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**Date: 23rd January 2019**

Dear Sir/Madam,

A meeting of the **Cabinet** will be held in the **Sirhowy Room, Penallta House, Tredomen, Ystrad Mynach** on **Wednesday, 30th January, 2019** at **10.30 am** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda. You are welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, a minimum notice period of 3 working days is required should you wish to do so. A simultaneous translation will be provided if requested.

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

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chrissy'.

**Christina Harrhy**  
INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## AGENDA

	Pages
1	To receive apologies for absence.
2	Declarations of Interest.

Councillors and Officers are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal

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and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any item of business on the 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 Cabinet held on the 16th January 2019. 1 - 6

To receive and consider the following reports on which executive decisions are required: -

- 4 Wales Audit Office WHQS Review. 7 - 76
- 5 WHQS Progress Report - Final Stages. 77 - 106
- 6 Housing Revenue Account Charges 2019-2020. 107 - 114
- 7 Whole Authority Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2018/19. 115 - 166
- 8 Update on Reserves. 167 - 180
- 9 CCBC Communication and Engagement Strategy. 181 - 212
- 10 To receive and consider the following report which in the opinion of the Proper Officer may be discussed when the meeting is not open to the public and first to consider whether the public interest requires that the meeting should be closed to the public for consideration of this item. 213 - 214
- 11 Funding for Settlement of Contract Claim - EXEMPT REPORT. 215 - 218

**Circulation:**

Councillors C.J. Cuss, N. George, C.J. Gordon, Mrs B. A. Jones, P.A. Marsden, S. Morgan, L. Phipps, D.V. Poole and Mrs E. Stenner,

And Appropriate Officers.

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## CABINET

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 16TH JANUARY 2019 AT 10.30 A.M.

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#### PRESENT:

Councillor D. Poole – Chair

#### Councillors:

C. Cuss (Social Care and Wellbeing), N. George (Neighbourhood Services), C.J. Gordon (Corporate Services), Mrs B.A. Jones (Finance, Performance and Governance), P. Marsden (Education and Achievement), S. Morgan (Economy, Infrastructure and Sustainability), L. Phipps (Homes and Places) and E. Stenner (Environment and Public Protection).

#### Together with:

C. Harry (Interim Chief Executive), D. Street (Corporate Director - Social Services and Housing), M. S. Williams (Interim Corporate Director - Communities) and R. Edmunds (Corporate Director – Education and Corporate Services) and S. Harris (Interim Head of Business Improvement Services).

#### Also in Attendance:

R. Kyte (Head of Regeneration and Planning), J. Carpenter (Finance Manager (Revenues)), T. McMahon (Community Regeneration Manager), K. Cole (Chief Education Officer), P. Warren (Strategic Lead for School Improvement), D. Lucas (Team Leader Strategic and Development Planning), I. Martin (Emergency Planning and Resilience Officer) and A. Dredge (Committee Services Officer).

#### 1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer).

#### 2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

#### 3. **CABINET – 12TH DECEMBER 2018**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 12th December 2018 (minute nos. 1- 12) be approved and signed as a correct record.

## **MATTERS ON WHICH EXECUTIVE DECISIONS WERE REQUIRED**

### **4. DRAFT YSTRAD MYNACH MASTERPLAN**

The report sought Cabinet's endorsement of the Ystrad Mynach Masterplan as the basis for a public consultation exercise commencing 28th January 2019 to 8th March 2019. The report had been presented to the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 11th December 2018. The Scrutiny Committee unanimously recommended to Cabinet that the Draft Ystrad Mynach Masterplan be endorsed.

Cabinet were advised that in order to benefit from the transformative change in the wider Cardiff Capital Region with the investment of City Deal, the Valleys Taskforce and further funding streams, it is necessary to set out the strategic priorities for the regeneration and enhancement of Caerphilly County Borough. This involves identifying opportunities that will make it more prosperous, healthier, resilient and equal, setting priorities that align and enhance regional work and are readily capable of being realised.

The Draft Ystrad Mynach Masterplan is the next suite of Masterplans to be prepared under the overarching regeneration strategy for the county borough 'A Foundation for Success', following on from the Caerphilly Basin Masterplan approved by Council in July 2018. The Masterplan forms part of the implementation plan for 'A Foundation for Success' and will be reviewed every five years. The Masterplan identifies investment and development opportunities within Ystrad Mynach as part of the Strategic Hub and seeks to build on the existing strengths of Ystrad Mynach to ensure that the area enhances its role as a business, employment, service, retail and sporting centre. In line with the agreed governance arrangements, the Regeneration Project Board will prioritise projects and proposals for consideration by Cabinet and therefore delivery will be dependent on decisions made by Cabinet. Officers advised that following a period of consultation, all comments will be considered and changes will be made to the Masterplan where appropriate, and the revised Masterplan will subsequently be reported to Full Council for formal approval. Following on from the Caerphilly Basin and Ystrad Mynach, Officers are also developing plans for the Rhymney and Risca areas in moving forward.

Cabinet thanked the presenting Officers for the comprehensive report and asked that this be relayed to the team involved in developing the Masterplan. It was also noted that local members contributed to the plan as part of the consultation process.

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, the Draft Ystrad Mynach Masterplan be endorsed as the basis for a public consultation exercise commencing on the 28th January 2019 until 8th March 2019.

### **5. WELSH GOVERNMENT FLEXIBLE FUNDING**

The report updated Cabinet on the Welsh Government's Flexible Funding Project and the subsequent decision made by Welsh Government to implement two integrated grants from 1st April 2019 'A Children and Communities Grant and a Housing Support Grant. The establishment of a governance structure is necessary to administer and manage the two integrated grants and establish a new Programme Collaboration Group and support collaboration with the Housing Support Grants.

Cabinet were advised that Welsh Government (WG) have piloted an approach to the amalgamation of funding for ten grant programmes aimed at supporting vulnerable people and communities, with the intention that a single Early Intervention Prevention and Support Grant will be allocated to the authority for local determination of delivery from 2019/20. The

aim of WG is to support a joined-up, long term, preventative approach to delivering for vulnerable people. The full Funding Flexibilities and Extending Flexibilities pilot was implemented from April 2018 and is ongoing. Caerphilly CBC was not a pilot authority. Members were referred to paragraph 4.12 in the report that provides examples of joint working and collaboration already in place in Caerphilly within the grants in scope for funding flexibility.

On the 3rd October 2018 a written statement from Alun Davies, Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services and Rebecca Evans, Minister for Housing and Regeneration confirmed the future direction of the Early Intervention Prevention and Support Grant over the remainder of this Assembly term. Details of included programmes were set out in Appendix 1. WG has indicated the level of funding across the programmes will remain unchanged during the current administration and will not be subject to financial cuts as previously indicated in 2017. Officers advised that should this position change a further report will be necessary as soon as the level of cuts are known. A further letter was received from Welsh Government on 15th November 2018 outlining the arrangements for financial year 2019-20. WG announced the timeline this week for Local Authorities to provide a single delivery plan by the 8th February 2019 in relation to grant funding. WG will then provide comments by the end of February confirming available grant funding. It was noted that WG require an overall plan with corporate sign off and will want to know how the funding will be allocated.

Cabinet fully supported the report but expressed their concerns in relation to the limited timescale afforded to Officers in responding to WG and felt that a longer transition period is required. It was therefore suggested that Officers contact WG to explore the flexibility of extending the deadline.

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 subject to an additional recommendation to include, *Officers to make representations to Welsh Government (WG) regarding the short timescale afforded to Officers to respond to the funding allocation and if there is flexibility to extend the deadline, in order that the response can be considered and managed in an effective way, and for the reasons contained in the Officer's report: -*

- (i) 2019 / 20 budgets are allocated to the programmes as previous years to enable time to plan for future years;
- (ii) future planning should include the evaluation of a programme's effectiveness, prioritising in delivery in line with corporate priorities;
- (iii) two collaboration groups be established for both new integrated grants to be chaired by the Interim Head of Business Improvement Services;
- (iv) a further report be provided when the amount of funding is known and guidance and grant conditions are received from Welsh Government;
- (v) Officers to make representations to Welsh Government (WG) regarding the short timescale afforded to Officers to respond to the funding allocation and if there is flexibility to extend the deadline, in order that the response can be considered and managed in an effective way.

## **6. SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS AND ITS IMPACT ON THE EDUCATION DIRECTORATE'S SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

The report updated Cabinet with the process of self-evaluation and its impact on the Education Directorate's Service Improvement Plan, and provided a summary of key strengths and priorities for improvement that are identified as a result of the self-evaluation process.

Officers explained that the self-evaluation process is an integral part of the overall cycle of service improvement. It is fundamental in ensuring the directorate secures ongoing improvements that positively contribute to the objectives in Caerphilly's Local Authority Service Improvement Plan and Corporate Plan. Over the last twelve months, an increasing number of strategies have been implemented to ensure that the process is robust, increasing the level of challenge, reflecting changes to the Estyn Inspection framework and involving a wider range of stakeholders. The self-evaluation process has identified a range of strengths and priorities for improvement (details of which are set out in the report).

Cabinet were referred to paragraph 4.1. in the report that sets out a range of data and other information that is collected through the self-evaluation process. The report sets out the priorities chosen and the evidence in support. Strategies include a series of re-induction training sessions for the Education Management Team. This has helped an increased number of managers and staff improve their understanding of the purpose of self-evaluation and to develop consistency in approach. Officers set out the current actions for the self-evaluation process that includes further developing the role of stakeholders in the process. At present, stakeholder feedback does not feature in all aspects of the self-evaluation document. Throughout 2018 members of the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee had the opportunity to contribute to the self-evaluation process via regular scrutiny meetings. The department are held to account by the Scrutiny Committee and this report was considered at its meeting on the 6th November 2018, where Members unanimously agreed to note its contents and endorsed the accurate findings.

Officers summarised the main themes of the self-evaluation process and the good features across the Education Directorate. These include performance at foundation phase is good, overall performance at the end of Key Stage 2 is good and Performance at Key Stage 3 continues to improve. In addition, there is a need to build and improve on attendance levels and work on reducing exclusions. Part 2 of the strategy is developing the Action Plan in moving forward and this will be presented to the Scrutiny Committee shortly and Cabinet thereafter.

Members thanked the Officers for the great deal of work that has been undertaken in providing the report and welcomed the fact that this is evidence based and allows the department to be resilient in moving forward.

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 therein, the contents of the report be noted.

## **7. BREXIT**

The report updated Cabinet on Brexit and the potential implications for Caerphilly CBC prior to consideration by Council at its meeting on the 22nd January 2019. Cabinet were referred to paragraph's 7.2 and 10.1.2 in the report and the unallocated reserve figure of £20.8m quoted is a typographical error and this should read £20.08m. The report sets out details of the background to the Brexit process and Cabinet will be aware that the position remains highly uncertain and fluid, particularly following the vote in Parliament on the 15th January 2019.

Cabinet were advised that despite this high level of uncertainty it is important that the Council is taking steps to prepare for the potential impacts arising from Brexit and to also ensure that funding is set aside to meet any potential short to medium-term financial implications. At the end of November 2018 the WLGA issued a Brexit Preparedness Toolkit setting out the practical steps that Local Authorities should be taking to prepare for the potential impacts of Brexit, whatever the outcome of the ongoing negotiations turns out to be. Caerphilly CBC has

established an internal Brexit Working Group which will focus on the advice in the WLGA Toolkit to ensure that appropriate actions are taken to help mitigate the risks of Brexit. This work is underway and key risks identified are set out in the report. Cabinet noted that this list is not exhaustive and the Brexit Working Group will meet regularly during the coming months to ensure that all potential impacts are considered and that appropriate mitigating actions are identified where possible.

Officers advised that given the high level of uncertainty and the likely negative impacts it is prudent to set aside funding to meet possible one-off financial implications that may arise. The report recommends that an Earmarked Reserve of £1m should be funded from unallocated reserves. In addition, that delegated powers be granted to the Leader and Interim Chief Executive to jointly approve expenditure from the earmarked reserve to ensure that Officers can respond to any emerging financial issues in a timely manner.

Cabinet discussed the report and considered the consequences for potential scenarios arising from Brexit. Clarification was sought in relation to paragraph 10.1.3. (delegated powers granted to the Leader and Interim Chief Executive) and how elected Members and the Public will know how any expenditure is allocated. It was explained that this will allow the Council to react quickly to emergency spends and will be reported to the retrospective Committee and therefore any spends will be open and transparent and in the public domain. In light of the discussions, Cabinet requested two additional recommendations in that both Leaders from the Opposition Groups be invited to join the recently established internal Brexit Working Group and any emergency spends authorised under delegated powers will be reported retrospectively to the appropriate Committee.

Cabinet thanked the Officers for the report and for the work undertaken by the Brexit Working Group.

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 subject to an amendment to paragraphs 7.2 and 10.1.2 that the figure quoted should be £20.08m and an additional two recommendations to include both Leaders from the Opposition Groups be invited to join the recently established internal Brexit Working Group and any emergency spends authorised under delegated powers will be reported retrospectively to the appropriate Committee, and for the reasons contained in the Officer's report: -

- (i) the contents of the report, be noted;
- (ii) a recommendation to Council that £1m be set-aside in an earmarked reserve as a contingency to meet any short to medium-term financial implications arising from the Brexit process (funded from the £20.08m unallocated reserves identified in the 'Update on Reserves' report that was presented to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on the 15th January 2019), be endorsed;
- (iii) a recommendation to Council that delegated powers be granted to the Leader and Interim Chief Executive to jointly approve expenditure from the earmarked reserve as and when required, be endorsed;
- (iv) both Leaders from the Opposition Groups be invited to join the recently established internal Brexit Working Group;
- (v) any emergency spends authorised under delegated powers will be reported retrospectively to the appropriate Committee.

## 8. WRITE-OFF OF DEBTS OVER £20,000 – BUSINESS RATE ARREARS FOR LTD COMPANIES

This report provided Cabinet with details of an amount of business rate that the Authority is required to write off as a bad debt. On 15th September 2009, Cabinet approved a revised write-off procedure for debts that are material, where the individual debt is greater than £20,000. Approval was sought to write-off two national non-domestic rate (NNDR), also known as business rate, debts where, in each case, the individual debt is greater than £20,000.

Cabinet were advised that the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee receives half yearly reports on monies due to the Council which cannot be collected. Unpaid business rates are pursued through a magistrates' court liability order that empowers the Authority to instruct bailiffs. Officers explained that due to debtors absconding, declaring themselves insolvent through bankruptcy/liquidation or other proceedings, ceasing to trade, dying with no estate, and because of limited means there are inevitably circumstances when debts cannot be collected. After all legal means have been exhausted a decision is made to write-off debts. Members noted that the Authority collects Business Rates on behalf of the Welsh Government which then redistributes the total amount collected by all 22 local authorities in Wales, along with the Revenue Support Grant.

The details of the cases of irrecoverable debts were set out in paragraphs 4.4 and 4.5.1 to 4.5.3 in the report.

Cabinet support the recommendation in the report and emphasised that the department has an excellent rate of debt collection.

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 subject to an amendment to the recommendation in that as the Authority has no further legal powers to recover the unpaid debts and for the reasons contained in the Officer's report: -

- (i) as the Authority has no further legal powers to recover the unpaid debts, the debts detailed in paras. 4.4 and 4.5.1 to 4.5.3 inclusive be written off on the grounds that they are irrecoverable.

The meeting closed at 11.16 am.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on the 30th January 2019.

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CHAIR



## CABINET - 30TH JANUARY 2019

**SUBJECT: WALES AUDIT OFFICE WHQS REVIEW**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR – SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Members on the outcome of the follow up review by the Wales Audit Office (WAO) on the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) delivery programme following the previous report which was submitted to Cabinet on the 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2017.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 During March and April 2017, as part of the WAO performance audit plan, the WAO undertook a review of the Council's arrangements to deliver the WHQS by 2020.
- 2.2 At the time of the review, the WAO concluded that the ***“majority of tenants’ homes remain below the WHQS standard due to longstanding inefficient and ineffective programme management and the Council is unlikely to achieve the standard by 2020”***.
- 2.3 The WAO have now completed their follow up review which was undertaken between April and October 2018 and have now concluded that ***“the Council has responded positively to our June 2017 WHQS report and statutory recommendations by making significant improvements and as a result we now conclude that it is likely to meet the WHQS by December 2020”***.

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The underlying principles of the WHQS programme, which includes the provision of good quality affordable housing, energy efficient homes and carbon reduction, sustainable communities, health and wellbeing, targeted recruitment and training, clearly links to 5 of the 7 well-being goals in ***The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015***.
- 3.2 ***Improving Lives and Communities: Homes in Wales (Welsh Government, 2010)***, which sets out the national context for improving homes and communities, including the energy efficiency of existing homes;
- 3.3 ***The Caerphilly We Want (CCBC, 2018-2023) - Well-Being Plan Objective 4: Positive Places - Enabling our communities to be resilient and sustainable.***
- 3.4 ***Corporate Plan (CCBC, 2018-2023): Well-being Objective 3: “Address the availability, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve people’s well-being.”***

- 3.5 ***The Welsh Housing Quality Standard: Revised Guidance for Social Landlords on Interpretation and Achievement of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (Welsh Government, 2008).***
- 3.6 ***Caerphilly Homes Service Plan (2018-2023): Priority 1A: All Council housing is improved to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by 2020.***

#### 4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 As part of the 2016/17 performance audit plan, the WAO, during March and April 2017, undertook a review of the Council's arrangements to deliver the WHQS by 2020. WAO sought to answer the question "***does the Council have effective arrangements in place to enable it to meet the WHQS by 2020?***"
- 4.2 The WAO Review resulted in a number of recommendations which were set out in the Cabinet report of the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017, together with comments from officers in response.
- 4.3 Progress made in addressing the recommendations were reviewed by a Cross Party Working Group which contained representatives from the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee and tenant representatives.
- 4.4 A report on the outcome of this review was presented to the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2018 and it was agreed that the recommendations had been progressed by the required timelines.
- 4.5 Following this review, the WAO arranged to undertake a further review during 2018 to determine whether the Council can demonstrate that it is meeting the commitments made to Cabinet on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017 in an effective, economic and efficient way.
- 4.6 This follow up review has been undertaken in two parts:-
- **A Service User Perspective Review** – which focussed on the views from 489 tenants and 25 leaseholders in relation to the delivery of the WHQS programme.
  - **A Follow Up Review** – to determine whether the Council is meeting its commitments and making satisfactory progress to meet the WHQS by the WG deadline of December 2020.
- 4.7 The final version of the Service User Perspective Review report was received on the 20<sup>th</sup> December 2018 and the Follow Up Review received on the 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 2019.

#### **Service User Perspective Conclusion**

- 4.8 ***"Tenants and leaseholders have positive views about many aspects of the Council's WHQS programme including the quality, but are less satisfied with external works, the timeliness of work and the extent to which the Council involves them and provides information on the works".***
- 4.9 The WAO arrived at this conclusion based on feedback from their survey of approximately 500 tenants/leaseholders who advised that:-
- 4.10 ***"The Council provides tenants and leaseholders with information about the WHQS programme, but could better explain why the works are needed".***

#### **Response**

- 4.11 Every property is visited and surveyed individually and tenants engaged as they have an element of choice in the delivery of the work. In addition, letters are also sent to each household to advise of the anticipated start date of the work/contract.

- 4.12 Contact details of our Tenant Liaison Officers are also provided, who will support the tenants throughout the process.
- 4.13 Information on the WHQS programme has also been made available on the Council's website, through the use of newsletters, consultation events, social media, working groups, press releases and marketing events.
- 4.14 For leaseholders we follow a detailed legislative process which sets out the requirement to issue leaseholders with a "Notice of Intention", to provide an indicative scope of works and thereafter a "Section 20 Notice" which provides information of the outcome of our tender exercise including anticipated costs for each leaseholder. Leaseholders are also offered the opportunity to meet with relevant officers if required.
- 4.15 Any work undertaken is identified based on the requirement to bring it up to the WHQ Standard or due to its condition which may result in an element being repaired or replaced. It is accepted that the reason why work is required to each element is not explained to our tenants, although they are advised that it is part of our remit to meet WHQS.

4.16 ***"The Council could do more to ensure that the works are consistently completed on time across all areas"***.

#### **Response**

- 4.17 The survey identifies that 71% of tenants/leaseholders reported that the works were completed to the original timescales. The timescale for completing works, however, can be affected by many factors which make it extremely difficult to consistently complete the work on time, e.g. weather, unforeseen work (asbestos, structural, dry rot), access, tenant circumstances (medical conditions), contractor performance, utility company involvement.
- 4.18 ***"Those who have not had improvement works are satisfied with the quality of internal work, but are less satisfied with external works"***.

#### **Response**

- 4.19 It is pleasing to note that overall 81% of residents who have had WHQS works completed were satisfied. It is disappointing that only 59% of residents reported that they were satisfied with the outside of their home, with a further 17% reporting that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
- 4.20 Unlike internal components, there is no stated timeline for replacing external elements of the home, therefore each property is surveyed and elements changed based on their condition. Tenants' expectations, however, may be that all properties would receive new roofs, new windows, doors, tender and paths, etc. which is not what was "promised" within our Offer Document. Work is ongoing to change the way in which customer satisfaction surveys are carried out so that responses can be analysed in more detail.

4.21 ***"Tenants and leaseholders are involved with the works, but the Council inconsistently applies tenant choice about electrical wiring"***.

#### **Response**

- 4.22 Caerphilly Homes has a policy to provide tenants with a choice about whether electrical cables are required to be chased into the wall or hidden with trunking.
- 4.23 Some tenants, however, advised that this choice was not consistently provided and as a consequence our survey forms have been amended to ensure this option is provided and the tenants are required to sign the form to confirm their choice.

4.24 ***“85% of tenants and leaseholders can quickly and easily contact the Council”.***

**Response**

4.25 This is a pleasing result and is considered to be the result of significant work that has been undertaken to promote our contact information through various sources, the introduction of appointments and texting facilities.

4.26 Overall, the Service User Perspective report confirms that the majority of tenants and leaseholders surveyed are satisfied with delivery of the WHQS programme. It is accepted that there is less satisfaction with external works, but these are not as clearly prescribed within the WHQS guidance document as internal works and therefore compliance and satisfaction levels are more difficult to gauge. It is also the case that leaseholders are required to contribute towards the cost of external works which may also impact on satisfaction responses. It is accepted, however, that improvements can be made and work will be progressed in this regard.

**WAO Service User Perspective Review – Proposals for Improvement**

4.27 To ensure that the WHQS programme meets the needs of all tenants and leaseholders, the Council should:-

***“Strengthen its communication approaches with all tenants and leaseholders, taking account of the experiences of different groups of residents”.***

**Response**

4.28 Information on the WHQS programme has been made available on the Council’s website, through the use of newsletters, consultation events, social media, working groups, press releases and marketing events. Newsletters have also been issued specifically to leaseholders and further communication provided to them in line with required leasehold legislation.

4.29 In addition each tenant has a letter to advise them of any pending work to their property and when the contract is anticipated to commence. In relation to the internal programme, tenants also receive a letter to confirm the extent of work and their choices and this provides them with 10 days to advise if they wish to make any changes to the choices they have made.

4.30 It is accepted that the precise details of why the work is required may not be communicated to all tenants, but due to the extent of communication being issued, they should be aware that the work is required to achieve WHQS compliance and to ensure their property is maintained.

4.31 The content of the letters will however be reviewed in consultation with the Repairs and Improvement Working Group to establish what further improvements can be made.

4.32 ***“Monitor and report compliance with the Charter for Trust to address any identified issues”.***

**Response**

4.33 The Charter for Trust is issued to all contractors and included as part of our contract documentation. The requirement of contractors to adhere to the Charter for Trust is also an agenda item for all monthly contract meetings.

4.34 Compliance with the Charter for Trust is monitored through customer satisfaction surveys as there are specific questions relating to standards met. In order to improve customer feedback however and to help to identify any issues, the customer satisfaction process has now been reviewed and changed. The new process will involve satisfaction surveys being undertaken by telephone which will hopefully improve the return rate. This will also provide officers with the opportunity to drill down to establish the cause of any concerns in order for us to learn from the feedback and make improvements for the future.

- 4.35 ***“Analyse complaints about the WHQS programme systematically to address the root causes and share learning to improve tenants and leaseholders experience of the programme”.***

**Response**

- 4.36 Formal complaints are dealt with in line with our Corporate complaints procedure where the outcome is reviewed to establish if there is a root cause which can be addressed in order to improve our customers experience for the future.
- 4.37 It is accepted however that the customer satisfaction process can be improved in order for us to learn from the feedback received and this is currently in the process of being addressed as mentioned above.

**WHQS Follow Up Conclusion**

- 4.38 ***“The Council has responded positively to our June 2017 WHQS report and statutory recommendations by making significant improvements and as a result we now conclude that it is likely to meet the WHQS by December 2020”.***

- 4.39 The WAO arrived at this conclusion based on the following:-

- 4.40 ***“The Council has made significant progress in identifying the investment and resources it needs to complete its WHQS programme by 2020”.***

**Response**

- 4.41 It is pleasing that the WAO have acknowledged the progress made in relation to surveying, which in turn has assisted in the identification and costing of future works to inform our business plan and asset management database.
- 4.42 The introduction of the Dynamic Purchasing System is also seen as a positive improvement to engage external contractors in a timely manner.
- 4.43 The work undertaken demonstrates that we have both the financial and physical resources available to deliver the programme by the end of 2020.
- 4.44 ***“The Council has taken steps to determine the value for money of its procurement arrangements”.***

**Response**

- 4.45 The report reflects the fact that an independent review was undertaken of our single source supply arrangements which concluded that value for money was being provided.
- 4.46 A separate exercise was also undertaken to compare costs of the in-house team with external contractors. Whilst this identified that costs were 20% higher, there are other benefits which offset this increase which were considered in the assessment of value for money. Feedback from tenants indicate that quality and customer satisfaction levels are higher for the in-house workforce.
- 4.47 ***“There have been improvements to its WHQS performance reports; however there is still inconsistent and inaccurate reporting of performance”.***

**Response**

- 4.48 Performance information is now more accurate and timely with new validation processes having been introduced, including an independent review of the process being undertaken by our Corporate Audit team.

- 4.49 It is accepted that there were some inaccuracies in data provided in reports during early 2018 and this was due to the source of the data collection, the reports being compiled by different departments and possibly the result of changes in some data following validation checks.
- 4.50 To address this problem, all performance data is managed within a centralised team and the data has been standardised for use in all reports.
- 4.51 ***“The Council now has measurable performance targets to effectively monitor the remainder of its WHQS programme”.***

**Response**

- 4.52 Standard reporting data now includes information on projected compliance up to the end of the programme, based on average compliance achievements calculated from weekly reports. This is constantly monitored to ensure Caerphilly Homes are on track to achieve the standard by the required deadline.
- 4.53 ***“The Council has strengthened its arrangements to meet its statutory landlord responsibilities”.***

**Response**

- 4.54 Following a review of our no access procedure and Members’ agreement to proceed with forced entry as a last resort following legal proceedings, performance in relation to gas servicing has improved, with current levels being above 99% compliance.
- 4.55 ***“The Council has invested additional resources to enhance its WHQS programme management, but still lacks a current Local Housing Strategy and does not always produce comprehensive Equality Impact Assessments for key Housing policy documents”.***

**Response**

- 4.56 The Local Housing Strategy will be developed during 2019 and this will be assisted by the recent approval of the Caerphilly Homes Asset Management Strategy and Homelessness Strategy.
- 4.57 The approval of the Asset Management Strategy supported the progress of a number of objectives and work-streams, which will require further reports detailing their proposed implementation. These further reports will result in the completion of comprehensive Equality Impact Assessments which will be undertaken at the appropriate time.

**WAO Follow Up Review – Proposals for Improvement**

- 4.58 ***“The Council should ensure that members and tenants receive accurate WHQS performance information regularly about its progress towards achieving it’s 2020 programme deadline”.***

**Response**

- 4.59 Performance information is now more accurate and timely with new validation processes having been introduced, including an independent review of the process being undertaken by our Corporate Audit team. A copy of the report together with its outcomes was provided to WAO as part of this review.
- 4.60 It is accepted that there were some inaccuracies in data provided in reports during early 2018 and this was due to the source of the data collection, the reports being compiled by different departments and possibly the result of changes in some data following validation checks.

4.61 To address this problem, all performance data is now managed within a centralised team and the data has been standardised for use in all reports which includes projections to provide our overall anticipated compliance date. Reports will continue to be provided on a regular basis.

4.62 ***“The Council should agree a Local Housing Strategy to set out its long-term vision for the future priorities for homes in Caerphilly”.***

#### **Response**

4.63 Work has been ongoing to establish a number of strategies which will inform the development of an overarching Local Housing Strategy, these include a Private Sector Renewal Strategy, Asset Management Strategy and a Homelessness Strategy.

4.64 Following approval of the Homelessness Strategy in December 2018 the development of a Local Housing Strategy will now progress in 2019 for its implementation in 2020.

4.65 ***“The Council should ensure that Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken consistently”.***

#### **Response**

4.66 This relates to the fact that a full EIA was not undertaken to support the Asset Management Strategy report. Officers took the view at the time that the report was seeking member approval on the principles of the strategy as it is clear that aspects of the strategy would require further specific reports seeking members approval and full EIA's would be considered again at this time.

4.67 To ensure consistency however, refresher EIA training would be provided to relevant officers.

#### **Conclusions**

4.68 The follow up reports provided by the WAO provide a far more positive picture on the current position of the WHQS programme and also provides independent confidence that Caerphilly Homes are on track to deliver the full programme by December 2020.

4.69 The methodology for carrying out customer satisfaction surveys is already in the process of being reviewed with the aim of collating more meaningful feedback which will assist us in making further service improvements.

4.70 It is accepted that improvements and consistency in the way performance information is presented was required and this has been addressed as indicated within the report.

4.71 The Local Housing Strategy will be developed during 2019 and EIAs on key policy reports will be carried out at the appropriate time.

4.72 Members will shortly be receiving further reports on the WHQS programme which will provide details on the current progress position and projections for full compliance. A further report will be submitted seeking approval of the re-profiling exercise which has also been undertaken, which demonstrates and informs all stakeholders on the current and projected completion of the programme broken down by community and street level.

4.73 When considering the improvement in performance that has been achieved over the last 12 months together with the latest position on WHQS compliance, Caerphilly Homes are well placed to achieve full compliance (including acceptable fails) by December 2020, and this view has now been supported by the WAO.

## 5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 5.1 The report outlines the contribution made towards the Well-being Goals as set out in the Links to Strategy section above. It is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act:-
- 5.2 Long-term - Since the Housing Ballot (2012) we continue to make substantial investments and improvements to both the internal and external environments of our social housing stock (Public Sector), including specialised adaptations in accordance with the needs of some of our tenants. Adaptations are also supported and implemented in the Private Sector (often referred to as Disability Facilities Grants).
- 5.3 These fundamental changes and improvements are being achieved through; the implementation of the Welsh Housing Quality Standards; housing adaptations in accordance with tenants and homeowners needs; enhancing the quality of product installations and repairs; improving environments around homes; all aiding the well-being of our communities, its infrastructure and citizens alike, providing homes and communities for now and the future.
- 5.4 Prevention - The works undertaken through Housing Services helps to improve lives and communities, by securing local employment either in-house or through supplier, contractor and partnership arrangements.
- 5.5 Works undertaken by our services make significant visual improvements to housing stocks and their surroundings environments (improved the look and feel) helping to prevent anti-social behaviour and enviro-crime.
- 5.6 By raising standards and conditions with improved quality materials and appropriate service response, should aide and ease future maintenance schedules and requirements, better controlling costs, levels of deterioration/depreciation, improve safety and accessibility, while also reducing disruption to our tenants in the future, and aiding quality of life in both Private and Public Sectors, through intervention and support actions that are fit-for-purpose.
- 5.7 Involvement - Through established governance and performance frameworks, tenants and local residents are consulted on proposed property and environment improvements works along with various initiatives, and they are periodically informed of progress as part of for example, the WHQS delivery programme.
- 5.8 Numerous working groups are established and well embedded with periodic reporting and feedback opportunities exploited. Welsh Government, Environment Standards, Regulatory Controls and Checks, Tenant Engagement are all part of our daily business.
- 5.9 Collaboration - The programme delivery focused on internal collaboration, wider partnership arrangements with suppliers and contractors, joint working with the community and various other interested parties/groups. The delivery of community benefits and tenant engagement by all involved with the WHQS programme is a key focus for the success and delivery of this objective.
- 5.10 Integration - The programme looks to integrate property and environmental improvements that will benefit and transform lives and communities throughout the county borough. It further brings together a variety of stakeholders to deliver long term sustainable benefits for lives and communities including Social Services & Health.
- 5.11 Housing Services and our outlined priorities, contributes to a minimum of 6 out of the 7 well-being goals within the *Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015*, including:-
- A prosperous Wales
  - A resilient Wales
  - A healthier Wales
  - A more equal Wales
  - A Wales of cohesive communities
  - A globally responsible Wales.

## **6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 This report is for information purposes only. There are, therefore, no equalities implications arising from the report.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The WAO stated that significant progress has been made in identifying the investment and resources it needs to complete the WHQS programme by the end of 2020. This work has helped to inform the Caerphilly Homes business plan which demonstrates that anticipated borrowing requirements will be sufficient to deliver the full programme and that the business plan remains financially viable.

## **8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATION**

- 8.1 There are no current personnel implications associated with this report.

## **9. CONSULTATIONS**

- 9.1 The report has been consulted on and any views received have been considered and incorporated where appropriate.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 Members are asked to consider and comment on the WAO reports, note and comment on the officer responses to the reports and the proposals for improvement.

## **11. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 11.1 To ensure that Cabinet is aware of the review work undertaken by the WAO and the relevant findings, conclusion and proposals for improvement.

## **12. STATUTORY POWER**

- 12.1 Housing Act 1996.  
Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

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Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Service User Perspective Review  
Appendix 2 Welsh Housing Quality Standard follow-up report



WALES AUDIT OFFICE  
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

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Auditor General for Wales

# Service User Perspective Review – **Caerphilly County Borough Council**

Audit year: 2017- 2018

Date issued: November 2018

Document reference: 826A2018-19

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[Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is also available in Welsh.]

The team who delivered the work comprised Gareth Jones, Kevin Sutch, Matthew Brushett and Lisa McCarthy programme managed by Non Jenkins under the direction of Huw Rees.

# Contents

Tenants and leaseholders have positive views about many aspects of the Council's WHQS programme including the quality, but are less satisfied with external works, the timeliness of work, and the extent to which the Council involves them and provides information on the works.

## Summary report

Summary	4
Proposals for improvement	6
Understanding the results	6
The Council provides tenants and leaseholders with information about the WHQS programme, but it could better explain why the works are needed	9
The Council could do more to ensure that the works are consistently completed on time across all areas	12
Those who have had improvement works are satisfied with the quality of internal works, but are less satisfied with external works	14
Tenants and leaseholders are involved with the works, but the Council inconsistently applies tenants' choice about electrical wiring	18
Eighty-five per cent of the tenants and leaseholders can quickly and easily contact the Council	20
<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1 – overview of survey participants	27
Appendix 2 – survey questions	29
Appendix 3 – infographic summarising survey results	36

# Summary report

## Summary

- 1 In 2017-18, the Wales Audit Office completed work to understand the 'service user perspective' at every council within Wales. We followed a broadly similar approach at each council but agreed the specific focus and approach to the work individually. In Caerphilly, we focused on tenants' and leaseholders' views on their experience of Caerphilly County Borough Council's (the Council) Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) programme.
- 2 The WHQS is a Welsh Government policy that applies to all public housing across Wales. Meeting the standard is the responsibility of each social housing landlord. The Council is the social housing landlord for Council tenants across the County Borough. Tenants and leaseholders therefore do not have a choice of service provider. As there is no alternative service provider, the ability of service users to influence services relies on 'voice' rather than 'choice'. This means that ensuring the views of service users are heard is important when the Council designs and delivers services and interventions aimed at meeting people's needs.
- 3 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act) places a duty on local authorities and other public bodies to have regard for the sustainable development principle and the five ways of working that define it. 'Involvement' is one of the five ways of working identified in the Act.
- 4 In 2017, we undertook a review of the Council's progress towards meeting the WHQS by 2020 and concluded that the majority of tenants' homes remain below the WHQS due to longstanding inefficient and ineffective programme management, and the Council was unlikely to achieve the Standard by 2020. One of the reasons that we came to this conclusion was that:
  - although 'the Council has a range of mechanisms to engage with tenants about WHQS, these are ineffective and are not being used to shape planning and drive performance'.
- 5 The Council's response to our 2017 finding was that their own satisfaction surveys pointed to high levels of tenant satisfaction, and that it would be valuable if we were to speak to more tenants.
- 6 We could not speak to all tenants and leaseholders, so we commissioned an independent research company to carry out a telephone survey of a sample of them. Between 23 April and 1 May 2018, 489 tenants and 25 leaseholders completed the survey. [Appendix 1](#) provides more detail about the tenants and leaseholders who completed the survey. We asked them about the quality and timeliness of the works, the communications and service they receive from the Council, and whether they feel listened to/able to influence the WHQS programme. [Appendix 2](#) contains our survey questions.
- 7 We spoke to residents at four Sheltered Housing Schemes in focus groups. Two of the schemes had improvement works being carried out at the time of our focus groups, one scheme had had the works completed and at one the work was yet to start.

