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For all enquiries relating to this agenda please contact Rebecca Barrett
(Tel: 01443 864245 Email: barrerm@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Date: 5th June 2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

A meeting of the **Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee** will be held in the **Sirhowy Room - Penallta House, Tredomen, Ystrad Mynach** on **Tuesday, 11th June, 2019** at **5.30 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda. Councillors and the public wishing to speak on any item can do so by making a request to the Chair. You are also welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, both these requests require a minimum notice period of 3 working days, and a simultaneous translation will be provided if requested.

All Committee meetings are open to the Press and Public, observers and participants are asked to conduct themselves with respect and consideration for others. Please note that failure to do so will result in you being asked to leave the meetings and you may be escorted from the premises.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chrissy', enclosed in a large, loopy oval shape.

Christina Harrhy
INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A G E N D A

1 To receive apologies for absence.

2 Declarations of Interest.

Councillors and Officers are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any item of business on this agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Officers.

Pages

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Correspondence may be in any language or format | Gallwch ohebu mewn unrhyw iaith neu fformat



- 3 Consideration of any matter referred to this Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.
- 4 Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme. 1 - 30
- 5 To receive and consider the following Cabinet reports*: -
1. Re-profiling of WHQS Programme and HRA Capital Programme 2019/20 - 13th March 2019;
 2. Regeneration Board – Project Proposals - 29th May 2019.

**If a member of the Scrutiny Committee wishes for any of the above Cabinet reports to be brought forward for review at the meeting please contact Rebecca Barrett, 01443 864245, by 10.00am on Monday 10th June 2019.*

To receive and consider the following Scrutiny reports: -

- 6 Universal Credit - Housing Update. 31 - 44
- 7 Energy and Carbon Report. 45 - 80

Circulation:

Councillors J. Bevan, D. Cushing, C. Elsbury, Mrs C. Forehead (Vice Chair), R.W. Gough, L. Harding, A.G. Higgs, G. Kirby, Ms P. Leonard, Mrs G.D. Oliver, B. Owen, Mrs D. Price, J. Ridgewell (Chair), Mrs M.E. Sargent, W. Williams and B. Zaplatynski

And Appropriate Officers

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HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 11TH JUNE 2019

**SUBJECT: HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD
WORK PROGRAMME**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE
SERVICES**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To report the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 Forward Work Programmes are essential to ensure that Scrutiny Committee agendas reflect the strategic issues facing the Council and other priorities raised by Members, the public or stakeholder.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That Members consider any changes and agree the final forward work programme prior to publication.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 To improve the operation of scrutiny.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 The Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee forward work programme outlines the reports planned for the period 11th June 2019 to 21st July 2020.

5.2 The forward Work Programme is made up of reports identified by officers and members. Members are asked to consider the work programme alongside the cabinet work programme and suggest any changes before it is published on the council website. Scrutiny committee will review this work programme at every meeting going forward alongside any changes to the cabinet work programme or report requests.

5.3 The Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1. The Cabinet Work Programme is attached at Appendix 2. A copy of the prioritisation flowchart is attached at appendix 3 to assist the scrutiny committee to determine what items should be added to the forward work programme.

5.4 Conclusion

The work programme is for consideration and amendment by the scrutiny committee prior to publication on the council website.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 No assumptions are necessary.

7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

7.1 The operation of scrutiny is required by the Local Government Act 2000. The Local Government Wales Measure 2011 and subsequent Statutory Guidance include requirements to publicise the work of scrutiny committees. The operation of scrutiny committee forward work programmes was agreed following decisions by Council in October 2013 and October 2015.

7.2 Corporate Plan 2018-2023.

Scrutiny Committee forward work programmes contributes towards and impacts upon the Corporate Well-being Objectives by ensuring that the Executive is held to account for its Corporate Objectives, which are:

Objective 1 - Improve education opportunities for all

Objective 2 - Enabling employment

Objective 3 - Address the availability, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve people's well-being

Objective 4 - Promote a modern, integrated and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity and minimises the adverse impacts on the environment

Objective 5 - Creating a county borough that supports a healthy lifestyle in accordance with the sustainable Development Principle within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Objective 6 - Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

8.1 This report contributes to the well-being goals and is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in that by ensuring the scrutiny function is effective when reviewing services and policies and ensure it considers the wellbeing goals.

8.2 The Forward Work Programmes contribute to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2016 by ensuring there is an effective scrutiny function and that council policies are scrutinised against the following goals:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities

- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language
- A globally responsible Wales

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no specific equalities implications arising as a result of this report.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no specific financial implications arising as a result of this report.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no specific personnel implications arising as a result of this report.

12. CONSULTATIONS

12.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been included in this report.

13. STATUTORY POWER

13.1 The Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Rebecca Barrett, Committee Services Officer

Consultees: Catherine Forbes-Thompson, Interim Head of Democratic Services
Dave Street, Corporate Director – Social Services and Housing
Mark S. Williams, Interim Corporate Director of Communities
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services/ Monitoring Officer

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme
Appendix 2 Cabinet Forward Work Programme
Appendix 3 Forward Work Programme Prioritisation Flowchart

| Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme June 2019 to April 2020 | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| Meeting Date: 11th June 2019 | | | |
| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
| Impact of Universal Credit and Homelessness | The purpose of this report is to recommend to members that Cabinet agree to receive regular updates on the roll out of Universal Credit and its impacts and ratifies the approach being taken to manage the roll out of Universal Credit (UC) and the support being offered to tenants of Caerphilly Homes | This report focuses upon the impact of UC on both Council tenants and Caerphilly County Borough Council. In recognition of the issues being experienced as a consequence of the roll out of UC the report also explains the additional resource implications for Caerphilly Homes in delivering the extensive support mechanisms that are considered necessary for our tenants to sustain tenancies, maximise incomes, improve living conditions and also maintain our rental income. | Shaun Couzens – Chief Housing Officer Sandra Isaacs, Rents Manager |
| Energy and Carbon Report | The report outlines the progress made in respect of energy conservation and carbon reduction predominantly through its Carbon Reduction Strategy. The report outlines the need for a new overarching plan which will assist the Council in meeting it's "Green energy" ambitions whilst aligning the authority with Welsh Government's and the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) aspirations for decarbonisation. It also demonstrates how the Council can make radical improvements via some key opportunity areas and projects. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report outlines the activity undertaken to reduce the Council's carbon footprint and energy bills. • It goes on to propose a new Energy Plan to replace the Carbon Reduction Plan which is due to expire in 2019. • The new Energy Plan would contain a number of proposals that are outlined in more detail in this scrutiny report. | Allan Dalimore, Regeneration manager |
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Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

| Meeting Date: 23rd July 2019 (Performance Management Meeting) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
| Wellbeing Objectives WBO2 & WBO3 | To provide an update on progress made against WBO2 & WBO3 up to 31/03/19 | To advise members on the progress made to address the progress of the wellbeing objectives WBO2-enabling employment WBO3-address the supply, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve people's health and wellbeing. | Shaun Couzens – Chief Housing Officer Tina McMahon, Senior Community Regeneration Co-ordinator |
| HRA outturn 2018/19 | Information only report | To provide members with information on the financial outcome of the Housing Revenue Account for the 2018/19 financial year. | Shaun Couzens – Chief Housing Officer |
| Year End Performance 2018/19 Regeneration and Planning | To provide members with a performance update for the Regeneration and Planning Service. | Impact of austerity on the service moving forward. The report takes a look back over the last twelve months of performance highlighting the exceptions and then through looking forward, i.e. future challenges, setting out our key objectives/priorities for the next twelve months, identifying any areas for improvement. | Rhian Kyte, Head of planning and regeneration |
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Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

| Meeting Date: 3rd September 2019 | | | |
|---|--|---|------------------|
| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
| The Grove Flats, Fochriw – Demolition and provision of new shop | To seek members views on proposals to demolish a block of flats in Fochriw and provide a new shop to replace the existing premises on the ground floor of the block. | To advise members of the lack of demand and historical issues associated with this block of flats, which also contains commercial premises to the ground floor, which is the only shop in the community. To seek support to proceed with the provision of a new shop in the community which will then facilitate the demolition of the block. | |
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Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

| Meeting Date: 15th October 2019 | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
| Heads of the Valleys Masterplan | For Members to consider the Draft Heads of the Valleys Masterplan. | The report is seeking the view of members prior to its presentation to Cabinet, where Cabinet will be asked to endorse the Draft Masterplan as the basis for a public consultation exercise. | Rhian Kyte, Head of planning and regeneration |
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Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

| Meeting Date: 26th November 2019 | | | |
|--|----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
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Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

| Meeting Date: (Medium-Term Financial Plan Special) – 5th December 2019 | | | |
|--|----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
| Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) | | | |

Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

| Meeting Date: 28th January 2020 (Performance Management Meeting) | | | |
|--|----------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
| Rent increase report 2020/21 | | | Shaun Couzens – Chief Housing Officer |
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Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

| Meeting Date: 10th March 2020 | | | |
|---|----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
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Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

| Meeting Date: 21st April 2020 | | | |
|---|----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
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Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

| Meeting Date: 9th June 2020 | | | |
|---|----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
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Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

| Meeting Date: 21st July 2020 | | | |
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| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
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Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

| Meeting Date: Date – to be confirmed | | | |
|--|----------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
| Update on increasing Council House supply (Affordable Housing New Build) DATE TBC | | | Shaun Couzens – Chief Housing Officer |
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Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee – Information Reports June 2019 to April 2020**Meeting Date: 11th June 2019 TBC**

| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| Regeneration Board Project Proposals | To provide the Scrutiny Committee with an update on the work of the newly constituted Regeneration Project Board and the projects they have approved. | The report updates Scrutiny Committee on the work of the Regeneration Project Board. It outlines the Board's revised budget for regeneration project implementation and gives details of the Tranche 2 projects recently supported by the Board. | Allan Dalimore, Regeneration manager |
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Meeting Date: 23rd July 2019 (Performance Management Meeting)

| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
|----------------------|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| WHQS Progress Report | This report provides members with an overview of the performance of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) Team to date and also sets out the anticipated projected performance up to December, 2020, prior to its consideration by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and thereafter Cabinet. | Details of the year end outturn for 2018/19 for WHQS works are also included, together with an overview of the many achievements that have been made as part of the wider commitments and benefits delivered by the WHQS programme. This report also details further changes to the sheltered housing schemes where survey results have necessitated in two further schemes having to be omitted from the programme, and transferred to the Post 2020 asset management programme on the grounds of health and safety. | Shaun Couzens – Chief Housing Officer |
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Meeting Date: 3rd September 2019

| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
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Meeting Date: 15th October 2019

| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
|---|----------------|-------------------|--|
| HRA/ General Fund 2019/20 Period 4 Budget Monitoring | | | Shaun Couzens – Chief Housing Officer |
| Compliments/ Complaints Annual Report | | | Shaun Couzens – Chief Housing Officer |
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Meeting Date: 26th November 2019

| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
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| Allocation of New Homes and the role of the Tenancy Enforcement Section | | | Shaun Couzens – Chief Housing Officer |
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| Meeting Date: (Medium-Term Financial Plan Special) – December ??? TBC | | | |
|--|----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
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Meeting Date: 28th January 2020 (Performance Management Meeting)

| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
|---|----------------|-------------------|--|
| HRA/ General Fund 2019/20 Period 7 Budget Monitoring | | | Shaun Couzens – Chief Housing Officer |
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Meeting Date: 10th March 2020

| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
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Meeting Date: 21st April 2020

| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
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Meeting Date: 9th June 2020

| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
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Meeting Date: 21st July 2020

| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
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Cabinet - Forward Work Programme

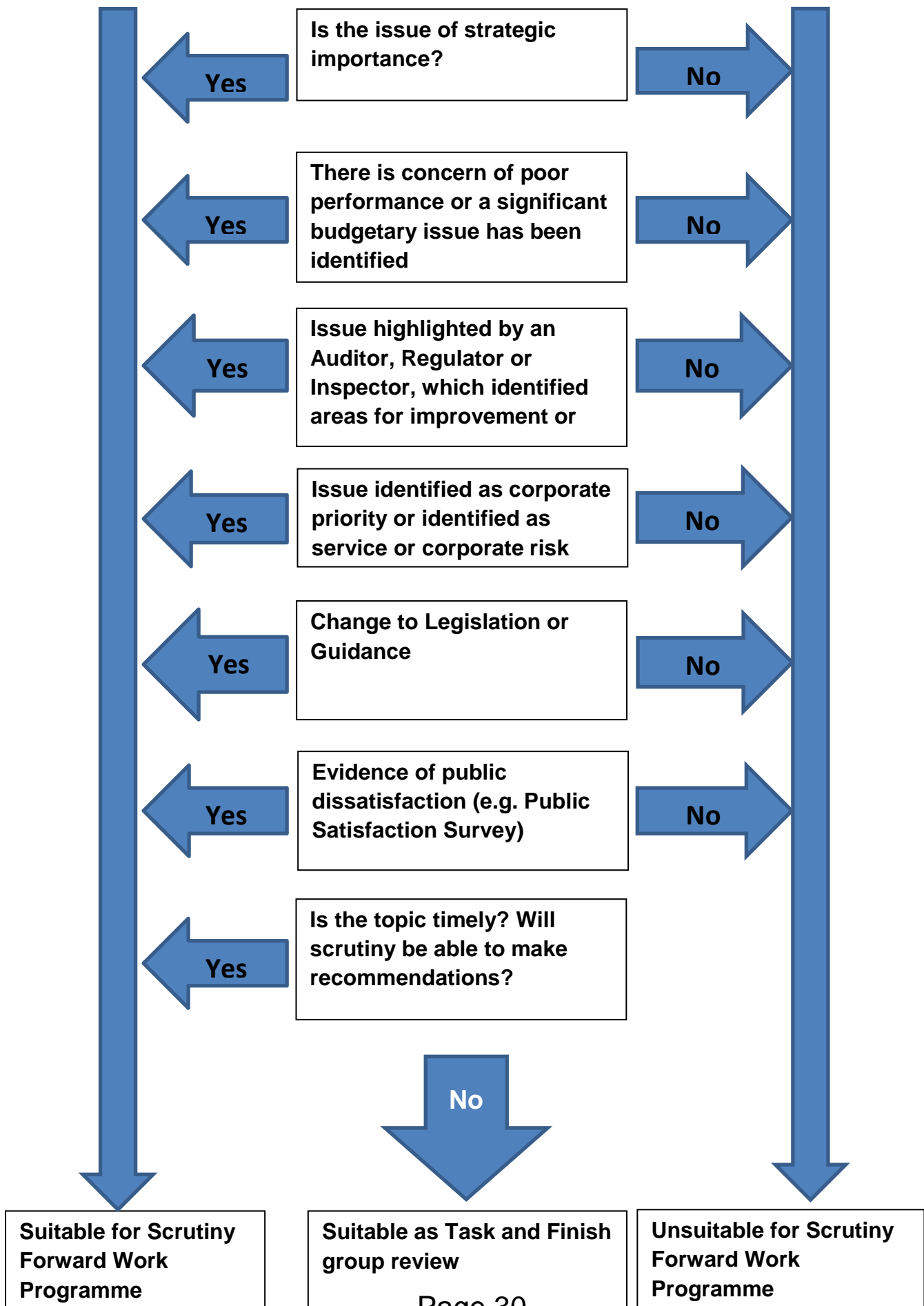
| Title | Key Issues | Author | Cabinet Member |
|---|------------|--------|----------------|
| Wednesday - 12/06/2019 Cabinet & PDM | | | |

