

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL Scrutiny Report Template

Committee:	Corporate Scrutiny Committee
Date:	17/11/2023
Subject:	Empty Homes Strategic Plan 2023-28
Purpose of Report:	To scrutinise the Empty Homes Strategic Plan and recommend its approval
Scrutiny Chair:	Councillor Douglas M Fowlie
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor G Pritchard
Head of Service:	Ned Michael
Report Author: Tel: Email:	Elliwllyr, Policy Manager, Commissioning and Empty Homes Strategic Plan 01248752137 Elliwllyr@ynysmon.gov.uk
Local Members:	

1 - Recommendation/s

The Committee is asked to:

R1 recommend that the Executive approves the Empty Homes Strategic Plan 2023-28

2 – Link to Council Plan / Other Corporate Priorities

The Council's Corporate Plan 2023-28 recognizes Housing as one of the strategic aims and ensuring that 'everyone has the right to call somewhere home'.

3 – Guiding Principles for Scrutiny Members

To assist Members when scrutinising the topic:-

3.1 Impact the matter has on individuals and communities **[focus on customer/citizen]**

3.2 A look at the efficiency & effectiveness of any proposed change – both financially and in terms of quality **[focus on value]**

3.3 A look at any risks **[focus on risk]**

3.4 Scrutiny taking a performance monitoring or quality assurance role **[focus on performance & quality]**

3.5 Looking at plans and proposals from a perspective of:

- Long term

- Prevention
- Integration
- Collaboration
- Involvement

[focus on wellbeing]

3.6 Possible effects this decision could have on:

- The protected groups under the 2010 Equality Act
- Those that experience a socio-economic disadvantage in their lives (when making strategic decisions)
- Opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and not to treat the Welsh language less favourably than English

[focus on equality and Welsh]

4 - Key Scrutiny Questions

1. Why is the Council preparing an Empty Homes Strategic Plan?
2. How does the Strategic Plan contribute to achieving the priorities of the Council's Plan: 2023-2028?
3. How does the Council's work in this area compare to other areas in Wales?
4. To what extent is the Council dependent on partners and grant funding to make this Strategic Plan a reality?

5 – Background / Context

1. Background

The Empty Homes Strategic Plan was reviewed following a consultation with owners of empty homes and sessions to share information with other Services in the Council. Anglesey Housing Partnership will also be consulted on the proposed Empty Homes Strategic Plan.

Welsh Government has an Action Plan for dealing with empty Properties as part of its response to recommendations made by Senedd Cymru on the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee, to assist Local Authorities to bring empty homes back into use. We as a Council have taken part in this and support the emphasis to bringing empty properties back into use.

2. Success of the Previous Empty Homes Strategy

The previous Empty Homes Strategy has had a number of successes including 525 empty homes have come back into use since 2017, with 32 units being created or re-introduced, meaning that the Council Tax budget is being collected. The Empty Homes Strategy has also ensured success with difficult sites like Beaumaris Social Club, the old Snooker Club in Holyhead and Plas Alltran, Holyhead.

3. Overview of the Empty Homes Strategic Plan

The Empty Homes Strategic Plan will work following its 4 main objectives, which are:

1. **Data** – Using evidence base to target resources for empty homes.
2. **Publicity** – raising awareness of empty homes matters and how owners can bring a property back into use.
3. **Providing Financial support** – administer grants / loans from WG and using the Council Tax Premium
4. **Enforcement** – to prioritise empty homes for enforcement action and taking a Council wide approach to deal with empty homes.
5. **Working together** – work together as services who deal with the most problematic Properties.

4. Consultation

A consultation was held with owners of empty properties during May – June to understand why these properties are empty, what problems do they face and what interventions would help them bring the empty properties back to use. We will use the results to target our interventions. An event was arranged (3.10.23) with other services to review the content of the Empty Homes Strategic Plan with teams who are key to bringing empty properties back to use.

6 – Equality Impact Assessment [including impacts on the Welsh Language]

6.1 Potential impacts on protected groups under the Equality Act 2010

No negative effect was noted after completion on the EIA.

6.2 Potential impacts on those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage in their lives (strategic decisions)

It will offer a chance for people to live and contribute to their local communities.

6.3 Potential impacts on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language

No negative effect was noted after completion on the EIA.

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7 – Financial Implications

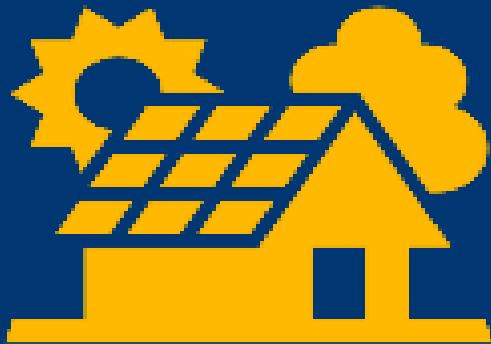
Resources have been allocated / identified for different initiatives included in the Empty Homes Strategic Plan.

8 – Appendices:

Housing Empty Homes Strategic Plan 2023-28.
Responses to the Consultation.
Assessment of the Effect on Equalities.
Assessment of the Effect on the Welsh language.

9 - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):

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Empty Homes Strategic Plan 2023–2028

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn y Gymraeg /

This document is also available in Welsh.



CYNGOR SIR
YNYS MÔN
ISLE OF ANGLESEY
COUNTY COUNCIL

Why do we need an Empty Homes Strategic Plan?



Housing

Ensuring that everyone has the right to call somewhere home.

Empty homes are a wasted resource and can assist in addressing other housing problems through the provision of additional accommodation; thereby reducing pressures on waiting lists and providing homes on both a short and long-term basis.

There is currently an increase in pressure on the housing markets as less people can purchase their own home. Rents in the private rented sector also continue to increase.

Not all empty homes need action, for example, there would be little point in targeting transactional empty properties which are empty for good reason. This would also apply to properties that are not causing a nuisance, are in good repair or would not be suitable to address the local housing need.

The purpose of the Empty Homes Strategic Plan is to ensure that the number of empty properties are kept to a minimum and to encourage owners to bring them back into use. It provides information on how we deal with empty properties.

This Plan forms part of the range of housing solutions which will assist in achieving the Council Plan 2023-28, focusing on a co-ordinated and joined approach across internal and external partners.

Strategic context



Housing

Ensuring that everyone has the right to call somewhere home.

The Empty Homes Strategic Plan responds to:

- The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 discretionary powers to local authorities to implement a premium charge on Council Tax for long term empty properties and utilisation of this towards affordable housing
- Local incentives such as Tai Teg assist with identifying and allocating affordable empty properties to purchase or intermediate rent who works in partnership with Local Authorities across North Wales
- Welsh Government (WG) response in working with Local Authorities in tackling empty properties following the recommendations of the [National Assembly for Wales, Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee report published in October 2019](#)
- Assistance available to Local Authorities in dealing with their long-term empty properties by WG with its Empty Property Enforcement Programme. The Council has actively taken part in this initiative and supports the WG emphasis on bringing empty homes back into use
- Empty Properties as a contributor to the local economy, an example of this during 2022-23 our First Time Buyer Grant has seen 68 small / medium sized businesses or contractors benefiting from the scheme by taking on work through this grant

Who is the Strategic Plan for?

The plan provides information to key internal and external stakeholders.

It will also be of interest to a wide range of people, such as:

- people who are struggling to find an affordable and secure home to rent or buy where they work or grew up in
- people who live in the same street as an empty home and whose physical and mental health can be affected as the condition of the house deteriorates and it becomes the focus of anti-social behaviour
- people who have inherited a property and are looking for practical help and support to bring it back into use, but instead are receiving bills for council tax
- internal service areas to facilitate effective collaboration

