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Date: 31st May 2017

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, 6th June, 2017** 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

AGENDA

| | Pages |
|--|--------|
| 1 To receive apologies for absence. | |
| 2 Declarations of Interest. | |
| 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. | |
| To approve and sign the following minutes: - | |
| 3 Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 28th February 2017. | 1 - 8 |
| 4 Special Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 27th March 2017. | 9 - 12 |

A greener place Man gwyrddach

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



- 5 Consideration of any matter referred to this Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.
- 6 To receive a verbal report by the Cabinet Member(s).
- 7 Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme. 13 - 24
- 8 To receive and consider the following Cabinet Reports*: -
1. Invest to Save Bids - 15th March 2017;
2. Annual Leave Payments - 15th March 2017;
3. Re-Profiling of WHQS Programme and HRA Capital Programme 2017/2018 - 15th March 2017;
4. Cabinet Forward Work Programme - 15th March 2017;
5. Annual Equalities Report 2015-2016 - 12th April 2017.

**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, 5th June 2017.*

To receive and consider the following Scrutiny reports:-

- 9 Year End Performance Report for Corporate Services 2016/17. 25 - 44
- 10 Review of Housing Service Charges. 45 - 52

Circulation:

Councillors M.A. Adams, Mrs E.M. Aldworth, K. Dawson, K. Etheridge, Mrs C. Forehead, Miss E. Forehead, L. Harding, G. Kirby, C.P. Mann, Mrs D. Price (Vice Chair), J. Pritchard (Chair), J. Ridgewell, Mrs M.E. Sargent, R. Saralis, J. Taylor and L.G. Whittle

And Appropriate Officers



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON
TUESDAY, 28TH FEBRUARY 2017 AT 5.30 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor S. Morgan - Chair
Councillor G. Kirby - Vice-Chair

Councillors:

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

Cabinet Members:

Mrs C. Forehead (HR and Governance/Business Manager), D. Hardacre (Performance and Asset Management), Mrs B. Jones (Corporate Services) and D.V. Poole (Housing)

Together with:

C. Harry (Corporate Director Communities), S. Couzens (Chief Housing Officer), M. Lloyd (Deputy Head of Programmes), L. Allen (Group Accountant), C. Forbes-Thompson (Interim Head of Democratic Services), and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer)

Also present:

Mr M. Jones (British Telecom), Ms A. Lewis and Mrs S. Jones (Tenant Representatives - Caerphilly Homes Task Group)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J.E. Fussell and Ms J.G. Jones.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the beginning or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES - 17TH JANUARY 2017

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 17th January 2017 (minute nos. 1 - 11) 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 Mrs C. Forehead, D.V. Poole, Mrs B. Jones and D. Hardacre. Questions and comments were invited on the report contents.

Councillor Mrs C. Forehead (Cabinet Member for HR and Governance/Business Manager) updated Members on developments across Legal and Democratic Services and credited the department on the areas of good practice recognised during the Lexcel.

Members noted that a new training on Ethics and Standards, which has been prepared by the WLGA, will be considered for approval by the Standards Committee and is aimed to be included in the Induction programme.

The Cabinet Member explained that the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) Final Report is due to be distributed to Councils later in the month, which will be presented to Council in due course.

Following the implementation of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015, training is under development within the National Framework to improve the arrangements for prevention, protection and support for individuals affected by Domestic Abuse. In addition the Act is set within the wider legislation context of Future Generations and Wellbeing legislation.

The Committee noted that the UK Government announced the plan to raise £3bn to fund apprenticeships in England in the Chancellor's Autumn Budget Statement. As a result, all employers with an annual wage bill of more than £3m will pay a levy of 0.5% of the total, with effect from 6th April 2017. This would amount to £454,000 for Caerphilly CBC's budget. Whilst the UK Government has confirmed that Wales will get £128m in the first year and £138m in the second year, there is no guarantee that Welsh Government will invest this to support the funding of apprenticeships. The Welsh Government has pledged to create at least 100,000 high quality, all age apprenticeships over the next 5 years. Whilst we know the financial cost to the Council, the full impact of the apprenticeship levy is still unknown at this stage.

Members thanked the Cabinet Member for the update and suggested that a letter be sent to the Welsh Government to determine the impact on Welsh Council's as a result of the Levy.

Councillor D.V. Poole (Cabinet Member for Housing) presented his report and advised Members that the energy efficiency works in Lansbury Park have commenced with some properties now receiving wall insulation and new render, which will not only improve the appearance of these properties, but also help to reduce fuel poverty for these residents. Similar Work has already been carried out in other parts of the borough and the feedback from residents has been extremely positive.

It was noted that the work will include all the council owned properties, and, as a result of cabinet approval, privately owned properties will also benefit from the scheme. In addition, the Committee were asked to note that a further bid for £380,000 has been successfully secured from WG via the Vibrant and Viable places funding and the Warms Homes Fund, which will provide additional works for landscaping and the demolition of the footbridge.

Members noted that the WHQS work to the Council's sheltered housing schemes is being carried out as a separate programme and is being delivered by the council's in-house workforce. The programme has been agreed to meet the WHQS timescale of 2020. Surveys of all next years schemes have been completed and meetings have been held with residents of each scheme. Work has already commenced in some schemes although the main programme of work is planned to commence in April, 2017.

To improve progress on the WHQS programme, it has been agreed that a new procurement process will be undertaken using a dynamic purchasing system. This will provide the council with an approved list of contractors that will be flexible to seek competitive tenders for both external and internal works throughout the borough. The main purpose of the DPS is to deliver the external works in the lower Rhymney Valley as no arrangements is currently in place, but the opportunity is being taken to widen the arrangement as a contingency for the whole of the borough. The system is expected to be operations from April, 2017.

Councillor B. Jones (Cabinet Member for Corporate Services) presented her report and advised Members that a pilot has been agreed by WHQS project board to grant Contractors who tender for the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for the Provision of General Builders with a 'Passport to trade' without the validity of the contract arrangement. The 'passport to trade' will alleviate the need for contractors to frequently submit repeat qualifying information such as but not limited to Health and Safety and Insurance Documentation whilst tendering for various opportunities of a similar nature. Once approved for inclusion, there is no further need for Contractor's to submit qualifying information to be able to bid for work opportunities via the DPS. The 'passport to trade' removes barriers faced by SME's when tendering for opportunities.

It was noted that during November and December 2967 calls for green waste were handled. In addition 1,933 bookings were taken through the website using a digital service developed by the in-house IT Development Team.

The Members' ICT Consultation Group met for the first time on 5th January 2017 and began a review of the current services provided, identify future requirements and propose options for consideration. The Group is to meet again on 23rd February to continue its work in readiness for the new member induction process scheduled for 9th May 2017, where available services and equipment will be explained and demonstrated.

Members thanked the Cabinet Member for the update and sought further information on the DPS system, with particular reference to the contractors, the tender process and the employment of local people. Members noted that the process is intended to be more accessible for local and smaller contractors, in an attempt to encourage more bids. Members were assured that, as part of the tender process, evidence of living wage is required. An update report can be provided later in the year, once the process has embedded.

Councillor D. Hardacre (Cabinet Member for Performance and Asset Management) presented his report and advised Members that Persimmon has been appointed as the "Preferred Developer" for the Pontllanfraith House site; therefore their bid have been accepted in principle, subject to modifications to their estate design, to satisfy the requirements of Planning and Highways. In this respect discussions with Persimmon have been very positive to date.

Discussions have commenced with Persimmon to begin demolition of the former offices at the earliest possible time, which would remove the current liabilities for the vacant building by the council. Persimmon is inviting tenders for the work and it is hoped the site can be cleared by December 2017.

The Persimmon bid is subject to their final scheme receiving Planning approval.

In addition, Members were asked to note that the Council's Well-being Objective publication has been drafted and is now going through the democratic process to Cabinet on the 1st March 2017 and Council on the 7th March 2017.

Throughout last summer, the Caerphilly Public Services Board (PSB) asked people to have their say around the Caerphilly Wellbeing of Future Generations assessment 'The Caerphilly We Want'. Through this process, 37 key issues were identified for the PSB to consider when developing their 'Wellbeing Plan'. The next stage of the process is to narrow down the number of issues raised to a more manageable number of key priorities.

The Public Services Board is keen to find out which of these issues matter most to interested parties. Your views, as well as residents matter, and we would like to encourage you to complete a short online survey.

Members thanked the Cabinet Member for the update and sought further information on the plans for the site and whether social and affordable housing is to be included in the contract. Members noted that further discussions are to take place in relation to the layout of the site, it is anticipated that the number of affordable homes would depend on the Local Development Plan (LDP) and the number of houses to be placed on the site.

The Cabinet Members present 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 included all reports agreed at the meeting held on 15th November 2016 and outlined the reports planned for the period February 2017 to June 2017. Members were asked to consider the FWP alongside the Cabinet Work Programme as appended to the report and to suggest any changes.

In addition, Members were asked to note that, following the Local Government Elections, a workshop would be scheduled in which Members could consider their priorities and reports going forward.

It was agreed that 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. BRITISH TELECOM – UPDATE ON BROADBAND PROVISION (VERBAL UPDATE)

The Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee welcomed Mr M. Jones – Superfast Cymru Programme Manager (BT) to the meeting, who provided a detailed presentation on the Superfast Cymru Programme.

Members noted that the Superfast Cymru Programme aims to provide superfast broadband across Wales. Of the 29.3million premises in the UK recorded, 22.4million (77%) have access to superfast broadband as a result of commercial rollout, of that, 6.8million were to be delivered as part of the BDUK Projects, Wales has total of 1.4million premises.

The Welsh Government has stipulated that the Superfast Cymru roll-out priority areas are defined as Economic being Enterprise Zones and Local Growth Zones and Social, which aims to reduce digital exclusion.

Members noted that the approach taken includes the deployment of both rural and business and consumer at the same time, which proves to be the most effective solution in order to reach as many people as quickly as possible. It has been a massive engineering project but Members were pleased to note that over 1.3 million premises in Wales now have access to Fibre Broadband.

The Committee noted that, whilst the project has been a success, one of the biggest issues being met is access to land or to dig where required.

Members thanked Mr Jones for the presentation and discussion ensued.

A Member sought further information on the distribution of Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) and Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC). Mr Jones explained that there is a low volume of FTTP stalled, this is largely due to the cost. The majority of urban homes, due to their proximity to the exchange are fitted with FTTC, however, in cases of rural premises, and due to the distance from the exchange, premises are often fitted with FTTP. Significant works has been underway to increase the number of cabinet available in order to increase accessibility and speed, in addition, Members noted that there are a number of alternative options for those not eligible for or covered by Superfast Cymru.

A Member sought further information on Vectoring. It was noted that all cabinets now include vectoring, which reduces the interferences from other copper lines and can reduce the performance and download speeds.

A member, in noting the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, and the anti-poverty agenda highlighted concerns about progress in comparison to other Countries. Mr Jones highlighted that, whilst FTTP would have been the better option, it would not have been cost effective, and significant works have been undertaken to upgrade systems that are already in place, however, as the programme continues, more areas are coming online, thus reducing exclusion.

Members were reminded that there are a number of events taking place across the borough to promote the programme. Details of which are available on the website.

