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

Date: 9th November 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

A meeting of the **Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee** will be held in the **Sirhowy Room, Penallta House, Tredomen, Ystrad Mynach** on **Tuesday, 15th November, 2016** at **5.30 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Chris Burns'.

Chris Burns
INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A G E N D A

	Pages
1 To receive apologies for absence.	
2 Declarations of Interest.	
<p>Councillors and Officers are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any 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.</p> <p>To approve and sign the following minutes: -</p>	
3 Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 4th October 2016.	1 - 8

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



- 4 Consideration of any matter referred to this Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.
- 5 To receive a verbal report by the Cabinet Member(s).
- 6 Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme. 9 - 20
- 7 To receive and consider the following Cabinet Reports*: -
1. WAO Review of Arrangements to Address External Audit, Inspection and Regulation Recommendations and Proposals for Improvement - Caerphilly County Borough Council - 19th October 2016;
 2. Capital Outturn 2015/16 - 19th October 2016;
 3. Additional Car Parking - Penallta House - 2nd November 2016;
 4. Former Nelson Boys and Girls Club - 2nd November 2016;
 5. Former Risca Collieries Workmens Institute - 2nd November 2016;
 6. Write-Off of Debt Over £20,000 - Brindavon Care Home Ltd - 2nd November 2016;
 7. Write-off of Debts Over £20,000 (EXEMPT) - 2nd November 2016.

**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 10.00 a.m. on Monday, 14th November 2016.*

To receive and consider the following Scrutiny reports:-

- 8 An Update on the Housing Division's Use of Bed and Breakfast Facilities for Emergency Accommodation. 21 - 28
- 9 Update on Reserves. 29 - 40
- 10 Complaints and Representations - Caerphilly Homes. 41 - 50

Circulation:

Councillors L.J. Binding, Mrs P. Cook, C.J. Cuss, Miss E. Forehead, J.E. Fussell, C. Hawker, Ms J.G. Jones, G. Kirby (Vice Chair), A. Lewis, C.P. Mann, S. Morgan (Chair), Mrs G.D. Oliver, D. Rees, R. Saralis, J. Simmonds and J. Taylor

And Appropriate Officers



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON
TUESDAY, 4TH OCTOBER 2016 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor S. Morgan – Chair

Councillors:

L. Binding, Mrs P. Cook, C.J. Cuss, Miss E. Forehead, C. Hawker, A. Lewis, C.P. Mann, Mrs G.D. Oliver, D. Rees, J. Simmonds and J. Taylor

Cabinet Members:

Mrs C. Forehead (HR and Governance/Business Manager), D.T. Hardacre (Cabinet Member for Performance and Asset Management), D.V. Poole (Housing)

Together with:

N. Scammell (Acting Director of Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer), S. Couzens (Chief Housing Officer), S. Harris (Interim Head of Corporate Finance), C. Jones (Head of Performance and Property Services), D. Whetter (Interim Head of Regeneration), L. Allen (Principal Accountant), A. Dallimore (Team Leader - Urban Renewal and Conservation), C. Forbes-Thompson (Interim Head of Democratic Services), A. Wyburn (Solicitor) and R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J.E. Fussell, Ms J.G. Jones, G. Kirby (Vice-Chair), R. Saralis and Mrs B. Jones (Cabinet Member for Corporate Services).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES – 12TH JULY 2016

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 12th July 2016 (minute nos. 1 – 10) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. CALL-IN PROCEDURE

There had been no matters referred to the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.

5. REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBERS

The Scrutiny Committee received verbal reports from Councillors D.T. Hardacre, Mrs C. Forehead and D.V. Poole.

Councillor D.T. Hardacre (Cabinet Member for Performance and Asset Management) summarised a number of forthcoming documents relating to Council performance. The Annual Performance Report for 2015/16 (which was due to be considered by Cabinet the following day prior to ratification by Council) will provide residents with the opportunity to appreciate the improvements being made to service delivery across the county borough, despite the difficult financial climate. The Local Government Data Unit's annual report on Council performance across Wales (which is due to be considered by Cabinet) will allow the Council to benchmark their performance against other local authorities and identify areas for improvement. The Annual Improvement Report from the Auditor General will also be presented to Cabinet and is expected to positively reflect on the Council's performance in 2015/16 and make some proposals for improvement.

The Cabinet Member explained that he would be responsible for ensuring that the Council's Asset Management (Land and Property) Strategy aligns with the proposed Draft Corporate Asset Management Strategy which was on the Scrutiny Committee agenda for that evening. The Cabinet Member also stated that he was pleased with the progress made by Corporate Property, as outlined in the State of the Estate report to be presented at the meeting.

Councillor Mrs C. Forehead (Cabinet Member for HR and Governance/Business Manager) summarised the changes to scrutiny arrangements arising from the Scrutiny Review, which were agreed by Council in October 2015 and have now been successfully implemented across all Scrutiny Committees. These changes (which include structured planning of the forward work programmes and advance circulation of Cabinet Member statements to the Scrutiny Committee Members) have been made to improve the effectiveness of the scrutiny arrangements and will continue to be monitored by Scrutiny Leadership Group. A self-evaluation of the scrutiny changes will be carried out during the Autumn period.

Members were advised that a planned Wales Audit Office thematic review is underway, which is being undertaken across all councils in Wales. The Cabinet Member also explained that the HR Strategy 2016-2020, which had recently been presented to the Scrutiny Committee, had since been ratified by Cabinet and was being prepared for publication.

Councillor D.V. Poole (Cabinet Member for Housing) updated the Scrutiny Committee on developments across the Housing service area. He explained that Welsh Government are prioritising the protection of social housing by ending the Right to Buy in Wales. If passed, this legislation will protect the Council's social housing stock from further reduction and ensure that social housing is available for people who need it.

Members were reminded that the Common Housing Register is due to be introduced in the near future, which will result in housing applicants completing a single form for all social housing within Caerphilly. A Common Allocations Policy to complement this new process has also been developed by the Council, and arrangements are being made for a Members' seminar to facilitate their understanding of the housing allocation process. During discussion on this item, the Cabinet Member explained that proactive attempts had been made by Council staff to contact those residents who had not re-registered under the new process.

The Scrutiny Committee were also informed that over 320 homes in Lansbury Park are due to be transformed as part of an innovative 'green' partnership with energy supplier EON. The properties will receive new external cladding as part of a £2m investment package which will improve energy efficiency and transform the appearance of the estate. In response to Members' queries, the Cabinet Member explained that consideration was being given to the use of different cladding colours across the estate in order to give each court its own identity. He also confirmed that an approved system of cladding would be used throughout the improvement works.

A query was raised regarding letters sent to a number of Caerphilly Homes tenants and their local ward members in relation to WHQS repairs/refurbishments. The Cabinet Member explained that 3 attempts are made to contact the tenant in order for WHQS improvement works to be scheduled. If the tenant does not respond, the property is removed from the WHQS programme of works. Local ward Members are informed of these attempts so that they have the opportunity to engage with the tenant (if they are known to them) and encourage them to accept the improvement works on offer.

In the absence of Councillor Mrs B. Jones, Members noted the contents of her report, which had been circulated to Members in advance of the meeting. The report provided an update in relation to Corporate Finance, Information Technology and Customer Service. There were no questions received on these items.

The Cabinet Members were thanked for their reports.

6. POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Cath Forbes-Thompson (Interim Head of Democratic Services) presented the report, which outlined details of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme (FWP).

Members were advised that the FWP includes all reports agreed at the meeting held on 12th July 2016 and outlines the reports planned for the period October 2016 to April 2017. Members were asked to consider the FWP alongside the Cabinet Work Programme as appended to the report and to suggest any changes.

A number of amendments were suggested, and it was agreed that a forthcoming report regarding the Welsh Language 5-Year Strategy be placed on the Members' Portal. Furthermore it was agreed that an additional report (Caerphilly Local Assessment of Wellbeing Report) be scheduled for 17th January 2017, with the HRA Budget Monitoring report already on the FWP for this date rescheduled to 28th February 2017.

It was agreed that subject to the foregoing amendments, the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme be published on the Council's website.

7. CABINET REPORTS

None of the Cabinet reports listed on the agenda had been called forward for discussion at the meeting.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

8. PROPERTY SERVICES - STATE OF THE ESTATE REPORT 31ST MARCH 2016

Colin Jones (Head of Performance and Property Services) presented the report, which summarised Property Services' first State of the Estate Report. This report had been considered and endorsed by Cabinet on 13th July 2016, who recommended that subject to the views of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, the State of the Estate Report be communicated across the Authority.

Members were informed that for some time now, the Welsh Government (WG) has produced an annual report on the "State of the Estate" relating to property in their ownership. The report was very useful and has been widely circulated by WG, and had prompted Property Services to prepare a similar report for the Council. The main driver for it being introduced was to reflect on the significant changes that have been made to better manage, rationalise and consolidate the Council's property portfolio, which arose from the recommendations of the Council's Asset Management (Land and Property) Strategy published in 2011-2012. The recommendations (which were summarised in Paragraph 4.1 of the Cabinet report) included a phased transfer of all property (including schools and public housing) into a central corporate portfolio managed by Property Services, together with the transfer of associated maintenance budgets. Although these have not yet been fully completed, the State of the Estate Report highlights the benefits that can be gained from these principles, and these were endorsed at the meeting of Cabinet on 13th July 2016.

The Scrutiny Committee were referred to the significant amount of work undertaken by Property Services as highlighted within the report. Particular reference was made to the rationalisation of office accommodation and the resulting revenue savings, which have significantly contributed to the protection of jobs and front line service delivery, and Members noted the efforts of all staff involved with the office relocations. Officers explained that this is the first of further annual reports, which will act as a benchmark and demonstrate the performance of the Council in relation to property ownership.

Discussion took place regarding the sale of Pontllanfraith House and Officers confirmed that a procurement exercise is currently being undertaken in this respect. A Member referred to parking issues in the surgery adjacent to the site and Officers explained that they are currently liaising with the relevant parties in an attempt to resolve this matter. Officers responded to a query regarding the amount of outstanding electrical tasks across community centres, as outlined in the State of the Estate report, and their timescales for completion. They explained that these figures related to outstanding works as of March 2016 and that the majority of these tasks had now been completed. A Member also suggested that the provision of childcare facilities would be of benefit to the Council and its staff.

