



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 12TH JULY 2016

SUBJECT: YEAR END PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR HOUSING SERVICES

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on performance of the Housing Service during 2015/16, to set out the key service objectives for 2016/17 and highlight any potential challenges that may affect delivery of these objectives.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report provides members with an overview of performance of the Housing Service by section during 2015/16.
- 2.2 The report also sets out a range of objectives to be undertaken in 2016/17 that will deliver further service improvements and identifies a number of potential challenges that may affect delivery of these objectives.
- 2.3 Overall the performance of the Housing Service for 2015/16 is considered to be good, although, it is accepted that there are areas for improvement. In addition, a number of challenges have been identified that have resulted in action plans being developed, which have been incorporated into the 2016/17 service plan. Looking forward the main challenges relate to the need to respond to and implement changing legislation, together with rising customer expectations against limited financial resources. Whilst challenging, the service is well placed to respond.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 ***The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*** contains 7 well-being goals. When making decisions the act requires public bodies in Wales, including local authorities, to take into account the impact they could have on people living their lives in the future.
- 3.2 ***Improving Lives and Communities: Homes in Wales (Welsh Government, 2010)*** which sets out the national context on meeting housing need, homelessness, and housing-related support services.
- 3.3 ***Caerphilly Delivers (Single Integrated Plan, 2013-2017): P2: "Improve standards of housing and communities, giving appropriate access to services across the county borough."***
- 3.4 ***Anti-Poverty Strategy (CCBC)*** which sets out a range of priorities to tackle poverty in the borough.
- 3.5 ***People, Property, Places: A Housing Strategy for Caerphilly County Borough*** provides the context for the provision of housing and related services in the county borough.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 The Housing Service consists of four main sections:

1. Housing Repair Operations;
2. Private Sector Housing;
3. Public Sector Housing; and
4. Welsh Housing Quality Standard.

4.2 As per current reporting arrangements, this report provides information only on the performance of the first three sections. A separate report has been produced detailing performance of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) section.

4.3 As part of the council's service improvement process, each year the Housing Service undertakes a self-evaluation exercise. This exercise allows us to evaluate the performance of the service against seven pre-defined areas, aspects of the service that require improvement and any challenges facing the delivery of the service. The self-evaluation exercise informs the development of the service plan.

4.4 The following priorities were identified in the 2016/17 service plan:

1. Investment in homes to transform lives and communities (Improvement Objective 5).
2. Reduce the reliance on and cost of the use of bed and breakfast accommodation by providing a range of temporary housing solutions for people who are homeless.
3. Continue to invest in our workforce by ensuring that staff have the necessary training, support and working conditions to enable them to provide excellent services to our customers.
4. Complete an assessment of the technological requirements of the service area to improve delivery to customers.
5. Address aspects of the service where there may be a threat to income and/or customer satisfaction levels.
6. Complete a review of the existing tenancy agreement for council housing in light of the introduction Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016.
7. Ensure the successful implementation of the common housing register IT system (Abritas), associated policies and procedures and revised staff structure.
8. Raise awareness amongst the public, including private sector tenants and landlords, on the introduction of the Rent Smart Wales scheme.

4.5 The performance of each section will be considered separately in turn in the following paragraphs:

Housing Repair Operations

4.6 The Housing Repair Operations section provides a responsive repairs and maintenance service to the council's housing stock of 10,825 properties, completing approximately 30,000 repairs per annum. It consists of 152 members of staff, including 121 multi-trade maintenance operatives, with an annual turnover of £7.8m. The section is also responsible for a further budget of £5.5m p.a. for response projects, external contractors and cyclical and statutory maintenance.

4.7 Overall, the section continues to strive towards improving the way it delivers its services. Significant cost savings have been generated through improved productivity brought about by the extension of mobile working, the multi skilling of operatives, reducing the necessity to travel, and a reduction in administration and overhead costs. Repair performance and customer satisfaction levels also improved in 2015/16 when compared with the previous year. A report on performance of the section and customer satisfaction levels is presented annually to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group.