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|---|---|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Impact Of Universal Credit and Homelessness | To advise Cabinet of the initial impact of Universal Credit and to seek approval of the policies we have in place to manage the impact. | Shaun Couzens | Cllr. Lisa Phipps |
| Affordable Housing New Build | For Cabinet to note the progress on a number of new builds and refurbishment projects, and to seek Cabinet approval to appropriate the land at Ty Darren, Risca and the transfer of associated funds to Caerphilly Homes. | Shaun Couzens/ Mark Williams | Cllr. Lisa Phipps |
| Future Caerphilly Transformation Strategy | To seek Cabinet approval of a new operating model for the Council | Steve Harris | Cllr. Barbara Jones |
| Digital Strategy | To seek approval of the Council's digital strategy. | Liz Lucas | Cllr. Colin Gordon |

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|---|--|-----------------|----------------------|
| Office 365 | To explore the principles for the roll out of Office 365 | Liz Lucas | Cllr. Colin Gordon |
| Provisional Outturn for 2018/19 | To provide Cabinet with details of the provisional outturn for the 2018/19 financial year prior to the annual audit by the Authority's External Auditor, Grant Thornton | Stephen Harris | Cllr. Barbara Jones |
| Wednesday - 26/06/2019 Cabinet & PDM | | | |
| Hafodyrynys Air Quality Feasibility Study | To present for approval for public consultation the draft Final Plan prepared in response to the Air Quality Direction issued by Welsh Government in respect of compliance with the EU Air Quality Directive at Hafodyrynys | Rob Hartshorn | Cllr. Eluned Stenner |
| Review of CCBC Regeneration Grants | To make recommendations to Cabinet following a review undertaken on the revenue and capital grant schemes currently administered by the Council's Regeneration Division. The report outlines proposals to amalgamate the grants into a combined "Caerphilly Enterprise Fund" and to focus their delivery to areas where they will have the biggest impact. | R. Kyte | Cllr. Sean Morgan |
| Annual Welsh Language Standards Report 2018-19 | To present to Cabinet the report which include a progress update on the Welsh Language Strategy | Anwen Cullinane | |
| Energy Generation and Savings Options | To outline work undertaken by the authority on energy conservation and carbon reduction, and to outline further opportunities | Allan Dalimore | Cllr. Sean Morgan |

| Wednesday - 10/07/2019 | | Cabinet & PDM | |
|--|---|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Consultation Response Report - Federation of Schools | Cabinet to consider the responses received as part of the formal consultation process and determine whether to proceed to formal federation for the 4 groups of schools included within the report. | Sue Richards | Cllr. Philippa Marsden |
| Corporate Plan 2018 - 2023 | To provide an update on progress | Ros Roberts | Cllr. Barbara Jones |
| Fees and Charges | | Stephen Harris | Cllr. Barbara Jones |
| Armed Forces: Guaranteed Interview Scheme | To consider a guaranteed interview scheme for former Armed Forces service leavers, reservists, veterans and spouses if they meet the vacancy essential criteria. | Lisa Rawlings | Cllr. Barbara Jones |
| Regeneration Board Projects - Tranche 3 Projects | | Allan Dallimore | Cllr. Sean Morgan |
| Wednesday - 24/07/2019 | | Cabinet & PDM | |
| Cabinet - Cancelled | | | |
| Thursday - 04/07/2019 | | Policy Meeting | |

Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme Prioritisation





HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 11TH JUNE 2019

SUBJECT: UNIVERSAL CREDIT – HOUSING UPDATE

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR – SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING

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- 1.1 The attached report was considered by the Caerphilly Homes Task Group at its meeting on 16th May 2019 and sought the views of Members, prior to its presentation to the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and thereafter Cabinet.
 - 1.2 The purpose of the report is to recommend to Members that Cabinet agree to receive regular updates on the roll out of Universal Credit and its impacts, ratifies the approach being taken to manage the roll out of Universal Credit (UC) and the support being offered to tenants of Caerphilly Homes.
 - 1.3 The report outlined the impact of UC on both Council tenants and Caerphilly Borough Council and explained how the roll out of UC operates and the issues this creates, resulting in an increase in rent arrears. The levels of rent arrears are significantly higher than that of tenants not in receipt of UC and it is quite clear that many tenants struggle with the complexity of UC and are at risk of not receiving their full benefit entitlement.
 - 1.4 In recognition of the issues being experienced as a consequence of the roll out of the U,C the report also explains the additional resource implications for Caerphilly Homes in delivering the extensive support mechanisms that are considered necessary for tenants to sustain tenancies, maximise incomes, improve living conditions and also maintain our rental income.
 - 1.5 In addition, Officers outlined an amendment in the report at 10.2 and 10.3 in which 10.2 should read “Despite the positive impact of this increase in support provision over the last 3 years the level of tenant *arrears has increased by 7.5% in 2018/19.* 10.3 should read “Furthermore, due to the increase of tenants’ arrears, it is necessary to ensure sufficient Bad Debt Provision is accounted for within the HRA. This is a reserve for future recognition of certain accounts being uncollectable and is an accounting requirement within the HRA. This level of provision has *also risen over the past 3 years by 10.73% in 2018/19.*”
 - 1.6 The Caerphilly Homes Task Group considered the report at length and sought clarification on the Universal Credit system and financial impacts on tenants and the allocation of benefits. Officers explained that there are some people who are worse off as a result of the system; however, there is an issue with budgeting as the system has moved to monthly and not fortnightly payments. In addition, during the assessment process, often people are without money for 5 weeks or more. However, claimants can apply for fortnightly payments on a short term basis to assist with budgeting where possible.

- 1.7 The Task Group raised a number of concerns around the arrears as a result of waiting period and the process and the additional financial difficulty UC is leaving people in. Officers explained that there is an option for people to apply for an advance payment, which acts as a loan and has to be repaid over 12 months, to bridge the gap during the assessment process, however the process can take between 5 weeks and beyond, depending on the completion of the applications, which are online and Identification checks also need to be completed online with a Driving Licence or Passport, however, if tenants don't have this, they can book an appointment with DWP to action.
- 1.8 Discussions took place around the support provided to tenants by the Tenant Support Officers (TSO) and it was noted that an average of 15 tenants a week are moving over to UC and a number of new ways of working have been implemented, for example Surgeries have been implemented in some areas in which residents can drop in and have the support they need, and TSO's are provided with Wi-Fi enabled tablets to help tenants with applications where need. However, it was noted that the level of support currently being provided to tenants may not be sustainable for future tenants moving to UC, and as a result, all Customer Services Staff and Housing Benefit staff have been provided with relevant training to assist with claims, and an advert has been posted for additional TSO's.
- 1.9 A Member sought further information into the levels of arrears as mentioned in the report. Officers explained that whilst UC has had an impact on the number of tenants in arrears, additional pressures such as a crisis in the family, Christmas period or change to direct payments also impact on the levels of rent arrears.
- 1.10 Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be supported. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee (and thereafter Cabinet) that for the reasons contained in the Officer's Report:

- i) it be agreed for a regular update to take place on the roll out of UC and its impact;
 - ii) the approach being taken to manage the roll out of UC and the support being offered to tenants be ratified.
- 1.11 The Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the report and above recommendations and comments from the Caerphilly Homes Task Group and make a recommendation to Cabinet.

Author: C. Evans, Committee Services Officer, Ext. 4210

Appendices:

Appendix Report to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group – Universal Credit – Housing Update – 16th May 2019



CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 16TH MAY 2019

SUBJECT: UNIVERSAL CREDIT – HOUSING UPDATE

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is seeking the views of members prior to its presentation to Regeneration and Housing Scrutiny Committee and thereafter Cabinet. The purpose of this report is to recommend to members that Cabinet agree to receive regular updates on the roll out of Universal Credit and its impacts and ratifies the approach being taken to manage the roll out of Universal Credit (UC) and the support being offered to tenants of Caerphilly Homes

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report focuses upon the impact of UC on both Council tenants and Caerphilly County Borough Council. The report explains how the roll out of UC operates and the issues this creates, resulting in an increase in rent arrears. The level of rent arrears is significantly higher than that of tenants not in receipt of UC and it is quite clear that many tenants struggle with the complexity of UC and are at risk of not receiving their full benefit entitlement.
- 2.2 In recognition of the issues being experienced as a consequence of the roll out of UC the report also explains the additional resource implications for Caerphilly Homes in delivering the extensive support mechanisms that are considered necessary for our tenants to sustain tenancies, maximise incomes, improve living conditions and also maintain our rental income.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Cabinet agree to a regular update on the roll out of UC and its impact.
- 3.2 Cabinet ratifies the approach being taken to manage the roll out of UC and the support being offered to tenants.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Universal Credit is one of the biggest changes to the welfare system since its inception, bringing together six existing benefits. Members will note the growing impact of Universal Credit on Caerphilly's Housing service and its tenants.

5. THE REPORT

Universal Credit

- 5.1 Universal Credit (UC) was initially introduced in the Caerphilly County Borough in May 2015 for new claims by single persons who would previously have been eligible to claim job seekers allowance (JSA) only. Initially UC claims by Caerphilly tenants were slow with only around 3 to 5 per month believed to be making a claim. This "live" service remained in place

in Caerphilly until September 2018 and during this time 120 Caerphilly tenants were known to have made a successful UC claim.

- 5.2 In September 2018 roll out of the “full service” commenced in Caerphilly for single claimants, couples and families, combining six means tested benefits, the so called “legacy benefits”
- Job Seekers Allowance, income related
 - Employment Support Allowance, income related
 - Child Tax Credit
 - Working Tax Credit
 - Housing Benefit
 - Income Support
- 5.3 The eligible tenant will directly receive one monthly combined lump sum payment covering each of the various benefits they are entitled to receive, which could include housing benefits to cover some or all of their rent. Previously housing benefit would have been paid by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) direct to the social landlord; during the period April 2018 to March 2019 we received £29 million in housing benefit payments directly to Caerphilly Council. As tenants move to UC this figure will reduce as payments are made directly to tenants, who become responsible for paying the rent to their landlord. Arrangements have to be made to collect these payments from tenants.
- 5.4 Tenants in receipt of UC will receive one lump sum payment which includes their personal allowance as well as their housing costs (rent). It is clear from our early experiences of roll out of UC that some tenants are using the housing costs element of their UC payment for other things and not paying their rent. At Christmas we noted an increase in rent arrears of tenants in receipt of UC.
- 5.5 Tenants move on to UC if they are a new claimant or if there is a change in their circumstances which triggers the changeover from the legacy benefits (detailed in 5.2). In practice this means a “change of benefits”. Examples of changes in benefits include:

| | |
|--|---|
| Universal Credit claim required | A tenant who has come out of work or has reduced their hours and doesn't have an existing housing benefit claim would be required to claim UC |
| | A person moves from a neighbouring borough and had a live housing benefit claim would need to make a claim for UC once they move to Caerphilly County Borough |
| | A single person working part time and claiming working tax credits who moves in with a partner would have to claim UC. |
| Universal Credit claim not required | A tenant currently claiming housing benefits moves within the County Borough to another property would not be required to make a claim for UC |
| | A couple working part time and claiming working tax credit who have their first child would not need to make a claim for UC for the child element |

- 5.6 There are further exceptions and the following groups would still continue to claim the legacy benefits (detailed in 5.2) above.

| | |
|--|---|
| Universal Credit exemptions | Anyone who has reached the qualifying age for state Pension Credit. Pensioners will claim Pension Credit from the DWP and Housing Benefit from the Council. |
| | Anyone living in supported accommodation (such as sheltered accommodation). People in supported accommodation who have not reached the age for state Pension Credit will claim UC to meet their personal costs and Housing Benefit from the Council to meet their housing costs |
| | Anyone placed in temporary accommodation by the Council. People in temporary accommodation will claim UC to meet their personal costs and Housing Benefit from the Council to meet their housing costs |
| | Anyone who is already claiming the Severe Disability Premium. People who qualify for Severe Disability Premium will continue to claim the legacy benefits listed in 5.2. |

- 5.7 Full service UC is digital by default with the initial application being made online and once in place all further interactions with UC are carried out via the claimants “digital journal.” This means any instructions or requirements for additional information from the DWP are notified to the claimant via the journal “to do” list.
- 5.8 Any changes in circumstances experienced by the claimant also need to be communicated digitally using the online journal. UC uses a texting service to advise claimants when a new request has been added to their journal. It is therefore vital that tenants inform the DWP, using the online journal, whenever they change their telephone number.
- 5.9 Once a claim has been completed claimants have to verify their identity either online using photo identification (passport or driving licence) or, as is often the case, if photo identification is not available by making an appointment at the local Job Centre. Once the claimant’s identity is verified then the UC claim enters a 5 week assessment period. The claimant should at this time make a separate application to the Council for Council tax Reduction as this process is completely separate to UC. Tenants not in receipt of UC and claiming Housing Benefit only need to complete one application used for both rent and Council tax reduction.
- 5.10 Generally, payments of UC are made each calendar month in arrears to one member of a couple, into the claimant’s bank account. If a claimant doesn’t think they will have enough to live on while they wait for their first payment (during 5 week assessment period) they are able to request an advanced payment of UC. The advanced payment is a loan and it has to be paid back within one year as a deduction out of their UC payments but no interest is charged.
- 5.11 An additional two week payment of Housing Benefit is paid during the assessment period, this is additional benefit and not repaid by the tenant. The DWP have recently announced that from July 2020 an additional 2 weeks non repayable legacy benefits (detailed in 5.2) will also be paid during the assessment period.
- 5.12 Alternative payment arrangements are available for claimants who can’t manage their monthly payment. The landlord or claimant can apply for an Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA) Managed Payment to Landlord (MPTL) at any time, which will be considered by the DWP on a case by case basis. An APA can also include more frequent than monthly payments or a split payment of an award between partners. The decision whether to award an APA takes account of numerous factors and using the Tier 1 and Tier 2 guidance detailed below

Tier 1 factors – Highly likely/probable need for Alternative Payment Arrangements
Drug/alcohol and/or other addiction problems, such as gambling
Learning difficulties including problems with literacy and/or numeracy
Severe/multiple debt problems

Homeless
Domestic violence and abuse
Mental health condition
Currently in rent arrears/threat of eviction/repossession
Claimant is a 16 or 17 year old and/or a care leaver
Families with multiple and complex needs

Tier 2 factors – Less likely/possible need for Alternative Payment Arrangements

Third party deductions in place (such as for fines or utility arrears)
Claimant is a refugee/asylum seeker
History of rent arrears
Previously homeless and/or in temporary or supported accommodation:
Other disability (such as physical disability or sensory impairment)
Claimant has just left prison
Claimant has just left hospital
Recently bereaved

The DWP intends the change of payment to the landlord to be a short term and temporary arrangement and subject to review. Experience to date has demonstrated that this process is not straight forward for the landlord and is particularly problematic when there is a change in claimants' circumstances.