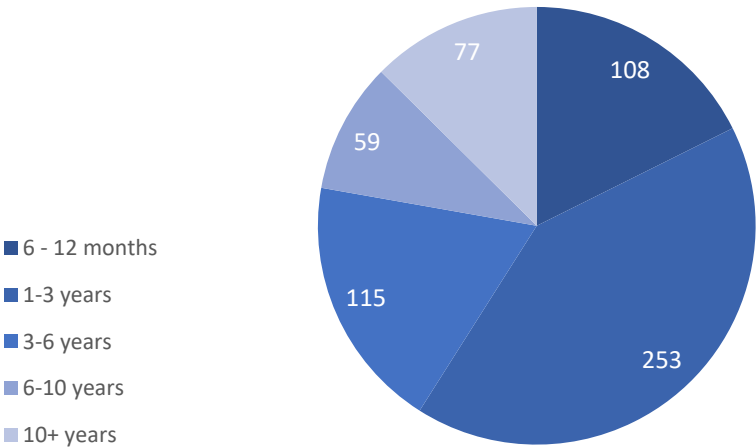


Baseline Data

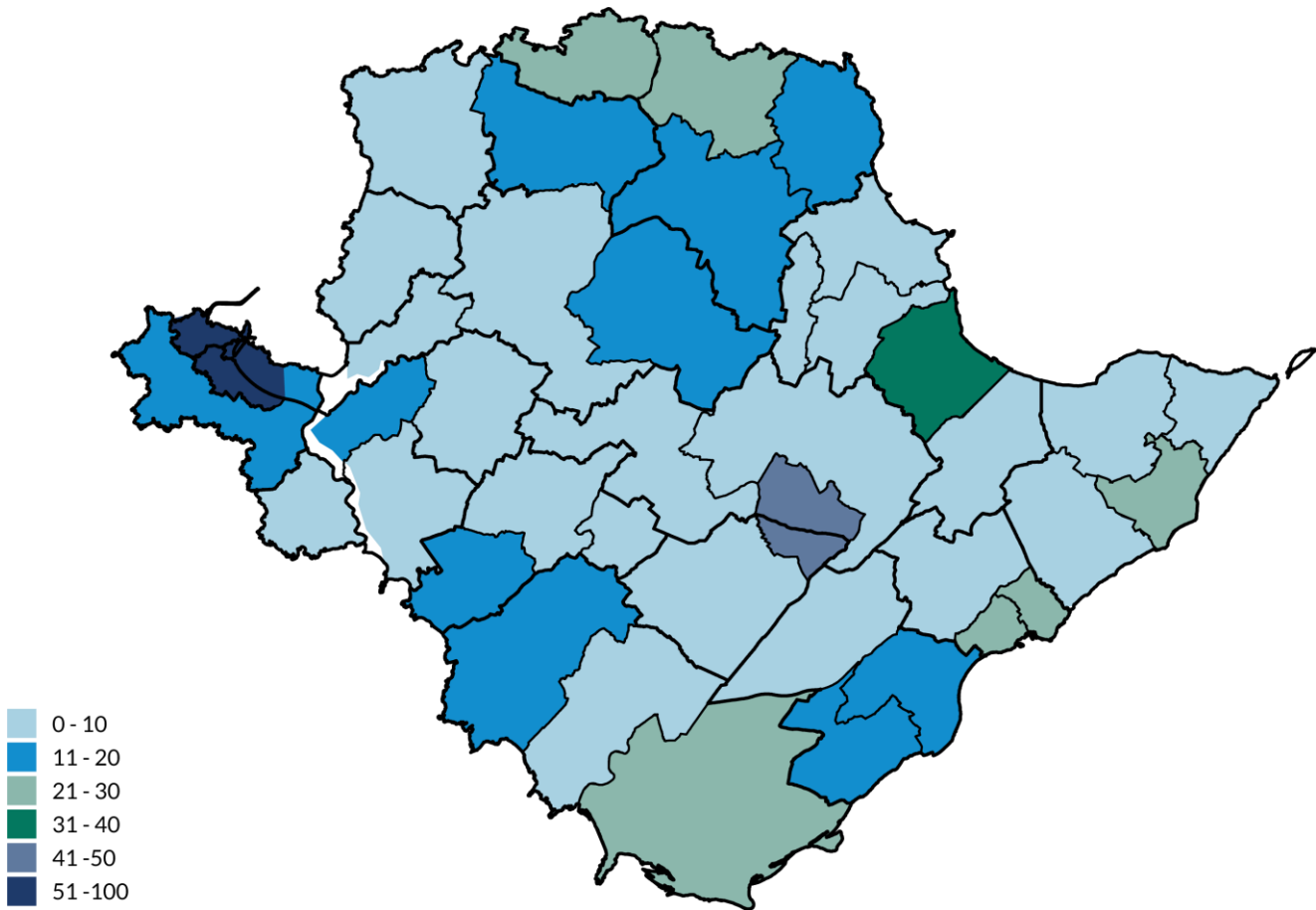


- 35,639 properties on Anglesey
- 612 empty homes*
- 2,591 second homes
- 876 households presented as homeless in 2022-23
- 69,000 people living on Anglesey

Number of years a properties are recorded as vacant



Location of empty properties



**based on Housing Services information which includes exemption properties from Council Tax*

Council Plan 2023–2028

The Council Plan’s vision is to:





‘Create an Anglesey that is healthy and prosperous where people can thrive.’

The Council Plan is the key document serving as a focal point for decision-making at all levels; providing a framework to plan and drive forward priorities; shape annual spending; monitor performance and progress.

At its core is our desire to work with Anglesey residents, communities and partners to ensure the best possible services, improve the quality of life for all and create opportunities for future generations.

Its six main objectives reflect the key areas the Council should be focusing its efforts on.

Our six strategic objectives

 <p>The Welsh Language</p> <p>Increasing opportunities to learn and use the language.</p>	 <p>Social Care and Wellbeing</p> <p>Providing the right support at the right time.</p>	 <p>Education</p> <p>Ensuring an effective provision for today and for future generations.</p>
 <p>Housing</p> <p>Ensuring that everyone has the right to call somewhere home.</p>	 <p>Economy</p> <p>Promoting opportunities to develop the Island's economy.</p>	 <p>Climate Change</p> <p>Responding to the crisis, tackling change and working towards becoming a net zero organisation by 2030.</p>

Values

The Council Plan 2023-28 is underpinned by the organisation's core values, which are used to develop and guide the vision, strategic plans and services.

Values



Respect

We are respectful and considerate towards others regardless of our differences.



Collaborate

We work as a team, with our communities and partners to deliver the best outcomes for the people of Anglesey.



Honesty

We are committed to high standards of conduct and integrity.



Champion the Council and the Island

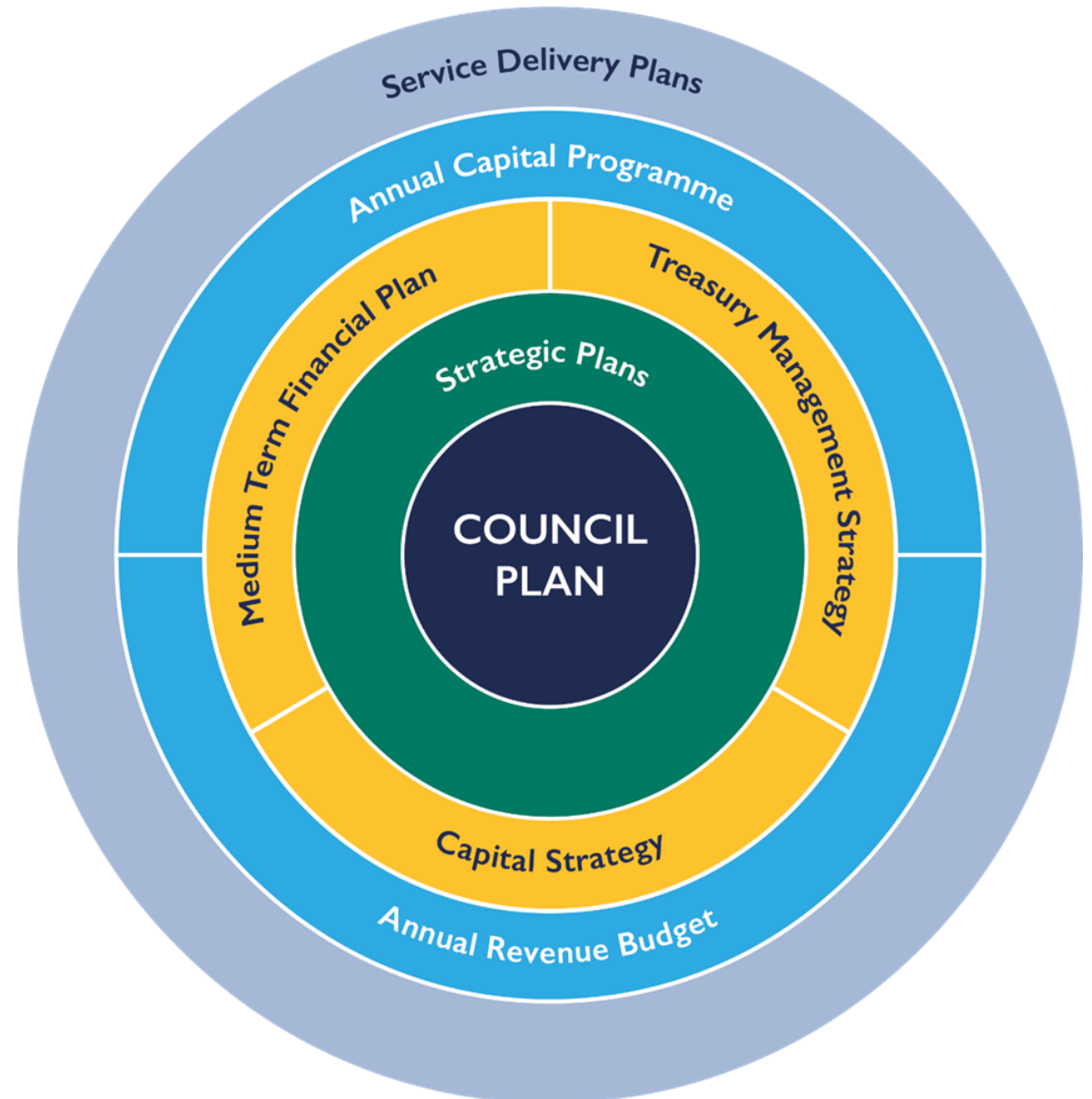
We create a sense of pride in working for the Council and present a positive image of the Council and the Island.