Performance in 2015/16

4.8 Examples of achievements in 2015/16 include:

- We were finalists in the Association of Public Excellence (APSE) UK, Best Performing Authority for Building Maintenance (2015).
- Mobile working has been extended to other aspects of the service following the successful introduction of new technologies such as handheld devices to record and update information whilst in a tenant's home. Tenants are now being offered appointments for a surveyor to visit their homes to pre inspect larger type repairs.
- A reduction in the overall average time taken to complete a repair appointment by 1.43 days to 10.28 days.
- An improvement in the percentage of repairs completed within target date by 0.65% from 98.45% to 99.10%.
- An improvement in the percentage of customers rating the overall repairs service as excellent or good from 91% to 95%.
- Supported the WHQS programme by completing over 120 kitchens and bathroom replacements, 44 electrical rewires, 45 central heating upgrades, 284 IG door replacements, 33 new fences and 28 fibreglass flat roofs.

Areas for improvement:

- 4.9 The winter of 2015 was one of the wettest ever recorded with the workforce dealing with roof leaks, chimney leaks and cavity wall insulation removals to address problems of dampness. In order to increase resources, given that the number of extreme wet weather events is increasing, we have established a sub-contractor framework whereby external contractors can provide assistance to meet changes in demand.

Key Performance Indicators	Previous Year 2015/16		Progress / Comments
	Target	Actual	
The average end of tenancy void costs.	£3,500	£3,944.60	HRO are now completing WHQS elements on void properties. If one element is identified on the pre-inspection then all 4 are completed, i.e. kitchen, bathroom, electrical rewires central heating, hence this has significantly increased the costs.
Number of WHQS works completed by HRO by category of works.	N/a	120 compliant	This number is broken down as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 93 bathrooms; • 98 kitchens; and • 44 rewires.
Number of backlog repairs pending at year end.	N/a	1,224	Repairs are prioritised and allocated a completion target, depending on the nature of the repair, ranging from 1-66 days. This means there will always be a backlog of pending repairs, which increases and decrease throughout the year.
Number of confirmed complaints received.	N/a	13	This number represents complaints received on the numbers of repairs completed (28,689)
Number of repairs carried out to tenants homes.	N/a	28,698	This is a slight reduction from 2014/15 figures where 30069 repairs carried out to tenants homes.
% of repairs undertaken as appointments (Qtly accum - Year to date)	95%	95.32	
Average number of working days taken to complete a planned repair	66	39.66	Defined as priority 8 = 66 days completion target.

Average number of working days taken to complete a routine repair	25	9.99	Defined as priority 3, 4 & 5 = 2, 25 & 50 days completion target.
Average number of working days taken to complete an emergency repair	1	0.98	Defined as priority 2 = 1 day completion target.
Percentage of emergency jobs completed on time (within 24 hours)	100%	100%	
Percentage of non emergency jobs not subject to call back/complaint (right first time)	98%	98.50%	
Percentage of planned repairs completed on time	90%	92.50%	
Percentage of routine repairs completed on time	95%	96.26%	
Tenant Survey: % of customers satisfied with the Repairs Services they receive	90%	100%	
Percentage of Materials Recycled	80%	85.67%	
Total Fuel Used by the DLO fleet (Yrly)	£215,000	£164,765.46	
Number of vehicles per operational employee (Yrly)	0.63	0.62	Number of vehicles = 76. Number of employees = 123.
Percentage of voids completed on time	96.50%	94.34%	The target for 2015/16 reduced slightly due to the increased workload where HRO completed 120 properties to the WHQS standard.
Refurbishment voids turnaround (average number of calendar days keys held by in-house workforce)	60	57.61	
Routine voids turnaround (average number of calendar days keys held by in-house workforce)	11.50	11.40	

Key objectives for 2016/17

4.10 The key objectives for the Housing Repair Operations section contained in the 2016/17 service plan:

- Introduce tablet devices for Housing Repair Operations surveyors to assist mobile working and improve efficiency.
- Review existing schedule of rates for in-house workforce to mirror schedule of rates developed for contractors.
- Introduce a new gas repairs and servicing contract which incorporates priority installations.
- Consider the management and delivery on statutory maintenance utilising the in-house team to achieve better value for money and improved performance.

