

Single Impact Assessment

Cardiff Council



1. Details of the Proposal

What is the proposal?

Title:	Consideration as to whether the Council should increase the council tax premium from 100% to 200% on dwellings that have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than 24 months and from 100% to 300% on dwellings that have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than 36 months.
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Is this a new proposal or are you amending an existing policy, strategy, project, procedure or service?

New	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Existing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Directorate/Service Area:

Resources/ Revenues

Who is developing the proposal?

Name:	Mike Taylor / Gary Watkins
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Job Title:	Council Tax Manager /Operational Manager
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Responsible Lead Officer (Director or Assistant Director):

Ian Allwood – Head of Finance

Cabinet Portfolio:

FINANCE, MODERNISATION AND PERFORMANCE



Authorisation	
Completed By:	Mike Taylor
Job Title:	Council Tax Manager
Date:	12 th February 2024
Approved By:	Gary Watkins
Job Title:	Operational Manager

Document History – do not edit

The Single Impact Assessment (SIA) can be strengthened as time progresses, helping shape the proposal. Version control will provide a useful audit trail of how the SIA has developed. Draft versions of the assessment should be retained for completeness, however only the final version will be publicly available. Draft versions may be provided to regulators if appropriate.

Version	Author	Job Title	Date
1	FG	Senior Corporate Policy Officer	12/10/2022
2	FG	Senior Corporate Policy Officer	12/04/2023
3	FG	Senior Corporate Policy Officer	12/12/2023

2. Overview of the Proposal

What action is the Council considering and why?

Please provide a detailed outline of the proposal. This information will support your findings in the impact assessments.

Long Term Empty Dwellings

The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 amended the Local Government Finance Act 1992 by inserting section 12A which gave the Council the discretion to discontinue any discounts granted to long term empty homes and apply a premium of up to 100% on top of the standard rate of council tax.

The Council Tax (Long term empty Dwellings and Dwellings Occupied Periodically) (Wales) Regulations 2022 have now further amended Section 12A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to provide that with effect from 1st April 2023 the Council has the discretion to charge a premium of up to 300% on top of the standard rate of council tax on long-term empty property.

Many issues of community concern arise from some of the empty properties within the city; these include fly tipping, nuisance, vandalism, criminal activity, and visual deterioration, all of which have the potential to adversely affect neighbouring properties and residents. Some empty properties can be a blight on a local community and boarded up dwellings have a significant impact on the way potential investors perceive an area. In addition to the above, empty properties also represent a wasted resource considering the housing demand within the city. Current figures show that there are 1563 empty for more than six months at any one time and the Housing enforcement team within the Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) actively monitor 200 of those empty properties on a prioritised basis as part of the Private Sector Empty Homes Policy. Priority is given to problematic empty homes and those vacant for more than 5 years.

In addition to reactive visits to complaints about empty properties, the SRS also work proactively to capture the wider scope of long-term empty properties. The Council seeks to incentivise owners to act positively in bringing properties into beneficial use in several ways. These include signposting owners to the Houses into Homes loan scheme, providing a list of private property developers, referring to a Housing Association for lease and repair where feasible or providing proof of empty status letters for VAT reduction on renovation costs. Although some owners may be receptive to this approach, there are of course situations where owners are absent and cannot be traced or are resistant to resolving the issues. In these circumstances, the SRS can exercise a number of enforcement powers. These can deal with immediate issues such as fly tipping and making premises secure to more long-term solutions such as enforced sale or compulsory purchase

In 2019 Cardiff Council made a decision to apply a premium of 50% on long term empty dwellings with effect from 1st April 2019. The reason for introducing the premium was to encourage home owners to bring properties back in occupation. A long term empty dwelling is defined as a dwelling that is both unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a continuous period of at least a year. With effect from 1st April 2023 the Council made a further decision to increase this premium from 50% to 100%.

As a result of this change the number of long-term empty properties that are charged a council tax premium has only reduced from 882 at the beginning of April 2023 to 808 on 16th January 2024 .Even more concerning is that more than half of these properties (406) have currently been empty for more than 2 years and 252 of these properties have been empty for more than 3 years. This is an indication that the current level of premium may not be sufficient to act as an added incentive to bring properties back into beneficial occupation.

Therefore, with effect from 1st April 2024, the Council is considering increasing the premium charge to 200% for properties that have been empty for more than 24 months and to 300% for properties that have been empty for more than 36 months.

The Council can make, vary, or revoke a determination made under Section 12A of the 1992 Act, but only before the beginning of the financial year to which the determination applies.

The Council is committed to minimising the amount of empty properties that exist in view of the housing demand within the city and the impact that some empty properties have upon the local community.