- 8 We held focus groups with the tenant members of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group and the Repairs and Improvements Group.
- 9 We also interviewed senior housing service managers and managers with responsibility for tenant engagement activities.
- 10 We concluded that: tenants and leaseholders have positive views about many aspects of the Council's WHQS programme including the quality, but are less satisfied with external works, the timeliness of work, and the extent to which the Council involves them and provides information on the works.
- 11 We came to this conclusion because:
- The tenants and leaseholders we surveyed and spoke to tell us that:
    - the Council provides tenants and leaseholders with information about the WHQS programme, but it could better explain why the works are needed;
    - the Council could do more to ensure that the works are consistently completed on time across all areas;
    - those who have had improvement works are satisfied with the quality of internal works, but are less satisfied with external works;
    - tenants and leaseholders are involved with the works, but the Council inconsistently applies tenants' choice about electrical wiring; and
    - 85% of the tenants and leaseholders can quickly and easily contact the Council.

## Proposals for improvement

### Exhibit 1: proposals for improvement

- 12 The table below contains our proposals for ways the Council could improve the effectiveness of its WHQS programme to make it better placed to meet tenants' and leaseholders' needs.

Proposals for improvement	
P1	<p>To ensure that the WHQS programme meets the needs of all tenants and leaseholders the Council should;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• strengthen its communication approaches with all tenants and leaseholders, taking account of the experiences of different groups of residents;</li><li>• monitor and report compliance with the Charter for Trust to address any identified issues; and</li><li>• analyse complaints about the WHQS programme systematically to address the root causes and share learning to improve tenants' and leaseholders' experience of the programme.</li></ul>

## Understanding the results

- 13 Our survey sample of 514 tenants and leaseholders provides an insight into their views. The Council has almost 11,000 tenants and leaseholders, and this sample of 514 people provides a confidence interval of 4.2% at a 95% confidence level. This means that if 50% of people chose a response in this survey and the survey was repeated, there would be 95% confidence that the response in the repeated survey would range from 45.8% to 54.2%. The sample includes tenants and leaseholders whose full WHQS works are complete, some that had only external work, others that had internal work only and others that are yet to receive any WHQS work. Further detail on the sample is provided in [Appendix 1](#).
- 14 Some of our survey questions used a five-point satisfaction scale: Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied, Dissatisfied, Very Dissatisfied. The percentages we show in the report combine the very satisfied and satisfied into one score of satisfied, and very dissatisfied and dissatisfied into one score of dissatisfied.
- 15 We provide the responses as percentages, which may not always add up to 100% because of rounding or for multiple response questions.

- 16 To provide further insight we used the following tenant characteristics to analyse the survey questions:
- Age of tenant
  - Gender of tenant
  - Length of tenancy
  - Tenancy status (general needs, sheltered housing tenant, leaseholder)
  - Location of property (the Council has three WHQS delivery areas, the Upper Rhymney Valley, Lower Rhymney Valley and the Eastern Valleys)
- 17 We have set out in the report if any of these tenant characteristics have a significant impact on the responses to any questions. Where we do not set out any impact of tenant characteristics there is no impact of those on the survey responses.
- 18 Leaseholders have a different relationship with the Council around WHQS to tenants. When a tenant becomes a leaseholder and purchases their property through the Right to Buy scheme, they assume certain responsibilities and obligations. Those include the maintenance of their property that they have bought. The terms of the lease issued by the Council includes an obligation on the leaseholder to contribute towards the repair, maintenance and refurbishment of the external structure and communal areas. These are referred to as Major Works, where the Council is legally required to undertake a formal consultation process with all leaseholders. The Council provides information to leaseholders about their obligations in a leaseholder handbook<sup>1</sup>. The Council undertakes only external improvement works to leaseholders' properties as part of the WHQS programme. The Council consults with leaseholders if the cost of the external improvements works is likely to exceed £250 per leaseholder or more than £1,000 for the block of flats.

<sup>1</sup> [Caerphilly County Borough Council Leaseholder Handbook](#)

# CAERPHELLY TENANTS' WHQS 'JOURNEY'

- 19 From our focus groups, Sheltered Housing residents and Council staff we understand the following as the main parts of tenants' 'journey' through having WHQS improvement works completed in their homes.

## Set Up



- 20 The Council informs tenants when WHQS works will take place in their community. Internal and external works take place at different times within communities. Sheltered Housing residents told us that special meetings took place in the communal areas where residents were able to ask questions about how the work would be carried out.

## Condition Survey



- 21 A Council surveyor visits the resident and explains what works (internal and external) will be carried to bring the home up to the WHQS standard. It is at this stage the resident has the opportunity to make their choices. It is also an opportunity to explain to the resident what can be changed, what will remain as part of the programme and what the residents will have to do. The Council writes to the tenant to set out what works will be completed as part of the WHQS programme.

## Works commence



- 22 In sheltered housing schemes the Tenant Liaison Officers (TLOs) help residents to pack and move items away from the work area. The Council informs tenants when the work will start along with the likely time it will take to complete.

## Works duration



- 23 During the duration of the works the main point of contact for tenants is either the workforce manager on site or TLO. The Council's 'Charter for Trust' suggests that all residents should have the contact details for the TLO for their area. For sheltered housing the sheltered housing liaison officer or the TLO are available to provide updates about the progress of the work.

## Works end



- 24 The Clerk of Works checks that the specified work(s) has been carried out correctly and identifies any work that needs to be completed or has not been carried out to standard.

# The Council provides tenants and leaseholders with information about the WHQS programme, but it could better explain why the works are needed

## Summary

Exhibit 2: summary of tenants' and leaseholders' views about the information the Council provides to them about the WHQS programme



### INFORMATION

**62%** of residents told us that the Council has told them about WHQS



### EXPLAINING THE NEED FOR THE WORKS

**55%** of residents who have had works told us that the Council explained why the improvement works were needed



### NEXT TWO YEARS

**51%** of residents know if the Council will be making any improvements to their home in the next 2 years

## Information about the WHQS Programme

- 25 Sixty-two per cent of the tenants and leaseholders we surveyed told us that the Council had told them about the WHQS, whilst 32% said that the Council had not told them, and 6% said they did not know.
- 26 Thirty-seven per cent of the 191 tenants and leaseholders we surveyed in the Upper Rhymney Valley told us that the Council had not told them about the WHQS.
- 27 We asked those tenants and leaseholders who remembered the Council telling them about the WHQS programme, what method(s) the Council had used to inform them. Fifty per cent of the tenants and leaseholders told us that the Council

informed them by letter, 29% told us that the Council used newsletters or told them in person.

- 28 Twenty per cent of the 44 tenants and leaseholders we surveyed aged between 45 and 54 told us that the Council had told them through newsletters, but 36% of this age group said that they were told in person. The tenants and leaseholders we surveyed who were aged between 45 and 74 were more likely to say that they had been told in person than those aged 44 and younger or those aged over 75

## Explaining why works are needed to achieve WHQS

- 29 Overall, 55% of the 374 tenants and leaseholders we surveyed who have had improvements works in the past five years told us that the Council had explained why those works were needed to achieve WHQS, whilst 34% told us that it had not, and 10% said that they didn't know/couldn't remember.
- 30 Nine of the 19 of the Sheltered housing respondents and six of the eight leaseholders who have had improvement works said the Council had explained why the works were needed.
- 31 Sixty per cent of the 129 Eastern Valleys respondents we surveyed told us that the Council had explained why the works were needed. Forty-three per cent of the 144 Upper Rhymney Valley respondents we surveyed told us that the Council had not explained why the works were needed.

## Information about Future Improvements

- 32 Fifty-one per cent of the tenants and leaseholders we surveyed were aware of the Council's plans to make improvements to their homes in the next two years, whilst 34% were not aware, and 15% said they did not know/could not remember.
- 33 Tenants' and leaseholders' awareness varied across the Council's three housing delivery areas, with 44% of the 191 Upper Rhymney Valley respondents we surveyed were aware of the Council's plans compared to 59% of the 177 Eastern Valley respondents, and 51% of the 146 Lower Rhymney Valley respondents in the Lower Rhymney Valley.

## Information about WHQS for leaseholders

- 34 Twelve of the 25 leaseholders we surveyed told us that the Council had informed them about their maintenance responsibilities as a leaseholder, 11 leaseholders told us that the Council had not and two leaseholders did not know.

## Sheltered housing residents' views

- 35 Residents in three of the four Sheltered Housing schemes we spoke to told us that they felt that the Council has an inconsistent approach to informing residents about why the works were being carried out and what was required. Some residents recalled having a scheme meeting in the communal room, but others could not

remember. Residents told us that the Council sent letters setting out the works to be carried out a number of months before works began, but some residents did not recall receiving these letters. However, in Tŷ Bedwellty, all the residents were very aware why the works were being carried out and thought the communication about the work was excellent.

- 36 Tenant Liaison Officers are the key link between the residents, sheltered housing wardens and the contractors delivering the improvement works. When it came to advising residents about potential start dates, the TLOs told us that they normally 'err on the side of caution' when providing residents with a start date so that they do not raise the residents' expectations.

### Tenant representatives' views

- 37 Tenant members of the Repairs and Improvement and Caerphilly Homes Task Group told us that, in their experience, the Council's information about the extent of works, and how and when those will be delivered, does not always reflect tenants' actual experience of the delivery of the works.

# The Council could do more to ensure that the works are consistently completed on time across all areas

## Summary

Exhibit 3: tenants' and leaseholders' views on the timeliness of the improvement works



### TIMELINESS OF WORK

**71%** of residents told us that the Council completed the works when they said they would

- 38 Seventy-one per cent of 374 tenants and leaseholders we surveyed who have had WHQS works carried out, reported that the works were completed to the original timescales, 24% reported that the works were not and 6% could not remember.
- 39 Twenty-eight per cent of the 101 Lower Rhymney Valley and 26% of the 129 Eastern Valley respondents we surveyed said that the works were not completed on time, but this figure reduced to 19% of the 144 Upper Rhymney Valley respondents.

## Sheltered housing residents' views

- 40 Eighty-four per cent of the sheltered housing tenants we surveyed told us that the Council completed the works when they were told they would.
- 41 In our focus groups, residents from the Sheltered Housing schemes told us that when the planned timescales are not adhered to, it causes confusion and disruption for residents. One resident told us that they went on holiday for the planned period of the works only to return and find the works had not been completed. Some residents told us that the Council, and the teams delivering the works, could improve their communication about changes to timescales. In Tŷ Bedwellty, the Council managed the works by moving tenants temporarily into empty properties whilst the works were being done, meaning that delays did not impact on residents' lives.

## Tenant representatives' views

- 42 Tenant members of the Repairs and Improvement and Caerphilly Homes Task Group told us that in the initial phases of the WHQS works, tenants experienced

delays, but stated that in their view the Council has now made changes to its delivery processes to try to overcome such delays. The tenants described how delays to completing works can impact on people's daily lives due to the disruption in their homes.

- 43 Tenants' and leaseholders' views indicate that the Council could do more to ensure that works are consistently completed on time across all areas.

## Those who have had improvement works are satisfied with the quality of internal works, but are less satisfied with external works

### Summary

Exhibit 4: tenant and leaseholder satisfaction with the overall WHQS works and specific elements of the programme (kitchens, bathrooms and outside of their homes)



#### OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH WHQS WORKS

**81%** of residents who have had works are satisfied



**79%** of tenants are satisfied with the overall condition of their kitchen



#### BATHROOM

**79%** of tenants are satisfied with the overall condition of their bathroom



#### OUTSIDE OF HOME

**59%** of residents are satisfied with how the outside of their homes looks

### Overall satisfaction with improvement works

- 44 We asked the 374 tenants and leaseholders we surveyed who have had any improvement works completed in the past five years about their satisfaction with the works. Eighty-one per cent are satisfied with the improvement works to their homes, 8% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 12% are dissatisfied.
- 45 Eighteen of the 19 sheltered housing residents we surveyed who have had works completed are satisfied compared to four of the eight leaseholders we surveyed

and 81% of the other (general needs) tenants who have had works completed. Eighty-five per cent of the tenants and leaseholders we surveyed who have had both internal and external works completed are satisfied.

46 When we asked the tenants and leaseholders we surveyed why they had given their satisfaction rating, we found that their satisfaction was related to a few key reasons:

- the lived experience of having the works done to their homes;
- tenants' experiences of the builders who carry out the building works;
- timeliness of the works;
- quality of the works;
- design of the works;
- effectiveness of communication;
- provision of services to disabled families; and
- level of choice provided to tenants.

47 The tenants and leaseholders we surveyed who had had a positive experience provided us with a range of comments that reflect a positive adherence to the Council's Charter for Trust<sup>2</sup>. In 2013, the Council developed the Charter following consultation with tenants and staff and it was agreed by the Caerphilly Homes Task Group. It sets out the standards that tenants can expect from the workforce and how tenants should treat the workforce. Many tenants and leaseholders highlighted positive compliance with the Charter for Trust during the works:

- 'They (the workforce) did a clean and tidy job.'
- 'Every lot of workmen I have had here were all punctual, polite and they all cleaned up after.'
- 'Very nice workmen asked me about my opinion every step of the way.'
- 'It was very good – especially the ones who did the indoor work – they'd explain what they were doing.'
- 'It was all carried out on time and they tidied up after themselves: all good.'
- 'New bathroom, we got a shower, floor no longer squeaks, toilet not leaking.'

48 A smaller proportion of tenants and leaseholders we surveyed, including some who told us that overall they are satisfied with the works they had received, however, provided us with feedback that highlighted non-compliance with the Charter for Trust:

- '(The works were an) absolute shambles and personal belongings were broken.'
- 'The workers ruined my stair carpets, I told the Council and they haven't done anything about it.'

<sup>2</sup> Caerphilly Homes Charter for Trust  
<http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/CaerphillyDocs/Housing/Tenants-handbook/13-CharterForTrust.aspx>

- ‘I was very disgusted at all the disruption caused, we were left without running water etc.’
- ‘We went four weeks without a sink.’
- ‘Some of the workers leave a mess after completing the work.’
- ‘The work’s nice but not happy with the hassle and length it took.’
- ‘They didn’t finish the job straight away and wouldn’t decorate the bathroom to a good standard.’

### Sheltered housing residents’ views

49 Sheltered housing residents told us that they were satisfied with the improvement works that the Council has completed, however, residents felt that this satisfaction is only achieved once any snagging is resolved. Some sheltered housing residents expressed dissatisfaction with the electrical works, and in one scheme residents had reported their concerns to the Council about the fitting of new front doors, which they had found to be difficult to open or close.

### Tenant representatives’ views

50 Tenant members of the Repairs and Improvements and Caerphilly Homes task groups told us that once completed, improvements works are usually finished to a high standard. However, they highlighted that there are examples of tenants having to complain to get to this point, after work had not been perceived to have been done correctly first time.

### Satisfaction with Kitchens

51 Seventy-nine per cent of the tenants we surveyed are satisfied with the condition of their kitchen, 12% are dissatisfied and 10% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

52 We looked at the level of satisfaction and whether having works completed affected tenants’ views. Eighty-four per cent of the 364 tenants we surveyed who have had works in the past five years are satisfied with the condition of their kitchen compared to 64% of tenants (120) who have not had works.

### Satisfaction with Bathrooms

53 Seventy-nine per cent of the tenants we surveyed are satisfied with the condition of their bathroom, 10% are dissatisfied and 11% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

54 Overall, 75% of the 136 tenants we surveyed in the Lower Rhymney Valley are satisfied with the condition of their bathroom compared to 81% of the 191 Upper Rhymney Valley tenants we surveyed and 81% of the 177 Eastern Valleys tenants.

55 We looked at tenants’ level of satisfaction and whether having works completed affected tenants’ views. Eighty-five per cent of the 364 tenants we surveyed who

have had works in the past five years are satisfied compared to 65% of the 120 tenants we surveyed who have not had works.

## Satisfaction with Exteriors of homes

- 56 We asked all 514 tenants and leaseholders we surveyed whether they are satisfied with the exterior of their home. Fifty-nine per cent are satisfied, with 17% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 23% dissatisfied.
- 57 We found no difference in satisfaction between those that have had improvement works done and those that have not had improvement works.
- 58 Sixty-three per cent of the 177 Eastern Valleys tenants and leaseholders we surveyed are satisfied with the exterior of their homes, with this figure being 59% of the 146 Lower Rhymney Valley and 55% of the 191 Upper Rhymney Valley tenants and leaseholders we surveyed.

# Tenants and leaseholders are involved with the works, but the Council inconsistently applies tenants' choice about electrical wiring

## Summary

Exhibit 5: 67% of tenants and leaseholders who have had work were included in the design of the improvement works

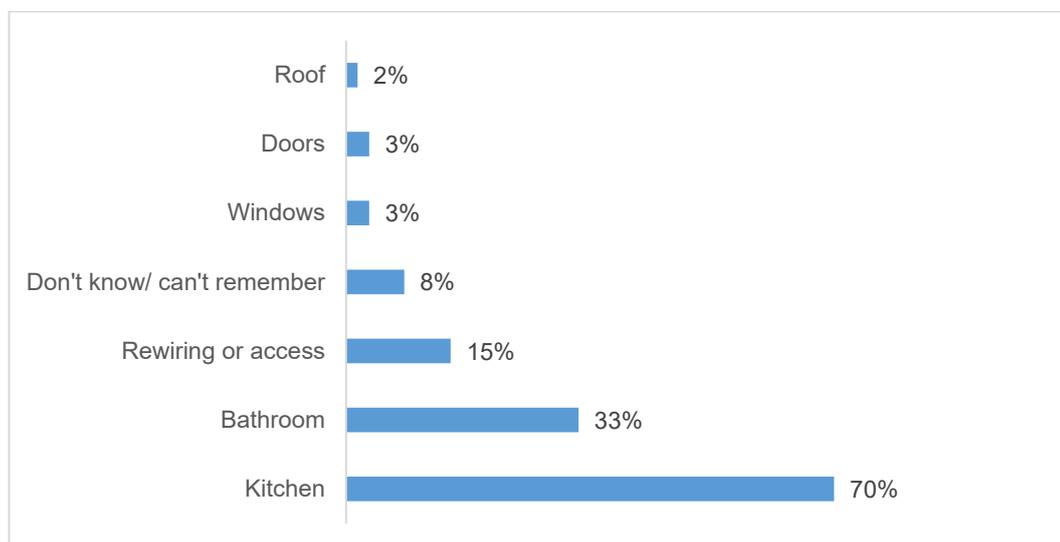


### DESIGN

**67%** of those residents who have had work were included in the design of the improvement works

- 59 We asked the 374 tenants and leaseholders we surveyed who have had improvements works whether the Council had involved them in the design or specification of any of the improvement works. Sixty-seven per cent of those tenants and leaseholders said the Council had involved them, 29% said the Council had not, and 5% did not know or could not remember.
- 60 Tenants and leaseholders can exercise their right to refuse improvement works. Fifty-five tenants and leaseholders in the survey had refused some improvement works with five having refused all the works.

Exhibit 6: kitchens and bathrooms are the improvement works most often refused by tenants and leaseholders



61 We asked those 60 tenants and leaseholders we surveyed who told us that they had refused works, why they had done so. Twenty-five per cent said they were happy with the existing state of their home, with 20% of tenants and leaseholders reporting health issues or the inconvenience of the proposed plan (20%) as their reasons to refuse the works. Thirty-seven per cent reported other reasons, with many of those stating that they had completed the improvements themselves.

### Sheltered housing residents' views in focus groups

62 The Sheltered Housing residents we spoke with in our focus groups told us that although the Council offers choice, they felt that the choice was extremely limited, especially colours and kitchen worktops. The Council provided us with examples of the brochure which details the choices which are available. The Council also provided us with an example of the document given to tenants confirming the choices that tenants have made. However, during our focus groups with Sheltered Housing residents, not all recalled receiving these documents.

### Tenant representatives' views

63 Tenant members of the Repairs and Improvement and Caerphilly Homes task groups told us that overall the level of choices is generally good, but there is still some inconsistency with how much choice is offered to all tenants depending on which builders are delivering the improvement works. The Council's policy is that tenants' choices are discussed and agreed jointly by tenants with the Council's Surveyors and TLOs.

64 Focus groups with tenants highlighted the methods that the Council uses for electrical rewiring as an area where tenants feel they are not always consistently able to influence the works to their homes. The Council maintains that it has a policy to provide tenants with a choice about whether the wires should be chased into the wall or hidden with trunking and wherever possible, cables should be chased into the wall. However, the tenants told us that this is not always the case, or it had not been clearly explained to the individual residents why trunking is needed and could not be chased into the wall. In May 2018, the Council introduced a process to record tenants' choice of either surface mounted (trunking) or buried cables.

# Eighty-five per cent of the tenants and leaseholders can quickly and easily contact the Council

## Summary

Exhibit 7: summary of tenants' and leaseholders' views of ease of contacting the Council



### CONTACTING THE COUNCIL

**85%** of residents can quickly and easily contact the housing service



### RESPONDING TO VIEWS

**64%** of residents think that the Council listens to their views about their home and neighbourhood and acts on them

## Contacting the Council

- 65 Whilst 85% of tenants and leaseholders we surveyed said that they can quickly and easily contact the Council, 9% said they cannot and 6% did not know or have not tried.
- 66 A small number of tenants and leaseholders told us that they are unclear about who to contact if they have any queries. Tenants and leaseholders aged below 45 were less likely to state that they can quickly and easily contact the Council than the overall response.
- 67 Those tenants and leaseholders we surveyed who told us that they were unable to contact the Council quickly and easily, told us about their experience of contacting the Council:
- 'When you call the Council takes ages to get through, hard to get to right department.'
  - 'Contacted the Council about a rat problem and there was no answer from the number they gave me.'
  - 'It takes a long time to get through to Council phone line; last time took me three days.'
  - 'It's difficult to call when Council you're in work.'
  - 'It would be good if you can phone after work hours, 8 am to 8 pm.'

- ‘They could be quicker in responding when you call for repairs.’
- ‘When you get problems they normally respond but we’ve had damp for two years and nothing fixed.’
- ‘Spoke to housing person and didn’t get any satisfactory answers.’

## Responding to views

68 Sixty-four per cent of the 514 tenants and leaseholders we surveyed are satisfied that the Council listens to their views and then acts on them, 17% are dissatisfied and 19% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Eighty-five per cent of the 41 sheltered housing residents are satisfied compared with 64% of the 454 other (general needs) tenants. Tenants’ and leaseholders’ satisfaction varied across the age groups from 73% for those aged over 75 to 49% for those aged 35 to 44.

## Sheltered housing residents’ views

- 69 Overall, the sheltered housing residents we spoke to told us that communication can be variable and depends on residents’ level of confidence in approaching the TLOs and the teams delivering the works. We found that the Council provides information about how to contact the Council about WHQS works including specific contact numbers, but a small number of tenants still contact the main housing team to resolve issues.
- 70 We found in Tŷ Bedwellty, the one Sheltered Housing Scheme where tenants were very satisfied with the work, that there was very good liaison between the TLO and the warden. The warden acted as the key point of contact between tenants and the TLO.

## Appointment system

71 In the phone survey, tenants and leaseholders provided us with generally positive feedback about the Council’s housing appointments system, including the text reminder system and the agreement of dates. However, a small number of tenants and leaseholders expressed negative views about the system including some who felt that there is a need to take a full day off work for an appointment, and some who had experienced appointments not being kept.

### Positive

- ‘They’re good, they always give an appointment date so you know when to expect them.’
- ‘No complaints, when I need repairs they will give a date and they keep to their word.’
- ‘If you need a repair they offer convenient time, text reminders.’

### **Negative**

- 'The times that they come out and do repairs can be inconvenient, we work full time and have to take a day off whenever we need a repair.'
- 'Pain when they can't give a time for repairs or visits.'
- 'I'm currently waiting for my roof to be repaired; it's hard to miss work for the repairs.'

72 The Council produces an annual report on the housing-related formal complaints received by its Housing Customer Services Section, which is presented to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group. In 2017 the report<sup>3</sup> highlighted an increase in service requests for both WHQS internal and external works, and also an increase in praise and thanks related to WHQS. The report also outlined how the Council had learnt lessons from the complaints to improve its housing service, including the WHQS programme. We understand that whereas previously WHQS complaints could be logged in a number of systems, there is now a single complaints inbox for the WHQS programme. Whilst this enables the Council to respond to individual complaints, the Council does not currently have a central complaints log for WHQS.

<sup>3</sup> [Complaints and Representations – Caerphilly Homes](#)

## Good practice example

Tŷ Bedwellty is a Sheltered Housing Scheme in Caerphilly County Borough. It is a block of individual flats with a shared communal area. The residents are capable of independent living but have the back up of a 'warden' on site to help with any difficulties. The Council told us that for this scheme it identified additional resources as the residents of the scheme were considered to be vulnerable, and it needed to be completed quickly.

### **Introduction**

The scheme was updated in accordance with the Welsh Quality Housing Standard (WHQS). The residents we spoke with were extremely impressed with the process and the way in which the works were carried out. We found that this was not consistent across the experience of residents in the other three sheltered housing schemes we spoke to. The apparent reasons for this are set out below.

### **Communication**

All the residents said the Council's communication with them about the improvement works was excellent. The Council held a meeting with the residents before the improvement works started. At that meeting the Council explained what improvement works it would carry out, what it would mean for residents, as well as a timeline of the works. The Council told residents what the work was going to be, and the choices that they could have.

### **How the work was carried out**

There seem to be two reasons for such high satisfaction levels at Tŷ Bedwellty. Firstly, there seemed to be a systematic approach to the work. Two flats were being upgraded at a time and all the required materials were delivered to the site in one container. The second reason seems to be that residents who were having the work carried out were moved temporarily into the two empty flats in the scheme whilst the work to their flats was completed. The residents were therefore able to avoid the mess and dust from the works.

Each of the vacated flats could be worked on quickly and without the worry of the resident being there. We were told that each flat took around two weeks to complete. It was also advantageous there was one team of workers who were available to complete the work.

We were also told that the Tenant Liaison Officers helped the residents pack their belongings, and the Warden was the main point of contact between the scheme and the WHQS team.

## Additional survey questions

- 73 We asked the tenants and leaseholders we surveyed additional questions in relation to their home to provide further insight for the Council.

### Exhibit 8: summary of tenants' and leaseholders' views about other aspects of their homes



#### HEATING

**34%** of residents find it difficult to heat their homes to a comfortable level in the winter.



#### DAMP

**34%** of residents have damp in some parts of their homes



#### SATISFACTION WITH OVERALL HOUSING SERVICE

**78%** of residents are satisfied with the Council's housing service



#### SATISFACTION WITH NEIGHBOURHOOD

**76%** of residents are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live

## Heating

- 74 We asked all tenants and leaseholders we surveyed if they find it difficult to heat their homes to a comfortable level in the winter. Thirty-four per cent told us that they find it difficult and 66% do not find it difficult to heat their home to a comfortable level in winter. Responses differed according to the compliance status of homes with 36% of tenants and leaseholders in non-compliant properties reporting it difficult to heat their home to a comfortable level compared to 23% of those tenants and leaseholders in acceptable fail properties and 16% of tenants and leaseholders in WHQS compliant properties.
- 75 We asked the 175 tenants and leaseholders we surveyed who said they have difficulty in heating their home to a comfortable level why. Twenty-eight per cent said it was due to a lack of draught proofing, for 19% it was a lack of insulation,

for 16% the cause was an old or poor heating system, and for 15% the reason was the affordability of fuel.

- 76 Forty-two per cent of those 65 Upper Rhymney Valley respondents who said they have difficulty in heating their home to a comfortable level identified draught proofing as the cause but just 10% of the 51 Eastern Valley respondents identified this as the cause. Twenty-four per cent of the 51 Eastern Valley respondents attributed old/poor heating systems as a cause compared to just 12% of the 65 respondents in the Upper Rhymney Valley
- 77 Thirty-eight per cent of those who told us that they find it difficult to heat their home to a comfortable level gave another reason. Almost all of these people identified issues relating to their windows as the cause for their difficulty in heating their homes. A number stated that their windows are not well fitted leading to drafts. Some said that their windows are currently non-double glazed. A small number of people noted that their radiators are insufficient to heat their rooms and the location of homes was a contributory factor for a very small number of people.

## Damp

- 78 We asked tenants and leaseholders we surveyed if there is any damp in their home. Thirty-two per cent told us that they have damp in their home and this tends to be only slightly more evident with non-compliant properties (34%). We found no difference between the three geographical areas in tenants' and leaseholders' responses to this question.
- 79 Most of the 162 respondents who reported that they have damp in their home generally said they saw evidence of damp in their house from visible mould (62%) and to a lesser extent visible wet patches (26%) and condensation on windows (14%).
- 80 Sixty-seven per cent of the 63 Upper Rhymney Valley respondents who reported damp identified visible mould compared to 56% of the 54 Eastern Valley and 62% of the 45 Lower Rhymney Valley respondents.
- 81 Seventy-five per cent of the tenants and leaseholders we surveyed who reported that they have damp said that they had reported this to their landlord. Reporting varied across the housing areas with 31% of the Lower Rhymney Valley respondents not reporting the damp to their landlord compared to 27% of Upper Rhymney Valley and 19% of Eastern Valley respondents. Cracks in the walls and missing roof tiles were common causes of damp identified by respondents but a small number of respondents attributed their damp to the cavity insulation.

## Satisfaction with the Housing Service

- 82 Overall, 78% of the tenants and leaseholders we surveyed were satisfied with the Council's housing service, with 10% dissatisfied and 11% not sure either way.

- 83 Satisfaction varies across the three housing areas with 40% of the 177 Eastern Valleys tenants and leaseholders, 32% of the 191 Upper Rhymney Valley, and 24% of the 146 Lower Rhymney Valley tenants and leaseholders being satisfied.
- 84 Tenant and leaseholder satisfaction with the housing service also varied across the age groups with those aged below 54 less satisfied and those aged 45 to 54 the least positive.
- 85 Seventy-seven per cent of those aged 25 to 34 were satisfied, this decreased to 72% for those aged 35 to 44 and 66% for those aged 45 to 54. Higher satisfaction levels were recorded by those aged 55 or above: 78% of those aged 55 to 65 were satisfied, 84% of those aged 65 to 74 and 86% of those aged over 75 satisfied.

### Satisfaction with the neighbourhood

- 86 Eighty-six per cent of the tenants and leaseholders we surveyed are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live, with 98% of sheltered housing tenants expressing satisfaction. Tenant and leaseholder satisfaction increased with age with the lowest levels of satisfaction being those aged less than 34 and the highest levels being for those aged over 55. We found no difference in the responses of tenants and leaseholders living in the three geographical housing areas to this question.

# Appendix 1

## Overview of survey participants

The survey sample of 514 people consisted of 451 who live in non-compliant homes (88%), 26 who live in fully compliant homes (5%) and 37 who live in homes with acceptable fails (7%).

Seventy-three per cent of the tenants and leaseholders told us that the Council has undertaken improvement works to their home to meet the WHQS in the past five years. Twenty-six per cent said that they had had not any improvements and one per cent did not know. Seventy-one per cent of those tenants and leaseholders living in non-compliant households and 78% of those living in acceptable fails reported that the Council has done some improvement works to their homes to meet WHQS.

Two hundred and twenty-five (62%) of those tenants and leaseholders who had had works completed in the past five years have received only internal works, 30% had received both internal and external works with 12% only receiving external works and 2% only communal areas. These data reflect the Council's approach of delivering internal/external works concurrently in different communities. Thirty-nine per cent of those tenants and leaseholders who had had works in the Eastern Valleys had received both internal and external works with this figure being 24% in the Upper Rhymney Valley and 29% in the Lower Rhymney Valley.

**Exhibit 9: overview of the tenancy type, age and length of tenancy for people who completed the survey**

### Tenancy type

	Number	Percentage
Tenant	489	95%
Leaseholder	25	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Age of respondents

	Number	Percentage
16-34	60	11%
35-44	47	9%
45-54	74	14%
55-64	93	18%
65-74	110	21%
75+	130	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Length of tenancy

	Number	Percentage
Less than one year	31	6%
One to two years	34	7%
Two to three years	38	7%
Three to five years	55	11%
More than five years	356	69%
Can't remember	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Appendix 2

## Survey questions

### Exhibit 10: Caerphilly County Borough Council: Welsh Housing Quality Standard Survey:

**Q1 Are you a council tenant or leaseholder?**  
*Read out - Tick one box only*

- Council tenant .....  1
- Leaseholder .....  2
- Tenant of a leaseholder .....  3

**Q2 All respondents**  
**How long have you lived in your home? (or if a leaseholder: How long have you been a leaseholder?)**  
*Read out - Tick one box only*

- Less than 1 year .....  1
- 1 to 2 years .....  2
- 2 to 3 years .....  3
- 3 to 5 years .....  4
- More than 5 years .....  5
- Can't remember .....  6

#### Views on council housing services and improvements

**Q3a Council tenants & Leaseholders (Q1 = Codes 1 & 2 only)**  
**Has the council told you about the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)?** *Read out if no/ don't know: The Welsh Housing Quality Standard requires all social landlords to improve their housing stock to an acceptable level by December 2020.*

- Yes .....  1
- No .....  2
- Don't know/ can't remember .....  3

**Q3b If yes, how did the Council tell you?**  
*Tick all that apply*

- Newsletter .....  1
- Letter .....  2
- Website .....  3
- In person .....  4
- Other .....  5

**Other (please specify)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Q4 Leaseholders only (Q1 = Code 2)**  
**Has the council informed you about your maintenance responsibilities as a leaseholder?**

- Yes .....  1
- No .....  2
- Don't know/ can't remember .....  3

**Q5a** All respondents

**In the past five years has the council done any improvement works to your home to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard?**

- Yes .....  <sup>1</sup> Go to Q5b
- No .....  <sup>2</sup> Skip to Q8
- Don't know/ can't remember .....  <sup>3</sup> Go to Q5b

**Q5b** Council tenants only (Q1 = Code 1)

**If yes, to what parts of your home has the council done the improvement works?**

*Read out - Tick all that apply*

- Internal only (for example, kitchen, bathroom, central heating) .....  <sup>1</sup>
- External only (for example windows or roofs) .....  <sup>2</sup>
- Communal areas (for example staircases, stairwells) .....  <sup>3</sup>
- Both internal and external .....  <sup>4</sup>

**Q5c** Leaseholders & tenants of leaseholders only (Q1 = Codes 2 & 3)

**If yes, to what parts of your home has the council done the improvement works?**

*Read out - Tick all that apply*

- External only (for example windows or roofs) .....  <sup>1</sup>
- Communal areas (for example staircases, stairwells) .....  <sup>2</sup>
- Structure of the building .....  <sup>3</sup>

**Q6** Council tenants & Leaseholders (Q1 = Codes 1 & 2 only): Those who recall improvement works (Q5b = Code 1)

**Did the council:** *Read out - Tick one box on each row*

	Yes	No	Don't know/ can't remember
Explain to you why the improvement works were needed to achieve WHQS?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complete the improvement works when you were told they would be?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Include you in the design or specification of any improvement works for example, to your kitchen or bathroom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q7a** *Those who recall improvement works (Q5a = Code 1)*  
**Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the improvement works that the council has carried out to your home?**  
*Read out - Tick one box only*

- Very satisfied .....  1
- Satisfied .....  2
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.....  3
- Dissatisfied.....  4
- Very dissatisfied.....  5

**Q7b** *All respondents*  
**Why do you say that?**

---

**Q8** *All respondents*  
**Do you know if the Council is going to make any improvements to your home in the next 2 years such as a new kitchen, bathroom, roof, windows, central heating, electrics, external doors, mains powered smoke detectors, gardens and external storage? (all respondents – although only state external works with leaseholders)**

- Yes.....  1
- No .....  2
- Don't know/ can't remember .....  3

**Q9a** *All respondents*  
**Have you refused to have improvements made to your home by the council, for example, windows, doors, roof, kitchen, bathroom, rewiring or access?**

- Yes - all .....  1
- Yes - some.....  2
- No .....  3
- Don't know/ can't remember.....  4

**Q9b** Which works did you refuse?  
*Tick all that apply - Unprompted*

- Windows.....  1
- Doors .....  2
- Roof .....  3
- Kitchen.....  4
- Bathroom.....  5
- Rewiring or access .....  6
- Don't know/ can't remember.....  7

**Q9c** Why did you refuse?  
*Tick all that apply - Unprompted*

- Health issues (do not specify) .....  1
- Concerns about the disruption .....  2
- Proposed plan for the work to be done was not convenient .....  3
- Uncertain about the nature of the work .....  4
- Happy with the existing state of my home .....  5
- Prefer not to say .....  6
- Other reasons.....  7

**Other reasons (please specify)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Views on general housing services and the condition of your home/ neighbourhood**

**Q10a** All respondents  
**Do you find it difficult to heat your home to a comfortable level in the winter?**

- Yes.....  1
- No .....  2

**Q10b** If yes, why is that?  
*Tick all that apply - Unprompted*

- Affordability of fuel .....  1
- Lack of adequate insulation .....  2
- Lack of lagged pipes/ tank.....  3
- Draught proofing .....  4
- Old/ inefficient boiler .....  5
- Old/ poor heating system.....  6
- Size of property .....  7
- Other .....  8

**Other reasons (please specify)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Q11a** All respondents  
**Is there any damp in any part of your home?**

- Yes.....  1
- No .....  2

**Q11b** If yes, how do you see the damp in your house?  
*Tick all that apply - Unprompted*

- Visible wet patches.....  1
- Water leak .....  2
- Condensation on windows for example during cooking or on cold mornings .....  3
- Visible mould.....  4
- Don't know .....  5
- Other .....  6

**Other reasons (please specify)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Q11d** Have you reported the damp to your landlord?