In response to a query regarding the exclusion of schools and public housing from the Council's property maintenance liability, Officers explained that schools are responsible for their own building maintenance budgets but that the Council liaises with Headteachers in relation to such matter. Members were also advised that the WHQS programme is funded separately and operates independently from the rest of the Council's property portfolio.

A Member referred to energy consumption as summarised in the State of the Estate report and queried whether there are plans to improve the performance of Display Energy Certificates across the Council's corporate buildings. Officers explained that there was an improvement in energy performance during 2015-16 and outlined the works that have been carried out to cooling and heating systems to improve performance across these buildings.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations from Cabinet as outlined therein be endorsed. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the State of the Estate Report 31st March 2016, as appended to the Cabinet report, be noted;
- (ii) the principles of completing a phased transfer of responsibility for the maintenance of all property (excluding schools and public housing) into a central corporate portfolio managed by Property Services together with the maintenance budgets as outlined in paragraph 4.1 of the report, and as endorsed by Cabinet, be noted;
- (iii) the State of the Estate Report be communicated across the Authority.

9. CORPORATE ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Consideration was given to the report, which sought the views of Members on a Draft Corporate Asset Management Strategy, prior to its presentation to Cabinet and thereafter Council for approval.

Officers explained that following a review of the Council's Asset Management (Land and Property) Strategy in 2013, Wales Audit Office (WAO) made 5 proposals for improvement, which included "*developing a robust Asset Management Strategy for its property and associated infrastructure*" and "*developing and implementing arrangements to monitor the delivery of the strategy*". In September 2014, the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee accepted that the development of a revised Asset Management Strategy should be delayed until the Council's financial position became clearer, a revised Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was agreed and services could better plan for the future. Following discussion between the WAO and Officers at Audit Committee in December 2015, it was resolved that a Corporate Asset Management Strategy (CAMS) should be progressed.

Members were advised that the Corporate Asset Management Strategy (appended to the report in draft form) is an overarching document which aligns with the corporate aims of the Council. It identifies where the Council has appropriate individual service asset plans/strategies in place. Where such asset plans/strategies are not present, the challenge will be to determine whether those assets need supporting strategies and, if so, by when they can be delivered. The CAMS establishes a set of Principles, which are aligned to the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and has developed a number of Outcomes, namely: Compliance, Condition, Suitability, Sufficiency, Accessibility and Sustainability. The expectation is that all individual council asset plans/strategies will reflect these Principles and Outcomes to ensure the effective implementation of the CAMS. Existing individual service asset plans/strategies will be reviewed and revised to align with these Principles and Outcomes.

During the course of the ensuing debate, Members sought clarification on activities listed within the Draft Strategy to achieve the strategic outcomes. Officers explained that the Strategy is intended as an overview of planned actions to produce such outcomes and that detailed information should be found within the relevant individual service plan. Discussion took place regarding assets referenced in the Draft Strategy, including funding considerations associated with the 21st Century Schools Programme. A Member also suggested that the Strategy could provide an opportunity for review across a number of service areas (including opening times across civic amenity sites).

A Member referred to the lease of physical assets (such as football pitches) and expressed the need for a uniform/consistent approach across the Authority regarding the charges for such arrangements. Officers explained that detail of this kind would not be expected to be included in an over-arching Strategy and suggested the proper place for this particular point of reference would be the forthcoming Income Generation Strategy.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the following recommendation be referred to Cabinet (and thereafter Council) for approval. By a show of hands, this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet (and thereafter Council) that the Draft Corporate Asset Management Strategy as appended to the report be approved.

10. CAPITAL OUTTURN 2015/16

Steve Harris (Interim Head of Corporate Finance) presented the report, which provided information relating to the capital outturn for the 2015/16 financial year and presented details of proposals to fund overspends on specific schemes, prior to its presentation to Cabinet for approval.

Members were advised that the approved Capital Programme for the 2015/16 financial year totalled £49.15m, consisting of £12.86m for the General Fund and £36.29m for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). During the year specific grants, slippage and contributions were received for various service areas taking the total available capital resources for 2015/16 to £91.11m. A summary of the 2015/16 outturn against each service area was included in the report. The 2015/16 Housing Revenue Account underspend of £7.4m will be carried forward into the 2016/17 financial year to support the ongoing programme of works to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS). The General Fund variance of £22.69m can be split into £14.7m for schemes that are ongoing or have been delayed in 2015/16 (slippage), underspends on ring-fenced budgets totalling £7.6m, additional underspends totalling £868k that have now been released into capital balances and overspends against capital schemes to the value of £478k. Further information on each of these areas was contained in the report appendices.

Members were asked to note details of the overspends as at the 31st March 2016 relating to Bargoed Regeneration (£197k), Newbridge Regeneration (£75k) and the refurbishment of Hafod Deg (£67k). It was explained that these overspends remain unfunded due to expenditure which was ineligible for recovery from funding sources, and therefore the report sought the Scrutiny Committee's support for a proposal to meet this £339k overspend via a number of sources from related service areas (as outlined in paragraph 4.12 of the report).

Members were also asked to note details of additional liabilities in 2016/17 for Bargoed and Newbridge regeneration schemes totalling £85k and the Scrutiny Committee were asked to support a proposal to fund these costs from a Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO) (as outlined in paragraph 4.13 of the report).

During the course of the ensuing debate at the Scrutiny Committee, Members were provided with an explanation of the circumstances which resulted in an overspend being incurred during Phase 4 of the Bargoed Regeneration Programme. Officers provided further detail on the issues which arose during the design, procurement, and implementation of projects, which delayed overall progress and resulted in expenditure being incurred after the Wales European Funding Office (WEFO) deadline, which was ineligible for recovery via the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) grant. Officers also outlined the resulting considerations that would be given to similarly funded programmes if they were to arise in the future. Members noted that over £20m of investment had been secured and successfully utilised for physical improvements within Bargoed and Newbridge town centres.

Clarification was sought on a number of items listed against slippage, ring-fenced budgets, underspends and overspends, and Offices responded accordingly to these queries. Reference was made to the level of slippage and Officers explained that the funding being carried forward for these schemes will be fully utilised in due course. Discussion also took

place regarding the use of capital funding to encourage the lease of shop units in Bargoed and Officers provided further information regarding the number of vacant units and the associated expenditure.

Following consideration of the report, and in noting the 2015/16 capital outturn position, it was moved and seconded that the following recommendations be referred to Cabinet for approval. By a show of hands, this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that:-

- (i) The 2015/16 capital outturn position be noted;
- (ii) the overspends in relation to the Bargoed and Newbridge regeneration schemes and Hafod Deg be funded from the sources detailed in paragraphs 4.12 and 4.13 of the Officer's report.

11. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET MONITORING – PERIOD 4 2016/17

Shaun Couzens (Chief Housing Officer) and Lesley Allen (Principal Accountant) presented the report, which outlined the projected expenditure for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the 2016/17 financial year.

Members were advised that the HRA is currently projecting a year end outturn of £870,000 underspend, which represents just under 2% of the total HRA budget. Members attention was directed to the main variances within this expenditure as detailed in the report, namely Salaries and Mileage (£86,000 overspend), Service Specific Related and Office Related (£92,000 underspend), Income (£1.3m additional), Building Maintenance (£283,000k overspend) and Revenue Contribution to Capital (£147,000 overspend). Full financial details relating to the HRA projected outturn for 2016/17 were provided in Appendix 1 of the report.

Officers explained that the in-house workforce for the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) is expected to increase its spend to £10m due to the increase of properties expected to be completed this year compared to last year (additional 240). The additional costs are fully funded from the WHQS programme and therefore do not form part of the HRA variance in the report.

It was noted that the HRA working balances at the end of 2015/16 stood at £19.8m, with the majority of the funding earmarked to fund the WHQS programme. To date no borrowing has been undertaken to fund the WHQS programme. However, the current business plan anticipates a borrowing requirement of £57m to fully deliver the programme. In response to a Member's query regarding alternative solutions to borrowing, Officers explained that it is not permissible to use the General Fund to provide loans to the HRA, and that the cost of borrowing has already been factored into the business plan.

Following consideration and discussion of the report, Members noted its contents.

The meeting closed at 7.08 pm.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 15th November 2016, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR

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POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 15TH NOVEMBER 2016

SUBJECT: POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND SECTION 151 OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To report the Policy and Resources 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 stakeholders.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

3.1 The operation of scrutiny is required by the Local Government Act 2000 and subsequent Assembly legislation.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 The Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee forward work programme includes all reports that were identified at the scrutiny committee meeting on 4th October 2016. The work programme outlines the reports planned for the period November 2016 to April 2017.

4.2 The forward work programme is made up of reports identified by officers and members and has been prioritised into three priority areas, priority 1, 2 or 3. 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.