- 5.13 A significant issue is the delays that can be experienced in processing requests for MPTLs (i.e. when the landlord requests for the housing costs (rent) and arrears to be paid directly to the landlord). For information purposes the payment schedule received from the DWP dated 16/04/19 included £95,000 worth of housing costs and arrears deducted from tenants and paid to the Council directly. This schedule showed that some of the payments included had been deducted from claimants UC accounts as long ago as February 2019. This means a tenant's rent account will show they are in arrears but the DWP have deducted the monies but not yet paid it over to their rent account.
- 5.14 At 23/04/19 25% of Caerphilly council tenants in receipt of UC have a managed payment i.e. the housing costs are paid directly to the Council. UC is an in work and out of work benefit. A tenant could gain employment and, dependant on their level of income, their entitlement to UC may cease or reduce. Landlords are not made aware of this and would assume their normal payment from their UC will be deducted by the DWP and paid to the landlord direct. As shown in 5.1.11 the delay in payments being direct to rent accounts by the DWP adds further complications for both the tenant and the Council.

Impacts of UC on the Housing Service

- 5.15 As at 23/04/19, 933 Council tenants were recorded as being in receipt of UC for housing costs, equating to 8% of all Council tenancies. Of these 933 cases, 783 were showing arrears at this date, amounting to a total debt due of £569,490. Of the 783 tenants in arrears 35% owed more than 8 weeks rent.
- 5.16 A geographical split of the 933 Council tenants claiming UC is shown by housing area below:-
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Upper Rhymney Valley housing area | - 46% |
| Eastern Valley housing area | - 32% |
| Lansbury Park neighbourhood | - 11% |
| Graig Y Rhacca neighbourhood | - 11% |
- 5.17 The average level of arrears for tenants on UC on this date amounted to £609.73. In context the average rent arrears for all Council tenants at this date was £375.15. Due to the nature of Universal Credit, with claimants receiving payments on differing dates depending on when their claim was accepted, and in four weekly schedules for receiving managed payments, it should be noted that these figures can only represent a snapshot of the position at the relevant date in question.

- 5.18 UC has been designed specifically with system change in mind – and many of the areas that are causing difficulties for Council tenants are those that are explicitly deliberate in the design of UC. These include:
- It is digital by default and therefore applications must be made online and once accepted, the customer must actively maintain their online journal
 - Applicants must budget monthly to prepare them for the world of work
 - Requirement for ID to make an initial claim although appointments can be made at the job centre to verify
 - Requirement for monies to be paid into a bank account
 - No payment for one calendar month (plus up to a week for payment to transfer) after a claim is made
 - Ending of system referred to as 'implied consent' which enabled advisors to discuss clients cases with the DWP without the client being present.
 - Tenants receive their Housing Costs (rent) direct and are responsible for paying rent to landlord
- 5.19 Support to new and existing council tenants affected by UC is provided by Tenancy Support Officers. The underlying economic climate and the introduction of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 which brought about wholesale reform of the benefits system, including the development of UC, led to the creation in 2012 of a tenancy support team within the Rents section. This team (5FTE), together with the Specialist Benefits Advisor, provide invaluable assistance to tenants in sustaining their tenancies, including:
- Supporting tenants with new and existing benefit claims (including UC)
 - Providing budgeting and basic debt advice
 - Warm home Discount scheme applications
 - Subsidised water tariffs (Help U)
 - Applications to relevant charitable trusts and Discretionary Assistance Fund
 - Energy advice (staff trained to level 3 City and Guilds)
 - Personal Independence Payment applications
 - Food parcels
 - Benefit better off calculations
 - Referrals to employability programmes.
- 5.20 During the period April 2018 to March 2019, the tenancy support staff made 2035 home visits to council tenants which resulted in an additional £628,000 additional income for those tenants. This came from a variety of sources including additional benefits, preferential water tariffs, written off utility debts, and grants. In addition to the financial savings the staffs were successful in applying for 92 free white goods items for tenants (e.g. cookers, fridge freezers and washing machines) from the Discretionary Assistance Fund. The support staff ensure the service is as accessible as possible by visiting tenants in their own homes and offering appointments at Council Offices and premises e.g. Hafod Deg and community spaces. Assistance is often provided at short notice, ensuring crisis situations can be avoided and tenants are able to sustain their tenancies.
- 5.21 The established tenancy support team at Caerphilly has been integral in supporting tenants moving onto and maintaining UC claims. The staff have received in depth UC training and the broader knowledge they have gained since 2012 is enabling them to provide focused support to tenants. The team also work in partnership with other teams within Housing who also support tenants e.g. Floating Support, and the Community Regeneration Team for tenants who require ongoing digital or employment support.
- 5.22 During February to April 2019 the Housing Service undertook a survey of council tenants who had recently moved to UC and made a claim directly with the DWP, to seek their views of the whole claim process. Although the sample was small the following highlights the key results from the survey:

- 48% did not find it easy to make a claim for Universal Credit
- 80% were informed by the DWP they could apply for an advance or more frequent payments
- 85% felt they could cope with managing their online journal (with possible assistance from families)

5.23 Comments from tenants about their claims included:

“I didn’t understand how to make claim, would have liked 1 to 1 support at home. Not confident to challenge how much the DWP gave me. I had help from the Council to check calculation”

“Had issues setting up the account but had help from JCP staff”

“Initial claim was easy but very little support after claim. DWP staff not helpful”

“Had support from daughter as do not have internet. Unable to use computer due to epilepsy. Daughter helps manage claim”

“Verification a problem due to no photo ID, advised of advance but not more frequent payments”

5.24 Appendix 1 details four case studies where the support staff have given assistance to tenants in relation to UC. In some instances it can financially benefit tenants to move to UC however due to the highlighted issues e.g. digital by default and monthly budgeting, many of our tenants are reluctant to move to this benefit which means they are losing out on additional income.

5.25 From September 2018 to March 2019 Caerphilly County Borough Council Rent Section received funding from the DWP to provide budgeting and digital support to tenants. During this period £7750 was received. From April 2019 the DWP announced that this funding is to be provided nationwide to Citizen Advice and removed from local authorities. The estimated cost of the actual provision of this support to Caerphilly Homes tenants for this period was considerably higher i.e. £50k.

5.26 Demand for the Tenancy Support Service continues to grow and we are constantly monitoring and reviewing resource and capacity levels.

5.27 Central Government recently announced that the roll out of UC was to be slowed down. It is not anticipated that this will reduce the numbers of new claims being submitted each week as a UC claim will still be made when there is a change of circumstances (as detailed in 5.1.3). The roll out being slowed down relates only to the migration of long term claimants of legacy benefits from their existing benefit to UC.

5.28 The Welsh Government has recently commissioned a study to assess the impact of UC on the Council Tax reduction scheme and rent arrears in Wales. They want to understand how UC is affecting families in Wales. Findings are not expected to be available until early next year.

5.29 **Conclusion**

The impact of UC is a strategic risk that, although mitigated by the advice and support we provide, remains a high risk to the Housing Service with critical impact. Mitigating the impact of UC comes at a significant additional cost to the Service but the alternative would be an even greater impact on tenants and their ability to sustain their tenancies, leading to an increase in homelessness and tenancy turnover, and rent arrears.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 No assumptions have been made in proposing the recommendations in the report.

7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

7.1 Corporate Plan 2018-2023

The report content contributes towards or impacts the Corporate Well-being Objectives within The Caerphilly We Want (2018-2023) Well Being Plan which are:

Objective 1 - Improve education opportunities for all - by supporting the improvement of digital skills for tenants

Objective 2 - Enabling employment through providing relevant support and the enhancement of knowledge and skills of Housing staff and tenants thereby supporting better employment prospects.

Objective 3 - Address the availability, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve people's well-being – by helping to reduce fuel poverty and preventing tenancies from failing by providing a range of housing related support to tenants, including those affected by financial hardship

Objective 6 - Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being – by supporting tenants to help themselves by providing comprehensive advice and information, including signposting to other services, and having meaningful conversations to help people identify what matters to them. Providing support to reduce the need for statutory interventions.

7.2 Caerphilly Homes Service Plan (2018-2023)

Priority Objective 6 – Prevent homelessness and tackle rough sleeping - by providing tenants threatened with homelessness advice to mitigate the impact of UC.

Priority Objective 7 - Sustaining tenancies by providing a range of housing related services:-

- Providing help to tenants to enable them to budget effectively, to claim the correct welfare benefits and to mitigate the impact of welfare reforms.
- Referring council tenants in need of money and debt advice to the right agencies.
- Providing advice to tenants on energy usage and other measures to help save money.
- Providing assistance to tenants requiring help with benefit claims and appeals including Employment Support Allowance and Personal Independence Payment.
- Closely monitoring the impact of the full role out of Universal Credit on tenants, resources and homelessness.
- Raising awareness amongst elected members and staff of the full role out of Universal Credit and the potential impacts.

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 8.1 Housing Services and our outlined priorities, contribute to a minimum of 6 out of the 7 well-being goals within the *Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015*, including:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A globally responsible Wales

- 8.2 This report contributes to the Well-being Goals as set out in Links to Strategy above. It is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle of the Act in that:

Long Term – supports the sustainability of cohesive communities for tenants and residents; providing a fair and transparent service for tenancy support and sustainment.

Prevention – supports tenants and assists in the prevention of eviction and homelessness. It supports the health and well-being of tenants and residents.

Integration – improved standards of housing support which contribute to stable community environments.

Collaboration – The service focuses on internal collaboration and wider partnerships. Joined up working arrangements within the organisation and with outside agencies support tenant engagement and tenancy sustainment.

Involvement – The engagement of tenants, residents and support agencies in relation to sustainment of tenancies.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 An EIA screening has previously been completed in accordance with the Council's Strategic Equality Plan and supplementary guidance. No potential for unlawful discrimination and/or low level or minor negative impact was identified therefore a full EIA has not been carried out to date.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 In 2012 additional resource was necessary to support tenants with Welfare Reform Changes, and 5 additional posts were created within the tenancy support team at a cost of £190k.
- 10.2 Despite the positive impact of this increase in support provision over the last 3 years the level of tenant arrears has increased sharply from 2.67% in 2016/17 to 7.52% in 2018/19. Although these arrears include all charges to tenants (e.g. rent, service charges, water and fuel charges) officers are confident that the increase is as a direct result of the introduction of Welfare Reform.
- 10.3 Furthermore, due to the increase of tenants' arrears, it is necessary to ensure sufficient Bad Debt Provision is accounted for within the HRA. This is a reserve for future recognition of certain accounts being uncollectable and is an accounting requirement within the HRA. This level of provision has also risen over the past 3 years from 3.58% in 2016/17 to 10.73% in 2018/19. The current level of Bad Debt Provision is £1.6m which equates to 2.99% of the rent debit.
- 10.4 The level of write offs have also increased from £267k in 2016/17 to £283k in 2018/19 although the percentage of this against the total rent charges has remained around about 0.5%.
- 10.5 The above are clearly significant costs to the HRA resulting from Welfare Reform.
- 10.6 There is a Welfare Reform Provision that has been set up within the HRA of some £398k over the past few years. The Chief Housing Officer reports to PDM on a quarterly basis due to concerns over UC linked to rent arrears, tenancy support and the potential for increasing homelessness. Whilst resources have increased there will probably be a need to increase further, with the unknown impact of Brexit adding to concerns, along with the likelihood of increased fuel poverty, foodbank use, and living costs generally. We are already seeing increased levels of persons presenting as homeless and we are obviously keen to avoid evictions which will only add to the homeless problem. The Welfare Reform Provision has therefore been set up to assist with this.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The roll out of UC is ongoing with an average of 15 tenants per week moving over to this benefit. If we are to be able to offer the same level of support to future tenants moving on to UC it may be necessary to increase the number of support staff.

12. CONSULTATIONS

- 12.1 The report reflects the views of the consultees.

13. STATUTORY POWER

- 13.1 Not applicable.

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Consultees: Cllr Dave Poole - Leader of the Council
Cllr Lisa Phipps - Cabinet Member for Homes and Places
Cllr Sean Morgan - Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Economy,
Infrastructure, Sustainability & Wellbeing of Future
Generations Champion

Christina Harrhy - Interim Chief Executive
David Street - Corporate Director of Social Services and Housing
Shaun Couzens - Chief Housing Officer
Robert Tranter - Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer
Steven Harris - Interim Head of Business Improvement Services
Fiona Wilkins - Housing Services Manager
Lesley Allen - Principal Accountant
Amanda Main - Benefits Manager
Mark Jennings - Housing Strategy Officer

Appendices:
Appendix 1 Universal Credit case studies

Case Study 1

Single tenant and non-dependant daughter both made a claim for Universal Credit the same day. Tenant wasn't able to access the online journal as she had forgotten her email address and rang to request a TSO visit to assist as she had used the service previously.