4.11 Other priorities for 2016/17 include:

- Continue to support the WHQS team in all elements of work to ensure the programme is completed on time.

Main risks

4.12 The key risks identified for 2016/17 are:

- Service provision and customer satisfaction levels could be affected if the budget for the section was reduced to satisfy medium term financial plan or other service area priorities, particularly as there is now a requirement to maintain tenants' homes to the WHQS.
- A reduction in the budget for the section could lead to increased risk of accidents within the home and claims for disrepair/injury as the number of backlog repairs increase.

Private Sector Housing

- 4.13 The Private Sector Housing section is responsible for the provision of major and minor works of adaptation for disabled persons living in the public and private sectors, improving the condition of homes in the private sector through individual grants, area renewal schemes and regulation. The section maintains the council's housing register and is responsible for the delivery of homelessness services. It is also assisting in the delivery of the WHQS programme, by project managing external works to blocks of flats in the lower Rhymney Valley area.
- 4.14 The section consists of 59 members of staff (FTE) with a budget of £7.4m p.a. (£6m capital and £1.4m (net) revenue).
- 4.15 Analysis of performance and customer satisfaction information tells us that, despite ongoing budget pressures, overall, the section continues to provide a wide range of good quality services.

Performance in 2015/16

- 4.16 Examples of achievements in 2015/16 include:
- Homelessness has been an increasing challenge in view of changes to legislation but this year we have managed to substantially reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for emergency housing by utilising a range of different options and interventions. We have also improved the type and level of temporary accommodation used by the council for homeless people by opening a new 18 person supported housing facility, which is owned by United Welsh Housing Association and managed by SOLAS.
 - Continuous improvement over the past 6 years in respect of waiting times for low cost adaptations, reducing from 54 days to 37 days.
 - A reduction in waiting times over a 5 year period for disabled facility grants under £5,000 from 328 days to 242 days.
 - Working in partnership with Cartrefi Hafod to increase access into the private rented sector via the introduction of a Social Lettings Agency. To date, 2 social lettings properties are approved and in use.
 - Secured accommodation for two families rehoused under the Syrian Resettlement Programme; one with a private landlord and one with a housing association partner.
 - Established a partnership with United Welsh Housing Association to assist in addressing the number of long-term empty properties in the borough. Work on returning properties into use will commence during 2016/17.
 - Restructured the Housing Options Team following the introduction of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 to address the additional responsibilities it places on the council in terms of the statutory homelessness function. This includes the utilisation of grant from Welsh Government to fund additional fixed term posts.
 - Delivery of 99% of all grant aided schemes on behalf of recipients by the in-house Agency Service.
 - Continued full utilisation of social housing grant and other forms of grant funding from Welsh Government to deliver new affordable housing via our housing association partners, both for social rent and low cost homeownership.
 - Continuation of the Renewal Area programme in Senghenydd by utilizing grant funding from Welsh Government.
 - Successful relocation of our own staff from Pontllanfraith House to Tredomen Business & Technology Centre and those of Caerphilly Care and Repair to Woodfieldside.

- Undertook and submitted a Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment to Welsh Government within the prescribed timescales.
- Successfully managed the introduction of Rent Smart Wales by using £12,384 grant from Welsh Government to fund awareness raising activities in the borough and provided two presentations, one targeted at council staff, who are also landlords and the other was given to the private sector landlords' forum.

Areas for improvement:

4.17 Areas that require improvement were identified as:

- Increasing the number of long-term empty properties in the private sector returned to beneficial use by direct action of the council (estimated to be over 900 properties), given that we are currently below the national average in respect of empty property activity.
- Reducing the delivery times for disabled facilities grants being that the council remains 19th out of 22 local authorities in Wales. (see stats below)
- Ensuring that we have robust policies and procedures in place in respect of the council housing register and homelessness functions.