4.3 The Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1. The cabinet work programme is attached at Appendix 2.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

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

8. CONSULTATIONS

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

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To improve the operation of scrutiny.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 The Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Catherine Forbes-Thompson Scrutiny Research Officer
Consultees: Gail Williams, Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Nicole Scammell, Acting Director Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer

Appendices:
Appendix 1 Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme
Appendix 2 Cabinet Work Programme

Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme
APPENDIX 1

Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme November 2016 to April 2017			
Meeting Date: 15 November 2016			
Subject	Purpose	Key Issues	Witnesses
B & B use as Emergency Accommodation (P1)	To provide a further update to members of Scrutiny on the use of B&B accommodation for the temporary placement of homeless persons	The report will highlight the historical trend on the use of B&B accommodation for placing homeless persons and the reasons for such use. The report will also provide information on the measures that Housing Services have taken to reduce such use and provide an update on the current position	Argoed Residents Group Malcolm Topping Supporting People
Housing Complaints & Representations (P2)	To provide members of Scrutiny with information on all representations and complaints received by Housing Services during the 201/16 financial year	Key issues include:- Identification of the numbers and types of representations and complaints received for the year. Comparison of data with previous years Analysis of the data to identify the areas of service that receive the highest level of representations and complaints. Highlighting any lessons learned from analysing the data.	Shaun Couzens
Usable Reserves Annual Report	To present the Scrutiny Committee with details of the usable reserves held by the Authority.	The report will provide detailed information on all usable reserves to ensure that there is an opportunity for effective scrutiny of the balances held and their intended purpose.	Interim Head of Corporate Finance – Stephen Harris
Treasury Management – Review of MRP Policy	Pre-decision to be considered by Cabinet on 14 th December	This report will set out options for revising the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy to identify potential savings to support the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).	Interim Head of Corporate Finance – Stephen Harris

Meeting Date: 17 January 2017			
Subject	Purpose	Key Issues	Witnesses
HRA Charging Report (P1)	To advise members of Scrutiny of proposed forthcoming charges for 2017/18 and in particular any increased charges relating to the Housing Revenue Account prior to seeking Cabinet approval.	Charges that will be incorporated within the report will include:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council house rents • Garage rents • Service charges relating to Sheltered Housing Schemes 	Shaun Couzens
Whole Authority Budget Monitoring Report 2016/17	To inform Members of projected whole-authority revenue budget expenditure for the 2016/17 financial year.	The report will provide information on the position of the whole-authority in respect of revenue budget monitoring for 2016/17. Detailed reports will already have been presented to Scrutiny Committees throughout the financial year. Consideration will be given to actual expenditure and income to date. A projection will be made of the likely outturn (year-end) position and where significant variations against budget are identified these will be commented upon.	Interim Head of Corporate Finance – Stephen Harris
Caerphilly Local Assessment of Well-being -Final assessment for Corporate Approval	CCBC Statutory Partner Role: The Caerphilly Public Service Board is required to produce a local assessment of the economic, social and cultural well-being of the authority which must be subject to Corporate approval by the statutory member before it can be adopted by the Public Service Board.	The Local Assessment of Well-being will consider the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of the local authority area. The structure of the assessment will follow the 7 Well-being goals for Wales. In addition it is a requirement that the assessment examines the situation in 5 defined community areas as well as the authority as a whole. The PSB has determined that the 5 community areas will follow the 5 former community planning areas and hence the assessment document will consider each of these in turn as well as the future trends for the area.	Corporate Policy Manager Senior Policy Officer

Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme
APPENDIX 1

Leaseholder Consultation Report (P3)	To provide a further report on leaseholder charges as requested by Scrutiny members	Key Issues will include:- <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leaseholder legislation• Leaseholder process, including procurement, consultation, nomination options, costs and payment options• Best Practice	Shaun Couzens
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Meeting Date: 28 February 2017			
Subject	Purpose	Key Issues	Witnesses
WHQS Programme Re-profiling and associated Capital Programme (P1)	To review progress with the implementation of the WHQS Programme, re-profile over the remaining years where necessary, and set out a capital programme budget for 2017/18.	To consider the implications of slippage within the internal and external works programmes, establish if works need to be re-phased. Examine the implications on the community sequence and potential overlaps between internal and external works. Review the resourcing issues given the commitment to deliver the WHQS Programme by 2020.	Shaun Couzens
Housing Service Charges (P2)	To present to Scrutiny proposals for the de-pooling of service charges in sheltered housing schemes and the introduction of service charging for provision of new services for general needs tenants	Key issues include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limitations on the Council's ability to introduce service charges arising from the current tenancy agreement. • The implications of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 as it relates to service charging of tenants of sheltered housing schemes. • Potential financial impact of de-pooling on tenants of sheltered schemes and associated implications for future viability of a number of schemes. 	Shaun Couzens
HRA Budget Monitoring Report (P2)	To provide Scrutiny members with an update on expenditure of the Housing Revenue Account budget for the first six months of the year	Key issues include:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the overall budget available for the delivering the Housing Service • Highlight any budget variations including projected overspends and underspends • Provide an indication of the revenue contribution to the Capital Programme 	Shaun Couzens

Meeting Date: 11 April 2017			
Subject	Purpose	Key Issues	Witnesses

Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme
APPENDIX 1

Meeting Date: to be confirmed			
Subject	Purpose	Key Issues	Witnesses
Care & Repair Merger (P2)	This is an information report to provide members with details of the merger of the Care and Repair Service between Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent	To advise members on the new arrangements as a result of the merger	
HR Policies and Welsh Language Standards 99-119 *NEW*	A number of HR related standards require internal HR policies to reflect the legal right of staff to be able to have internal discussions and paperwork relating to their employment available in Welsh. This report should be seen by Scrutiny, prior to Cabinet and Full Council. There will need to be a change to a number of HR policies. It is envisaged that a single report may cover all changes.	A generic overarching approach will be adopted to revise all affected HR policies in the same way. The report will cover how this approach will allow the authority to meet its legal requirements in complying with the Welsh Language Standards. The affected policies and the cross matching to each relevant standard will be explained in the report	Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language) Head of Human Resources This report will be drafted as a Corporate Services report since it relates to HR issues

Cabinet Forward Work Programme

APPENDIX 2

16TH NOVEMBER 2016	Key Issues	Service Area
Highway Asset Management Plan Endorsement. Cynllun Cynnal a Chadw'r Priffyrdd.	To update on the current All Wales approach to Asset Management and seek endorsement for CCBC's development of its Highways Asset Management Plan	Engineering Services
Mid-Year Budget Monitoring (Whole Authority) Monitro Cabol Blwyddyn Cyllideb 2015/16	This report will provide details of projected whole-Authority revenue expenditure for 2016/17 along with details of any significant issues arising. The report will also update Cabinet on progress in delivering approved savings for the 2016/17 financial year.	Corporate Finance
Highway Inspection Manual Endorsement. Cynllun Cynnal a Chadw'r Priffyrdd.	To seek endorsement of the Council's approach to maintaining its highway network.	Engineering
Land at Mill Street Car Park, Risca Tir ym Maes Parcio Stryd y Felin, Rhisga	To seek approval to the disposal of land at Mill Street, Risca to the POBL Group.	Property Services
30TH NOVEMBER 2016	Key Issues	Service Area
Rhymney 3-18 All Through School Ysgol Rhymni Oedrannau 3 i 18	To seek Member agreement to commence a consultative process on establishing a Rhymney 3-18 All Through School.	Education
Draft Savings Proposals for 2017/18 Cynigion Arbedion Drafft ar gyfer 2017/18	This report will seek Cabinet endorsement of draft savings proposals for the 2017/18 financial year based on the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement. This will then allow for a period of consultation prior to consideration of final 2017/18 budget proposals by Cabinet and Council in February 2017	Corporate Finance

Cabinet Forward Work Programme

APPENDIX 2

Capital Bids Ceisiadau Cyfalaf	This report will seek Cabinet approval of proposals to utilise the capital earmarked reserve of £7.9m that was agreed as part of the Capital Programme approved by Council at its meeting on the 24th February 2016.	Corporate Finance
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14TH DECEMBER 2016	Key Issues	Service Area
Council Tax Base Sylfaen Treth y Cyngor		Corporate Finance
Usable Reserves Annual Report Adroddiad Blynyddol Cronfeydd Wrth Gefn Defnyddiadwy		Corporate Finance
Cabinet Forward Work Programme Blaenraglen Waith y Cabinet		Democratic Services

18TH JANUARY 2017	Key Issues	Service Area
Welsh Language 5-Year Strategy Strategaeth 5 Mlynedd yr Iaith Gymraeg	The Welsh Language Standards require the authority to produce a 5 year Welsh language strategy that sets out a target to maintain, or improve, the number of Welsh speakers in the area and the steps that will be taken to achieve the target. The strategy has been developed with local partners but must be adopted by the local authority.	Public Protection
Treasury Management - Review of MRP Policy. Rheolaeth Y Trysorlys – Adolygiad o'r Polisi Isafswm y Ddarpariaeth Refeniw.	This report will set out options for revising the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy to identify potential savings to support the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).	Corporate Finance

Cabinet Forward Work Programme

APPENDIX 2

1ST FEBRUARY 2017	Key Issues	Service Area
Well Being Assessment Asesiad Lles	The local assessment of well-being is a key Public Services Board document that must be published by early May 2017. The local authority will have a statutory duty to contribute to the PSBs objectives which will follow in the subsequent Well-being Plan	Public Protection
15TH MARCH 2017	Key Issues	Service Area
Rhymney 3-18 All Through School	To apprise Members of the outcome of the consultative process to establish a Rhymney 3-18 All Through School and determine whether to proceed to publish a statutory notice.	Education
1ST JUNE 2017	Key Issues	Service Area
Rhymney 3-18 All Through School	To make a final decision on the proposal to establish a Rhymney 3-18 All Through School.	Education

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POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 15TH NOVEMBER 2016

**SUBJECT: AN UPDATE ON THE HOUSING DIVISION'S USE OF BED AND
BREAKFAST FACILITIES FOR EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION**

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update in respect of the Housing Division's current use of Bed and Breakfast (B&B) facilities for emergency accommodation. This is as a result of the decision of a Special Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 22nd October 2015 where, following extensive debate on the issue, Members asked that a further report on the use of B&B facilities as emergency accommodation be brought back to a future meeting of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for further review. This report responds to the Committee's request for the further review.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 A meeting of a Special Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee was held on 22nd October 2015 to specifically discuss the Authority's use of Bed and Breakfast (B&B) facilities for emergency accommodation. The Special meeting was convened in response to a presentation made at full Council on 21st April 2015 by members of the Argoed Residents for a Safer Community. At that meeting, the residents outlined their concerns in respect of the use of B&B accommodation for homeless persons and called upon the Authority to support the Residents' Group in bringing about changes to legislation by ceasing its use of B&B accommodation for the housing of vulnerable persons in the County Borough.
- 2.2 The Interim Chief Executive responded by advising Council that the use of B &Bs for temporary accommodation would be examined at a future meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee. To this end a Special Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting was convened which discussed a report that provided a comprehensive overview in respect of the use of B&B accommodation within the County Borough for households presenting to the Authority as homeless. The report detailed the Authority's activities prior to and following the implementation of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, which introduced major changes to the way in which homeless clients needed to be assisted and housed. It outlined the statutory obligations placed on Local Authorities when discharging their homelessness functions and the procedures operated by Council Officers when dealing with persons presenting as homeless, together with the various options available to the Authority in respect of where homeless persons are accommodated.
- 2.3 During the course of the meeting, and in addition to the presentation of the Officer's report, the Scrutiny Committee received presentations from Cornerstone Support Services and Argoed Residents for a Safer Community in respect of the use of B&B accommodation for emergency housing. Members agreed that the matter of the use of B&B accommodation as emergency accommodation should be brought back to a future meeting of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for further review.