The Scrutiny Committee thanked Mr Jones for the presentation and comprehensive overview of the Programme.

9. RE-PROFILING OF WHQS PROGRAMME AND HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2017/2018

The report, which was considered by Caerphilly Homes Task Group on the 16th February 2017, sought the view of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, prior to its presentation to Cabinet.

Members noted that there has continued to be progress and slippage with the WHQS delivery programme during 2016/17. As such it has been necessary to review and update the current delivery programme.

It was noted that the majority of the internal work changes have resulted in work being brought forward in the programme. In regard to the external works programme, the majority of the changes have results in works being moved to future years. The Sheltered Housing Scheme approach has now altered with the works being delivered by the in-house teams. This work has now been built into the forward works programme.

The HRA Capital Programme budget allocates the necessary resources based on the Savills cost plan. Work is underway to amend this approach so that in future it will be based on actual costs being achieved for works undertaken which provides a more realistic projection in relation to the proposed budget expenditure. These figures will be continually reviewed and assessed to provide the most accurate forecast possible for budget planning.

Cabinet noted that concerns were raised by both Representatives from the Caerphilly Homes Task Group and Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee in relation to tenant involvement in future contracts and the continued use of the Savills Survey. It was noted that assurances have been provided that, where possible Tenant involvement will continue with the new DPS process and the Savills Survey will shortly be replaced with actual costs. Officers advised that work is ongoing to address the projected costs issue and this will be finalised within 6 months whereby historical actual costs will be used to calculate estimated average future projections.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's report, and in noting the views of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group, the Re-Profiling of WHQS Programme and HRA Capital Programme 2017/18 be referred to Cabinet for consideration and approval.

10. WELL BEING OBJECTIVE WO5 – INVESTMENT IN COUNCIL HOMES TO TRANSFORM LIVES AND COMMUNITIES

The report provided details of the progress against Well Being Objective (WO5) – Investment in Council homes to transform lives and communities for 2016/17, during the period April 2016 to December 2016.

Members noted that the internal works have achieved 1567 completions against a target of 1692 (93%). The external completions have achieved 584 completions against a target of 1992 (28%). There has been limited progress in relation to the environmental programme.

Works in relation to energy efficiency and adaptations to meet tenants specific needs have progressed well during the year so far and tenant satisfaction levels remain high with extremely low levels of complaints.

The Committee noted that during the period covered by the report, it is assessed that achievement against the Well Being Objective WO5 is partially successful.

The Committee thanked the Officers for the report and discussion ensued.

A Member, in noting that the Communities First Programme is coming to an end sought further information on the LIFT programme. Officers highlighted that it is currently still early days, but will continue work with colleagues in order to provide the same aims.

A Member thanked the team for the excellent work provided, with particular reference to issues that have been raised as a result of quality of work. It was noted that the issues have been resolved and regular updates provided on the process.

Members discussed the Refusals. It was noted that there are a number of reasons for this, such as refusal of the works or inability to gain access to the property. There is a 3 Strikes system in place, following this, a legal process is followed with the Area Housing Office and Ward Members are made aware of the situation, as part of the process.

It was moved and seconded that the Scrutiny Committee note the content of the report and agreed the judgement of partially successful at this stage of the year. By a show of hands, this was unanimous.

11. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET MONITORING – PERIOD 9 2016/17

The report provided members with the projected expenditure for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the 2016/17 financial year. The HRA Capital programme, which predominantly funds the WHQS programme was also included within the report.

Members were provided with details of the distinction between the HRA, which is funded by rental income received from council tenants, and General Fund Housing and Private Housing, which fall under the General Fund and is funded via the Council Taxpayer.

The report outlined the projected outturn for the HRA based upon the expenditure and income for the first nine months of the financial year.

The Committee noted that there is an underspend in the HRA of £1.7m, which represents approximately 3% of the total HRA budget. It was noted that the Salaries and associated costs within the HRA are currently expected to overspend by some £38k. However, Members were assured that underspend in other areas would offset this overspend. The Service Specific and Office Related (non-pay related budgets) are expected to carry an underspend of £467k. Members were pleased to note that the projected additional income is anticipated to provide an additional £1.6m to the HRA account. Building Maintenance has been projected to overspend by £183k, as a result of the HRA being utilised for the maintenance of public housing stock and costs associated with materials, sub-contractors and tipping charges. Members noted that there is an overspend on the Revenue Contribution to Capital, as a result of an increase in agency posts and the complete utilisation of the HRA RCCO.

The Committee noted that the HRA Working balances at the end of 2015/16 stood at £19.8m. The majority of this funding is earmarked to fund the WHQS programme. To date no borrowing has been undertaken to fund the WHQS programme; however the current business plan anticipates borrowing requirement of £57m to fully deliver the programme.

The spend to date for the first 9 months on the HRA Capital Programme is £18.9m against a full year budget of £38.6. 28% (£5.4m) of the spend related to carried forward contracts from previous years.

A summary of the internal and external works totalled £15.3m, the remaining spend is on fees (£1.6m), adaptations (£408k), policy voids (£1.1m) and garages (£417k).

Members thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued. Clarification was sought on the agency staff employed and the roles they perform. It was noted that they are usually staff in specialist roles such as surveyor or Clerk of Works, and are often only required for a short-term.

Members discussed the increase in expenditure on Building Maintenance. It was explained that there has been more work undertaken by the in-house team, therefore this has had an impact on that particular budget allocation. However, Members were assured that this will be adjusted for next year.

The Committee thanked the Officers for the report and unanimously noted the contents.

The meeting closed at 7.26 pm.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 6th June 2017, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR



SPECIAL POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON
MONDAY, 27TH MARCH 2017 AT 5.30 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor S. Morgan - Chair
Councillor G. Kirby - Vice-Chair

Councillors:

Miss E. Forehead, Ms J.G. Jones, A. Lewis, C.P. Mann, D. Rees, R. Saralis, J. Simmonds, J. Taylor

Representing the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee: D.T. Davies (Chair), M.A. Adams, P.A. Marsden

Together with:

C. Harry (Corporate Director - Communities), M.S. Williams (Head of Community and Leisure Services), J. Jones (Corporate Information Governance Manager), B. Manners (Principal Solicitor) and R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

1. CHAIR'S WELCOME

The Chair advised that Members of the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee had been invited to attend the meeting, as the proposed Occupational Road Risk Policy falls within the remit of the Communities Directorate.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L. Binding, Mrs P. Cook, C.J. Cuss, J.E. Fussell, C. Hawker and Mrs G.D. Oliver, together with Cabinet Members Mrs C. Forehead (HR and Governance/Business Manager), D.T. Hardacre (Performance and Asset Management), Mrs B. Jones (Corporate Services) and D.V. Poole (Housing).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following report.

4. OCCUPATIONAL ROAD RISK POLICY

Mark S. Williams (Head of Community and Leisure Services) presented the report, which provided details of the proposed Occupational Road Risk Policy for the Authority. The report sought the views of Members on the contents of the Policy, prior to its presentation to Cabinet for formal adoption.

It was explained that Officers have been working over the last 12-18 months to develop an Occupational Road Risk Policy to assist the Authority in recognising and reducing risks posed by occupational driving. It is intended for the Policy to provide guidance, information and advice for managers and employees of the Authority and assist them in recognising, reducing and responding to the risks posed by travelling on Council business. Commuting and the use of private cars for Council business is not covered by the Policy, although it covers those workers travelling direct to site from home when in a Council vehicle.

Members were referred to the 7 sections of the Policy as appended to the report (Introduction, Scope of Policy, Purpose of Policy, Legislative Requirements, Policy Detail, Key Organisational Responsibilities, and Appendices - Driver Handbook, Vehicle Management Information Systems Privacy Impact Assessment and Vehicle Management Information Authorisation form). The Policy Detail sets out how the Authority will discharge its duties to introduce and include safe systems of work for those undertaking driving, and outlines processes for inspecting driving licences, driving assessments, maintenance of a driver register, issue and update of the drivers handbook, maintenance of vehicles, accident and incident reporting, use of vehicle management information (VMI) systems and driver training.

It was explained that consultation meetings have been held with the relevant Trade Unions, with the most significant discussion point relating to the type of and use of Vehicle Management Information (VMI) Systems. An agreement has been reached with the Trade Unions to limit the use of VMI information systems at this stage to vehicle tracking, external 360° camera systems, digital tachographs (an existing legal requirement) and specific service technologies such as salt spread monitoring systems and gully emptying monitoring systems. However, it has been agreed with the Trade Unions that the use of any new or additional VMI systems will be the subject of a new consultation exercise before they are implemented.

The use of VMI systems is supported by a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) which has been developed by the Authority's Corporate Information Governance Unit. The PIA clearly sets out the purposes for which VMI systems will be used and discusses information flows, access to data controls and retention of data. The PIA has also been the subject of consultation with the Trade Unions.

The Scrutiny Committee were asked to note that whilst there are no financial impacts associated within the report, the Council is keen to adopt the Policy from a risk management perspective as it could be of benefit when assessing insurance claims and could allow for savings to be made on vehicle insurance premiums.

Discussion of the report ensued and Officers detailed the current VMI systems in place and provided an explanation of how they operate. Members discussed the use of camera systems and Officers explained that any new systems (such as the use of dashboard-mounted cameras) would be the subject of a new consultation exercise and further discussions with the Trade Unions if these were proposed in the future.

In response to Members' queries, Officers provided details of driving assessments/training for relevant staff and physical/medical assessments where required by legislation (such as for HGV drivers). Officers responded to queries involving the redeployment options for employees in the event of arising medical issues and outlined the range of health monitoring processes available to employees (such as corporate health screening clinics).

Discussion took place on a number of items within the Drivers Handbook appended to the Policy, which includes advice on matters such as planning for long-distance journeys. It was noted that this handbook will be regularly reviewed and kept updated with current driving guidance and legislation. In response to a query regarding the use of mobile telephones in Council vehicles, it was explained that any complaints are dealt with in accordance with the Council's disciplinary procedure.

A Member referred to the distinction between monitoring and surveillance and sought further information on how the Council uses data from these VMI systems. Officers explained that this information is often accessed to evidence vehicle insurance claims (such as resident claims against refuse collection trucks) but is not used for staff surveillance. The VMI systems also include vehicle tracking and specific service technologies (such as salt spread monitoring systems and gully emptying monitoring systems) which can be useful when responding to queries on whether a specific location has been attended.

The Scrutiny Committee were assured that there are robust mechanisms in place to ensure that the information is only accessed for a valid reason and that the release of this information requires the authorisation of several senior officers within the relevant service area. It was explained that surveillance concerns from the Trade Unions relate to the use of inward-facing cameras, which do not form part of the current VMI systems. Members were also advised that there is currently no employee surveillance being undertaken within the Authority but that in the event that this was required, it would need to be discussed and agreed in advance by the Audit Committee.

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

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the Operational Road Risk Policy as appended to the report be adopted.

The meeting closed at 6.09 p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 6th June 2017, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR

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POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 6TH JUNE 2017

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

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

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 28th February 2017. The work programme outlines the reports planned for the period June 2017 to October 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 Forward Work Programme is attached at Appendix 2.

