and secure home, is essential for children and adults of all ages.</p> <p>Whilst the scheme is not specifically aimed at particular age group, the overall benefits of the scheme could positively impact on anyone, through the removal of category 1 hazards from the home and therefore the health benefits that are related to this.</p> <p>According to the 2021 report Implementing the Socio-economic Duty A review of evidence on socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome, the evidence suggests that damp housing is strongly associated with ill-health in children – with aches and pains, respiratory problems, diarrhoea and headaches more common amongst children in damp housing. Similarly, children in homes with visible mould have been shown to suffer more vomiting and sore throats.</p> <p>Adults in damp and mouldy housing are also more likely to experience nausea, vomiting, blocked nose, breathlessness, backache, fainting and poor nerves, so any improvements to Social Housing will be beneficial to the adult population living there.</p>	N/A

		<p>Frailer older people tend to live in less fit accommodation and have high rates of multiple morbidities/ chronic illnesses which are associated with frequent hospital admissions putting them further at risk. Reducing these admissions is a critical part of the better management of chronic conditions and unscheduled care.</p>	
Disability (think about different types of disability)	<p>Disabled tenants will be positively impacted by the ability, through undertaking the improvements to the home, to enable the internal lay out of a home to be amended to meet the needs of an applicant.</p>	<p>Good quality housing can provide a positive impact by providing a warm, safe, secure environment, improvements in family life and offers increased independence, confidence and self-reliance among people with disabilities.</p> <p>Although the scheme is not specifically aimed at this group, the overall benefits of the scheme could positively impact on anyone from this group through the additional opportunities to secure warm, safe and secure housing and tailoring of homes to meet need.</p> <p>Disabled people are more likely to be living in the most deprived areas of Wales than the least deprived.</p> <p>A higher proportion of people with an impairment or health condition live in the most deprived (31%) than in the least deprived (17%) areas of Wales.</p> <p>According to a report by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, In 2015, around 25 per cent of the population of</p>	N/A

		<p>Wales were disabled according to the Equality Act 2010 definition. This figure was similar for males and females.</p> <p>In addition, a study carried out by Shelter in 2006 suggested that children in bad housing conditions, including cold homes, are more likely to have mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression, to contract meningitis, have respiratory problems, experience long-term ill health and disability, experience slow physical growth and have delayed cognitive development.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/welsh-health-survey-annual-report-2013</p>	
Gender Reassignment (the act of transitioning and Transgender people)	Neither positive nor negative impacts	We have been unable to find evidence to determine what the impact will be.	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	Neither positive nor negative impacts	Whilst the Programme is not specifically aimed at any new or expectant mothers, there will be obvious health impacts on pregnant women and their unborn children or women with young children with improving the quality of the home.	N/A
Race (include different ethnic minorities, Gypsies and Travellers and Migrants, Asylum seekers and Refugees)	Neither positive nor negative impacts	We have been unable to find evidence to determine what the impact will be.	N/A

Religion, belief and non-belief	Neither positive nor negative impacts	We have been unable to find evidence to determine what the impact will be.	N/A
Sex / Gender	Neither positive nor negative impacts	We have been unable to find evidence to determine what the impact will be.	N/A
Sexual orientation (Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual)	Neither positive nor negative impacts	We have been unable to find evidence to determine what the impact will be.	N/A
Marriage and civil partnership	Neither positive nor negative impacts	We have been unable to find evidence to determine what the impact will be.	N/A
Children and young people up to the age of 18	Positive in that many families with children have been able to access to opportunities to secure warm, safe and secure housing and tailoring of homes to meet need	<p>Good quality housing, providing a safe, warm and secure home, is essential for children and adults of all ages.</p> <p>Whilst the scheme is not specifically aimed at a particular age group, the overall benefits of the scheme could positively impact on anyone, through the removal of category 1 hazards from the home and therefore the health benefits that are related to this.</p> <p>The evidence suggests that damp housing is strongly associated with ill-health in children – with aches and pains, respiratory problems, diarrhoea and headaches more common amongst children in damp housing. Similarly, children in homes with visible mould have been shown to suffer more vomiting and sore throats.</p> <p>According to a report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Child poverty and unequal educational opportunities have been linked, as children who</p>	N/A