- Yes.....  1
- No .....  2

**Q12 How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following:**

*Read out - Tick one box on each row*

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
a) <i>Tenants only (Q1 = Code 1)</i> The overall condition of the kitchen in your home?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>					
b) <i>Tenants only (Q1 = Code 1)</i> The overall condition of the bathroom in your home?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>					
c) The outside of your home such as external walls, doors, windows and boundary fences/ walls?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q12d All respondents**  
**Why do you say that?**

---

**Q13 Council tenants & Leaseholders (Q1 = Code 1 & 2 only)**  
**Can you easily and quickly contact the housing service at times that are convenient for you?**

Yes.....  1

No .....  2

Don't know/ haven't tried .....  3

**Q14** All respondents

**Thinking about your home and neighbourhood, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you:**  
*Read out - Tick one box on each row*

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
a) That your council listens to your views and acts upon them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) With your neighbourhood as a place to live?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q14c** All respondents

**Why do you say that?**

---

**Q15** All respondents

**Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the housing service you receive from the Council?**

Very satisfied .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Satisfied .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Neither nor .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Dissatisfied.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
Very dissatisfied.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	5

**Q16** All respondents

**Is there anything else you would like to say about Council housing services that you have not already mentioned?**

**Q17** All respondents

**Which of the following of age groups do you fall in?**

*Read out - Tick one box only*

16-24.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
25-34.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
35-44.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
45-54.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
55-64.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
65-74.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	6
75+.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	7

# Appendix 3

## Infographic summarising survey results

Exhibit 11: infographic summarising survey results



Around a third of residents have problems heating their homes or experience damp



HEATING

**34%** of residents find it difficult to heat their homes to a comfortable level in the winter.



DAMP

**34%** of residents have damp in some parts of their homes

Residents do not always get the information that they need about WHQS



INFORMATION

**62%** of residents told us that the Council has told them about WHQS



EXPLAINING THE NEED FOR THE WORKS

**55%** of residents who have had works told us that the Council explained why the improvement works were needed



NEXT TWO YEARS

**51%** of residents know if the Council will be making any improvements to their home in the next 2 years



WALES AUDIT OFFICE  
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

The telephone interviews for **Caerphilly County Borough Council** ran from **23rd April** until **1st May** 2018.

The Wales Audit Office requested from the Council the full list of its residents. The Wales Audit Office then spoke to a sample of around **5%** of all of the Council's tenants and leaseholders. The sample of **514** respondents was divided between tenants and leaseholders based on the WHQS compliance status of the **10,477** homes that the Council provided. Homes can be fully compliant, non-compliant or acceptable fails. The sample also reflects the WHQS status of homes across the area based on the data provided by the Council. **489** tenants and **25** leaseholders responded to the survey.

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WALES AUDIT OFFICE  
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

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Auditor General for Wales

# Welsh Housing Quality Standard follow-up report – **Caerphilly County Borough Council**

Audit year: 2018-19

Date issued: January 2019

Document reference: 994A2018-19

This document has been prepared as part of work performed in accordance with statutory functions.

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We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

This document is also available in Welsh.

The team who delivered the work comprised Gareth Jones, Gwilym Bury and Allison Rees programme managed by Non Jenkins under the direction of Huw Rees.

# Contents

The Council has responded positively to our June 2017 Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) report and statutory recommendations by making significant improvements and as a result we now conclude that it is likely to meet the WHQS by December 2020.

**Summary report** 4

Proposals for improvement 7

**Detailed report** 8

The Council has responded positively to our June 2017 Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) report and statutory recommendations by making significant improvements and as a result we now conclude that it is likely to meet the WHQS by December 2020 8

The Council has made significant progress in identifying the investment and resources it needs to complete its WHQS programme by the end of 2020 9

The Council has taken steps to determine the value for money of its procurement arrangements 10

There have been improvements to its WHQS performance reports, however, there is still inconsistent and inaccurate reporting of performance 11

The Council now has measurable performance targets to effectively monitor the remainder of its WHQS programme 13

The Council has strengthened its arrangements to meet its statutory landlord responsibilities 13

The Council has invested additional resources to enhance its WHQS programme management but still lacks a current local housing strategy and does not always produce comprehensive Equality Impact Assessments for key housing policy documents 14

## Appendices

Appendix 1 – Caerphilly County Borough Council WHQS review action plan – updated October 2018 16

# Summary report

## Summary

### Why the Welsh Housing Quality Standard is important

- 1 In 2001, the Welsh Government set out their long-term vision for housing in Wales entitled Better Homes for People in Wales. The Welsh Government then introduced the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) in 2002, with revised guidance issued in 2008 to implement this vision. The Welsh Government developed the WHQS to provide a common target standard for all housing in Wales and is primarily used to assess the social housing provided by councils (consistent with the term used in the rest of the report) and housing associations (social landlords). The Welsh Government expected all social landlords in Wales to adopt the standard and devise realistic programmes for bringing all their homes up to it as soon as possible, but by the end of 2020 at the latest, and to maintain standards into the future.
- 2 As at March 2018, Caerphilly County Borough Council (the Council) owned 10,801 properties. In August 2018, the Council reported that 3,501 properties met the standard to 'full compliance' having had certain improvement works undertaken, with a further 794 properties meeting the standard as 'acceptable fails' as defined by the Welsh Government in its guidance on compliance. 6,506 were not fully compliant as at 31 March 2018<sup>1</sup>.

### What we looked at

- 3 Between May and October 2018, we carried out a review of the Council's progress in addressing the three statutory recommendations in our Welsh Housing Quality Standard report issued to the Council in June 2017.
- 4 Our 2017 statutory recommendations were:

<sup>1</sup> Welsh Government Statistical Release. Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS), as at 31 March 2018. 'This annual release presents information from the annual data collection measuring the progress made by social landlords in achieving the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) for their stock. The release covers compliance with the standard as at 31 March 2018 and information on compliance with the WHQS by individual component type. Full compliance refers to dwellings where the WHQS standard is achieved for all individual elements, but there can be situations where achieving the standard for an individual element is not possible. Such situations may include the cost or timing of the work, residents choosing not to have the work done or where there are physical constraints to the work. In these instances, the social landlords may record one or more elements as acceptable fails. Where a dwelling contains one or more acceptable fails, but all other elements are compliant, the dwelling is deemed to be compliant subject to acceptable fails.'

Exhibit 1: recommendations on action to achieve the WHQS by 2020

<b>Statutory Recommendations</b>	
<b>The Council should take urgent action to achieve WHQS by 2020. It should:</b>	
<b>R1</b>	<p>By September 2017, develop a comprehensive, overarching, financial and operational programme setting out how the Council will achieve WHQS by 2020. This programme should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• establish the full scope of investment needed in the Council's housing stock based on accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date stock condition information;</li><li>• set out how the Council, by March 2018, will:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– review its procurement arrangements to ensure value for money;</li><li>– provide clear and transparent information to members and tenants about the current position of the programme and a commitment to stakeholders with accurate projected completion dates; and</li><li>– secure the resources needed to deliver the programme by 2020.</li></ul></li><li>• contain clear and measurable milestones and relevant performance measures for delivering the programme up to 2020; and</li><li>• set out the programme management, governance and accountability responsibilities and arrangements so that urgent remedial action can be taken if further slippage occurs and those tasked with delivering the programme can be held to account at appropriate decision-making levels.</li></ul>
<b>R2</b>	<p><b>Assure itself that it is meeting its statutory landlord responsibilities by ensuring that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• all properties have a valid gas safety certificate in place, or are having the Council's non-compliance arrangements applied to them fully; and</li><li>• arrangements for undertaking asbestos surveys and recording the results of these surveys are robust.</li></ul>
<b>R3</b>	<p><b>Ensure it has sufficient project management capacity to deliver the Council's WHQS programme effectively by 2020.</b></p>

How we approached the review

- 5 We undertook the follow up review work in two phases. During the first stage we reviewed the Council's WHQS progress reports to Cabinet, Policy and Resources scrutiny committee and Caerphilly Homes task group since 1 November 2017. In this first stage of the review we established the Council's own assessment of progress. The output from Phase One was fed back to senior Council officers and the relevant Cabinet Member in July 2018. The Phase One review informed the planning and delivery of Phase Two.
- 6 During the second phase, we interviewed officers, contractor representatives and members and visited some properties undergoing WHQS works. We sought to

verify the Council's progress on delivering the WHQS programme and the effect of that progress on the Council's achievement of the WHQS by the end of 2020.

- 7 As part of a separate project, we surveyed a sample of 500 tenants about their experiences of the Council's WHQS programme during April and May 2018. A report on this Service User Perspective project will be issued separately.

## Overall findings

- 8 Overall, we found that: **The Council has responded positively to our June 2017 Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) report and statutory recommendations by making significant improvements and as a result we now conclude that it is likely to meet the WHQS by December 2020.** We came to this conclusion because:

- the Council has made significant progress in identifying the investment and resources it needs to complete its WHQS programme by the end of 2020;
- the Council has taken steps to determine the value for money of its procurement arrangements;
- there have been improvements to its WHQS performance reports, however there is still inconsistent and inaccurate reporting of performance;
- the Council now has measurable performance targets to effectively monitor the remainder of its WHQS programme;
- the Council has strengthened its arrangements to meet its statutory landlord responsibilities; and
- the Council has invested additional resources to enhance its WHQS programme management but still lacks a current Local Housing strategy and does not always produce comprehensive Equality Impact Assessments for key housing policy documents.

## Proposals for improvement

- 9 The table below sets out the proposals for improvement that we have identified following this review.

### Exhibit 2: proposals for improvement

Proposals for improvement	
P1	The Council should ensure that members and tenants receive accurate WHQS performance information regularly about its progress towards achieving its 2020 programme deadline.
P2	The Council should agree a Local Housing Strategy to set out its long-term vision for the future priorities for homes in Caerphilly.
P3	The Council should ensure that Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken consistently.

# Detailed report

## The Council has responded positively to our June 2017 Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) report and statutory recommendations by making significant improvements and as a result we now conclude that it is likely to meet the WHQS by December 2020

- 9 The Council has responded positively to our June 2017 WHQS report which concluded 'the majority of tenants' homes remain below the Welsh Housing Quality Standard due to long-standing inefficient and ineffective programme management and the Council is unlikely to achieve the Standard by 2020'.
- 10 **Appendix 1** contains the Council's action plan to address the three statutory recommendations made in our 2017 WHQS report. Following our presentation on the 2017 WHQS report to Cabinet on 1 November 2017, the Council set up a Cross Party working group of members of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee to consider the Council's progress in addressing our statutory recommendations. This Cross Party working group reported their satisfaction that progress was being made to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 27 February 2018.
- 11 The Council is making a number of positive changes to the planning, management, delivery and monitoring of the WHQS programme. In particular, we note that the Council:
  - a. is undertaking a full stock condition survey of all Council owned properties;
  - b. is improving WHQS project management and capacity;
  - c. has a comprehensive financial and operational programme outlining how it will achieve WHQS by the end of 2020;
  - d. has a Caerphilly Homes Asset Management Strategy which is focused on maintaining WHQS after 2020;
  - e. has a comprehensive 30-year Housing Investment Business Plan;
  - f. has made significant improvements in its arrangements to meet its statutory landlord responsibilities;
  - g. has a more comprehensive asbestos management policy;
  - h. has sought to improve its reporting of performance of its WHQS programme; and
  - i. has increased the number of WHQS fully compliant properties from 5.7% in 2016-17 to 39.76% in 2017-18.

- 12 During this review, we also note that there are other aspects of the WHQS programme and wider Council housing programme that require improvement. In particular:
- a. there remains inconsistent and inaccurate reporting of WHQS performance to members and the public despite the Council introducing a performance data validation process and WHQS strategic scorecard;
  - b. the continued lack of a Local Housing Strategy; and
  - c. a limited Equalities Impact Assessment for the Caerphilly Homes Asset Management Strategy.
- 13 The remainder of this report provides the context and detail of how the Council is addressing our statutory recommendations.

## The Council has made significant progress in identifying the investment and resources it needs to complete its WHQS programme by the end of 2020

- 14 The Council has made substantial progress in developing a comprehensive financial and operational programme outlining how the Council will achieve WHQS by the end of 2020.
- 15 Since our 2017 review, the Council has embarked on surveying all Council properties that do not meet the WHQS standard. The Council now has a more accurate understanding of the individual requirements of each Council property which is improving the planning and delivery of its WHQS work. The Council intends to complete these surveys by December 2018.
- 16 Since our 2017 review the Council has established average costs of each internal and external elements required to achieve WHQS. The Council can now more accurately forecast future programme expenditure to inform its business plan.
- 17 As a result of the surveying non-WHQS compliant properties, the Council is now predicting an increase in the overall projected costs to deliver WHQS by the end of 2020 from £220 million to £250 million. The Council will need Housing Revenue Account (HRA) contributions and an element of 'borrowing' to fund the difference, however, the amount needed is within the Council's agreed borrowing threshold set up at the start of the WHQS programme.
- 18 The Council's IT asset management system – called Keystone – records all the data related to each individual social housing property and includes the costs associated when updating each property to WHQS. Keystone is critical to monitoring compliance with each of the components used to assess progress in achieving WHQS.
- 19 The Council's HRA Business Plan, Caerphilly Homes Asset Management Strategy and other associated detailed documents we reviewed demonstrate that the Council has a detailed costed plan to achieve WHQS by 2020. The Council's in-

house workforce, or Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) as it is also known, as well as private contractors are delivering the WHQS programme.

- 20 Following the introduction of the Council's Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) in 2017, the Council's ability to engage local specialist contractors in a timely manner to complete WHQS works on properties has improved. At the time of this review, about 80 contractors were available through the DPS.
- 21 At the time of our fieldwork for our previous review in March and April 2017, the Council did not have a contractor in place to undertake the external works to tenants' homes in the Lower Rhymney Valley. Through the DPS and the Council's DLO, all areas of the county now have WHQS work planned.
- 22 The Council spent £42 million on WHQS programme delivery in 2017-18. This represents the highest annual amount since WHQS programme delivery started and reflects the significant increase in fully compliant homes in 2017-18.

## The Council has taken steps to determine the value for money of its procurement arrangements

- 23 Since June 2017, the Council commissioned an independent review of its single source supplier<sup>2</sup> arrangements for its WHQS programme and undertook an exercise to compare costs of its DLO workforce to those of external contractors.
- 24 The independent review of the single source supplier looked at 72 products, purchased by the Council for its WHQS programme that have the highest annual expenditure. The review concluded that the arrangement provides value for money for the Council for the products used, although some rates could be improved. The review gave two recommendations:
- ensure that the Council pays the most competitive prices for plasterboard; and
  - ensure a consistent classification of products that would assist any future pricing reviews.
- 25 Cabinet received a report in November 2017 which included the findings of the Council's comparison of the costs undertaken by private contractors and the Council's DLO team. The Council reported that its DLO are 20% more expensive than the private contractors due to a number of factors including superannuation, living wage, leave, sickness, overheads linked to support service costs. In its report, the Council set out factors that it had used to consider the value for money that it was achieving through its arrangements. These factors included greater tenant satisfaction reported from those receiving works from the DLO, comparative performance of the in-house and external contractors, reduced number of complaints.

<sup>2</sup> In 2012, the Council entered into a single source supply arrangement for all materials in relation to Council-house maintenance and the WHQS programme.

## There have been improvements to its WHQS performance reports, however there is still inconsistent and inaccurate reporting of performance

- 26 The Council has taken action to ensure that key WHQS performance information and key dates are on Keystone in a more timely manner.
- 27 In early 2018, the Council reviewed the process of performance reporting and the inputting of performance data onto Keystone. This review highlighted delays and occasional incorrect recording of performance. As a result, the Council introduced revised weekly responsibilities and timescales to record WHQS performance into Keystone. All WHQS project managers interviewed by us for this review are aware of the revised responsibilities and timescales for the recording of performance.
- 28 The accuracy of the Council's performance recording and reporting is now subject to a more rigorous validation process. Following our Phase One feedback to the Council, the Chief Housing Officer requested the Council's Internal Audit service to review the WHQS data validation processes. This took place during August to October 2018.
- 29 The report concludes that:

'The control procedures which were in place were:

In need of improvement – based on the results of the audit work undertaken it is considered that the control framework that was in place was in need of improvement. In May 2018 however, new procedures were introduced which are well documented and set out the processes for relevant staff to follow. These address the control issues going forward, but procedures now need to be developed to address historical issues identified by the audit. In addition, staff resources, in the form of a dedicated team of Officers supported by the Housing Technical Manager and Housing Group Accountant, have been made available to evolve and introduce new validation processes to address the main subject of this audit.

Compliance with the controls are considered to be:

In need of improvement – based on the results of the audit work undertaken it is considered that the control framework that was in place was in need of improvement. In May 2018 however, new procedures were introduced which are well documented and set out the processes for relevant staff to follow. These address the control issues going forward, but procedures now need to be developed to address historical issues identified by the audit. In addition, staff resources, in the form of a dedicated team of Officers supported by the Housing Technical Manager and Housing Group Accountant, have been made available to evolve and introduce new validation processes to address the main subject of this audit.

Due to the levels of Conclusions above the Chief Housing Officer will be invited to the next audit committee.'

- 30 The Council's 2018 annual performance submission to the Welsh Government states that 39.76% of its properties are fully compliant with WHQS as of 31 March 2018. However, this is not the figure it has used in any of its end of year performance reports to members since its annual performance submission to the Welsh Government. This provides members with an inaccurate picture of the Council's performance.
- 31 The Council reported its 2017-18 WHQS performance in three end of year performance reports during September and October 2018:
- a. Well-being Objective 5;
  - b. Caerphilly Homes end of year performance report; and
  - c. the Council's Annual Performance Report.
- 32 We found discrepancies in different aspects of the 2017-18 WHQS performance in these reports and there was no clear rationale as to why the Council reported different performance information in the different reports. In particular, we note that the overall WHQS compliance rate in these reports was lower than the performance reported to the Welsh Government in August 2018. Therefore, WHQS performance for 2017-18 was under reported to members and the public after it made the submission to Welsh Government.
- 33 To improve WHQS performance reporting, a WHQS strategic scorecard accompanies performance reports to elected members. The scorecard shows:
- a. levels of compliance for internal and external works;
  - b. weekly targets and actual key performance for the completion of internal and external works. A Red, Amber, Green (RAG) system highlights whether weekly targets are achieved or not;
  - c. tenant satisfaction levels;
  - d. targets for each quarter up to March 2020;
  - e. projected and actual programme expenditure until March 2020; and
  - f. the number of WHQS fully compliant properties.
- 34 We found that the programme targets are not clear and the number of compliant properties in the end of year 2017-18 scorecard is different to the number reported to the Welsh Government. Additionally, the scorecard has inaccurately recorded the previous year's performance.
- 35 The WHQS strategic scorecard shows future quarterly targets for internal and external works and overall compliance. However, the design of the scorecard means it is difficult to read the actual targets and would benefit from presenting this information more clearly.
- 36 In our previous report issued in June 2017, we noted that the Council's WHQS performance reports focused more on completion of internal and external works and not full compliance. The Council now clearly reports the number of properties

that are fully compliant, but due to inconsistent and inaccurate performance information reported to members, officers, tenants and leaseholders, effective challenge and oversight of WHQS progress is hampered.

## The Council now has measurable performance targets to effectively monitor the remainder of its WHQS programme

- 37 In 2015, the Council commenced WHQS work on its properties. The annual rate of properties fully compliant for 2015-16 and 2016-17 was low at 2.5% and 5.7% respectively. The number of fully compliant properties increased significantly to 39.76% for 2017-18. As at the end of September 2018, the Council reported to the Audit Committee on 16 October that its overall compliance rate was 51%.
- 38 The Council has weekly completion targets for both internal and external works. The Council's WHQS team monitor the weekly delivery of both internal and external works and this monitoring is showing that internal works are delivering to target but the external works are slightly behind schedule.
- 39 All officers and members we interviewed are clear that March 2020 is its deadline to fully deliver its WHQS programme although the Welsh Government's deadline is December 2020. However, the WHQS strategic scorecard (as at 28 September 2018) gives the projected deadline for full internal works compliance as 1 May 2020 and 20 May 2020 for full external works compliance. Setting a deadline that is earlier than the Welsh Government deadline is prudent and allows for potential slippage to complete external WHQS works due to any severe weather in the winters of 2018 and 2019.

## The Council has strengthened its arrangements to meet its statutory landlord responsibilities

- 40 At the time of our fieldwork for our previous review in March and April 2017, there were over 400 council properties which did not have a valid CP12 gas safety certificate. As at 28 April 2017, just over 98% of the council's properties had a valid CP12 gas safety certificate meaning that 221 properties did not.
- 41 During our fieldwork for this review, we found that the Council has made significant improvements in its arrangements to meet its statutory landlord responsibilities. The Council has made revisions to its gas safety procedures which are now fully compliant with UK Health and Safety Executive guidance for landlords. Where tenants do not provide access to their homes to allow the Council to undertake gas servicing, there is staged approach for the Council to gain access.
- 42 If the Council cannot gain access through these steps, the Council's policy states that the Council can take legal proceedings to gain access. Since the introduction of the new policy on commencing legal proceedings the Council has obtained access to 50 properties where it has been determined that there has been a

breach of their tenancy agreement, by the issuing of formal Notices of Seeking Possession (NOSP).

- 43 In the Council's regulatory proposal for improvement progress report for its Audit committee on 24 July 2018, it reported that 99.3% of its properties now have the gas servicing certificate. Those properties where a certificate had expired and access was not agreed were subject to ongoing legal proceedings.
- 44 The Council's asbestos procedures comply with Health and Safety Executive guidance and no property has WHQS or other repairs work undertaken without a full survey being available prior to the commencement of work. To address our statutory recommendation, the Council appointed an asbestos technical officer to coordinate the completion of all asbestos surveys and ensure the recording of asbestos surveys onto Keystone. The officer ensures that the findings of the surveys are available to operational staff. The Council now has clear arrangements and a dedicated member of staff and anticipates that all properties will have asbestos information recorded on Keystone by January 2019.

### The Council has invested additional resources to enhance its WHQS programme management but still lacks a current Local Housing strategy and does not always produce comprehensive Equality Impact Assessments for key Housing policy documents

- 45 The Council is improving project management capacity in delivering and managing the WHQS programme. A new role of housing technical manager has been created and appointed to increase project manager capacity. This officer oversees the WHQS programme, the housing repairs team as well as the work of the surveyors and Gas Servicing team.
- 46 The Council has also appointed an additional foreman, assistant project manager and surveyor to increase its capacity to manage and deliver its WHQS.
- 47 The Council is alert to the prospect that properties currently fully compliant as an 'acceptable fail' due to residents' choice<sup>3</sup>, may become available for WHQS internal and or external works in the future. The Housing Repairs team is creating a new sub-team to complete works in those homes if they become available and the DLO or external contractor are not working in the area where the property has become available for works.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS), as at 31 March 2018. Welsh Government press release dated 4 October 2018.

There can be situations where achieving the standard for an individual element is not possible. Such situations may include the cost or timing of the work, residents choosing not to have the work done or where there are physical constraints to the work. In these instances, the landlords may record one or more element as acceptable fails.

- 48 Although the Council's procedures for encouraging residents to allow access to their homes for WHQS work are in line with the Welsh Government guidance the Council does not have a robust system in place to periodically check if residents change their minds. For example, the Council could after 2019 contact residents at least once a year to offer previously refused WHQS works.
- 49 Our previous 2017 report highlighted that the Council did not have an up-to-date local housing strategy. This remains the case.
- 50 During our fieldwork for this review, both officers and members expressed their own views as to how housing should evolve and what the Council's future responsibilities are in providing social housing. Therefore, by not having a strategy there is the potential to create a fragmented and inconsistent vision for the service. The absence of a Local Housing Strategy also may prevent the Council from fully demonstrating how it is addressing the five ways of working to meet the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- 51 The Council is considering and planning for the continuation of Caerphilly Homes maintenance and investment beyond 2020. In September and October 2018, the Caerphilly Homes Task Group, Policy and Resources scrutiny committee and Cabinet considered a draft Caerphilly Homes asset management strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to understand and commit to maintaining the quality of all Council housing properties post-2020.
- 52 The Housing Asset Management Strategy did not include a comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment. The Council did not consider it necessary for a full Equality Impact Assessment, but during our review the explanation as to why was not clear. At the time of our fieldwork, there has been few Equality Impact Assessments in relation to Housing service change proposals were available to the public or members to consider. The Council will need to assure itself that the absence of an Equality Impact Assessment for key strategic decisions, does not put it at risk of not complying with the 2010 Equality Act. The Council should also assure itself that it fully demonstrates how it is addressing the five ways of working which Councils are required to adopt to meet the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFG Act).

# Appendix 1

This is the Council's action plan to address the Wales Audit Office's three statutory recommendations made in our 2017 WHQS report:

## WALES AUDIT OFFICE WHQS REVIEW – ACTION PLAN – AUGUST 2017

Recommendations	Actions	Owner	Progress / Due Date
<p><b>Recommendation 1</b></p> <p>Develop a comprehensive, overarching, financial and operational programme setting out how the Council will achieve WHQS by 2020.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure that the Keystone Asset Database provides up to date survey information.</li> <li>2. Review projected programme costs by replacing Savill's estimates with more accurate actual costs based on recently completed contract information.</li> <li>3. Amend existing programme in order to reflect communities where work has been completed, is currently ongoing or is planned. Programme to also incorporate a breakdown of the communities to clarify which streets are included.</li> <li>4. Ensure adequate resources to enable surveys to be completed at the earliest opportunity in order to better inform future investment requirements and budget forecasting.</li> </ol>	<p>MRL</p> <p>LA</p> <p>MRL</p> <p>MRL</p>	<p>Sept 2017/ Completed</p> <p>Sept 2017/ Completed</p> <p>Sept 2017/ Completed</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Recommendations	Actions	Owner	Progress / Due Date
<p><b>Recommendation 1a</b></p> <p>Review procurement arrangements to ensure value for money.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure adequate procurement arrangements are in place to cover all aspects of the programme.</li> <li>2. Undertake an independent benchmarking exercise in relation to the single source supply arrangement to assess value for money.</li> <li>3. Undertake an exercise to compare costs of the in-house workforce to those of external contractors, whilst also considering quality and performance to determine value for money.</li> <li>4. Introduce a flexible Dynamic Purchasing System for the external works in the lower Rhymney valley, whilst also providing options to deliver contracts for internal and external works throughout the borough.</li> <li>5. Contracts for internal works are in place until 2020 and were procured in open competition. External work packages are tendered individually from existing frameworks and more recently the D.P.S. Tenders are evaluated on receipt and if deemed to be uncompetitive, the work is re-tendered in an attempt to improve value for money.</li> </ol>	<p>MRL</p> <p>KRW</p> <p>MRL</p> <p>MRL</p> <p>MRL</p>	<p>April 2017/ Completed</p> <p>March 2018/ Completed</p> <p>March 2018/ Completed</p> <p>April 2017/ Completed</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Recommendations	Actions	Owner	Progress / Due Date
<p><b>Recommendation 1b</b></p> <p>Provide clear and transparent information to members and tenants about the current position of the programme and a commitment to stakeholders with accurate projected completion dates.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review existing programme information being provided to members and tenants and amend this to ensure it is accurate, easily understood and timely.</li> <li>2. Review the way performance information is presented to all stakeholders to ensure that this provides a good overview on the progress of the overall programme is easily understood and timely.</li> </ol> <p>Performance information is regularly being updated and amended to improve the way data is presented.</p>	<p>MRL</p> <p>SC/MRL</p>	<p>March 2018/ Completed</p> <p>December 2017/ Ongoing</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 1c</b></p> <p>Secure the resources needed to deliver the programme by 2020.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Business case approved for the appointment of additional staff and operatives to support the in-house team in view of the additional work they will be undertaking to deliver WHQS works to our sheltered housing schemes.</li> <li>2. Business case approved for the appointment of Surveyors/Clerks of Works to support the delivery of the external works programme following the implementation of the DPS.</li> <li>3. Use of agency workers ongoing to supplement directly employed staff as workforce will need to reduce post 2020.</li> <li>4. Introduction of DPS has provided an additional pool of contractors to deliver all aspects of the programme and to act as a contingency in case any issues are encountered with existing contracts.</li> </ol>	<p>MRL</p> <p>MRL</p> <p>MRL</p> <p>MRL</p>	<p>April 2017/ Completed</p> <p>April 2017/ Completed</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>April 2017/ Completed</p>

Recommendations	Actions	Owner	Progress / Due Date
	<p>5. Use of other in-house teams, both within and outside Caerphilly Homes, has been implemented to provide further assistance and resources for the delivery of the programme, eg Housing Repair Operations, Network Contracting Services, Highways Operations Group, Grounds Maintenance.</p> <p>6. Additional financial resources being sourced to assist with the delivery of the programme and to provide additional improvements to the housing stock and communities, eg ECO, Arbed, V.V.P.</p>	<p>SC/MRL</p> <p>MRL/JRW</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Recommendations	Actions	Owner	Progress / Due Date
<p><b>Recommendation 2</b></p> <p>Assure itself that the Council is meeting its statutory landlord responsibilities in relation to gas servicing.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Council's performance in relation to gas servicing averages 98% which results in approximately 200 properties not having a valid gas safety certificate, which has been identified as an issue with no access. A review of the no access procedure has been undertaken.</li> <li>2. To improve compliance the gas servicing cycle will be changed to operate on a ten-month cycle rather than the existing 11 months.</li> <li>3. To reduce issues with no access, a charge will be introduced for tenants who fail to provide access at the appointment time.</li> <li>4. The timescales for issuing letters to tenants seeking access will be reduced and if required a Notice of Seeking Possession will be issued prior to the expiry of the gas certificate.</li> <li>5. Failure to provide access during the NOSP period will result in arrangements being made to force entry, with the tenant being provided with advanced notice of such action.</li> </ol>	<p>SC</p> <p>PS</p> <p>PS</p> <p>Housing Managers</p> <p>Housing Managers/ PS</p>	<p>July 2017/ Completed</p> <p>Sept 2017/ Completed</p> <p>August 2017/ Completed</p> <p>August 2017/ Completed</p> <p>Sept 2017/ Completed</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 2a</b></p> <p>Ensure that arrangements for undertaking asbestos surveys and recording the results of these surveys, is robust.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review the accuracy and timeliness of asbestos information being recorded within the Keystone Asset Database.</li> <li>2. Ensure that all relevant staff have access to asbestos records to ensure these are checked prior to commissioning surveys.</li> </ol>	<p>PS</p> <p>PS</p>	<p>August 2017/ Completed</p> <p>December 2017/ Completed</p>

Recommendations	Actions	Owner	Progress / Due Date
	3. Submit a business case to appoint a Technical/Admin Officer to input surveys and cleanliness certificates into Keystone in a timely manner, and also act as a central point of contact.	PS	August 2017/ Completed
<p><b>Recommendation 3</b></p> <p>Ensure the Council has sufficient project management capacity to deliver the WHQS programme by 2020.</p>	<p>1. Business case approved for the appointment of additional resources, allowing recruitment to take place as and when required.</p> <p>2. Project management of the sheltered housing programme being carried out by the in-house team following consultation with tenants.</p> <p>3. Project management of various aspects of the programme is being undertaken by other services to spread workload and maximise use of existing resources, eg work to leaseholder properties being managed by Private Sector Housing, WHQS work to voids and statutory maintenance being undertaken by Housing Repair Operations Team, environmental programme being progressed by utilising services of Grounds Maintenance, Highways Operations Group, Network Contracting Services.</p> <p>4. A restructure of Caerphilly Homes to be undertaken to further improve integration and better align key functions with the aim of improving capacity to support the programme.</p>	<p>MRL</p> <p>MRL</p> <p>SC/MRL</p> <p>SC</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

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Updated October 2018

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## CABINET – 30TH JANUARY 2019

**SUBJECT: WHQS PROGRESS REPORT – FINAL STAGES**

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

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- 1.1 The attached report, which had been presented to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 6th December 2018, detailed the performance of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) Team to date, and set out the anticipated projected performance up to December 2020. Details of the capital expenditure for 2018/19 for WHQS works were also included, together with an overview of the many achievements made as part of the wider commitments and benefits delivered by the WHQS programme. The view of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee were sought on the contents of the report, prior to its presentation to Cabinet.
- 1.2 By way of an accompanying slideshow presentation, Officers summarised the progress of the WHQS programme to date, with further details set out in the report and its appendices. The Committee noted details of the background to the WHQS, the contracts established across internal and external works and the timeframes for the delivery of works, survey and compliance completion rates, tenant satisfaction levels, details of the Council's promise in respect of attainment levels, and pre-and post-work photographs showing the improvements that had been made to kitchens, bathrooms, and external fascia. Members also noted details of environmental works across housing estates, energy efficiency improvements, community benefits and investment, details of current and future expenditure, and the plans in place to achieve and validate the compliance of the WHQS programme by December 2020.
- 1.3 The current cumulative level of compliance is 80% for internal works and 62% for external works. Tenant satisfaction levels are 88% across internal works and 71% across external works. Total spend projected to March 2019 is £200m and borrowing of £20m will be required for this year. It is anticipated that the £220m estimate to deliver the WHQS programme is likely to be exceeded, although Officers confirmed that at this time no increase in borrowing would be required. Although full compliance is projected for 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020 for internal works and 10<sup>th</sup> April 2020 for external works, it is hoped that these can be brought forward to March 2020 to allow for any unforeseen contingencies and for full WHQS compliance to be achieved prior to the December 2020 deadline. A validation process is ongoing to ensure the accuracy of the data received
- 1.4 The Committee discussed the progress made to date across the WHQS scheme and a Member queried why the external compliance rate (projected to be 73% by the end of the financial year) had not met the target throughout 2018/19. Officers referred to the slippage across external works in the early stages of the programme arising from delays caused by contractor procurement issues, and it was explained that an accelerated rate of completions is now being achieved. A Member sought clarification on the amount of additional funding that would be needed to deliver the WHQS programme and when this would be considered by Cabinet. Officers explained that it is not expected that the amount of borrowing originally approved by Cabinet would be exceeded and hence there will be no need to take a further report to Cabinet to seek approval of additional funding.

- 1.5 In response to Members' queries, Officers provided further information on the remedial work carried out across non-traditional properties, together with details of the assessment processes to carry out environmental improvements. Clarity was sought on the underspend position across the Council's Promise for non-traditional homes and it was explained this is because the allocation had been based on the original Savills survey in 2008 and some works had already been done in this regard but had been incorporated into other spends. It is expected that the spend will rise by the time WHQS is achieved in 2020.
- 1.6 Reference was made to the disparity between satisfaction levels for internal and external works and a Member also highlighted higher levels of dissatisfaction for external works in parts of the borough and around the Penyrheol area in regards to the timescales for environmental improvements. He also suggested that some of the works set out in the Environmental Programme appended to the report for Penyrheol had not been completed. Officers outlined the consultation process that had been carried out with residents and explained that expectations may have been skewed by two separate consultations being carried out at that time. A Member subsequently suggested that staff from the Parks and Highways team be available to attend future meetings where environmental improvements are discussed in order for them to respond to such queries. Officers informed the Committee that an update report on environmental works is due to be presented to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group where the suggested Officers would be attending and that the minutes of the CHTG would be submitted to Members of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee so they could consider their comments. A Member queried the reasons for variation in satisfaction levels across areas of the county borough, particularly the north, and it was explained that the survey operates a tick-box structure but does not allow for additional comments to explain why the individual surveyed is not satisfied. The Officer confirmed that for this reason as well as a means of improving response rates, the customer satisfaction process was currently being reviewed, which would likely result in more telephone surveys which would assist in obtaining more details to help improve the service going forward.
- 1.7 Having considered and noted the report and the comments of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group, the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee unanimously recommended to Cabinet that the contents of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard Progress Report – Final Stages be noted.
- 1.8 Members are asked to consider the report and the above recommendation.