Key Performance Indicators	Previous Year 2015/16		Progress / Comments
	Target	Actual	
Enquiry to approval times - Disabled Facilities Grants (days)	150	134	This figure relates to the average amount of time that staff take to approve a grant following receipt of the recommendation from Social Services.
Enquiry to approval times Minor Works Grants (days)	260	223	
Enquiry to approval times Public Sector Adaptations (days)	63	85.75	The reason for a below target is one officer left the department to commence employment elsewhere. This post has subsequently been replaced. Officers have also concentrated on adaptations relating to disabled facility grants.
Percentage of grant recipients who stated they were satisfied with the conduct of the builders	99%	96%	The annual performance outturn is 96%, with 1% reporting a poor conduct (3 clients) and 3% providing no response (5 clients). The Principal Housing Officer (Agency) investigates all cases where substandard performance has been identified by a client.
Percentage of grant recipients who stated they were satisfied with the length of time it took to complete the grant work (Qtly)	96%	92%	The annual performance outturn is 92%, with 6% reporting poor performance in relation to the time taken to complete the works (13 clients) and 2% providing no response (4 clients). The Principal Housing Officer (Agency) investigates all cases where substandard performance has been identified by a client.
Percentage of grant recipients who stated they were satisfied with the quality of the grant work (Qtly)	99%	96%	The annual performance outturn is 96%, with 2% reporting poor quality (3 clients) and 2% providing no response (4 clients). The Principal Housing Officer (Agency) investigates all cases where substandard performance has been identified by a client.
The average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant (Annual)	288	271	Last year we suffered as a result of one of the Technical Officers (representing 20% of the Team) being on long term sickness absence for some 5 months. This severely affected performance and we failed to meet our target.

			This year, albeit still without a full staff compliment, we were better resourced. We also undertook a review of our working practices to make them more efficient and it is a combination of both that has enabled us to reduce waiting times to below the target we set for the year.
The average number of days taken to deliver a LA tenant adaptation other than a DFG	175	210	The reason for a below target performance is largely due to the impact of the introduction of a new Procurement Framework for Public Sector Adaptations, which was scheduled for commencement on 1 st April 2015. Unfortunately, the introduction of the revised system was delayed until early May and this, together with officers having to familiarise themselves with the new way of working, led to schemes being held up and consequently increased waiting times at the start of the year. The situation was also exacerbated by reduced staff resources associated with long term sickness absence.
The average number of calendar days taken to deliver low cost adaptation works in private dwellings where the Disabled Facilities Grant process is not used	38	34	
The average number of calendar days taken to deliver a disabled facilities grant of less than £5k	265	242	
% of applicants suspended on the waiting list (Qtly - stand alone)	10%	8.42%	
% of New Tenants who found completing Housing Application Form easy - Tenant Survey (Qtly - accum)	85%	88.95%	
% of Tenants satisfied with the Housing Allocations and Letting Service (Qtly - accum)	90%	91.06%	
The number of new affordable housing units provided during the year as a percentage of all new housing units provided during the year	45%	47.36%	2014/15 data. 2015/16 data is not prepared until July 2016. 162 out 342 properties were affordable.
Percentage of the houses in multiple occupation known to the local authority that are subject to enforcement activity	N/a	2.17%	
Percentage private sector dwellings returned to occupation that had been unoccupied for more than 6 months due to direct action from CCBC (Qtly accum)	4.30%	3.86%	Our inability to meet the annual target was as a result of extremely poor performance in quarter 2 (as a result of sickness absence) which could not be made up during the year. We have, however, now undertaken a mail shot to all relevant empty home owners, which it is envisaged will substantially improve performance in 2016/17.