		experience disadvantages growing up (e.g. children in poorer families, who live in more deprived areas, or live in inadequate housing) are less likely to gain qualifications in school and have worse educational performance and prospects.	
Low-income households	An increase in the supply of market housing will lead, indirectly, to greater availability of homes in the Private Rented Sector and Social homes.	Improving existing homes to ensure that the most vulnerable can live in warm, decent, affordable homes that meet their needs. This in turn reduces potential impacts on health and social care provision, allows children to fulfil their potential and creates local jobs and training opportunities.	N/A

Human Rights and UN Conventions

Do you think that this policy will have a positive or negative impact on people's human rights? (Please refer to point 1.4 of the EIA Guidance for further information about Human Rights and the UN Conventions).

Human Rights	What are the positive or negative impacts of the proposal?	Reasons for your decision (including evidence)	How will you mitigate negative impacts?
<p>Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world, from birth until death.</p> <p>They are based on shared values like dignity, fairness, equality, respect and independence.</p> <p>The Human Rights Act 1998 sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to.</p>	<p>The proposal has positive impacts as good quality housing, providing a safe, warm and secure home, is essential for children, families and adults of all ages.</p> <p>A good quality home enables children and young people to</p>	<p>Good quality housing, providing a safe, warm and secure home, is essential for children and adults of all ages.</p> <p>Whilst the scheme is not specifically aimed at a particular age group, the overall benefits of the scheme could positively impact on</p>	N/A

<p>The following Articles will have most relevance in this area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 8 - Respect for family and private life • Protocol 1 article 1 - The right to peaceful enjoyment of your property 	<p>flourish and achieve their potential.</p>	<p>anyone, through the removal of category 1 hazards from the home and therefore the health benefits that are related to this.</p>	
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B. DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING

Please send your assessment to the Information Rights Unit
 (DataProtectionQueries@gov.wales) copied to your Information Asset Owner.
 Confirmed by Colin Chapman

Title of proposal – National Empty Homes Grant Scheme	
Name of Information Asset Owner – Colin Chapman	
PIA reference number (A unique number to identify this PIA such as DivDate or this document's ishare id) – H&PDEC22	
Please describe your proposal:	
<p>(i) Welsh Government are launching the national rollout of an empty homes scheme that provide grant funding to owner occupiers to bring properties back into use by removing HHSRS category 1 hazards from the home.</p> <p>(ii) In addition to the grant incentives above, local authorities will be able to claim for costs that the local authority incurs as a result of undertaking the necessary checks / visits to consider the works required.</p> <p>(iii) The local authority will have control of all data relating to both the property and its owner(s). Any personal data will not be shared with any 3rd parties, including Welsh Government.</p> <p>(iv) Through the scheme, Welsh Government will be monitoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of empty homes brought back into use as part of the scheme, • Type of works delivered through the scheme; • Energy efficiency improvements as a result of the works; • Number of defaults, • Number of grants issued. <p>(v) None of the above will involve Welsh Government receiving or processing personal data.</p> <p>(vi) The proposal will not involve the development of new legislation/measures that will require the processing of personal data by Welsh Government or any other parties.</p>	
Has data protection impact screening or assessment already been carried out?	
<p>It is considered that WG are not determining the means or nature of the processing of any personal data associated with the allocation of funds. This would be determined by RCT in their discussions with LAs who engage with the scheme. This would mean that RCT are Data Controller for personal data processed in the delivery of this Grant.</p>	
Does the proposal involve the processing of personal data by Welsh Government or any other parties? No	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No: there is no need to complete the remainder of this form. Please return it to DataProtectionQueries@gov.wales, copied to your Information Asset Owner 	
Personal	
Name	Telephone numbers