Strategic circle

The strategic circle identifies the plans in place to ensure we are able to achieve our priorities and objectives.

This plan is a key strategic plan that aligns with the Council's Plan and contributes to the achievement of the strategic objectives and vision.



Key priority areas

Delivering the strategic priority, together with key priority areas, sets a clear and ambitious mandate.

We want to ensure that we:

- Make best use of existing housing stock and improving homes and communities (Theme 2 of the Council's [Housing Strategy 2022-27](#))
- Be a contributor to the local economy (Theme 6 of the Council's [Housing Strategy 2022-27](#))



Data – use an evidence-based approach to targeting our resources on empty homes



Why is this important?

There are 908 applications on the Council's Social Housing Register requiring suitable social housing (as of March 2023).

There is an increase in the number presenting as homeless requiring temporary accommodation as a short-term solution to their housing situation.

Increasing the availability of accommodation through returning an empty property back into use is the most effective attempt of equalling the demand for suitable housing and helps to relieve the Local Authority of the housing pressures.

What are we going to do?

The Local Government Act 2003 makes it possible to share information about empty properties which facilitates the work of prioritising which properties need to be targeted.

By continuing to refine our data and correspondence on empty homes we will be able to analyse the particulars of the long-term empty and target our response.

Develop a Scoring Matrix for empty properties. The Scoring Matrix will be used to refer properties to an internal Empty Homes Surgery meeting where any possible outcome and enforcement action will be considered.

How are we going to do this?

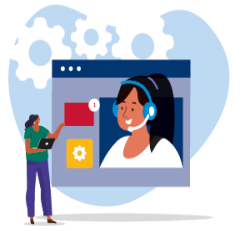
Utilise the toolkit of options available to owners to encourage empty homes back into use.

Promote funding opportunities to bring back empty homes into use.

By regularly reporting on the number of empty homes returned into use and which intervention was used.

Monitor the number of Equity Share and First Time Buyer Grants utilising the Council Tax Premium which have been approved on a quarterly basis.

Publicity- raise awareness of empty homes and how owners can bring back homes into use



Why is this important?

Since 2017, advice and guidance has been the most successful measure in bringing long-term empty property back into use: totalling 56% of the total empty properties.

The main reasons for properties remaining empty is that they:

- are currently being renovated (33%) or
- that they require repair or renovation works (28%).

33% of properties returned to use have been assisted by financial schemes offered by the Council.

Owners may choose not to engage as they believe that as the property is privately owned, the Council do not have the right to require action to return it to use.

They may be unaware or have no concern for the effect the property is having on the local area and surrounding properties.

What are we going to do?

Ensure the following information is readily available:

- guidance on bringing empty homes back into use
- details of assistance available and how to access funding
- offering shared equity and grants on empty homes
- a method of reporting concerns or complaints regarding empty homes



How are we going to do this?

Use a range of methods to communicate with owners of empty homes, which includes information on our website and social media including:

- Online reporting of empty homes
- Financial support for owners of empty homes

Targeted mailing to owners of empty homes

Delivering financial support- by administering WG loans/grants and utilizing the Council Tax Premium

Why is this important?

WG have developed an Empty Property Enforcement Programme to assist Council's in dealing with long term empty properties.

By offering solutions the Council is maximising the Council Tax revenue collectable.

The local economy benefits, as an example, 68 small / medium sized businesses or contractors have been employed via our grant schemes.

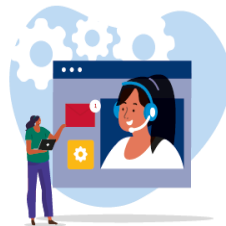
The thermal efficiency of properties are improved upon completion of renovation works, for example, an efficient boiler, insulation and heating systems leading to a reduction in energy costs for owners.

What are we going to do?

The Council has actively taken part in this initiative and supports the WG emphasis on bringing empty homes back into use.

Deliver financial support to empty homeowners as a practical means to bring houses back into use.

Encourage the use of local small and medium sized businesses



How are we going to do this?

Providing financial support by administering WG grants /loans and utilising the Council Tax Premium, including:

- Houses into Homes (to let or sell on)
- Home Improvement Loan
- National Empty Homes Scheme
- First Time Buyer Grant Scheme
- Town Centre Loans – which include Commercial and Residential units as well as conversions to create units, which would be subject to planning approval
- Working with owners to deliver affordable and improved energy efficiency use of current stock

In addition to the financial assistance and incentives above, we can also sign post to:

- WG Private Leasing Scheme
- Possible purchase of properties via the Transitional Capital Accommodation Plan

Enforcement – to prioritise empty homes for enforcement action by taking a whole Council approach to tackling empty homes

Why is this important?

Whilst we acknowledge that no owner wishes the Council to take enforcement action, powers are available to bring empty properties back into use:

- Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO)
- Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO)
- Enforced Sale.

Records show that 4% of properties returned to use since 2017 received either threat of enforcement or notices had been served.

What are we going to do?

The preferred course of action is to return properties to use through negotiation and encouragement, avoiding the need for more time consuming and costly enforcement measures.

EDMOs are complicated and pose risks for LAs as capital funds are needed which can be attached as a local charge to the property and will require specialist legal advice.

How are we going to do this?

Certain properties that have been problematic over a long period, attracting volumes of complaints by the general public and elected members will be prioritised. Where possible, these will be re-developed or brought back into use by enforcement or purchase by agreement with the owner. See appendix 3 for successful examples.

Viewed as a last resort and used only where negotiations have failed or there is no other real prospect of an empty property being returned to use, the council will utilise the Enforced Sales Policy.

Appendix 1 shows the various powers available to the Local Authority.

The council will also utilise the WG Enforcement Action Plan to access specialist advice on difficult properties.



Working together – bringing services together to address the most problematic properties

Why is this important?

- 108 dwellings have been vacant for between 6-12 months
- 299 have been vacant between 1-5 years
- 128 have been vacant for between 5-10 years
- 77 have been vacant for over 10 years.

There will be a continual cycle of properties which become problematic and classed as long-term empties.

What are we going to do?

There are reasons, which require different approaches in intervention, as to why property becomes and remains empty.

By identifying the reasons why properties are empty, we can work together to bring them back into use in a targeted way.

Example of reasons why properties are empty:

- Death of the occupant
- Need for repair and refurbishment beyond the budget
- Fears about renting the property - the owner may have had a former bad experience though letting
- Properties which are for sale- properties can be in good condition but have been unable to sell for various reasons.
- Inherited properties - the owner may lack the knowledge or the inclination to do anything with inherited properties. Some keep them in case their children choose to occupy them in future.
- Speculative purchases - Properties bought as an investment by buyers who are not inclined to do anything with them.

How are we going to do this?

Work together as Council Services via the Empty Homes Surgery and other agencies to deal with the different aspects of empty homes and the various legislation there is in place (see *appendices 1 and 2*).



Governance: Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure the strategic plan is realised, we will establish robust governance arrangements.

The arrangements will ensure clarity, accountability, coordination and the structure to monitor progress effectively. This will include quarterly monitoring of performance indicators and an action plan.

Progress will include information on actions, outcomes and the impact highlighting successes and issues.

An annual progress report and review of the strategic plan will be completed.