What are the costs and/or savings?

What will the proposal cost and how will it be funded?

How might costs be reduced through involvement and collaboration, across Cardiff Council and/or with external stakeholders?

Are there savings and how will these be realised?

As this is an amendment to an existing scheme the new cost structure will be met from existing resources. The policy intention is to encourage owners of long-term empty properties to take steps to bring them back into occupation. Consideration will be given to ring fencing any additional income for housing purposes.

3. Impact Assessments

Which impact assessments do you need to complete to support your proposal?

Further information is included about each assessment at the start of the relevant section.

The [Impact Assessment Screening Tool](#) provides advice tailored to your proposed policy, strategy or project regarding which impact assessments may be required and who to contact to find out more.

The screening tool is an online form with mainly multiple-choice questions which should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

Once the answers have been submitted, an automated email will be sent to you with the recommended next steps and details of who to contact for expert advice.

Put Yes or No next to each of the impact assessments listed below to indicate which ones are being carried out. For assessments which are not being carried out, please delete the relevant sections on the subsequent pages.

Impact Assessment	Completed: Y/N
A. Equality Impact Assessment	y
B. Child Rights Impact Assessment	n
C. Welsh Language Impact Assessment	y
D. Habitats Regulations Assessment	n
E. Strategic Environmental Assessment	n
F. Data Protection Impact Assessment	n
G. Health Impact Assessment	n

For further information on all the above impact assessments including who to contact for advice, please visit the [Policy Portal](#).

A: Equality Impact Assessment

Guidance in completing this assessment can be accessed [here](#). Please consult the Equality Team for any further assistance with completing this assessment EqualityTeam@cardiff.gov.uk

Under the Equality Act 2010, “differential impact” means that people of a particular protected characteristic (e.g. people of a particular age) will be significantly more affected by the change than other groups.

Impact on the Protected Characteristics

Age

Will this proposal have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on different age groups?

	Yes	No	N/A
Up to 18 years		X	
18 - 65 years		X	
Over 65 years		X	

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

Officers work proactively to incentivise owners in bringing their properties back into use and this proposal will aid the council’s commitment to reducing the number of empty homes and any associated problems.

Liability to council tax is assessed in accordance with existing statute and this will not change on the grounds of age.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

No differential impact in relation to age

Disability

Will this proposal have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on disabled people?

	Yes	No	N/A
Hearing Impairment		X	
Learning Disability		X	
Long-Standing Illness or Health Condition		X	
Mental Health		X	
Neurodiversity		X	
Physical Impairment		X	
Substance Misuse		X	

Visual Impairment		X	
Other		X	

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

Officers work proactively to incentivise owners in bringing their properties back into use and this proposal will aid the council's commitment to reducing the number of empty homes and any associated problems.

Liability to council tax is assessed in accordance with existing statute and this will not change on the grounds of disability.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

No differential impact in relation to disability

Gender Reassignment

Will this proposal have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on transgender people?

	Yes	No	N/A
Transgender People (Transgender people are people whose gender identity or gender expression is different from the gender they were assigned at birth.)		x	

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

Officers work proactively to incentivise owners in bringing their properties back into use and this proposal will aid the council's commitment to reducing the number of empty homes and any associated problems.

Liability to council tax is assessed in accordance with existing statute and this will not change on the grounds of Gender Reassignment.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

Liability to council tax is assessed in accordance with existing statute and this will not change on the grounds of Gender Reassignment

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Will this proposal have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on marriage and civil partnership?

	Yes	No	N/A
Marriage		X	
Civil Partnership		X	

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

Officers work proactively to incentivise owners in bringing their properties back into use and this proposal will aid the council's commitment to reducing the number of empty homes and any associated problems.

Liability to council tax is assessed in accordance with existing statute and this will not change on the grounds of Marriage and Civil Partnership.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

No differential impact in relation to Marriage and Civil Partnership

Pregnancy and Maternity

Will this proposal have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on pregnancy and maternity?

	Yes	No	N/A
Pregnancy		X	
Maternity		X	

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

Officers work proactively to incentivise owners in bringing their properties back into use and this proposal will aid the council's commitment to reducing the number of empty homes and any associated problems.

Liability to council tax is assessed in accordance with existing statute and this will not change on the grounds of Pregnancy and Maternity.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

No differential impact in relation to Pregnancy and Maternity

Race

Will this proposal have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on the following groups?

	Yes	No	N/A
White		X	
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups		X	
Asian / Asian British		X	
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British		X	
Other Ethnic Groups		X	

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

Officers work proactively to incentivise owners in bringing their properties back into use and this proposal will aid the council's commitment to reducing the number of empty homes and any associated problems.