Name address Business address Postcode Email address	Date of birth Driving licence number Passport / ID card number Photographs / images (which could be used to identify an individual) Other (please specify)
Special Category	
Racial / ethnic origin Political opinions Religious / philosophical beliefs Trade union membership Physical / mental health conditions Sexual life Sexual orientation Criminal & court records (inc. alleged offences)	Biometric data e.g., DNA, fingerprints
If special category personal data is being processed, is this data being collected mandatorily (i.e., without the data subjects having an option to not provide it)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No 	
Do any of the data subjects whose personal data will be processed fall into the following categories? Children (under the age of 12) Patients Asylum Seekers Welsh Government employees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No 	
Please give an indication of the scale of the processing (e.g., pan-Wales, targeted group) Details: Pan-Wales	
For the personal data being processed, please indicate	
Who the data controller is?	Details: Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC
Any data processors?	Details: Local Authorities
Will the data be shared?	Details: Yes – between RCT & LAs
What is the statutory basis for processing the data? NB – GDPR itself does <u>not</u> provide a statutory legal basis to process personal data. N/A	
Have legal Services confirmed that the basis outlined above provides the necessary statutory gateway for processing (including any proposed sharing)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	
Will the proposal involve new or significantly changed processing of personal data about each individual? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	
Will the personal data be consolidated, linked or matched with data from other sources?	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
<p>Will the personal data be used for automated decision making?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
<p>Will the personal data result in systematic monitoring of data subjects?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
<p>Does the proposal involve new or changed data collection, retention or sharing policies/practices for personal data?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
<p>Do you have a clear retention policy and what practical things are in place for you to ensure that your Retention Policy is applied?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
<p>Will the proposal involve the introduction of privacy-intrusive technologies such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart cards • RFID tags • Biometrics • Visual surveillance (e.g., CCTV) • Digital image and video recording • Profiling, data mining or logging electronic traffic • Locator technologies (e.g., GPS, mobile phone tracking) • Other (please provide details) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
<p>Will the proposal involve new or changed identity management or authentication processes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
<p>Will the proposal have the effect of enabling identification of individuals who were previously anonymous?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

Please send your assessment to the Information Rights Unit
(DataProtectionQueries@gov.wales) copied to your Information Asset Owner.
For completion by Information Rights Unit

<p>Is a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) required for this proposal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No
<p>Has advice on General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliance been provided?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes
<p>Does the proposal require a Privacy Notice to be drafted?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No
<p>Does the proposal require consultation with the ICO under GDPR Art 36(4)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No

Does the proposal require a contract between Welsh Government as data controller and a third-party processor?

- No

Does the proposal require a data sharing agreement to be drafted?