- 2.4 This report now outlines the efforts that have been undertaken since October 2015 in the strive to move away from the use of B&B for emergency accommodation and informs Members as to the current position.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 10 Year Homelessness Action Plan For Wales – 2009-2019, which sets out some guiding principles for the development and delivery of homelessness services.
- 3.2 Caerphilly Delivers: The Single Integrated Plan (2013-17); linking to the Prosperous, Safer Caerphilly and Healthier Caerphilly themes.
- 3.3 *People, Property & Places: A Housing Strategy for Caerphilly County Borough*, linking to aims 1 and 4 .
- 3.4 Caerphilly Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan 2015-2018.
- 3.5 The proposal also contributes to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015:
- A sustainable Wales
 - A prosperous Wales
 - A healthier Wales
 - A more equal Wales
 - A Wales of cohesive communities

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide emergency accommodation for persons identified as being homeless and in priority need (defined at Appendix 1). Due to a lack of supported accommodation a number of homeless persons have to date had to be placed into Bed and Breakfast (B&B) accommodation both within and outside the County Borough.
- 4.2 Since November 2014 the Authority has made a conscious effort to reduce its reliance on B&B accommodation for emergency housing. This has been done, in the main, by the creation and use of additional supported accommodation located at:
- Ty'r Fesen, Caerphilly – providing 10 rooms for homeless families and 3 rooms that are able to accommodate homeless singles and couples.
 - Ty Croeso, Newbridge – providing 10 rooms predominantly for single homeless persons (although couples can be accommodated if necessary).
 - Maes y Derwen, Tredomen – providing 18 rooms predominantly for single homeless persons (although couples can be accommodated if necessary) and
 - The Countryman, Bedwellty – providing 14 rooms for single homeless persons aged between 16 and 24.
- 4.3 This type of accommodation has 24/7 on-site management and provides greater support for homeless persons during the period their housing options are being investigated and where they are being prepared for suitable move-on accommodation.
- 4.4 The increased availability of supported accommodation has greatly assisted our ability to reduce the use of B&B accommodation to the extent that in November 2014 we had, on average, between 30-35 persons in B&B at any one time whereas during 2016 we have seen an average of 5 persons in B&B at any one time.

- 4.5 Whilst this situation is a notable achievement officers have been and are currently actively continuing in their efforts to identify additional supported accommodation so as to further reduce reliance on B&B accommodation.
- 4.6 To this end a block of 13 self contained flats located at Llys Tabernacle, Church St., Rhymney, owned by Wales and West Housing Association, was earlier this year identified as being suitable for adaptation to a 24hr supported housing scheme.
- 4.7 The facility itself, following slight remodelling, provides emergency accommodation for homeless persons referred to the project via our Housing Advice Team. Referrals to the accommodation will only be from those accepted as eligible homeless and in priority need that may require support. The accommodation at Llys Tabernacle provides the Authority with a relatively modern facility that will deliver a combination of independent and communal facilities. Clients will receive a 24/7 support service provided by Solas who currently provide similar services at the Countryman and Maes y Derwen.
- 4.8 Cabinet on 1st June 2016 agreed to support a partnership arrangement between the Authority and Wales and West Housing for Llys Tabernacle and the building has now undergone its conversion to a 12 room facility which officially opened under the new name of "Idris Davies House" on 31st October 2016.
- 4.9 This additional facility, making 12 more rooms available for use as emergency accommodation, would have almost certainly placed the Authority in a position whereby future B&B use would be unlikely or at best minimal (we cannot ever guarantee that we would never utilise B&B). Unfortunately, however, concerns have now been raised which has seen the Authority having to discontinue its use of the Countryman.
- 4.10 A recent inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation, Ofsted (Social Care) and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CCSIW) was extremely critical of the premises citing, amongst other things, the building's location and state of disrepair as contributing to the facility's inability to now provide supported accommodation of an acceptable standard.
- 4.11 The effect of this is that even with Idris Davies House now available there is an overall loss of 2 rooms for emergency housing, which is obviously disappointing. However, Officers are actively seeking additional, smaller facilities for use as similar supported accommodation. This will raise available room numbers to a level which should combat the need for future B&B use (although, as stated above, this cannot be absolutely guaranteed) without creating the potential for excessive void costs during periods where rooms are unoccupied.

5. Progress with the Social Lettings Agency

- 5.1 For some time the Authority has been preparing to develop its own Social Lettings agency, using privately owned properties managed by a partner Housing Association and providing affordable tenancies with support. To this end Officers have been actively working with private sector owners in an effort to increase the availability of properties for this purpose. The additional housing resource available to the Homelessness and Housing Advice team enables a speedier transition from emergency or temporary accommodation into well managed, suitable properties that are affordable for clients. The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 now permits the Authority to also discharge its homelessness duty into the private rented sector and so access to a local Social Lettings Agency will be a positive mechanism to further reduce the reliance on B&B accommodation.

Unfortunately, interest from private sector owners has been relatively slow. To date only 5 properties have been secured and of these 2 were diverted to assist with the Syrian refugee programme. This initiative is currently being supported by funds provided by Welsh Government Transitional funding for which ongoing commitment has not been secured and which, in any event, will end at 31st March 2018. Officers are, therefore, closely monitoring progress with this initiative.

6. Conclusion:

- 6.1 The Authority has made meaningful progress in its efforts to reduce its reliance on B&B for emergency accommodation and, were it not for the unforeseen concerns raised in respect of the continued use of the Countryman, we would almost certainly be reporting at this time that our use of B&B, other than in extreme circumstances, had ceased. Unfortunately the Countryman issue means that the current position is such that we still need to source additional supported accommodation to properly address our clients' needs. To this end, Officers are actively working with our Housing Association partners in an effort to secure the provision of a suitable facility as a matter of urgency.
- 6.2 Members should be aware, however, that impending welfare reforms in the form of Housing Benefit caps will no doubt pose a threat to a number of households who currently rent in both the public and private sectors. It is estimated that in November 2016 the benefit cap will affect approximately 200 families, which could potentially increase the incidence of evictions. This may bring further pressures in respect of the availability of supported accommodation, especially in the case of family accommodation which is currently only available at Ty'r Fesen. Forthcoming trends, therefore, need to be carefully monitored to ensure that the extent of provision of supported accommodation, particularly for families, is sufficient to cope with any additional demand that may arise.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This report is for information purposes, so the Council's Eqla process does not need to be applied.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The report itself is an information item and so brings no financial implications. Members should be aware, however, that both the existing and proposed activities outlined in this report are potentially under threat as a result of the uncertainty of future funding such as:
- Welsh Government Transitional funding has been made available to assist Authorities in meeting the additional demands of the Housing (Wales) Act. Originally promised as three year funding in 2015/16, it has now provided funding for 2016/17, however, currently there is still no WG commitment to a third year's funding for 2017/18. The uncertainty of future Transitional funding severely hinders forward planning.
 - Supporting People (SP) funding is critical to the successful delivery of many initiatives within the Homelessness field. It is pleasing to note that Welsh Government have committed to protecting the SP budget for 2017/18, however, there is no certainty that similar protection will be afforded in future years.
 - The Authority's ambition to move away from the use of B&B accommodation in favour of managed supported accommodation, if not carefully considered (in terms of the amount of accommodation we secure) brings the potential for void costs during periods where rooms are unoccupied.
 - Impending welfare reforms will affect affordability for tenants, which may well place additional burdens on the available supported accommodation.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personnel issues. This report is for information purposes only.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 Any views of the consultees listed below have been incorporated into the report.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 That Members note the contents of the report.

12. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1 To provide the Committee with relevant information in respect of progress made in reducing the Authority's reliance on Bed and Breakfast accommodation following a commitment to do so at the full Council meeting of 21st April 2015 and the subsequent meeting of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 22nd October 2015.

13. STATUTORY POWER

- 13.1 Housing Act 1996, Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation)(Wales) Order 2006, Housing Act 2004, Housing (Wales)Act 2014.

Author: Kenyon Williams – Private Sector Housing Manager willikh@caerphilly.gov.uk
Consultees: Cllr Dave Poole - Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing
Cllr Sean Morgan – Chair Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Gez Kirby - Vice Chair Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Christina Harray – Corporate Director, Communities.
Shaun Couzens - Chief Housing Officer
Suzanne Cousins – Principal Housing Officer (Housing Portfolio)
Fiona Wilkins - Public Sector Housing Manager
Claire Davies - Principal Housing Officer (Strategy and Standards)
Lee Clapham – Emergency Housing Manager
Malcolm Topping – Supporting People Manager
Lesley Allen - Principal Accountant
Kevin Fortey – Housing Development Officer
Todd Rawson - Solicitor
Housing Advice Team

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Priority Need categories of households who may present to a local authority as homeless

Background Papers:

1. Report to Special Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 22nd October 2015 entitled: *"The Use of Bed and Breakfast Accommodation for Emergency Housing"*
2. Report to Health Social Care and Well Being Scrutiny Committee on 3rd May 2016 entitled: *"The Provision of Floating Support to Bed And Breakfast Establishments"*

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Priority Need categories of households who may present to a local authority as homeless.

- A pregnant woman
- A person with whom a dependent child resides
- A person who is vulnerable as a result of some special reason(for example: old age, physical or mental illness or physical or mental disability)
- A person who is homeless or threatened with homelessness as a result of an emergency such as fire, flood or other disaster
- A person who is aged 16 or 17
- A person who has attained the age of 18, but not the age of 21, who is at particular risk of sexual or financial exploitation
- A person who has attained the age of 18, but not the age of 21, who was looked after, accommodated or fostered at any time while under the age of 18
- A person who has been homeless since leaving the armed forces
- A person having a local connection to the area who has been deemed vulnerable having served a custodial sentence or remanded in custody by the order of the court.