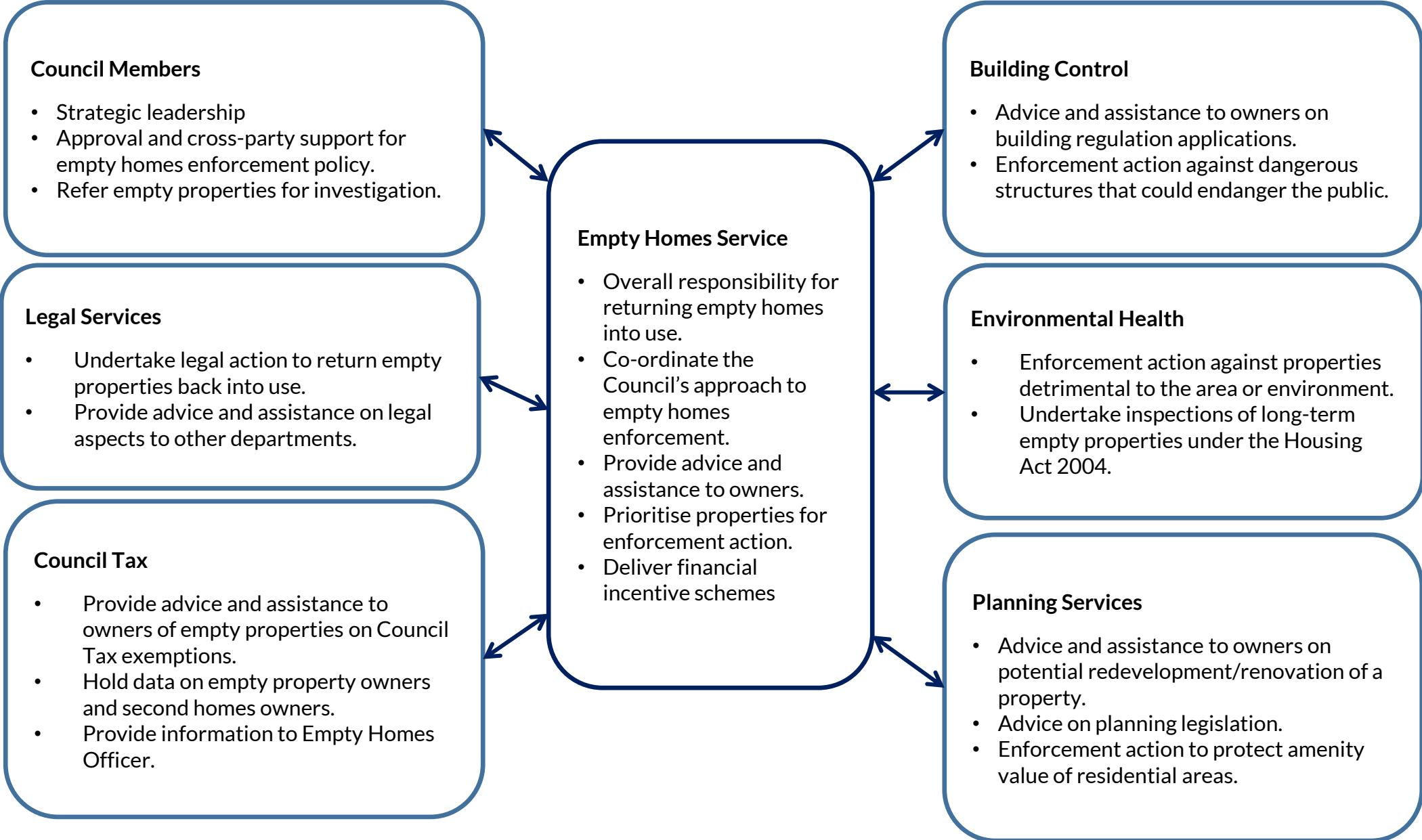


Appendix 1: Legislation to support Councils to resolve problematic properties

Problem	Legislation	Power Granted
Dangerous or dilapidated building structures	Building Act 1984, ss77 & 78	Section 77 – requirement for owner to make property safe
Dangerous or dilapidated building structures		Section 78 – Enables Council to take emergency action to make building safe
Unsecured properties (risk that it may be entered or suffer vandalism, arson etc.)	Housing Act 2004, Part 1	Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) enables councils to evaluate potential risks to health and safety arising from property deficiencies and take enforcement action.
	Building Act 1984, s79	Requirement for owner to repair, restore or demolish.
Unsecured properties (risk that it may be entered or suffer vandalism, arson etc.)	Building Act 1984, s78	To allow councils to fence off property.
	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, s29	To allow councils to take steps to secure property

Problem	Legislation	Power Granted
Blocked or defective drainage or private sewers	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976), s35	To require owner to address obstructed private sewers.
	Building Act 1984 s59	To require the owner to address blocked or defective drainage
	Public Health Act, 1961, s17	To require the owner to address defective drainage or private sewers.
Vermin (either present or there is a risk that they will be attracted)	Public Health Act 1961, s34	To require the owner to remove waste so that vermin is not attracted to the site, to destroy an infestation and to remove any accumulation prejudicial to health
	Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949, s4	
	Public Health Act 1936, s 83	
	Environmental Protection Act 1990, s.80	
	Building Act 1984, s76	
Unightly land and property affecting the amenity of an area	Public Health Act 1961, s34	To require the owner to remove waste from the property
	Town and Country Planning Act 1990 s215	To require the owner to take steps to address a property adversely affecting the amenity of an area through its condition.

Appendix 2: List of Council Services which are involved with empty homes



Appendix 3: Case Studies

The following case studies highlight some of interventions with long term empty properties.



Old Social Club, Beaumaris – Compulsory Purchase Order

- The Council has executed a Compulsory Purchase Order to acquire the Old Sport and Social Club Site at Steeple Lane, Beaumaris where the existing dangerous building was demolished and re-developed to six new one bedroom apartments. These apartments are offered on intermediate rent to people, primarily with a local connection to the area. The development will be completed in September 2023.

Before:



After:



Plas Alltran, Caergybi– Purchase by Agreement

- Re-development of the derelict Grade II Plas Alltran, is located near the port of Holyhead, was purchased through negotiations with the previous owner to create four, one-bedroom apartments to be offered as social housing.

Before:



Proposed Development:



Results of the Empty Properties Survey 2023

As part of the preparation the Empty Homes Strategy 2023-28 a survey was sent to all owners of long term empty properties, totalling 542 properties in total. This excludes properties receiving Council Tax exemptions such as properties in probate, owners receiving care elsewhere or in residential care/hospitals, owners in detention.

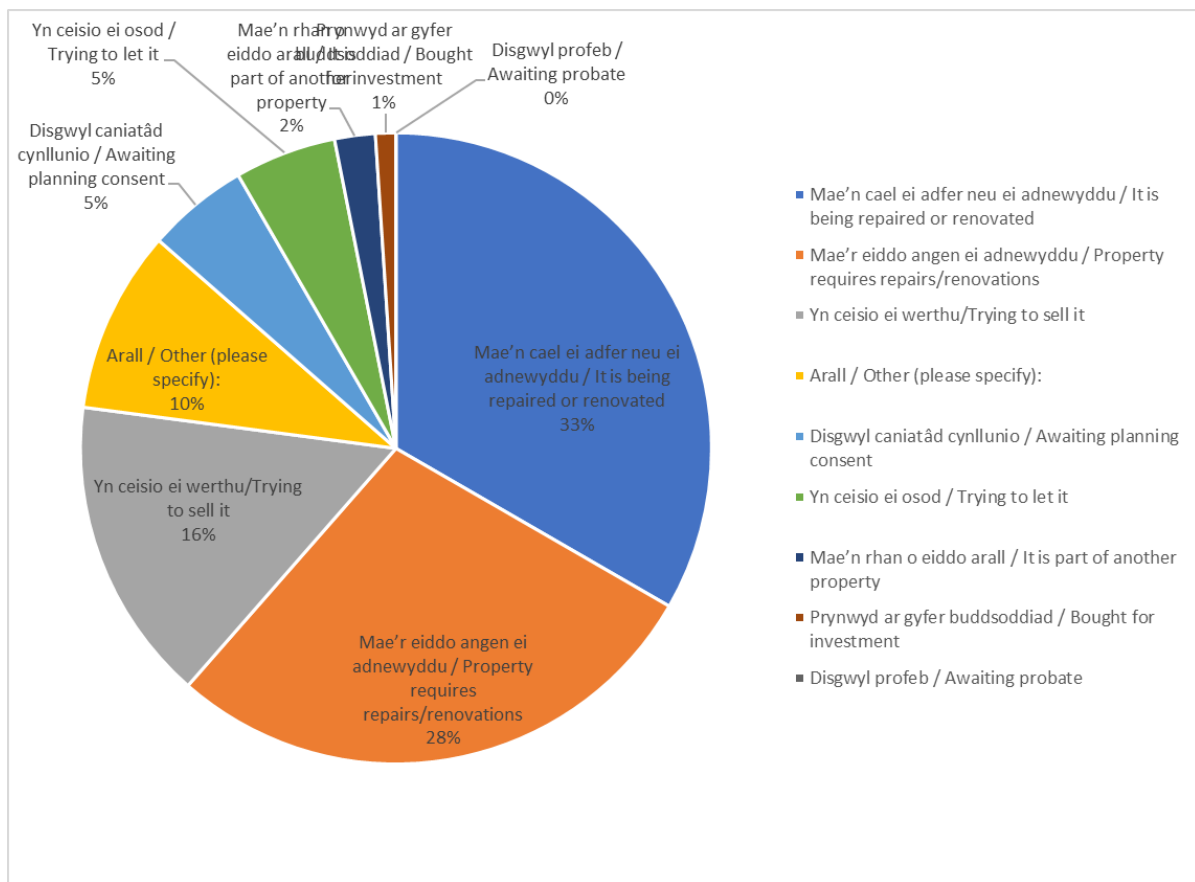
As of 17th of July 2023, 87 responses have been received, 9 of which are partially completed. This represents a response rate of 16%. The following results outline the background and reasons why their properties are empty and unfurnished and what incentives might encourage them to return their properties back into use.