Author: R. Barrett, Committee Services Officer, Ext. 4245

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Report to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 15th January 2019 - Agenda Item 10



## **POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 15TH JANUARY 2019**

**SUBJECT: WHQS PROGRESS REPORT – FINAL STAGES**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR SOCIAL SERVICES & HOUSING**

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- 1.1 The attached report, which was considered by the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 6th December 2018 ahead of its presentation to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and thereafter Cabinet, sought the views of Members on the performance of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) Team to date and also set out the anticipated projected performance up to December 2020.
- 1.2 Details of the capital expenditure for 2018/19 for WHQS works were also included in the report, together with an overview of achievements that have been made as part of the wider commitments and benefits delivered by the WHQS programme.
- 1.3 Members raised concerns regarding the timing of the customer satisfaction surveys which may have resulted in confusion between tenant responses on internal versus external works. Members discussed the management of tenant expectations and the prioritisation of where works would be carried out which may have impacted on satisfaction levels. Officers highlighted to Members that works were prioritised based on the condition of properties and therefore consistency would not have been possible due to the variable condition of individual properties across the County Borough.
- 1.4 A Member queried the longevity of the community benefits highlighted in the report once the programme had been completed. Officers responded that although contracts were up to 2020 only the programme had provided opportunities for members of the community to develop skills that increased their employability beyond the end of the programme.
- 1.5 Members discussed the standard of external works carried out including circumstances when this work requires replacement or repair and whether the Council takes on the financial responsibility for these works. Officers confirmed that if works are deemed substandard and further replacement or repair is required then the contractors would be responsible for the financial impact.
- 1.6 Following consideration of the report and in noting the details of the WHQS Progress Report – Final Stages report, the Caerphilly Homes Task Group unanimously recommended to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee that its contents be noted.
- 1.7 The Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the report and the comments of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group and make a recommendation to Cabinet.

Author: K. Houghton, Committee Services Officer, Ext. 4267

Appendices:

Appendix Report to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 6th December 2018 – Agenda Item 5



## CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 6TH DECEMBER 2018

**SUBJECT: WHQS PROGRESS REPORT – FINAL STAGES**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE SOCIAL SERVICES & HOUSING**

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides members with an overview of the performance of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) Team to date and also sets out the anticipated projected performance up to December, 2020, prior to its consideration by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and thereafter Cabinet.
- 1.2 Details of the capital expenditure for 2018/19 for WHQS works are also included, together with an overview of the many achievements that have been made as part of the wider commitments and benefits delivered by the WHQS programme.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The details contained within this report provide information on current and projected performance of the internal and external works main WHQS programme and demonstrate that the achievement of full compliance is achievable prior to the deadline of December 2020.
- 2.2 Good progress has been made with surveys which are now well in advance of the planned works and provides us with more detail on the scope of anticipated works which assists with contract forecasting and budget monitoring.
- 2.3 The energy efficiency schemes have been delivered throughout the borough since the commencement of the programme, with the latest scheme at Lansbury Park seeing the completion of all council owned properties and approximately 50% of the privately owned properties. A further bid for additional funding has been submitted to Welsh Government (WG) for the remainder of the private properties and a response is awaited. Funding for other areas will also continue to be pursued.
- 2.4 Feedback from our customers has been incorporated within the report which generally demonstrates high levels of satisfaction. It is accepted that levels of satisfaction for external works continues to be less than those received for internal works. As a result we are currently reviewing the existing customer satisfaction monitoring processes.
- 2.5 Consultation to identify environmental projects continues throughout the borough with many projects having now been delivered. A number of large-scale projects have also been identified and officers are working with In-House service colleagues to ensure these are delivered within our programme deadlines. Members have recently received a separate report on the progress of the Environmental Programme.
- 2.6 The current and projected financial position is set out within the report and at this stage of the programme, there has not been any requirement for borrowing to directly support it's delivery

from a financial perspective, although based on current projections, borrowing may be required for the third quarter of the year. It is also confirmed that the housing business plan remains financially viable throughout the programme and to deliver the post 2020 strategy.

- 2.7 Community benefits have been achieved with the provision of training opportunities, 44 work placements, 114 permanent jobs and 58 apprenticeships that have been created with the in-house service, external contractors and our supply partner.

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The underlying principles of the WHQS programme, which includes the provision of good quality affordable housing, energy efficient homes and carbon reduction, sustainable communities, health and wellbeing, targeted recruitment and training, clearly links to 5 of the 7 well-being goals in ***The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015***.
- 3.2 ***Improving Lives and Communities: Homes in Wales (Welsh Government, 2010)***, which sets out the national context for improving homes and communities, including the energy efficiency of existing homes;
- 3.3 ***The Caerphilly We Want (CCBC, 2018-2023) - Well-Being Plan Objective 4: Positive Places - Enabling our communities to be resilient and sustainable.***
- 3.4 ***Corporate Plan (CCBC, 2018-2023): Well-being Objective 3: "Address the availability, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve people's well-being."***
- 3.5 ***The Welsh Housing Quality Standard: Revised Guidance for Social Landlords on Interpretation and Achievement of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (Welsh Government, 2008).***
- 3.6 ***Caerphilly Homes Service Plan (2018-2023): Priority 1A: All Council housing is improved to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by 2020.***

### 4. THE REPORT

#### Progress of internal Surveying

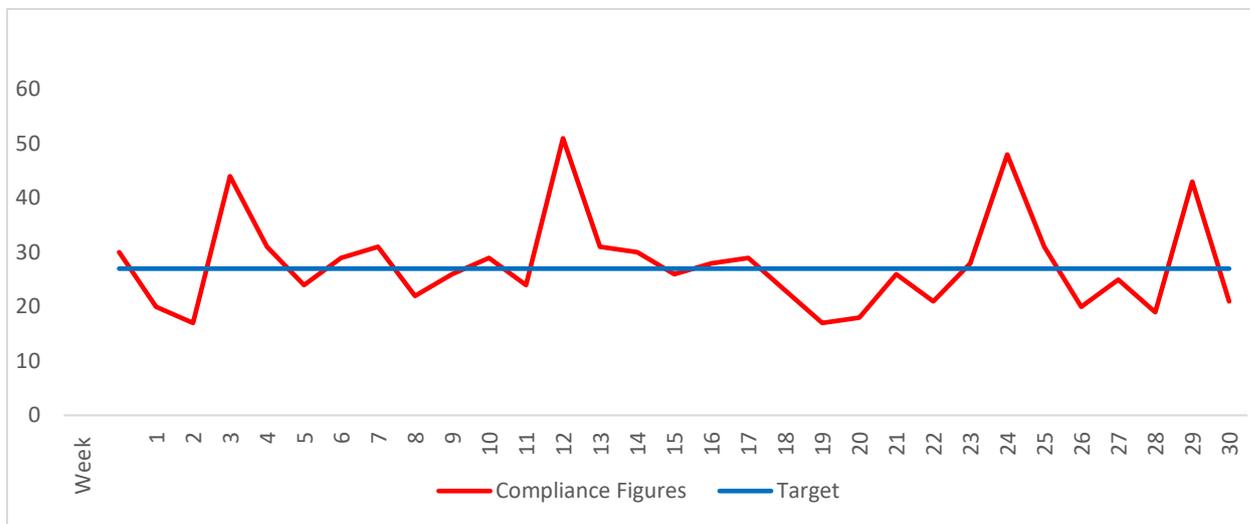
- 4.1 To date 95% of internal surveys have been undertaken to deliver the overall programme. It is anticipated, therefore, that surveys for internal works will be fully complete by the end of December 2018. This will assist with forecasting future scope of works and budget monitoring for the final year.

#### Progress of the internal works programme 2018/19 – Completion of works

- 4.2 The number of properties where internal WHQS compliance has been achieved per week is shown in Chart 1 below. The average compliance rate is now 28 properties per week against a target of 27. Based on the current rate it is likely that 85% of the overall internal works programme will be completed by the end of the financial year, which is in line with the target set.
- 4.3 Appendix 1 provides the weekly compliance achievements and targets that are shown against each contract area.
- 4.4 The existing planned programme for 2019/20 indicates that 968 properties will be remaining however based on current performance 613 properties are likely to be carried over to 2019/20 which leaves a revised figure of 1,581 properties to be completed in the final year (15% of the total stock).

4.5 The above performance has been achieved despite the loss of one of the main contractors in 2017 and the recent termination by another contractor. Contingency arrangements to cover these losses are in place, i.e. the DPS (Dynamic Purchasing System), in-house mop up teams with other options also being considered.

Chart 1: The WHQS internal works weekly compliance rate during 2018/19



### Progress of the internal works programme 2018/19

4.6 At the time of writing this report 862 properties in the 2018/19 internal works programme were compliant in relation to their internal elements. This results in a cumulative total of 8,640 properties that are currently compliant in relation to internal works (80% of the total stock). 'Compliance' indicates that a property meets the WHQS internally because:

- We have carried out works to renew one or more elements to achieve compliance.
- One or more elements within a property were already compliant.
- One or more elements within the property have been classed as an acceptable fail.
- Or any combination of the above reasons.

### Progress of External Surveying

4.7 To date 79% of external surveys have been undertaken to deliver the overall programme. It is anticipated, therefore, that surveys for external works will be fully complete by the end of January 2019. This will assist with forecasting for future scope of works and budget monitoring for the final year.

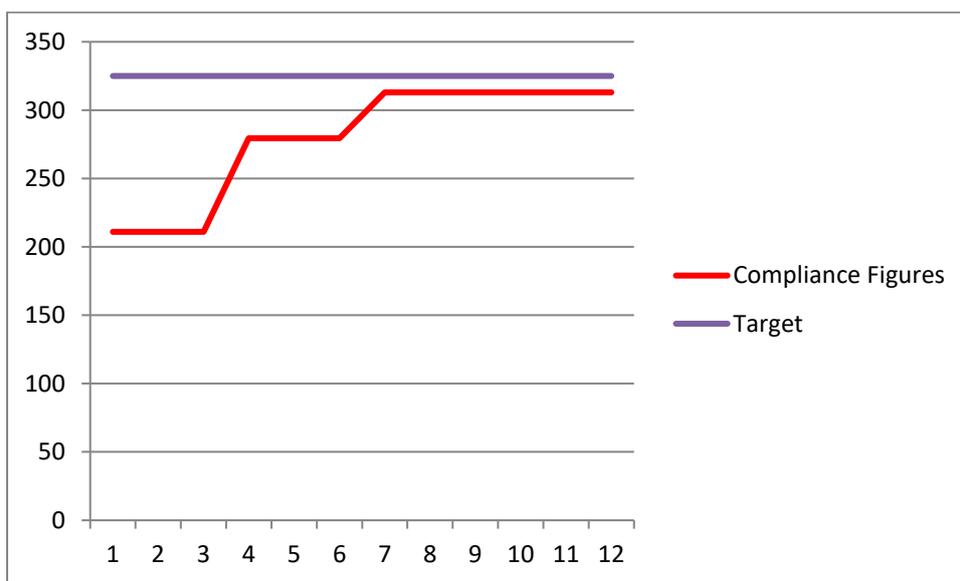
### Progress of the External Works Programme 2018/19 – Completion of Works

4.8 The number of properties where external WHQS compliance has been achieved per month is shown in Chart 2 below. The average compliance rate is now 59 properties per week against a target of 78 (including leaseholders). Based on the current rate it is likely that 73% of the overall external works programme will be completed by the end of the financial year, which is not currently in-line with the target set.

4.9 The existing planned programme for 2019/20 indicates that 1,532 properties will be remaining however based on current performance 1,433 properties are likely to be carried over from 2018/19 to 2019/20 which leaves a revised figure of 2,965 properties to be completed in the final year (27% of the total stock).

- 4.10 In addition to the above, we are also completing external works to 412 leasehold properties; however this has detrimentally affected progress due to the legislative process that needs to be followed by way of consultation.
- 4.11 Performance for this area of the programme has improved considerably due to a combination of mobile working, and improved procurement processes through the DPS.
- 4.12 Appendix 2 provides the weekly compliance achievements and targets which are shown against each contract area.

Chart 2: The WHQS external works monthly compliance rate during 2018/19



### Progress of the External Works Programme 2018/19

- 4.13 To date 1,700 properties in the 2018/19 external works programme were compliant in relation to their external elements. This results in a cumulative total of 6,651 properties which are currently compliant in relation to external works (62% of the total stock). 'Compliance' indicates that a property meets the WHQS externally because:
- We have carried out works to renew one or more elements to achieve compliance.
  - One or more elements for a property were already compliant.
  - One or more elements for the property have been classed as an acceptable fail.
  - Or any combination of the above reasons.
- 4.14 The WHQS external works programme for 2018/19 within the Keystone system includes 4,550 properties (including leaseholders), 94% of which are being completed by outside contractors, and 6% by our own workforce. Following previous agreement by Cabinet, the in-house workforce are undertaking all works to sheltered housing schemes.
- 4.15 Significant progress has been made in 2018/19 in terms of the management and monitoring of external works contracts. All new contracts are now being entered into and managed via the Keystone asset management system.

### Tenant Satisfaction with the Internal Works Programme

- 4.16 Tenant satisfaction levels and compliance with service standards for internal works are measured via surveys which are sent to tenants after each property has been completed. The Housing Systems and Performance section administer this service. The survey process was suspended for a period of time during this year at the request of Wales Audit Office (WAO), as they were undertaking their own survey as part of their review of the WHQS programme.

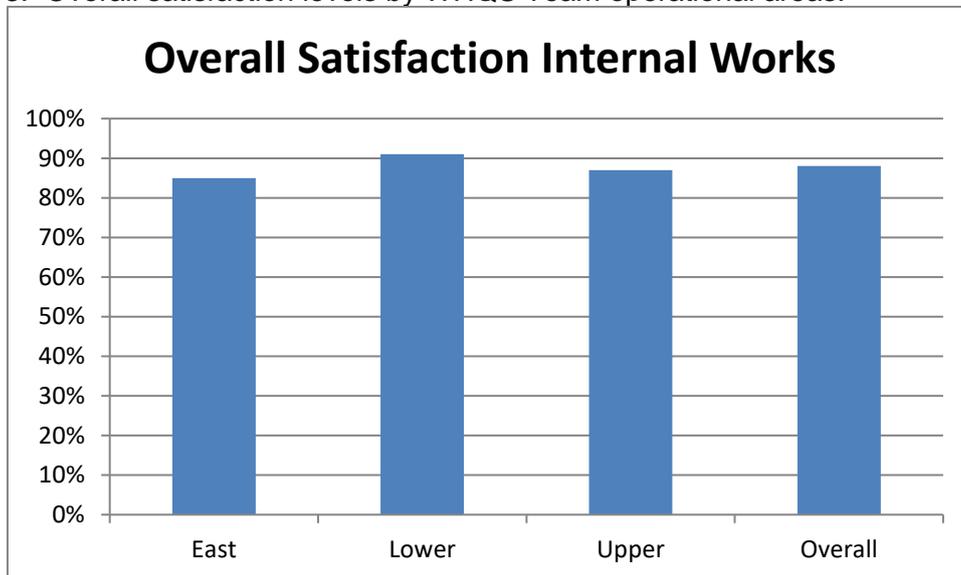
4.17 Table 1 below provides a summary and breakdown of the returned surveys for each of the WHQS Team operational areas within the County Borough for internal works. It shows that the overall satisfaction level for internal works is 88% based on a return rate of 40%. It also shows that we are achieving 87% of the standards that we measure within the Charter For Trust document. Charts 3 and 4, below, display these two measures for each of the WHQS Team operational areas.

4.18 The process of undertaking tenant satisfaction surveys is currently being reviewed in line with WG guidelines with the aim of improving the timeliness of the surveys and improving the level of feedback. To assist with this telephone surveys may be introduced.

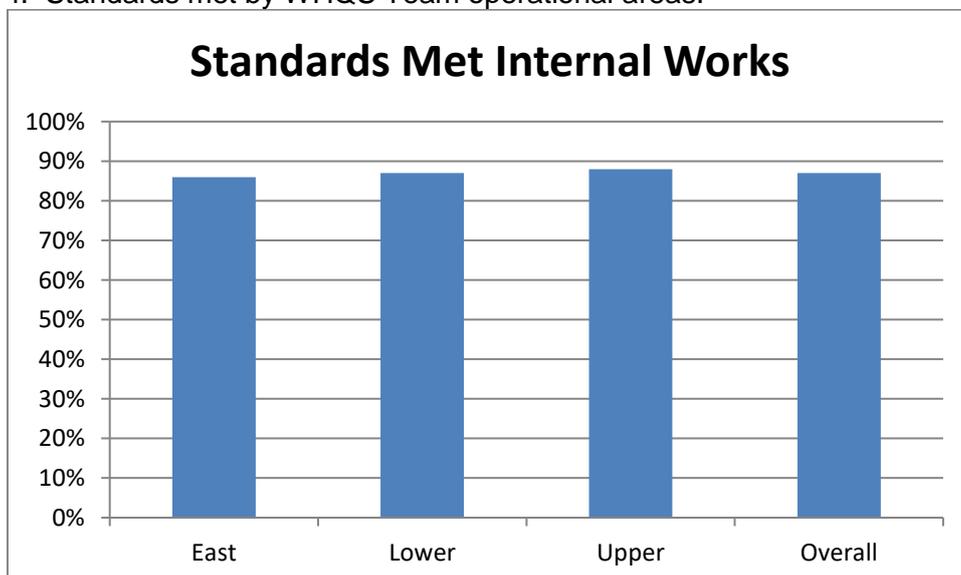
4.19 Table 1: Satisfaction levels and standards met by WHQS Team operational areas.

Area	Overall Satisfaction	Standards Met
East	85%	86%
Lower	91%	87%
Upper	87%	88%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>87%</b>

4.20 Chart 3: Overall satisfaction levels by WHQS Team operational areas.



4.21 Chart 4: Standards met by WHQS Team operational areas.

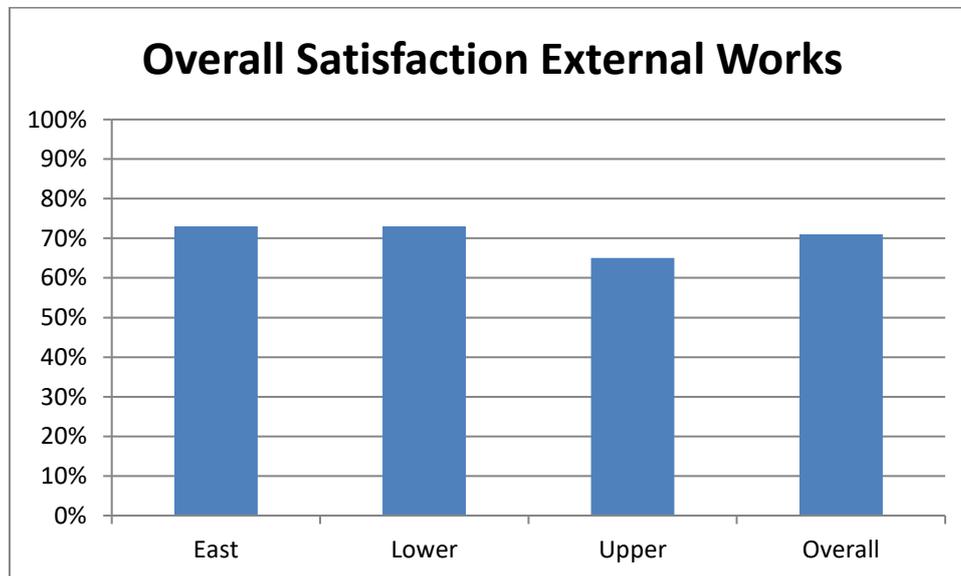


## Tenant Satisfaction with the External Works Programme

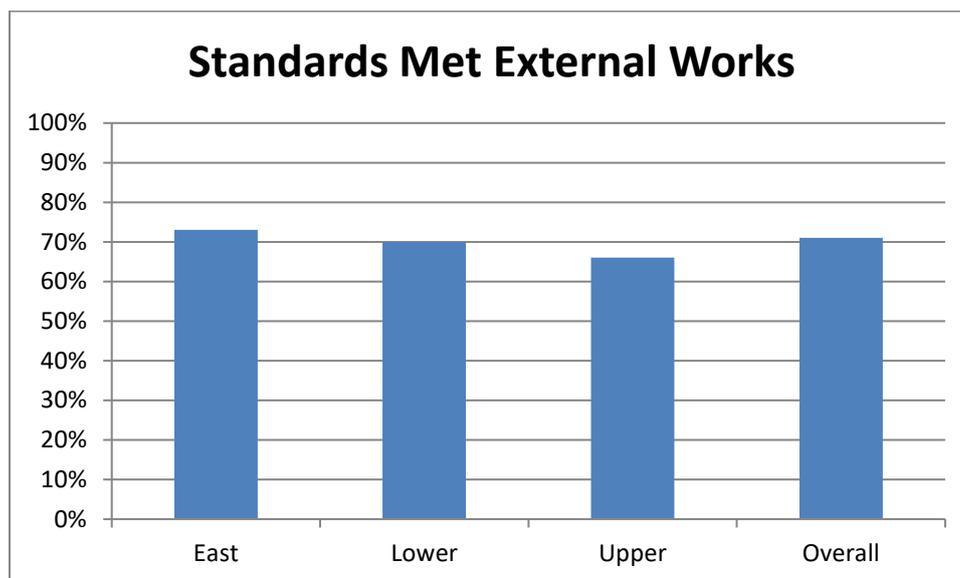
- 4.22 Tenant satisfaction levels and compliance with service standards for external works are measured via surveys which are sent to tenants after each contract has been completed. The Housing Systems and Performance section administer this service. The survey process was suspended for a period of time at the request of WAO, as they were undertaking their own survey as part of their review of the WHQS programme.
- 4.23 Table 2 below provides a summary and breakdown of the returned surveys for each of the WHQS Team operational areas within the County Borough for external works contracts to date. It shows that the overall satisfaction level for external works is 71% based on a return rate of 28%. It also shows that we are achieving 71% of the standards that we measure within the Charter For Trust document. Charts 5 and 6 below display these two measures for each of the WHQS Team operational areas.
- 4.24 The process of undertaking tenant satisfaction surveys is currently being reviewed with the aim of improving the timeliness of the surveys and improving the level of feedback. To assist with this telephone surveys may be introduced
- 4.25 Table 2: Satisfaction levels and standards met by WHQS Team operational areas.

Area	Overall Satisfaction	Standards Met
East	73%	73%
Lower	73%	70%
Upper	65%	66%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>71%</b>

- 4.26 Chart 5: Overall satisfaction levels by WHQS Team operational areas.



4.27 Chart 6: Standards met by WHQS Team operational areas.



### Environmental Programme

- 4.28 Part of the commitment to deliver the WHQS across all 10,749 homes (31<sup>st</sup> October 2018 count) also includes a requirement to comply with Part 6 which aims to ensure that 'all dwellings should be located in an environment to which residents can relate and in which they can be proud to live'.
- 4.29 An indicative budget of £10.6m has been set aside in the business plan and agreed with WG specifically for this purpose.
- 4.30 Three Environmental Officers were recruited to work with the Area Housing teams and local members in order to initially identify environmental maintenance / repair issues. The issues were identified and collated into a single spreadsheet with each project being detailed using a proforma.
- 4.31 Over 300 minor projects were initially identified across the County Borough as part of the first phase of the programme. The majority were progressed; some were repackaged into larger schemes.
- 4.32 The second phase of the programme commenced in 2017 and has involved the environmental officers undertaking an extensive engagement programme throughout the County Borough which is intended to:-
- i) Engage local communities in discussions regarding the quality and safety of their local environment.
  - ii) Identify solutions to some of the challenges and constraints within communities that could be overcome via the WHQS environmental programme, and
  - iii) To work with partners to help develop more cohesive and resilient communities through joint working and the pooling of resources.
- 4.33 A copy of the programme and projects identified to date is attached as Appendix 3. All of the projects identified and approved to date are coterminous with the aims of the Future Generations and Well being Act and aim to contribute towards the creation of cohesive communities that are attractive, accessible and safe. The programme aims to help futureproof the borough's communities through providing relatively minor improvements such as benches and planting but also via the replacement of park equipment and the installation of new amenities such as skate parks and green gyms thereby promoting greater well being and access to the local environment.

## Energy Efficiency

4.34 A range of energy efficiency improvements have been carried out as part of the WHQS programme including upgraded loft insulation, energy efficient heating and the installation of double glazed windows. The majority of non-traditional houses have also benefitted from external wall insulation, with some of these being completed prior to the main WHQS programme. This work contributes to health and wellbeing improvements and towards addressing fuel poverty. External Wall Insulation (EWI) has been installed in approximately 2,532 properties (see breakdown below).

- Gelligaer (285)
- Ty Coch (17)
- Bryn Carno (38)
- Rowan Place (72)
- Brynglas Pontlottyn (16)
- Brynhyrydd Pontlottyn (56)
- Phillipstown (112)
- Birchgrove flats (20)
- Fochriw / Rhymney / Porset Park (CESP) (520)
- Fochriw (Arbed) (57)
- Markham (76)
- Maesmabon (142)
- Pantside (75)
- Graig y Rhacca (300)
- Pontlottyn Flats (40)
- Lansbury Park (548)
- Morrisville & Attlee Road Blackwood (34)
- Gilfach flats (20)
- Hengoed (61)
- Bedwas (43)

A number of BISF houses and Cornish properties have also had EWI installed to their properties which are not included in the above.

4.35 A contract has recently been awarded and work commenced to undertake energy performance assessments for the housing stock to demonstrate compliance with the required energy rating of 65. This work will also help to establish the energy efficiency of our homes and the contribution being made towards addressing fuel poverty and will also be used to inform future rent levels, as energy ratings are required as part of the WG's rent setting policy.

## Supply Partner

4.36 An independent review of the Supply Partner arrangement has been conducted and the findings of the report confirm that the partnership is providing value for money. This outcome was achieved by comparing the cost of our key components against those in the marketplace.

4.37 The report also made a number of recommendations on making improvements in order to maximise benefits from the arrangement, which includes just in time deliveries, review of consignment of stock, restructuring of the support team, improved forward planning and product reviews. These recommendations are in the process of being implemented.

4.38 The Supply Partner arrangement is delivering a number of benefits for the local economy including the creation of jobs and training opportunities (see item 4.39 below).

## Community Benefits

4.39 Council made a conscious decision to ensure that the money invested in bringing all tenants' homes up to the WHQS would be used to support development of small and medium

enterprises and create training and employment opportunities to help people back into work. Since the start of the WHQS programme the Council has invested over £200m and is projecting to invest over £220m by the end of the programme. Figures received to date suggest that cumulatively, 71 permanent full time permanent jobs have been created by external contractors in addition to 43 permanent full time opportunities that have been created by the Council. A total of 58 apprenticeship opportunities have also been created by external contractors and the Council since the start of the programme.

- 4.40 The Supply Partner has completed and submitted the Value Wales Toolkit to Welsh Government which has calculated that for every £1 invested in the contract during 2017/18, it has resulted in £1.80 being invested in the local economy. Keepmoat / Engie have also completed the Toolkit for 2017/18 which determines that for every £1 spent on their contracts, £1.88 has been invested in the local economy. The Council's key contractors are each required to complete and submit the Value Wales toolkit to Welsh Government at the end of each financial year. This multiplier effect is as a result of the Supply Partner and Internal Works contractor employing people living in Wales who then spend their wages locally, supporting other businesses such as shops and restaurants.
- 4.41 Further benefits have resulted for the borough's communities as a result of donations made by the Supply Partner and the commitment made by Keepmoat / Engie to run the Careers Wales Business Class programme with Blackwood Comprehensive School and its feeder primary schools.

#### **The Capital Expenditure Programme for WHQS Works (2018-19)**

- 4.42 The WHQS budget for 2018/19 is set at £55.8m. The total expenditure on the WHQS capital programme for the first 6 months of 2018/19 is £24.9m which is some 45% of the total budget, and is the highest spend level compared to previous years.
- 4.43 The spend for the first six months on internal works is £7.2m. 68% of the spend is on current contracts, 18% relates to previous years carried forward contracts, 11% on works to sheltered schemes, and 3% on works outside of the WHQS programme which could not be delayed to fit into future programmes, i.e. emergency heating installations and voids.
- 4.44 The spend for the first six months on external works is £12.6m and is predominantly carried out by external contractors. 21% of the spend is on current contracts, 73% of the spend relates to previous years carried forward contracts, and 6% of the spend is on sheltered works.
- 4.45 The remaining spend is on Fees (£1.1m), Large Scale Voids (£620k), Adaptations (£310k), Garages (£622k), Non Traditional properties (£205k). There is also £2.2m spend on energy conservation works at Lansbury Park where funding has been earmarked from the Arbed and Vibrant & Viable Places (VVP) regeneration grants.
- 4.46 Funding for the 2018/19 programme of £55.8m will be met from the Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) given by WG of £7.3m, and revenue contributions from the HRA of £48.4m. The MRA has been fully drawn down from Welsh Government this year. No borrowing has been required to fund the WHQS spend to date. Borrowing is expected to take place this year which is estimated at £20m if the full budget is expended.
- 4.47 Total spend to date for the WHQS Programme is £200m which has resulted in 8,640 (80%) properties achieving compliance for internal works, 6,651 (62%) properties achieving compliance for external works, and 5,635 (52%) properties achieving full compliance.

#### **Final Stages**

- 4.48 As we are now entering the final 2 years of the programme, significant work has been undertaken to validate the compliance data and accuracy of information recorded within the Keystone database. The validation process is also currently being checked by Internal Audit in order to provide independent verification. This will provide us with greater assurance of the

full achievement of WHQS by the end of December 2020.

- 4.49 In order to support this, an exercise has been undertaken to provide us with projections based on current levels of performance up to the end of the programme. The anticipated outturns are shown within our Strategic Scorecard which is provided as Appendix 4. This provides us with our current performance against projected targets which indicates that full compliance for internal works will be achieved by 15 May 2020 and external compliance will be achieved by 10 April 2020. Therefore full WHQS compliance is currently projected to be achieved by 15 May 2020; however, this is subject to change and will be closely monitored as the programme progresses with the aim of achieving full compliance by the end of March 2020. Further details on how these projections have been calculated are included in Appendices 5 and 6.
- 4.50 Performance information including the Strategic Scorecard is submitted and scrutinised by the Caerphilly Homes Project Board and the Repairs and Improvements Working Group on a monthly basis and included in progress reports which are submitted to Caerphilly Homes Task Group and the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee as and when required.
- 4.51 Regular progress monitoring meetings are also held with officials from WG where performance reports are discussed and they are satisfied with the projections made. WG also made a number of recommendations for improving our performance data, which have been implemented and incorporated into the information contained within this report.
- 4.52 Members will be aware of the ongoing WHQS review by the WAO, however their final report is still awaited.
- 4.53 Resources are constantly being reviewed in order to maintain the momentum currently being achieved and with the aim of bringing full completion forward to the end of March 2020. Additional in-house resources have been secured for the sheltered housing programme. Internal work packages are being tendered through the DPS and additional assistance has been achieved through improved integration including services provided through the Housing Repair Operations team.
- 4.54 Some minor structure changes have been implemented which have included the establishment of a Validation Team, the provision of a Technical/Administration team and the centralising of resources to improve efficiency and reduce duplication.
- 4.55 Officers acknowledge that whilst the delivery of WHQS programme by the deadline will be an excellent achievement there is still the requirement to ensure the standard is maintained thereafter. In this regard members have already approved the post 2020 strategy and preparations to deliver this strategy will commence during 2019/20. This includes external surveys to implement the delivery of the external planned maintenance programme for 2020/21.
- 4.56 Consideration has also been given to providing continuity of work to the in-house workforce who will be responsible for undertaking the remodelling of the sheltered housing schemes during 2020-2025. However, it is evident that a review of resources will be required.

#### **Progress Achieved Against the Promises Made**

- 4.57 Prior to the ballot of tenants on the housing stock transfer proposal in 2012, every household was issued with an Offer Document and an Addendum Document. The Addendum Document set out what improvements and repairs tenants could expect to receive if they voted to remain with the Council and the following table replicates this information and also includes what work has actually been delivered to date.

Internal Elements	Offer Document	Compliance to date	Acceptable Fails	Total
Kitchens	9,918	5,739	1,102	6,841
Bathrooms	7,150	6,563	781	7,344
Boilers	4,033	1,668	0	1,668
Heating	2,050	5,073	370	5,443
Rewires	3,933	4,780	56	4,836

External Elements	Offer Document (£m)	Compliance to date
Fences, gates & paths	9.9	7.6
Roofing/associated works	6.5	9.1
Wall finishes	1.5	3.1
Non-traditional homes	26.0	15.6
Window Replacements	2.9 (1,163 No.)	2.6 (987 No.)
External Doors	4.5 (4,090 No)	3.7 (5,326 No)

4.58 The above information hopefully provides reassurance that we are delivering on the promises made and likely to exceed these commitments in many areas. In addition to this, it is also anticipated and evidenced within this report that full compliance of the WHQS programme will be achieved prior to the WG deadline of December 2020.

## 5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

5.1 The report outlines the contribution made towards the Well-being Goals as set out in the Links to Strategy section above. It is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act:-

5.2 **Long-term** - Since the Housing Ballot (2012) we continue to make substantial investments and improvements to both the internal and external environments of our social housing stock (Public Sector), including specialised adaptations in accordance with the needs of some of our tenants. Adaptations are also supported and implemented in the Private Sector (often referred to as Disability Facilities Grants).

5.3 These fundamental changes and improvements are being achieved through; the implementation of the Welsh Housing Quality Standards; housing adaptations in accordance with tenants and homeowners needs; enhancing the quality of product installations and repairs; improving environments around homes; all aiding the well-being of our communities, its infrastructure and citizens alike, providing homes and communities for now and the future.

- 5.4 **Prevention** - The works undertaken through Housing Services helps to improve lives and communities, by securing local employment either in-house or through supplier, contractor and partnership arrangements.
- 5.5 Works undertaken by our services make significant visual improvements to housing stocks and their surroundings environments (improved the look and feel) helping to prevent anti-social behaviour and enviro-crime.
- 5.6 By raising standards and conditions with improved quality materials and appropriate service response, should aide and ease future maintenance schedules and requirements, better controlling costs, levels of deterioration/depreciation, improve safety and accessibility, while also reducing disruption to our tenants in the future, and aiding quality of life in both Private and Public Sectors, through intervention and support actions that are fit-for-purpose.
- 5.7 **Involvement** - Through established governance and performance frameworks, tenants and local residents are consulted on proposed property and environment improvements works along with various initiatives, and they are periodically informed of progress as part of for example, the WHQS delivery programme.
- 5.8 Numerous working groups are established and well embedded with periodic reporting and feedback opportunities exploited. Welsh Government, Environment Standards, Regulatory Controls and Checks, Tenant Engagement are all part of our daily business.
- 5.9 **Collaboration** - The programme delivery focused on internal collaboration, wider partnership arrangements with suppliers and contractors, joint working with the community and various other interested parties/groups. The delivery of community benefits and tenant engagement by all involved with the WHQS programme is a key focus for the success and delivery of this objective.
- 5.10 **Integration** - The programme looks to integrate property and environmental improvements that will benefit and transform lives and communities throughout the county borough. It further brings together a variety of stakeholders to deliver long term sustainable benefits for lives and communities including Social Services & Health.
- 5.11 Housing Services and our outlined priorities, contributes to a minimum of 6 out of the 7 well-being goals within the *Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015*, including:-
- A prosperous Wales
  - A resilient Wales
  - A healthier Wales
  - A more equal Wales
  - A Wales of cohesive communities
  - A globally responsible Wales

## 6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment is not needed because the issues covered are for information purposes only, therefore the Council's full EIA process does not need to be applied.
- 6.2 However, it should be noted that, through the 'adaptations work and improvement programmes' we are assisting citizens with well-being opportunities and helping them stay within their home communities (inclusion). All WHQS improvements and wider environment programmes are delivering equitable standards of facilities where practical and reasonably appropriate and there are no equalities implications to this report that have not been considered or would adversely affect any individual or group

who fall under one of the protected characteristics or wider issues as shown in the Council's Strategic Equality Plan.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Finance arrangements are explained in 4.40 - 4.45 of this report and are incorporated into the 30 year business plan required by WG as part of the annual MRA application.
- 7.2 At the time of submitting the current plan there was a borrowing cap placed on all local housing authorities in Wales & England and any borrowing was strictly limited to that cap level. Caerphilly Homes' borrowing requirement (which includes historical, buy out and WHQS debt) was under its cap with a comfortable contingency. Recently UK Government have announced the removal of this borrowing cap which has been welcomed by Welsh Government and steps are in place to accommodate the removal. This is to assist local authorities to progress with new build as part of the UK Government's initiative to reduce homelessness. This will allow local housing authorities to borrow to their requirement as opposed to borrowing to a capped limit although it will still need to remain affordable.
- 7.3 The current plan requires £43.6m of borrowing to ensure the programme is completed which is 17% of the total programme costs. Whilst this remains affordable, a separate report will be submitted to Cabinet as expenditure is likely to exceed the current approved level of £220m.