5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

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

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

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

9. CONSULTATIONS

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

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 To improve the operation of scrutiny.

12. STATUTORY POWER

12.1 The Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Catherine Forbes-Thompson Interim Head of Democratic Services

Consultees: Gail Williams, Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Nicole Scammell, Acting Director of 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 June 2017 to October 2017 | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| Meeting Date: 6 June 2017 | | | |
| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
| 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 - Chief Housing Officer |
| Corporate Services Year End Performance | Performance of Corporate Services for 2016/17 | Highlighting the exceptions and looking forward to 2017/18. The future challenges, setting out key objectives/priorities for the next twelve months, and identifying areas for improvement. | Nicole Scammell – Interim Director Corporate Services |
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Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme
APPENDIX 1

| Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme January 2017 to October 2017 | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| Meeting Date: 18th July 2017 | | | |
| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
| Housing Services Year End Performance. | Performance Monitoring | An update on performance of the Housing Service during 2016/17, to set out the key service objectives for 2017/18 and highlight any potential challenges that may affect delivery of these objectives. | Christina HARRY – Corporate Director Communities Shaun Couzens - Chief Housing Officer |
| Wellbeing Objectives 2016/17 – Investment in Council Homes | To provide a year-end performance update of progress against the Councils highest priorities identified within the Councils Corporate Plan 2016. | To provide the performance update of the Well-being Objective action plan. The Council Ffynnon scorecard will provide PI data regarding completion of internal and external works programmes and adds information on peoples satisfaction with the internal works. | Marcus Lloyd - WHQS and Infrastructure Strategy Manager Shaun Couzens – Chief Housing Officer |
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Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme
APPENDIX 1

| Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme January 2017 to October 2017 | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| Meeting Date: 3rd October 2017 | | | |
| Subject | Purpose | Key Issues | Witnesses |
| Data Protection Changes | To update Members on changes to Data Protection regulations. | To make Members aware of changes to Data Protection regulations and the penalties incurred for any breaches. | Jo Jones Corporate Information Governance Manager |
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| 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 update members on the progress of the 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 |
| Supported Accommodation | This information report will update members on the progress on supported accommodation | To advise members on the progress on supported accommodation. | |

Cabinet Forward Work Programme

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| 7TH JUNE 2017 | Key Issues | Service Area |
|--|---|-------------------|
| Risk Management Strategy Strategaeth Rheoli Risg | This report presents the Council's current Corporate Risk Register and an updated version of the Council's Risk Management Strategy following amendments approved by Cabinet. | Public Protection |
| A468/A469 Pwllpant Roundabout Highway Improvement Scheme A468/A469 Cynllun Gwella Priffordd Cylchfan Pwll-y-pant | To seek Cabinet approval to utilise funding for and progress the construction of the A468/A469 Pwllpant roundabout highway improvement scheme. | Engineering |
| Unit 21 Lawn Industrial Estate, Rhymney – Lease Renewal to the Furniture Revival, GC Enterprises (Wales) Ltd Uned 21 Ystâd Ddiwydiannol Lawn, Rhymni – Adnewyddu Prydles i'r Furniture Revival, GC Enterprises (Cymru) Cyf | To seek approval for the terms of the a new lease arrangement at a peppercorn rent with The Furniture Revival | Communities |
| Bryn Compost Liaison Group Terms of Reference Cylch Gorchwyl Grŵp Cyswllt Bryn Compost | To seek views in the future operation of the Liaison Group. | Public Protection |

| 21ST JUNE 2017 | Key Issues | Service Area |
|--|--|-------------------|
| EAS Business Plan Cynllun Busnes GCA | This report presents the South East Wales Education Achievement Service (EAS) Business Plan. | Education |
| Cabinet Report - Welsh Language Standards Annual | The Council has a statutory duty to produce an annual monitoring report on implementing Welsh Language issues under current legislation. | Public Protection |

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|---|--|-------------------|
| Report 2016-2017 Adroddiad Cabinet - Adroddiad Blynyddol y Safonau Iaith Gymareg 2016-2017 | The information required for 2016-2017 covers four key areas as required under the Welsh Language Standards. | |
| National Non-Domestic Rate Relief Grant Funding – WG ‘High Street Rate Relief’ Scheme 2017/18 Ariannu Cymorth Trethi Annomestig Cenedlaethol - Cynllun 'Rhyddhad Ardrethi Stryd Fawr' LIC 2017/18 | The report will ask Cabinet to adopt a proposed scheme for high street rate relief for the 2017/18 financial year | Corporate Finance |
| Food Standards Agency Audit on the Caerphilly Food Law Enforcement Services Archwiliaeth yr Asiantaeth Fwyd ar Wasanaethau Gorfodi'r Gyfraith Fwyd Caerffili | To inform of the findings of an audit conducted by the Food Standards Agency, on Caerphilly County Borough Council's food law enforcement services, which include the food safety, food standards and communicable disease control functions in Public Protection. | Public Protection |
| Housing Service Charges Taliadau Gwasanaeth Tai | To present to Cabinet proposals for revising how service charges in sheltered housing schemes are collected and to introduce WG requirements to de-pool service charges from rents for general needs tenants | Housing |

| 5TH JULY 2017 | Key Issues | Service Area |
|--|---|--------------------|
| Final Governance of Service Change Report Llywodraethu terfynol yr adroddiad newid gwasanaethau. | To present the results of the Wales Audit Office review of Caerphilly County Borough Council arrangements for “Good governance when determining significant service changes” and any proposals for Improvement. | Wales Audit Office |

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| Financial Resilience Adroddiad Hydwythedd Ariannol | To present the Wales Audit Office (WAO) report on its financial resilience assessment of Caerphilly CBC. | Wales Audit Office |
| Provisional Outturn for 2016/17. Alldro Dros Dro ar gyfer 2016/17 | The report will provide Cabinet with details of the provisional revenue budget outturn for the 2016/17 financial year prior to the annual audit by the Authority's External Auditors Grant Thornton. | Corporate Finance |
| Rhymney 3-18 All Through School Rhymni 3 - 18 Ysgol Gydol Oed | To make a final decision on the proposal to establish a Rhymney 3-18 All Through School. | Education |

| 20TH JULY 2017 | Key Issues | Service Area |
|---|---|-------------------|
| Corporate Risk Register Cofrestr Risg Corfforaethol | This report presents an updated version of the Council's Corporate Risk Register. | Public Protection |
| Visit Wales ERDF Projects - The Monmouthshire And Brecon Canal Adventure Triangle Prosiectau ERDF Croeso Cymru - Triongl Antur Camlas Mynwy a Brycheiniog | <p>The report concentrates on the progress made since January 2016 in respect of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) capital infrastructure proposal - The Mon and Brecon Canal Adventure Triangle, that has been developed as a regionally prioritised destination management project.</p> <p>This proposal was first considered and endorsed by Cabinet on the 20th January 2016. However the passage of time and ongoing discussions with Welsh Government (WG), Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO), project partners Torfaen CBC along with Visit Wales has highlighted the need to revise and refocus the scope of the CCBC Council works in the original project proposal and to revisit the Council's match funding allocation to the project.</p> | Communities |

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| CABINET AS TRUSTEES OF BLACKWOOD MINERS INSTITUTE | | |
|--|--|-----------------------------|
| 19TH JULY 2017 | Key Issues | Service Area |
| <p>Blackwood Miners' Institute progress report and update on 2017/2018 Budget</p> <p>Adroddiad Datblygiad Sefydliad y Glowyr Coed Duon a Diweddariad Cyllid 2017/2018</p> | <p>To update Cabinet as Trustees on progress against the activity programme and work plan for Blackwood Miners Institute for the current year.</p> | <p>Economic Development</p> |
| 20TH SEPTEMBER 2017 | Key Issues | Service Area |
| <p>Anti Money Laundering and Anti Fraud Polices</p> <p>Polisiau i Ymladd Gwyngalchu Arian a Pholisiau Gwrth-dwyll</p> | <p>To seek Cabinet approval of update policies in relation to Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption and Anti-Money Laundering</p> | <p>Corporate Finance</p> |
| 4TH OCTOBER 2017 | Key Issues | Service Area |
| <p>Speed Limit Review of A and B Class Roads Within Caerphilly County Borough</p> <p>Adolygiad o Derfyn Cyflymder ar Ffyrdd Dosbarth A a B o fewn Bwrdeistref Sirol Caerffili</p> | <p>Following the issue of new speed limit guidance by Welsh Government, Officers have carried out a review of all speed limits on A and B class roads within the Borough. This report provides the outcomes and recommendations from the review.</p> | <p>Housing</p> |
| <p>Active Travel Integrated Network Map</p> <p>Map Rhwydwaith Integredig</p> | <p>The Cabinet report will seek endorsement of the Active Travel Integrated Network Map prior to submission to the Welsh Government in November 2017 in order to meet the Council's statutory obligations.</p> | <p>Housing</p> |

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| Teithio Llesol | | |
| Leisure Review | | Communities and Leisure |
| Adolygiad Hamdden | | |
| The Management of Trees | To seek the approval of Cabinet to formally adopt a Tree Strategy, following consideration at Scrutiny Committee. | Communities and Leisure |
| Rheolaeth Coed | | |
| Annual Performance Report 2016/17 | The Annual Performance Report is a statutory requirement and an important part of the Council's Performance Framework. The Council is required to assess its own performance and provide the public with a balanced picture of that performance. In addition, the report must also show how the Council performed against the Well-being Objectives. | |
| Adroddiad Perfformiad Plyneddol 2016/17 | | |

| | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 15TH NOVEMBER 2017 | Key Issues | Service Area |
| Waste Review | | Communities and Leisure |
| Adolygiad Gwastraff | | |

| | | |
|--|-------------------|---------------------|
| 29TH NOVEMBER 2017 | Key Issues | Service Area |
| Sheltered Housing Schemes – Eastern Valleys Area Remodelling | | Housing |
| Cynlluniau Tai Lloches - Ailfodelu Ardal Cymoedd Dwyreiniol | | |

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| 13TH DECEMBER 2017 | Key Issues | Service Area |
|---|---|-------------------|
| Council Tax Base Sylfaen Treth Y Cyngor | The report provides details of the Council Tax base for 2018/19 for tax setting purposes and the collection percentage to be applied. | Corporate Finance |



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 6TH JUNE 2017

**SUBJECT: YEAR END PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR CORPORATE SERVICES
2016/17**

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

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with a performance update for Corporate Services. This involves taking a look back over the last twelve months of our performance highlighting the exceptions and then looking forward i.e. future challenges, setting out our key objectives/priorities for the next twelve months, identifying areas for improvement.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 During 2016/17 there was evidence of excellent performance, but also areas of poorer performance. Members are reminded that it is important for officers to take an honest approach to this process to ensure areas that require improvement are identified and supported. 2017/18 will continue to be driven by the need to deliver better services with less resource, but against the backdrop of the Local Government Reform Agenda.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Corporate Services provide direct and indirect support to all of the Corporate Priorities and Well-Being Objectives.
- 3.2 The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a number of legal duties on public bodies in Wales to meet the legally binding 'common purpose' for 7 National Well-Being goals. This report links into each goal as follows (this has been based on an incremental approach/view):-
- A sustainable Wales – delivering services in accordance with available resource. Reducing assets to a sustainable level. Maximising income collection to support service provision. Ensuring the most appropriate use of our third party spend to address sustainable alternative goods and material whilst developing and enhancing local supply chains.
 - A prosperous Wales – prompt processing of Council Tax and Housing Benefits, ability of residents to access key services and support either digitally or face-to-face via customer contacts. Effective use of third party spend to foster engagement of local supply chains which will facilitate regeneration opportunities in and around the borough. Effective use of appropriate Community benefits will support jobs and community engagement.