Houses in Multiple Occupation - Number of assessments carried out under the Housing Act 2004, by property type	N/a	55	
Landlord - Number of dwellings improved via private housing grants, by tenure	N/a	14	
Landlord - Number of dwellings improved via private housing loans, by tenure	N/a	8	
Owner occupied -Number of dwellings improved via private housing grants, by tenure	N/a	106	
Owner occupier - Number of dwellings improved via private housing loans, by tenure	N/a	1	
Single Occupancy - Number of assessments carried out under the Housing Act 2004, by property type	N/a	504	
The average number of days that all homeless households spent in bed and breakfast accommodation.	30	11.75	
The number of homeless households temporarily accommodated in bed and breakfast accommodation.	N/a	175	Of which 154 actual new placements for 2015/16.
The number of people provided with financial assistance by the homelessness team to access accommodation in the private rented sector (excluding temporary accommodation).	N/a	226	We utilised WG transitional homelessness funding to assist households to access accommodation prior to them getting into a homelessness crisis situation. This type of intervention prevents homelessness from occurring and reduces the actual number of people that the council may later owe a duty towards. Therefore, the higher this number is, the fewer households need to be accepted under the subsequent duties in the 3 PIs below.
Cases who have had homelessness prevented (linked to a national PI Table 1.3 – Eligible, threatened with homelessness, prevention assistance provided (Section 66)).	N/a	12.60%	The number of people we accept as having a 'Duty to prevent an applicant from becoming homeless (Section 66)' 'PREVENTION DUTY' as homeless as a percentage of the number of people we have assessed under (Section 62) duty to assess.
Cases who have had their risk of homelessness relieved by providing alternative accommodation (linked to a national PI Table 1.4 – Eligible, homeless, subject to duty to help to secure (Section 73)).	N/a	35.24%	The number of people we accept as having a 'Duty to help to secure accommodation for homeless applicants (section 73) 'RELIEF DUTY' as a percentage of the number of people we have assessed under (Section 62) duty to assess.
The number of people determined as homeless as a percentage of the number of people threatened with homelessness who approach the Council for	N/a	8.46%	The number of people we accept a final 'Duty to secure accommodation' for applicants in priority need when the duty in section 73 ends section 75 'FINAL DUTY' duty as homeless as a percentage of the number of people we have assessed

assistance (linked to a national PI Table 1.5c – Eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need (Section 75)).			under (Section 62) duty to assess.
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Key objectives for 2016/17

4.18 The key objectives for the Private Sector Housing section contained in the 2016/17 service plan:

- Use a range of activities to increase awareness of the Rent Smart Wales (RSW) scheme.
- Utilising grant funding from Welsh Government, appoint an additional member of staff to assist in the creation of a comprehensive private rented sector database
- Sign the RSW Memorandum of Understanding between the Single Licensing Authority and all councils in Wales in relation to service standards and roles.
- Replace of the current environmental health IT system (Civica App) with Tascomi. To include full system implementation, user acceptance testing and end user training prior to go live of the system.
- Ensure the successful implementation of the common housing register IT system (Abitas), associated policies and procedures and revised staff structure.

4.19 Other priorities for 2016/17 include:

- Continue to seek improvements in the provision of the adaptations service.
- Improved partnership working to increase the number of long-term empty properties in the private sector returned to beneficial use by action of the council.

Main risks

4.20 The key risks identified for 2016/17 are:

- Further reductions in the Capital budget could affect our ability to deliver the objectives set out in the Private Sector Housing Renewal policy and achieve the desired level of Agency income.
- Agreeing with partners the funding arrangements for and the staffing structure to facilitate the introduction of the Common Housing Register.
- Insufficient resources to deliver the statutory obligations of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 in respect of homelessness prevention once the 3-year transitional homelessness funding from Welsh Government has ended.
- Failure to increase in the number of properties available to the council to discharge its homelessness duties could result in increased use of bed and breakfast accommodation and associated costs.
- A delay in the introduction of Tascomi would affect our ability to record and maintain service records.
- Failure to meet key milestones in the implementation of Abitas could delay the introduction of the common housing register.

Public Sector Housing

4.21 The Public Sector Housing section is responsible for the day-to-day delivery of the landlord services function to council tenants (10,825 council owned houses and 947 garages) in accordance with all statutory requirements and council policies. It consists of 117 members of staff with a budget of £5m p.a. and income collection of £46m p.a.

4.22 In the absence of benchmarking data we are unable to compare our performance against housing management services in other areas. Although, our performance information shows that we are currently sustaining high standards of service delivery. There are some areas of weakness that we are aware of, such as low demand for certain property types and areas,

and are actively working to address. It is becoming increasingly more challenging in the current environment with significant legislative changes to sustain and maintain standards.

