



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

**COFNOD O BENDERFYNIAD WEDI'I DDIRPRWYO GAN SWYDDOG**  
**RECORD OF DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION**

**Penderfyniad Allweddol | Key Decision** ✓

**PWNC | SUBJECT:**

Housing Strategy And Investment: RCT To Lead On The Valleys Taskforce Empty Homes Scheme

**DIBEN YR ADRODDIAD | PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:**

This report has been prepared to accompany the intended officer decision of the Director of Prosperity and Development as described below.


This report provides details on:

- Proposal for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCT) to act as Lead Authority for the Valleys Taskforce Empty Homes Scheme.

**PENDERFYNIAD WEDI'I DDIRPRWYO | DELEGATED DECISION:**

It is agreed that:

- RCT act as Lead Body for the Valleys Taskforce Empty Homes Scheme as requested by the Valleys Taskforce members and the additional costs incurred by RCT in this role shall be top sliced from the total grant.
- A Service Level Agreement be entered into between the Valleys Taskforce local authorities to govern the Valleys Taskforce Empty Homes Scheme.

  
**Llofnod y Prif Swyddog**  
Chief Officer Signature

**NIGEL WHEELER**  
**Enw (priflythrennau)**  
Name (Print Name)

**03/10/19**  
**Dyddiad**  
Date

Mae'r penderfyniad yn cael ei wneud yn unol ag Adran 15 o Ddeddf Llywodraeth Leol 2000 (Swyddogaethau'r Corff Gweithredol) ac yn y cylch gorchwyl sy wedi'i nodi yn Adran 5 o Ran 3 o Gyfansoddiad y Cyngor.

The decision is taken in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government Act, 2000 (Executive Functions) and in the terms set out in Section 5 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.

**YMGYNGHORI | CONSULTATION**



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3/10/19.

**LLOFNOD YR AELOD YMGYNGHOROL O'R CABINET**  
**CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE**

**DYDDIAD | DATE**

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**LLOFNOD SWYDDOG YMGYNGHOROL**  
**CONSULTEE OFFICER SIGNATURE**

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**DYDDIAD | DATE**

DYDDIADAU CYHOEDDI A GWEITHREDU | PUBLICATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATES

CYHOEDDI | PUBLICATION

Cyhoeddi ar Wefan y Cyngor | Publication on the Councils Website: 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2019.

DYDDIAD | DATE

GWEITHREDU'R PENDERFYNIAD | IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

**Nodwch:** Fydd y penderfyniad hwn ddim yn dod i rym nac yn cael ei weithredu'n llawn nes cyn pen 3 diwrnod gwaith ar ôl ei gyhoeddi. Nod hyn yw ei alluogi i gael ei "Alw i Mewn" yn unol â Rheol 17.1, Rheolau Gweithdrefn Trosolwg a Chraffu.

**Note:** This decision will not come into force and may not be implemented until the expiry of 3 clear working days after its publication to enable it to be the subject to the Call-In Procedure in Rule 17.1 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

Yn amodol ar y drefn "Galw i Mewn", caiff y penderfyniad ei roi ar waith ar / Subject to Call In the implementation date will be

9<sup>th</sup> October 2019

DYDDIAD / DATE

WEDI'I GYMERADWYO I'W GYHOEDDI: ✓ | APPROVED FOR PUBLICATION : ✓

**RHEOLAU'R WEITHDREFN GALW-I-MEWN | CALL IN PROCEDURE RULES.**

**A YW'R PENDERFYNIAD YN UN BRYD A HEB FOD YN DESTUN PROSES GALW-I-MEWN GAN Y PWYLLGOR TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU?:**

**IS THE DECISION DEEMED URGENT AND NOT SUBJECT TO CALL-IN BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:**

**YDY | YES      NAC YDY | NO**

**Rheswm dros fod yn fater brys | Reason for Urgency:**

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***Os yw'n cael ei ystyried yn fater brys - llofnod y Llywydd, y Dirprwy Lywydd neu Bennaeth y Gwasanaeth Cyflogedig yn cadarnhau cytundeb fod y penderfyniad arfaethedig yn rhesymol yn yr holl amgylchiadau iddo gael ei drin fel mater brys, yn unol â rheol gweithdrefn trosolwg a chraffu 17.2:***

***If deemed urgent - signature of Presiding Member or Deputy Presiding Member or Head of Paid Service confirming agreement that the proposed decision is reasonable in all the circumstances for it being treated as a matter of urgency, in accordance with the overview and scrutiny procedure rule 17.2:***

.....  
**(Llywydd | Presiding Member)      (Dyddiad | Date)**

**DS - Os yw hwn yn benderfyniad sy'n cael ei ail-ystyried yna does dim modd galw'r penderfyniad i mewn a bydd y penderfyniad yn dod i rym o'r dyddiad mae'r penderfyniad wedi'i lofnodi.**

**NB - If this is a reconsidered decision then the decision Cannot be Called In and the decision will take effect from the date the decision is signed.**

**Rhagor o wybodaeth | Further Information:**

Cyfadran   Directorate:	Prosperity and Development
Enw'r Person Cyswllt   Contact Name:	Derek James
Swydd   Designation:	Service Director Prosperity and Development
Rhif Ffôn   Telephone Number:	01443 281115

# **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **KEY DELEGATED DECISION**

### **A REPORT TO ACCOMPANY A DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT**

**SEPTEMBER 2019**

#### **PROPOSAL FOR RCT TO LEAD ON THE VALLEYS TASKFORCE EMPTY HOMES SCHEME**

**AUTHOR: DEREK JAMES, SERVICE DIRECTOR PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT**

#### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 This report provides details on proposals for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCT) to act as Lead Body for the co-ordination and monitoring of the Valleys Taskforce Empty Homes Scheme.

#### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 The request by the Valleys Taskforce members that the Council act as Lead Body for the Valleys Taskforce Empty Homes Scheme is agreed and that additional costs incurred by RCT in this role be top sliced from the total grant.
- 2.2 A Service Level Agreement be entered into between the Valleys Taskforce local authorities to govern the Valleys Taskforce Empty Homes Scheme.

#### **3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 The availability of Valleys Taskforce funding in South Wales provides a significant opportunity to deliver Empty Property Grants, which will provide much needed affordable housing for people in South Wales and further boost the local economy, providing job opportunities for local people.

#### **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 According to Welsh Government statistics, there are an estimated 1.4 million dwellings in Wales as of 31st March 2016. During 2016-2017, 23,303 of these had been vacant for more than six months. Of these, 255 were brought back into use in 2017-18. Empty homes represent a wasted resource, financial expense and in many cases a missed opportunity to provide much needed affordable housing for people in Wales.

- 4.2 The Welsh Government has an ambitious target of delivering an additional 20,000 new affordable homes by 2021. Whilst this target relates to new build homes, it is acknowledged that better utilisation of the existing housing stock can help ease some of the burden to delivering these new homes whilst also acting as a catalyst for area regeneration and community sustainability.
- 4.3 Studies have shown that the average cost of returning empty homes to a habitable state is between £6,000 and £12,000 per property. This supports the statement that “bringing empty homes back into use not only provides much needed affordable housing, but can also be a more economically viable option to new build”. For this reason, the Welsh Government has set an equally ambitious target of 5000 empty homes to be brought back into use across Wales in the same period and RCT is required to contribute to this target.
- 4.4 In response to this target, RCT, using its own capital funding, launched an Empty Property Grant scheme, which provides a grant of up to £20,000 for residents who wish to renovate an empty property they have purchased. To date, RCT has invested £5.2 million into this scheme. It is estimated that this initiative and total investment will bring back into use in the region of 200 empty homes over the next two to three years.

## **5.0 VALLEYS TASKFORCE**

- 5.1 The Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport, in his capacity as chair of the Valleys Taskforce, has recently been considering new themes and priorities that the Valleys Taskforce can take forward.
- 5.2 During a Valleys Taskforce board meeting earlier this year, the Leader, who is a member of the board, shared the RCT’s Empty Property Grant Scheme and given its success, suggested as a way of sharing best practice, that this could be something that is shared with the other local authorities across the Valleys.
- 5.3 The Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport discussed the idea with the Minister for Housing and agreed that the Valleys Taskforce, working with Housing colleagues and RCT, could look into how RCT’s Empty Property Grant Scheme could be taken forward for other Valleys local authorities.
- 5.4 The Valley Taskforce members have requested that Rhondda Cynon Taf act as the Lead Body to manage and co-ordinate the scheme. This is because of the knowledge, experience and success RCT has of managing the RCT Empty Property Grant Scheme. As the lead body, RCT will monitor the delivery of the scheme across the nine areas to ensure it is meeting targets. RCT will also provide reports and make financial claims to Welsh Government as well as make payments to the other local authorities. The responsibility for approving and managing all aspects of the grants sits with RCT on behalf of the other local authorities, this process will be enforced by a Service Level Agreement.
- 5.5 The Scheme will be led by the Housing Strategy and Investment Service within the Prosperity and Development department, supported by colleagues in Finance and Legal. A management fee is available to be top sliced from the

project budget to cover all additional costs borne by the Council in administering the project.

- 5.6 The next steps would be to submit a detailed project proposal to the Valleys Taskforce for approval and to agree a Service Level Agreement with each of the South Wales local authorities to formally establish the Council's role as Lead Body for this project.
- 5.7 The local authorities that will be a part of this scheme are Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Carmarthenshire, Merthyr Tydfil, Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Torfaen and RCT.

## **6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment screening test has been completed and indicated that a full Equality Impact assessment was not required.

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## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 A consultation exercise is not required.

## **8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 8.1 The Valleys Taskforce funding is available until March 2021.
- 8.2 The scheme will be implemented in two phases. There are no match funding requirements for phase one of the scheme, however for phase two there is a match funding requirement of 35% from each local authority. For RCT, the current Empty Properties Grant scheme budget for 2019/20 and 2020/21 is sufficient to satisfy the match funding requirement for this Council.
- 8.3 All additional costs of managing the scheme will be funded by top slicing the grant for the region, therefore there are no additional financial resources required as a result of the recommendations in this report.

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## **9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 9.1 Discussions have taken place with Legal Services and Finance to consider the legal implications and legislation and it is considered that the arrangements and terms and conditions of this funding can be administered under the council's lawful powers. In addition, a Service Level Agreement will be put in place between RCT and each of the other participating local authorities in South Wales. This will essentially pass on the accountability, risk and responsibility for the local delivery of projects to each of the participating local authorities and will also govern the grant monitoring and claim process. The SLA will pass on all relevant Welsh Government grant terms and conditions that sit with the overall grant approval.



## **10.0 LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT**

10.1 The Valleys Taskforce Empty Homes Scheme will contribute to the delivery all three of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities of economy, people and place. The Scheme will also assist the Council to contribute to three of the seven wellbeing goals that 'The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015' puts in place as follows:

1. A healthier Wales
2. A prosperous Wales
3. A Wales of cohesive communities

## **11.0 CONCLUSION**

11.1 The Valleys Taskforce Empty Homes Scheme will provide an opportunity to bring empty homes back into use, providing much needed affordable housing, which will be a more economically viable option to new build, boosting the local economy and provide job opportunities for local people.

**Other Information: -**

***Relevant Scrutiny Committee***

Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee

**Contact Office:** Derek James Tel: (01443) 281115