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POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 15TH NOVEMBER 2016

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON RESERVES

**REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND SECTION 151
OFFICER**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the Scrutiny Committee with details of the usable reserves held by the Authority.
- 1.2 To present details of proposals for the use of reserves prior to consideration by Cabinet.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report provides details of the usable reserves held by the Authority as at the 1st April 2016 totalling £122.622m.
- 2.2 The report also includes proposals for the use of reserves in some areas. The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider these proposals prior to them being presented to Cabinet at its meeting on the 14th December 2016.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Ensuring that adequate General Fund balances are maintained to meet any unforeseen expenditure and the establishment of specific reserves to meet known future financial commitments are key elements of prudent financial management.
- 3.2 Prudent financial management contributes to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2016:-
 - 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.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Appendix 1 provides details of the Authority's usable reserves as at the 1st April 2016 totalling £122.622m. The following paragraphs provide a detailed commentary on the balances held.

4.2 General Fund

4.2.1 As part of the annual budget setting process the Section 151 Officer recommends to Council a prudent level of General Fund reserves. In recent years a minimum of £10m has been recommended which is circa 3% of the Authority's net revenue budget. Members will recall that at its meeting on the 24th February 2016 Council approved the budget for the 2016/17 financial year. This included the proposed use of General Fund balances resulting in a projected balance as at the 31st March 2016 of £10.105m.

4.2.2 The actual General Fund opening balance as at the 1st April 2016 is £12.615m. The main reason for the increase above the projected level is an increased take to working balances resulting from the 2015/16 revenue budget underspend being higher than anticipated. After adjusting for the approved use of General Fund balances during 2016/17 the projected balance as at the 31st March 2017 currently stands at £11.155m

4.3 Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

4.3.1 HRA funds must be ring-fenced and cannot be transferred into General Fund balances. The balance on the HRA usable reserves as at the 1st April 2016 was £21.218m. Most of this funding will be utilised for the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) Capital Programme.

4.4 Capital Reserves

4.4.1 The total capital reserves of £39.156m are ring-fenced for the Authority's Capital Programme, including approved matched funding for 21st Century Schools. These reserves will be subject to a detailed review over the coming months and the outcome of this review will be reported to the Scrutiny Committee in due course.

4.5 Corporate Services

4.5.1 The balance on Corporate Services reserves as at the 1st April 2016 totalled £32.200m. The following table provides details of individual balances and the purpose of the reserves:-

Reserve	Amount £m	Description
Trehir Reserve	0.585	Required for potential works on former landfill site.
Invest to Save Reserve	0.600	To provide repayable one-off financial support for service initiatives that deliver cashable savings. £250k of this balance is currently committed to purchase a Velocity Patcher for carriageway resurfacing works (agreed by Cabinet on the 1 st October 2014). New bids will be sought from Heads of Service to utilise the balance of this funding and these will be considered by Cabinet in due course.
Insurance Earmarked Reserve	6.046	Self-insurance facility. The Authority's insurance excess is £250k. All claims below this level are funded through the insurance earmarked reserve.
Risk Management Reserve	0.795	To support risk management initiatives that mitigate insurance claims. Annual contributions to this reserve from Directorate revenue budgets have been reduced from 2016/17 onwards as part of approved savings to support the MTFP.

General Fund Housing Service Initiatives Reserve	0.268	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewal Fund for future building costs at Ty Croeso single persons' accommodation (£116k). • Renewal fund for the replacement of white goods and internal decoration at Ty Fesen family accommodation (£111k). • Shortfall in Shelter contract payments for 2017/18 to 2019/20 (£21k). • Homelessness prevention initiatives (£20k).
Corporate Property Service Initiatives Reserve	0.157	To support Corporate building schemes.
Policy	0.032	There are currently no commitments against this reserve. It is therefore recommended that the £32k should be released into the General Fund.
Electoral Admin Reserve	0.442	Cumulative balance on funding set aside annually for local elections.
Health & Safety Initiatives	0.652	To meet unavoidable cost pressures in Council establishments.
PC Replacement Reserve	1.260	This reserve funds the ongoing replacement of essential IT hardware and software across the Authority.
Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Equalisation Reserves	13.334	Committed to funding approved PFI Schemes.
Corporate Services Service Initiatives Reserves	5.224	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careline (£208k) – Retained underspends on the Care First budget. • Counsel Fees (£508k) – Retained underspends on the Counsel Fees revenue budget. • Human Resources (£133k) - Cumulative underspends on HR recruitment advertising budget and legal costs. There are currently no commitments against this reserve. It is therefore recommended that the £133k should be released into the General Fund. • Council Tax Reduction Scheme (£1.146m) – Retained underspends on the CTRS budget. The Welsh Government has currently only committed to a fully funded scheme until the end of 2017/18. Options for the use of this reserve may need to be considered in future years in the event of funding reductions. • Housing Benefits (£100k) - There are currently no commitments against this reserve. It is therefore recommended that the £100k should be released into the General Fund. • Apprenticeship Scheme (£885k) – Committed to ongoing apprenticeships and for match-funding the ESF Inspire to Work project.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Services (£419k) – Ring-fenced retained underspends on the Member Services budget. • Voluntary Sector Grants (£124k) – Retained underspends on the Grants to the Voluntary Sector budget. This budget is monitored by Members on the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel. • Municipal Mutual Insurance (MMI) Levy (£1m) – Funding set aside to meet future liabilities arising from the MMI Scheme of Arrangement. • Senior Officer Investigation (£701k) – Previously approved funding in respect of the ongoing investigation.
Ty Pontllanfraith	0.404	One-off costs associated with the closure of Ty Pontllanfraith and associated moves.
Salix Finance	0.203	To support energy saving initiatives.
Retained Underspends Reserves	2.198	Accumulated service underspends.
Total: -	32.200	

4.5.2 Members will note from the above that £2.198m is held in 'Retained Underspends Reserves'. Cabinet has previously agreed a policy whereby service areas retain 50% of reported underspends at the financial year-end. Conversely, any service based overspends are carried forward by the service areas responsible for generating the overspends. This approach has worked well as there is full ownership and accountability by budget holders in respect of delivering a balanced budget. At its meeting on the 27th July 2016, Cabinet agreed a Reserves Strategy which included the introduction of a cap on the cumulative amount that can be held by Directorates in service underspend reserves. This will be covered in more detail in paragraphs 4.9.1 to 4.9.3 of this report.

4.6 Environment

4.6.1 The balance on Environment reserves as at the 1st April 2016 totalled £2.454m. The following table provides details of individual balances and the purpose of the reserves:-

Reserve	Amount £m	Description
DLO Surplus/Deficit	0.208	Retained cash surplus for Network Contracting Services (NCS) work arising from the Sirhowy Enterprise Way PFI contract.
Planning - Community Infrastructure Levy	0.040	This balance will be utilised in 2016/17 to part-fund agreed short-term financial support for Senghenydd Youth Drop In Centre (SYDIC).
Planning - LDP Related Expenditure	0.131	Ring-fenced reserve for the Local Development Plan.
Highways – Service Specific Reserve.	0.492	Ring-fenced winter maintenance reserve.
Community Regeneration Fund	0.178	Approved grants to be drawn down.
Economic Development – Service Initiative Reserve.	0.002	To be utilised in 2016/17 for gathering foot fall data in Town Centres.

Area Forum Reserve	0.115	This is being utilised to support agreed MTFP savings in this area.
Cemeteries Reserve	0.983	Funds set-aside to meet the capital cost of future land acquisition for Cemeteries.
Accumulated Service Underspends	0.305	As per agreed policy (see paragraph 4.5.2)
Total: -	2.454	

4.7 Education & Lifelong Learning

4.7.1 The balance on Education & Lifelong Learning reserves as at the 1st April 2016 totalled £9.240m. The following table provides details of individual balances and the purpose of the reserves:-

Reserve	Amount £m	Description
Service Initiatives Reserve	4.430	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Management of Schools (LMS) Contingency (£2.550m) – Accumulated underspends on LMS revenue budget. This reserve is maintained to support potential redundancy costs in schools, statutory maintenance costs and other unforeseen unavoidable cost pressures. At its meeting on the 30th March 2016 Cabinet approved £50k funding from this reserve to support the 2016/17 match-funding budget for maintenance projects in schools. Furthermore, it will be recommended to Cabinet on the 14th December 2016 that an earmarked reserve of £150k be established from the LMS Contingency in respect of targeted support to raise GCSE attainment levels. • 21st Century Schools (£750k) – Additional contribution agreed by Cabinet (27/07/15). • ESF Bridges into Work (£374k) – Match-funding contribution (agreed by Cabinet 27/07/15). • ESF Working Skills for Adults (£169k) - Match-funding contribution (agreed by Cabinet 27/07/15). • Voluntary Early Release (VER) costs (£479k) – Required to meet ongoing liabilities. • Fire Safety (£27k) – Earmarked reserve to fund fire alarm upgrades. • Home to School Transport Equalisation Reserve (£53k) – This will be utilised in 2016/17. • Other (£28k) – There are currently no commitments against this balance. It is therefore recommended that the £28k is released into the General Fund.