Performance in 2015/16

4.23 Examples of achievements in 2015/16 include:

- Staff successfully relocated from Pontllanfraith House to Tredomen Business and Technology Centre and The Market Place, Blackwood.
- Tenancy support staff visited more than 2,000 tenants and were successful in helping those people secure an additional £494,000 in benefits.
- A recent review undertaken by the Wales Audit Office in relation to the implementation of the welfare reform cited the service in several examples of best practice.
- The recently introduced Housing Improvement Partnership involves tenants in scrutinising key housing functions and works with Caerphilly Homes to improve housing services from a customer perspective. As a result of the partnership we have revised our procedures relating to landlords consent for tenants to carry out certain proposed works to their home, to reflect the view of tenants.
- Implemented a joint responsibility policy with the WHQS team regarding the maintenance of tenants' homes.
- An extensive consultation exercise has been carried out with tenants on a new rent setting policy and a report was submitted to Policy & Resources scrutiny committee and subsequently approved by Cabinet.
- Commenced a review of the existing service charge arrangements for sheltered housing schemes and for other types of housing. This work will be concluded during 2016/17.
- Undertaken exit surveys, using a new form, to understand the reasons why tenants are giving up their secure tenancy to move into the private rented sector (upper Rhymney Valley housing office). Analysis of the surveys failed to identify any common reasons.
- Introduced daily tenancies for council housing, moving from a system of weekly tenancies. Whilst this has not reduced rent loss from voids it has increased flexibility for the new tenant in terms of when they can sign for their tenancy and move in to the property, and reduced the void turnaround period.
- Reviewed our void property performance information to ensure it provides accurate business intelligence.
- Commenced work in Lansbury Park to address the long standing problem of deprivation in that area and are investing close to £10m in housing and environmental improvements on the estate and are committed to working with local people to make it a place where people are genuinely proud to live.
- Working in partnership with the WHQS section to improve properties in Rowan Place, Rhymney via a £4.2m regeneration programme.
- Introduction of a sensitive lettings policy in Rowan Place for new tenants to address recurring issues of anti-social behaviour and low demand, thereby assisting in the establishment of a sustainable community.
- Utilised existing staff and property visits to maximise information gathering as a means of implementing property/tenancy inspections.
- Increased the support offered to older tenants via a floating support service and by the recruitment of an activities coordinator, thereby assisting in increasing independence and reducing isolation.
- We have introduced changes to a number of our procedures to reflect lessons learned from our investigation of complaints.
- Establishment of a Recharges Review Panel, consisting of officer, tenant and member representation, to ensure a consistent approach to recharges is applied across housing offices.
- We have consulted with the residents of six sheltered housing schemes on the potential remodelling of these schemes to ensure their fitness for purpose for current and future tenants.
- We have initiated and actively participated in a multi agency approach to address concerns with tenancy sustainment and anti-social behaviour in the flats at Holly Road, Ty

Sign. Supported by partners we have opened a housing sub-office in Holly Road to provide additional support and assistance to local residents. Whilst still a work in progress the turnover of tenants and the incidence of recorded complaints has subsequently reduced and housing demand for the flats has increased.

- Produced a Tenant Participation Strategy following extensive consultation and discussion with tenants, staff and the Chartered Institute of Housing on its production.
- Introduced a revised garden monitoring procedure that provides detailed guidance on monitoring and enforcement action for unsatisfactory garden conditions that constitute a breach of tenancy conditions.

Areas for improvement:

4.24 Areas that require improvement were identified as:

- We lack performance information for a number of aspects of the service. A revision of the performance information that is collected and reported would ensure current relevance and value.
- Some of our sheltered housing accommodation suffers from low demand and is not suitable to meet the needs and expectations of current and future tenants.
- Rent loss from void properties remains high, as does the number of tenants requesting a transfer.
- We do not equality monitor the delivery of our services to tenants and, therefore, we do not know who our customers are and are unable to fully tailor services to meet their individual needs.
- There are areas of the service where we do not know what our customers think because tenant or leaseholder satisfaction surveys have not been undertaken.
- We do not fully recoup the cost of providing the leaseholder services management function which results in a reduction in income to use on maintaining existing or developing new services.
- A central database for the collection of property inspection information has not yet been developed and this would greatly assist with monitoring and progressing referrals.