- Completed a discretionary housing payment application as tenant and daughter were in a 3 bedroom house and affected by the bedroom tax. **This additional income was granted**
- Completed a water tariff reduction form with tenant **reduced by £6.50 per week**
- Assisted tenant to set up a new email and added it to the Universal Credit claim to enable tenant to manage claim online. **Tenant could now manage her claim online with the assistance of her daughter**
- Tenant receiving incorrect amount of housing costs, contacted the Universal Credit service centre and resolved this. **Backdate received of correct housing costs**

Case Study 2

Single tenant, with mental health issues, not digitally literate and with no access to online/internet services. Tenant had contacted the Universal Credit service centre who told her to go to her local Job Centre Plus to make a claim. She was advised by the Job Centre Plus that due to her vulnerabilities and lack of digital skills she could make a claim by telephone. At this time her phone had been disconnected

TSO visited – contacted Universal Credit and a claim was made using the TSO's telephone. Request made for the DWP to carry out a home visit to verify ID **Universal credit now in payment**

Case Study 3

Tenant claiming Job Seekers Allowance found not fit for work and informed he should claim Universal Credit. Tenant attempted to complete his own claim but did not finalise this as he did not complete the verification process

Support officer visited to assist tenant to claim Personal Independence Payments and found he was not in receipt of UC. Tenant had selected he preferred to be contacted by email but was not digitally literate

Tenant assisted to make a new claim for Universal Credit and contact was made to book a verification interview. A request was made for a backdate of UC due to vulnerabilities and a request was made for the tenant to manage his UC manually and not online – **Universal credit now in payment and tenant manages claim manually. Backdate of universal credit successful. The tenant was signposted for digital support at their local library**

Case Study 4

Tenant in receipt of job seekers allowance two working non dependants living with her. Struggling to cover rent as was not entitled to Housing Benefits due to the amount that the non-dependants were earning. Non dependants were not contributing towards rent which led to rent arrears on account.

The tenancy support officer visited and carried out a "better off" calculation which showed she would be £60.00 per week better off on Universal Credit. The nondependent flat rate charge entitled her to help opposed to the Housing Benefit non dependant charge that disqualified her. Tenant was supported to make a Universal Credit claim

Tenancy support officer followed up this initial visit a month later to see how the tenant was coping with her new benefit claim and she advised me that she was unable to manage her money monthly and was left with nothing by the end of the month, she had attended a budgeting class with the Job Centre but this had done very little in helping her. **Tenancy support officer applied for more frequent payment which amended her payment from monthly to fortnightly**

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HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 11TH JUNE 2019

SUBJECT: ENERGY AND CARBON REPORT

REPORT BY: INTERIM CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report outlines the progress made in respect of energy conservation and carbon reduction predominantly through its Carbon Reduction Strategy. The report outlines the need for a new overarching plan which will assist the Council in meeting its “Green energy” ambitions whilst aligning the authority with Welsh Government’s and the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) aspirations for decarbonisation. It also demonstrates how the Council can make radical improvements via some key opportunity areas and projects.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report firstly summarises the positive track record that the authority has through introducing and implementing measures to reduce energy consumption and reduce its carbon footprint. It sets out the benefits attained from that work and outlines how this will be further enhanced by exploring and maximising the Council’s assets. The existing Carbon Reduction Strategy period ends in 2019, so there is a need to develop a new overarching strategy for the Council. Part of this process will be the development of an Energy Plan which sets out our overarching objective of being a carbon neutral council and identifies a number of projects that the Council can take forward over the short, medium and long term that will move us towards this overarching aim.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To acknowledge the volume and diversity of work on carbon conservation that has already been undertaken, as outlined in Appendix 1: *Summary report on initiatives to date*.
- 3.2 To seek the views of the Committee regarding the proposed overarching aims of the new Energy Plan to make us a carbon neutral council, and the associated proposed projects that will assist in delivering that aim.
- 3.3 The committee consider the next steps in the development of the Energy Plan and to

offer scrutiny consideration once a draft is developed.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Council needs to build on the progress made over the last decade through the implementation of the Carbon Reduction Strategy. In order to continue that work the Council needs to take a coordinated approach to carbon/energy management. This report advocates a wider approach to reducing energy consumption and investing in energy efficiency using the Council's own assets to drive forward this agenda through the development of a new Caerphilly County Borough Council Energy Plan.
- 4.2 Taking this wider approach will certainly assist the Council in fulfilling its Green energy potential as well as demonstrating the current obligations we have already, set out by Welsh Government and Westminster Government. Importantly it will also help future-proof the local authority going forward. In order to shape the Energy Plan it is imperative that the Council first understands what problems it is trying to solve in order to align potential projects to deliver maximum impact.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The requirement for the Authority to continue to be proactive stems from a suite of internal and external drivers and influences. Continuing energy cost increases are a prime external driver; whilst the need to develop a replacement Carbon Reduction Strategy and the opportunity to take a commercial approach to some of our assets are internal ones. Importantly, we brand ourselves as the "Green" council and we know there is still much to do to maximise our full potential in terms of Green energy credentials.
- 5.2 There is also a changing legislative landscape and a change in focus particularly by Welsh Government. The launch of Welsh Government's Prosperity for All: Low Carbon Wales in March 2019 outlines the following vision:
- "In 2050, Wales will be among the best places in the world to live, learn, work and do business. Our businesses, public services, third sector and government will have worked together to achieve the goals that we set in the ground-breaking Well-being of Future Generations Act and the target to reduce emissions by at least 80% against the 1990 baseline".*
- 5.3 Welsh Government advocates a low carbon pathway that requires decarbonisation across a number of sectors, such as power, buildings and transport. This means that the Council needs to ensure that long lived infrastructure for these sectors support low carbon options and avoid locking in high carbon infrastructure and behaviour. It will mean investing in infrastructure in the low carbon economy as soon as possible,
- 5.4 Regionally there is also pressure to accelerate decarbonisation. Cardiff Capital Region City Deal is working towards creating an overarching regional energy strategy. It is likely that the objectives set by this regional energy strategy will mirror and support those set out by Welsh Government. We have already identified through our Regeneration Strategy that the Green energy sector provides an important opportunity for us to develop an economic and environmental eco-system.

WORK TO DATE

- 5.5 Caerphilly County Borough Council has been active in energy conservation methods and techniques since 2005, and is able to demonstrate many good examples of success as outlined below:

Carbon Reduction Strategy

- 5.6 The authority has a Carbon Reduction Strategy which is due to expire in 2019. This 10 year strategy focusses in on reducing carbon emissions on non domestic buildings and street lighting. The strategy has been founded on the principles of: Good Housekeeping; Invest to Save; Asset Management and renewable energy all of which have played a major role in significant energy efficient projects being delivered by the authority. The Carbon Reduction Strategy identified a 45% reduction target and the Council have been working towards this over the last decade. Initial out-turn figures indicate that the Council is close to achieving this target.

Invest to Save

- 5.7 The authority has a proven track record in delivering energy and carbon improvements using the Invest to Save model. The authority was a founding member (2004) of the national Salix scheme, which provides interest free loans from a revolving investment pot for technologies such as lighting (as in Ty Penallta), boiler controls or insulation to name a few. There have been 120 projects delivered in schools across the county borough. The authority has £800k to reinvest and is the top performer in Wales on the volume of annual carbon saved. The County Borough is also placed highly in UK national league tables. It is the eighth placed authority within the Salix scheme and is the highest placed Welsh Authority. Overall against all public sector organisations we are placed 16th out of 110 organisations.
- 5.8 As at 1st April 2018, the Salix scheme is reported to save £475,882 annually off the authority's gas and electricity bill. The Council's annual utility bill would have been significantly higher had the projects not been implemented. Our annual carbon savings through the Salix scheme is 2,930 tonnes and in 17/18 this equated to £51,861 saved on carbon tax. As the cost of carbon tax and utility costs increase and as we continue to add to the projects implemented, the annual savings continue to increase.

Renewables

- 5.9 The Council has invested in 19 medium sized Photo Voltaic (PV) arrays and 45 smaller demonstration PV schemes that have offset grid electricity consumption by 621 MWh (CCBC have also exported power to the grid). These PV's schemes have resulted in a total of 583 tonnes of carbon saved at today's conversion rate; and a total Feed In Tariff revenue to the authority of circa £390k.

Street Lighting

- 5.10 Caerphilly CBC has a current street lighting stock of approximately 27,500 units, which since 2009 have been subject to a number of energy saving measures (inter-urban road part-night lighting, replacement of conventional lamps with low-energy alternatives, dimming etc.). In 2015-16 a capital investment was made for the replacement of approximately 8,200 lights with LED gear trays (replacing the lighting elements only) and approximately 1250 LED lanterns replacing life expired sodium lanterns within residential areas. To date these changes have brought a reduction in energy of 4,239,776 kWh and 1747 tonnes of CO².
- 5.11 At the beginning of April 2019 the Council has begun a program to convert all the county borough's remaining street lanterns to LED and at the same time implement

part night lighting, between the hours of midnight and 5.30am, to all lighting, except at junctions and in major town centres. Once the additional savings of 6,884,477KWh and 2,836 are realised, the Council will have contributed to energy reductions of 11,124,253 kWh and 4583 tonnes of Co². This equates to a 63% reduction in CO² from Highway energy alone and 17.6% towards the Authority's 45% target. The new programme will see millions of pounds invested in replacing the remaining luminaires. The energy savings to date have been approx. £500,000. The energy savings for the current LED/part night initiative will realise an additional £940,000 in avoided costs/savings.

Housing

- 5.12 Reducing energy consumption has been the key objective of the Council when considering its own housing stock. Over a third of the Council's stock has now benefitted from external wall insulation. A large proportion has also benefitted from the introduction of more efficient condensing boilers and loft insulation. This work has been supplemented by the introduction of double glazing on all of the Council's housing stock. Some innovative projects have been trialled, including the installation of Solar PV on stock at Ty Coch, Rhymney and air source heat pumps at properties in Rudry. The Council were also partners in the off grid housing exemplar at Maes Yr Onn to design and deliver a modern farmhouse and family home.

CCBC Office Stock

- 5.13 The Council, wherever possible is looking to reduce energy costs associated with running its own office buildings. Much progress has been made in reducing the electricity consumption in Ty Penallta for example. 108 roof top PV panels have been installed, changes have been made to the heating and cooling controls strategy and the original tungsten and fluorescent lighting is progressively being replaced with the latest low energy LED fittings.

Housing Association Developments

- 5.14 All of the zoned Housing associations active in the county borough are absolutely committed to addressing the Welsh Government's low carbon agenda and housing delivery challenges in Wales. Those HA's zoned in the locality have been working towards a decarbonisation agenda for some time and have been working to higher standards than volume house builders.

Utility Billing

- 5.15 Between 2005-2013 the authority's energy team checked all non domestic Gas and Electricity bills. Post 2013 the team has been paying those bills. This has improved accuracy and speed of payment and prevents overpayment. Importantly this has led to accurate energy consumption/cost reporting on all Council owed buildings. This covers circa 7,880 invoices (including credits and rebills) with a value of £3.65m.

Sustainable transport

- 5.16 Transport accounts for 14% of Welsh carbon emissions, and although vehicles are becoming increasingly efficient, this figure has barely moved since the 1990 baseline. Significant work has already been undertaken to reduce the emissions from Council vehicles, with a drive to phase out older vehicles and replace them with more efficient and cleaner new (Euro 6 compliant) vehicles. Work has also been undertaken to support staff to travel more sustainably, including: establishing a car share scheme; providing pool bikes; promoting low emission vehicles through a salary sacrifice car scheme; and installing shower and changing facilities to encourage people to cycle to work. The Authority also operates a "Cycle to Work Scheme, and has recently taken ownership of an electric bike which is available for staff to use

Electric Vehicles

- 5.17 The Authority recently approved an *Electric Vehicle Strategy and Action Plan* setting out its vision to “*Introduce an electric vehicle infrastructure across Caerphilly county borough, to maximise the economic, social and environmental benefits and opportunities that the electric vehicle agenda will provide, and for electric vehicles to be a fundamental part of our fleet*”. The key aims are to:
- Provide electric vehicle infrastructure across the Caerphilly County Borough.
 - Lead by example incorporating electric vehicles into our fleet and trial new technologies as they evolve.
 - Work with private developers to incorporate electric vehicle infrastructure into new builds and developments.
 - Work with our partners and local businesses to encourage them to adopt a similar approach to electric vehicles and their infrastructure.
- 5.18 Continuing and expanding on this good work will bring about a number of benefits for the Council, its residents and indigenous businesses

REDUCING OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT CAN HAVE MULTIPLE BENEFITS:

- 5.19 Although the Council has worked hard to reduce its current carbon footprint, we do still impact negatively on our environment. The Carbon Reduction Strategy concentrated on non domestic buildings and street lighting and looked to reduce energy consumption and associated carbon emissions. The Council has accurate data in relation to consumption and carbon for both that as allowed us to measure the impact of this strategy. . The starting carbon emission in 2007/08 was circa 27,718 tonnes dropping to circa 23,227 tonnes in 2017/18. Unfortunately outside of the Carbon Reduction Strategy there isn't a carbon map to currently outline the authority's overall carbon footprint which would include additional areas such as waste, transport and social rented housing.
- 5.20 The positive impact of the interventions that we have already made and measured can be further increased through the implementation of this new Energy Plan and it is of paramount importance that the Council seeks to measure the impact that these interventions will have. The Council advocates that carbon reduction should be the primary benefit and this should be our focus moving forward even if options that maximise carbon reduction are financially more expensive.
- 5.21 Our overall ambition is to ***become a net carbon neutral local authority by 2030.*** This motion has been signed by the Cabinet plus the leaders from the two other political groups and has the support of the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee. The Energy Plan will set out opportunities for delivery against the objective to become carbon neutral and reduce and/or offset our non-domestic building and street lighting annual carbon emissions from its current level of circa 23,000 tonnes to zero by 2030. The plan will also enable us to quantify and agree a carbon reduction strategy for other areas such as transport, waste and social rented housing. Key benefits are as follows:

Carbon Reduction

- 5.22 Carbon is one of the main greenhouse gas emissions that are directly responsible for the change in climatic conditions around the world. More and more extreme weather events are resulting in people losing their health, wealth and general wellbeing. Reducing carbon emissions must remain our key focus in driving forward the Energy Plan.