Schools PFI Earmarked Reserves	0.757	Contingent sum for unforeseen cost pressures for 2 PFI schools.
School Balances	2.887	Net overall retained underspends ring-fenced to schools.
Accumulated Service Underspends	1.166	As per agreed policy (see paragraph 4.5.2)
Total: -	9.240	

4.8 Social Services

4.8.1 The balance on Social Services reserves as at the 1st April 2016 totalled £5.739m. The following table provides details of individual balances and the purpose of the reserves:-

Reserve	Amount £m	Description
Community Activities Reserve	0.059	To support trading activities in Day Centres.
Service Initiatives Reserve	1.700	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapeutic Fostering Service (£875k). Approved by Cabinet 13/04/16. • Operation Jasmine (£112k). • Finance IT System (£34k) – Required to replace Microsoft Access databases. • Gwent Frailty Programme (£336k) – To meet future Invest to Save loan repayments to the Welsh Government. • Immediate Response Team (£343k) – See paragraph 4.8.2 below.
Reserves Held for Partnerships	0.807	Reserves held on behalf of partnerships led by Caerphilly CBC:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Resource Centre (£25k). • SE Wales Shared Lives Scheme (£117k). • Youth Offending Service (£416k). • SE Wales Safeguarding Children Board (£70k). • SE Wales Emergency Duty Team (£7k). • I.T. Consortium (£172k).
Accumulated Service Underspends	3.173	As per agreed policy (see paragraph 4.5.2)
Total: -	5.739	

4.8.2 £343k of the Service Initiatives Reserve was originally set aside to fund a pilot Immediate Response Team within Children's Services to deal with situations where children are at risk of becoming 'looked after' by the Authority. Due to revenue budget underspends across the Social Services Directorate in recent years the Team has been funded from core revenue budget and there has been no requirement to draw on the reserve. Funding for the Team was built into the Social Services base revenue budget from the 2015/16 financial year. However, increased demand is impacting on the Social Services revenue budget and will continue to do so in future years. It is therefore prudent to retain this reserve as a contingent sum to help deal with any spikes in demand.

4.9 Cap on Retained Underspend Reserves

4.9.1 As mentioned in paragraph 4.5.2, at its meeting on the 27th July 2016 Cabinet agreed a Reserves Strategy which included the introduction of a cap on the cumulative amount that can be held by Directorates in service underspend reserves. This cap is set at 3% of the net revenue budget for each Directorate and where this is exceeded then proposals must be presented to utilise the excess or a justification must be made to hold the reserves above the 3% level. The following table summarises the 2016/17 net budget for each Directorate, the balance on underspend reserves as at the 1st April 2016 and whether the cap has been exceeded:-

Directorate	2016/17 Net Budget £m	Reserve Balance £m	3% Cap £m	Excess Above Cap £m
Corporate Services	21.863	2.198	0.656	1.542
Environment	34.245	0.305	1.027	-
Education & Lifelong Learning	33.661	1.166	1.010	0.156
Social Services	84.520	3.173	2.536	0.637

4.9.2 Members should note that at its meeting on the 19th October 2016, Cabinet agreed to utilise £247k of the retained underspend of £305k for Environment to part-fund capital overspends.

4.9.3 The following table summarises proposals to utilise or retain the excess accumulated underspend reserves for Corporate Services, Education & Lifelong Learning and Social Services:-

Directorate/Proposal	£m
1) Corporate Services Excess	1.542
Proposals: -	
- Additional car parking at Ty Penallta (agreed by Cabinet 02/11/16)	(0.439)
- 2016/17 projected overspend for Policy Unit	(0.035)
- Replacement of IDOX for Council Tax/Housing Benefits	(0.150)
- Transfer Housing balances to Director of Communities	(0.249)
- Establish contingency for one-off cost of MTFP staffing reductions	(0.381)
- Balance to be released into the General Fund	(0.288)
	0.000
2) Education & Lifelong Learning Excess	0.156
Proposals: -	
- Contribution to one-off investment in Behaviour Support	(0.084)
- Contribution to one-off investment in EOTAS (Educ Other Than at Schools)	(0.072)
	0.000
Social Services Excess	0.637
Proposals: -	
- Contribution to the Gwent Safeguarding Partnership (2016/17 to 2018/19)	(0.210)
- Temporary staff in Adult Services (transformation projects)	(0.270)
- Retain balance of excess as a contingency for demographic pressures	(0.157)
	0.000

5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 5.1 The establishment and management of reserves are key elements of effective financial management which assists the achievement of the Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2016.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 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 regarding this report; therefore a full EIA has not been carried out.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 As detailed throughout the report.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no direct personnel implications arising from this report.

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been reflected in this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Members of the Scrutiny Committee are asked to:-

10.1.1 Note the content of the report.

10.1.2 Support a recommendation to Cabinet that an earmarked reserve of £150k be established from the LMS Contingency in respect of targeted support to raise GCSE attainment levels.

10.1.3 Support a recommendation to Cabinet to release the following reserves into General Fund balances:-

- Corporate Services – Policy (£32k).
- Corporate Services - Recruitment Advertising and Legal Costs (£133k).
- Corporate Services – Housing Benefits (£100k).
- Education & Lifelong Learning – Service Initiatives Reserve (£28k).

10.1.4 Support a recommendation to Cabinet that accumulated underspend reserves above the 3% cap be utilised as detailed in the table in paragraph 4.9.3 of this report.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 To ensure that the Scrutiny Committee is provided with details of the usable reserves held by the Authority and is able to consider specific proposals to Cabinet.

12. STATUTORY POWER

12.1 The Local Government Acts 1998 and 2003.

Author: Stephen Harris, Interim Head of Corporate Finance
E-mail: harrisr@caerphilly.gov.uk Tel: 01443 863022

Consultees: Chris Burns, Interim Chief Executive
Nicole Scammell, Acting Director of Corporate Services & Section 151 Officer
Dave Street, Corporate Director Social Services
Gail Williams, Interim Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer
Andrew Southcombe, Finance Manager, Corporate Finance
Dave Roberts, Principal Group Accountant, Corporate Services
Mike Eedy, Finance Manager, Environment
Jane Southcombe, Finance Manager, Education & Lifelong Learning
Mike Jones, Interim Financial Services Manager, Social Services
Lesley Allen, Principal Accountant, Housing
Cllr B Jones, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

Background Papers:

Council (24/02/16) – Budget Proposals 2016/17 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2016/2021
Cabinet (27/07/16) – Reserves Strategy

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - List of Usable Reserves

List of Usable Reserves**Appendix 1**

Directorate	Service Area	C.C.	Subj	Description	Opening Balance (01/04/16)
1) General Fund					
Corporate Services	CORPORATE BAL SHEET	9931	D781	GENERAL FUND	12,615,054
Total General Fund					12,615,054
2) Housing Revenue Account					
Housing Revenue Account	HRA			VARIOUS	21,217,748
Total HRA					21,217,748
3) Capital Reserves					
All	CAPITAL EARMARKED RESERVES			VARIOUS	17,773,742
All	USEABLE CAPITAL RECEIPTS			VARIOUS	11,910,898
All	CAPITAL GRANTS UNAPPLIED			VARIOUS	9,471,816
Total Capital Reserves					39,156,456
4) Corporate Services					
Corporate Services	CORPORATE BAL SHEET	9931	D861	TREHIR RESERVE	584,549
Corporate Services	B/S CAP - CORPORATE	9985	D857	RESERVE - INVEST TO SAVE	600,135
Corporate Services	INSURANCE FUND	9987	D911	INSURANCE EARMARKED RESERVE	6,046,129
Corporate Services	INSURANCE FUND	9987	D935	RISK MANAGEMENT RESERVE	794,909
Corporate Services	HOUSING NON HRA BAL SHEET	9917	D899	SERVICE INITIATIVES RESERVE	268,393
Corporate Services	PROPERTY - CORPORATE SERVICES	9924	D899	SERVICE INITIATIVES RESERVE	157,392
Corporate Services	POLICY AND RESOURCES BAL SHEET	9926	D892	RESERVE - POLICY	31,697
Corporate Services	POLICY AND RESOURCES BAL SHEET	9926	D948	ELECTORAL ADMIN RESERVES	442,167
Corporate Services	CORPORATE SERVICES BAL SHEET	9928	D952	HEALTH & SAFETY INITIATIVES	651,804
Corporate Services	CORPORATE SERVICES BAL SHEET	9928	D953	CORPORATE PC REPLACEMENT RESER	1,260,239
Corporate Services	CORPORATE SERVICES BAL SHEET	9928	D828	SEW PFI EQUALISATION RESERVE	3,451,940
Corporate Services	CORPORATE SERVICES BAL SHEET	9928	D850	EDUC PFI EQUALISATION RESERVE	9,882,065
Corporate Services	CORPORATE BAL SHEET	9931	D899	SERVICE INITIATIVES RESERVE	1,701,114
Corporate Services	CORPORATE SERVICES BAL SHEET	9928	D899	SERVICE INITIATIVES RESERVE	3,523,372
Corporate Services	CORPORATE SERVICES BAL SHEET	9979	D899	TY PONTLLANFRAITH CLOSURE	404,398
Corporate Services	B/S CAP - PROPERTY	9979	D944	SALEX FINANCE	203,038
Corporate Services	HOUSING NON HRA BAL SHEET	9917	D856	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	150,993
Corporate Services	HOUSING PRIVATE BAL SHEET	9918	D856	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	98,351
Corporate Services	BUILDING CONSULTANCY	9925	D856	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	54,203
Corporate Services	POLICY AND RESOURCES BAL SHEET	9926	D856	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	288,416
Corporate Services	CORPORATE SERVICES BAL SHEET	9928	D856	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	1,604,815
Total Corporate Services					32,200,119