Key Performance Indicators	Previous Year 2015/16		Progress / Comments
	Target	Actual	
The average number of calendar days taken to let lettable units of accommodation during the financial year for permanent accommodation (Annual)	46	53.14	<p>This PI reflects the total void time for a property in debit, from end of one tenancy to commencement of a new tenancy. Over the course of the year a number of low demand properties were let, in part due to the development and implementation of a marketing strategy. This is a positive housing management outcome but it adversely affects the overall re-let time.</p> <p>The average re-let time for properties that are not classed as low demand is 45.51 days, against a target of 46 days, however, the average re-let time for low demand properties is 95.67 days. This has a negative impact on the overall average re-let time. 132 of 868 properties allocated were classed as 'low demand'.</p> <p>Demand for properties north of Aberbargoed is limited and some of our sheltered housing schemes that comprise bedsits are also low demand. Six sheltered schemes comprising bedsits have been identified for consideration for remodelling pending the outcome of feasibility studies.</p>

			The HRO team are increasingly carrying out comprehensive WHQS works to void properties rather than repairs, which improve the outcome to new tenants but, of necessity, is leading to longer void durations. Of the 931 HRO voids in 16/17, 280 were improved to the WHQS.
Percentage of Council Housing Stock that is Empty (Qtly - Yr to date)	1.80%	1.23%	Stock of 10,852. Number of voids is 134 (31/03/16).
Percentage of new tenants who found it easy to contact Housing Office	95%	93.41%	There was a reduction in satisfaction in Q4 which impacted on overall performance. This reflects the period of transition of the EVAHO to The Market place, Blackwood, during which time there were significant difficulties experienced with the telephony system.
The number of Council tenants who are affected by welfare reform and under-occupying that successfully downsized to alternative Council accommodation.	N/a	39	New PI. Experience this year has demonstrated that there is considerable reluctance for many households that have been affected by welfare reform to actively consider a transfer to smaller accommodation when reasonable offers of such accommodation are made.
Percentage of tenants who chose to view the property before tenancy started	82%	86.26%	
The level of tenant satisfaction with general condition of their new property (following allocation or transfer)	70%	68.13%	An increasing number of void properties are improved to the WHQS prior to allocation, however, it may well be that general expectation has arisen due to WHQS. There are also occasions where applicants are allocated smaller properties than they may hope for if affordability is an issue following welfare reform. We are offering transfers for downsizing and these may be reluctant movers. A significant proportion of respondents over the course of the year (18.68%) answered the question 'How would you describe the general condition of this property?' as 'Average'. We currently only include responses that are 'Good' or 'Very Good' as indicators of satisfaction. Should we include 'average' responses the annual satisfaction rate would increase to 86.81%.
Percentage of residents satisfied with visit by tenancy support officers.	97%	100%	Relates to council tenants only.
Tenant satisfaction with overall rent service (Rating Good/Very Good)	85%	86.29%	
The total amount of rent arrears owed by former tenants in permanent accommodation which were written off as unrecoverable during the financial year as a percentage of the total rent collectable for the financial year (Qtly accum - Year to date)	0.50%	0.54%	Write offs authorised by Interim Head of Corporate Finance.
The total amount of rent lost due to lettable units of	1.90%	1.55%	

permanent accommodation being empty as a percentage of the total rent debit for the financial year (Qtly accum - Year to date)			
The total amount of rent arrears owed by current tenants in the following types of accommodation as a percentage of the total rent collectable for the financial year - Permanent Accommodation (Qtly accum - Year to date)	3.00%	2.73%	
The number of council tenants affected by welfare reforms who were visited in their own homes and provided with advice and support to minimise the impact of the changes	2,000	2,252	Encompasses tenants affected by any of the changes to the welfare benefits system including the bedroom tax.
The number of council tenants referred for money and debt advice as a direct result of face to face support on the impact of welfare reforms	130	215	
The value of financial savings generated for tenants as a direct result of face to face support on the affect of welfare reforms	£280,000	£493,911	This includes additional Housing Benefit and welfare benefit savings, together with assistance with water costs.
The number of people supported by tenancy support officers to access benefits they are entitled to [council housing only]	N/a	811	New PI.
Legal action resulting in a Court Order will be reasonable and proportionate to the number of ASB referrals	2%	1.65%	12 court orders out of 727 cases.
Maximise the use of the VIP to support tenants at risk of losing their homes	8	11	Number of referrals.
Satisfaction with the way ASB complaints are handled by the TES will be maintained to a high standard	90%	90.63%	