- A Healthier Wales – no direct links to Corporate Services, although support is provided to those front line services that deliver this goal. Ensure where appropriate all contracts reflect requirements which contribute to the Healthy Wales agenda.
- A more equal Wales – ensuring all groups including vulnerable and hard to reach have access to the Authority. Procurement, Customer Services and IT play a key role.
- A Wales of cohesive communities –Corporate Services facilitates the delivery of this goal via front line services.
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language – compliance with Welsh language standards.
- A globally responsible Wales – rationalisation of assets should reduce carbon footprint. Developing sustainable supply chains who are globally and socially responsible will assist with the over-arching principles.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 A summary is provided for each service area of Corporate Services below.

4.2 **Corporate Finance**

4.2.1 **Overview**

The services provided by Corporate Finance are essentially twofold. The Council Tax/Business Rates, Housing Benefit/Council Tax Reduction and Income Sections provide front-line services to the public. In addition to this, a range of support services are provided to every Directorate of the Council and these include Accountancy, Treasury Management, Payments, Insurance & Risk Management and Internal Audit.

Corporate Finance has 165 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff, split 81 FTE frontline and 84 FTE support services. Some staff are based in the larger Council Directorates enabling the delivery of some financial services to be devolved.

4.2.2 **What Went Well?**

- The various teams within Corporate Finance continued to perform well during the 2016/17 financial year and all statutory targets were met. This has been achieved against a backdrop of continuing downsizing in many teams to address budget cuts.
- The various Corporate and seconded Accountancy Teams have played a pivotal role in supporting Heads of Service to identify and develop savings proposals to support the Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). This working relationship has been crucial in recent years due to the need to respond to unprecedented cuts in funding.
- Effective financial planning and robust budget monitoring arrangements have helped the Authority to manage its financial affairs. We have continued the trend of delivering balanced budgets and identifying some savings in advance of need. However, this is becoming far more challenging as the programme of austerity continues.
- The following table provides a summary of the key performance measures for Corporate Finance: -

| Description | 2014/15 | | 2015/16 | | 2016/17 | |
|---|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| | Target | Actual | Target | Actual | Target | Actual |
| Percentage of total Council Tax due for the financial year received by the Authority. | 96.5% | 96.7% | 96.8% | 97% | 97.1% | 97.1% |
| Percentage of total | 97% | 97% | 97.2% | 97.7% | 97.9% | 97.9% |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-----|--------|-----|--------|-----|--------|
| non-domestic rate (NNDR) due for the financial year received by CCBC. | | | | | | |
| Average time taken in days to process housing benefit change events and new claims. | 14 | 9.90 | 14 | 12.54 | 12 | 10.46 |
| The number of housing benefit interventions completed per annum as a percentage of total caseload (lower is worse). | 20% | 19.46% | 20% | 21.97% | 20% | 13.75% |
| Sundry debtors collected within 3 months as a % of amounts due. | 96% | 98.2% | 96% | 97.7% | 96% | 99% |
| Percentage of undisputed invoices which were paid within 30 days. | 95% | 95.5% | 95% | 94.01% | 95% | 94.88% |
| Average number of calendar days to make payment of undisputed Invoices to SME's. | 13 | 12.2 | 13 | 13.93 | 13 | 12.97 |

- e) It is pleasing to report that 97.1% of all council tax bills issued for the 2016/17 financial year were collected in full, which is the highest amount achieved since Caerphilly CBC was formed in 1996. The Council Tax Team also proactively pursues council tax arrears and over a typical 3-year period the collection rate rises to 99.5%, which means that the vast majority of residents do pay in full.
- f) Members will note that there has also been a steady improvement over the last 3 years in the collection rates for non-domestic rates with 97.9% of the amount due in 2016/17 being collected in year.
- g) The average time taken to process housing benefit change events and new claims was 12.54 days in 2015/16 (9.9 days in 2014/15). This dip in performance was partly due to significant IT downtime experienced during 2015/16 following the rollout of iGels. The IT systems used by the Benefits Section play a major part in performance so the Acting Director of Corporate Services & Section 151 agreed to replace the iGels with PCs. It is pleasing to note that performance has now improved for 2016/17 (10.46 days).
- h) Whilst there has been an improvement in the time taken to process new claims and change events, the number of housing benefit interventions completed per annum as a percentage of total caseload has reduced (13.75% in 2016/17 compared to 21.97% in 2015/16). There were fewer interventions completed in 2016/17 as the main focus of the Benefits Section was to improve processing times and clear backlogs to ensure that claimants had their benefits on time with minimum delay. Current workload levels are now more manageable and the Section will be able to carry out more interventions during the coming year. Interventions target high risk claims where there may be a change in circumstances that could result in overpayments or underpayments being made.

- i) Performance during 2016/17 has improved in relation to the timeliness of collecting sundry debtor income and paying invoices to suppliers. The percentage of undisputed invoices which were paid within 30 days was 94.88%, which is just short of the target of 95%. However, this is an improvement on the 94.01% achieved in 2015/16.
- j) During 2016/17 the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) were commissioned by the Society of Welsh Treasurers, along with Welsh Government (WG) and the WLGA to undertake a benchmarking exercise in respect of the Cost of Administration for functions in Corporate Services. The work included all 22 Local Authorities and it used 2016/17 budgets as provided to WG. The total net expenditure of administration per 1000 population showed Caerphilly CBC as 3rd lowest cost in Wales for the overall functions in Corporate Services. Within this overall position the finance function showed a net cost of £12.70 per 1000 population against a Welsh average of £18.40.
- k) The audit and regulatory reports in relation to the services provided by Corporate Finance have generally been positive: -
- The annual external audit of the NNDR3 Return in 2015/16 was completed without any qualification or comment to the Welsh Government.
 - Following the external audit of the Authority's 2015/16 financial statements, the auditors (Grant Thornton) included the following comments in their ISA260 Report to the Audit Committee: -

"We have no concerns about the qualitative aspects of your accounting practices and financial reporting. We found the information provided to be relevant, reliable, comparable, material and easy to understand. We concluded that accounting policies and estimates are appropriate and financial statement disclosures unbiased, fair and clear."

"We did not encounter any significant difficulties during the audit. We received information in a timely and helpful manner and were not restricted in our work."

"There were no significant matters discussed and corresponded upon with management which we need to report to you"

"We did not identify any material weaknesses in your internal controls".
 - The external audit of the 2015/16 Housing Benefit Subsidy claim identified a number of minor errors which led to a qualification. Whilst these errors did not result in any financial loss for the Authority there is a potential risk in future if the type of errors identified continue. In response to this refresher training has been organised for staff to reinforce the potential risks and to ensure accuracy in processing. In addition, extra quality control checks have been put in place to ensure that the training is effective and errors are being reduced.
 - Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) regard Caerphilly CBC as a low risk Authority for VAT and as a consequence they do not impose as rigorous an inspection regime on us as those Authorities regarded as a high risk.
 - Internal Audit reports on financial systems during 2016/17 have not reported any major issues.

4.2.3 Future Challenges/Areas that need improvement as they did not go well

- a) The ongoing austerity programme will require further significant savings to be delivered. In addition to savings of £9.046m already approved for 2017/18, it is anticipated that the

Authority will need to find further savings totalling £28.8m for the period 2018/19 to 2020/21.

- b) There will be significant demands on finance staff arising from the need to support Heads of Service and Service Managers to identify and cost potential savings. The delivery of approved savings will also need to be closely monitored and due to the financial position becoming ever more challenging, the need for accurate and reliable budget monitoring information will be greater than ever. In addition to these demands we will still need to ensure that core financial functions are delivered and that statutory deadlines are met.
- c) From the 2020/21 financial year the statutory deadline for the production of the Council's Draft Accounts will be reduced by one month from the 30th June to the 31st May. Furthermore, the statutory deadline for the completion of the external audit of the Draft Accounts and subsequent Council approval will be reduced by two months from the 30th September to the 31st July. These changes will be phased in from the 2018/19 financial year and will present significant challenges to maintain the quality and accuracy of the financial accounts. The Council's Corporate Accountancy Team is being proactive in dealing with this change and is working closely with the external auditors (Grant Thornton) on a trial basis to produce the 2016/17 Draft Accounts by the 23rd June 2017. These will then be audited and subsequently approved by Full Council on the 31st July 2017. This approach will mean that we will be in a very strong position to meet the revised deadlines for the production of the Annual Accounts well before they become a statutory requirement.
- d) The introduction of the CIPFA Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and the demands on the Internal Audit Service will need to be carefully managed as we move forward. Client engagement will be crucial to ensure that priority areas are identified for review.
- e) In August 2016 the Wales Audit Office (WAO) issued a report following its review of arrangements to address external audit, inspection and regulation recommendations and proposals for improvement. This report identified a number of new proposals for improvement for the Internal Audit Service. These included the development of an assurance framework, aligning the audit plan to key risks, completing internal and external assessments against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and ensuring that the Audit Committee is provided with summary reports highlighting the key findings of Internal Audit work during the year. The Corporate Governance Panel is monitoring progress against the agreed actions to address the proposals for improvement and good progress has been made. However, further work will be required during 2017/18 to ensure that all actions are fully completed.
- f) The Housing Benefits Section will need to deal with the ongoing roll-out of Universal Credit and further reductions in grants from the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP).
- g) Finance staff will have a key role to play in dealing with the impact of Local Government Reform (LGR). Support and advice will need to be provided in relation to financial governance arrangements and pooled budgets and Heads of Service will need financial information to inform wider collaborative models for various services. Furthermore, a number of services within Corporate Finance are likely to be considered for collaborative working hence business cases will need to be developed for these services for Members to consider.

4.3 **Communications, Health & Safety, Human Resources**

4.3.1 **Overview**

The three teams continue to be managed by the Acting Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development and together as a service, remain committed to support the Council with difficult change agenda ahead.