Directorate	Service Area	C.C.	Subj	Description	Opening Balance (01/04/16)
5) Environment					
Environment	HIGHWAYS BALANCE SHEET	9908	D882	DLO SURPLUS / DEFICIT C/F	208,097
Environment	PLANNING BAL SHEET	9923	D877	COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY	39,673
Environment	PLANNING BAL SHEET	9923	D899	LDP RELATED EXPENDITURE	130,527
Environment	HIGHWAYS BAL SHEET	9932	D899	SERVICE SPECIFIC RESERVE	492,477
Environment	ECON DEVT & TOURISM BAL SHEET	9927	D892	RESERVE - COMMUNITY REGEN FUND	177,684
Environment	ECON DEVT & TOURISM BAL SHEET	9927	D899	SERVICE INITIATIVE RESERVE	1,874
Environment	PLANNING BAL SHEET	9923	D891	RESERVE - AREA FORUM	115,385
Environment	COMMUNITY & LEISURE BAL SHEET	9939	D865	RESERVES - CEMETERIES	983,388
Environment	PLANNING BAL SHEET	9923	D856	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	17,242
Environment	ECON DEVT & TOURISM BAL SHEET	9927	D856	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	47,024
Environment	HIGHWAYS BAL SHEET	9932	D856	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	(7,876)
Environment	DIRECTORATE OF ENVIRONMENT	9936	D856	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	248,059
Total Environment					2,453,554
6) Education & Lifelong Learning					
Education	EDUCATION BAL SHEET	9919	D899	SERVICE INITIATIVES RESERVE	4,430,085
Education	EDUCATION BAL SHEET	9919	D949	PFI SCHOOLS EARMARKED RESERVES	757,174
Education	SCHOOLS BAL SHEET	9920	D785	RESERVES - DELEGATED SCHOOLS	2,886,662
Education	EDUCATION BAL SHEET	9919	D856	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	937,017
Lifelong Learning	CELL BAL SHEET	9921	D856	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	229,089
Total Education & Lifelong Learning					9,240,026
7) Social Services (Inc. Public Protection)					
Social Services	SOCIAL SERVICES BAL SHEET	9922	D859	RESER - SOC SERV COMM ACTIVITIES	58,621
Social Services	SOCIAL SERVICES BAL SHEET	9922	D899	SERVICE INITIATIVES RESERVE	1,700,360
Social Services	SOCIAL SERVICES BAL SHEET	9922	D951	RESERVES HELD FOR PARTNERSHIPS	806,519
Social Services	SOCIAL SERVICES BAL SHEET	9922	D856	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	3,128,520
Public Protection	TRADING STANDARDS	9937	D856	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	31,011
Public Protection	ENVIRON HEALTH BAL SHEET	9938	D856	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	13,720
Total Social Services & Public Protection					5,738,752
GRAND TOTALS: -					122,621,709

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POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 15TH NOVEMBER 2016

SUBJECT: COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS – CAERPHILLY HOMES

**REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND SECTION 151
OFFICER**

- 1.1 The report was considered by the Caerphilly Homes Task Group (CHTG) on 3rd November 2016 and provided details of contacts in relation to complaints and representations received by the Authority's Housing Customer Services Section, from 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016.
- 1.2 The Task Group were advised that the monitoring of complaints and representations is carried out to provide information on the level of satisfaction with the service provided by Caerphilly Homes. The results enable Managers to focus on areas of concern to improve services and monitor performance and ensure that similar problems are avoided in the future. The corporate complaints procedure places an emphasis on learning from complaints. There have been examples of complaints which have led to changes in policies and procedures and these are explained in the report.
- 1.3 It was noted that in addition to recording Stage 1, Stage 2 and Ombudsman complaints, Caerphilly Homes Customer Services Section also records any service requests received directly by the Customer Services Section and any housing related correspondence received by the Chief Executive. Between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016 the Customer Services Section of Caerphilly Homes recorded a total of 559 contacts from the public and/or their representative. This is in comparison with 520 between 1st April 2014 and 31st March 2015.
- 1.4 CHTG noted that records are also kept of any praise or thanks received by Caerphilly Homes. In 2015/16 there were 78 recorded. This is in comparison with 44 for 2014/15.
- 1.5 The Task Group discussed the report at length and Tenant Representatives felt that the complaints process was too long and suggested that an independent agency should be used. Officers explained that complaints are dealt with within timescales, which are outlined within the Corporate Complaints Policy. In the case of service requests, these are dealt with initially by the service.
- 1.6 Task Group Members, in noting the increase in complaints between 2014/2015 and 2015/2016, sought further information on the increase. Officers highlighted that there have been no significant trends identified which could pin-point the reason for the increase. However, work has been conducted to make tenants more aware of the Complaints Procedure and process, which could be the reason for the increase.
- 1.7 Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the report be noted and forwarded to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for information.
- 1.8 Members are asked to note the content of the report.

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

Appendices: Appendix 1 - Report to Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 3rd November 2016 – Agenda Item 5.



CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 3RD NOVEMBER 2016

SUBJECT: COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS – CAERPHILLY HOMES

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide information on contacts in relation to complaints and representations received by the Authority's Housing Customer Services Section, from 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The monitoring of complaints and representations is carried out to provide information on the level of satisfaction with the service provided by Caerphilly Homes. The results enable Managers to focus on areas of concern to improve services and monitor performance and ensure that similar problems are avoided in the future. The corporate complaints procedure places an emphasis on learning from complaints. There have been examples of complaints which have led to changes in policies and procedures and these are explained in the report.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Corporately, Complaints and Representations will link to the Council's Strategic Equality Objectives 3 and 4, and also to themes in "Caerphilly Delivers", the Local Service Board single integrated plan.
- 3.2 The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 sets out the following wellbeing goals which link with the aims of this report:-
- A sustainable Wales
 - A prosperous 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

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The annual report is based on information collected during the financial year 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016. Complaints received about the Housing Service are recorded and responded to in accordance with the Council's 2 stage corporate complaints policy which was implemented in April 2013. This was based on guidance issued by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. If, after following these 2 stages, the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint they can progress their complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

4.2 Overall Numbers

In addition to recording Stage 1, Stage 2 and Ombudsman complaints, Caerphilly Homes Customer Services Section also records any service requests received directly by the Customer Services Section and any housing related correspondence received by the Chief Executive. In general, contacts recorded as service requests relate to the first time the service area has been made aware of the issue concerned. Reasonable judgement is used, based on the information available at the time and these cases are often deemed to be 'business as usual' situations. However, if enquiries identify previous dealings on the same issue then the matter can be escalated through the complaints procedure. It is not necessary for the contact to specifically state that they want the issue dealt with as a complaint as this would be determined from the detail of the contact and any previous dealings on the same subject.

Between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016 the Customer Services Section of Caerphilly Homes recorded a total of 559 contacts from the public and/or their representative. This is in comparison with 520 between 1st April 2014 and 31st March 2015.

The table below details the contacts received by the Chief Executive and those recorded as service requests. Details of Stage 1 and Stage 2 cases are in 4.5 and 4.6

Function Area	Chief Exec		Service Request	
	2014/15	2015/16	2014/15	2015/16
Response Repairs	12	16	121	93
Housing Management	29	41	67	70
Antisocial Behaviour	1	6	65	29
Allocations	29	37	8	12
Homelessness	12	1	7	2
WHQS Internal	1	9	12	56
Heating	4	0	9	6
Sheltered Housing	1	8	10	3
Grants	2	7	5	4
WHQS External	0	4	6	16
Rents	2	1	5	3
Adaptations	1	3	5	4
Energy Works	2	0	0	0
Enforcement Action	0	0	4	1
Planned Maintenance	0	0	0	2
Leaseholder	2	1	0	1
Other	0	1	0	1
Housing Development	0	0	0	1
Tenant Participation	0	0	1	0
Private Landlord	0	3	0	0
Total	98	138	326	304

4.3 The number of contacts received via an advocate was 193 compared with 167 in 2014/15. Examples of the type of advocates used include MP, AM, Councillors, other tenants and family members.

4.4 Praise and Thanks

Records are also kept of any praise or thanks received by Caerphilly Homes. In 2015/16 there were 78 recorded. This is in comparison with 44 for 2014/15. These covered a number of service areas, as detailed below :-

Praise or Thanks		
	2014/15	2015/16
Rents	8	9
Allocation	3	1
Leaseholder Services	1	3
Housing Management	5	14
Responsive Repairs	14	24
Tenancy Enforcement	0	2
Tenant Participation	0	4
Sheltered Housing	3	7
WHQS	3	3
Private Landlord	2	1
Homelessness	2	1
Adaptations	2	7
Housing Development	1	0
Handy Person Scheme	1	0
Grants	0	1
Heating	0	1
Total	44	78

4.5 Stage 1 and Stage 2 Complaints

Stage 1 of the complaints procedure offers the opportunity for the complaint to be resolved at the point of service delivery. These complaints are referred to the appropriate service manager for any necessary action and response. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 they are advised how the complaint can be progressed to Stage 2. Alternatively, complainants can request their complaint is escalated straight to a Stage 2 investigation. In addition, where an appeals procedure is in place this must be exhausted before progressing to a Stage 2 complaint. Stage 2 complaints are investigated by the Customer Services Section, on behalf of the Head of Service or nominated Officer.

There were 81 Stage 1 complaints recorded for Caerphilly Homes in 2015/16 compared with 60 in 2014/15. There were 36 Stage 2 complaints in 2015/16 which is the same number as 2014/15. Of the 36 Stage 2 complaints received in 2015/16, 19 had progressed from a Stage 1.

As detailed in the table below the largest number of Stage 1 complaints (25) related to housing management issues. An analysis of the Stage 1 housing management complaints shows that they were in relation to a variety of aspects of the service including gardens/trees, mutual exchanges, successions, requests for rent free periods, parking and amount of decoration allowance awarded. 9 of these cases were not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction and progressed to Stage 2 complaints.

There were 23 Stage 1 complaints recorded for WHQS (internal works). An analysis of these complaints shows the majority related to the standard of work carried out. These included tenants being left without facilities for longer than expected, position of the electrical consumer unit and

damage caused during the works. The majority of complaints were resolved at Stage 1 with only 3 progressing to Stage 2.

The 17 response repair Stage 1 complaints were in relation to the quality of service provision and workmanship. 4 of these cases were not resolved to the tenant's satisfaction and progressed to a Stage 2.

Function Area	Stage 1		Stage 2		Progressed	
	5	6	5	6	5	6
Housing Management	17	25	21	26	2	9
WHQS (Internal)	14	23	6	4	4	3
Response Repairs	10	17	1	4	1	4
Allocations	3	3	0	0	0	0
Leaseholders	4	3	3	1	1	1
Grants	0	1	0	0	0	0
Planned Maintenance	1	0	0	0	0	0
Anti Social Behaviour	0	1	0	0	0	0
Heating	2	0	0	0	0	0
Sheltered Housing	0	0	0	0	0	0
WHQS (External)	3	5	1	1	1	1
Adaptations	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enforcement Action	2	0	2	0	2	0
Homelessness	2	0	1	0	1	0
Rents	2	3	1	0	1	1
Total	60	81	36	36	13	19

The majority of Stage 2 complaints (26) related to the Housing Management function. 14 of these cases were in relation to recharges and the remaining cases related to a variety of issues including parking, gardens, request for rent free period and the withdrawal of an offer of accommodation.