Key objectives for 2016/17

4.25 The key objectives for the Public Sector Housing section contained in the 2016/17 service plan:

- Development of a divisional training strategy.
- Consider the replacement of the Capita Housing Management IT system.
- Establish whether we are able to introduce service charges for council tenants for existing and new services.
- Complete current consultation process with tenants before deciding whether to pilot the introduction of service charges for certain new services for tenants living in Holly Road flats.

- Carry out an assessment of the implications Universal Credit may have on our ambitions to introduce service charges for all tenants that receive eligible services.
- Complete de-pooling of service charges for tenants of sheltered housing schemes to determine the appropriate service charge for each sheltered housing scheme.
- Present a report to the relevant committees and Cabinet on the introduction of service charges for non sheltered housing accommodation.
- Undertake a review of sheltered housing schemes in consultation with social services to inform current proposals for remodelling and to consider their suitability to meet the needs of a range of potential future customers.
- Complete a review of the existing tenancy agreement for council housing in light of the introduction of the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016.

4.26 Other priorities for 2016/17 include:

- Develop a database to assist with the management and monitoring of property inspections.

Main risks

4.27 The key risks identified for 2016/17 are:

- An inability to introduce or de-pool service charges will affect our ability to recover income for services that we currently provide and for services which we may want to introduce in the future.
- An inability to recoup 100% of the cost of providing the leaseholder services management function will result in a reduction in income to use on maintaining existing or developing new services, due to the need to subsidise the function from our sources of funding.
- We will experience a reduction in income to use to maintain existing or develop new services, through continuing long-term voids, if the outcome of the viability assessments means that we are unable to remodel a number of sheltered housing schemes.
- Review of service charges for sheltered housing schemes and the introduction of service charges to general needs accommodation could result in reduced levels of customer satisfaction.
- The numbers of low demand properties needs to be addressed to maximise income and contribute towards reducing the housing waiting list.
- A lack of equality information would mean that we are unable to tailor services to meet the needs of our customers, resulting in lower levels of satisfaction.

Monitoring arrangements

4.28 The delivery of the objectives outlined in this report will be monitored through the following methods:

Frequency	MONITORING ARRANGEMENT
Weekly	Review financial & operational performance reports Consider weekly workloads
Fortnightly	WHQS Project Board
Monthly	Performance data review meetings Service plan review meetings Financial and operational performance and strategy review meetings. Financial monitoring meetings (capital)
Bi-monthly	Financial monitoring meetings (revenue)
6 weekly	Caerphilly Homes Task Group (WHQS) Housing management team meeting
Quarterly	Aspireview updated and reviewed Performance management meetings Performance management unit review support meeting Performance management reports – Aspireview Progress reports to chief officer

6 monthly	Reports to Policy and Resources scrutiny committee and Cabinet Progress reports to head of service Performance management meeting
Annually	Performance development reviews for all staff Benchmarking (APSE) Aspireview updated and reviewed Year end report to head of service

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 An equality impact assessment is not required as the report is for information purposes only.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no financial implications to this report, although, there may be in respect of the individual actions.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no personnel implications to this report, although, there may be in respect of the individual actions.

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 Comments received following consultations during the course of preparing this report have been reflected within the content.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Members are asked to consider the content of this report and, where appropriate, question and challenge the performance presented.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Performance management scrutiny affords members the opportunity to challenge, inform and shape the future performance of the housing service and the priorities presented within this report for 2016/17.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Measure 2009.

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Nicole Scammell, Acting Director of Corporate Finance & Section 151 Officer
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