Staff are allocated as follows:

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Communications (including graphic design & printing) | 13.42 FTE |
| Health and Safety | 27.70 FTE |
| Human Resources | 60.72 FTE |

4.3.2 What went well?

- The three teams continued to perform well during 2016/17. Directorates have been provided with the same levels of service, despite the loss of staff in each team to meet the required budget cuts of the MTFP.
- Each of the teams has continued to support Heads of Service to manage various risks within their service areas, whether that relates to people, buildings, or reputation.
- All Schools buy the Health and Safety, Human Resources and Payroll Service Level Agreements (SLA's) and this year Schools have been offered the opportunity to purchase an SLA for the Communications Team and most have chosen to do so.
- The Council continues to lead the way in Wales with its successful use of social media and other digital channels to engage and communicate with residents and other key stakeholders. The Communications Team has continued to play a strategic role in leading the Authority's public consultation and engagement agenda on major pieces of work. They won the Silver Award for Public Service Communications Excellence and were the only Welsh entry shortlisted.
- Payroll have processed 101,520 payments through the payroll in 2016/17 in comparison with 104,888 in 2015/16 and 103,846 in 2014/15. The reduction in numbers is to be expected following the reduction in number of employees in these 3 years. Payroll continue to submit accurate information to the various regulators on time.
- HR have continued to support Heads of Service to successfully manage changes to service delivery and staffing requirements to meet their own MTFP targets, resulting in 37 compulsory redundancies as detailed below. A comparison to the previous 2 financial years is included for information. The projected future austerity provides an inevitability that it is going to become far more challenging to maintain low numbers of redundancies in future years.

| Number of compulsory redundancies | 2016/17 | 2015/16 | 2014/15 |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Service related | 28 (includes 19 in schools) | 9 (includes 7 in schools) | 12 |
| End of fixed term contract | 9 (includes 5 in schools) | 27 (includes 13 in schools) | 25 (includes 10 in schools) |

- HR continue to manage the Council's redeployment pool successfully. The Council has been advertising more posts on a fixed term basis for a number of years due to the review of service provision by each Head of Service. Consequently, the number of permanent redeployment opportunities that HR have supported. The number are lower due to there being less permanent posts advertised. See details below:

| | 2016/17 | 2015/16 | 2014/15 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|
| Number of staff permanently redeployed | 10 | 11 | 21 |

However, HR continually support staff to be redeployed in to fixed term posts. The table below details the number of employees in the redeployment pool as at 31 March 2107 and the previous 2 years for comparison:

| | As at 31/03/17 | As at 31/03/16 | As at 31/03/15 |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Number of employees in the redeployment pool | 130 | 81 | 125 |

- h) The Health and Safety Team have supported the asbestos removal project in schools has been completed, resulting in amosite asbestos products being removed across 37 affected schools, costing £800k. The resulting position is that there is no amosite asbestos product (brown asbestos) within occupied areas of Caerphilly schools.

Performance information is as follows for 2016/17:

Communications

600 press releases were generated which led to 2,266 separate articles in the local press and media. This clearly demonstrates that each positive article issued by the council is used multiple times by various media outlets. The team have recently implemented a new way of monitoring the performance of media releases by applying a scoring system to provide improved analysis of coverage.

The Council's Facebook page currently has 14,000 followers and the Council's Twitter account has over 13,000 followers. Caerphilly has the highest Facebook following of all local authorities in Wales thanks to the proactive way we engage residents using social media.

47,000 users have subscribed to GovDelivery, which allows the Council to send news, information and advice direct to subscribers. This is new communication channel for the authority, but performance is exceeding initial estimates and this continues to grow.

Health and Safety

The table below provides a sample of information relating to some of the activity of the team and a comparison with the previous 2 financial years:-

| | 2016/17 | 2015/16 | 2014/15 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|
| Number of Health and Safety training courses attended by employees | 3,934 | 2,614 | 2,387 |
| Number of inspections of Schools | 90 | 101 | 45 |
| Number of fire risk assessments of Council premises | 141 | 135 | 54 |
| Number of asbestos surveys of Council premises | 36 | 37 | 54 |
| Number of asbestos removal projects | 29 | 21 | 16 |

Human Resources

The table below provides some of the activity that the team has supported to assist Heads of Service to manage their services and a comparison with the previous 2 financial years:-

| | 2016/17 | 2015/16 | 2014/15 |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| New starters to the Council | 831 | 648 | 735 |
| Number of job applications received | 7,803 | 6,910 | 6,730 |
| Leavers | 925 | 979 | 964 |
| Early retirement by mutual consent | 23 (includes 18 in schools) | 25 (includes 13 in schools) | 13 (includes 8 in schools) |
| Voluntary severance | 10 | 54 | 23 |
| Flexible retirement | 3 | 7 | 0 |
| Voluntary redundancy | 6 (all in schools) | 2 (both in schools) | 6 (includes 4 in schools) |

4.3.3 Future Challenges/Areas that need improvement as they did not go well

- a) The impact of the Medium Term Financial Plan:-
 - i) on the service as a whole when it has no option but to downsize
 - ii) how the service supports the Council to achieve any agreed changes in a sensitive, manageable and safe way
- b) Changes to legislation that may impact on the business of each team.
- c) Potential reputational risks to the Council from matters in the public domain.
- d) Delivering the HR Strategy 2016 – 20, as this was a key outstanding action following the Wales Audit Office Review of Corporate Governance.
- e) Supporting the reduction of sickness levels across the Authority.

4.4 Property Services

4.4.1 Overview

Property Services continues to take a lead role in the rationalisation and improvement of the Council's buildings and land assets. Four major buildings, Pontllanfraith House, Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School (CS), Oakdale CS and Cwmcarn CS are, or will soon be, decommissioned. These buildings were inefficient, were no longer fit for purpose, required ever greater maintenance and contain asbestos. Furthermore three of these sites will now be sold and the Council will benefit from significant capital receipts.

Property Services also delivers all new building and building improvement projects for the Council and the in-house team has earned a reputation for designing impressive yet cost effective projects.

The recently completed £20m Y Gwindy Welsh Medium campus



4.4.2 What went well?

- (a) The sale of the Pontllanfraith House site has progressed and a preferred bidder has been appointed. Similarly progress has been made with the sale of Dyffryn House. Contracts, conditioned on completing the sale by the end of December 2017, have been exchanged.
- (b) Tir-y-Berth Depot has been transferred to the Corporate portfolio and is now fully occupied, with some office areas refurbished and external improvements completed to increase pedestrian safety.
- (c) Tredomen House refurbishments have been completed on time and the building is now ready to accept Highway Division staff when Dyffryn House is sold. The move to draw staff into the Tredomen campus and maximise the utilisation of wholly owned office buildings is well progressed. Team relocations have, without exception, gone very smoothly.
- (d) The inaugural State of the Estate report was well received with the first annual update underway. The report mirrors reports produced by central government and WG and will provide year on year metrics.
- (e) The centralisation of maintenance budgets under the Property Services has progressed well. Responsibility for the statutory testing of Authority buildings has been with Property Services for some time but the management of remedial works arising from the statutory testing is now also monitored and managed centrally on an increasing proportion of the estate and this has substantially reduced the number of outstanding actions.
- (f) The Capital program budget for 2016/17 was fully allocated and over 200 individual building improvement projects were successfully delivered via the Building Consultancy team in 2016/17. In addition the team delivered the last Phase of the £20m Y Gwindy Welsh Medium campus and completed the £23m Islwyn High School both of which were delivered within budget and on time. Site work on the £7m Abertysswg and Pontlottyn Primary School was commenced and is currently on programme and forecast to be delivered within budget. All three of these major projects were designed in house.
- (g) The Response Repair team has now been in place for 4 years and some 35,000 requests have been successfully actioned to date. In the 2016/2017 period 93% of all requests were actioned within the target time frame but steps are being taken to increase this.

- (h) The Facilities Management team has continued to diligently provide a very valuable but a largely behind the scenes service to building users. Staff continue to be very happy with the service with the latest survey indicating an overall satisfaction level of 99%.
- (i) The Energy Team has had a busy year with £200k spent on 9 invest to save energy reduction projects reducing the Council's carbon footprint by some 125 tonnes per annum. The team also audited and validated over 9,000 energy invoices totalling £3.2 m and continues to give energy management advice to building users.

Benchmarking

Building Consultancy compares its fee charges with others. Typically its fee average is 11.25% of Project Cost compared to a Private Provider at 12.15%. Additionally the build costs of the capital projects delivered by the Building Consultancy are compared to those delivered by other authorities. The build cost of the schools delivered in house is amongst the most economic in Wales and the Islwyn High School Projects is seen as an exemplar for cost effective design.

FM salary costs have been compared with those in similar public services such as the Local Health Board (LHB) and were found to be very competitive. Similarly Asset Management has compared its salary base with the District Valuer's office and found it to be competitive.

4.4.3 Future Challenges/Areas that need improvement as they did not go well

- (a) Property Services continues to contribute to the wider MTFP savings targets and several vacated posts will not be filled. Indeed following the retirement of the Head of Service the Building Consultancy Manager and Head of Property roles were merged and a new Interim Head of Property Services was appointed in March 2017. Consequently delivering the current range of services has become progressively more challenging and managing any sudden increases in demand will be a key challenge going forward. The Property Services team is currently split over two floors of Penallta House but they will be co-located from June 2017 and this will enable closer working relationships and greater resource flexibility.
- (b) The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) issued an enforcement notice in relation to an incident related to Bargoed RFC flood lights in 2017. Considerable progress has been made in relation to statutory testing and the completion of the associated remedial tasks in recent years and the incident was therefore particularly disappointing. Internal investigations have highlighted areas for further process improvements and an action plan has been produced. Delivering against this action plan is a key challenge going forward.
- (c) The overall level of sickness absence for Property Services has been unacceptably high and the Interim Head of Service is now conducting all return to work interviews. Several difficult personnel issues continue to tie up management time, add to the sickness absence figures and increase the workload of colleagues. Improving the current situation and taking steps to reduce future incidents is a key objective for the Interim Head of Service.
- (d) Property Services lead the delivery of the Council's asset rationalisation programme and completion of the sales of Pontllanfraith House & Dyffryn House and the demolition and sale of the Oakdale and Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School sites are immediate priorities.

4.5 Procurement Services

4.5.1 Overview

The function has 16.5 FTE officers, who provide a full range of services related to Strategic Procurement, eProcurement systems and support and Supplier Relationship Management. In 2015 the Service was awarded Welsh Government's Outstanding Contribution Award at the Welsh National Procurement Awards. The department is supporting the Authority's Pre-placements for Cynydd Progress Scheme which supports looked after children into the work place.

4.5.2 What Went Well?

- (a) Statistics, comparators and KPI's show that quantitatively the service has in the main improved performance year on year over the last 5 years. For example:-

| Title | Actual |
|---|--------|
| % of Local Suppliers Awarded Contracts – WPC 12 Area* | 90% |
| No. of Local Suppliers Awarded Contracts | 396 |

During 2016/17 396 local suppliers were awarded contracts out of a total of 440 that were successful in winning contracts with the Council. This is consistent with the results recorded at the end of 2015/16 when 89.6% of all suppliers awarded contracts were local suppliers. The Authority has agreed the definition of local as "suppliers within the region of the old Welsh Purchasing Consortium area". (The Old WPC area consists Caerphilly, Bridgend, RCT, Merthyr, Monmouth, Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent, Vale of Glamorgan, Swansea, Cardiff, Neath Port Talbot, Newport).

- (b) The Welsh Government Fitness Check (2014/15) described the function as "mature, moving towards advanced". This places the Authority as one of the top 5 performing procurement functions within Local Government in Wales. No further Fitness Checks have been scheduled to date.
- (c) The service can demonstrate good success in supporting the local economy through our work in developing local SME's.