Social benefits

- 5.23 Making homes more energy efficient will reduce fuel bills and is a key tool in reducing fuel poverty. Improving access to efficient, integrated transport will enable residents to access employment and will tackle inequalities.

Direct Financial Benefits

- 5.24 As well as the environmental and social benefit to Carbon reduction there is also a financial benefit to the authority. Each tonne of carbon generated from building usage in 18/19 will cost £18.30. The annual cost for 17/18 was £337,415. From 1st April 2019 the Climate Change Levy tariff has increased for Electricity by 45% and Gas by 67% on last year's figures. Through the authority's invest to save scheme, we have shaved 3,078 tonnes off the annual carbon bill, 922 tonnes of this from schools. These are continual annual saving and as new projects are added, the value grows.
- 5.25 Energy improvement projects, including good housekeeping and invest to save opportunities, reduce the electricity bill value and carbon emissions by reducing consumption at source. It reduces the overall bill and reduces carbon taxes outright and also protects budgets. Some Invest to save opportunities can result in a steady revenue stream. The authority sells its electricity, generated from a PV scheme on the roof of Islwyn Indoor Bowls, to the club, bringing in a regular income stream to the authority. It also helps safeguard the bowls club as they are purchasing from the Council at a cheaper rate than they could obtain from grid suppliers.

Legislative compliance

- 5.26 The authority is included in the Carbon Reduction Commitment scheme which has come at a financial cost, however non-compliance in the scheme could have resulted in fines (max £1M) and / or prosecution. The authority also has to provide Display Energy Certificates and Energy Performance Certificates in line with the Energy Performance Building Directive. It is to be assumed over time greater legal responsibility will be imposed on the authority to adhere to decarbonisation targets and it makes perfect sense to move towards wide scale reductions ahead of this

Future proofing

- 5.27 Energy prices for gas and electricity are influenced by many factors such as: weather, location, green tariffs, political agenda and generation constraints. Local generation for local consumption can mitigate against grid price rises and future proof against cost increase, however this must go hand in hand with reducing consumption at source. Local generation can provide some opportunities to raise revenues.

Wider economic benefits

- 5.28 Delivering on this agenda will have wider economic benefits. Proposals within the Energy Plan will bring opportunities to local businesses, including but not restricted to:
- Offering direct employment for a local workforce to manage projects once they are established.
 - Local businesses will have the opportunity to benefit from construction/build contracts.
 - Local firms will be encouraged to supply goods and services during construction and once the projects are operational.
 - Some local businesses will benefit from clean renewable energy.
 - Attracting inward investment into the county borough offering clean energy for business use at certain locations.
- 5.29 Individual projects may contribute to one or all of these benefits. The Council has

land, building and assets that provide the authority with the opportunity to implement projects that will bring forward some or all of the benefits outlined above. Some will focus on improving carbon reduction, others on economic prosperity, some will serve to alleviate social and energy poverty and some will bring more opportunities for job creation than others. All future projects will need to be considered in terms of the benefits they bring to the authority and its residents.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES/PROJECTS

5.30 There are a number of projects that the Council can incorporate into their evolving Energy Plan. These can be identified against short, medium and long term timescales for implementation. For this report it has been assumed that short timelines are up to 24 months, medium are between two and 5 years and long term are 5 years plus.

5.31 Each of these projects will help the Council move towards reducing our carbon footprint and move us towards our goal of becoming a net carbon neutral authority by 2030. The Energy Plan will seek to measure how each project impacts positively on reducing carbon production and where appropriate energy savings to the council. A standard set of measurements are currently used to measure our carbon production in certain arenas of operation such as non domestic building management. The level of kilowatt hours of energy (gas and electricity) used by the Council is carefully measured and is then converted into “quantity of carbon generated” data. This will be a primary source of measurement going forward but will be refined for each project.

5.32 The following section gives a pen portrait of projects that the Council could readily take forward.

Solar Power generation - Medium (24-60 months)

5.33 In recent weeks the authority has undertaken an initial survey to establish if available land would be suitable for large scale renewable energy projects. From an initial 14 sites the Council has now established that large scale PV could be explored at five sites within the county borough. Additional consideration will be given to other available public sector land across the county borough, although The Council is aware that Western Power Distribution report infrastructure constraints for exported power between Rhymney and Abergavenny until 2026. Perhaps the most exciting prospect is the prospect of introducing solar farms on publicly owned open air car parks. With improvements in associated technologies, it is now possible to set up arrays of solar panels so they permit vehicles to park underneath them.

5.34 Smaller PV installations remain an option on buildings such as Tredomen House (circa £55k), Tredomen Innovation Centre and schools. Funding would be required to proceed and structural roof surveys will be needed, so no sites can be guaranteed at this stage. Approval will be required from Western Power Distribution before any power is exported onto the grid. Maximum benefit is derived from aligning PV schemes to buildings that have extended operating hours to absorb the power being generated at all times.

Anaerobic Digester - Short (0-24 Months)

5.35 Anaerobic Digesters (AD) break down feeder fuels such as food waste and maize to generate a biogas. The gas is burnt to generate electricity. Bryn Quarry which is 2.1km away from the Ty Penallta estate has an Anaerobic digester. Initial discussions with the company that owns it, indicates a willingness to discuss the option of the authority buying their electricity, which would be beneficial to both parties as it would increase their revenue stream whilst possibly reducing authority

energy costs. This opportunity could feed the Tredomen estate/campus and possibly a wider catchment of properties. Additional added benefits could include the use of authority land to grow feeder crops for the Anaerobic Digester.

Wind Turbines - Medium/Long (24-60+ Months)

- 5.36 The Council already has a partnership project between CCBC and the Partnership for Renewables, where two wind turbines have been installed on council owned land on Oakdale Business Park. Each turbine has a generating capacity of 2 Megawatts, capable of powering 2,000 homes. As part of the project a Community Benefit scheme was established which provides £10,000 to local projects each year of the 25 year lifetime of the scheme.
- 5.37 The authority's recent land review did not identify any obvious sites for Wind Turbine generation. However, the Heads of the Valleys may provide suitable opportunity for an energy belt to feed the grid and local industry. Large wind turbines have the potential for good power generation and therefore revenue generation, they require a smaller footprint than solar farms and are easier to safeguard against vandalism. As reported previously, Western Power Distribution is aware of grid infrastructure constraints in the area and a dialogue continues on this matter.

Electric Vehicle Strategy and Action Plan - Short (0-24 Months)

- 5.38 As part of the work on the Electric Vehicle Action Plan, CCBC is leading on a feasibility study to determine the most suitable sites for electric vehicle charge points in the 5 Gwent local authorities, for all types of vehicles including cars, vans and bikes. It will also identify the grid connection availability and approximate costs, along with the most appropriate type of charging unit and options for income generation. The study will form the basis of a bid for the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) funding. The aim is to identify a cost-effective regional approach for electric vehicle charge point infrastructure across Gwent.
- 5.39 Linked to this, work is being undertaken to install charge points at the Tredomen Campus for fleet vehicles and visitors. The Council will look to roll out additional EV charging points across the authority. Caution must be taken to ensure the correct type of chargers are installed. They vary from very slow to super-fast and the latter are expensive to install but the authority need to future proof against improving battery systems.
- 5.40 CCBC is also leading on a strategic fleet review for each Gwent Local Authority and PSB Partner to break down current vehicle usage and quantify the benefits and any potential issues of introducing ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEV's) into their fleet (i.e. identifying opportunities for replacing existing fleet with more efficient ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs).

Stage Coach Metro Link Medium (12-24 months)

- 5.41 The Council has warmly welcomed the news that Stagecoach will deliver one of Europe's largest single investments in electric buses for Caerphilly, after securing £2.9m in grant funding from the UK Government. Stagecoach will invest £3.6 million in the ground-breaking project, which is supported by CCBC, the Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority and the Welsh Government. The combined investment of £6.5 million will deliver a new 16 vehicle fleet of zero emission buses and associated infrastructure over the next two years.
- 5.42 Opportunities exist to use this as a catalyst for change towards greener and cleaner vehicles, particularly in the Caerphilly basin area where the Stagecoach services will be most concentrated. The Council has targeted the current rail/bus terminal in

Caerphilly town centre for redevelopment and investigatory work is currently underway to establish how the new station can become an electric vehicle hub, accommodating the electric bus fleet and electric cars, taxis and bikes.

- 5.43 The Stagecoach project can also provide the stimulus to work more intently towards a council owned electric fleet as outlined above.

Valleys Metro - Short/Medium/Long (0-64months+)

- 5.44 The £700m+ investment in the Valleys Metro will create many opportunities to stimulate a see-change in peoples attitude to travel. Although not directly affecting the authority's own targets, it is the spin offs for active travel and more sustainable means of travel that the Council can help to promote. Establishing new park and rides and/or expanding existing ones to encourage people to use the improved train service is fundamental to reducing congestion, emissions and fuel use. The use of active travel routes to better link communities with these public transport hubs is also a key factor in getting people to think differently about their mode of travel

Agile Working Short (0-24 months)

- 5.45 Still on the Transport theme, the introduction of agile working within the local authority will reduce the need for staff to travel unnecessarily and could reduce the need for office space. This would result in reduced energy consumption and bills. The Council is already developing an Agile working plan as part of the emerging Workforce Plan.

- 5.46 There are a number of opportunities that can be taken forward when the Council considers its existing housing stock and proposed new housing provision in the county borough. The Council can concentrate on making its own stock more energy efficient, look to introduce innovative measures to also make new builds more energy efficient and be proactive in promoting opportunities for making both existing and new stock energy generators.

Housing Association New Build - Short/Medium/Long (0-64months+)

- 5.47 The Council will continue to work with and support our active Registered Social Landlords to deliver ground-breaking innovative housing schemes within the county borough using their Social Housing Grant (SHG) allocations and Innovative Housing Programme (IHP) monies. Several of the schemes have planning permission or are close to getting on site. Examples include: the LINC Housing Association scheme at the Magistrates Court in Caerphilly, which will be developed to Passive House standards; and the United Welsh Scheme at Cwm Ifor Primary School, which will deliver highly energy efficient timber frame housing using the Beattie Passive system. Both schemes will use high performance insulation, making the buildings completely draught free, effectively eliminating heat loss to create buildings with very low environmental impact. The Council can support RSL's to continue to focus on energy saving construction by offering support in securing the necessary finances, be it SHG or IHP monies. This Passive House philosophy is based on a well-insulated and almost air tight envelope with tightly controlled ventilation. As we live in a cool climate heat recovery of expelled air is essential so the building services are a key component. Few Passive House standard homes have been delivered in the UK.

Reducing Fuel Poverty - Short/Medium/Long (0-64months+)

- 5.48 The Council has been concentrating its efforts with its own council stock on reducing fuel poverty and improving insulation, through a number of energy supplier grants and the Welsh Government Arbed scheme. In the short term these initiatives to reduce tenants' heating bills will continue to be a primary focus of the Council's housing staff.

- Maximising Assets - Short/Medium/Long (0-64months+)**
- 5.49 Caerphilly CBC can become much more proactive in using its own assets (primarily land in this instance) to drive its carbon agenda forward by working closer with partnering organisations such as Housing Associations and housing developers. For instance, the capital value of its own assets (i.e. capital receipts for land) can be offset by carbon reduction initiatives such as building to Passive house standards. By accepting reduced value on land in exchange for innovative building techniques the council could resolve to stimulate good quality energy efficient developments.
- Partnerships with Housing Associations - Short/Medium/Long (12-64months+)**
- 5.50 The Council working in partnership with zoned Housing Associations has targeted a number of large housing developments to use innovative housing techniques to help take forward the decarbonisation agenda in the medium term. The Council are working closely with Pobl Housing Association to deliver the Chartist Village at the former Ty Pontllanfraith site and United Welsh are working towards developing land at Ty Du Nelson for the development of over 200 blended tenure homes.
- Modular Build - Short/Medium/Long (12 -64months+)**
- 5.51 Modular off site construction techniques are considered by many housing associations within South Wales to be a real alternative to traditional construction techniques. Seven regional housing associations have commissioned consultants to explore the opportunities to work together to create enough forward demand for modular build to make it viable for modular construction companies to set up within the region. CCBC is heavily involved in this dialogue and hope to be able to benefit from any inward investment opportunities that stem from the region by offering suitable sites for locating these companies
- Caerphilly Homes New Build Programme - Short/Medium/Long (12-64months+)**
- 5.52 The Council is committed to delivering new council housing. The same innovative housing techniques being employed by the housing associations will be considered by the authority on its new build stock, helping to reduce fuel consumption by its tenants and in doing so help contribute positively towards addressing fuel poverty.
- WHQS Successor Programme - Short/Medium/Long (12-64months+)**
- 5.53 Post WHQS completion in 2020 there is currently an understanding that resources will thereafter be focused on the energy agenda. Officers have recently opened a dialogue with the Welsh Government Energy Services to explore how the authority could act as a pilot authority to lead any new initiatives.
- Existing Housing Stock – Energy Production Short/Medium/Long (6-64months+)**
- 5.54 There are opportunities to create energy from PV's on our own housing stock. The Council is currently exploring the best model for taking this forward. One option available is to work in partnership with private companies who offer a fully rounded package (including covering costs of installation, paying fee for using our assets and offering benefits of green energy to tenants). Officers are tasked with establishing the most beneficial model for the Council to progress.
- Plot Shop – Self Build Short/Medium/Long (12-64months+)**
- 5.55 Welsh Government has announced an initiative to encourage potential home owners to develop their own homes. Through the Development Bank of Wales Welsh Government will invest £40m into the Plot Shop – Self Build Fund scheme, which will help to deliver additional housing throughout Wales. CCBC are in the process of identifying suitable sites eligible for the scheme and will be able to set design standards for the new housing. One of Welsh Government's key aims of the scheme is to develop housing that has highest levels of energy efficiency. As part of the

process of bringing sites forward the council will need to prepare a 'Passport' for each plot which sets out the all the relevant parameters for the development, which could include decarbonisation and energy efficiency aspirations. On sites with a larger number of plots, consideration could be given to the use of communal heating and power systems where they are appropriate

Changing Planning/Building Control Legislation (24 months+)

- 5.56 The Council, along with the Public Service Board would like to lobby Government to use planning legislation and building regulations to ensure properties use less carbon. Examples of this would include provision within planning legislation to require electric vehicle charging points within new residential developments.. Building regulations could further advocate the use of more environmentally friendly materials.