There were 4 WHQS (internal) Stage 2 complaints. 1 related to the positioning of the electrical consumer unit, 1 was in relation to the time taken to complete the kitchen works, 1 was in relation to the amount of work undertaken and the remaining case was a request for compensation following the removal of the tenant's own gas fire.

There were 4 Stage 2 complaints recorded for Response Repairs. 1 case was in relation to a request for compensation for loss of wages as a result of the contractor missing two appointments, 1 case related to the quality of repair work to steps and a handrail, 1 case was in relation to damp issues and the remaining case involved the tenant's concerns with draughts in the bathroom.

4.6 Outcome of Stage 1 and Stage 2 Complaints

The outcome of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints is recorded as not upheld, partially upheld or upheld. The table below shows the outcomes recorded for all Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints recorded for 2015/16.

Function Area	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Did Not Proceed
Stage 1				
Housing Management	21	2	2	0
Response repairs	12	2	3	0
WHQS (internal)	6	7	10	0
WHQS (external)	2	1	2	0
Allocations	2	1	0	0
Leaseholders	2	0	1	0
Rents	2	0	1	0
Grants	0	1	0	0
Anti Social Behaviour	1	0	0	0
Total	48	14	19	0

Stage 2				
Housing Management	12	1	12	1
WHQS (internal)	1	0	3	0
WHQS (external)	0	0	1	0
Leaseholder		0	1	0
Response repairs	3	0	1	0
Total	16	1	18	1

4.6.1 Stage 1's - Upheld

The service area identified with the greatest number of Stage 1 complaints upheld (10) and partially upheld (7) was the WHQS internal works. The majority of these cases were resolved at Stage 1 with only 3 cases progressing to Stage 2. An analysis of all the Stage 1 WHQS (internal) complaints upheld and partially upheld shows that the majority of these related to the quality of service and standard of workmanship provided. Examples of the issues concerned included standard of electrical works carried out, the length of time tenants were without cooking facilities, the length of time for works to be completed and damage to tenants' goods. In these cases an apology was provided, actions were agreed to rectify the works and the contractor was reminded of the code of conduct. There were also two cases involving requests for a replacement bathroom and kitchen which were initially turned down but later agreed. One of the remaining cases involved the removal of a tenant's own gas fire which the tenant wanted to keep. In this case the tenant was referred to our Insurance Section to make a claim but this was later progressed to a Stage 2.

4.6.2 There were 3 response repair Stage 1 complaints upheld. In two cases an apology was provided for not being able to complete the works on the appointed days and the remaining case was in relation to a request for a replacement window which was later agreed. One of the partially upheld cases involved a problem with damp and it was agreed to provide the tenant with a decoration allowance and the other case included issues with a porch roof leak and the roof was renewed.

4.6.3 There were 2 stage 1 complaints upheld in relation to housing management issues. One case involved inconvenience and miscommunication in relation to a front door which was resolved by ordering a new front door and the second case was in relation to the length of time taken to remove a chimney stack. An apology was provided and the stack was removed. There were also two housing management stage 1 complaints partially upheld, one involved a further survey being undertaken for possible damp with some works agreed and in the second case a garage needed repairs which prevented its use so it was agreed to withdraw the associated rent charge.

- 4.6.4 The two WHQS (external) stage 1 complaints upheld both related to issues with scaffolding contractors. In one case an apology was provided and the contractor concerned was reminded of acceptable times to carry out works. The second case involved behaviour of the personnel from a different scaffold company which resulted in the company being removed from the remainder of the contract. The partially upheld complaint involved operatives entering the garden area of an owner/occupied property without prior consent and an apology was provided.
- 4.6.5 The stage 1 complaint upheld for leaseholder services related to a disputed charge to the leaseholder for repointing work. On further investigation the charge was removed.
- 4.6.6 The stage 1 complaint upheld for rents was in relation to a request to cancel contents insurance. The tenant complained he was initially advised that his cancellation would have to be in writing but he was later advised that it would be accepted verbally. Due to the confusion the insurance charge for the period concerned was removed from the rent account.
- 4.6.7 The partially upheld stage 1 case for Private Sector Grants was in relation to an applicant trying to secure loan assistance. An apology was provided for not informing the applicant sooner of the problems encountered with the associated savings plan.
- 4.6.8 Stage 2's - Upheld

There were 12 housing management Stage 2 complaints upheld. One case related to the removal of an offer of accommodation due to a misunderstanding over information provided by the applicant. On investigation it was considered that the applicant had provided reasonable information and an offer of alternative accommodation was made. In addition compensation of £350 was paid to cover expenses incurred by the applicant, which were evidenced, during this period. Two cases involved requests for rent free periods, one in relation to a garage which was in need of repair and one involved rent charged for the notice period on a tenancy. In both cases the rental charge was removed. Another case related to a misunderstanding and delay in providing a front door, which was later renewed. The remaining 8 cases related to recharges to tenants which were later removed.

- 4.6.9 The partially upheld stage 2 housing management case was in relation to a communal garden area dispute. Agreement was reached with the tenant regarding the position of a border and the erection of a small picket fence.
- 4.6.10 There were 3 stage 2 complaints upheld relating to WHQS internal works. One case related to the positioning of a new electrical consumer unit which was later repositioned to meet the needs of the tenant. One case was in relation to a tenant questioning the amount of work originally specified for the bathroom. Following a further survey it was agreed to renew the whole bathroom. The remaining case was the stage 1 case listed earlier regarding the removal of the tenant's own gas fire. The tenant was not satisfied with the offer of £50 made by Insurance. On further investigation it was agreed that Housing would award an additional £50 for inconvenience and upset caused.
- 4.6.11 The 1 stage 2 complaint upheld in relation to WHQS external works was in relation to the erection of a rear boundary chain link fence rather than a timber fence. On further investigation and consultation with the owner/occupier at the rear of the property regarding ongoing maintenance it was agreed to erect a timber fence.
- 4.6.12 The stage 2 Leaseholder complaint upheld was in relation to the standard of painting works on the communal stairway which the leaseholder paid a contribution towards. On further inspection it was agreed the area would be repainted at the Council's cost.

4.6.13 The response repair stage 2 complaint upheld involved a tenant taking two days unpaid leave for appointments to renew a back door. The contractor did not turn up on the first appointment and on the second occasion the contractor turned up with the wrong size door. The contractor paid £52 reimbursement to the tenant and reordered and fitted the correct size door.

4.7 Ombudsman Complaints

Of the 35 Stage 2 complaints responded to 6 were referred to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. None were investigated but one 'quick fix' was agreed. This was in relation to no access on an out of hours call. The Ombudsman was satisfied with our approach to resolve the case. The recharge was withdrawn and practices regarding out of hours calls were reviewed. The changes are detailed below in 4.9.2.

4.8 Response Target Times

The Customer Service Section monitors the performance in responding to all contacts recorded by the section, within the corporate timescales. 94% of complaints and representations were responded to within the agreed timescales in 2015/16 which is the same percentage as 2014/15.

4.9 Learning from Complaints

Complaints are used as a means of analysing the service provided by Caerphilly Homes and highlighting any areas for improvement or any necessary changes in existing policies and procedures. The following are some examples of 'lessons learned' and the associated changes that have been made to the appropriate procedures:

4.9.1. During WHQS rewiring works at a designated older person's property a new electrical consumer unit was fitted. However, a concerned family member brought to our attention that due to the location of the new consumer unit the tenant was unable to access it without assistance. As a result it was agreed that when being changed all consumer units must be located in easily accessible locations to meet the needs of the tenant.

4.9.2 We have come across a couple of occasions when repairs have been reported to the Out of Hours team and the operatives have attended the call and not gained access to the property. The operative would normally move on to their next call in this instance and the tenant would receive a recharge for this call. If a call is reported to the OOH's team, it is deemed to be an emergency and the tenant is expected to be at the property.

If a repair is reported during normal working hours and the operative fails to gain access the operative rings back to the Central Repairs Team who then try to contact the tenant to advise the operative is outside their property.

The Out of Hours Team is not operated by the Housing Division, however, we have worked with the team involved to adopt the same procedure that operates during normal working hours. If the Out of Hours operative is unable to gain access they now ring back to the Out of Hours control room who will then ring the tenant to advise them the operative is outside their property.

4.9.3 An officer could not get any reply when they attempted to ring a tenant to arrange a repair appointment so an appointment letter was hand delivered arranging the appointment for 2 days time. The tenant was not available for the appointment and was subsequently recharged for a missed appointment. When the recharge was appealed it was agreed that practices should be amended so that if the tenant could not be reached by telephone to agree a mutually convenient appointment a letter would be sent advising the tenant of the appointment date, giving at least 7 days notice.

4.9.4 In respect of complaints relating to recharges made to tenants, it was reported last year that a revised appeals procedure would be introduced which incorporated the use of an independent Recharge Review Panel comprising Senior Housing Officers, a Councillor and a Tenant. This

process has been in place with effect from July 2016.

5 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Any complaints received by Caerphilly Homes that contain alleged discriminatory aspects to them are dealt with jointly by Caerphilly Homes and the Equalities and Welsh Language Team to ensure that the allegations are investigated thoroughly and appropriately, in line with both the complaints process and the requirements of the Strategic Equality Plan and Welsh Language Scheme

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Consultation responses have been considered within this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 This report is for information purposes only.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 The monitoring of complaints forms part of the process to monitor performance and continuous improvement for Caerphilly Homes.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government and Housing Acts. This is a Cabinet function

Author: Janet Carter, Senior Housing Officer, Customer Services Ext 5372
e-mail cartej1@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Christina HARRY, Corporate Director of Communities
Cllr Dave POOLE, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing
Shaun COUZENS, Chief Housing Officer
Fiona WILKINS, Public Sector Housing Manager
Kenyon WILLIAMS, Private Sector Housing Manager
Paul SMYTHE, Housing Repair Operation Manager
Marcus LLOYD, Deputy Head of Programmes
Jane ROBERTS-WAITE, Housing Strategic Co-ordination Manager
Gail WILLIAMS, Interim Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer
Mandy BETTS, Tenant and Community Involvement Manager
Gemma HOARE, Housing Officer, Customer Services
Anwen REES, Senior Policy Officer, Equalities and Welsh Language