How much of total spend is within the Authority's definition of local

| 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 50% | 54% | 55% | 56% | 55% |

- (d) Provision of service has been maintained whilst meeting the challenges of the MTFP.
- (e) Officers are supporting the WG funded project team on the integrated health and social care collaborative commissioning programme.
- (f) Officers have been instrumental in supporting the work with the National Procurement Service and other public sector procurement agencies in Wales.
- (g) The Authority has continued to take advantage of the new flexibilities of the Public Contract Regulations 2015, specifically in establishing Dynamic Purchasing Systems (DPS) for Transport Services and for the provision of General Builders to support the WHQS programme. Further DPS applications, which give passport to trade type advantages to approved suppliers, are being considered for particular Waste streams and Grounds Maintenance Services for implementation in 2017/18.
- (h) Renewal of the small lots exemption under the Public Procurement Regulations to support local providers in the delivery of the WHQS programme.

- (i) The Authority continues to implement electronic tendering across service areas to meet the future legislative requirement of full electronic procurement by October 2018. The implementation of e-Tendering also supports other initiatives such as, but not limited to the reduction in the use of paper, ease of access for all suppliers and a clear auditable approach to Procurement.
- (j) In pursuit of the objective of increasing the number of suppliers invoicing more efficiently through an electronic process, during 2016/17 the number of suppliers participating was increased from 6 to 31, increasing the spend through electronic invoicing from £98,356 to £1,516,811.
- (k) Procurement Officers continue to utilise the Caerphilly Community Benefits Guide and actively consider initiatives linked to targeted recruitment & training along with other desired outcomes. Measurement of the outcomes is done via the Welsh Government Measurement Tool for all suitable contracts in line with the WG Welsh Procurement Policy Statement. Some recent examples of positive Community Benefit outcomes include support for local people through the WHQS Internal Works Contract and the Construction of Islwyn West High School.

| Deliverable | WHQS Internal Works | Islwyn West High School |
|----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Full Time Employment | 67 | 6 |
| Apprenticeships | 16 | 24 |
| Work Experience | 22 | 17 |

4.5.3 **Future Challenges/Areas that need improvement as they did not go well**

- (a) The decision to include non core Community Benefits needs to be based on a more pragmatic assessment of what is realistic and achievable. Having made the decision to include these, a more robust effort needs to be made to ensure that suppliers are delivering in accordance with the Community Benefits plan submitted by the awarded supplier at tender stage.
- (b) Continue to monitor and review our processes to ensure that DPS and other initiatives introduced to alleviate supply chain capacity issues are effective in providing efficient solutions for front line services.
- (c) Press on with electronic procurement objectives to meet the requirements of new legislation regarding electronic trading.
- (d) Better understand the requirements of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to raise awareness and work more proactively through the procurement function to facilitate the changes required to make a difference in the outcomes achieved.
- (e) Continue to review long term undertakings, challenging terms and conditions where appropriate with a view to reducing the cost of the provision for the remaining contract term.

4.6 **Corporate Customer Services**

4.6.1 **Overview**

Corporate Customer Services has an establishment of 52 staff who deal with more than 700,000 customer contacts and collects £28 million of the Council's income each year. The service provides:-

- Six Customer Service Centres which provide a range of face-to-face services such as Blue Badge applications, Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) evidence checks and Payments. Payments can also be made at the Cash Desk located in Newbridge Library.
- The Corporate Contact Centre which handles calls, emails and web/social media requests for a variety of service areas including Waste Management, Payments, Environmental Health and Highways. The Centre also provides a corporate switchboard service.
- The Blue Badge scheme which issues Disabled Parking Permits.
- The Reception service in Penallta House.

4.6.2 What went well?

- (a) There were 232,480 visits made to the Centres during 2016. Of these visits 189,071 were to make payments, the remainder (43,409) were service requests such as Blue Badge applications. The number of service requests has dropped since its peak of 63,729 visits during 2014/15 after the opening of the Caerphilly Customer Service Centre. The number of payments handled in the Customer Service Centres and Newbridge Cash office has continued to fall as customers have increased their use of other payment methods. This has allowed the refocusing of staff time in the Customer Service Centres on Low volume/High value services.
- (b) The changes in the opening hours of the Customer Service Centres were delivered on time with very little disruption. This has facilitated the delivery of the agreed MTFP savings of £122,000.
- (c) Changes to the Blue Badge scheme as a result of further changes in legislation and Welsh Government guidance resulting from the introduction of temporary Blue Badges were introduced with no significant negative feedback or disruption. CCBC officers have been working closely with Welsh Government to improve the delivery of the scheme across Wales.
- (d) A new Customer Service Strategy has been agreed and an implementation plan is currently in development. A key part of the Strategy is the development of digital services and the movement of customers to lower cost contact channels.
- (e) There has been an in-depth review of payment handling processes which has resulted in the issuing of a new Payment Handling Manual supported by a training programme for all cash handlers.
- (f) Safeguarding arrangements in Customer Services have been significantly improved with staff and managers receiving training, and improved reporting arrangements put in place. This has resulted in a number of issues relating to vulnerable adults being raised with Social Services. An improved awareness of safeguarding issues has also resulted in staff taking a more holistic view of the customer rather than just a focusing on processes.
- (g) Customer Service Key Performance Indicators have been reviewed and a new set of indicators have been agreed.

4.6.3 Future Challenges/Areas that need improvement as they did not go well

- (a) Sickness absence within the service remains above Directorate averages despite rigorous application of the Managing Sickness Absence policy.
- (b) During 2016/17 customer engagement was very limited. An engagement and consultation programme will be implemented during 2017/18 to gain a better understanding of customer priorities, the drivers of customer satisfaction, and what customers think about our service.

- (c) Local Government Reform is likely to have an impact on the Contact Centre, which has been identified as a service that could be delivered on a collaborative basis.
- (d) Although all MTFP savings have been made with limited impact on the public, future savings will require a more significant review of how we deliver our service, in particular our Customer Service Centres.
- (e) With such a significant amount of customer contact the continued implementation of the Welsh Language Standards will be a key area of work within the service.

4.7 **Legal Services**

4.7.1 **Overview**

The service area can be split into three distinct service areas. Electoral Services who are responsible for running and managing all elections and referenda in the Borough, in addition they are also responsible for ensuring that residents are registered to vote. Democratic Services have the responsibility for all duties associated with supporting the Council's democratic process including the scrutiny function. They provide advice and support to senior officers and all Elected Members. Legal Services provide a comprehensive legal service to the Council taking instructions from its client departments. The Legal Service is split into three small teams, corporate and governance advice (including corporate complaints), welfare and litigation and planning land and highways. The area is headed up by the Interim Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer. In total there are 37 FTE's employed within the combined service areas.

4.7.2 **What Went Well?**

- (a) The table includes a small sample of the P.I.'s for the service area. On the whole the P.I.'s have been maintained or exceeded.

| Period | Title | Target | Actual |
|------------------------|--|---------------|---------------|
| 16/17 (Quarter 1-4) | Summons issued within 15 working days | 93% | 98% |
| 16/17 (quarters 1-4) | %of Members that scored training events as good or very good | 80% | 99% |

- (b) The recent benchmarking exercise undertaken by CIPFA in conjunction with SWT using budget 2016/17 across Wales, demonstrates that this service area is a below average spending area for Corporate Services.
- (c) There were a number of staff shortages faced during the year. Staff worked well to fill gaps. The new appointments have been excellent, however a further vacancy has arisen recently and recruitment is underway.
- (d) Legal Officers contributed to the successful outcome of the challenge in relation to the Welsh Language Standards.
- (e) In relation to the Democratic Team, an interim appointment was made to support the scrutiny function. This has been very successful and the officer also provides support to the more general work undertaken. It is worth noting that this small team of officers services 39 different Council Committees and attend around 200 meetings. The new scrutiny arrangements have been implemented and are working well and the recent peer review, which is due to be reported in the new future has produced positive feedback. In addition officers implemented the new Cabinet Member Statement Protocol, again overall positive feedback received.

- (f) The Officers faced a major challenge as a result of the implementation of the new Welsh Language Standards in relation to reports and minutes. Overall the new arrangements were implemented successfully and are in full operation.
- (g) Over the last few months staff have been planning and developing the mandatory training programme for Elected Members. The success of this will be measured over the next few months.
- (h) For Electoral Services it was another busy year. Following the EU Referendum staff moved to their new office in Bargoed. This was a well planned move and on the whole went well. The staff settled in in good time for the local elections.
- (i) Valuable lessons were learnt previously in relation to the sharing of staff across the divisions in order to meet the capacity issues at election times. On the whole this works well and has proven to be very effective in practical terms.
- (j) In relation to Corporate Governance the current Interim Head of Legal Services undertakes a very active role in promoting and maintaining good governance across the Authority. Following the decommissioning of the Improving Governance Programme Board governance issues are now 'business as usual' and monitored by the Corporate Governance Panel of which the Interim Head of Service is a member.
- (k) Once again the Lexcel Inspection for Legal Services was successful and accreditation maintained. The inspection recognised several areas of good practice.

4.7.3 **Future Challenges/Areas that need improvement as they did not go well**

Review and report the final outcome of the scrutiny review. Ensure that arrangements are embedded within current practices.

Welfare/Child Care Issues

In relation to child care cases, there is a very worrying trend, in relation to the number of active cases. Over the last two years legal proceedings have increased significantly. Current figures are suggesting that the increase this year will exceed 60% from the figures in 2014 (37 in 2014, 63 at the end of 2016 and 37 cases issued at the end of March 2017).

The reasons for this increase are not clear. The local judiciary are driving changes in social work from practice, not necessarily followed in other parts of the UK. Data recently shared through the Family Justice Network has confirmed that the increases in the UK as a whole are running at 24%.

As a result of this increase in workloads within Legal Services (and Social Services) current systems are struggling to maintain performance in this critical area.

Regular updates are circulated at Director level and a paper is to be presented to CMT to discuss additional resources to meet the additional significant workloads.

Local Government reform is likely to include Legal Services as an area for consideration for regional working by Members.

4.8 **IT & Central Services**

4.8.1 **Overview**

IT and Central Services provides a complex range of services underpinning the Authority's and its schools' information and communications technology (ICT) requirements plus other essential services including the management of information governance matters (incorporating advice and guidance regarding the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts), corporate records centres, mail and courier services and the central typing function.

The Division currently has 89.17 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff based over three sites (Penallta, Tredomen and Enterprise Houses). Staff are allocated as follows:- 74.89 FTE in IT and 14.28 FTE in Central Services. An additional 9 FTE staff are funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) dedicated to providing IT and performance management services to Housing Services and the WHQS Programme and are based over two sites (Penallta House and Cherry Tree House).