Woodland development - Short/Medium (6-36 Months)

- 5.57 The Welsh Government Low Carbon Delivery Plan 2019 proposes the development of a new national park. The Council could look to establish a new Caerphilly Forest in line with the national plan which could offset and lock out carbon emissions from the county borough. .

Community Partnership work/tree planting Short/ Medium (6 -36 months)

- 5.57 The Caerphilly Climate Change Strategy was formally launched in November 2009. Since then partners have worked together to reduce Carbon emissions and to combat climate change. In total 12 climate change woodlands have been planted across the county borough. Further opportunities exist to plant additional woodlands on Council owned land, particularly in our country parks, which could make a significant contribution to off-setting Carbon emissions and could help develop the Caerphilly Forest concept mentioned above.

Water consumption -Short (0-24 Months).

- 5.58 The authority needs to consider water conservation as part of its carbon and energy strategy. Water takes energy to distribute, and process before and after use. Welsh Water are now starting to issue electronic billing which will allow the authority to monitor and report on consumption. It is also an area where we can reduce costs as well as carbon emissions.

Waste Management - Short/Medium/Long (0-64months+)

- 5.59 Prosiect Gwyrdd is a high profile waste management facility that generates electricity for sale to the grid with the Council playing a major role in its development. In addition to this we have local arrangements in place, such as food waste being converted into green energy via the Anaerobic Digester at Bryn Quarry. There may be further opportunities for the authority to link digestible waste into this scheme or gain additional benefit from it.

- 5.60 In addition, the Council has been generating electricity from landfill gas at the former Trehir Landfill Site (small scale generation). This scheme has been operating for some 5-6 years and has been reported to Scrutiny previously.

Opportunities for heat clusters in the County Borough - Short/Medium/Long (12-64months+)

- 5.61 Opportunities for the provision of community heating systems are being investigated on new build schemes, be they residential, commercial or industrial where there is an opportunity for a heat cluster. The Council are currently actively looking to introduce a scheme in the county borough and are working with the Welsh Government Energy Service to develop viable options.

Hydroelectric Viability Overview– medium (24-36 months)

- 5.62 In 2014, a study was undertaken with the aim of identifying potential sites for hydro schemes within the county borough, a partnership project was established with Carbon Trust Wales. Consultants were appointed to complete a hydro viability study and overview of the opportunities for hydroelectric generation from high head and low head systems within the county borough.
- 5.63 Phase one of the study involved a high level screening study of the area which identified 11 medium high head sites and 13 low head sites. Of these sites five were shortlisted for preliminary feasibility studies. Despite three schemes progressing to preliminary system design and specification for appropriate type and scale of technology, none of the schemes were considered to be viable.
- 5.64 The study did identify the potential for generation from the stream adjacent to the visitor centre at Cwmcarn Forest Drive. An initial feasibility study has been undertaken and although there are some issues it does appear that this site offers the greatest potential for hydro electricity generation across the Authority's land holdings. The site offers the potential for any scheme to provide educational and tourism opportunities as well. Further investigation is needed to clarify whether or not a viable scheme could be developed.

Beyond Caerphilly Boundaries

- 5.65 The authority does not have any viable Hydroelectric opportunities, but it is possible for the authority to consider partnerships outside of the authority on all major forms of renewable energy projects including hydro, solar, wind, and possibly tidal.
- 5.66 Partnerships could also be developed with other local authorities to identify arable farm land to grow the crops necessary to feed into the anaerobic digester described in section 5.35 above.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Over the last decade, the Council has worked hard to reduce carbon emissions. The Salix Invest to Save scheme alone has delivered 2,930 tonnes of annual carbon savings across 266 non domestic building projects. These values will grow, with new LED lighting being installed at key buildings including Ty Penallta as outlined above. many examples to prove this.
- 6.2 However, we need to increase our pace and focus upon reducing our carbon footprint and moving us towards being a carbon neutral council. This will also enable us to respond to Welsh Government's recent statement of intent referring to decarbonisation (Prosperity for All: Low Carbon Wales) and also influence the work being undertaken by the Cardiff Capital Region. The best way to achieve this is to develop an overarching carbon/energy strategy that reflects this ambition and sets out a route-map on how we intend to deliver this objective.
- 6.3 Opportunities exist to adopt a commercial perspective on the projects outlined above and there is a growing realisation that the benefits stemming from these projects can spread more widely into the local communities within the county borough. The Council must decide which benefits are most important so it can focus its activity accordingly to where most impact can be made.

- 6.5 In order to develop the strategy and set out a proposed route-map of deliverable projects, it is proposed to set up an officer group to firstly develop the strategy but thereafter deliver the projects identified within it.
- 6.6 Further scrutiny consideration would be welcomed once the draft strategy and Energy Plan is developed prior to formal adoption as Council policy.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

- 7.1 A number of assumptions have been made in writing this report. The first is that Welsh Government will tighten its approach towards decarbonisation and the use of clean energy. The production of WG's Prosperity for All: Low Carbon Wales in March 2019 is a clear indication of their direction of travel. It is also safe to assume that that legislation on carbon reduction will increase over the next 10 years as central government look to address the current levels of carbon production.
- 7.2 Energy prices continue to increase and it is predicted that this rise will continue. Hence it makes economic sense to invest now in reducing energy consumption and look at opportunities for green energy production. Related to this, it is assumed that there will be no central government grants in the immediate future to help the Council take these opportunities forward.
- 7.3 Fuel poverty exists within the county borough and is particularly focused on areas of deprivation often centred around traditional council housing estates. Investment in the Council's housing stock to reduce energy consumption is helping, but clean energy production that tenants can benefit from will help further.
- 7.4 It is assumed that there will be an Increase in population. This will put more strain and demand on resources and infrastructure.
- 7.5 An assumption has been made when it comes to specific projects that the necessary volume of assets, be they buildings or land, will be available to take projects through to fruition and accumulate the benefits mentioned earlier.

8. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

- 8.1 The following Council policies are relevant to the development of an Energy Strategy:
- CCBC Carbon Reduction Strategy 2009-2019
 - CCBC Sustainable Development Strategy
 - A Foundation for Success 2018-2023
 - Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021

Corporate Plan 2018-2023.

- 8.2 Carbon reduction and renewable energy generation work supports the following Corporate Well-being Objectives, identified within the CCBC Corporate Plan 2018-2023:

Objective 2 - Enabling employment. The green economy is likely to be one of the fastest growing sectors in the coming years. Development of a Carbon Strategy will incorporate projects which will have the potential to generate significant new jobs. There is also the potential to offer energy at a reduced rate for business to encourage inward investment and jobs.

Objective 3 - Address the availability, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve people's well-being. Making existing houses more energy efficient or retrofitting renewable energy technology has the potential to reduce fuel bills and could move some residents out of fuel poverty. The Strategy will consider the opportunities to increase the sustainability of new building through the Planning process.

Objective 4 - Promote a modern, integrated and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity and minimises the adverse impacts on the environment. The inclusion of sustainable transport and in particular electric vehicles, in the proposed Strategy will have the potential to contribute significantly to this objective.

9. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

9.1 The development of Carbon reduction and renewable energy projects contribute to several of the Well-being goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015, including:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A globally responsible Wales

9.2 Carbon reduction and renewable energy projects are consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act.

9.3 The five ways of working of the sustainable development principle, listed in the Act are:

- Long Term – taking action to improve our energy efficiency and to generate clean energy will enable progress towards a low carbon society that uses resources efficiently it will reduce our dependency on fossil fuels and will reduce the contribution that we make to climate change.
- Prevention – Providing opportunities for the use of ultra-low emission vehicles to help mitigate climate change and reduce air pollution and the resulting health issues.
- Integration – The proposal contributes to the Corporate Well-being Objectives identified within the CCBC Corporate Plan 2018-2023 as set out in section 8.2.
- Collaboration – The proposal will require a collaborative approach with PSB Partners, and others.
- Involvement – Local residents, staff and visitors all have an important role to play in developing and delivering the Strategy and will be involved at all stages of the work.

10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Making homes more energy efficient will reduce fuel bills and is a key tool in reducing fuel poverty. Improving access to efficient, integrated transport will enable residents to access employment and will help to tackle inequalities.

- 10.2 An EIA screening has been completed in accordance with the Council's Strategic Equality Plan and supplementary guidance. No potential for unlawful discrimination and/or low level or minor negative impact has been identified, therefore a full EIA has not been carried out.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The Council has been using Salix funding for the Invest to Save scheme since 2004. We have recently taken on an additional £4.1m from Salix for the street lighting project and we would be able to attract additional funding from this route for new projects. This is an interest free loan basis.
- 11.2 The Council may resolve to use internal financial reserves in order to take forward new energy schemes in the future.
- 11.3 In developing a suite of short, medium and long term projects there will be a need to establish which are feasible and viable options for the Council to pursue. Technical support will be required to undertake this task and this will come at a cost. The Council is looking at a number of ways of financing this initial work including using its own reserves and working with the Welsh Government Energy Service to secure external grant
- 11.4 Once projects have been prioritised they will require business plans to be developed. This will include more detailed design and the analysis of financial plans. Again the Council will look at a number of financing options including using its own monies and grant aid
- 11.5 While the Council will look at funding the construction/implementation of these projects, it is aiming to deliver projects that will pay for themselves over time. It must however be acknowledged that the end of the feed in tariff rate means that some renewable energy payback periods will be considerable. On buildings this could be between 7.5 to 15 years and this excludes ongoing maintenance costs.

12. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There are no personnel implications relevant to this report.

13. CONSULTATIONS

- 13.1 The views of consultees have been included within the report

14. STATUTORY POWER

- 14.1 Local Government Measure 2009.
Local Government Acts.

Author: Paul Rossiter, Energy and Water Officer /Paul Cooke, Senior Policy Officer /Allan Dallimore, Regeneration Services Manager

Consultees:

- Cllr Sean Morgan, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy, Infrastructure, Sustainability & Wellbeing of Future Generations
- Cllr Lisa Phipps, Cabinet Member for Homes and Places
- Cllr John Ridgewell – Chair of Regeneration and Housing Scrutiny Committee
- Cllr Mrs Christine Forehead – Vice Chair of Regeneration and Housing Scrutiny Committee
- Christina Harray - Interim Chief Executive
- Mark S Williams - Interim Corporate Director Communities
- Rhian Kyte – Head of Regeneration and Planning
- Marcus Lloyd – Head of Infrastructure
- Stephen Harris – Interim Head of Business Improvement Services & Sec 151 Officer
- Mark Williams – Interim Head of Property
- Richard (Ed) Edmunds - Corporate Director for Education & Corporate Services
- Dave Street - Corporate Director - Social Services
- Lisa Lane – Monitoring Officer
- Rob Tranter - Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer
- Shaun Watkins – Human Resources Manager
- Sean Couzens, Chief Housing Officer

Appendices:
Appendix 1 Summary Report On Initiatives To Date

Appendix 1

CCBC Energy & Carbon Report - *Summary report on initiatives to date.*

The aim of this short report is to pull together in one place, all the work that the Authority has done, or is doing on energy and climate change issues. This can then be used as a basis for identifying and prioritising the work that the Council would like to do going forward..

The report is structured to identify what we have done to date, and is divided into:

- Corporate Energy Projects – Co-ordinated by Corporate Energy & Water Team
- Housing Projects – Co-ordinated by Housing and WHQS Teams
- Community/Climate Change/Other/Co-ordinated by the Policy Team (previously the SD & Living Environment Team)

Section 1: What have we done to date?

Corporate Energy Projects – Co-ordinated by Corporate Energy & Water Team

WHERE HAVE WE COME FROM?

Prior to 2005 energy management within the authority lacked strategy, direction and accountability. There were many gaps in data, processes and application of energy management:

Carbon Strategy

There was no formal and agreed Carbon Reduction Strategy in place.

Investment

The invest to save scheme was established in 2004 using Salix and Caerphilly Funding.

Strategic Indicator

There was little by way of formal reporting to the Sustainable Development Advisory Panel.

There was no central record of total authority energy consumption (kWh) or costs and there was little reliable data for individual buildings due bills being issued directly

from the supplier to the individual building. This impacted on benchmarking for buildings.

There was no formal energy awareness training taking place.

There were no energy audits available for the majority of authority buildings, therefore no reference to the potential for energy saving. Building managers did not have the data required to take objectives decisions.

Billing

Payment of energy bills was delegated to the building manager/head teacher resulting in poor control of payments. One school paid a credit note statement thinking it was a bill.

Individual building managers and head teachers entered into stand alone energy contracts which were not always the best available at the time. Some sites entered long-term contracts and some buildings were left on expensive out of contract tariffs for extended periods of time. One leisure centre had no formal gas supplier for eight years.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Invest To Save.

We are recognised as one of the leading participants within the UK's Salix Invest To Save scheme and we regularly perform well on various KPI's. We are Wales's top authority in carbon emissions saved in the Salix scheme, and figure highly in the national league tables.

To date we have spent £2.2M to reduce energy consumption in our buildings through invest to save and have achieved an annual energy cost saving of over £525k. In doing this we have reduced our annual carbon footprint by over 3,101 tonnes to date, of which 1,355 tonnes has been registered since the start of the carbon reduction strategy in 2009. Furthermore our carbon tax payments have been reduced considerably.

The £2.2m was spent installing as much insulation as possible in e.g. schools as well as other buildings. Other technologies include; Street Lighting control, plant room insulation; energy efficient LED lighting and controls; utilising variable speed drives on pumps; installing building energy management systems to improve heating and cooling control; installing Voltage Optimisation units and heat recovery units amongst other technologies.

Over 266 projects have been installed across authority buildings, 120 of these in schools.

We are the best performing authority in Wales and figure highly in national league tables.

Strategic Indicators

After the establishment of the carbon reduction strategy and carbon management group, we now report carbon performance annually. Adjusted baseline emissions were 24,238 tonnes on 07/08 falling to approximately 16,907 (before weather correction) in 17/18. An overall reduction of circa 30%, at this point in time.

We now have one of the most comprehensive Fynnon scorecards and dashboards in the authority, supported by pinpoint reporting for individual buildings energy consumption, cost and carbon data.

We have up to date building energy benchmarks for key building types and detailed energy audits for all key buildings.

Education finance will be issued with annual energy reporting to improved accuracy it brings to their reports.