Isle of Anglesey County Council asked owners of long-term empty property owners the following questions:

1. Why is the property empty?
2. What is the condition of the property?
3. How did you come to own the empty property?
4. What do you plan to do with the property?
5. Is the cost of repairs a factor in the property remaining empty?
6. Does the property cause you any issues?
7. Which of these services might encourage you to bring your property back into use?

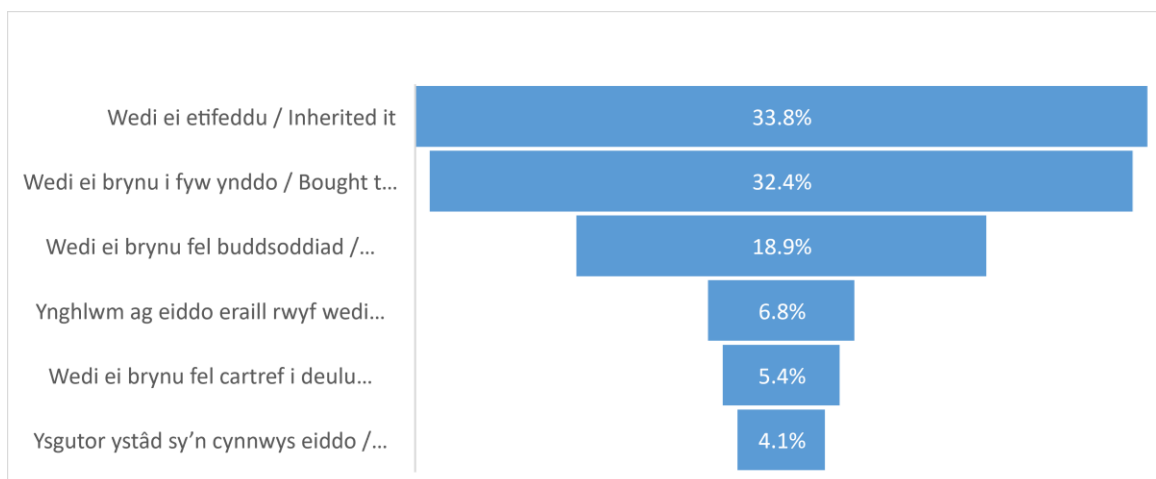
Below is the responses to these questions

Why is the property empty?

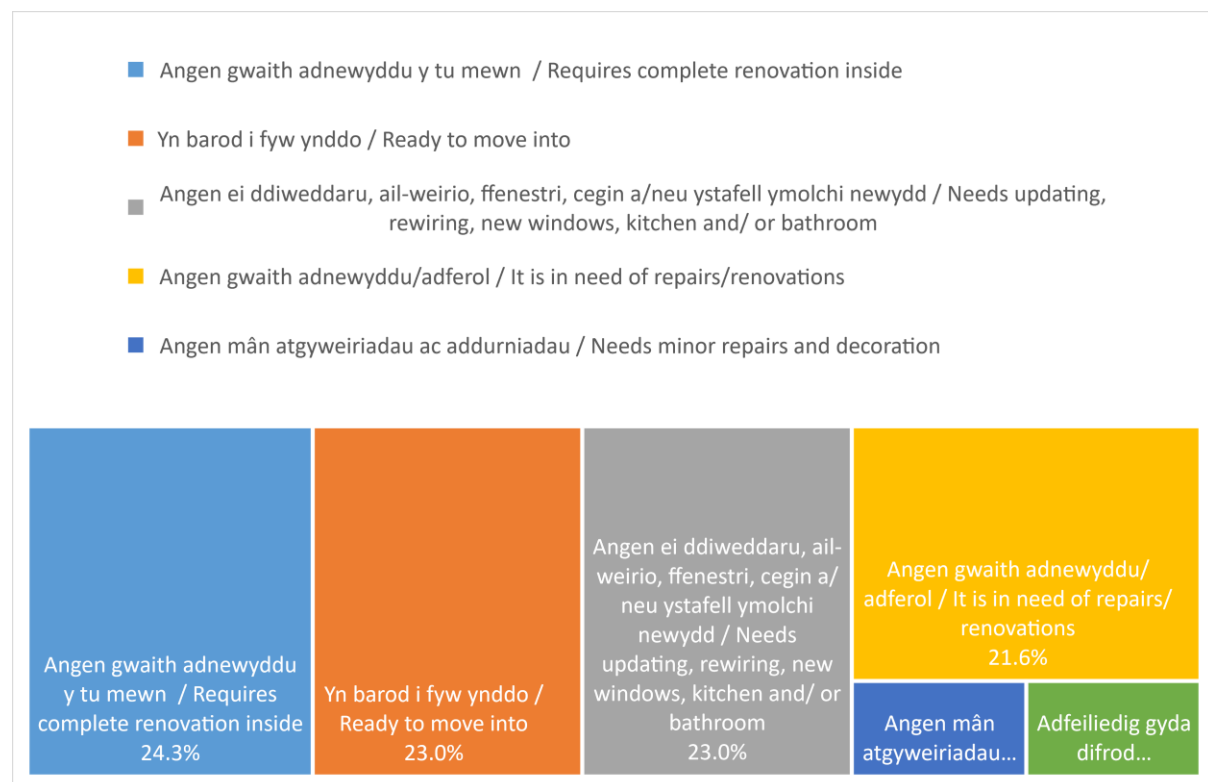


According to the response received, the main reasons for properties remaining empty is that they are currently being renovated (33%) or that they require repair or renovation works (28%). The results show 16% of respondents to the survey are attempting to sell their empty property. Some other reasons why properties remain empty outside of the options provided is for demolishing and re-building purposes, confirmed by two respondents in the 'other' section.

Why is the property empty?