- No

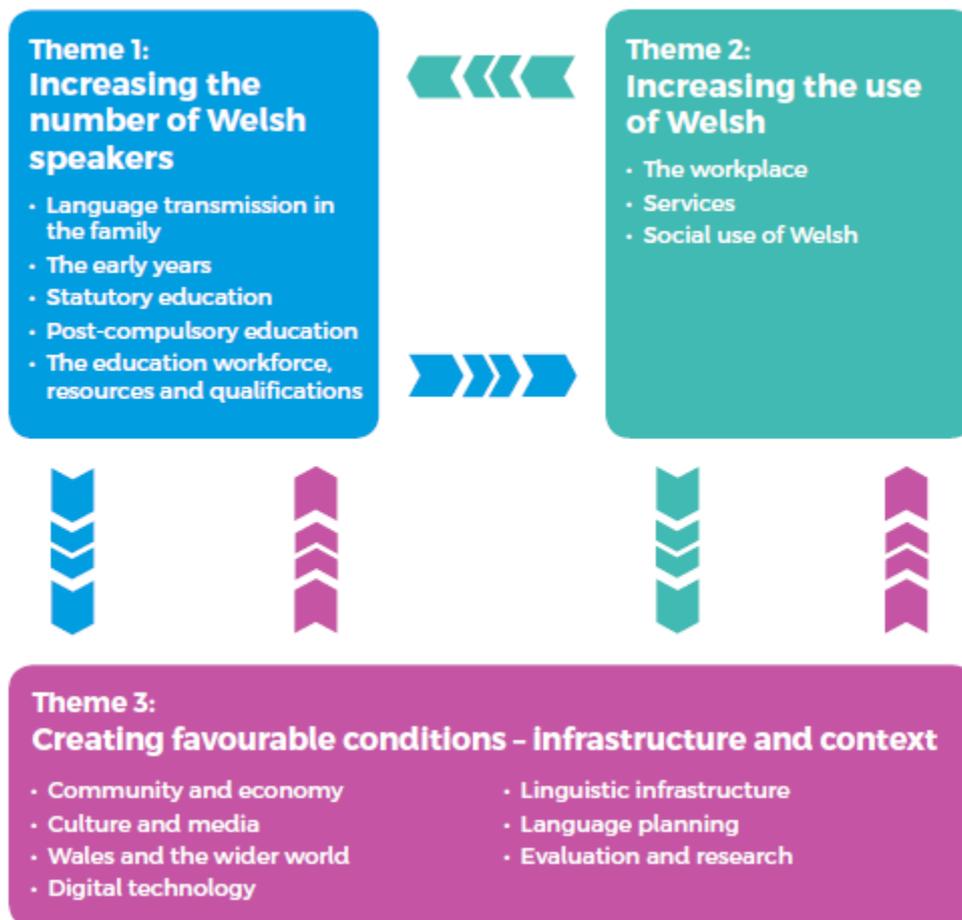
C. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Cymraeg 2050 is our national strategy for increasing the number of Welsh speakers to a million by 2050.

The Welsh Government is fully committed to the new strategy, with the target of a million speakers. A thriving Welsh language is also included in one of the 7 well-being goals in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

We also have a statutory obligation to fully consider the effects of our work on the Welsh Language. This means that any Welsh Government policy should consider how our policies affect the language and those who speak it.

The *Cymraeg 2050* strategy has three themes:



The headings under each theme outline the scope of activities that can affect the language.

As a general rule, if your policy has the potential to impact on people, it will impact in some way on Welsh speakers and therefore on the Welsh language.

1. Welsh Language Impact Assessment reference number (completed by the Welsh Language Standards Team, email: Safonau.Standards@gov.wales): **02/11/2022**
2. Does the proposal demonstrate a clear link with the Welsh Government's strategy for the Welsh language? – *Cymraeg 2050 A million Welsh speakers* and the related Work Programme for 2017-2021?

Yes, this proposal has a direct link with the Welsh Government's strategy for the Welsh language by providing support for individuals to live within their local communities. The proposal links closely with Theme 3 of the Cymraeg 2050 strategy, by creating favourable conditions in ensuring the sustainability of communities and the Welsh language by providing homes that will enable people to stay in their local communities. Many Welsh speaking communities are located in rural and coastal communities where the availability of housing is a problem. This scheme will support housing supply by bringing more properties back into use.

The proposed scheme will be delivered by a local authority on behalf of WG and despite their own requirements to meet Welsh Language Standards including the need to prepare a plan to promote the Welsh language, it will be a requirement of the grant that certain standards are met, including providing a bilingual service and producing all documentation / marketing in both Welsh and English. Compliance with Welsh language standards is monitored by the Welsh language Commissioner.

In some parts of Wales, including Welsh speaking communities, people can encounter difficulties in finding an affordable home due to high house prices. It has been suggested this can be to the detriment of the Welsh language. Ensuring there is adequate availability of affordable housing for local people in their communities is particularly important way of helping rural Welsh speaking communities to continue to exist and thrive.