There is a statutory requirement to report carbon emissions and purchase carbon credits accurately to the environment agency under a scheme called Carbon Reduction Commitment. 2017/18 emissions were 19,063 tonnes and cost £338k.

Further legislative requirements include the generation of Display Energy Certificates and Energy Air Conditioning inspection reports.

Billing.

Central collection of bills and extraction of data is fundamental to monitoring and reporting. The Energy Team now receives all electricity and gas invoices for all sites on the Crown Commercial Services Contract. We check each invoice for accuracy and pay them, with a reported administrative savings of £8 -10 per invoice. We paid circa £3.6 million in 17/18.

We are the central point of contact for suppliers and council officers. We ensure all sites are on appropriate contracts and arrange all connections and disconnections of supplies.

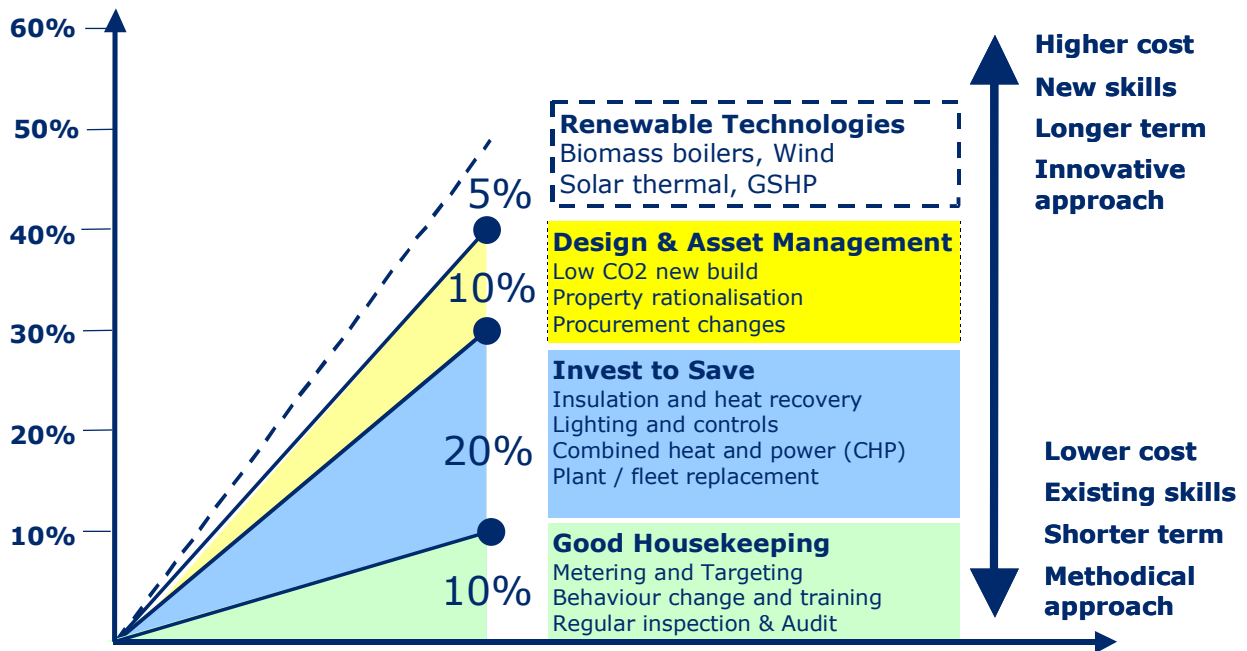
We are currently dealing with major supplier billing issues with EDF Energy and British Gas on behalf of the authority.

In 18/19 we started to receive and centrally pay some electronic water invoices for non domestic buildings, the intention being that most non domestic buildings will be billed this way by the end of the first year.

Carbon Strategy

In 2009 the authority approved an ambitious aspirational Carbon Reduction Strategy. Caerphilly's target is to reduce its carbon emissions (buildings and street lighting) by 45% of the 07/08 emissions levels resulting in carbon emissions falling by 10,907

tonnes. This is a 10 year strategy that expires in 2019. The strategy focuses on four key areas and is summarised thus:



Housing Projects – Co-ordinated by Housing and WHQS Teams

In 1997, to comply with the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA), the Council prepared a report outlining how it aimed to improve the energy efficiency of the housing stock to all tenures by 30% within the ensuing 10 years. Whilst currently HECA still applies in England, the Welsh Assembly Government revised the original target of 30% by 2007 to 12% as set out in its policy agreement targets.

At the end of 2006/07 this Authority's progress to date was 12.01% and the Policy agreement target of 12% had been met.

The use of the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme (HEES) played a significant role in improving the energy efficiency of homes within Caerphilly CBC. Since 2003 - 3,645 households had improvements carried out at an estimated cost of £3,237,408. In addition to the HEES scheme over 2500 households had energy efficiency measures carried out via the energy suppliers Energy Efficiency Commitment Scheme (EEC).

What has been carried out within the last 5 years

Strategic Energy Performance Investment Programme (Arbed)

This programme was introduced by the Welsh Government in 2009 to bring social, environmental and economical benefits to Wales and co-ordinate investment into the energy performance of Welsh Homes. This scheme is more commonly known as ARBED which means 'Save'.

The Council was successful with a bid for an Arbed project at Fochriw. This project now completed was project managed by Melin Homes. Some 300 plus private sector and 58 council properties benefited from a mixture of measures made up from External Wall Insulation, Gas condensing boilers, voltage optimisers and positive input ventilation. The estimated value of the works is in the region of £2.5 - 3 million and was funded by the Welsh Government.

A further successful bid was submitted for upgrading the energy efficiency of 115 private dwellings at Hollybush. This entailed installing a gas main into the village and residents receiving a gas central heating installation with condensing boilers and up to date controls.

The Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP)

CESP is a central government initiative that required gas and electricity suppliers to deliver energy saving measures to domestic customers in low-income areas. CESP has been designed to promote a 'whole house' approach to improving the energy efficiency of homes.

There are several CESP projects that have been undertaken within the county borough over the last 5 years. A synopsis of each scheme is as follows:-

British Gas CESP Scheme:

The council entered into an agreement with British Gas to improve the energy efficiency of council properties at Markham and Panside. The approximate value of the works is £1 million. (CCBC £600,000 & British Gas £400,000)

Markham

58 properties received external wall insulation, there were also 31 condensing boilers installed at these properties.

Panside

79 properties received external wall insulation, 18 condensing boilers were installed at these properties.

SSE (Swalec) CESP Scheme

An agreement was entered into with SSE (Swalec) to improve the council properties within the following lower super output areas. The measures carried out and programmed were:-

i **Porset/Lansbury Park**

126 properties (wimpy no-fines) received external wall insulation; there were 1 condensing boiler/heating renewal and 45 loft insulation upgrades.

ii **Rhymney**

168 properties received external wall insulation (Tanybryn/Maerdy View), there are also 95 condensing boiler/heating renewals and 6 loft insulation upgrades.

iii **Gilfach**

155 properties (wimpy no-fines) received external wall insulation, there are also 6 condensing boiler/heating renewals and 120 loft insulation upgrades.

iv **Fochriw**

96 properties (wimpy no-fines) received external wall insulation; there are also 45 condensing boiler/heating renewals and 70 loft insulation upgrades.

v **Cefn Hengoed**

42 properties programmed to receive boiler/heating renewals and 70 loft insulation upgrades.

The estimated value of the work was £4.4 million. (SSE £3.1million & CCBC £1.3 million).

Community Energy Saving Programme - Blackwood (SERS / British Gas)

22 Council properties at Morrison Street and 12 properties at Attlee Road received external wall insulation. This work was funded by British Gas and carried out by SERS at a cost of £1.00 CCBC contributed £7,888 for additional work.

Estimated cost of EWI works £240,000

In addition to the above schemes there have been a number of private housing CESP projects carried out. These projects are at:-

Brithdir & Trethomas

SERS a local specialist external wall insulation company undertook a CESP project to private householders within Brithdir and Trethomas. Approximately 350 properties have received external wall insulation as part of this project.

Cefn Hengoed

EDF energy targeted the private homes within the Cefn Hengoed area. It is understood that at least 100 private sector properties received external wall insulation which included some 38 condensing boiler renewals.

Bryn Carno Rhymney.

29 Private properties at Bryn Carno is receiving external wall insulation at Bryn Carno. These works were project managed by UWHA and being funded by the Welsh Government and an Energy company.

Energy Company Obligation – (SERS / Scottish Power)

334 Wimpy no-fines flats in the areas below received external wall insulation. This work was funded by Scottish Power and carried out by SERS at a cost of £1.00 CCBC anticipated contribution is £41,500 for additional work.

Gelligaer = 180 flats complete 8 omitted due to 31 March deadline.

Porset Park = 40 flats complete

Pontlottyn = 86 flats complete 8 omitted due to 31 March deadline.

Gilfach = 28 flats complete 8 omitted due to 31 march deadline

Estimated cost of EWI works £1,480,000

Cyd Cymru

Cyd Cymru – is a collective energy switching scheme developed to offer people in Wales an opportunity to save money by coming together to buy fuel “in bulk”.

The scheme has been developed by Cardiff Council and the Vale of Glamorgan Council, with support from the Welsh Government’s “Regional Collaboration Fund”. Cyd Cymru was developed in the Autumn of 2013.

Caerphilly CBC signed upto the CYD Cymru Charter in January 2015 and became active in promoting the scheme just before CYD CYmru commenced with its 3rd switch. Following the successful completion of Switch 3 of Cyd Cymru can reveal the final results for numbers switching and savings made. Over 5,600 households registered for the scheme with just over 2,000 households switching (36% conversion rate). The average saving per household was just over £250 per annum resulting in savings across Wales of over £525,000.

Community/Climate Change/Other/ Co-ordinated by the Policy Team (previously the SD & Living Environment Team)

Sustainable Development

The Council has had a long commitment to sustainable development and to reducing its resource consumption. It approved its first sustainable development policy in 1997, and has built on this foundation. In 2008 the **Sustainable Development Strategy, *Living Better, Using Less***, was published. It sets out the approach that the Authority is taking to sustainable development and our vision for a sustainable county borough. It sets out our strategy for tackling the issues and explains how we will manage and monitor the process and how we will report on progress

Information on sustainable development and the work of the Team can be found at: <http://your.caerphilly.gov.uk/sustainablecaerphilly/content/welcome>

Future Generations Advisory Panel (Formerly the Sustainable Development Advisory Panel)

The Sustainable Development Advisory Panel (SDAP) was set up in February 2002. In June 2016 it became the Future Generations Advisory Panel (FGAP), to reflect the new requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. It consists of 11 elected members across all political parties. It is currently chaired by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy, Infrastructure, Sustainability & Wellbeing of Future Generations. FGAP has a remit to look at any aspect of sustainable development within the Council, or within the wider County Borough, and makes recommendations direct to Cabinet.

Welsh Declaration on Climate Change.

In April 2006, Caerphilly County Borough Council signed the Welsh Declaration on Climate Change.

Climate Change Challenge Week

CCBC held a climate change challenge week held during March 2007 to raise awareness of the potential impact of climate change and encourage individuals to make a difference. Achievements during the week included:

- 4,051 pledges undertaken,
- 99 people attended workshops,
- 60 people received personal travel plans from SEWTA,
- 90 people attended the free viewings of the Al Gore film 'An Inconvenient Truth'.

Corporate Improvement Objectives

In the Corporate Improvement Plan 2005 – 2008, one of the Council's 12 key objectives was "**To improve the sustainability of Council operations**". Progress on this was measured against 5 aims, which included – “To reduce our contribution to global warming and climate change” – measured by “Reduce the tonnes of CO2 emissions in Council buildings”. Reducing Carbon emissions has remained a corporate priority since then.

Sustainable Development Charter

In July 2011 Caerphilly County Borough Council signed the Welsh Government's Sustainable Development Charter. The aim of the Charter is to contribute to making Wales a sustainable nation by encouraging organisations to work with the Welsh Government to deliver sustainable development objectives.

By signing the charter, we committed to make sustainable development our central guiding principle, and to promote and deliver wellbeing through our decisions and operations.

ICT Services

The Policy Team and Energy Management Team work closely with ICT Services on projects to reduce carbon emissions. ICT currently represents about 2% of CCBC's total CO₂ emissions. Within that 2%, 39% can be attributed to PCs and monitors, 23% to servers and cooling, 15% to fixed-line telecom, 9% to mobile telecom, 7% to LAN and office telecom, and 6% to printers.

The Authority took a decision to replace all CRT monitors with Flat Panel Monitors and energy efficient PCs. This process was completed for corporate buildings in 2012 and dramatically reduced power consumption with LCD display using about 60% less electricity than CRTs.

The deployment of multi function printers (MPF's) to consolidate local printers, scanners and fax machines onto single devices began in 2008. 270 MFP's have been deployed to replace approximately 1,300 individual devices.

In December 2009, power management was introduced on all PCs and laptops.

The Authority is moving from PCs to IGel thin clients, where applicable, to reduce the support costs and also the power consumption. With this technology the devices run on approximately 12 watts of electricity rather than the 50-60 watts used by a standard PC.

Caerphilly Solar Schools Project

The Caerphilly Solar Schools project was developed in 2009, delivered by the Policy Team (previously the Sustainable Development Team) and has run over 5 project phases. To date 4Kw solar PV installations have been installed on 45 schools in the Caerphilly county borough. In total £361,311 external funding has been secured to support the programme along with £100K from the Carbon Reduction Budget.

Each system has an estimated electricity generation of 3,196Kwh per school per year, estimated electricity saving of £415 per year and an estimated CO₂ saving of 1.9 tonnes per school per year.

Overall, for the 45 systems, this gives an estimated energy generation of 143,820Kwh per year, estimated electricity saving of £18,675 per year and estimated CO₂ saving of 85.5 tonnes per year.

As part of the programme a Caerphilly Solar Schools Resource pack was developed, to support schools incorporating renewable energy and energy efficiency into the

curriculum. The pack contains primary and secondary lesson plans, examples of audits and action plans and advice on energy efficiency. It has been distributed to every school in the Caerphilly county borough, with extra resources (solar PV kits) available for schools to borrow.

Active Travel Work

As part of the authority's carbon reduction and active travel work, the Policy Team has established a pool bike scheme for staff, to encourage them to commute to work by bike and support the health and well-being agenda. There are currently 16 pool bikes available for staff to use based at Penallta House and Tir-Y-Berth depot.