4.8.2 What Went Well?

- (a) Despite resource reductions at both operational and managerial levels many significant achievements have been completed during the year as shown by the examples below. However, it is accepted that some aspects of the service have been below par due to the necessary diversion of resources to deliver mandatory technological changes and the organisation's business requirements, particularly IT support to the WHQS Programme.
- (b) In the main key PIs showed good performance with improvements made to system availability from the previous year.

| | Actual | Target | 2015/16 Result |
|--|--------|--------|----------------|
| Major System Availability* ¹ | 99.96% | 99.70% | 99.71% |
| Call Resolution (IT Helpdesk) * ² | 92.88% | 92.00% | 90.67% |
| Data Protection Act Subject Access Requests answered within 40 calendar days* ³ | 68.00% | 70.00% | 64.00% |
| FOI/EIR Act requests responded to within 20 working days* ⁴ | 82.00% | 85.00% | 85.00% |

- (c) Members should note:-

- *¹ – Figures based upon “office hours” availability of the 21 most significant systems used across the Council. Current performance equates to a total of 86¹/₂ hours unplanned downtime affecting those systems in 2016/17.
- *² – Results have been below target for previous two years where significant technical change was implemented. 2016/17 has seen the benefits of the previous years’ work resulting in the target being exceeded. Total calls logged have dropped by 1.5% on 2015/16 remaining at just over 41k p.a. although there has been a 4% drop in calls categorised as “failures” to 12.5k with the remainder being service requests.
- *³ – Remains below target but is an improvement on previous year. This result achieved despite a 27% increase in requests during the 2016 calendar year many of which proved complex and time-consuming to answer.
- *⁴ – Below target. This has been contributed to by a small increase in requests during the year (1.4%). It should be noted that this performance measure is highly dependent upon the performance of the Council’s Service Areas to locate information, raise concerns regarding disclosure and quality checking by the relevant Heads of Service. To assist this process, internal deadlines have been shortened and the Corporate Information Governance Unit (CIGU) generates reports and reminders to help Services and give CIGU time to undertake compliance tasks such as exemptions within 20 working days. Late responders are referred to the Chief Executive.

- (d) In addition to the above the following went well during 2016/17:-

- IT & Central Services met its MTFP savings targets.
- Completion of the replacement of unsupported technologies affecting user management & authentication, desktop computers, servers, MS Office, printers and email system.
- Maintained its ISO27001 Information Security Management accreditation following completion of its fourth triennial in-depth audit.

- Retained its Public Services Network (PSN) Connection Compliance Certificate to assure access to and secure communication with the rest of the public sector.
- Successful implementation of new systems including Abris Common Housing Register, Mayrise Highways Management, Parks Ground Maintenance and Green Waste Booking, Route-Optimisation and Collections.
- Improvements to Council website resulting in it being identified as the highest ranked in Wales in the latest Sitemorse Survey of all UK local authority websites.
- Upgrades, updates and preventative maintenance undertaken to improve performance, capacity and availability of ICT solutions to the customer.
- 100% buy-in from schools for ICT services, improved communications through head teachers' forums & account management meetings and the on-going replacement of their unsupported technologies.
- Preparation for GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) initiated Council-wide. This has incorporated updates to Information Asset Registers, audits of information sharing and privacy notices, creation of Privacy Impact Assessment templates and provision of advice and guidance based on GDPR "Privacy by Design" standards to reduce information risk during the formulation of contracts/agreements for high profile projects.
- Records management guidance developed to encourage staff to only retain what is required and dispose of records in line with retention schedule. All formats including email incorporated.
- Major contributor to joint working / collaboration on the information governance front participating in the South Wales Information Forum and advising major collaboration projects.

4.8.3 Future Challenges/Areas that need improvement as they did not go well

- Continue to improve reliability and performance of services offered.
- Meet requirements of MTFP savings targets.
- Deliver services during the Shared Resource Services (SRS) collaboration evaluation process and transform as a result of its outcome.
- Maintain IT security and information governance standards.
- Seek further income generation opportunities.
- Ensure the organisation and staff are prepared for GDPR and the necessary changes are implemented.
- Raise statutory timescales compliance rates for FOI, EIR and SARs. ICO will expect 90% compliance for FOI. It should be noted that the £10 fee for SARs will cease in May 2018 which may encourage an increase in volumes in 2018/19.
- Maintaining service delivery standards and infrastructure. Resources and budget likely to reduce whilst demand resulting from greater LGR collaboration, digital agenda / citizen expectations and service area requirements grow.
- Provide solutions and expertise to support the Council's analysis of its electronic record assets, dispose of "stale" or unrequired material appropriately and introduce more effective management processes of such information.
- Continue to be proactive in securing the Authority's network in the light of increased levels of cyber attack.

4.9 Sickness Absence in 2016/17 for Corporate Services

The following table shows sickness levels for 2016/17:-

| Directorate | Service Area | Overall Absence % 15/16 | % Sick Short Term 16/17 | % Sick Long Term 16/17 | Overall Absence % 16/17 |
|-------------|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| | Corporate Finance | 3.80 | 1.81 | 4.36 | 6.17 |
| | Human Resources | 2.86 | 1.05 | 2.73 | 3.78 |
| | Information & Citizen Engagement | 4.65 | 1.64 | 4.47 | 6.12 |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Legal & Governance | 3.11 | 1.07 | 0.92 | 1.98 |
| | Performance & Property | 4.08 | 1.69 | 5.45 | 7.13 |
| | Procurement Services | 5.26 | 2.6 | 5.94 | 8.53 |
| | Director & Staff | 0 | 0.96 | 0 | 0.96 |
| Corporate Services | | 3.98 | 1.62 | 4.07 | 5.69 |

4.10 **Corporate Complaints – Corporate Services**

| | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Total No. of Complaints | 2015/16 | 2016/17 |
| | 21 | 19 |

5. **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required as the report is for information.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 CIPFA were commissioned by the Society of Welsh Treasurers, along with Welsh Government (WG) and the WLGA to undertake a benchmarking exercise in respect of the Cost of Administration for functions in Corporate Services. The work included all 22 Local Authorities and it used 2016/17 budgets as provided to WG. The total net expenditure of administration per 1000 population showed Caerphilly CBC as 3rd lowest cost in Wales.

6.2 The table below shows the net budgets for 2017/18:-

| Service Area | Estimate 2017/2018 |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Financial Services & Internal Audit | 2,069,794 |
| Procurement | 438,467 |
| Customer First | 1,182,248 |
| Legal & Democratic Services | 1,032,569 |
| Members Allowances | 1,648,122 |
| Electoral Services | 315,411 |
| IT Services | 4,316,066 |
| Central Services | 386,915 |
| Estates | 519,199 |
| Corporate Facilities | 2,380,113 |
| Maintenance | 2,190,006 |
| Building Consultancy | (57,146) |
| Human Resources | 1,563,174 |
| Communications Unit | 286,527 |
| Health & Safety | 943,894 |
| Total Corporate Services | 19,665,487 |

6.3 There are no direct financial implications to this report.

7. **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no personnel implications to this report.

8. **CONSULTATIONS**

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

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The Committee is asked to consider the content of the report and where appropriate question and challenge the performance presented.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Performance Management Scrutiny affords members the opportunity to challenge, inform and shape the future performance of services.

11 STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government Measure 2009.

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Cllr C Gordon, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Cllr L Phipps, Cabinet Member for Homes & Places
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Gail Williams, Interim Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer
Liz Lucas, Head of Procurement & Customer Services
Paul Lewis, Interim Head of IT
Lynne Donovan, Interim Head of HR and OD

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POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 6TH JUNE 2017

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF HOUSING SERVICE CHARGES

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To obtain the views of the Policy and Resource Scrutiny Committee on the review of how service charges are collected within Sheltered Housing and the need to review service charges for General Needs accommodation, prior to its presentation to Cabinet.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report recommends the introduction of a fair and transparent system for recovering service charges from sheltered housing tenants for services provided.
- 2.2 The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 imposed a new duty for local housing authorities to comply with standards for housing quality, rents and service charges. Local authorities are required to review the way in which charges for services are claimed to ensure that tenants are only charged for services that they receive. Detailed guidance has not been provided but it is required that service charges fairly reflect costs incurred and be transparent with a detailed breakdown provided to tenants so they can see what they are paying for.
- 2.3 The Authority currently recovers its costs for services it provides to tenants in sheltered housing schemes by smoothing the cost of these services between all tenants within all of the schemes. This is contrary to Welsh Government policy. It is proposed that, in future, the Authority recovers from tenants the actual cost of providing services in their individual scheme, based on the calculated cost of providing the services in the previous financial year.
- 2.4 Most general needs service charges are not currently de-pooled and will not be considered in detail within this report, however, in order to comply with Welsh Government policy, a further report proposing the de-pooling of service charges for general needs tenants will be required.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Single Integrated Plan 2013-2017 has a priority 'to improve standards of housing and communities, giving appropriate access to services across the County Borough'.
- 3.2 The Authority's Local Housing Strategy 'People, Property and Places' has the following aims:- 'To provide good quality, well managed homes in communities where people want to live and offer people housing choices which meet their needs and aspirations'.
- 3.3 The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 sets out the following wellbeing goals which link with the aims of this report:-

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

4. GENERAL – SERVICE CHARGES

- 4.1 The Landlord & Tenant Act 1985 defines a service charge as: ‘*An amount payable by a tenant of a dwelling as part of or in addition to the rent which is payable directly or indirectly for services, repairs, maintenance, improvements or insurance or the landlord’s costs of management and the whole or part of which varies or may vary according to the relevant costs.*’ The Act also advises that services charges, provision of services and/or works, the standard of work and any payments in advance must be reasonable.
- 4.2 A service charge is a payment made by a tenant or leaseholder towards the cost of services and repairs beyond those specifically for their property. For example, for tenants living in a sheltered housing scheme with communal lounge facilities, the cost of providing the communal facilities is covered by a service charge because it is available to all residents of the scheme.
- 4.3 Charges can only be made for services currently being received. Tenants have to be consulted prior to the introduction of any new services. Services covered by such charges may include but are not limited to:
- Staff cover (including sickness/absences)
 - Management/administration charges
 - Employing a Community Environmental Warden
 - Grounds maintenance work
 - Cleaning costs e.g. communal areas
 - Internal/external improvements e.g. car parking
 - Decoration of communal areas
 - Building Managers Health & Safety maintenance checks, e.g. Fire safety, legionella
 - Utility costs
 - Installation, maintenance and/or repairs to:
 - Door entry systems
 - TV aerials
 - Internal, external and emergency lighting
 - White goods, communal furniture, fittings & equipment
 - Laundry services and drying areas
 - Lifts & communal adaptations
 - CCTV
- 4.4 Local authorities have historically included the cost of providing services in the rent charged to all tenants, regardless of whether all tenants receive the service. This pooled approach is easier for local authorities to administer than itemised charges but it is not fair and transparent for tenants. It can result in loss of revenue and some tenants paying for services they do not receive.
- 4.5 The costs of providing services to tenants of sheltered schemes have long been de-pooled from rents and service charged to sheltered housing tenants. Currently these service charges are based on historical actual costs that have been subject to agreed annual percentage increases for a number of years. The costs of all the services are combined and are smoothed across all tenants of all sheltered schemes irrespective of whether or not they receive all of the services. It is recognised that the combining and smoothing of service charges and the imposition of annual percentage increases do not accurately reflect actual annual costs, resulting in the Authority subsidising any shortfalls.

4.6 Through service improvements and the current Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) sheltered housing programme of work, the Authority continues to seek ways of reducing service charges to tenants and promoting sustainability for the future, for example, energy efficiency initiatives, including improvements to heating systems, insulation and energy efficiency lighting.