3. Describe and explain the impact of the proposal on the Welsh language and explain how you will address these impacts, in order to improve outcomes for the Welsh language. How will the proposal affect Welsh speakers of all ages (both positive and/or adverse effects)? You should note your responses to the following in your answer to this question, along with any other relevant information:
- ◆ How will the proposal affect the sustainability of Welsh speaking communities¹ (both positive and/or adverse effects)?
This will have a positive effect on Welsh speaking communities as it will increase the supply of housing for all, especially local people which in many communities include a high proportion of Welsh speakers. This proposal has the potential to help people stay or return to the communities they were brought up. The consultation on the draft Welsh language Community Housing Plan received nearly 800 responses. Many of the responses were concerned of the possible effects second homes and empty properties can have on the long-term sustainability of communities and the Welsh language. With some responses advocating that empty properties do not contribute or benefit communities.
 - ◆ How will the proposal affect Welsh medium education and Welsh learners of all ages, including adults (both positive and/or adverse effects)?
See previous answer/as above.

¹ These can be close-knit rural communities, dispersed social networks in urban settings, and in virtual communities reaching across geographical spaces.

- ◆ How will the proposal affect services² available in Welsh (both positive and/or adverse effects)? (e.g., health and social services, transport, housing, digital, youth, infrastructure, environment, local government etc.)
See previous answer/see above – should be positive and local authorities must meet their Welsh language statutory duties.
- ◆ How will you ensure that people know about services that are available in Welsh and are able to access and use them as easily as they can in English? What evidence / data have you used to inform your assessment, including evidence from Welsh speakers or Welsh language interest groups?
Legal documents and guidance will be provided in English and Welsh to the participating local authorities and the Welsh Government will ensure that its own standards are complied with when dealing with local authorities / producing its own marketing content for the scheme.
- ◆ What other evidence would help you to conduct a better assessment?
N/A
- ◆ How will you know if your policy is a success?
We will undertake regular monitoring of the scheme, within which we will seek to understand how the proposal has supported the Welsh language.

² The Welsh Language Strategy aims to increase the range of services offered to Welsh speakers, and to see an increase in use of Welsh-language services.

D. SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY ASSESSMENT

Undertaking the impact assessment

What evidence has been considered to understand how the proposal contributes to inequalities of outcome experience as a result of socio-economic disadvantage?

Although predominantly aimed at the owner occupier market, the proposed scheme will increase the supply of housing in communities by bringing additional properties back into occupation, therefore freeing up properties that were previously in use to reduce the demand for social or rented homes. This impact will have a positive impact on individuals and families, but the impact is likely to be moderate to minimal as there is a huge demand for social and rented housing in Wales.

Improving existing homes ensures that the most vulnerable can live in warm, decent, affordable homes that meet their needs. This in turn reduces potential impacts on health and social care provision, allows children to fulfil their potential and creates local jobs and training opportunities.

As supported by the 2019 Welsh Government 'Welsh Housing Conditions Survey 2017-18: Energy Efficiency of Dwellings', Wales has older housing stock in comparison to the rest of the UK and therefore has a higher proportion of poor-quality housing.

The scheme is designed to help those who are potentially more vulnerable and/or disadvantaged, including socio-economically disadvantaged, to access affordable, secure and suitable accommodation.

Have protected characteristics been considered?

Yes – see Equalities IA above.

Have communities of interest and places interest been considered. (Refer to page 8 in the statutory [guidance](#)).

Age related groups, income related groups, groups who experience discrimination or other social disadvantage, and geographical groups will benefit from the Scheme as more accommodation is made available. See also Equalities IA above.

What information has been considered regarding future trends?

The latest statistical data published by the WG on Estimate of Housing Need was published in August 2020 and provides estimates of future housing need. The shortage of housing at all levels is impacting on low-income households looking for affordable accommodation of a suitable standard.