Eco Schools

Every school in the county borough is an Eco School. At present, 88% of our schools have achieved their green flag award, with 43% achieving the prestigious Platinum award (4th green flag award and highest award). The remaining 12% of schools are working towards their green flag award, with 10% having achieved the silver award and 2% the bronze award.

The Policy Team runs Eco School training covering all 8 Eco School topic areas, for teachers, Eco Coordinators and support staff.

A specific session focussed on Energy & Water. The aim was to run short sharp sessions (2hrs max) providing the attendees with the information to go away and start making a difference.

The sessions covered the following:

- Importance of topic area and reasons to take action
- Ideas for actions/projects
- No cost/ low cost/ higher cost actions
- Curriculum links and links to Literacy & Numeracy Framework
- Ideas to monitor and evaluate actions
- Benefits to the school and wider community
- Other alternatives (e.g. renewable technology)
- Links with other schemes (Healthy Schools, Fairtrade Schools etc.)

The sessions supported a variety of schools and helped them move forward on their Eco Schools award programme.

Wind Turbines at Oakdale Business Park

A partnership project between CCBC, led by Economic Development, and Partnership for Renewable successfully installed 2 wind turbines on Oakdale Business Park. Planning permission was granted in 2011. Each turbine has a

generating capacity of 2 Megawatts, capable of powering 2,000 homes. As part of the project a Community Benefit scheme was established this will provide £10,000 to local projects each year of the 25 year lifetime of the scheme.

Renewable energy baseline for the county borough

The Policy Team in partnership with the Strategic & Development Plan Team undertook a Renewable Energy Baseline Assessment (REBA) for the county borough to inform the preparation of the Draft Renewable Energy Assessment for Caerphilly County Borough. The REBA was carried out in accordance with the guidance contained in “Planning for Renewable and Low Carbon Energy – A Toolkit for Planners” which was published by the Welsh Government in July 2010.

The study was undertaken to inform discussions on whether or not a countywide renewable energy target or site specific provision would be appropriate in any future review of the Local Development Plan (LDP).

The report provides a series of recommendations to facilitate the development of suitable forms of renewable and low carbon energy in order to move towards a low carbon economy and thus help to tackle the causes of climate change.

Hollybush Sustainable Energy Study

Heads of the Valleys funding was secured to undertake a study into energy issues for Hollybush. With 120 properties, the village was the largest in the county borough that is not connected to the gas network. The majority of properties are pre 1920 solid wall terraced properties. The study included door to door surveys collecting data on energy use, fuel type, income etc on which to base findings and recommendations.

Hollybush was one of the two successful areas in the county borough under Arbed II funding. The project involved extending the existing gas mains network to the village and to installing gas central heating to each property. Work was completed in 2014 to install full gas central heating systems for residents.

RDP SUSTAINABLE ENERGY PROGRAMME

In 2011 two RDP Sustainable Energy Officers were appointed under axis 4 of the plan, which ran until the end of December 2014. The officers were based in the SD & LE Team. The main aim of their project was to engage with farm households and rural businesses to reduce energy use and promote the uptake of renewable energy. Energy costs are rising and energy security is an increasing issue.

There are approximately 320 farms in the RDP eligible wards in the County Borough; many of these are primarily hill farms. The majority of the farmhouses were built before 1900, and are considered “hard to treat” being of solid wall construction. Around 96% are off the mains gas grid, and over half of farmers believe that they spend more than 10% of their income on fuel bills.

The help provided to eligible farms & businesses was in a 3 tiered system of support:

- Level 1: Information and advice
 - Telephone and email advice on energy efficiency and renewable energy
 - Information on grants/loans, signposting to external organisations
 - Desktop solar power assessments
 - Factsheets – covering the different renewable energy technologies, including biomass, heat pumps, microhydro, solar photovoltaic, solar thermal and wind.

- Level 2. Surveys and support
- Level 3. Exemplar projects

Hydro Viability Overview in Caerphilly County Borough

Established with the aim of developing micro hydro schemes within the county borough, a partnership project was established with Carbon Trust Wales. Consultants were appointed to complete a hydro viability study and overview of the opportunities for hydroelectric generation from high head and low head systems within the county borough.

Under phase 1 of the study a high level screening study of the area was undertaken to assess the viability for low and high head hydro developments. The consultant carried out a desk based high-level assessment of all appropriate rivers and streams in the Caerphilly Borough area for hydro energy development potential. Phase 1 of the project initially identified 11 medium to high head sites and 13 low head sites.

Following further screening 5 priority sites were shortlisted for preliminary feasibility studies (initial assessments), which included head, flow rate etc and assessment of potential generation capacity.

A preliminary system design and specification for appropriate type and scale of technology was produced for 3 schemes, along with a financial appraisal of the hydro development. Advice on any planning and environmental issues associated with the development was also produced, coupled with an assessment of any existing electrical usage and infrastructure.

Business cases were prepared for each of these schemes. A scheme at Gibbs weir, on the Sirhowy was progressed to detailed feasibility but was withdrawn due to the number of risks involved in the development of the scheme. This weir has

subsequently been removed by NRW to allow salmon to navigate further up the Sirhowy. Projects at Nant y Twyn and Nant Twynyrharris schemes were not taken forward by the landowners.

Maes Yr Onn - Off Grid Living exemplar

In late 2011 Caerphilly County Borough Council's RDP Sustainable Energy Team put together a partnership with the Building Research Establishment (BRE) and SSE to design and deliver a modern farmhouse and family home for the Davies family who had secured planning permission to build near Manmoel.

The site had no access to mains electricity, water, gas or sewerage services.

The solution included designing the property to minimise heat loss from every part of the building fabric, so the envelope of the building was designed as a super-insulated home. SSE's Contracting division installed all the power, heating and water supply technologies. These included:

- a 20kW biomass boiler
- a 3.9kW solar photovoltaic array linked to a battery system with a small diesel generator as backup, and
- rainwater-harvesting technology with a 5500 litre tank located in the basement plant room.

Living off grid means that the family needs to be constantly aware of their consumption to ensure that there is no wasteful use of lights and appliances. Over the past two years, Constructing Excellence in Wales and the Wales School of Architecture, at Cardiff University, have been monitoring the family's use of the various renewable energy technologies and the overall energy and water consumption.

The project has been hailed as an exemplar in sustainable low carbon living, and has won several high profile accolades including the top prize at the Royal Town Planning Institute Wales awards. In June 2014 the project was visited by one of the most senior UK representatives in the European Union, Shan Morgan, UK Deputy Permanent Representative to the EU. She was very impressed with the project and in particular was interested in how the technology could be replicated in properties both on and off the grid to encourage people to change their behaviour and use energy and water more sustainably.

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

During 2011 the Authority started the process of developing a Climate Change Adaptation Plan. The SD & LE Team engaged with a broad range of Council Service Areas to begin the process.

Part 1 involved the development of a Local Climate Impacts Profile (LCLIP). A database of extreme weather events between 2003 and 2013 was collated by reviewing local media reports.

Meetings were undertaken with 43 senior officers covering each of the 18 Service within the Authority. One hundred and twenty eight impacts were identified, of which 33 were rated as a high priority for further assessment.

The study made a total of 14 recommendations, divided into two areas:

- Existing work and reviews where consideration of climate change adaptation issues should be included. This includes 5 recommendations under 3 headings:
 - Strategies and Plans
 - Review of policies and procedures
 - Financial considerations
- Specific additional work on climate adaptation issues. This includes 9 service specific recommendations

LIVING ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP / GREENER CAERPHILLY

The Policy Team supported and co-ordinated the work of Greener Caerphilly, previously the Living Environment Partnership, on environmental issues, including climate change, in the county borough.

The Team now supports the Public Services Board, Well-being Plan Action Area “To protect and enhance the local natural environment”

Well-being Action Area - To protect and enhance the local natural environment

This is one of the 5 themes of the Well-being Plan. It was agreed as a priority based on the findings from the Caerphilly Well-being Assessment. It includes 3 priority areas of activity:

- Protect, enhance and promote our natural environment, including encouraging and supporting community involvement

- Identify and remove the barriers to people accessing green spaces
- Increase the contribution that the environment makes to the health and well-being of residents

Caerphilly Climate Change Strategy

The Living Environment Partnership played a lead role in co-ordinating a partnership approach to tackling climate change. The Partnership's Climate Change Working Group developed the Climate Change Strategy for the county borough, which was formally launched at the Standing Conference in November 2009. Since then work has been ongoing to raise awareness of the issues and to develop projects in response to the issues.

Climate Change Commitment

A Climate Change Commitment was developed as an innovative way of engaging with individuals, organisations and businesses to enable them to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and take simple steps to save energy, reduce the amount of fossil fuels used, and lower the climate change impacts of everyday activities.

The pledges had 3 levels. Level 1 activities were simple changes in behaviour such as switching appliances off rather than leaving them on standby. These small steps only require simple changes that little or no financial investment. Level 2 pledges include using public transport more often or improving the insulation in a house. These actions require more effort and may include some financial investment. Level 3 actions which include installing renewable energy generation equipment or having UK only holidays require more commitment and investment.

Over the 3 years that the commitment was promoted 5,635 residents made a commitment to combat climate change.

Climate Change Woodlands

The Climate Change Woodlands concept was developed as a public engagement tool. It linked with the Climate Change Commitment scheme, and enabled signatories to make a pledge to do their bit to tackle climate change and plant a tree as a long-lasting and publicly-visible sign of that commitment and to help absorb carbon dioxide and reduce their local contribution to global climate change.

In total 12 Climate Change Woodlands have been planted across the county borough.

Electric Vehicles and Charging Infrastructure

The Policy Team are leading on the authorities electric vehicle work. To date the following has been achieved.

In September 2018 the CCBC Electric Vehicle Strategy and Action Plan was approved by Cabinet. The strategy sets out the proposed approach to supporting the installation of electric vehicle infrastructure to maximise the economic, social and environmental benefits and opportunities that electric vehicles provide, and for electric vehicles to be a fundamental part of the council's own fleet.

As part of the work to deliver the Strategy Action Plan, the Caerphilly Policy Team are leading on a Gwent Regional Electric Vehicle Charge Point Feasibility Study to identify sites suitable for EV charging across the Gwent region, linking to the OLEV On Street Residential Charge Point Fund and the OLEV Workplace Fund. The study involves all 5 Gwent local authorities and the 4 PSB Partners (ABUHB, SWFRS, Gwent Police and Natural Resources Wales).

The Caerphilly Policy Team are also leading on the Gwent Regional Fleet Review, involving all 5 local authority partners and 3 PSB Partners (ABUHB, SWFRS and Gwent Police). £75K funding has been secured from the Welsh Government Decarbonisation Team to deliver this project.

The project aims of the Gwent Regional Fleet Review are to:

- Undertake individual and a strategic overview fleet reviews for each eight Gwent Local Authorities and PSB Partner, breaking down current vehicle usage and quantify the benefits and any potential issues of introducing ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEV's) into their fleet (i.e. identifying opportunities for replacing existing fleet with more efficient ULEVs)
- Undertake a grey fleet review to identify the potential savings by introducing ULEV pool cars/ vans into the fleet.
- Contribute to cleaner air for communities in Gwent
- Combine with the EV Feasibility infrastructure review, to encourage ULEV visibility to help nudge communities to transition to a cleaner mobility environment.

In 2017 the Policy Team installed 6 electric vehicle slow charge units at Penallta House and 5 slow charge units at Tir-Y-Berth Depot. These are designed as slow overnight charge points and were required to allow different services to trial electric vehicles. These charge points were also designed and installed to support the electrification of the Meals Direct Fleet, which was initially planned for 2017.

In August 2018 the Policy Team worked with Facilities to install a fast charge unit, dedicated for fleet vehicles at Penallta House. The fast charge unit is currently used by the Leader of the authority, for the hybrid vehicle.

Several types of electric vehicles have been trialled over the past two years by various services and individual users, all of which have been successful.

The Gwent Regional work is linking with Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD). The Gwent Region is leading the way on this area of work, but they are sharing their resources with the CCRCD to help them catch up. We are looking to hold a regional Electric Vehicle dissemination and 'have a go' event towards the end of May to give potential users, including taxi's, businesses etc. the opportunity to try an electric vehicle.

The Policy Team and Procurement Team are working with Tusker, the CCBC Car Salary Sacrifice Scheme to promote electric vehicles to staff. As part of this work Tusker are offering free home charging units in May/ June 2019 for employees who purchase an electric vehicle during those two months. They are also looking into providing a demo vehicle for CCBC staff to use to try before they buy. We are waiting for more information on this.

The Policy Team have also taken delivery of an electric bike to support staff commuting sustainably and possible over longer distances. The bike also gives staff a chance to try before they buy as part of our sustainability and well-being for future generations agenda.

Section 2: What are we currently doing?

Corporate Energy Projects – Co-ordinated by Corporate Energy & Water Team

See section above

Housing Projects – Co-ordinated by Housing and WHQS Teams

Arbed scheme at Phillipstown.

This is the third successful Arbed project that Caerphilly has been successful with a bid. Currently works are on site undertaking external wall insulation and voltage

optimisers to approximately 400 Private & Council properties at Phillipstown at an estimated cost of £2.5 million.

Energy Company Obligation (ECO)

Framework agreement in place to undertake external wall insulation and loft insulation within specific lower super output areas, although CCBC will contribute funding to the scheme the cost of the works will be subsidised via the carbon savings generated. This framework has 2 energy suppliers Eon (rank 1) and SSE (rank 2). This agreement is in place until end of March 2017.

What works are proposed

2015 -16 Wimpy No-fines = 191 properties to receive external wall insulation. Properties with less than 200mm loft insulation will receive loft insulation upgrades.

Further investigations will be undertaken to evaluate if properties at Lansbury Park & Trecenydd Caerphilly would qualify for ECO funding and be programmed for 2015 /16 – 2017.

Welsh Government Warm Homes Project

A bid has been submitted to the Welsh Government Warm Homes project to improve 178 (primarily private sector) homes within several LSOA areas that have not benefitted from previous schemes. The bid was submitted in June 2015 and it is anticipated that the Welsh Government will confirm the successful project bids in September 2015. The potential value of this bid is around £2.4 million and all works would need to be completed by end of March 2016.

Cyd Cymru

Switch 4 registration opens on 7th September and promotional activities by Cyd Cymru are currently being considered.

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