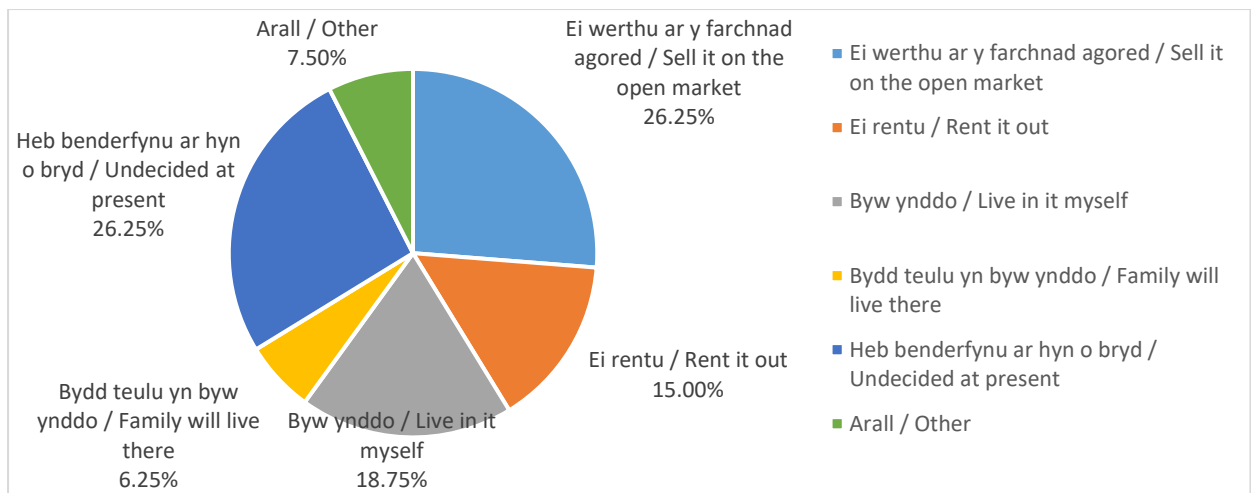
What is the condition of the property



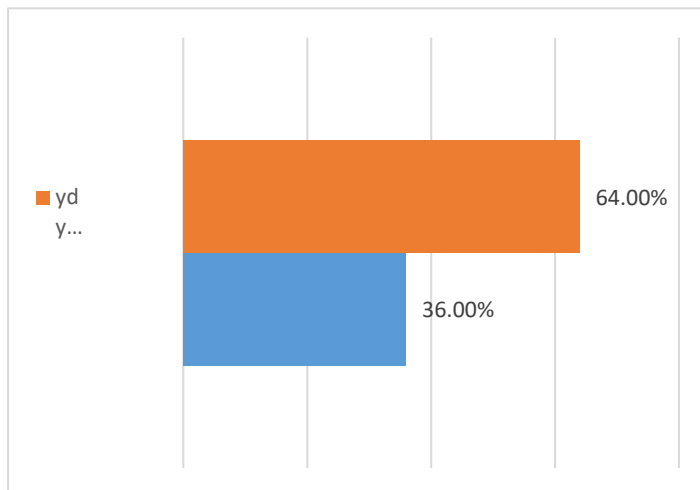
How do they come to own their empty property?

Isle of Anglesey County Council questioned the history of the owner's empty properties and how they came to own their properties which are currently vacant. 33.8% of the respondents inherited their property and 4.1% are acting as an executor of estate. The second most common response shows respondents intended, at some point, to occupy the property themselves.

Intentions of empty property owners?

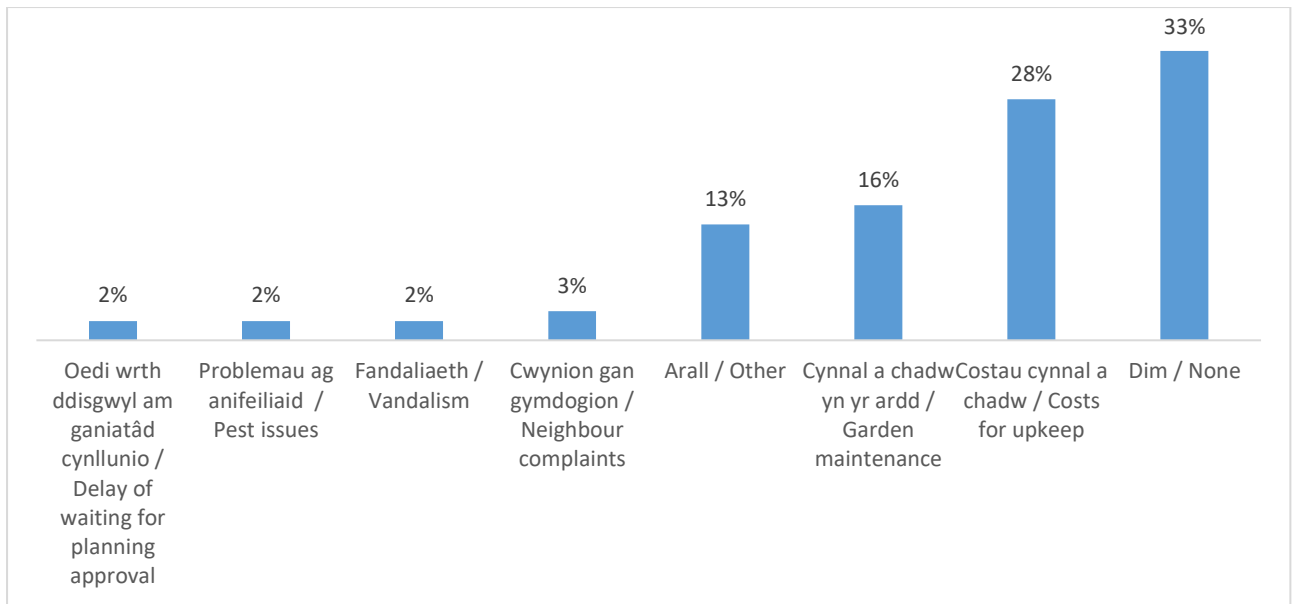


Is the cost of repairs a factor in the property remaining empty?



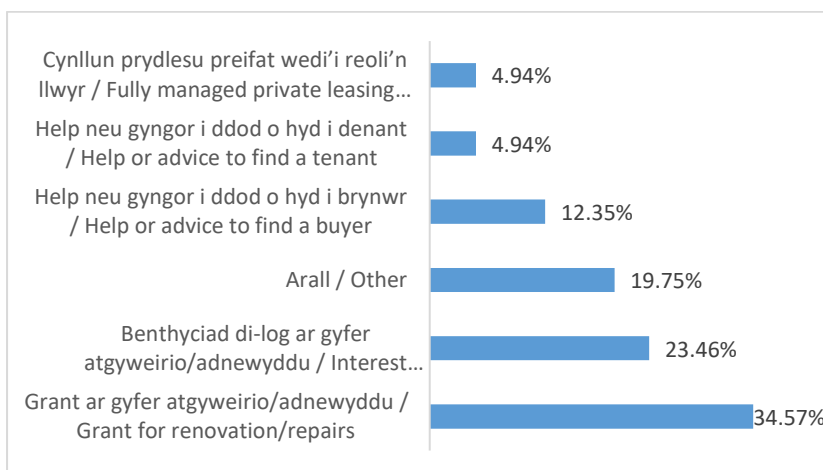
When asked if the cost of repairs is a factor in the property remaining empty, 64% respondents confirmed this was the case in their situation. 36% of owners said the cost was not a factor.

Does the property cause any issues?



When asked the question ‘does the property cause any issues?’, 33% of respondents confirmed that the property does not cause them any issues. 28% confirmed that the cost for upkeep was an issues for owners, this may include the Council tax premium applied. Rodents and pests and anti-social behaviour is an issue faced by 4% of the respondents. Some respondents provided ‘other’ as an answer and included comments such as “Rising cost of materials” and “difficulties in getting trades men”.

Which of these services might encourage you to bring your property back into use?



58.02% of respondents would be encouraged by financial assistance through grant schemes and or an interest-free loan to renovate and repair their empty properties. 17.28% of respondents would require assistance in identifying a prospective buyer or a suitable tenant. 4.94% have expressed their interest in a Private Leasing scheme.

Equality Impact Assessment Template (including the Welsh language and the Socio-Economic Duty)

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg / This document is also available in Welsh.

Version	Date	Summary of changes
V0.1	September 2023	

Step 1: Background	
1 - What are you assessing?	Isle of Anglesey CC Empty Homes Strategic Plan 2023-28
2 - Is this a new or existing proposal?	Replaces previous Empty Homes Strategy
3 - What are the aims and purpose of this proposal?	The Empty Homes Strategic Plan for Anglesey provides the Council's with the direction for bringing empty homes back into use on the Island and the 4 key objectives in delivering this

Step 1: Background		
4 - Who is responsible for the proposal you are assessing?	Housing Services- Strategy, Policy and Commissioning Unit	
5 - Who is the lead officer for this assessment?	Housing Strategy, Policy and Commissioning Manager	
6 - Who else is involved in undertaking this assessment?	Strategy, Policy and Commissioning Unit	
7 - Is the proposal related to other areas of work? For example, are there other proposals of policies that should be taken into consideration as part of this assessment?	Housing Strategy 2022-27 The Housing Strategy helps deliver the aims of the Corporate Plan.	
8 - Is the proposal relevant to how the Authority complies with the public sector general duty relating to people who are protected by the Equality Act 2010? As a general rule, any policy that affects people is likely to be relevant across all protected groups.	The elimination of discrimination and harassment	yes
	The advancement of equality of opportunity	yes
	The fostering of good relations	yes
	The protection and promotion of human rights	yes
9 – Is the proposal a strategic decision? If so, the Socio-Economic Duty is relevant - see appendix 1.		

