

# Empty Property Strategy Consultation 2018/19

## Introduction

This survey will take around 10 minutes to complete.

### GDPR - Privacy Notice

Information provided by you on this form will be used to inform the Empty Property Strategy 2019-2023.

The council will take all reasonable precautions to ensure confidentiality and to comply with data protection legislation. Your information may be shared with the Housing Team for the purposes of informing the Empty Property Strategy 2019-2023. Your information will be retained in accordance with the council's Data Retention Policy.

You have a number of rights under data protection legislation. You may also withdraw your consent and ask us to delete your personal information at any time by contacting us. Further information about this is available on our website or you may contact the Data Protection Officer.

If you are dissatisfied with the manner in which we process your personal data then you have the option to make a complaint to the Data Protection Officer and the Information Commissioner's Office.

## Background

The Empty Property Strategy was developed to:

- Outline an approach to identify, prioritise and reduce empty private sector residential properties across the county borough and help contribute towards increasing the availability of housing for sale or for rent.
- Adopt an approach that seeks to work cooperatively with owners to bring their empty properties back into use.
- Consider the use of legislative powers where properties continue to remain empty and are in a state of disrepair, are detrimental or a nuisance to the community.

It is considered that a well-balanced Empty Property strategy can deliver the following benefits:

- Creating rental or sale income, rather than properties being wasted assets
- Increasing property values
- Reducing vandalism, arson or squatting, and the fear of crime
- Enhancing town centres' viability and vitality
- Creating an increased sense of community
- Boosting the supply of good quality affordable housing
- Supporting strong, balanced housing markets and community sustainability
- Improving the local environment
- Creating training and job opportunities e.g. local builders carrying out the works
- Increasing council tax revenues so the council can provide a better service

### **Approach to identify and prioritise empty properties**

The council uses an objective scoring mechanism, initially based on desktop information held by services with the council, to prioritise the empty properties it will focus on. The two key determinations are the impact the property has on the community and the location of the property.

The priority list will be reviewed regularly and as appropriate, properties will be added or removed. The scoring mechanism enables a blended approach to the prioritisation of the properties where some are more problematic than others.

The criteria, which is in no particular order is explained in detail in the strategy.

- o If the property is a nuisance
- o If complaints have been received
- o If the property is in an area of high housing need
- o If the property is in disrepair
- o If the property is detrimental to the local community
- o If the property is in the town centre or outskirts
- o If there is debt owed to the council
- o The length of time empty

- Carry out an exercise to confirm that empty property data is accurate and confirm that properties are empty.
- Develop and maintain a database of empty properties using council tax data and other sources of information.
- Develop a referral mechanism for services within the council to consistently provide information about empty properties to inform prioritisation on the empty property database

### **Approach to provide help and assistance to owners**

- Survey owners to establish why properties are empty to inform the strategy going forward.
- Make contact with owners of empty properties via a regular mailshot to advise them of the help and assistance available.
- Review the assistance provided via the Private Sector Renewal & Disabled Adaptations Policy e.g. grants and loans, to ensure it is relevant and fit for purpose.

### **Approach to ensure effective communication is undertaken**

- Develop a confidential online reporting service so people are able to report an empty property and associated issues.
- Develop an empty property web page to communicate the help and assistance available to owners e.g. grants and loans.
- Identify and share success stories via the empty property web page and via social media.

### **Approach to Work closely with internal and external partners**

- Collaborate as an Empty Property Working Group to ensure a coordinated approach to tackling empty properties.
- Develop new initiatives with external partners to offer to empty property owners.

Participate in conferences and training events to share best practice and improve knowledge

### **Consider the use of enforcement action**

- Explore options for increasing the council tax premium on properties empty for two years or longer.

Consider the use of possible enforcement action open to the council and take enforcement action where appropriate.

- Consider the use of enforced sales, Empty Dwelling Management Orders and Compulsory Purchase Orders.

## Survey questions

Are you a resident of Bridgend county borough?

- Yes
- No

Where in Wales do you live?