Liability to council tax is assessed in accordance with existing statute and this will not change on the grounds of Race.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

No differential impact in relation to Race

Religion, Belief or Non-Belief

Will this proposal have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on people with different religions, beliefs or non-beliefs?

	Yes	No	N/A
Buddhist		X	
Christian		X	
Hindu		X	
Humanist		X	
Jewish		X	
Muslim		X	
Sikh		X	
Other belief		X	
No belief		X	

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

Officers work proactively to incentivise owners in bringing their properties back into use and this proposal will aid the council's commitment to reducing the number of empty homes and any associated problems.

Liability to council tax is assessed in accordance with existing statute and this will not change on the grounds of Religion, Belief or Non-belief.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

No differential impact in relation to Religion, Belief and Non-belief

Sex

Will this proposal have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on male, female or non-binary persons?

	Yes	No	N/A
Male persons		X	
Female persons		X	
Non-binary persons		X	

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

Officers work proactively to incentivise owners in bringing their properties back into use and this proposal will aid the council's commitment to reducing the number of empty homes and any associated problems.

Liability to council tax is assessed in accordance with existing statute and this will not change on the grounds of sex.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

No differential impact in relation to Sex.

Sexual Orientation

Will this proposal have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on people with different sexual orientations?

	Yes	No	N/A
Bi		X	
Gay		X	
Lesbian		X	
Heterosexual		X	
Other		X	

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

Officers work proactively to incentivise owners in bringing their properties back into use and this proposal will aid the council's commitment to reducing the number of empty homes and any associated problems.

Liability to council tax is assessed in accordance with existing statute and this will not change on the grounds of sexual orientation.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

No differential impact in relation to Sexual Orientation.

Socio-economic Duty

Is the change anticipated to reduce or contribute to inequality of outcome as a result of socio-economic disadvantage? (e.g. will the change negatively impact on those on low-incomes or those living in deprived areas?)

	Yes	No	N/A
Socio-economic impact	x		

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

More significant numbers of long-term empty dwellings seem to be located in less affluent areas of the city. Therefore the work that is being carried out to incentivise owners in bringing their properties back into use along with the potential increase in the council tax premium may have a more positive impact on some of the less affluent areas by improving the environment (please see details above).

Liability to council tax is assessed in accordance with existing statute and this will not change.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

Welsh Language

Will this proposal have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on the Welsh language?

	Yes	No	N/A
Welsh language		X	

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.
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Officers work proactively to incentivise owners in bringing their properties back into use and this proposal will aid the council’s commitment to reducing the number of empty homes and any associated problems.

Liability to council tax is assessed in accordance with existing statute and this will not change.

No differential impact on the Welsh language or Welsh speakers is therefore anticipated as the premium will affect all such owners, regardless of their chosen language.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

Consultation and Engagement

What arrangements have been made to consult/engage with equality/ community organisations, especially those who are representative of those you have identified as being likely to be affected?

<p>The Council has previously consulted twice on the implementation of long-term empty premiums. The most recent consultation exercise took place between 23rd December 2022 to 29th January 2023 when considering increasing the council tax premium charge on long term empty properties to 100%.</p> <p>Responses were received from over 350 different stake holders including residents, businesses, landlords and second home owners.</p> <p>The overwhelming majority of responders (78%) supported the Council’s proposal to increase the premium on long term empty property from 50 to 100% from 1st April 2023.</p>

In view of this and given the tight timescales involved it is not proposed to undertake a further consultation exercise.

Summary of Actions (Listed in the sections above)

	Actions
Age	none
Disability	none
Gender Reassignment	none
Marriage & Civil Partnership	none
Pregnancy & Maternity	none
Race	none
Religion/Belief	none
Sex	none
Sexual Orientation	none
Socio-economic Impact	none
Welsh Language	none
Generic/ Over-Archiving (applicable to all the above groups)	none

Next Steps

Any recommendations for action that you plan to take as a result of this Equality Impact Assessment (listed in Summary of Actions) should be included as part of your Service Area's Business Plan to be monitored on a regular basis.

Where the Equality Impact Assessment shows negative impacts, you must append the form to the Cabinet or Officer Decision Report.

On completion of this Assessment, please ensure that the whole form is submitted to the Equality Team mailbox so that there is a record of all assessments undertaken in the Council EqualityTeam@cardiff.gov.uk

C: Welsh Language Impact Assessment

Please consult with Bilingual Cardiff's Policy Team for any assistance with completing this assessment by emailing [Materion Polisi Iaith Gymraeg / Welsh Language Policy Matters](#).