## **8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Personnel resources are continually reviewed and where necessary additional resources are recruited to ensure the momentum of this major investment programme remains on track. Agency workers are also utilised to support the programme due to the temporary nature of some positions and also due to the lack of suitable candidates in the market place.

## **9. CONSULTATIONS**

- 9.1 All consultee responses have been incorporated within the report.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 That the report is noted, prior to its consideration by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and thereafter Cabinet.

## **11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 11.1 Not applicable.

## **12. STATUTORY POWER**

- 12.1 Not applicable.

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Consultees:	Cllr Lisa Phipps	-Cabinet Member for Homes & Places
	Dave Street	- Corporate Director of Social Services and Housing
	Shaun Couzens	- Chief Housing Officer.
	Nicole Scammell	- Head of Corporate Finance & S151 Officer
	Paul Smythe	- Housing Technical Manager
	Jane Roberts-Waite	- Strategic Co-ordination Manager - WHQS Programme
	Fiona Wilkins	- Housing Services Manager
	Deborah Gronow	- Service Auditor
	Lesley Allen	- Principal Accountant (Housing)
	Kathleen Webb	- Relationship Manager
	Rhys Lewis	- Systems and Performance Manager.
	Colin Roden	- WHQS Project Manager
	Alan Edmunds	- WHQS Project Manager
	Steve Greedy	- WHQS Project Manager
	Mark Jennings	- Housing Strategy Officer
	Ian Raymond	- Performance Management Officer

## Appendices

Appendix 1 - Weekly Internal Compliance Achievements and Targets for each contract area.

Appendix 2 - Weekly External Compliance Achievements and Targets for each contract area.

Appendix 3 – Environmental Programme projects identified to date (will be available at the meeting).

Appendix 4 - WHQS Strategic Scorecard

Appendix 5 – Projections for internal works.

Appendix 6 – Projections for external works.

To Week	31
	02/11/2018

**Appendix 1**

IN YEAR							
		Planned	Revised	Contract	Voids	No Access	Total
Area	Contractor	2018/19 Planned	2018/19 Revised	Cumulative Contract Compliance	Cumulative Voids	Cumulative No Access	
All areas	In House	810	992	366	25	0	391
All areas	Sheltered	256	262	95	2	0	97
All areas	DPS	0	98	0	14	0	14
EV	Keepmoat	311	508	241	15	0	256
URV	Vinci	195	141	99	5	0	104
LRV	Contract Serv	0	0	0	0	0	0
To be allocated		0	2	0	0	0	0
		1572	2003	801	61	0	862

Compliant	Target
Average Weekly Compliant data (inc voids & No Access)	Target Weekly Compliant 85%
12.61	13.43
3.13	3.55
0.45	1.33
8.26	6.88
3.35	1.91
0.00	0.00
0.00	0.03
27.81	27.12

CUMULATIVE TO DATE						
Area	Contractor	Stock No	Previously Compliant	2018/19 to Date	Compliant to date	Remaining
All Areas	In House	5044	3755	391	4146	898
All Areas	Sheltered	795	326	97	423	372
EV	Keepmoat	2274	1626	256	1882	392
URV	Vinci	1018	877	104	981	37
LRV	Contract Serv	873	873	0	873	0
Non Trad		97	97	0	97	0
Post 2020		175	175	0	175	0
D.P.S.		464	43	14	57	407
Queries		9	6	0	6	3
<b>TOTAL STOCK</b>		10749	7778	862	8640	2109
					80.38%	19.62%

Anticipated Compliance 2018/19	Programme 2019/20	Total
992	297	5044
262	207	795
508	140	2274
141	0	1018
0	0	873
0	0	97
0	0	175
98	323	464
2	1	9
2003	968	10749

STOCK LEVEL	
Opening Stock 1.4.18	10803
Less hostel formula adjustment	-2
Less RTB's	-24
Added to stock	3
To be demolished	-31
<b>TOTAL STOCK</b>	10749

Requires Action less than 10% of target  
Caution Within tolerance  
Target Achieved At or above target

IN YEAR					
Area	2018/19 Planned	2018/19 Revised	Compliance in year	Average Weekly Compliance	Target Weekly Compliant 80%
Eastern Valley	853	1227	466.8	15.56	21.07
Upper Rhymney	739	1100	488.45	16.28	18.89
Lower Rhymney	557	1037	434	14.47	17.81
Sheltered	256	365	187	6.23	6.27
Private Sector	32	521	121.42	4.05	8.94
Leaseholders	0	283	83.38	2.78	4.87
Non Trad	0	10	2.5	0.08	0.17
To be allocated	0	7	0	0.00	0.12
	2437	4550	1783.55	59.45	78

**With Lease Holders**

CUMULATIVE TO DATE				
Area	Stock No	Compliant up to 31.3.18	2018/19 to date	Compliant to date
Eastern Valley	3156	1766	466.8	2232.8
Upper Rhymney	3227	1532	488.45	2020.45
Lower Rhymney	2375	893	434	1327
Sheltered	795	220	187	407
Private Sector	917	277.45	121.42	398.87
Leaseholders	412	64.55	83.38	147.93
Non Trad	97	87	2.5	89.5
Post 2020	175	175	0	175
Query	7	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL STOCK</b>	<b>11161</b>	<b>5015</b>	<b>1783.55</b>	<b>6798.55</b>
		45%	16%	60.91%

Anticipated Compliance 2018/19	Programme 2019/20	Total
1227	163	3156
1100	595	3227
1037	445	2375
365	210	795
521	119	917
283	64	412
10	0	97
0	0	175
7	0	7
4550	1596	11161
41%	14%	

**Without Lease Holders**

CUMULATIVE TO DATE				
Area	Stock No	Compliant up to 31.3.18	2018/19 to date	Compliant to date
Eastern Valley	3156	1766	466.8	2232.8
Upper Rhymney	3227	1532	488.45	2020.45
Lower Rhymney	2375	893	434	1327.00
Sheltered	795	220	187	407
Private Sector	917	277.45	121.42	398.87
Non Trad	97	87	2.5	89.5
Post 2020	175	175	0	175
Query	7	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL STOCK</b>	<b>10749</b>	<b>4950</b>	<b>1700.17</b>	<b>6650.62</b>
		46.05%	16%	61.87%

Anticipated Compliance 2018/19	Programme 2019/20	Total
1227	163	3156
1100	595	3227
1037	445	2375
365	210	795
521	119	917
10	0	97
0	0	175
7	0	7
4267	1532	10749
40%	14%	

STOCK LEVEL	
Opening Stock 1.4.18	10803
Less hostel formula adjustment	-2
Less RTB's	-24
Less demolitions	-31
Added to stock	3
<b>TOTAL STOCK</b>	<b>10749</b>
Leaseholders	412
<b>TOTAL STOCK INC LEASEHOLDERS</b>	<b>11161</b>

Requires Action Less than 10% of target  
 Caution Within Tolerance  
 Target Achieved At or above target

CONSULTATIONS ONGOING	CONSULTATION COMPLETIONS	CONSULTATIONS TO BE STARTED
23	36	23

COMPLETED PROJECTS	EXPENDITURE
106	£ 3,941,018.43

CONSULTATION SCHEDULE	YEAR	COMMUNITY	NO OF COUNCIL PROPERTIES	ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER	SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEME	CONSULTATION STATUS COMPLETED / ONGOING / TO BE STARTED	POTENTIAL PROJECTS	PROJECTS	WORK ISSUED - COSTINGS REQUESTED, AWAITING COMMENCEMENT ETC	TO WHOM	NUMBER OF PROJECTS COMPLETED	ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE WITHIN COMMUNITY	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE
COMPLETE	2018/2019	HEOL TRECATELL	57	BETH SMITH		COMPLETED	PAINTING, PLANTING AND PAVING at 1 - 16 and 17 - 30 HEOL TRECATELL	3	RELAY PATHWAY TO THE SIDE OF NO 57	NCS complete	1	£ 25,000.00	SOFT AND HARD LANDSCAPING 2018
2 (Q1)	2018/2019	PENLLWYN (Upper & Lower)	324	LYNNE JOHN		ONGOING	POTENTIAL SWING PARK & SKATE PARK / REVAMP OF SHOP AREA LIKE GELLIGAER PARKING ON PENYMEAD FORMALISATION OF PARKING AREA IN FDL AVE PARKING OPPS SCHOOL FDL AVE INSTALL STEPS IN BANKING FDL AVE PARKING IN BRYNTEG AVE	7	BEECH CLOSE BENCH REPLACEMENT	PARKS (COMPLETED)	1	£ 1,880.00	
2 (Q1)	2019/2020	OAKDALE	73	LYNNE JOHN		TO BE STARTED	FARM CLOSE VILLAGE GREEN UPGRADE SKATE PARK	2					
COMPLETED	2019/2020	WATTSVILLE	49	LYNNE JOHN	WOODLAND VIEW-COMPLETED	COMPLETED	BENCHES AND RAISED BED PLANTERS NEW PLACENAME SIGNAGE	2					
COMPLETED	2019/2020	GELLIGROES	58	LYNNE JOHN	TY MYNYDDISLWYN-COMPLETED	COMPLETED	TY MYNYDDISLWYN PARKING	1	PILLAR REDUCTION AT TY MYNYDDISLWYN PARKING AT TY MYNYDDISLWYN	NCS (COMPLETED) EPG INVESTIGATING	1	£ 394.00	
2 (Q2)	2018/2019	SPRINGFIELD	239	LYNNE JOHN	YNYSWEN	ONGOING	BROOKFIELD RD/MEADOW CLOSE PARKING / MEADOW RD PATHWAY / NEW STREET SIGNS	1	BROOKFIELD RD/MEADOW RD PARKING MEADOW RD PATHWAY	NCS (COMPLETED) AWAITING APPROVAL	1		
2 (Q2)	2018/2019	RISCA	165	LYNNE JOHN	ST MARYS COURT BRITANNIA COURT	TO BE STARTED		1	REPLACEMENT BENCHES X 2 @ CROMWELL BUNGALOWS	PARKS (COMPLETED)	1	£ 1,880.00	
2 (Q4)	2018/2019	HENGOED	106	ANNA LEWIS		ONGOING							
COMPLETE	2017/2018	FOCHRW	152	ANNA LEWIS		COMPLETED		13	1. FENCING ON BRIDGE BY COMMUNITY CENTRE 2. EXTRA PLAY FACILITIES IN RHODFA GANOL PARK – ROUNDABOUT, HOP SCOTCH, SNAKES AND LADDERS. 3. GREEN GYM 4. FENCING OF PLAY AREA AROUND TEENAGER POD AND KICK ABOUT ADDING A PICNIC BENCH 5. SHEEP ISSUE RESOLUTION – SPRINGS ON GATE AND REINSTATE LATCH AT GLAN Y NANT 6. FENCE AND GATE AT RAILWAY TERRACE 7. CONTAINER FOR YOUTH FOOTBALL 8. CLEAN UP – ESTATE AND COMMON 9. IMPROVEMENTS TO "DINGLE" AREA – TO BE CARRIED OUT BY COMMUNITIES FIRST, GAVO, GROUNDWORK – BENCH AND ASSAULT COURSE FOR TODDLERS 10. LIGHTING COLUMN X2 CAE GLAS NEWYDD 11. LINES ON CHILDRENS MUGA AREA, USED BY COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL 12. FENCING BETWEEN BRYN NANT & SCHOOL 13. PARKING RESOLUTIONS AT AEL Y BRYN	1. PARKS 2. PARKS- G/R 3. PARKS- G/R 4. PARKS 5. COUNTRYSIDE 6. HIGHWAYS 7. COMMUNITY BENEFITS 8. KWT 9. COMMUNITIES FIRST 10. HIGHWAYS 11. PARKS 12. PARKS 13. EPG/HIGHWAYS	5	£ 57,867.00	2018
COMPLETE	2017/2018	PHILLIPSTOWN	159	ANNA LEWIS		COMPLETED		15	1 SKATE PARK 2 IMPROVEMENTS AT PARK 3 PARKING – DERLWYN 4 BUS SHELTER 5 MEASURES TO STOP OFF ROAD BIKES NEAR PARK/ FOOTBALL FIELD & PATHWAYS BETWEEN HOUSES. 6 RUBBISH AMNESTY - ALREADY COMPLETE 7 LITTER PICK 8 STREET SIGNS & ENTRANCE SIGNAGE 9 BULB PLANTING & TREE PLANTING ON ENTRANCE 10 CLEAN BOTH OVERGROWTH AND LITTER 11 HAND RAILS ON STEPS 12 DOG WASTE BINS & LITTER BINS 13 DAISY FIELD 14 PARKING JONES STREET 15 BOW TOP RAILINGS BOTTOM OF BEDDLWYN ROAD	1. PARKS 2. PARKS 3. HIGHWAYS 4. HIGHWAYS 5. HIGHWAYS 6. WASTE MANAGEMENT 7. KWT 8. PARKS/HIGHWAYS 9. PARKS 10. PARKS 11. HIGHWAYS 12. WASTE MANAGEMENT 13. HIGHWAYS 14. HIGHWAYS 15. PARKS	4	£ 210,959.71	
2 (Q2)	2018/2019	NEW TREDEGAR	140	ANNA LEWIS	GLYNSYFI COMPLETED	ONGOING		5	1. TREES ON THE BOUNDARY OF THE SCHEME TO BE CUT AND BRAMBLES CUT BACK AND GENERAL CLEAN-UP OF LAND. (I WILL CONTACT KEEP WALES TIDY IN RELATION TO THE CLEAN-UP). THE AREA IS HIGHWAYS OWNED BUT HAS BEEN AN ONGOING ISSUE FOR TENANTS THERE FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS. TENANTS HAVE SAID TREE CUTTING WAS TAKING PLACE UNTIL THE NEW ROAD WAS BUILT. 2. BUSHES ON THE SCHEME TO BE TAKEN AWAY WHERE POSSIBLE OR CUT BACK TO ALLOW FOR ACCESS TO PARKING (OVERGROWN), TO BE MORE EASILY MAINTAINED AND MAKE THE AREA LOOK MORE APPEALING. 3. REPLACEMENT OR PAINTING WHERE POSSIBLE OF X3 BENCHES AS TENANTS ARE UNABLE TO SIT ON THEM AS THEY ARE IN A 'BAD STATE' YET HAVE BEEN WELL USED AND PEOPLE WOULD LIKE TO CONTINUE TO USE THEM FOR SOCIALISING AND TO SIT OUT DOORS. 4. NO PARKING SIGNAGE WHERE THERE ARE DROPPED KERBS FOR DISABLED ACCESS. 5. THE ADDITION OF X2 DROPPED KERBS AS THERE IS ONLY ONE EACH END OF THE SITE.	1. PARKS -DB 2. PARKS-DB 3. PARKS 4. HIGHWAYS 5. HIGHWAYS	4	£ 6,735.00	2018 FOR GLYNSYFI WORKS
2 (Q2)	2018/2019	PONTLOTTYN	233	ANNA LEWIS		ONGOING	PARKING ON SUNNYVIEW RAILINGS, WALLS, HANDRAILS - BRYNHFRYDD/BRYNGLAS UPGRADE COMM CENTRE LAND UPGRADE PARK STEPS ON BLACK PATH CLEAN UP AROUND FARM RD SIGNAGE NOTICE BOARD WALLS THOUGH VILLAGE	10					
2 (Q2)	ONGOING	GILFACH (LOWER)	108	ANNA LEWIS		TO BE STARTED							
2 (Q3)	2018/2019	ABERBARGOED (MIDDLE)	88	ANNA LEWIS		ONGOING	STARTING TO BE PACKAGED						
ONGOING	2018/2019	PORSET PARK*	179	BETH SMITH		ONGOING	SKATE PARK, GWAUN NEWYDD PARKING, COED CAE PARKING	9	1 BOLLARDS ON LON YR ODYN 2 BINS AND BENCHES ON PORSET PARK, 3 DROPPED KERB, 4 RAILINGS ON COED MAIN, 5 SIGNAGE ON GWAUN NEWYDD	VARIOUS	4	£ 219,380.00	2020
ONGOING	2018/2019	TRETHOMAS	145	BETH SMITH	GROVE I & GROVE II - COMPLETED	ONGOING	PLANTING, PARKING NOT FEASIBLE, AEL Y BRYN, GROVE	5		COMMUNITY GROUP		£ 60,000.00	2020
ONGOING	2018/2019	MACHEN	63	BETH SMITH		ONGOING	PLANTING, PARKING AREAS, GRAIG VIEW	7	TREES ON FFWRWM ROAD, BENCH OF THE CRESCENT, RAILING ON FFWRWM RD	PARKS 2 COMPLETE	2	£ 50,000.00	
COMPLETED	2018/2019	PONTYMISTER	164	LYNNE JOHN	TY ISAF - COMPLETED	COMPLETED	TY ISAF BENCHES AND RAISED BEDS RESURFACING OF DEAD SPACE TO THE SIDE OF THE SCHEME	2					

CONSULTATION SCHEDULE	YEAR	COMMUNITY	NO OF COUNCIL PROPERTIES	ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER	SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEME	CONSULTATION STATUS COMPLETED / ONGOING / TO BE STARTED	POTENTIAL PROJECTS	PROJECTS	WORK ISSUED - COSTINGS REQUESTED, AWAITING COMMENCEMENT ETC	TO WHOM	NUMBER OF PROJECTS COMPLETED	ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE WITHIN COMMUNITY	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE
COMPLETE	2017/2018	ABERTYSSWG (Rhymer South)	82	ANNA LEWIS	PROSPECT PLACE COMPLETED	COMPLETED		19	<p>1. REDUCE GREEN AREA OPPOSITE 1-6 AND PROVIDING ADDITIONAL 4 PARKING SPACES FOR AND KNEE RAIL TO PREVENT UNACCEPTABLE PARKING ON THE GREEN AND TO WIDEN THE ROAD</p> <p>2. REPLACE HANDRAIL TO LEFT HAND SIDE ENTERING GREENSWAY WITH GREEN METAL LOOP TOP FENCING AND GATE</p> <p>3. REMOVE BOLLARDS AT BOTTOM RIGHT HAND SIDE TO ALLOW ACCESS FOR GRASS CUTTER</p> <p>4. REMOVE OLD CONCRETE FENCE POSTS FROM LEFT AND RIGHT PATH AND REPLACE WITH HANDRAIL GOING DOWN THE FULL LENGTH OF THE LEFT HAND SIDE OF THE PATHWAY &amp; REPLACE HANDRAIL ON RIGHT HAND SIDE PATHWAY</p> <p>5. PAINT BARRIER AT THE TOP OF THE PATH LEADING TO LOWER ABERTWSSYG AND PAINT BOLLARDS AT THE BOTTOM.</p> <p>6. REPLACE KNEE RAILS AROUND GRASS AREA FAR END OF GREENSWAY SO THAT THEY GO ALL THE WAY AROUND TO PREVENT MOTORBIKES ENTERING</p> <p>7. RESURFACE PATH WAY TO LOWER ABERTWSSYG ON LEFT HAND SIDE</p> <p>8. REMOVE SMALLER BOLLARDS AT BOTTOM OF THE PATH LEADING TO THE BACK OF THE HOUSES AND REPLACE IF POSSIBLE AND WITHIN BUDGET</p> <p>Prospect Place Projects</p> <p>1. BOW TOP FENCING</p> <p>2. STOCK PROOF FENCING</p> <p>3. SPRING/RUBBER ON GATE</p> <p>4. HANDRAILS &amp; PATHWAY ON LEFT</p> <p>5. EXTEND CAR PARK</p> <p>6. FORMALISED PARKING BAYS</p> <p>7. 5MPH SIGN/SIGNAGE/WAYFINDER</p> <p>8. BENCHES REPLACED</p>	<p>1. HIGHWAYS</p> <p>2. HIGHWAYS</p> <p>3. HIGHWAYS</p> <p>4. HIGHWAYS</p> <p>5. HIGHWAYS</p> <p>6. HIGHWAYS</p> <p>7. HIGHWAYS</p> <p>8. HIGHWAYS</p>	6	£62,650.00	2018 Prospect Place 2020

CONSULTATION SCHEDULE	YEAR	COMMUNITY	NO OF COUNCIL PROPERTIES	ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER	SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEME	CONSULTATION STATUS COMPLETED / ONGOING / TO BE STARTED	POTENTIAL PROJECTS	PROJECTS	WORK ISSUED - COSTINGS REQUESTED, AWAITING COMMENCEMENT ETC	TO WHOM	NUMBER OF PROJECTS COMPLETED	ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE WITHIN COMMUNITY	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE
2 (Q3)	2018/2019	BARGOED	157	ANNA LEWIS	ST GWLADYS COMPLETED	ONGOING		10	1. RAMPS FOR ACCESS - OFF SITE 2. LINE MARKING FOR PARKING, WALKWAYS & HATCHED AREA 3. TIDY UP AND ASPHALTING TO ENTRANCE OF COMPLEX 4. SIGNAGE 5. DRAINS AND PATHWAYS 6. CLEAN UP - CUT BACK OVERGROWTH & REMOVAL OF TREE 7. PICNIC TABLE 8. BIRD BOXES 9. APPLE TREE 10. GREEN HOUSE, ALLOTMENT AREA, BBQ AREA, PLANTERS - LATER	1. HIGHWAYS 2. HIGHWAYS 3. HIGHWAYS 4. HIGHWAYS 5. HIGHWAYS 6. PARKS 7. PARKS 8. GROUNDWORK 9. TARRAGON 10. LATER	2	£ 60,687.20	2019
2 (Q3)	2018/2019	MAESYCWMMER	112	ANNA LEWIS	Y GLYN COMPLETED	TO BE STARTED	SUBWAY PARKING BAYS MAINTENANCE - WALLS COMMUNITY ORCHARD MEASURES TO STOP OFF ROAD VEHICLES	12	1. REMOVE PLANTING WERE POSSIBLE AROUND THE CENTRE AND OPPOSITE TENANTS HOMES ON GRASSED COMMUNAL AREAS AS THESE HAVE BECOME OVERGROWN AND UNKEMPT. THIS WILL ALLOW THE AREA TO BE EASILY MAINTAINED AND LOOK AESTHETICALLY PLEASING. 2. RENEW BENCHES X3 - ONLY THE BENCHES THERE ALREADY WILL BE REPLACED AND ONLY THE ONES THAT WERE PUT IN BY CCBC - THERE IS AN ADDITIONAL ONE THAT WILL NOT BE REPLACED AS IT WAS PUT IN AS A MEMORIAL BENCH BY A TENANT. NO ADDITIONAL BENCHES TO BE PUT IN 3. ONE OFF LITTER PICK - (TO BE COMPLETED BY GROUNDWORK OR KEEP WALES TIDY) 4. OUTSIDE COMMUNAL TAP NEAR TO LAUNDRY FACILITY 5. ADDITIONAL PARKING SPACES TO BE CREATED BEHIND 3-6 AND RE-FORMALISATION OF THE CURRENT PARKING IN THE SAME AREA TO ALLOW FOR MORE SPACES IF POSSIBLE. IT WAS INITIALLY SUGGESTED FOR ADJACENT TO 1&2 BUT THIS WAS NOT AGREED BY TENANTS AFTER A WALKABOUT AS IT WAS FELT THE SPACES WOULD BE USED BY OTHERS RATHER THAN THOSE LIVING IN Y GLYN 6. TENANTS HAVE REQUESTED A DROPPED KERB NEAR THE COMMUNAL WALKWAY SECTION TO BE ABLE TO ACCESS THE ROAD & SIGNAGE TO SHOW FOR DISABLED ACCESS 7. ADD WAY FINDER SIGNAGE FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES AND VISITORS	1. PARKS 2. PARKS 3. KWT 4. EXTERNALS 5. HIGHWAYS 6. HIGHWAYS 7. DESIGN	5	£ 23,519.00	2018 FOR Y GLYN WORKS
2 (Q4)	2018/2019	BRITANNIA	83	BETH SMITH		TO BE STARTED	BOLLARD ON ROUNDABOUT TO STOP CARS PARKING UP THERE. BUTTERFLY PLANTING, PAINT MUGA	6	HODGES CRESCENT AND SALWAY AVENUE POSTS AND FENCING, WORK TO THE BUTTERFLY ROUNDABOUT, ANGEL LANE RAILINGS	PARKS HRO	2	£ 20,000.00	
2 (Q4)	2018/2019	GELLIGAER / INCL PENYBRYN	350	ANNA LEWIS	WAUNRHIDD COMPLETED	ONGOING		7	1. TREES TO BE REMOVED OR CUT WHERE POSSIBLE - DUE TO SLIP HAZARD AND ALMOST TOUCHING PROPERTIES. 2. REMOVAL OF LARGE PLANTERS 3. PAINT / RENEW BENCHES 4. PATHWAYS TO BENCHES 5. KERB TO BE LOWERED AT THE SIDE OF THE COMMUNAL HALL TO ALLOW FOR DISABLED ACCESS 6. PARKING MARKED OUT CLEARLY OR A WALKWAY TO ALLOW FOR WHEELCHAIRS AND OTHER WALKING AID USERS TO PASS THE CARS TO ENTER THE COMMUNAL HALL 7. SPRAYING OF WEEDS	1. PARKS - DB 2. EXTERNALS 3. PARKS 4. PARKS 5. HIGHWAYS 6. HIGHWAYS 7. PARKS	5	£12,528.26	2018 FOR WAUNRHIDD WORKS
2 (Q4)	2018/2019	FAIRVIEW	31	BETH SMITH		TO BE STARTED		1	ANEURIN CLOSE STEPS	HRO	1	£ 6,000.00	COMPLETE
2 (Q4)	2018/2019	CEFN FFOREST incl Twyn Gardens	389	BETH SMITH	TY BEDWELLY - COMPLETED	TO BE STARTED	WHEATLEY PLACE AND GRAIG GLAS AVENUE and DYLAN AVENUE and TY BEDWELLY, ECO PARK	8	BRYNGOLEU DEAD ZONE, WAUNBORFA ROAD, DYLAN AVENUE LINES ON THE ROAD, TWYN GARDENS PAINTING AND CONCRETING, TY BEDWELLY	Parks	2	£ 58,567.00	
COMPLETE	2018/2019	PENGAM	28	BETH SMITH		COMPLETED	PARKING IN ISLWYN CLOSE, BENCHES, HATCHED OUT AREA, SIGNAGE	3	BOLLARD ON ISLWYN CLOSE PARKING	NCS	1	745,000	
2 (Q4)	2017/2018	BLACKWOOD	307	LYNNE JOHN	PALMER PLACE / GIBBS CLOSE	ONGOING	BLOOMFIELD ROAD REVAMP GREENSPACE AREA CORONATION ROAD - FORMALISATION OF PARKING UPGRADE PLAY EQUIPMENT IN APOLLO RD MORRISON STREET - INCREASE PARKING	4	ALDERMAN CLOSE FENCING	PARKS (COMPLETED)	1	£ 5,364.00	
3 (Q1)	2019/2020	RHYMNEY SOUTH	447	ANNA LEWIS	ST CLARES COMPLETED	COMPLETED	STARTING TO BE PACKAGED	5	1. 7 BENCHES (3 REPLACEMENT AND 1 NEW IN THE INNER COURTYARD AREAS AND 3 REPLACEMENT AT THE FRONT) 2. CLEAN THE MOSS ETC FROM THE CAR PARK AREA 3. CONCRETE THE PATIO AREA WHERE FLOWER BEDS ARE TO ALLOW FOR ACCESS - ALREADY COMPLETE 4. NEW ENTRANCE SIGNAGE 5. CUT BACK OF TEES AT ENTRANCE - WILL NEED FURTHER INVESTIGATION. IN PRINCIPLE DECISION NEEDED.		1	£ 4,685.20	2018
COMPLETE	2017/2018	MAES MABON	148	ANNA LEWIS		COMPLETED		13	1 PATHWAYS ON MAES MABON TO GIVE ACCESS TO PEDESTRIANS 2 HAND RAILS ON STEPS AT MAES MABON & RAMPS - DISABLED ACCESS - DROPPED KERBS, PARKING BAYS REMOVED 3 PATHWAY REPLACED NEAR BUNGALOWS 28-33 YNYS LAS 4 ACCESS AT BACK OF PROPERTIES WHERE TUNNELS HAVE BEEN BLOCKED. 5 DRAINAGE RELATING TO FLOODING OF PROPERTIES NEAR PARK AND ON MAES YR ONEN LLWYN YR EOS AS WELL AS ON PARK/ESTATE ITSELF 6 RAILINGS, TREE AND WALLS ON LLAN Y PARC 7 COMMUNITY ORCHARD 8 MEASURES TO STOP OFF ROAD BIKES NEAR PARK 9 LITTER AND DOG BINS 10 CLEAN UP BY SCHOOLS & PARK BOTH OVERGROWTH AND LITTER 11 STREET SIGNAGE & ENTRANCE SIGNAGE 12 SEATING ON WAY TO VILLAGE 13 MUGA	1. HIGHWAYS 2. HIGHWAYS 3. HIGHWAYS 4. HIGHWAYS 5. HIGHWAYS 6. HIGHWAYS 7. HIGHWAYS 8. HIGHWAYS 9. WASTE MANAGEMENT 10. PARKS 11. PARKS/HIGHWAYS 12. PARKS 13. PARKS	0	£ 401,600.00	
3 (Q1)	2018/2019	PONTYWAUN	76	LYNNE JOHN	CASTLE COURT	TO BE STARTED							
3 (Q1)	2018/2019	NEWBRIDGE	88	LYNNE JOHN	HIGHFIELD HOUSE - COMPLETED	ONGOING	CREATE EXTRA PARKING IN HIGHFIELD HOUSE	1	REPLACEMENT BENCHES X 5	PARKS (COMPLETED)	1	£ 2,240.00	
3 (Q1)	2019/2020	MORRISVILLE (WATTSVILLE)	12	LYNNE JOHN		TO BE STARTED							
3 (Q1)	2019/2020	WESTEND (ABERCARN)	12	LYNNE JOHN		TO BE STARTED							
3 (Q1)	2019/2020	PERSONDY	29	LYNNE JOHN		TO BE STARTED							
3 (Q1)	2019/2020	PENTWYNMAWR	62	LYNNE JOHN	MAESTEG - COMPLETED	COMPLETED	ASSORTED AESTHETIC WORK INCLUDING PLACENAME SIGNAGE INSTALLATION OF BARRIER TO PREVENT OFF RD BIKERS	4	CREATE PATIO AREA AND JET WASH BUILDING	WHQS EXTERNALS			
3 (Q1)	2019/2020	LLANFACH	24	LYNNE JOHN		TO BE STARTED							
COMPLETED	2019/2020	CROESPENMAEN	62	LYNNE JOHN	TY MELIN - COMPLETED	COMPLETED	BENCHES AND RAISED BEDS IN TY MELIN PARKING OUTSIDE TY MELIN	4	SHELLEY CLOSE PARKING BAY BENCHES AND RAISED BEDS IN TY MELIN	NCS (COMPLETED) PARKS	1	£ 7,000.00	

CONSULTATION SCHEDULE	YEAR	COMMUNITY	NO OF COUNCIL PROPERTIES	ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER	SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEME	CONSULTATION STATUS COMPLETED / ONGOING / TO BE STARTED	POTENTIAL PROJECTS	PROJECTS	WORK ISSUED - COSTINGS REQUESTED, AWAITING COMMENCEMENT ETC	TO WHOM	NUMBER OF PROJECTS COMPLETED	ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE WITHIN COMMUNITY	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE
3 (Q1)	2018/2019	FLEUR DE LYS	46	BETH SMITH		TO BE STARTED		1	GWENT COURT	NCS		£ 5,000.00	
3 (Q1)	2019/2020	MARKHAM - HOLLYBUSH	132	BETH SMITH		TO BE STARTED	ADDITIONAL WORKS IN MOUNTAIN VIEW	3	1 COMMIN CLOSE CUTTING BACK, MOUNTAIN VIEW VARIOUS 2 MONMOUTH WALK PAINTING AND SHRUB AREA REMOVED,	1,2 PARKS AND PARKS 3 NCS	2	£ 10,000.00	
3 (Q1)	2019/2020	UPPER TRELYN (Little Australia)	79	BETH SMITH		TO BE STARTED	brighten up the streets??	2	LINES ON THE CAR PARKS, CUTTING BACK AREAS, CWRT Y WAUN RAILINGS	NCS AND PARKS	2	£ 10,000.00	
COMPLETE	2018/2019	BRITHDIR	8	ANNA LEWIS		COMPLETED		4		1. BENCHES X2 AT FRONT OF FLATS 2. CLEAN UP GROUNDS FRONT	4	£ 4,685.20	
ONGOING	2017/2018	RHYMNEY NORTH (INCL BUTETOWN)	384	ANNA LEWIS		COMPLETED		14	1. RUBBISH AMNESTY 2. LIGHTING AND PARKING FORMALISATION ON GLAN Y NANT 3. REPLACE GATE ON GRASSED AREA OF TY COCH 4. REPLACE BARRIER AND KNEE RAIL ON TY COCH PARK AREA 5. FOOTBALL POSTS ON TY COCH PARK AREA 6. OFF ROAD BIKE MEASURES ON TOP PLATEAU OF RHYMNEY – VARIOUS STREETS AND LOCATIONS 7. TY COCH LANE CLEAN UP 8. WASTE AND DOG WASTE BINS 9. BRYN CARNO – REPLACE BOLLARDS 10. CLEAN UP GARAGE AREA BACK OF PEN Y DRE 11. WILDFLOWER PLANTING 12. KNEE RAIL ON LAND NEAR PREMIER STORES 13. CLEAN UP LANE BEHIND ROYAL PUB 14. DROPPED KERBS – PEN Y DRE	1. WASTE MANAGEMENT 2. HIGHWAYS 3. PARKS 4. PARKS 5. PARKS 6. HIGHWAYS 7. PARKS 8. WASTE MANAGEMENT 9. HIGHWAYS 10. PARKS 11. PARKS 12. HIGHWAYS 13. PARKS 14. HIGHWAYS	3	£ 46,768.39	
ONGOING	2019/2020	ARGOED	30	BETH SMITH		ONGOING	PENYLAN ROAD BACK LANE LIMITED TO WHAT WE COULD DO BUT COULD CREATE SOME BETTER AREAS FOR PARKING IN THE LANE NOT SURE IF THIS WOULD HELP THOUGH AS THE PROBLEM IS ON THE BROW OF THE HILL AREA AND THERE IS NOWHERE TO PUT PARKING ON THE BACK LANE HERE	1					
ONGOING	2019/2020	THOMASVILLE (ENERGLYN)	31	BETH SMITH		ONGOING	INVESTIGATED PARKING BUT CANT DO IT	1					
3 (Q4)	2019/2020	CAERBRAGDY	24	BETH SMITH		TO BE STARTED	NOTHING HERE						
3 (Q4)	2019/2020	TY NANT	29	BETH SMITH		TO BE STARTED	PARKING	1					
ONGOING	2019/2020	RUDRY (incl TRAPWELL)	25	BETH SMITH		ONGOING	PARKING, DROPPED KERBS IN TRAPWELL OPEN UP THE SPACE	2	DROPPED KERB ON EDWARD THOMAS CLOSE	HIGHWAYS	0	£ 5,450.00	WITHIN 2 WEEKS
3 (Q4)	2019/2020	TY ISAF	7	BETH SMITH		TO BE STARTED	CUTTING BACK TREES ON FRONT AREA	1				£ 5,000.00	
2 (Q3)	2018/2019	ABERBARGOED (LOWER)	47	ANNA LEWIS		ONGOING	STARTING TO BE PACKAGED						
2 (Q3)	2018/2019	ABERBARGOED (UPPER)	218	ANNA LEWIS		ONGOING	STARTING TO BE PACKAGED						
2 (Q4)	2018/2019	CASCADE	18	ANNA LEWIS		TO BE STARTED							
2 (Q4)	2018/2019	CEFN HENGOED	165	ANNA LEWIS		TO BE STARTED							
3 (Q1)	2019/2020	YSTRAD MYNACH	48	ANNA LEWIS		TO BE STARTED						£ 4,685.20	
COMPLETE	2017/2018	TREOWEN	11	LYNNE JOHN		COMPLETED			REPLACE BENCHES AND INSTALL SETTLEMENT SIGN ON THE ELLIPSE	PARKS (COMPLETED)	2	£ 5,960.00	
COMPLETE	2017/2018	YNYSDDU / CWMFELINFACH	41	LYNNE JOHN	ALEXANDRA COURT	COMPLETED	ISLWYN CLOSE PARKING / GRAIG VIEW	2	ISLWYN CLOSE PARKING GRAIG VIEW ASB	PROPOSAL REJECTED PARKS (COMPLETE)	1		
COMPLETE	2018/2019	ABERCARN	38	LYNNE JOHN	GWYDDON COURT/THE RANKS - COMPLETED	COMPLETED			THE RANKS TARMAC AND DROPPED KERB/BINSTORE REPLACE BENCHES GWYDDON COURT BIN STORE AND PATIO	NCS AND EXTERNAL TEAM	1		