- |                                       |   |  |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Blaenau Gwent   | <input type="radio"/> Gwynedd           | <input type="radio"/> Rhondda Cynon Taf                    |
| <input type="radio"/> Caerphilly      | <input type="radio"/> Isle of Anglesey  | <input type="radio"/> Swansea                              |
| <input type="radio"/> Cardiff         | <input type="radio"/> Merthyr Tydfil    | <input type="radio"/> Torfaen                              |
| <input type="radio"/> Carmarthenshire | <input type="radio"/> Monmouthshire     | <input type="radio"/> Vale of Glamorgan                    |
| <input type="radio"/> Ceredigion      | <input type="radio"/> Neath Port Talbot | <input type="radio"/> Wrexham                              |
| <input type="radio"/> Conwy           | <input type="radio"/> Newport           | <input type="radio"/> Other (please type in the box below) |
| <input type="radio"/> Denbighshire    | <input type="radio"/> Pembrokeshire     |  |
| <input type="radio"/> Flintshire      | <input type="radio"/> Powys             |  |

Other

Are you an owner of an empty property in Bridgend county borough?

- Yes
- No

Is the strategy written in plain language that is clear and easy to understand?

- Yes
- No

No - Please tell us why

Does the strategy clearly explain why empty properties are a priority for the council?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Please tell us why

Are the aims and objectives the most relevant?

- Yes
- No

No - Please tell us why

Is the council approach to identifying and prioritising empty properties appropriate?

- Yes
- No

No - Please tell us why

Is the approach for providing help and assistance to owners appropriate?

- Yes
- No

No – Please tell us why

Is the planned approach to ensure effective communication with owners and the public appropriate?

- Yes
- No

No - Please tell us why

Do you agree that working closely with internal and external partners is needed to deliver the strategy?

- Yes
- No

No - Please tell us why

Is the use of enforcement action appropriate to deliver the strategy?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Please tell us why

Is there anything missing from the strategy that you would like to see included?

- Yes
- No

Yes - Please tell us what you think should be included:

Please use the space to provide any further comments on this strategy:

Would you like to be emailed once the consultation report is available?

- Yes
- No

If you have answered 'yes' please provide your email address below:

## Equalities monitoring

In order to help us ensure that we are providing services fairly to everyone who needs them, we would be grateful if you could answer a few more questions about yourself.

The information you supply will be kept confidentially and will only be used for the purposes of equalities monitoring.

Completion of these questions is not required as part of the questionnaire. You do not have to answer any of the questions if you do not wish to do so.

Alternatively, you can choose to answer some and not others by selecting the 'prefer not to say' options.

Are you happy to answer a few more questions about yourself?

- yes
- No

**Please select your age category.** Please select one option only.

- Under 18
- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 - 74
- 75+
- Prefer not to say

**Do you consider yourself to be disabled?** Please select one option only.

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Please type in the box below

**How would you describe your nationality?** Please select one option only.

- Welsh
- English
- Scottish
- Northern Irish
- British
- Other (please type in the box below)
- Prefer not to say



**What is your ethnic group?** Please select one option only.

- White
- Mixed / multiple ethnic groups
- Asian or Asian British
- Black / African / Caribbean / black British
- Other ethnic group (please type in the box below)
- Prefer not to say

**What is your religion or belief?** Please select one option only.

- No religion
- Christian
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Other (please type in the box below)
- Prefer not to say

**What is your gender?** Please select one option only.

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Prefer not to say

**Are you pregnant?** Please select one option only.

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

**Have you given birth within the past 26 weeks?** Please select one option only.

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

**What is your sexual orientation?** Please select one option only.

- Heterosexual / straight
- Gay man
- Gay woman / lesbian
- Bisexual
- Other
- Prefer not to say

**What is your marital status?** Please select one option only.

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Single          | <input type="radio"/> Divorced          |
| <input type="radio"/> Partnered       | <input type="radio"/> Widowed           |
| <input type="radio"/> Married         | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="radio"/> Civil partnered |   |

**Are you able to...**

Please select one option per row.

	Not at all	A little	Fairly well	Fluently	Prefer not to say
Speak Welsh?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
read Welsh?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
write Welsh?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Thank you**