What data has been considered (National and local)

See evidence throughout the IIA.

According to [research](#) by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the number of people in “housing cost-induced poverty” – those who are not living in poverty/socio-economic disadvantage before housing costs are taken into account and are living in poverty once housing costs are considered - has increased over the past two decades. The shortage of housing at all levels is impacting on low-income households looking for affordable accommodation of a suitable standard.

Provide a summary of evidence and links

See evidence throughout the IIA and above evidence in this section.

How could the proposal potentially further exacerbate inequality of outcome experienced as a result of socio-economic disadvantage?

Please provide detail regarding inequalities of outcome likely to be impacted and those people and communities likely to be impacted

It is not expected the scheme will exacerbate inequalities of outcome as a result of socio-economic disadvantage. The scheme aims to address concerns around housing cost induced poverty, including communities where families and young people are priced out of affordable home ownership. It also addresses the mental and physical health issues associated with poor quality housing and tackles inequalities and poor life chances associated with living in insecure, poor-quality accommodation.

Provide a summary of evidence and links

N/A

How could the decision potentially improve outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage?

Please provide detail regarding outcomes that will be improved and for who.

According to the 2021 [report](#) Implementing the Socio-economic Duty A review of evidence on socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome, evidence suggests that living in inadequate housing affects mental and physical health. The scheme is designed to reduce inequalities of income by enabling low income and economically disadvantaged people access to affordable, quality, secure accommodation.

Provide a summary of evidence and links

N/A

How will you monitor the impact of this decision? (Please consider wider outcomes)

We will undertake regular monitoring of the scheme from the outset and reported on periodically throughout the lifespan of the scheme.

Provide a summary of evidence and links

N/A

E. BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales contains six objectives to reverse the decline of biodiversity which should be used to assess the impacts on biodiversity. They can also help develop and guide actions to comply with the S6 duty. They have been simplified as a set of questions to guide you through the impact assessment.

These questions should be considered whether your proposal has a land management element or not, although some will be particularly relevant if your policy area relates to land management in any way.

You should take a pro-active approach to considering the potential impacts on biodiversity – this is one area where unintended consequences are often overlooked, either through lack of awareness, or because it is difficult to assign a monetary value to biodiversity. Moreover, the duty requires that we positively seek opportunities to maintain and enhance biodiversity, both directly (where the intervention involves land management or construction), and indirectly (for example, where there may be an opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity). In completing this assessment consider how enhancing biodiversity and promoting resilience of ecosystems contribute reciprocally to the aims of your policy or project.

You will need to record decisions and impacts arising from this assessment. Please note how you have answered each question, or you can use the template at the end of the assessment. Further guidance is available on the intranet.

Consider Questions 1 - 9 for ALL policies:

Embedding biodiversity

1. How will your proposal integrate biodiversity into decision making?

The Scheme will use existing resources, i.e., already built properties, to help deliver increase the supply of housing in communities and therefore consideration of biodiversity is limited.

2. Has your proposal ensured biodiversity is accounted for in business decisions?

The Scheme will use existing resources, i.e., already built properties, to help deliver increase the supply of housing in communities and therefore consideration of biodiversity is limited.

3. How does your proposal improve understanding and raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity, encouraging others to act?

N/A

Improving our evidence, understanding and monitoring

4. Have you used the best available evidence of biodiversity to inform your proposal and this assessment?

N/A

5. Have you used up to date knowledge of the key impacts on biodiversity to make evidence-based decisions?

N/A

6. Can your proposal contribute to our body of knowledge for biodiversity?

No

Governance and support for delivery of biodiversity action

7. Can your proposal support biodiversity action in any way?

No

8. Can your proposal help to build capacity for biodiversity action?

No

9. Have you recorded decisions and actions to maintain and enhance biodiversity?

None

If your proposal concerns construction or management of land and/or sea, please also consider Questions 10 – 16:

N/A