Page 66 of 99

CONSULTATION SCHEDULE	YEAR	COMMUNITY	NO OF COUNCIL PROPERTIES	ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER	SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEME	CONSULTATION STATUS COMPLETED / ONGOING / TO BE STARTED	POTENTIAL PROJECTS	PROJECTS	WORK ISSUED - COSTINGS REQUESTED, AWAITING COMMENCEMENT ETC	TO WHOM	NUMBER OF PROJECTS COMPLETED	ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE WITHIN COMMUNITY	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE
COMPLETE	2017/2018	DERI	29	ANNA LEWIS	YSGWYDDGWYN COMPLETED	COMPLETED	IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PARK TREDEGAR TERRACE PATH	14	DERI 1. HAND RAIL AND STEPS AT GLYN DERW 2. RE LAY STEPS AT GLYN DERW AND H LINES BELOW STEPS 3. STEPS LEADING TO PARK 4. BULB PLANTING ON BANKING AT GLYN DERW 5. PARKING ON GLYN DERW 6. BENCH - NEAR BUS STOP - INTERPRETATION BENCH IF POSSIBLE 7. KNEE RAILS ON GLYN DERW YSGWYDDGWYN 1. PARKING SIGNAGE (RESIDENTS ONLY), REQUESTED LINES FOR BAYS 2. PAINT STEPS (WHITE LINES) 3. OUTSIDE LIGHTS NOT WORKING (ATTACHED TO BUILDINGS) 4. PATHS CLEARED OF MOSS AND LEAVES/GRASS 5. TREES CUT BACK AND REMOVED WHERE POSSIBLE 6. BENCHES AND PICNIC TABLES RENEWED/PAINTED 7. ADDITIONAL TREE WORKS - POLLARDING	DERI 1. HIGHWAYS 2. HIGHWAYS 3. HIGHWAYS 4. PARKS 5. HIGHWAYS 6. PARKS 7. HIGHWAYS YSGWYDDGWYN 1. HIGHWAYS 2. HIGHWAYS 3. EXTERNALS 4. PARKS 5. PARKS 6. PARKS 7. PARKS	7	£ 66,900.00	2018
COMPLETE	2017/2018	PENYRHEOL	492	BETH SMITH	PLEASANT PLACE - COMPLETED	COMPLETED		14	1 PAINTING RAILINGS ON BRYN HEULOG 2 WALL REPAIRS ON HEOL FAWR 3 CAR PARKING ON PENYBRYN, GELLIDEG 4 SKATE PARK 5 ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT IN THE PARK 6 OUTDOOR GYM 7 PLEASANT PLACE, SIGNAGE AND DROPPED KERBS AND BENCH 8 TRIP RAILINGS 9 TIDY UP THE WALL ON HEOL ANEURIN 10 PARKING ON HEOL ANEURIN 11 BULB PLANTING WITH THE COMMUNITY 12 PENTWYN AND PEN Y Y BRYN 13 BINS ON THE TRIP 14 BRYN GLAS RAILING	4,5,6,11 PARKS NCS AND EPG	3	£ 248,641.32	2018
COMPLETE	2017/2018	CHURCHILL PARK	178	BETH SMITH	GLYNDERW - COMPLETED	COMPLETED		6	1 ROUNDABOUTS, 2 PLANTING THE PLANTERS ON LEWIS DRIVE 3 SEVERAL BARRIERS 4 TAKING DOWN A WILLOW TREE 5 PUTTING ANTI VANDAL PAINT ON 2 ROOFS, 6 DYLAN DRIVE EXTRA PARKING	1, 5 and 6 NCS, 2,3,4 PARKS	2	£ 90,000.00	2018
COMPLETE	2017/2018	NELSON	80	ANNA LEWIS	HEOL ISLWYN TO BE STARTED	COMPLETED		7	1. Paint skate park - to be match funded by Community Council 2. Sensory garden & Planters for children at Community Centre 3. Clean up ambulance area 4. Bulb planting opposite library 5. Gate on side of community centre 6. Waste/dog waste bins near school lanes 7. Bench renewed on Bryncelyn			£ 6,570.00	
COMPLETE	2017/2018	PWLLYPANT	38	BETH SMITH		COMPLETED		3	1 RAILINGS, 2 FENCING, AND WALL REPAIR 3 BOE	1 NCS AND 2 AND 3 HRO	3	£ 21,000.00	COMPLETE
COMPLETE	2017/2018	BRYNCENYDD (INCL MORGAN JONES PARK)	32	BETH SMITH		COMPLETED		2	PLAS PHILLIPS, BENCH AND BOLLARD	PARKS	1	£ 3,000.00	
COMPLETE	2017/2018	WAUNFACH	17	BETH SMITH		COMPLETED		2	BENCHES AND DEB SMYTHE PAID FOR THE PARKING	PARKS	2	£ 2,440.00	COMPLETE
COMPLETE	2017/2018	SENGHENYDD	118	BETH SMITH		COMPLETED		3	1 PLAS CWM PARC VARIOUS 2. PATHWAYS BETWEEN PLAS CWM PARC AND THE MAIN ROAD, LITTER PICK WITH THE COMMUNITY 3. TAN Y BRYN WALL REPAIRS	VARIOUS FOR COSTINGS	0	£ 52,000.00	
COMPLETE	2017/2018	ABERTRIDWR	134	BETH SMITH		COMPLETED		6	1 ABERTRIDWR PARK 2 ILAN ROAD CLEARANCE OF PATHS AND WALL REPAIR 3 GRANG VY FEDW AREA TO BE RETARMACED AND CLEARED 4 LITTER PICKS WITH THE COMMUNITY DROPPED KERB 5 SIGNAGE FOR ILAN ROAD FLATS 6 DROPPED KERB		2	£ 60,000.00	
COMPLETE	2017/2018	TRECENYDD	201	BETH SMITH		COMPLETED		8	1 BIN STORE AREAS ON THE GRANGE AND THIRD AVENUE 2 GENERAL TIDY UP 3 ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT IN THE PARK 4 TURNING AN OVERGROWN AREA ON FIRST AVENUE INTO GRASS 5 BENCHES ON GRANGE CLOSE 6 OVERGROWN AREA ON GRANGE CLOSE 7 CAR PARK ON WEST AVENUE RELAYED 8 HANDRAILS ON THE 2 SETS OF STEPS BY THIRD AVENUE AND TEGFAN	2,3,4,5,6 PARKS, 7 AND 8 NCS AND 1 HRO	2	£ 90,000.00	
COMPLETE	2018/2019	NANTDDU	52	BETH SMITH		COMPLETED	1 DROPPED KERB FENCING, WHITE LINES, SIGNAGE 3. PLANTING, REBUILD PLANTERS, AND PAVING, FENCING	3	1 DROPPED KERB, complete 2. FENCING, WHITE LINES IN CAR PARK, RESIDENTS ONLY PARKING SIGNS, 3. PLANTING, FENCING TO STOP DOG FOULING	VARIOUS	1	£ 34,084.00	SOFT AND HARD LANDSCAPING 2018
COMPLETE	2019/2020	TIRPHIL	39	ANNA LEWIS		COMPLETED		5			0	£ 1,900.00	2018
ONGOING	2017/2018	GILFACH PARK ESTATE TOTAL	388	ANNA LEWIS	OAKLANDS COMPLETED	COMPLETED		21	1. MEASURES TO PREVENT OFF ROAD BIKES ON TOP PLATEAU AND OAK PLACE 2. REPAIR/ REMOVE WALLS THROUGHOUT THE ESTATE 3. REMOVE STEPPED PARKING BAYS 4. RUBBISH AMNESTY 5. LITTER PICK 6. COMMUNITY ORCHARD 7. WASTE AND DOG WASTE BINS 8. SETTLEMENT SIGN 9. HIGH KERBS ON ROUNDABOUT NEAR COMMUNITY CENTRE TO STOP VEHICLES MOUNTING ROUNDABOUT 10. BULB PLANTING 11. FOOTPATH NEAR SHOP 12. IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PARK 13. CUT BACK ON ESTATE-INCLUDING UNDERPASSES TREES ON BRYNTEG, PARK VIEW, 14. "BOWLS" AREA - CLEANED UP AND CUT BACK AND FENCING MEASURES TO STOP FLYTIPPING ON PARK VIEW. 1. SPEED RAMP NEAR ENTRANCE / OPPOSITE FIRST PARKING BAYS 2. SIGNAGE FOR TURNING CIRCLE REGARDING USE FOR EMERGENCY SERVICE AND ENSURING OTHER SIGNAGE IS ADEQUATE AND PRACTICALLY LOCATED FOR RESIDENTS ONLY PARKING. 3. PLANTING, WILDFLOWERS, SHRUBS, BULBS 4. CUTTING BACK OF OVERGROWTH AND REMOVAL OF WEEDS & BOUNDARY TREES 5. BENCHES RENEWED X1 AND X2 REPAINTED	1. HIGHWAYS 2. HIGHWAYS 3. HIGHWAYS 4. WASTE MANAGEMENT 5. KWT 6. PARKS 7. WASTE MANAGEMENT 8. PARKS 9. HIGHWAYS 10. PARKS 11. HIGHWAYS 12. PARKS 13. PARKS 14. PARKS 1. HIGHWAYS 2. HIGHWAYS 3. PARKS 4. PARKS 5. PARKS 6. EXTERNALS 7. EXTERNALS	3	£ 554,033.21	
2 (Q4)	2018/2019	PENPEDAIRHEOL	8	ANNA LEWIS		TO BE STARTED							
COMPLETE	2017/2018	TIRYBERTH	44	ANNA LEWIS		COMPLETED		3	1. REMOVAL OF PLANTERS 2. REPLACEMENT OF BENCHES 3. PLANTING		0		
ONGOING	2017/2018	CROSSKEYS	149	LYNNE JOHN	WAUNFAWR HOUSE TREDEGAR COURT	ONGOING	RISCA ROAD FLATS PARKING - ENHANCEMENT OF WAUNFAWR GREEN + BENCHES/VILLAGE GREEN	2	RISCA ROAD PARKING	EPG (AWAITING CONSENT)	0		
COMPLETE	2017/2018	HIGH MEADOW	42	LYNNE JOHN		COMPLETED	POCKET PARK AT THE ENTRANCE / RENOVATION OF THE STEPS	1	DESIGN PROPOSALS FOR WELCOME FEATURE AT ENTRANCE	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT	0		

CONSULTATION SCHEDULE	YEAR	COMMUNITY	NO OF COUNCIL PROPERTIES	ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER	SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEME	CONSULTATION STATUS COMPLETED / ONGOING / TO BE STARTED	POTENTIAL PROJECTS	PROJECTS	WORK ISSUED - COSTINGS REQUESTED, AWAITING COMMENCEMENT ETC	TO WHOM	NUMBER OF PROJECTS COMPLETED	ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE WITHIN COMMUNITY	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE
COMPLETE	2017/2018	PANTSIDE (Upper & Lower)	300	LYNNE JOHN	ST PETERS CLOSE - COMPLETED	COMPLETED	WELCOME FEATURE UPGRADE OF PLAY PROVISION AT WILLOW COURT CENTRAL AVE LOWER PARKING CENTRAL AVE MID PARKING SHOPS AREA UPGRADE END OF CLAREMONT AVE REVAMP LAND TO THE REAR OF SHOPS - TREE PLANTING FENCE INSTALLATION AT THE END OF CARLYON INCREASE PARKING IN QUEENS RD AND SUNNYCREST	10	WOODLAND PARK ENHANCEMENT UPGRADE OF PLAY PROVISION CENTRAL AVE (MID) PARKING CENTRAL AVE (LOWER) PARKING CLAREMONT AVE BENCHES AND FENCING AT SHOPS	PARKS - COMPLETE AWAITING APPROVAL NCS (COMPLETE APART FROM BENCH) NCS PARKS FOR COSTS PARKS (COMPLETE)	3	£ 102,759.00	
COMPLETED	2017/2018	TY SIGN	460	LYNNE JOHN	HAFOD Y BRYN	COMPLETED	HOLLY ROAD WINDOW BOXES. BIN STORE (PASSED TO HOUSING TO PROGRESS) HOLLY RD COMMUNITY GARDEN ENHANCEMENT OF GREEN PLATEAU BY MUGA / WOODLAND WALK ON HOLLY RD PARKING ON ELM DRIVE ENHANCEMENT OF THE SHOPS AREA	6	RISCA SKATE PARK FORSYTHIA CLOSE BIN STORE HOLLY RD WINDOW BOXES	PARKS - WITH CONTRACTOR NCS - COMPLETED PARKS / MARK PEARCE	1	£ 46,714.00	
ONGOING	2018/2019	CWMCARN	104	LYNNE JOHN		TO BE STARTED	HARD LANDSCAPE TO ALLEVIATE ASB AT THE STEPS / PROVISION OF MORE PLAY EQUIPMENT?	2			0		

CONSULTATION SCHEDULE	YEAR	COMMUNITY	NO OF COUNCIL PROPERTIES	ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER	SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEME	CONSULTATION STATUS COMPLETED / ONGOING / TO BE STARTED	POTENTIAL PROJECTS	PROJECTS	WORK ISSUED - COSTINGS REQUESTED, AWAITING COMMENCEMENT ETC	TO WHOM	NUMBER OF PROJECTS COMPLETED	ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE WITHIN COMMUNITY	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE
COMPLETED	2018/2019	TRINANT	242	LYNNE JOHN	HOREB COURT - COMPLETED	COMPLETED	REVAMP OF TRINANT SQUARE UPGRADE OF PLAY PROVISION - HOREB COURT PATHWAYS, BENCHES AND PLANTERS/ CHAIN LINK FENCING REPLACEMENT VILLAGE GREEN TOP OF PENTWYN TCE ST PETERS KERB INCREASE FENCING TO THE REAR OF ST PETERS COMM LOUNGE OSBOURNE RD - REMOVE STEPPED PARKING BAYS	9	TRINANT SQUARE REVAMP UPGRADE OF PLAY PROVISION HOREB COURT - BENCHES, PLANTERS REPLACE FENCING ALONG ROW VILLAGE GREEN ENHANCEMENT PRINCESS CRESCENT - REMOVE BOLLARDS ST PETERS KERBS FENCING TO THE REAR OF COMM GARDEN	NCS - COMPLETED APART FROM KNEE RAILS AND LINE MARKING PASSED TO CAPITA FOR FEASIBILITY AWAITING CONFIRMATION OF CONTINUED MAINTENANCE PARKS COMPLETE - ISH PARKS (COMPLETE) FURTHER INVESTIGATION REQUIRED PARKS (COMPLETE) PARKS NCS (COMPLETE) WHQS EXTERNALS - WHO	5	£ 34,670.00	
ONGOING	2017/2018	LLANBRADACH	76	BETH SMITH		COMPLETED		2	1. FENCING AND AREA CLEARANCE 2. HAVE BEEN LOOKING AT THE PARKING ON PLAS CAE LLWYD AS WELL	PARKS	0	£ 5,000.00	01/10/2018
ONGOING	2018/2019	BEDWAS	254	BETH SMITH	THE WILLOWS - COMPLETED GREENACRES	ONGOING	PARKING	5	CHERRY TREE CLOSE	PARKS complete	1	£ 350,000.00	PARKING 2019 GREENACRES 2020
ONGOING	2018/2019	GRAIG YR RHACCA	389	BETH SMITH		ONGOING	SKATE PARK, PLAY GROUND, GENERAL TIDY UP, MORE BINS, PLANTING	9	RAILINGS AND WALL S, PLANTING IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS	NCS COMPLETED RAILINGS AND WALLS. PARKS HAVE THE PLANTING	3	£ 300,000.00	2020
ONGOING	ONGOING	LANSBURY PARK AHO*	520	BETH SMITH		ONGOING	PARK, PARKING, ROAD WIDENINGS, GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IDEAS ETC.	20	ACCESS PROJECT TREVELYAN, GARAGES ANTI VANDAL PAINT			£ 500,000.00	
TO START		CLAUDE ROAD	70	BETH SMITH		ONGOING	WALLS, GENERAL TIDY UP	2				£ 50,000.00	

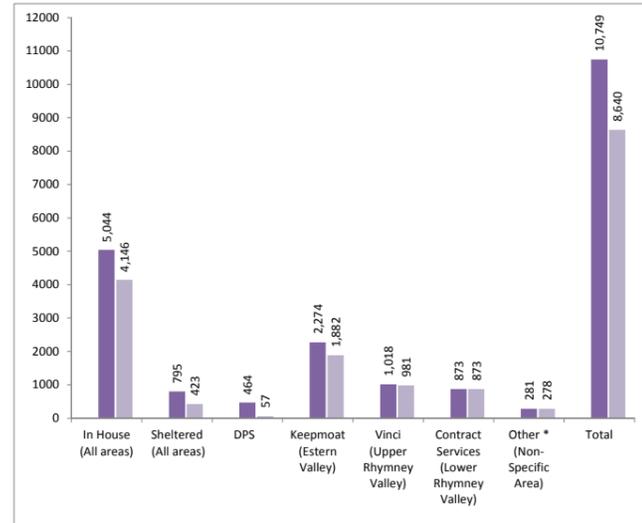
## WHQS - STRATEGIC SCORECARD - LEVELS OF COMPLIANCE

(Standards Met - by Number of Properties)

Reporting Period: **02/11/2018**

### \*INTERNAL Works Programme (Stock v Compliance)

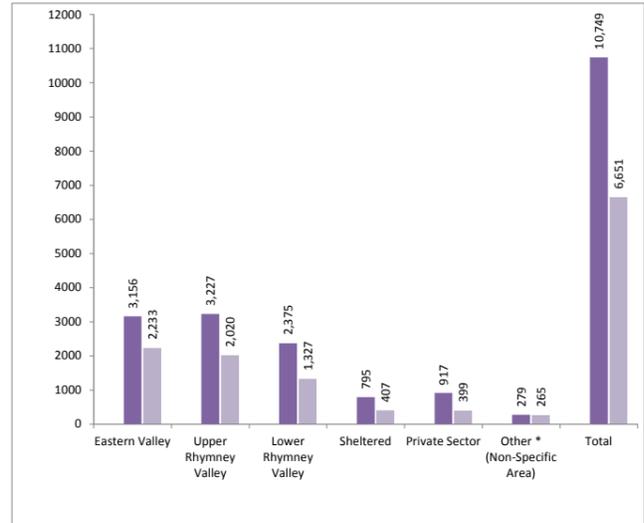
Internal Target 31/3/19	<b>85.00%</b>
Internal Components (% of stock)	<b>80.38%</b>



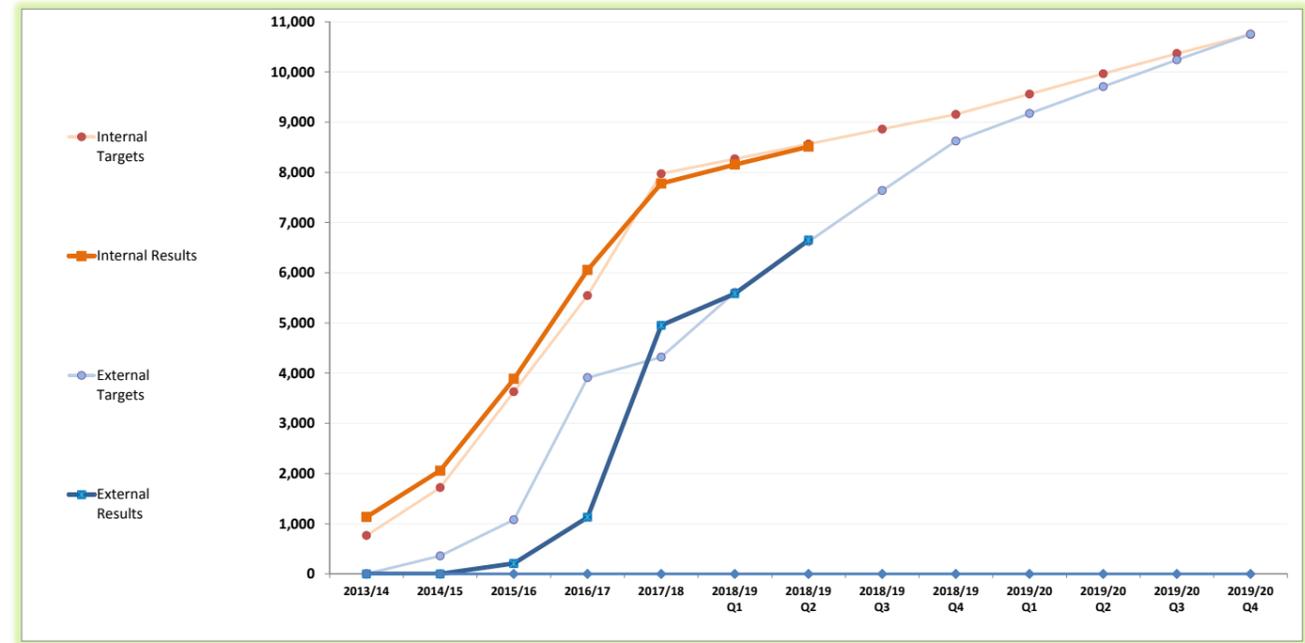
Reporting Period: **26/10/2018**

### ~ EXTERNAL Works Programme (Stock v Compliance)

External Target 31/3/19	<b>80.00%</b>
External Components (% of stock)	<b>61.87%</b>



INTERNAL & EXTERNAL - Programme Profile (Targets & Results Achieved)



Projected Compliance Date for Internal works - **15th May 2020**

Projected Compliance Date for External works - **10th April 2020**

Financial Programme	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19 Projected	19/20 Projected	2020 Projected
Budget (£,000's)	19,100	48,320	77,990	107,660	136,880	166,100	195,320	220,000	
Actual Spend	19,057	33,707	49,051	77,683	109,061	152,165	207,968	254,938	
Balance	43	14,613	28,939	29,977	27,819	13,935	(12,648)	(34,938)	

The above finance table details accumulative budget allocations and spend profiles to date, which are subject to annual review and re-profiling.

### Tenant Satisfaction Internal Works

Return Rate	<b>40%</b>
	<b>88.0%</b>
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	5.0%
Dissatisfied	7.0%

### Tenant Satisfaction External Works

Return Rate	<b>28%</b>
	<b>71.0%</b>
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	7.0%
Dissatisfied	22.0%

Page 103

### TARGET PERFORMANCE

INTERNALS	WEEKLY TARGET	WEEKLY RESULT	TARGET ACHIEVED	EXTERNALS	WEEKLY TARGET	WEEKLY RESULT	TARGET ACHIEVED
In House	13.43	12.61		Eastern Valley	21.07	15.56	
Sheltered	3.55	3.13		Upper Rhymney	18.89	16.28	
DPS	1.33	0.45		Lower Rhymney	17.81	14.47	
Keepmoat	6.88	8.26		Sheltered	6.27	6.23	
Vinci	1.91	3.35		Private Sector	8.94	4.05	
Contract Serv	0.03	0.00		Leaseholders	4.87	2.78	
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>27.13</b>	<b>27.80</b>		Non Trad	0.17	0.08	
				To be allocated	0.12	0.00	
	Target achieved or within 10% tolerance			<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>59.45</b>	
	Target not achieved						

### COMMENTS/ACTION POINTS

- ~Loss of Contractor Services and poor performance & imminent loss of Vinci terminating the contract early
- ~Newly implemented DPS system utilising local contractors to pick up the work intended for Contractor Services and Vinci and external works
- ~Separate teams are being set up within HRO to pick up isolated properties with access issues, enabling the WHQS team to focus on delivering the programme without affecting performance
- ~An additional in-house team is being established to increase performance on the sheltered contracts
- ~Work programmed for Keepmoat will reduce significantly in 2019/20 therefore options being considered to allocate additional work to assist with performance
- ~Surveys for both internal and external works are anticipated to be completed by Dec 2018., and data gathered to date has not identified any major problems which may have a detrimental impact on performance

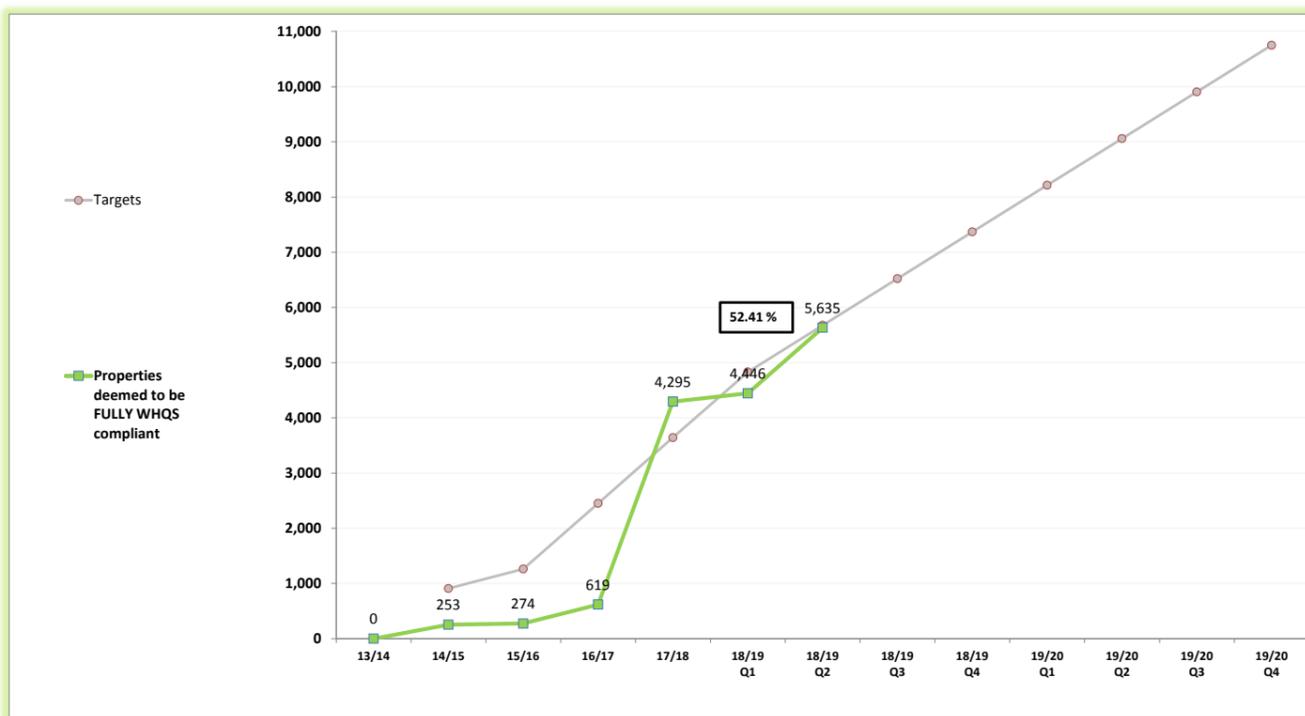
The charts above, have been based on properties surveyed, improvement works undertaken, post-works inspections and portfolio updates, focusing on the following WHQS components:

**Internal Works** : 4 main elements - Kitchens, Bathrooms, Heating & Electrics.

**External Works** : 10 main elements - Boundary walls, Doors, Drainage works, Fences/Railings/Gates, Curtilage works, Paths/Drives, Roofs, Stores/Sheds/Outbuildings, Windows & property skin

Other specialist works/improvements are also undertaken in conjunction with the WHQS Programme, such as Adaptations to meet the specific needs of the tenants

WHQS - Properties fully compliant (total stock)



## Appendix 5

### Internal Forecast Data

Current Compliance			8640	
Compliance since April 20	862 Properties for	31 weeks	27.81	
2018 - 2019 remaining	19 weeks @	27.81 properties per week	528.32	19
2019 - 2020 remaining	50 weeks @	27.81 properties per week	1390.32	50
Total projected compliance on current stock			10558.65	
Stock Number			10749	
Projected over run			190.35	
	190.35 divided by	27.81 properties per week	7	Weeks Over
Full compliance projected to be achieved by		15th May 2020		

## Appendix 6

### External Forecast Data ( Without Leaseholders )

Current Compliance	6650.62
Compliance since April 2018 = 1700.17 properties for 30 weeks	56.67
2018 - 2019 remaining 20 weeks @ 56.67 properties per week	1133.45
2019 - 2020 remaining 50 weeks @ 56.67 properties per week	2833.61
Total projected compliance on current stock	10617.68
Stock Number	10749
Projected over run	131.32
131.32 / 56.67 properties per week	2 Weeks Over
Full compliance projected to be achieved by	10th April 2020

### External Forecast Data ( With Leaseholders )

Current Compliance	6798.55
Compliance since April 2018 = 1783.55 properties for 30 weeks	59.45
2018 - 2019 remaining 20 weeks @ 59.45 properties per week	1189.03
2019 - 2020 remaining 50 weeks @ 59.45 properties per week	2972.58
Total projected compliance on current stock	10960.17
Stock Number	11161
Projected over run	200.83
200.83 / 59.45 properties per week	3 Weeks Over
Full compliance projected to be achieved by	17th April 2020

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## CABINET – 30TH JANUARY 2019

**SUBJECT: HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT CHARGES – 2019/2020**

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

- 
- 1.1 The attached report, which provided details of the proposed increased charges which are intended to be effective for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the 2019/20 financial year, was considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 15th January 2019. The report sought the views of Members on the proposed increases contained therein, prior to its presentation to Cabinet.
  - 1.2 Officers summarised the process involved in preparing the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget. Members were reminded that Welsh Government's (WG) Policy for Social Housing Rents sets a target rent band for each Authority whereby councils have to adjust average rents for their properties in line with this banding. The uplift on the rent policy is fixed for five years and uses the previous September Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation figure (as opposed to the RPI inflation figure). It also applies a 1.5% real increase to the average local authority rent and an additional £2 per week discretion for social landlords meeting certain criteria. 2018/19 was the final year of the existing five year agreement and following ministerial pressures in comparing Welsh rents to those in England, WG have agreed that the increase should be CPI only for 2019/20. The discretion to apply up to £2 per week has been removed for those social landlords whose average weekly rent is within or above their Target Rent Band. This decision will apply for one year only whilst WG are awaiting the outcome of the Affordable Housing Supply Review.
  - 1.3 The previous September CPI inflation figure was 2.4% and the Business Plan assumed a rent increase of 3%. Applying 2.4% to the average rent means that Caerphilly Council are just below the Target Rent Band, and therefore this can be increased up to a maximum of £2 to ensure inclusion within the envelope range. In order to be at the minimum of the Target Band Range, a minimum increase of 2.7% is required, and in order to meet the requirement of the Housings Business Plan, an increase of 3% is necessary. The maximum rent increase that can be applied by the Authority is 4.74%. Members were therefore asked to recommend to Cabinet the level of increase per property from April 2019 based on the options in the report (2.7%, 3% or 4.74%). All relevant charges were highlighted within the report and detailed the amount of additional income that would be generated (excluding voids) for each of the proposed levels of increase, together with the percentage of service users receiving housing benefit. The increased income is required to offset other inflationary increases within the service area and support the delivery of all housing-related services, including the delivery of the WHQS programme.
  - 1.4 The report also provided an update in respect of garage charges and it was noted that it is not proposed to increase the rent on Council-owned garages this year. This is due to the ongoing garage rationalisation and refurbishment programme, which is having a significant impact on void levels as the block of garages must be fully vacated prior to commencement of works on each site.
  - 1.5 Discussion took place regarding the proposed levels of rent increase outlined in the report and

how local authorities are responding to the changes in the WG rent policy. A Member queried the implications for Caerphilly Council if the minimum level of increase (2.7%) were to be applied. Officers explained that increased borrowing would have to take place in order to achieve the Welsh Housing Quality Standard and that additional costs arising from extenuating factors might also need to be met. In response to Members' queries, Officers also outlined the different scenarios across each of the proposed levels in regards to the amounts payable by tenants and the percentage of tenants in receipt of housing benefits. Members also expressed concerns as to the impact of the proposed increases on some tenants in view of the changes to Universal Credit.

- 1.6 Having considered the options set out in the report, two levels of increase (3% and 2.7%) were moved and seconded respectively in regards to the level of rent increase to be recommended to Cabinet. The Committee took the motion on the 3% increase first, and by a show of hands and the majority present (and in noting there were 4 against) this was declared carried. As such, the alternative motion in respect of the 2.7% increase was declared lost.
- 1.7 The Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee therefore recommended to Cabinet by the majority present that for the reasons set out in the report, the increase of 3% per property to comply with the Housing Business Plan be applied from April 2019.
- 1.8 Members are asked to consider the report and the above recommendation.

Author: R. Barrett, Committee Services Officer, Ext. 4245

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Report to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 15th January 2019 - Agenda Item 9



## **POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 15TH JANUARY 2019**

**SUBJECT: HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT CHARGES - 2019/2020**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 For Members to consider and take a view on the increased Housing rent charges proposed in this report, prior to consideration by Cabinet on the 30th January 2019. The charges predominantly focus on council house rents and are intended to be effective for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the 2019/20 financial year.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Members will be aware that the preparation of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget is quite separate to the work involved in setting the General Fund Budget and Council Tax. The HRA is funded by rental income received from council tenants rather than the Council Tax Payer. Whilst there is a clear separation of these funds, the majority of council tenants rent is funded from housing benefits which is derived from the tax payers' purse, therefore value for money must always be sought. We charge our council tenants rent over a 48 week basis but The Welsh Government (WG) base their rents on a 52 week basis so this report shows the 52 week equivalent.
- In previous years WG determined the annual guideline rent increases. The standard uplift policy for Local Authorities used to be based on the previous September Retail Price Index (RPI) plus a 2% real increase in support of rent convergence. The Minister for Housing and Regeneration changed this uplift policy as part of the new Policy for Social Housing Rents in April 2015 and was accepted by Members in the 2015/16 HRA charges report. The policy sets a target rent band for each Authority and if the average weekly rent is below the target rent, the Authority will have to increase average rents, and if the average weekly rent is above the target rent, average rents will increase at a lower rate, to bring the rent back within the target envelope.
  - The uplift on the new rent policy was fixed for five years up to 2018/19 and uses the previous September Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation figure (as opposed to the RPI inflation figure) and also applied a 1.5% real increase to the average local authority rent. There was also an option to add up to £2 per week if social landlords needed to increase their rent to keep in line with their rent envelope, or if rents were being restructured and if their local rent policy was being revised.
  - 2018/19 was the final year of the existing five year agreement and it has been expected that rent increases will see a reduction due to the pressure The Minister for Housing and Regeneration has when comparing Welsh rents to those in England where rents are required to be reduced by 1% a year for 4 years from their 2015/16 baseline. The Minister has considered the position for 2019/20 and has agreed that the increase should be CPI

only. The discretion to apply “up to £2 per week” has been removed for those social landlords whose average weekly rent is within or above their Target Rent Band. This decision will apply for one year only (2019/20) while Welsh Government are awaiting the outcome of the Affordable Housing Supply Review.

- The previous Septembers CPI inflation figure was 2.4%.
- The Business Plan assumed a rent increase of 3%
- By applying 2.4% to our average rent means we are just below the lowest Target Rent Band, therefore this can be increased up to a maximum of £2 to ensure we are within the envelope range.
- In order to be at the minimum of the Target Rent Band a minimum increase of 2.7% is necessary.
- In order to meet the requirement of the Housing Business plan an increase of 3% is necessary
- The maximum increase allowed under the current rent policy is 4.74%.

2.2 The responsibility for setting the rents for individual dwellings remains with the individual landlords, however the current policy sets a target rent band, or envelope, for each landlord who will be required to operate with average weekly rent levels that fall within the scope of those bands. The policy is intended to provide landlords with a continuing measure of discretion over their overall rent levels and there is no proposal to alter Caerphilly CBC’s current rent structure for the 2019/20 rent charges, only to apply an increase that is within the current policy and also supports the Housing Business Plan.

2.3 The target rent bands provide a low end figure, a mid-point and a high end figure for each landlord. The average weekly rent level for each landlord is compared to the target rent band and the difference dictates what level the rent needs to be adjusted to fall within the target rent band.

2.4 In order to meet the deadlines for advising tenants of increases in rents and other charges, the increases have to be determined and fully agreed by 27th February 2019. All charges must be formally agreed (including call in period) by this date or it will not allow sufficient time for notice of increase to tenants, which is a legal requirement. Any delay in notifying tenants would result in a minimum rental loss of about £26k per week (based on a 2.7% increase)

2.5 All relevant charges are highlighted within this report detailing the amount of additional income that would be generated (excluding voids) if the proposed increases were implemented, along with the percentage of service users receiving housing benefit

2.6 The report also includes proposals for garage rental income.

2.7 Service Charges for sheltered schemes no longer form part of this report as they were recently reviewed under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 requirement and are now charged on a retrospective actual basis per scheme.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

3.1 The recommendations within this report provide the council with additional income that will be used to supplement existing funding arrangements to provide management, repair and improvement of the housing stock. This funding is used to maximize the resources available to assist in meeting and maintaining the WHQS. The rent increase is applied equally to all tenants. The report therefore links to the following strategic objectives:

- The Caerphilly We Want (CCBC, 2018-2023) – Well-Being Plan Objective 4: Positive Places – Enabling our communities to be resilient and sustainable
- Corporate Plan (CCBC, 2018-2023) Well-being Objective 3: the availability, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve peoples well-being.
- Caerphilly Homes Service Plan.