5. SHELTERED HOUSING

5.1 Sheltered Housing comprises groups of unfurnished units of accommodation (bungalows, flats or bedsits) designed to meet the needs of older people. The aim of sheltered housing is to enable older people to live as independently as possible with the added security of support from dedicated Sheltered Housing staff. It also gives residents the opportunity to make friends and to socialise through the use of communal facilities and activities. There are 34 sheltered housing schemes comprising of 987 units of sheltered housing in the Caerphilly Borough, 15 of these are under one roof and one is an 'extra care' scheme.

5.2 For the majority of Council tenants in sheltered housing, the cost of meeting most service charges is covered by housing benefit, either in part or in full. There are currently 215 sheltered tenants who are not in receipt of any housing benefit, with 710 tenants on part or full housing benefit. The findings of the recent UK government's 'Supported Housing Review' are potentially significant for the future funding of all types of supported housing in Wales. It is proposed that from April 2019 all tenants will receive Housing Benefit only up to the Local Housing Allowance limit. Any additional top-up funding required, such as that for service charges, will be devolved to Welsh Government. Arrangements are yet to be determined so there is still significant uncertainty and until these changes have been confirmed we are unable to accurately assess the potential impact on tenants of sheltered housing schemes.

5.3 Throughout the County Borough utility charges in sheltered accommodation have also been de-pooled. Utility charges for communal facilities in sheltered housing and for units of accommodation that do not have individual metering are smoothed across each specific scheme against actual usage and shown as a separate charge on the tenant's rent account. Notification is provided annually by letter to tenants at the end of August/beginning of September. Through the WHQS programme of works for sheltered accommodation we are continuing to increase the number of schemes with individual utility metering for units of accommodation which will further reduce incidences of smoothing.

5.4 As detailed in 4.5, other than utility charges, management services for sheltered housing tenants are combined and smoothed across the tenants of all sheltered housing schemes. These tenants do not get a breakdown of this service charge as it is detailed as one payment in addition to their rent charge on their rent account. For 16/17 all sheltered housing tenants were charged £23.49 per week. Point 4.3 above provides examples of services that are charged.

5.5 Many tenants have expressed frustration that they are not able to have a clear breakdown of their service charges to compare with the services that they receive.

5.6 It is recognised that smoothed charges can result in:

- Under and over charging of tenants across schemes
- Tenants contributing towards a service they do not receive, and that may be neither available nor necessary within their scheme
- Tenants being unaware that they are paying for a service
- Services provided and the quality of services may not reflect the needs and aspirations of tenants
- The cost to the landlord being unclear, with the possibility of under or over recovery of costs.
- Difficulty demonstrating that a particular service provides value for money.

5.7 Basing charges on actual costs per scheme gives the opportunity to:

- Become more fair, transparent and equitable in our provision of services to tenants
- Better evidence the cost of provision of services
- Improve the quality of the services provided to tenants
- Increase levels of satisfaction of the tenants
- Consult tenants on individual service charges
- Become more responsive to the needs and aspirations of tenants within individual schemes
- Better support those tenants applying for, or in receipt of, Universal Credit

5.8 Extensive work has recently been undertaken to identify those services provided to individual sheltered schemes and the accurate expenditure costs of providing services to those who receive them. We have undertaken a cost analysis per scheme for the past two years. This has provided an actual cost per scheme which can be compared against the charges made to tenants to evidence not only the range of costs between schemes but also the level of subsidy funded within the service.

| | Weekly service charge to tenant | Lowest actual weekly cost | Highest actual weekly cost | Average weekly cost | Average weekly subsidy | Total subsidy per annum |
|---------|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2014/15 | 22.58 | 22.34 | 48.74 | 29.66 | 7.08 | 326,926 |
| 2015/16 | 23.03 | 20.93 | 42.24 | 26.47 | 3.44 | 158,845 |

5.9 As can be seen in the table above the range of costs between schemes varies year on year depending on what is provided at each scheme and previous charges are not necessarily an indicator of charges for future years (e.g. cyclical refurbishments). The table demonstrates that actual costs have reduced by some 10% on average, but there is still a significant under-recovery of costs, as demonstrated by the levels of subsidy. This ranges from 31% in 2014/15 to 15% in 2015/16. The above costs per scheme are unlikely to accurately reflect the costs going forward, and it is difficult to predict with certainty what the likely impact for tenants each year is in advance.

5.10 It has been established that the Authority currently has the capacity to charge for services based on the actual costs incurred in the previous financial year. It has also been established that, as with utility charges, notification can be provided annually to tenants during August/September. The cost of the yearly service would be divided into equal amounts based on the number of rent collection weeks and the number of tenant households receiving the service.

5.11 As charges would be calculated on the actual costs of services provided for each sheltered scheme, these charges will vary for each scheme due to the variation in the size of the scheme, and the nature and number of services provided. This proposal would be a significant change in the approach to recovery of service charges. Whilst some tenants will benefit from a reduction in charges, it will also result in increased costs to tenants of some schemes.

5.12 As a preliminary forecast for charges in 2017/18, using the most up to date actual costs currently available (2015/16 costs rather than the 2016/17 costs which are not yet available) and the current service charge of £23.49, 72% of tenants could be subjected to an increase in service charges, with 28% having a reduction. The average tenant increase would be £3.89 with a potential maximum increase of £18.75 in one scheme. The average reduction would be £1.03 with maximum reduction of £3.99.

- 5.13 It is proposed that transitional arrangements will initially be introduced for two years following implementation of the changes, to assist existing tenants in adjusting to them, following which their continuation will be subject to review by officers. It is further proposed that during the transition period service charge increases will be capped so as not to exceed the agreed annual rent increase, therefore, the maximum service charge for 2017/18 will be £26.35 per week, an increase of £2.86. It is also proposed that if capped charges within a scheme reach actual costs, the transitional arrangements for that scheme will end.
- 5.14 It is recognised that some tenants will be concerned about future affordability but there will be options available for tenants, in addition to practical support from officers in relation to income maximisation. This could include the possibility of a move to alternative accommodation with lower or no service charges, or a review of existing services that may result in a reduction in levels of services provided, subject to full consultation at the individual schemes. It may also be possible to meet any requests for enhanced services, albeit for an increased cost, for example to return to full time Sheltered Housing Officer cover.
- 5.15 As mentioned in 4.6 above, the sheltered housing WHQS programme is now underway so consideration is being actively given to improvements that have the potential to reduce service charges for tenants. Such initiatives could include new energy efficient heating systems, independent utility supplies and meters, review of laundry facilities, energy efficiency lighting and other efficiency measures.
- 5.16 A communication and information plan is in place for raising awareness in preparation for the implementation of any agreed changes following the service charge review. Sheltered Housing Officer awareness sessions have been completed and tenants meetings were held in February/March at each scheme. The meetings included a discussion around the service charges review to raise the awareness of tenants and to respond to any questions or concerns they may have. Feedback from tenants was largely positive and tenants welcomed the opportunity to have a breakdown of their service charges based on actual expenditure. There will be further communication to tenants through a range of media sources prior to implementation of any changes.
- 5.17 Tenants will not be able to opt out of paying any element of service charges for their scheme if they do not use a service, for example the laundry room, however, consultation with tenants for future service provision, such as the opportunity to receive enhanced or reduced services will be the standard approach for the future.

6. GENERAL NEEDS

- 6.1 The term 'General Needs Housing' is used to describe housing for rent that is suitable for anyone over the age of 16 including single people, couples or families. In common with many other Local Authorities this Authority has traditionally included the cost of providing additional services to tenants of general needs accommodation in the rent charged to all tenants, regardless of whether or not they benefit from a particular service. Services commonly provided for general needs accommodation include but are not limited to:
- Installation, maintenance and repairs to door entry systems
 - Communal lighting
 - Cleaning of communal areas and employment of Community Environmental Wardens
 - Maintenance of grounds and communal facilities
- 6.2 This traditional approach to service charges is no longer considered to be acceptable moving forward, following the introduction of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 as the current Welsh Government policy for social housing rents requires Local Authorities to disaggregate, or de-pool, service charges from rents. Also, whilst under current housing benefit regulations most service charges are covered by Housing Benefit, with the introduction of Universal Credit tenants are increasingly required to provide information on the breakdown of rents and service charges as part of their application for assistance. Authorities, therefore, need to separate and show these costs.

For these reasons, and also for reasons of fairness and transparency, most stock retaining Local Authorities in Wales have now completed or are working towards the de-pooling of service charges across all of their accommodation.

- 6.3 The Authority has already begun to introduce service charges for new services provided to new tenants, and has also consulted with some existing tenants on the possibility of introducing service charges for new services, however, the introduction of service charges for existing tenants and services will be the subject of a future report to Members in the near future. As the introduction of service charges for existing tenants would require a review of the Tenancy Agreement it is currently planned to coincide this review with the review that will be required to implement the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016.

7. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

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

Long Term – improving and future proofing our properties; providing affordable housing for tenants; providing a fair and transparent service to tenants

Prevention – providing well maintained, safe, warm and secure homes; preventing disrepair and promoting low maintenance for the future

Integration – improved standards of housing and community environments

Collaboration – joined up working arrangements within in-house teams and cost effective procurement arrangements

Involvement – tenant meetings, consultation and information updates to obtain the views of the residents

8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment is not needed as this report is recommending changes to the manner in which existing charges are calculated, therefore the Authority's full EIA process does not need to be applied.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Despite a willingness to review the appropriateness and level of service charges within schemes there is a risk of an increase in the number of low demand properties and higher rent and service charge arrears.
- 9.2 There will be a reduction in the likelihood of under recovery of the costs of providing services and any requirement to subsidise the provision of some services.
- 9.3 The rationale for, and costs associated with, the provision or removal of any subsidy will be better evidenced.
- 9.4 The proposed transitional arrangements will lead to under recovery of costs from some existing tenants during the transitional period, resulting in a loss of income, necessitating subsidy of the service provision.

10. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There will be resource implications for managing and administering the calculation and recovery of service charges based on actual costs.

- 10.2 Current service delivery will be affected if existing resources are unable to sustain the increased responsibilities. Any additional resources would be service charged to the tenants.

11. CONSULTATIONS

- 11.1 All responses from consultees have been incorporated in the report.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1 Members are asked to consider and give a view on the following recommendations which will be presented to Cabinet on the 21st June 2017:
- 12.2 The proposal to charge tenants of sheltered housing schemes the actual costs of providing them with services per scheme is approved.
- 12.3 The proposal to introduce transitional arrangements for two years, prior to review, and to cap charges in line with the rent policy during the transitional period is approved.
- 12.4 This report be submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

13. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13.1 To comply with Welsh Government rent setting policy.
- 13.2 To provide a fair and transparent system to tenants.
- 13.3 To provide assistance to those tenants most affected by any increase in charges while they adjust to the changes.

14. STATUTORY POWER

- 14.1 Housing Act 1985
- 14.2 Landlord & Tenant Act 1985

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Councillor David Poole, Leader of the Council
Councillor Lisa Phipps, Cabinet Member for Homes and Places
Shaun Couzens, Chief Housing Officer
Stephen R Harris, Interim Head of Corporate Finance
Nicole Scammel, Acting Director of Corporate Services S151
Lesley Allen, Principal Accountant
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