Step 1: Background	
<p>10 - Who would be affected by the proposal(s) (adversely or positively, directly or indirectly)?</p> <p>If this is a strategic proposal, ensure that you give specific consideration to whether the proposal would affect more on people living in less favourable social and economic circumstances than others in the same society (see appendix 1)</p>	<p>Potentially all Anglesey citizens but particularly those who are vulnerable and / or who struggle to meet their housing needs in the open market. Groups that need especial consideration include older people, people with disabilities, those affected by social deprivation.</p>

Step 2.1: Information Gathering – Welsh Language Standards and the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011	
11 - Does this proposal ensure that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language, in accordance with the Council's Welsh Language Policy?	It encourages people to stay within their communities and on the Island
12 - Is there an opportunity here to offer more opportunities for people to learn and / or use the Welsh language on a day-to-day basis?	It will offer people the opportunity to stay and contribute to their local communities on the Island
13 – Will this area of work proactively offer services in Welsh for users?	
14 – Is this proposal likely to protect and promote the Welsh language within communities?	We believe it will
<p>To help you to answer the questions above, the corporate Impact Assessment Guidance lists a series of questions which should be considered when assessing how proposals impact on the Welsh language in general. The extent to which these questions are relevant will depend on the proposal in question. However:</p>	

Step 2.1: Information Gathering – Welsh Language Standards and the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are looking at how the implementation of the Council's key policies, strategies or guidance would affect the Welsh language; or • If your initial response to the above questions raises any concerns or evidence to suggest that the proposal would treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language, or would have a detrimental impact on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language; <p>a more comprehensive impact assessment on the Welsh language should be carried out. A separate template is available on MonITor. The Welsh Language Commissioner's good practice advice document is also available on MonITor to assist you further.</p>	

Step 2.2: Information Gathering – Human Rights Act 1998	
15 - Are there any Human Rights issues? If so, what are they? For example, could this proposal result in the failure to safeguard the right to privacy?	<p>(The 16 basic rights are listed at Appendix 2).</p> <p>The strategy would not negatively impact on Human rights.</p> <p>It should support Article 8 right to respect for private and family life through ensuring sufficient and appropriate accommodation for all households.</p>

Step 2.3: Information Gathering – Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015		
16 – Does this proposal meet any of the seven national well-being goals outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015? (Descriptions of the wellbeing goals are listed at Appendix 3)	A prosperous Wales	yes
	A resilient Wales	yes
	A healthier Wales	yes
	A more equal Wales	yes
	A Wales of cohesive communities	yes
	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	yes
	A globally responsible Wales	Improvements made to homes

Step 2.4: Information Gathering – Engagement / Consultation / Evidence / Filling gaps in information	
Please see the pre-consultation and pre-engagement checklist, which is available on MonITor	
17 - What has been done to date in terms of involvement and consultation with regard to this proposal?	A questionnaire was sent all owners of empty properties which will provide a basis on how we will respond to empty properties
18 – What other information have you used to inform your assessment? Please list any reports, websites, links used etc here and include the relevant evidence in the table in Step 3 below	Information on empty homes
19 - Are there any gaps in the information collected to date? If so, how will these be addressed?	

Step 3: Considering the potential impact and identifying mitigating action

20 – Note below any likely impact on equality for each individual group, and identify what action could be taken to reduce or improve the impact. *For determining potential impact, please choose from the following: **Negative / Positive / No impact**

Protected group	*Potential Impact	Details of the impact (including evidence to support the findings)	Actions to mitigate negative impact
Age	Positive		
Disability	Positive		
Sex	Positive		

Protected group	*Potential Impact	Details of the impact (including evidence to support the findings)	Actions to mitigate negative impact
Gender Reassignment	Positive		
Pregnancy & Maternity	Positive		
Race / Ethnicity / Nationality	Positive		
Religion or Belief	Positive		
Sexual Orientation	Positive		
Marriage or Civil Partnership	Positive		
Welsh language	Positive		
Human Rights	Positive		
Any other relevant issue.			
There are clear links between equality and socio-economic issues. Discrimination against protected groups can be a direct cause of socio-economic disadvantage. If any such issues become apparent when assessing non-strategic matters, they should be given due regard and recorded under the relevant protected group, or under 'any other relevant issue' above.			

Please complete this section if the proposal is a strategic matter (see appendix 1)			
The Socio-Economic Duty	Potential impact	Details of the impact (including evidence to support the findings)	Actions to mitigate negative impact
Is the proposal likely to cause any inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage?	Low impact		

Step 4 – Outcome of the assessment

There are four possible outcomes – bear these in mind when completing the next section:

- **No major change** - The assessment demonstrates the proposal is robust; there is no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. All opportunities to promote equality have been taken.
- **Adjust the proposal** - The assessment identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. Adjust the proposal to remove barriers or better promote equality.
- **Continue the proposal** - The assessment identifies the potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to promote equality. Clearly set out the justifications for continuing with it. The justification should be included in the assessment and must be in line with the duty to have due regard. For the most important relevant proposals, compelling reasons will be needed.
- **Stop and remove the proposal** - The proposal shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination. It must be stopped and removed or changed. (The codes of practice and guidance on each of the public sector duties on the Commission's website provide information about what constitutes unlawful discrimination.)

Step 4: Outcome of the assessment	
21 - Note the impacts identified and how it is intended to mitigate any negative impact in terms of equality, the Welsh language and, if relevant, socio-economic disadvantage (ie a summary of the table/s in step 3)	No major change
22 - Describe any actions taken to maximise the opportunity to promote equality and the Welsh language, the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (sustainability) and, if relevant, ensure better outcomes for those facing economic disadvantage.	No major change
23 - Would any aspect of the proposal contravene the wellbeing goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?	No major change
24 – Is there a need to look at what could be done differently, or to reconsider the entire proposal as a result of conducting this assessment?	No major change

Step 4: Outcome of the assessment	
(Evidence of negative impact could render the proposal or decision unlawful. If you have identified negative impact, you should consider at this stage whether it is possible to proceed with the proposal).	
25 - Is there a strategy for dealing with any unavoidable but not unlawful negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?	
26 - Will the proposal be adopted / forwarded for approval? Who will be the decision-maker?	It will be approved by The Executive
27 - Are there monitoring arrangements in place? What are they?	Review within 2 years

Step 5: Action Plan

Please detail any actions that are planned following completion of your assessment. You should include any changes that have been made to reduce or eliminate the effects of potential or actual negative impact, as well as any arrangements to collect data or to carry out further research.

Ref	Proposed actions	Lead officer	Timescale

Appendix 1 – A More Equal Wales – The Socio-Economic Duty (Commencement date of the Duty: 31 March 2021)

What is the Duty?

The general aim of the duty is to ensure better outcomes for those suffering socio-economic disadvantage. When making strategic decisions such as deciding priorities and setting objectives, due regard must be given to the need to reduce the inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage.

Who is likely to experience socio-economic disadvantage?

Socio-economic disadvantage can be disproportionate in both ‘communities of interest’ and ‘communities of place’, leading to inequality of outcome, which can be further exasperated when considering ‘intersectionality’:

Communities of interest – groups who share an experience, eg homelessness; or people who share an identity, eg lone parents, carers. Also those who share one or more of the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010.

Communities of place – people who are linked together because of where they live, work, visit or spend a substantial portion of their time there.

Intersectionality - crucially, this is about understanding the way in which a combination of characteristics such as gender, race or class, can produce unique and often multiple experiences of disadvantage in certain situations. One form of discrimination cannot and should not be understood in isolation from other forms. A truly intersectional approach ensures that this does not happen.

When will the Duty be relevant?

When making **strategic decisions**. The Welsh Government has provided some examples of strategic decisions (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Strategic directive and intent.
- Strategies developed at Regional Partnership Boards and Public Service Boards which impact on public bodies’ functions.
- Medium to long term plans (for example, corporate plans, development plans, service delivery and improvement plans).
- Setting objectives (for example, well-being objectives, equality objectives, Welsh language strategy).
- Changes to and development of public services.
- Strategic financial planning.
- Major procurement and commissioning decisions.
- Strategic policy development

Further details can be found in the corporate equality impact assessment guidance.

Appendix 2 – Human Rights

Human rights are rights and freedoms that belong to all individuals, regardless of their nationality and citizenship. There are 16 basic rights in the Human Rights Act – all taken from the European Convention on Human Rights. For the purposes of the Act, they are known as ‘the Convention Rights’. They are listed below:

(Article 1 is introductory and is not incorporated into the Human Rights Act)

- Article 2: The right to life
- Article 3: Prohibition of torture
- Article 4: Prohibition of slavery and forced labour
- Article 5: Right to liberty and security
- Article 6: Right to a fair trial
- Article 7: No punishment without law
- Article 8: Right to respect for private and family life
- Article 9: Freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- Article 10: Freedom of expression
- Article 11: Freedom of assembly and association
- Article 12: Right to marry
- Article 14: Prohibition of discrimination
- Article 1 of Protocol 1: Protection of property
- Article 2 of Protocol 1: Right to education
- Article 3 of Protocol 1: Right to free elections
- Article 1 of Protocol 13: Abolition of the death penalty

Appendix 3 - Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

This Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. Public bodies need to make sure that when making their decisions they take into account the impact they could have on people living their lives in Wales in the future. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals:

A prosperous Wales:

An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.