3.2 Improving Lives and Communities: Homes in Wales (Welsh Government, 2010) which sets out the national context on meeting housing need, homelessness and housing related support services.

3.3 Effective financial planning and financial control contribute to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015: -

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

3.4 Whilst Housing services contribute towards the Act, this is a financial report for information only and therefore does not directly contribute towards the above wellbeing goals.

## 4. THE REPORT

### 4.1 Rent Increase

4.1.1 For a number of years the WG have effectively determined the level of annual rent increases, and these increases have been linked with the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy (HRAS) calculations, thus restricting an Authority from completely controlling its rental income. Members will be aware of the buyout of the HRAS system which introduced self-financing from April 2015

4.1.2 Under the current rent policy a target rent band for each Authority is set by WG so there is still some degree of control retained by WG however, all of the rental income will be retained by the Authority and used to fund expenditure, service debt and create borrowing headroom to support the delivery of WHQS and future investment.

4.1.3 As a result of the housing benefit limitation scheme, rent increases above DWP rent limits do not produce extra income from tenants in receipt of housing benefit. At this stage however, as in previous years, details regarding the DWP limit under the current rent policy are yet to be confirmed. Approximately 71% of tenants are in receipt of housing benefit.

4.1.4 The WG draft proposal for 2019/2020 of its policy rent band for CCBC is:

- Low end           £87.84       per week
- Mid point       £92.46       per week
- High end         £97.08       per week

- 4.1.5 CCBC's current average rent debit for 2018/19 is £85.57 (52 week basis) which met the minimum rent band for 2018/19. By applying a 2.4% increase means our average rent will be £87.62, which is slightly below the rent envelope. To ensure we are within our rent envelope a minimum increase of 2.7% is necessary which would take our rent at the absolute low end point of £87.84. In previous years we have been above the low end and just under the mid point level. The 2018/19 Housing Business Plan however assumed a 3% rent increase for 2019/20 which was on the assumption that the rent policy would reduce to CPI plus 1%. Although the CPI level is higher, the "plus 1%" has been removed for 2019/20 meaning that the rent increase is lower than anticipated for the business plan.
- 4.1.6 Initially, WG have stated in their policy that "*The rent policy allows you to apply the inflation plus £2 (per week) if you are aiming to move to a higher point within the Target Rent Band to meet your business plan commitments...*" This has been removed for 2019/20 and the "plus £2" can now only be implemented if Social Housing Landlords are below the rent envelope. Therefore the lowest increase we can apply in order to move within the rent envelope is 2.7%, which is equivalent to 2.4% plus 24p. However, as we are one of those authorities currently below the target we can apply up to the "plus £2" on top of the CPI of 2.4%
- 4.1.7 The current average rent for CCBC is £85.57 based on 52 weeks. The latest business plan submitted to WG in March 2018 included a rent increase of 3% for 2019/20 (assuming CPI would be 2%) and this resulted in a £43.6m borrowing requirement in order to meet the WHQS by 2020. A rent increase of less than 3% will mean less income for the WHQS programme which will obviously result in increased borrowing. Factoring this reduction into the current business plan results in additional borrowing of £200k, but still remains viable. However this is on the assumption that the following years rent increase remain at 3% and all other assumptions remain the same. As part of the HRAS buy out there was an imposed borrowing cap which limited our flexibility to increase borrowing, should we need it. A recent announcement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his budget statement, confirmed the removal of the borrowing cap for Local Housing Authorities so this will no longer be a restriction. Additional borrowing however must be affordable under the Prudential Code. Meeting the WHQS standard by 2020 is a statutory requirement.
- 4.1.8 A rent increase to meet the business plan proposals is 3% which is equivalent to 2.4% plus 51p.
- 4.1.9 However, members must be made aware of the uncertainty on future rents which could place additional financial risk on our business plan from 2019/20 onwards. Members were advised of this risk on the 2018/19 rent increase report where one of the options was to consider a 4.5% increase to future proof likely reductions coming ahead.
- 4.1.10 An increase of 2.7% would result in a £2.27 weekly increase to £87.84 on a 52 week basis. This is an additional rental stream of £1.3m on the gross rent and would be the minimum increase in compliance with the rent policy.
- 4.1.11 An increase of 3% would result in a £2.55 weekly increase to £88.12 on a 52 week basis. This is an additional rental stream of £1.4m on the gross rent and would comply with the rent policy and the assumptions made within our business plan.
- 4.1.12 The maximum rent increase we can apply in accordance with the 2019 rent policy is 4.74% which would result in a £4.03 weekly increase to £89.60 on a 52 week basis. This is equivalent to the maximum increase of 2.4% plus £2 and would create an additional rental stream of £2.3m on the gross rent.
- 4.1.13 The Stock Condition Survey carried out in 2008 reported that high levels of investment are required to maintain the properties and meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard. Experience has shown that significant variances arise once the properties are surveyed and contract packages are specified and indications of cost escalation have emerged based on trends from tender prices and valuations. A rent increase less favourable to the business plan

will mean additional borrowing, and, although the cap is in the process of being removed, the additional borrowing has to be affordable. Additional borrowing means an increase in debt charges which takes resources away from the HRA to manage and maintain our housing stock and support our tenants. Failure to implement these increased charges would increase the shortfall in resources identified in the Housing Business Plan required to meet the WHQS by 2020 and maintain it thereafter.

## **4.2 Garage Charges**

4.2.1 The garage rationalisation and refurbishment programme, linked to the WHQS programme has led to a reduction in our garage stock and will result in improvements to our remaining stock. This work, which is ongoing, is currently having a significant impact on void levels as the blocks of garages must be fully vacated prior to commencement of works on each site. On completions of works to each block, former garage tenants and former leaseholders of garage plots will be offered new tenancies of the newly built and refurbished garages, prior to new tenants being sought for the remainder from existing waiting lists or through marketing. In addition a number of garages have been demolished due to unsuitability and lack of demand. Therefore at this time, it is not proposed to increase the rent on Council owned garages this year.

### **4.2.2 Tenants in receipt of benefit**

Garage rents are not eligible for housing benefit and the majority (75%) of garage tenants are not actually council house tenants.

### **4.2.3 Financial impact**

The Business Plan has included a 2% increase on garage rental income. Not increasing the income will mean a loss of approximately £5k in the Business Plan in 2019/20. This will not have an immediate impact on the borrowing requirement in the short term.

## **5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS**

5.1 Effective financial management is a key element in ensuring that the Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 are met.

## **6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 This report deals with the financial implications of the proposed rent increases which affects the HRA.

7.2 The impact of the Welfare Reform Act is not taken into consideration

## **8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The proposals contained in this report will not alter the current arrangements for the collection of housing revenue account monies.

## 9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 All consultation responses have been reflected in this report. The report will be presented to Cabinet on the 30th January 2019.

## 10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Members are asked to consider and give a view on the following recommendations which will be presented to Cabinet on the 30<sup>th</sup> January 2019;
- (a) Members recommend to Cabinet the level of increase per property from April 2019 based on the options as explained in this report, which is:-
- (i) 2.7% - The minimum increase to set our rents at the absolute bottom of the rent envelope
  - (ii) 3% - The increase to comply with the Housing Business Plan
  - (iii) 4.74% - The maximum increase before the rent policy is contravened and
- (b) This report is submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

## 11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 Inflationary increases on providing all aspects of the housing service are experienced annually, however as the HRA cannot legitimately set a deficit budget, the loss of additional income will result in reduced resources being available to effectively manage and maintain the stock.
- 11.2 Housing benefit will cover the increased costs for the rent charge in this report for 71% of our tenants up to the Housing Benefit limitation rate (yet to be confirmed).
- 11.3 If charges are not increased annually it has a detrimental effect on subsequent years as higher increases are then needed to recover the shortfalls from previous years.
- 11.4 The Council's Business Plan relies on inflationary increases to remain viable.

## 12. STATUTORY POWER

- 12.1 Local Government Act 1972. This is a Cabinet function.

Author: Lesley Allen, Group Accountant (Housing)  
(Email: [allenl@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:allenl@caerphilly.gov.uk) – Tel: 01443 864470)

Consultees: Cllr L Phipps, Cabinet Member for Homes & Places  
Cllr James Pritchard, Chair Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr Gez Kirby, Vice Chair Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee  
Dave Street, Director of Social Services & Housing  
Nicole Scammell, Head of Corporate Finance & Section 151 Officer  
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer  
Shaun Couzens, Chief Housing Officer  
Fiona Wilkins, Housing Services Manager  
Sandra Isaacs, Rents Manager  
Amanda Main, Acting Benefits Manager  
Anwen Rees, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language)

Background Papers:  
Available on request:-  
Housing Revenue Account Charges – 2019/20  
Welsh Government Rent Policy Guidelines



## CABINET – 30TH JANUARY 2019

**SUBJECT:       WHOLE AUTHORITY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT  
2018/19**

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

- 
- 1.1    The attached report was circulated to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee as an information item ahead of its meeting on 15th January 2019. There were no comments arising from the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.
  - 1.2    Cabinet are asked to consider the report recommendation.

Author:        R. Barrett, Committee Services Officer, Ext. 4245

Appendices:

Appendix A    Report to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee – For Information – Whole Authority Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2018/19

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## **POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – FOR INFORMATION**

**SUBJECT:      WHOLE AUTHORITY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT  
                  2018/19**

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

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### **1.      PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1      To provide the Scrutiny Committee with details of projected whole-authority revenue budget expenditure for the 2018/19 financial year.

### **2.      SUMMARY**

- 2.1      This report provides information on the position of the whole-authority in respect of revenue budget monitoring for 2018/19. Detailed budget monitoring reports are prepared for Scrutiny Committees throughout the financial year. Consideration has been given to actual expenditure and income trends and projections have been made of the likely year-end outturn position. Where variations from budget have been identified these are commented upon throughout the report.

### **3.      LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1      The Council has a number of corporate strategies and this report deals with the use of resources in the achievement of those strategies.
- 3.2      Effective financial planning and financial control contribute to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015: -
- 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      Members will be aware of the ongoing challenging financial outlook for Local Government and the need to identify significant savings to support the Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan (MFTP). Officers have been mindful of this and consequently expenditure has been curtailed

in a number of areas in recent years with the aim of identifying savings in advance to support the MTFP. This prudent approach has resulted in a trend of reported year-end underspends for some Directorates.

- 4.2 The table below provides a comparison between the original 2018/19 budget, a revised budget (where approved changes have been made in year), and the projected outturn. The detail in respect of each service area is covered in the Appendices 2 to 5 attached. The total projected revenue budget underspend for the Authority for 2018/19 is £1,899k.

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Original Budget 2018/19 £000's</b>	<b>Revised Budget 2018/19 £000's</b>	<b>Projected Outturn 2018/18 £000's</b>	<b>Projected (Overspend)/ Underspend £000's</b>
Education & Lifelong Learning	124,564	124,564	125,376	<b>(813)</b>
Social Services, Public Protection and Corporate Policy	89,456	89,440	88,452	<b>989</b>
Communities	51,273	51,076	51,490	<b>(414)</b>
Corporate Services	21,050	21,262	20,133	<b>1,129</b>
Miscellaneous Finance	45,701	45,701	44,693	<b>1,008</b>
<b>Totals: -</b>	<b>332,043</b>	<b>332,043</b>	<b>330,144</b>	<b>1,899</b>

## **5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS**

- 5.1 Effective financial management is a key element in ensuring that the Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 are met.

## **6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 This report is for information purposes, so the Council's Equalities Impact Assessment (EqLA) process does not need to be applied.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 As detailed throughout the report.

## **8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The personnel implications of agreed savings are carefully managed and staff are fully supported to identify redeployment opportunities wherever possible.

## **9. CONSULTATIONS**

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

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 It is recommended that Members continue to request Directors and Heads of Service to review expenditure and income levels in order to ensure that annual budgets and in-year savings are achieved.

## **11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 11.1 The Council budget is based upon the achievement of both expenditure targets and income targets. In order to ensure these are met and that the Council's financial integrity is maintained, Members are required to review expenditure and income trends included in budget monitoring reports.

## **12. STATUTORY POWER**

- 12.1 Local Government Act 1972 and 2000.

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Dave Roberts, Principal Group Accountant, Corporate Services  
Mike Eedy, Finance Manager, Environment  
Jane Southcombe, Finance Manager, Education & Lifelong Learning  
Mike Jones, Interim Financial Services Manager, Social Services  
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal services & Monitoring Officer  
Steve Harris, Interim Head of Business Improvement services  
Cllr Barbara Jones, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Governance.

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Whole Authority Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2018/19 – Summary by Directorate/Service Area.  
Appendix 2 Education & Lifelong Learning  
Appendix 3 Social Services  
Appendix 4 Communities  
Appendix 5 Corporate Services and Miscellaneous Finance

Background Papers:

Council (22/02/18) - Budget Proposals 2018/19 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2018/2023

## Whole Authority Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2018-19

## Summary by Directorate/Service Division

Directorate/Service Division	Original Budget 2018/19	Revised Budget 2018/19	Projected Outturn 2018/19	Projected (Overspend)/ Underspend
	£	£	£	£
<b>Education &amp; Lifelong Learning</b>				
- Planning and Strategy	104,976,523	104,976,523	105,506,126	(529,603)
- Learning, Education and Inclusion	15,237,131	15,237,131	15,807,931	(570,800)
- Lifelong Learning	4,350,049	4,350,049	4,062,407	287,642
<b>Sub-Total: -</b>	<b>124,563,703</b>	<b>124,563,703</b>	<b>125,376,464</b>	<b>(812,761)</b>
<b>Social Services &amp; Housing</b>				
- Children's Services	23,341,970	23,341,970	22,245,220	1,096,750
- Adult Services	62,387,484	62,387,484	62,522,881	(135,397)
- Service Strategy and Business Support	2,082,425	2,067,198	2,002,208	64,990
- Housing Services	1,643,637	1,643,637	1,681,476	(37,839)
<b>Sub-Total: -</b>	<b>89,455,516</b>	<b>89,440,289</b>	<b>88,451,785</b>	<b>988,504</b>
<b>Communities</b>				
- Regeneration and Planning	2,559,514	2,489,733	2,605,531	(115,798)
- Engineering	19,819,265	19,818,706	19,906,260	(87,554)
- Community and Leisure Services	21,491,782	21,365,386	21,751,651	(386,265)
- Public Protection	7,235,186	7,234,627	7,065,415	169,212
- Directorate General	167,738	167,738	161,000	6,738
<b>Sub-Total: -</b>	<b>51,273,485</b>	<b>51,076,190</b>	<b>51,489,857</b>	<b>(413,667)</b>
<b>Corporate Services</b>				
- Interim Chief Executive/Acting Director	460,085	367,177	296,243	70,934
- Corporate Finance	2,124,090	2,124,090	2,021,369	102,721
- Procurement and Customer Services	1,502,217	1,502,217	1,800,935	(298,718)
- Legal and Governance	3,065,565	3,068,172	2,869,252	198,920
- Information Technology/Central Services	4,488,861	4,443,177	4,151,473	291,704
- Corporate Property	5,356,212	5,425,993	5,162,661	263,332
- Corporate Policy	1,338,584	1,509,175	1,332,986	176,189
- Human Resources and Communications	1,811,558	1,919,693	1,731,699	187,994
- Health and Safety	902,518	902,518	766,584	135,934
<b>Sub-Total: -</b>	<b>21,049,690</b>	<b>21,262,212</b>	<b>20,133,202</b>	<b>1,129,010</b>
<b>Miscellaneous Finance</b>	<b>45,700,839</b>	<b>45,700,839</b>	<b>44,693,178</b>	<b>1,007,661</b>
<b>Grand Total: -</b>	<b>332,043,233</b>	<b>332,043,233</b>	<b>330,144,486</b>	<b>1,898,747</b>



## EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 8TH JANUARY 2019

**SUBJECT: BUDGET MONITORING 2018/19**

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

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To outline the projected 2018-19 outturn position for the Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning (LL), based on the most recent information available.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report identifies projected under / overspends currently forecast for 2018-19 (full details attached in Appendix 1), together with an update with regards to any issues relating to the progress of the 2018/19 savings targets.

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The report considers the use of resources within the Directorate to ensure that key strategies are achieved.
- 3.2 Effective financial planning and financial controls contribute to the Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015. In particular as follows:

A healthier Wales, supporting vulnerable learners can improve their well-being and educational achievement.

A more equal Wales, a society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background is; and

A Wales of cohesive communities, improving quality of life with attractive, viable, safe and well connected communities.

### 4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The report deals with the budget monitoring information for Education and Lifelong Learning (LL). The revenue position for the Directorate is summarised in Appendix 1, with a breakdown for the 3 service areas of Planning & Strategy; Learning, Education and Inclusion (LEI); and LL respectively.
- 4.2 The projected outturn position is based on actual income and expenditure details to the end of October 2018, together with data used to forecast income and expenditure. Account is also taken of the outturn position for 2017-18 and information available following discussions with Managers.

4.3 A net overspend of £813k is currently forecast, details with regards to each of the service areas are outlined below. To advise, £518k relates to the in year variance position and £295k relates to the projected deficit on closure of Cwmcarn High School.

4.4 Members are advised that the projected outturn position for Corporate Services is an underspend of £1.091m, consequently overall the projected outturn position for Education and Corporate Services (excluding the Cwmcarn High position which will be treated separately) is an underspend of £573k. The details with regards to the Corporate Services position will be reported to Policy & Resources Committee in January 2019.

4.5 **Planning & Strategy (Including Home to School Transport) – (Overspend £530k)**

4.5.1 The main variances in this service area relate to the following:

	£'000 (Under / (Over))
<b><i>Cwmcarn High School (On-Closure)</i></b>	<b>(295)</b>
Relief Supply Cover (SRB's & Maternity)	(221)
Retirement / Severance School Based Staff	(53)
Rationalisation / Vacant Properties	(39)
Management & Support Service Costs	68
Net Other	10

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Total	(530)
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4.5.2 In February 2018, as part of the 2018/19 budget process, Members will recall that agreement was made to set aside £1.4m from the General Fund to meet the then projected deficit on closure of Cwmcarn High School. This projected deficit position is now updated to a figure of £1.7m. Since the financial position is not concluded (low value invoices are still being received), a final update on the deficit at closure will be included as part of the outturn report for 2018/19. The variance of £295k represents an additional cost in excess of the £1.4m. Consequently an update will be provided to Cabinet which will include funding options. The options could include the following:

- General Fund Reserves
- Education & Lifelong Learning (General) Reserves
- LMS Contingency Reserves

4.5.3 Due to the unpredictability of sickness in our Special Resource Bases and maternity absences across all school sectors, the relief supply cover spend on school based staff is always very closely monitored. Whilst it is very difficult to be able to forecast an outturn position, current data identifies an increase in maternity absences in our schools and previous trends suggest there will be an increased sickness pressure in the winter months. Monitoring is on-going due to the volatility and uncertain nature of the spend. The level of projected overspend has increased by circa £100k since the previous update, however due to the uncertain nature of this spend the budget position could improve or deteriorate further by the end of the financial year. This projected in year overspend has already been reduced on the assumption that the Directorate will need to access funding of £39k in balances (Relief Supply Equalisation Account – this is the full balance currently held in balances for this purpose).

4.5.4 The projected overspend of circa £53k, on the early retirement pension costs budget for school based staff, is impacted by staff losses resulting from the closure of Cwmcarn High School. In addition there are £39k of costs linked to the rationalisation of the Oakdale, Pontllanfraith and Cwmcarn sites, these are unavoidable costs linked primarily to short term security of the Pontllanfraith and Cwmcarn sites.

- 4.5.5 The underspend in relation to Management & Support costs relates predominantly to in year savings on staff costs. This variance is due largely to in year vacancies that are not on-going as posts are linked to delivering support through SLA Agreements with our Schools.
- 4.5.6 Members will recall that in September we reported a potential budget pressure (circa £18k) relating to the Home to School College Transport Budget. As Members are aware this area of the service is managed by the Engineering Division (with any variances ring fenced to Education). The update is currently a breakeven position.
- 4.5.7 In summary the net projected variance for Planning & Strategy is an overspend of £530k, this includes £295k relating to the closure of Cwmcarn High.

#### 4.6 Learning, Education & Inclusion – (Overspend £571k)

- 4.6.1 The most significant variances within LEI are as follows:

	£'000 (Under / (Over))
Psychological Service	38
14 – 19 Initiative Transport	24
EOTAS / Adn. Support / Out of County	(879)
Early Years – Rising 3's	75
Early Years Central Team	94
Support Services & Resources	49
Music Service	(30)
Education Achievement Contract	28
Education Improvement Grant (Match)	27
Net Other	3
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Total	(571)

- 4.6.2 The underspend in the Psychological Service is linked to in year staff savings. This is largely attributable to delays in recruitment due to a shortage of appropriately qualified staff.
- 4.6.3 The projected underspend on 14-19 transport (which allows pupils wider course access between Schools), is a trend that continues into 2018-19. This spend will continue to be monitored and is part of the Directorates savings proposals moving forwards.
- 4.6.4 The significant cost pressure within the Directorate continues to be in relation to the EOTAS (Education Other Than at School) provision. The provision accommodates learners who are unable to attend and learn in a mainstream school setting. In reviewing the continuum of additional support provided to pupils, our alternative EOTAS provision and Out of County Placements, the projected overspend against this budget heading is currently estimated at £879k (this is an increase of £49k on the previously reported projection). A review of demand, costs and structures is on-going. In recent years, savings in other areas of the Directorate have contributed towards funding this pressure, with the Directorate underspending as a whole. Based on projections for 2018/19 this will not be possible in the current financial year and going forwards. This pressure has been recognised in the Budget Proposals 2019/20 for the Authority.
- 4.6.5 The spend on Early Years – Rising 3's is very much demand led, as it is driven by the number of age 3 pupils who access nursery provision in the term following their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. This can vary from year to year, with spend based on the birth rate and parental choice with regards to accessing this “early” provision. Current projections do not indicate a significant increase in uptake, consequently based on recent trends the current projection is a saving of £75k. The Budget proposals 2019/20 include a budget reduction of £50k based on realignment to trend.

- 4.6.6 The projected underspend against the Early Years Central Team is consistent with the position in 2017/18 and is largely due to successfully accessing grant funding to contribute towards supporting specific posts within the Team. This update is an improved position and again a £20k budget reduction is part of the Proposals for 2019/20.
- 4.6.7 The variance against Support Services & Resources relates predominantly to in year vacancy gaps. The position in the Music Service relates to a mix of additional expenditure and reduced income to the original predication.
- 4.6.8 In 2018-19, the charge on the main contract with the Education Achievement Service is less than current budget provision. Similarly the budget for the Authority's match funding requirement against the Education Achievement Grant is greater than required. These variances are part of savings proposals for future years.
- 4.6.9 In summary, the net projected variance for Learning, Education & Inclusion is an overspend of £571k. Overall this is a marginal variance to the £586k reported in September.

#### 4.7 Life Long Learning – (Underspend £288k)

- 4.7.1 In 2018-19 the main budget variances are as follows:

	£'000 (Under / (Over))
Community Education (Adult & Youth)	107
Library Service	181
Net Other	Nil
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Total	288

- 4.7.2 The projected underspend within Community Education is a mix of both the Adult Education and Youth Services. In adult education an underspend of £41k is attributable to a vacant management post following a retirement and a further in year vacancy gap. The Youth service underspend of circa £65k relates largely to in year gaps in the part time youth service. These vacancies form part of the MTFP budget proposals in 2019/20.
- 4.7.3 The Libraries variance relates primarily to a one off rebate for NNDR (National Non Domestic Rate) charges of £130k. This refund relates to 4 libraries covering financial year 2010/11 through to 2017/18. A further projected net saving of £51k relates largely to in year vacancies and supply cover arrangements.

#### 4.8 Progress Made Against the 2018/19 Revenue Budget Savings Targets

- 4.8.1 The 2018/19 revenue budget settlement for Education and Lifelong Learning included a specific savings target of £1,221k. Managers have progressed implementation of the targets set and there are currently no significant issues causing concern. The impact has been referenced in the narrative of this report and the projected outturn position for 2018-19.
- 4.8.2 Members will be aware that the revenue budget of £333k for Maintenance of School Buildings (50/50 Funding with Schools) formed part of the £1,221k savings target for 2018-19. In 2018-19, the Authority has continued to support building maintenance projects on a 50/50 basis with our Schools by accessing funds from LMS Contingency balances. The details of planned expenditure are contained in the Education Capital Report 2018/19, which went to Education for Life Scrutiny on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

## **5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS**

- 5.1 Effective financial management is a key element in ensuring that the Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 are met.

## **6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's) have been completed for all the savings proposals in 2018/19 that are anticipated to have a public impact.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 In summary, based on information currently available there is a projected revenue overspend for Education & Lifelong Learning of £813k. This includes £295k linked directly to the deficit on closure of Cwmcarn High School. The net balance is £518k is significantly impacted by the current spend position on our most vulnerable learners and this has been recognised in the Budget Proposals for 2019/20.
- 7.2 In 2018/19 there are a number of one off savings which have assisted with regards to reducing the projected overspend position, most notably an NNDR net refund of £130k within the Library Service. In addition current projections assume that circa £39k is utilised from an earmarked equalisation account. However it's important to be clear that the pressures relating to Relief Supply & Maternity costs is not linked to a mismatch with regards to the number of school days that fall in the 2018/19 financial year.
- 7.3 Overall the current projected outturn position for Education & Corporate Services is an underspend of £573k.

## **8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 In 2018-19 the Directorate will continue with the strategy of prudent vacancy management.
- 8.2 The budget proposals include provision to pay the living wage, as agreed by Council.
- 8.3 In striving to achieve these budget proposals the service area will have regard to the Council's Workforce Flexibilities Policies. However, should employees still be placed at risk, either through the achievement of any agreed budget savings or grant funding reductions, they will be supported via the Council's agreed HR policies to address any issues.

## **9. CONSULTATIONS**

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

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 Members are requested to note the contents of this report and the detailed budget monitoring information contained in Appendix 1.

## **11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 11.1 The Council Budget is based on the achievement of both expenditure and income targets. In order to ensure that these are met and the Council's financial integrity maintained Directors are required to review income and expenditure trends.

## 12. STATUTORY POWER

### 12.1 Local Government Act 1972.

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Steve Harris, Interim Head of Business Improvement Services, Corporate Services  
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Julie Baker, Principal Finance Officer (Schools)  
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Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services  
Dave Roberts, Principal Group Accountant (Financial Advice & Support)
- Appendices:  
Appendix 1: Projected Revenue Outturn Figures 2018-19

<b>EDUCATION &amp; LIFELONG LEARNING</b>	<b>Original Estimate 2018-19 £</b>	<b>Estimated Outturn 2018/19 £</b>	<b>Variance Under (Over) 2018/19 £</b>
<b><u>SUMMARY</u></b>			
<b>PLANNING and STRATEGY</b>	<b>104,976,523</b>	<b>105,506,126</b>	<b>(529,603)</b>
<b>LEARNING, EDUCATION and INCLUSION</b>	<b>15,237,131</b>	<b>15,807,931</b>	<b>(570,800)</b>
<b>LIFELONG LEARNING</b>	<b>4,350,049</b>	<b>4,062,407</b>	<b>287,642</b>
<b>TOTAL SERVICE EXPENDITURE (Revenue)</b>	<b>124,563,703</b>	<b>125,376,464</b>	<b>(812,761)</b>

<b>EDUCATION &amp; LIFELONG LEARNING</b>	<b>Original Estimate 2018-19 £</b>	<b>Estimated Outturn 2018/19 £</b>	<b>Variance Under (Over) 2018/19 £</b>
<b><u>PLANNING and STRATEGY</u></b>			
<b>Individual Schools Budget</b>	<b>102,404,172</b>	<b>102,404,172</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Cwmcarn High School (On-Closure)</b>		<b>294,741</b>	<b>(294,741)</b>
<b>Post 16 Initiative (Grant Income)</b>	<b>(4,003,381)</b>	<b>(4,003,381)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Earmarked Formula Funding (inc. Joint Use Sites)</b>	<b>214,064</b>	<b>214,115</b>	<b>(51)</b>
<b>Schools LMS Contingencies</b>	<b>192,687</b>	<b>192,687</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Other Direct School Related</b>			
Learning Support Staff Registration Fee	19,690	19,690	0
PFI Funding Gap	322,117	322,117	0
PFI Building Maintenance	48,230	48,230	0
Former Key Stage 2 Grant	1,370,822	1,370,822	0
Secondary Additional Funding	1,059,471	1,059,471	0
School Meal Admin. Utility & Telephone	423,893	413,893	10,000
Relief Supply Cover (SRB's & Maternity)	467,077	688,360	(221,283)
Copyright and Licensing (Schools)	69,461	68,623	838
	<b>3,780,761</b>	<b>3,991,206</b>	<b>(210,445)</b>
<b>Home to School/College Transport (Environment)</b>		<b>(31)</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Early Retirement Pension Costs of School Based Staff</b>	<b>1,815,907</b>	<b>1,868,831</b>	<b>(52,924)</b>
<b>School Rationalisation &amp; Vacant Properties</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>39,124</b>	<b>(39,124)</b>
<b>Management &amp; Support Costs</b>	<b>572,313</b>	<b>504,662</b>	<b>67,651</b>
<b><u>EXPENDITURE TO DIRECTORATE SUMMARY</u></b>	<b>104,976,523</b>	<b>105,506,126</b>	<b>(529,603)</b>

<b>EDUCATION &amp; LIFELONG LEARNING</b>	<b>Original Estimate 2018-19 £</b>	<b>Estimated Outturn 2018/19 £</b>	<b>Variance Under (Over) 2018/19 £</b>
<b><u>LEARNING, EDUCATION and INCLUSION</u></b>			
<b>Social Inclusion</b>			
Psychological Service	476,492	438,716	37,776
Behaviour Support	174,704	155,971	18,733
Education Welfare Service	404,597	408,661	(4,064)
Youth Offending Team	52,292	51,666	626
School Based Counselling	278,243	270,452	7,791
	<b>1,386,328</b>	<b>1,325,466</b>	<b>60,862</b>
<b>Additional Learning Needs</b>			
ALN Advisory Support Service	218,572	223,319	(4,747)
Learning Support	10,693	4,691	6,002
Professional/Statementing	63,760	85,123	(21,363)
Language Support Primary	428,848	420,756	8,092
Specialist Resources	42,239	42,205	34
ALN Improvement Initiative	349,478	349,478	0
Childrens Centre	46,900	41,250	5,650
SNAP Cymru	37,744	39,606	(1,862)
Outreach Trinity Fields	49,657	49,657	0
Speech Therapy	50,406	56,384	(5,978)
<b>SENCOM (Sensory Service)</b>	<b>715,647</b>	<b>723,992</b>	<b>(8,345)</b>
Autism	198,962	198,962	0
	<b>2,212,906</b>	<b>2,235,423</b>	<b>(22,517)</b>
<b>Learning Pathways Partnership</b>			
14 - 19 Initiative (Transport Costs)	166,967	142,944	24,023
	<b>166,967</b>	<b>142,944</b>	<b>24,023</b>
<b>EOTAS, Additional Support &amp; Out of County Provision</b>			
	<b>7,277,092</b>	<b>8,156,468</b>	<b>(879,376)</b>
<b>Early Years Provision &amp; Support</b>			
Early Years (Rising 3's)	865,868	791,248	74,620
Early Years Central Team	373,198	279,433	93,765
	<b>1,239,066</b>	<b>1,070,681</b>	<b>168,385</b>
<b>LEI Service Provision</b>			
Service Support & Resources	312,802	263,860	48,942
SACRE	2,490	2,490	0
Outdoor Education Advisor SLA	29,568	29,568	0
School Improvement	344,858	338,586	6,272
Music Service	499,949	530,005	(30,056)
WJEC & Subscriptions	35,704	38,618	(2,914)
	<b>1,225,371</b>	<b>1,203,127</b>	<b>22,244</b>

<b>EDUCATION &amp; LIFELONG LEARNING</b>	<b>Original Estimate 2018-19 £</b>	<b>Estimated Outturn 2018/19 £</b>	<b>Variance Under (Over) 2018/19 £</b>
<b>Education Achievement Service (EAS) &amp; Regional Grant Match Funding</b>			
Contribution to EAS Joint Working	1,070,012	1,041,858	28,154
Education Improvement Grant - Match Funding	659,389	631,964	27,425
	1,729,401	1,673,822	55,579
<b>EXPENDITURE TO DIRECTORATE SUMMARY</b>	<b>15,237,131</b>	<b>15,807,931</b>	<b>(570,800)</b>
<b><u>LIFELONG LEARNING</u></b>			
<b>Community Education</b>	<b>1,663,832</b>	<b>1,557,221</b>	<b>106,611</b>
<b>Library Service</b>	<b>2,595,826</b>	<b>2,415,259</b>	<b>180,567</b>
<b>LLL Insurance &amp; Non Operational Property/Land</b>	<b>90,391</b>	<b>89,927</b>	<b>464</b>
<b><u>EXPENDITURE TO SERVICE SUMMARY</u></b>	<b>4,350,049</b>	<b>4,062,407</b>	<b>287,642</b>



## **HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND WELL BEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 23RD OCTOBER 2018**

**SUBJECT: BUDGET MONITORING REPORT (MONTH 5)**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Members of projected revenue expenditure for the Social Services Directorate for the 2018/19 financial year.
- 1.2 To update Members on the progress made against the savings targets built in to the 2018/19 revenue budget for the Directorate.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The report summarises the projected financial position for the Social Services Directorate for the 2018/19 financial year based on information available as at month 5 (August 2018). It identifies budget pressures relating to services for adults with learning disabilities and highlights the financial successes achieved by the Children's Services division despite an increase in the numbers of looked after children. Full details are attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The report also identifies the savings targets that have been factored into the Directorate's budget for 2018/19 and highlights the good progress made towards achieving those targets.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 The expenditure of the Directorate is linked directly to its ability to shape and deliver its strategic objectives, which in turn assists the achievement of the Authority's stated aims and well-being goals.
- 3.2 Effective financial planning and financial control contribute to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015: -
  - 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 Based on known commitments as at the end of August 2018, the Social Services revised budget of £87.797m for 2018/19 is forecast to be underspent by around £1,027k. However, this does not account for the costs of transport of Social Services service users which is funded through a budget held by the Integrated Transport Unit within the Directorate of Communities. This budget for transport costs amounts to £1.465m and is forecast to be overspent by around £130k giving a forecasted net underspend of £897k when offset against the £1,027k underspend within the Social Services Directorate.

Division	Revised Budget (£000's)	Projection/ Commitment (£000's)	Over/(Under) Spend (£000's)
Children's Services	23,342	22,245	(1,097)
Adult Services	62,388	62,523	135
Service Strategy & Business Support	2,067	2,002	(65)
<b>Sub Total Directorate of Social Services</b>	<b>87,797</b>	<b>86,770</b>	<b>(1,027)</b>
Transport Costs	1,465	1,595	130
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>89,262</b>	<b>88,365</b>	<b>(997)</b>

#### 4.2 Children's Services

- 4.2.1 The Children's Services Division is currently projected to underspend its budget by £1,097k as summarised in the following table: -

	Revised Budget (£000's)	Projection/ Commitment (£000's)	Over/(Under) Spend (£000's)
Management, Fieldwork & Administration	8,067	7,740	(327)
Residential Care Including Secure Accommodation	5,420	4,775	(645)
Fostering & Adoption	7,724	7,791	67
Youth Offending	395	395	0
Families First	64	26	(38)
After Care Support	786	633	(153)
Other Costs	886	885	(1)
<b>Totals: -</b>	<b>23,342</b>	<b>22,245</b>	<b>(1,097)</b>

##### *Management, Fieldwork and Administration*

- 4.2.2 A prudent approach to recruitment to back office posts and difficulties in recruiting to social work posts has resulted in a potential staffing underspend of £327k across the division.

##### *Residential Care Including Secure Accommodation*

- 4.2.3 There has been a reduction of 2 expensive secure accommodation placements since the 2018/19 budget was set. This has been partially offset by an increase of 1 less expensive residential placement resulting in a net underspend of £443k. One-off slippage against staff costs during recruitment to posts within our second in-house residential home has added a further underspend of £202k bringing the total projected underspend for residential care to £645k. However, it is important to acknowledge that the situation is volatile and just one additional standard residential placement could cost up to £250K per year.