Welsh Language Standards 88-97 (Policy Making)

Cardiff Council's full Compliance Notice can be found [here](#), but the Standards noted above specifically relate to what impact, if any, your proposal (be it a policy decision, new or updated policy or strategy, or a new or updated service delivery provision) has on the Welsh language and on Welsh speakers. The impact identified could be **direct or indirect** and any such evidence must be included.

They are summarised below, and you **must** provide evidence, especially from, but not limited to, any consultation exercises undertaken, in order to support your comments, regardless of whether you are noting a positive, negative or neutral impact.

- Will this proposal impact on a) the opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and b) treating the Welsh language **no** less favourably than the English language? (Please tick where relevant.)

	Positive	Negative	Neutral
a)			x
b)			x

Based on your above answer, please provide supporting comments and evidence in the relevant boxes on the following questions, for each one of the above that you have ticked.

- Could this proposal be formulated or re-formulated, so that it would have positive effects, or increased positive effects?

Could this proposal be formulated or re-formulated to ensure that it does not have adverse effects, or a decreased adverse effect?

Liability to council tax is assessed in accordance with existing statute and this will not change.

No differential impact on the Welsh language or Welsh speakers is therefore anticipated as the premium will affect all such owners, regardless of their chosen language.

- When consulting on the proposal, were views considered, and sought, on the effects (both positive and negative) that it would have on the Welsh language and for Welsh speakers in the wider community?

Did the consultation seek and give consideration to views on how the proposal could have positive, or increased positive effects?

Did the consultation seek and give consideration to views on how the proposal could have no adverse effects, or decreased adverse effects?

Please include a copy of the relevant consultation question/questions below along with your evidence.

The Council has previously consulted twice on the implementation of long-term empty premiums and given the tight timescales involved it is not proposed to undertake a further consultation exercise.

It is planned to contact affected households directly in advance of any increase being implemented.

There is no differential impact regarding the Welsh Language.

- If the proposal includes the awarding of grants, has consideration been given to the guidance presented in Cardiff Council's Policy on Awarding Grants in Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards with regard to a) the opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and b) in terms of treating the Welsh language **no** less favourably than the English language?

Note **N/A** if no awarding of grants was involved.

n/a

- If research was undertaken or commissioned to assist with the development of the proposal, did it give consideration to whether it would have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on a) the opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and b) in terms of treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?

Did the research undertaken or commissioned to assist with the development of the proposal give consideration to how it could have a positive effect, or increased positive effects?

Did the research undertaken or commissioned to assist with the development of the proposal give consideration to how it could have no adverse effect, or decreased adverse effects?

Note **N/A** if no research was undertaken or commissioned.

n/a

Material and Services

In addition to the impact assessment to ensure that the proposal meets the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards, consideration must also be given to the supporting materials and services that may be required.

Click on the following to view further information on specific issues:

- [Correspondence](#) - receiving and replying (emails, letters, online communication).
- [Education Training Courses](#)
- [Meetings & Public Events](#) – public meetings or events, group meetings, consultation, individual meetings.
- [Procurement Checklist](#)
- [Producing Forms](#)
- [Producing Public Documents](#) - policies, strategies, annual reports, corporate plans, guidelines, notices, codes of practice, consultation papers, licences, certificates, rules, brochures, leaflets, pamphlets or cards, ticket/vouchers.
- [Public Address Announcements](#)

- [Public Messages – electronic – video](#)
- [Publicity & Advertising](#)
- [Reception Services](#)
- [Self Service Machines](#)
- [Signs, Notices & Display Material](#)
- [Social Media](#)
- [Telephone](#) – receiving and answering calls.
- [Websites, Apps and Online Services](#)

Are all supporting materials and services compliant with the requirements of the Welsh language standards? If not, please send any required translation work to Bilingual Cardiff's Translation Log – the request form can be found [here](#).

Yes

Cardiff Council's Welsh Language Skills Strategy

This strategy may be viewed [here](#) and additional guidance documents have been produced to support its implementation:

- [Assessing Welsh Language Skills and Identifying Welsh Essential Roles](#)
- [Recruitment, Selection, and Interview Procedures and the Welsh Language](#)

Do you have access to sufficient Welsh speaking staff to support the delivery of the proposal in compliance with the requirements of the Welsh language standards?

Yes

Next Steps

Where it is considered that a Welsh Language Impact Assessment is required, you must append the form to the Cabinet or Officer Decision Report.

A copy must also be emailed to Bilingual Cardiff's Policy Team [Materion Polisi Iaith Gymraeg / Welsh Language Policy Matters](#).