A resilient Wales:

A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).

A healthier Wales:

A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

A more equal Wales:

A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).

A Wales of cohesive communities:

Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language:

A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.

A globally responsible Wales:

A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.

Isle of Anglesey County Council - Welsh Language Impact Assessment Template

Issues to consider with regard to the Welsh Language

The corporate equality impact assessment template includes specific questions about the impact of decisions on the Welsh language (questions 11-14). The extent to which these questions are relevant will depend on the proposal in question.

However:

- If you are looking at how the implementation of the Council's key policies, strategies or guidance would affect the Welsh language; or
- If your initial response to the above questions raises any concerns or evidence to suggest that the proposal would treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language, or would have a detrimental impact on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language;

a more comprehensive impact assessment on the Welsh language should be carried out. Please complete this template and attach to your equality impact assessment on the same proposal.

The **Welsh Language Commissioner's good practice advice document** is also available on MonITor to assist you further.

What is being assessed?	Empty Homes Strategic Plan 2023-28
Who is carrying out this assessment?	Housing Services – Strategic Plan, Commissioning and Policy
Assessment completion date	September 2023

Isle of Anglesey County Council - Welsh Language Impact Assessment Template

1 - Compliance with the Welsh Language Policy	
<p>1.1 Is the proposal influential in terms of dealing with the Welsh-speaking public?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will activities such as corresponding by letter, communicating by telephone, public meetings and other meetings comply with the language policy? • Will any new IT development comply with the policy? 	<p>No</p> <p>Housing Services offer a bilingual service and works with partners who offer a bilingual services</p>
<p>1.2 Is the proposal likely to impact upon the public image of the organisation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will all signs comply with the language policy? • Will publications and forms be compliant? • Will any publicity material or marketing campaigns comply? • Will staff recruitment advertisements comply? • 	<p>Yes, any material relating to this Strategic Plan will be published bilingually</p>
<p>1.3 Is the proposal likely to have an impact upon the implementation of the language policy?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the proposal create new jobs? • Will the staffing arrangements facilitate the implementation of the language policy? • Will the proposal offer training through the medium of Welsh? • Will any arrangements with third parties comply with the 	<p>Yes, refurbishment of empty homes enables local contractors to obtain work which could lead to work opportunities on the Island</p>

Isle of Anglesey County Council - Welsh Language Impact Assessment Template

1 - Compliance with the Welsh Language Policy	
<p>language policy?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the proposal include any targets or indicators relating to the language? • How will performance be monitored and measured? 	

2 - Effect on Welsh speaking users	
<p>2.1 Will the proposal offer a language choice for users?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it be possible for users to receive any part of the service in Welsh? 	Yes, in accordance with the Council's Policy
<p>2.2 If there a risk for the proposal to discriminate against Welsh speaking service users?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the needs of Welsh speakers been considered in the proposal? • Are Welsh speakers likely to receive the same standard of service as provided in English? • Are Welsh language arrangements likely to lead to a delay in the service? 	No new service is created as it is a Strategic Plan
<p>2.3 Is the proposal likely to make Welsh more visible?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it likely to increase use of the language by producing Welsh 	No new service is created as it is a Strategic Plan

Isle of Anglesey County Council - Welsh Language Impact Assessment Template

2 - Effect on Welsh speaking users	
<p>language materials and signs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is it likely to influence others to make more use of Welsh, for example businesses? 	No
<p>2.4 Will the Welsh language service in relation to the proposal be accessible?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the service be as accessible in Welsh as in English? Will the services be available at the same time? 	Yes, in accordance with the Council's Policy

3 - Effect on Welsh speaking communities	
<p>3.1 Is the proposal likely to contribute towards safeguarding Welsh in communities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is it likely to contribute towards efforts to tackle the challenges of demographic change and migration - such as providing opportunities for young people to stay in their communities? Is it likely to contribute towards the local economy in Welsh speaking areas? Will it provide Welsh medium services - such as child-minding services? 	<p>This Strategic Plan complements our Housing Strategy and Welsh Language Promotion Strategy which promotes the opportunity for people to stay within their communities and on the Island by offering a range of different initiatives.</p> <p>According to the Census, the percentage of Welsh speakers in the population aged 16-64 (working age) fell by 27.1%, a decrease of 8% in Welsh speakers aged 3-15; but a 16% increase in the percentage of Welsh speakers over the age of 65. This means that it is extremely important to hold on to young families, encourage Welsh speakers who have moved away to return to the area and encourage individuals to learn Welsh in order to at least maintain the language. Providing housing that is affordable enough and of the right kind to address the need in the local area and in a Local Service Centre (which is a sustainable location to live in) is an important way of doing this.</p>

Isle of Anglesey County Council - Welsh Language Impact Assessment Template

3 - Effect on Welsh speaking communities	
<p>3.2 Does the proposal take steps to promote and facilitate the Welsh language?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the proposal contribute towards Welsh medium community activities? Does it offer opportunities for young people to use Welsh outside school hours? Does it offer a new service that will also be available in Welsh – for example leisure or sporting activities and provision? Does it contribute or add value to other activities relating to language, such as the work of the local Welsh language initiative (Menter Iaith), the Urdd etc. 	<p>No new service is created as it is a Strategic Plan</p>

4 - Contribution towards Welsh language standards, language policies, strategies and other relevant guidance relating to the Welsh language	
<p>4.1 The language policies of partner organisations or nearby public bodies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the authority working in partnership on the proposal? Which other organisations are likely to be affected by the development? Do those organisations have Welsh language standards or language policies? Does the proposal contribute towards these schemes? 	<p>No new service is created as it is a Strategic Plan</p>

Isle of Anglesey County Council - Welsh Language Impact Assessment Template

4 - Contribution towards Welsh language standards, language policies, strategies and other relevant guidance relating to the Welsh language	
<p>4.2 Relevant Welsh language strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the proposal contribute towards the Anglesey Welsh Language Strategic Forum's Welsh Language Strategic Plan 2016 – 2021 which was adopted by this Council in September 2016? • How does the proposal contribute towards the vision of the Assembly Government for one million Welsh speakers by 2050? 	<p>Yes, it will offer opportunities for people to have access to housing within their communities and the Island. See 3.1 above.</p>

5 – The impacts identified and assessed	
<p>5.1 What impacts and effects have you identified (ie summary of the responses to the above questions) together with the probability and likely severity/ significance of impact? How do you plan to address these impacts in order to improve the outcomes for the Welsh language? Detail mitigation measures/ alternative options to reduce adverse impacts and increase positive outcomes:</p>	
Positive impact	Opportunities for people to have access to housing through a range of initiatives
Adverse impact	No adverse impact identified
Opportunities to promote the Welsh language e.g. status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life, Welsh at work increased?	Any service that is provided in relation to the Strategic Plan will be provided in Welsh in accordance with Welsh language

Isle of Anglesey County Council - Welsh Language Impact Assessment Template

5 – The impacts identified and assessed	
	standards and the Council's Welsh language policy
Evidence / data used to support your assessment:	2011 Census data about the number of Welsh speakers by age

6 - Consultation	
<p>6.1 During consultation, what questions do you wish to ask about the Welsh Language Impacts?</p> <p>Guidance has been included in the pre-consultation and pre-engagement checklist, which is available on MonITor</p>	We have completed an Impact Assessment on the positive and negative impact on Equality and the Welsh Language. In your opinion, have we missed anything?
6.2 With whom are you consulting? How are Welsh language interest groups likely to respond?	Consultation with empty homes owners
6.3 Following consultation, what changes have you made to address language issues raised?	No changes

7 – Post consultation, final proposals and ongoing monitoring	
<p>7.1 Summarise your final decisions, list the likely effects on the Welsh language and how you will promote/ mitigate these. Record your compliance with the Welsh language standards.</p> <p>You will need to refer to this summary in the equality impact</p>	No negative impact identified

Isle of Anglesey County Council - Welsh Language Impact Assessment Template

7 – Post consultation, final proposals and ongoing monitoring	
assessment template (Step 4 – result of the assessment)	
7.2 How will you monitor the ongoing effects during the implementation of the policy?	The action plan at the end of the equality impact assessment template should be used to note any actions planned following completion of the assessment.