##### *Fostering and Adoption*

- 4.2.4 Since the beginning of the financial year, the division has seen an increase of 8 Special Guardianship places and a net increase of 11 foster placements. However, the division has experienced some recent success in recruiting in-house foster carers, while support received through the MIST Therapeutic Fostering Service has enabled more challenging children to be supported by in-house carers. This has enabled a reduction of 5 independent foster care placements, thereby mitigating a large part of the financial impact of the overall increase in demand and restricting the potential overspend to around £67k. Again, it is important to acknowledge that the situation is volatile.
- 4.2.5 The introduction of the MIST Therapeutic Fostering Service and a revised fee structure for in-house foster carers has achieved early successes in mitigating the cost of increasing numbers of looked after children. However, both of these initiatives will be funded from reserves throughout 2018/19 so it should be noted that additional funding may be required to fund these arrangements beyond 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 unless further reductions in residential placements and independent fostering placements can be achieved. These 2 initiatives are likely to cost in the order of £900k in 2019/20.

#### *Families First*

- 4.2.6 The £38k underspend in respect of Families First is largely due to vacancies within the core staff team.

#### *Aftercare*

- 4.2.7 An overspend of £153k is projected in respect of Aftercare Services and reflects the numbers of 16 to 18 year olds currently in receipt of leaving care services.

#### *Other*

- 4.2.8 There has been no inflationary increase in the costs of supporting the 2 unaccompanied asylum seeking children placed with foster care agencies since 2017/18, resulting in a small underspend of £1k in respect of other children's services costs.

### 4.3 **Adult Services**

- 4.3.1 The Adult Services Division is currently projected to overspend its budget by £226k as summarised in the following table: -

	<b>Revised Budget (£000's)</b>	<b>Projection/ Commitment (£000's)</b>	<b>Over/(Under) Spend (£000's)</b>
Management, Fieldwork & Administration	8,199	8,003	(196)
Own Residential Care and Supported Living	6,017	5,900	(117)
Own Day Care	4,211	4,094	(117)
Supported Employment	68	68	0
Aid and Adaptations	789	737	(52)
Gwent Frailty Programme	2,252	2,239	(13)
Supporting People (net of grant funding)	0	0	0
External Residential Care	14,503	14,970	467
External Day Care	1,327	1,438	111
Home Care (In-House and Independent Sector)	10,835	10,990	155
Other Domiciliary Care	11,861	12,593	732
Resettlement	(1,020)	(1,020)	0
Services for Children with Disabilities	1,480	1,296	(184)
Other Costs	1,866	1,215	(651)
<b>Totals: -</b>	<b>62,388</b>	<b>62,523</b>	<b>135</b>

#### *Management, Fieldwork and Administration*

- 4.3.2 An underspend of £196k is currently projected in respect of Management, Fieldwork and Administration costs. However, this assumes around £256k of vacancy savings can be achieved in the remaining 7 months of the financial year.

#### *Own Residential Care and Supported Living*

- 4.3.3 A combination of reduced vacancy levels and increasing costs of staff cover in July and August has reduced the projected underspend within in our residential homes and supported living homes to £117k, a reduction of £117k when compared with the £234k underspend reported in month 3.

#### *Own Day Care*

- 4.3.4 Vacancy levels in our own day care services have increased over the last 2 months thereby increasing the projected underspend in this area to £117k from the £66k underspend reported in month 3.

#### *Aids and Adaptations*

- 4.3.5 The £52k underspend is due to a repayment from the Gwent Wide Integrated Community Equipment Service (GWICES) in respect of unspent funding from 2017/18.

#### *External Residential Care*

- 4.3.6 An overspend of £418k was forecast in month 3 in respect of external residential care which was largely due to the 7 additional placements for people with learning disabilities. This potential overspend has now increased to £467k mainly as a result of increased demand for placements for older people.

#### *External Day Care*

- 4.3.7 The projected overspend of £111k in respect of external day care can be attributed to an increase in service users with learning disabilities since the start of the financial year.

#### *Home Care (In-House and Independent Sector)*

- 4.3.8 Actual costs incurred in recent months suggest the number of hours paid to in-house carers has returned to budgeted levels after a recent recruitment campaign, resulting in a reduction in the projected underspend in respect of the in-house service to £106k. This has been partially offset by a reduction in the over commitment in respect of domiciliary care commissioned through the independent sector to £261k. This leaves a net over commitment of £155k which is due to the inclusion of a £264k savings target within the 2018/19 budget. This would suggest that £109k of the savings target has been achieved to date.

#### *Other Domiciliary Care*

- 4.3.9 An overspend of £732k is projected in respect of other domiciliary care costs. However, around £680k of this can be attributed to the cost of care packages that were previously funded through the Welsh Independent Living Grant. This grant funding transferred into the Revenue Support Grant in April 2018 and a core budget of £872k was earmarked within the Social Services Other Costs budget to fund the ongoing cost of this care. Many of the service users that were previously receiving care funded through this grant have been reviewed in line with Welsh Government requirements and the care has been absorbed in to wider packages of support including supported living, direct payments and shared lives arrangements. This has caused a shift in costs of £680k from Other Costs to Other Domiciliary Care. Once all the necessary reviews have been completed budgets will need to be transferred to reflect these

changes.

- 4.3.10 After adjusting for the impact of the Welsh Independent Living Grant changes the projected net overspend in respect of Other Domiciliary Care amounts to around £52k which can be attributed to the replacement of flat rate supporting people tariff funding with individual needs assessments. This has led to a reduction in supporting people grant contributions towards many care packages without the corresponding reduction in the total cost of the packages that had been anticipated. The overspend in this area would have been higher had it not been for the projected additional £186k in service user contributions based on current income levels.

#### *Other Costs*

- 4.3.11 An underspend of £651k has been forecast in respect of Other Costs but after adjusting for the Welsh Independent Living grant changes highlighted above, this becomes an overspend of £29k. This is largely attributable to staffing cover within the Telecare Service.

#### *Children with Disabilities*

- 4.3.12 With effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018, the budget for services for Children with Disabilities transferred from the Children's Services budget to the Adult Services budget to reflect a change in management reporting lines. These services now fall within the portfolio of the service manager with responsibility for services for adults with disabilities in order to minimise the impact on service users of transitioning from childhood in to adulthood. An underspend of £184k is currently forecast against this budget, largely as a result of a reduction in foster care placements.

#### **4.4 Service Strategy & Business Support**

- 4.4.1 The service area is currently projected to underspend by £65k as summarised in the following table: -

	<b>Revised Budget (£000's)</b>	<b>Projection/ Commitment (£000's)</b>	<b>Over/(Under) Spend (£000's)</b>
Management and Administration	861	829	(32)
Office Accommodation	224	213	(11)
Office Expenses	172	178	6
Other Costs	810	782	(28)
<b>Totals: -</b>	<b>2,067</b>	<b>2,002</b>	<b>(65)</b>

- 4.4.3 The underspend of £65k in respect of Business Support is largely attributable to vacancies and spinal point savings within Financial Services and savings delivered in advance of the Medium Term Financial Plan requirements.

#### **4.5 Transport Costs**

- 4.5.1 In addition to the £87.797m budget managed within the Directorate of Social Services, the Directorate of Communities manages a budget of £1.465m for the purposes of transporting Social Services service users. An overspend of £130k is currently forecast against this budget including £80k which is reflective of the increasing numbers of children in foster care placements and £50k largely due to increased taxi journeys commissioned on behalf of Adult Services service users.

#### **4.6 Progress Made Against the 2018/19 Revenue Budget Savings Targets**

4.6.1 The 2018/19 budget for Social Services included a savings target of £1,328k. The following table provides a summary of how this saving was to be achieved:-

Paragraph Number	Targeted Area of Service	Savings Target (£000s)
4.6.2	Children's Services staffing	335
4.6.3	Children's Services voluntary sector contracts	50
4.6.4	Adult Services voluntary sector contracts	202
4.6.5	Implications of the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act	264
4.6.6	Contract for extra care services	26
4.6.7	Domiciliary care service user contributions	75
4.6.8	In-House day services	200
4.6.9	Vacant posts within residential homes	96
4.6.10	Respite care	30
4.6.11	Office accommodation	10
4.6.12	Business Support Services staffing	40
<b>4.6.1</b>	<b>TOTAL SOCIAL SERVICES SAVINGS TARGET 2018/19</b>	<b>1,328</b>

- 4.6.2 The potential underspend of £327k identified in paragraph 4.2.2 would suggest that the £335k savings target from reviewing Children's Services staffing structures has been exceeded. However, this underspend is partially due to temporary vacancies, secondments and career breaks so further work is required to identify further posts that can be permanently deleted from the structure to achieve a recurring saving.
- 4.6.3 The £50k savings target in respect of Children's Services voluntary sector contracts has been achieved in full through a combination of realigning budgets with contract values and reviewing contracts that were approaching their end dates.
- 4.6.4 Of the £202k savings target in respect of Adults Services voluntary sector contracts, £56k has been achieved through a review of existing contracts and £134k has been achieved through decommissioning. The remaining £12k was to be achieved through the decommissioning of 2 luncheon club contracts from April 2018 however it has become necessary to extend funding into 2018/19 while alternative funding is sourced. As a result, there is likely to be a £6k shortfall against this target in 2018/19 but the full target will be achieved for future years.
- 4.6.5 An amount of £264k was deducted from the Adult Services budget for 2018/19 as it was felt that savings could be achieved through signposting potential service users to other agencies or other low cost services. The Home Care budget is currently overcommitted by around £155k which would suggest that around £109k of this target has been achieved at this point. However, demographic changes are likely to have increased costs in this area so it could be argued that this target has been fully achieved and the over-commitment is due to demographic changes.
- 4.6.6 The £26k savings target in respect of extra care services has been achieved in full through realigning budgets with contract values.
- 4.6.7 The £75k savings target in respect of domiciliary care service user contributions was to be achieved by realigning the budget to reflect the additional levels of service user contributions that were experienced throughout 2017/18. The levels of contributions experienced in the first quarter of 2018/19 would suggest that this target will be exceeded.
- 4.6.8 Some of the contractual changes required to achieve the £200k savings target for in-house day services have taken a little longer to achieve than anticipated but a number of temporary vacancies within the service have more than compensated for this in 2018/19 and a full year effect of the contractual changes can be expected in 2019/20.

- 4.6.9 A small number of posts within our homes for older people have remained vacant for some time and have therefore been removed from the structure on a permanent basis in order to deliver the savings target of £96k with no impact on residents.
- 4.6.10 The £30k savings target in respect of respite care has been achieved in full through realigning budgets to reflect actual expenditure levels in recent years.
- 4.6.11 The budget for I.T. and telephony costs at the North Resource Centre has been realigned to reflect the actual level of recharges from the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board experienced over the last two financial years. This has enabled the £10k savings target in respect of office accommodation to be achieved in full.
- 4.6.12 The termination of the South East Wales IT Shared Service has meant that the savings target of £40k in respect of Business Support Services staffing has been exceeded and an additional £23k saving has been earmarked as a saving in advance of the Medium Term Financial Plan requirements. The support previously received from this shared service will in future be received from the regional WCCIS support service which will be funded through Integrated Care Fund grant.

## **5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS**

- 5.1 Effective financial management is a key element in ensuring that the Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 are met.

## **6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 This report is for information purposes, so the Council's Equalities Impact Assessment process does not need to be applied.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 As detailed throughout the report.

## **8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **9. CONSULTATIONS**

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

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 Members are asked to note the projected underspend of £1,027k against the Directorate's budget for 2018/19 and the projected overspend of £124k against the Directorate of Communities' transport budget for 2018/19.
- 10.2 Members are asked to note the progress made towards delivering the savings target of £1.328m that was included in the Directorate's budget for 2018/19.

## **11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

11.1 To ensure Members are apprised of the latest financial position of the Directorate.

## **12. STATUTORY POWER**

12.1 Local Government Act 1972 and 2000.

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Appendices: Appendix 1 - Social Services 2018/19 Budget Monitoring Report (Month 5)

## APPENDIX 1 – Social Services 2018/19 Budget Monitoring Report (Month 5)

	Revised Budget 2018/19	Projection	Over/ (Under) Spend
	£	£	£
<b>SUMMARY</b>			
CHILDREN'S SERVICES	£23,341,970	£22,245,220	(£1,096,750)
ADULT SERVICES	£62,387,484	£62,522,881	£135,397
RESOURCING AND PERFORMANCE	£2,067,198	£2,002,208	(£64,990)
<b>SOCIAL SERVICES TOTAL</b>	<b>£87,796,652</b>	<b>£86,770,310</b>	<b>(£1,026,342)</b>
<b>CHILDREN'S SERVICES</b>			
<b>Management, Fieldwork and Administration</b>			
Children's Management, Fieldwork and Administration	£8,805,904	£8,416,849	(£389,055)
Appropriation from Specific Reserve	(£588,604)	(£543,259)	£45,345
Intermediate Care Fund Contribution	(£150,842)	(£133,342)	£17,500
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£8,066,458</b>	<b>£7,740,248</b>	<b>(£326,210)</b>
<b>Residential Care Including Secure Accommodation</b>			
Own Residential Homes	£1,190,608	£988,635	(£201,973)
Gross Cost of Placements	£4,315,171	£3,860,474	(£454,697)
Contributions from Education	(£85,912)	(£74,388)	£11,524
Contributions from Health	£0	£0	£0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£5,419,867</b>	<b>£4,774,722</b>	<b>(£645,145)</b>
<b>Fostering and Adoption</b>			
Gross Cost of Placements	£7,322,369	£7,533,068	£210,699
Appropriation from Specific Reserve	(£613,933)	(£764,992)	(£151,059)
Other Fostering Costs	£122,086	£140,086	£18,000
Adoption Allowances	£110,616	£100,180	(£10,436)
Other Adoption Costs	£354,519	£354,519	£0
Professional Fees Inc. Legal Fees	£428,749	£428,749	£0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£7,724,406</b>	<b>£7,791,609</b>	<b>£67,203</b>
<b>Youth Offending</b>			
Youth Offending Team	£395,152	£395,152	£0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£395,152</b>	<b>£395,152</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>Families First</b>			
Families First Team	£214,017	£181,479	(£32,538)
Other Families First Contracts	£2,547,484	£2,542,022	(£5,462)
Grant Income	(£2,697,747)	(£2,697,747)	£0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£63,754</b>	<b>£25,754</b>	<b>(£38,000)</b>
<b>Other Costs</b>			
Preventative and Support - (Section 17 & Childminding)	£64,736	£64,736	£0
Aftercare	£785,768	£632,799	(£152,969)
Agreements with Voluntary Organisations	£670,962	£670,960	(£2)
Other	£150,867	£149,240	(£1,627)
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£1,672,333</b>	<b>£1,517,735</b>	<b>(£154,598)</b>
<b>TOTAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES</b>	<b>£23,341,970</b>	<b>£22,245,220</b>	<b>(£1,096,750)</b>

	Revised Budget 2018/19	Projection	Over/ (Under) Spend
	£	£	£
<b>ADULT SERVICES</b>			
<b>Management, Fieldwork and Administration</b>			
Management	£124,883	£132,425	£7,542
Protection of Vulnerable Adults	£268,983	£272,145	£3,162
OLA and Client Income from Client Finances	(£269,645)	(£295,590)	(£25,945)
Commissioning	£641,369	£655,546	£14,177
Section 28a Income Joint Commissioning Post	(£17,175)	(£17,175)	£0
Older People	£2,425,718	£2,460,343	£34,625
Less Wanless Income	(£44,747)	(£44,747)	£0
Physical Disabilities	£2,224,696	£2,261,421	£36,725
Provider Services	£383,986	£401,989	£18,003
ICF Funding	(£132,275)	(£134,435)	(£2,160)
Learning Disabilities	£778,793	£757,710	(£21,083)
Contribution from Health and Other Partners	(£44,253)	(£44,253)	£0
Mental Health	£1,331,381	£1,366,297	£34,916
Section 28a Income Assertive Outreach	(£94,769)	(£94,769)	£0
Drug & Alcohol Services	£367,897	£330,713	(£37,184)
Emergency Duty Team	£254,536	£251,758	(£2,778)
Further Vacancy Savings	£0	(£256,293)	(£256,293)
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£8,199,378</b>	<b>£8,003,084</b>	<b>(£196,294)</b>
<b>Own Residential Care</b>			
Residential Homes for the Elderly	£6,452,046	£6,424,720	(£27,326)
Intermediate Care Fund Contribution	(£97,387)	(£101,136)	(£3,749)
-Less Client Contributions	(£2,251,840)	(£2,228,959)	£22,881
-Less Section 28a Income (Ty Iscoed)	(£115,350)	(£115,350)	£0
-Less Inter-Authority Income	(£38,297)	(£21,184)	£17,113
Net Cost	£3,949,172	£3,958,091	£8,919
Accommodation for People with Learning Disabilities	£2,463,760	£2,312,113	(£151,647)
-Less Client Contributions	(£63,437)	(£63,437)	£0
-Less Contribution from Supporting People	(£25,985)	(£41,206)	(£15,221)
-Less Inter-Authority Income	(£306,801)	(£266,016)	£40,785
Net Cost	£2,067,537	£1,941,455	(£126,082)
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£6,016,709</b>	<b>£5,899,545</b>	<b>(£117,164)</b>
<b>External Residential Care</b>			
Long Term Placements			
Older People	£10,147,329	£10,192,004	£44,675
Less Wanless Income	(£303,428)	(£303,428)	£0
Less Section 28a Income - Allt yr yn	(£151,063)	(£151,063)	£0
Physically Disabled	£428,951	£492,008	£63,057
Learning Disabilities	£3,042,534	£3,317,579	£275,045
Mental Health	£893,783	£941,555	£47,772
Substance Misuse Placements	£58,902	£95,902	£37,000
Net Cost	£14,117,008	£14,584,557	£467,549

	Revised Budget 2018/19	Projection	Over/ (Under) Spend
	£	£	£
<b>Short Term Placements</b>			
Older People	£248,822	£248,822	£0
Carers Respite Arrangements	£39,330	£39,330	£0
Physical Disabilities	£41,149	£41,149	£0
Learning Disabilities	£16,264	£16,264	£0
Mental Health	£40,353	£40,353	£0
Net Cost	£385,918	£385,918	£0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£14,502,926</b>	<b>£14,970,475</b>	<b>£467,549</b>
<b>Own Day Care</b>			
Older People	£848,144	£778,646	(£69,498)
-Less Attendance Contributions	(£16,869)	(£16,869)	£0
Learning Disabilities	£2,860,936	£2,868,017	£7,081
-Less Attendance Contributions	(£20,691)	(£20,691)	£0
-Less Inter-Authority Income	(£24,986)	(£29,846)	(£4,860)
Mental Health	£731,515	£673,474	(£58,041)
ICF Funding	(£85,682)	(£77,628)	£8,054
-Less Section 28a Income (Pentrebane Street)	(£81,366)	(£81,366)	£0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£4,211,001</b>	<b>£4,093,737</b>	<b>(£117,264)</b>
<b>External Day Care</b>			
Elderly	£3,005	£8,816	£5,811
Physically Disabled	£162,676	£126,474	(£36,202)
Learning Disabilities	£1,189,119	£1,350,128	£161,009
Section 28a Income	(£72,659)	(£72,659)	£0
Mental Health	£44,900	£25,868	(£19,032)
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£1,327,041</b>	<b>£1,438,627</b>	<b>£111,586</b>
<b>Supported Employment</b>			
Mental Health	£68,088	£68,088	£0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£68,088</b>	<b>£68,088</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>Aids and Adaptations</b>			
Disability Living Equipment	£535,638	£484,495	(£51,143)
Adaptations	£246,169	£246,169	£0
Chronically Sick and Disabled Telephones	£7,000	£6,432	(£568)
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£788,807</b>	<b>£737,096</b>	<b>(£51,711)</b>
<b>Home Assistance and Reablement</b>			
Home Assistance and Reablement Team			
Home Assistance and Reablement Team (H.A.R.T.)	£3,968,343	£3,878,973	(£89,370)
Wanless Funding	(£67,959)	(£67,959)	£0
ICF Funding	(£29,504)	(£46,043)	(£16,539)
Independent Sector Domiciliary Care			
Elderly	£5,545,788	£5,879,689	£333,901
Physical Disabilities	£772,024	£733,348	(£38,676)
Learning Disabilities (excluding Resettlement)	£360,725	£328,399	(£32,326)
Mental Health	£285,169	£283,319	(£1,850)
Gwent Frailty Programme	£2,320,293	£2,307,363	(£12,930)
Appropriation from Specific Reserve	(£68,226)	(£68,226)	£0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£13,086,653</b>	<b>£13,228,863</b>	<b>£142,210</b>

	Revised Budget 2018/19	Projection	Over/ (Under) Spend
	£	£	£
<b>Other Domiciliary Care</b>			
Shared Lives			
Shared Lives Scheme	£916,695	£987,479	£70,784
-Less Contribution from Supporting People	(£138,698)	(£125,378)	£13,320
Net Cost	£777,997	£862,101	£84,104
Supported Living			
Older People	£50,029	£50,029	(£0)
-Less Contribution from Supporting People	£0	£0	£0
Physical Disabilities	£1,360,081	£1,427,882	£67,801
-Less Contribution from Supporting People	(£15,737)	(£22,116)	(£6,379)
Learning Disabilities	£7,547,846	£8,105,858	£558,012
Less Section 28a Income Joint Tenancy	(£28,987)	(£28,987)	£0
-Less Contribution from Supporting People	(£397,099)	(£263,247)	£133,852
Mental Health	£2,135,574	£2,027,920	(£107,654)
-Less Contribution from Supporting People	(£15,326)	(£10,018)	£5,308
Net Cost	£10,636,381	£11,287,319	£650,938
Direct Payment			
Elderly People	£187,100	£87,538	(£99,562)
Physical Disabilities	£574,901	£698,082	£123,181
Learning Disabilities	£536,344	£729,242	£192,898
Section 28a Income Learning Disabilities	(£20,808)	(£20,808)	£0
Mental Health	£3,594	£3,456	(£138)
Net Cost	£1,281,131	£1,497,510	£216,379
Other			
Sitting Service	£289,802	£277,513	(£12,289)
Extra Care Sheltered Housing	£540,689	£518,875	(£21,814)
-Less Contribution from Supporting People	(£13,635)	(£13,635)	£0
Net Cost	£816,856	£782,754	(£34,102)
Total Home Care Client Contributions	(£1,650,816)	(£1,836,462)	(£185,646)
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£11,861,549</b>	<b>£12,593,222</b>	<b>£731,673</b>
<b>Resettlement</b>			
External Funding			
Section 28a Income	(£1,020,410)	(£1,020,410)	£0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>(£1,020,410)</b>	<b>(£1,020,410)</b>	<b>£0</b>

	Revised Budget 2018/19	Projection	Over/ (Under) Spend
	£	£	£
<b>Supporting People (including transfers to Housing)</b>			
People Over 55 Years of Age	£842,157	£753,418	(£88,739)
People with Physical and/or Sensory Disabilities	£60,000	£50,351	(£9,649)
People with Learning Disabilities	£161,846	£153,197	(£8,649)
People with Mental Health issues	£915,651	£892,631	(£23,020)
Families Supported People	£499,171	£491,158	(£8,013)
Generic Floating support to prevent homelessness	£881,334	£999,998	£118,664
Young People with support needs (16-24)	£968,966	£1,117,667	£148,701
Single people with Support Needs (25-54)	£414,170	£387,840	(£26,330)
Women experiencing Domestic Abuse	£448,444	£435,253	(£13,191)
People with Substance Misuse Issues	£298,466	£304,094	£5,628
Alarm Services (including in sheltered/extra care)	£19,210	£14,853	(£4,357)
People with Criminal Offending History	£43,419	£65,678	£22,259
Contribution to Social Services Schemes	£749,956	£636,651	(£113,305)
Newport CC funding transfer	(£70,000)	(£70,000)	£0
Less supporting people grant	(£6,232,790)	(£6,232,790)	£0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>Services for Children with Disabilities</b>			
Blackwood Resource Centre	£319,996	£319,996	£0
Residential Care	£283,152	£310,254	£27,102
Foster Care	£619,834	£411,908	(£207,926)
Preventative and Support - (Section 17 & Childminding)	£9,248	£9,248	£0
Respite Care	£68,031	£68,031	£0
Direct Payments	£179,480	£176,304	(£3,176)
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£1,479,741</b>	<b>£1,295,740</b>	<b>(£184,001)</b>
<b>Other Costs</b>			
Telecare Gross Cost	£589,788	£613,722	£23,934
Less Client and Agency Income	(£353,985)	(£353,985)	£0
-Less Contribution from Supporting People	(£83,476)	(£83,476)	(£0)
Agreements with Voluntary Organisations			
Children with Disabilities	£391,442	£391,442	£0
Elderly	£148,410	£154,013	£5,603
Learning Difficulties	£60,904	£60,904	£0
Section 28a Income	(£52,020)	(£52,020)	£0
Mental Health & Substance Misuse	£102,444	£102,444	(£0)
MH Capacity Act / Deprivation of Libert Safeguards	£95,176	£93,378	(£1,798)
Other	£95,304	£95,304	£0
Wales Independent Living Expenditure	£872,014	£192,274	(£679,740)
Gwent Enhanced Dementia Care Expenditure	£279,692	£279,692	£0
Gwent Enhanced Dementia Care Grant	(£209,692)	(£209,692)	£0
Intermediate Care Fund Contribution	(£70,000)	(£69,186)	£814
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£1,866,001</b>	<b>£1,214,813</b>	<b>(£651,188)</b>
<b>TOTAL ADULT SERVICES</b>	<b>£62,387,484</b>	<b>£62,522,881</b>	<b>£135,397</b>

	Revised Budget 2018/19	Projection	Over/ (Under) Spend
	£	£	£
<b><u>SERVICE STRATEGY AND BUSINESS SUPPORT</u></b>			
<b>Management and Administration</b>			
Policy Development and Strategy	£167,448	£165,904	(£1,544)
Business Support	£693,879	£663,013	(£30,866)
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£861,327</b>	<b>£828,917</b>	<b>(£32,410)</b>
<b>Office Accommodation</b>			
All Offices	£283,079	£272,206	(£10,873)
Less Office Accommodation Recharge to HRA	(£59,430)	(£59,430)	£0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£223,649</b>	<b>£212,776</b>	<b>(£10,873)</b>
<b>Office Expenses</b>			
All Offices	£171,750	£177,673	£5,923
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£171,750</b>	<b>£177,673</b>	<b>£5,923</b>
<b>Other Costs</b>			
Training	£314,448	£314,448	£0
Staff Support/Protection	£9,800	£9,800	£0
Information Technology	£11,186	£11,186	£0
Management Fees for Consortia	(£55,558)	(£55,558)	£0
Insurances	£252,763	£248,254	(£4,509)
Other Costs	£277,833	£254,712	(£23,121)
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£810,472</b>	<b>£782,842</b>	<b>(£27,630)</b>
<b>TOTAL RESOURCING AND PERFORMANCE</b>	<b>£2,067,198</b>	<b>£2,002,208</b>	<b>(£64,990)</b>



## REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – FOR INFORMATION

**SUBJECT: BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2018/2019**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Members of the most recent budget monitoring position for 2018/2019 for Communities Directorate Service Divisions, including Regeneration & Planning Division, Infrastructure Services Division, Public Protection Division and Community & Leisure Services Division.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The report summarises the most recent budget monitoring projections for 2018/2019 based on the latest available financial information.
- 2.2 It attaches, as appendices the more detailed budget monitoring figures for each of the Council Fund Services outlined in paragraph 1.1 above.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 The content of the report is in accordance with the budget strategy considered by the Council at its meeting of 22nd February 2018.
- 3.2 The budget figures outlined in this report assist in meeting the ambition of the Authority to build better communities by building better public services, building better lifestyles, building a vibrant economy and building Futures Changing Lives.
- 3.3 Budget monitoring and management information itself is in accordance with the corporate theme of delivering the Strategies.
- 3.4 Effective financial planning and financial control contribute to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:-
- 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 INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1 The report outlines the revenue budget position for each of the service Divisions that form part of the Communities Directorate based on the most current financial information available. Projected outturn figures for the financial year are compared with the budget to show the anticipated under/overspends. More detailed budget monitoring figures are shown in the appendices' 1a to 1d.
- 4.1.2 It should be noted that the budget report to Council on 22nd February 2018 detailed the need to apply further budget efficiency savings in 2018/2019 to meet medium term financial plan (MTFP) targets and achieve budget strategy aims. Environment Directorate services were targeted to achieve new budget efficiency savings of £2.219million.
- 4.1.3 The table 1 below summarises the present budget monitoring position, with an overall Directorate over spend of £412k, but **exclusive** of ring fenced budgets this over spend is reduced to £377k. Appendices 1a to 1d provide more detail on the budget variation projections for each Service Division.

#### 4.1.4

TABLE 1	ORIGINAL ESTIMATE 2018/2019	REVISED ESTIMATE 2018/2019	ANTICIPATED OUTTURN 2018/2019	ANTICIPATED VARIANCE 2018/2019 Under (Over)
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Regeneration & Planning Division	2,560	2,490	2,605	(115)
Infrastructure Services Division	19,819	19,819	19,906	(87)
Public Protection Division	7,235	7,235	7,065	170
Community & Leisure Services Division	21,492	21,365	21,752	(387)
Directorate General	168	168	161	7
<b>NET DIRECTORATE</b>	<b>51,274</b>	<b>51,077</b>	<b>51,489</b>	<b>(412)</b>
Home to School Transport - ring fenced over spend				(40)
Social Services Transport – ring fenced over spend				(124)
Cemeteries Task & Finish – ring fenced under spend				129
<b>NET DIRECTORATE over spend (excluding ring fenced budgets)</b>				<b>(377)</b>

### 4.2 REGENERATION & PLANNING DIVISION

- 4.2.1 Overall, the service division presently has a projected over spend of £115k. Planning services are reporting over spend of £100k and Regeneration over spend of £15k.
- 4.2.2 Development Control is reporting an under spend of £78k due to staff vacant posts, one of which is being held vacant as part of MTFP savings for 2019/2020. Fee income is presently projected to be close to the budget of £537k and pre-application advice fee income is projected at £30k again close to the budget for the year. Building Control is however reporting

overspend of £122k where income is presently projected to be £109k below the £295k budget and there is also a £10k debtor write off in relation to dangerous structures linked to the Pound-stretcher building in Blackwood. Planning application fee and building control fee income is dependent on the number of applications received and applications and fee levels can vary significantly so will continue to be monitored closely.

- 4.2.3 Strategic Planning budgets are presently projected to be £42k over spent due a shortfall in rechargeable fee income, partly offset by staffing under spend due to staff on reduced working hour contracts and a temporary vacant principal planner post.
- 4.2.4 Land charge service is reporting overspend of £20k due to a shortfall in search fee income.
- 4.2.5 Overall Regeneration is presently projecting over spend of £15k. Business Support has underspend of £46k which is due to a vacant post which is being held in support of the MTFP for 2019/2020 and a reduction in some operational costs such as marketing, subscriptions etc.
- 4.2.6 Business Urban Renewal is reporting an over spend of £19k, this includes a projected over spend of £45k in relation to the Bargued retail shop units due to anticipated under occupancy of the units and reduced rental income in 2018/2019 partly offset by underspend in the Urban Renewal and Town Centre management teams from a vacant post and reduced operational costs.
- 4.2.7 There is a projected £10k over spend in relation to industrial properties primarily due to a shortfall in industrial property rent income resulting from a number of units becoming unoccupied because the companies have gone into liquidation. This underachievement in income is partly offset by under spend from staff vacant post and other operational costs. There will be further review of this service and initiatives identified to sustain and increase Industrial Property rent income in order to ensure budget targets are achieved in the future.
- 4.2.8 Overall Tourism Events and Tourism Venues are reporting a combined small overspend of £8k, this is primarily due to additional costs of security and health & safety in relation to the Big Cheese event and an underachievement in income at the tourism venues, offset by staffing underspends at the tourism venues. It is likely that income generation at some of the tourism venues such as Llancaich Fawr have been influenced by the unusually warm weather over the summer months and income at Cwmcarn VC has been affected by the summer mountain fires which had a negative impact on visitor numbers and on the bike trails.
- 4.2.9 Community Regeneration has an under spend of £3k, mainly due to additional staff recharge income from support provided to the grant funded Community First programme.
- 4.2.10 There is over spend of £27k in senior management support primarily due to one off payment in lieu of notice costs associated with the Interim Head of Service retiring.
- 4.2.11 The Head of Regeneration and Planning is currently reviewing the structure of the division with a view to achieving greater flexibility, clarity of roles and increasing the ability of the division to contribute to the MTFP for 2019/20 and beyond.

### **4.3 INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES**

- 4.3.1 Infrastructure is reporting a net over spend of £87k on a £19.819million budget, but after excluding budget variations in relation to Home to School Transport (£40k overspend) and Social Services Transport (£124k over spend) which will be ring fenced and appropriated back to the Service Directorates, there is an under spend of £77k.
- 4.3.2 Highway Operations is reporting overspend of £82k, of which £100k relates to street lighting energy due to an increase in prices. The general highway maintenance and winter

maintenance budgets of £5.4million are presently projected to break-even but much will depend on the severity of winter weather and general wear and tear on the highway network. The expected amount of reactive maintenance required is difficult to predict, but every effort will be made to manage the maintenance programme within the budget available. Winter maintenance is assumed for now to be within the £1.1million budget, but it will depend on the severity of the winter. There is a winter maintenance reserve of £500k available to help fund costs associated with a very severe winter. There is also a £21k shortfall in fixed penalty income associated with New Roads Street Works (NRSWA). Overspends are partly offset by underspend in staffing of £34k some of which is MTFP in advance for 2019/2020.

- 4.3.3 EPG (Engineering Projects Group) is reporting underspend of £27k mainly due to delayed filling of posts.
- 4.3.4 Transport Engineering overall is projecting a £30k under spend, with a shortfall in car park income of £85k (on £736k budget), being more than offset by staffing underspend of £86k, of which £42k relates to school crossing patrol which is mostly MTFP in advance for 2019/2020. There is also underspend traffic signal maintenance (£11k) and road accident and road conditions surveys (£9k) both of which are planned MTFP savings for 2019/2020.
- 4.3.5 Public Transport is reporting an under spend of £23k, mainly due to the Connect 2 lead driver being recovered via grant.
- 4.3.6 At this stage Network Contracting Services (NCS) is anticipating surplus of £53k primarily in relation to the SEW contract. The financial position of NCS is heavily dependent on the volume and value of work secured during the year and this is monitored closely along with productivity levels within the workforce.
- 4.3.7 Engineering general support costs are underspent by £25k due to a vacant post which is MTFP in advance for 2019/20.
- 4.3.8 Home to School Transport is projected to overspend by £40k at present, due to increased operator costs (buses and taxis) resulting from increased demand, the financial position will be monitored closely as it is subject to variation during the year.
- 4.3.9 Social Services Transport is projecting over spend of £124k again due to increased operator costs resulting from increased demand in adult services (£50k) and children services (£76k). This budget will be monitored closely as it is also subject to variation in demand and costs during the year.
- 4.3.10 The Head of Infrastructure is currently reviewing the structure of the division with a view to achieving greater flexibility, clarity of roles and increasing the ability of the division to contribute to the MTFP for 2019/20 and beyond.

#### **4.4 PUBLIC PROTECTION**

- 4.4.1 Public Protection is presently projecting an under spend of £170k on an overall revenue budget of £7.235million.
- 4.4.2 Environmental Health is currently projecting a net underspend of £127k this is primarily due to underspend in salaries from a combination of vacant posts some being held to support the Medium-Term Financial Plan savings requirement for 2019/20, maternity, reduced hour contracts and reduced overtime. There are a number of ongoing issues in respect of pollution and contaminated land sites that are unpredictable and difficult to assess in terms of financial cost, but it is assumed the existing provisions and budget will cover this at present. Pollution and contaminated land sites are being closely monitored as any increases in this area would impact on the overall financial position.

- 4.4.3 Trading Standards, Licensing, Community Safety and CCTV has a projected net underspend of £35k. This is primarily in relation to staffing costs (£48k) from career break savings, vacancy management, associated costs in relation to car allowances and staff not currently top of the incremental scale. These underspends are partly offset by a shortfall in licensing fee income of £20k. Licensing fee income can be subject to variation so this will be monitored closely.
- 4.4.4 Catering Services are projecting a small overall underspend of £8k on a £3.483million budget, this includes underspend in relation to Comprehensive schools (£33k) this is mainly due to over achievement in income, this has been assisted by an increase in the number of schools implementing a policy of school children not leaving the premises at lunch time. There is projected overspend in Primary schools however of £113k due to an underachievement in income targets of £91k and overspend in staffing of £65k partly offset by underspend in other operational costs. Income generation will be monitored closely as it can vary depending on pupil take up, school disruptions due to poor weather etc. There is underspend in HQ costs of £29k and underspend in relation to staff restaurants of £53k due to increased income and reduced staffing costs and overspend in meals direct of £24k due to a shortfall in income partly offset by reduced operating costs.

## **4.5 COMMUNITY & LEISURE SERVICES**

- 4.5.1 The Community & Leisure Division is presently projecting overall net overspend of £387k on a budget of £21.365 million.
- 4.5.2 Waste Management & Cleaning Services is reporting over spend of £531k. There is anticipated overspend in dry recycling treatment (£753k), due to inadequate budget to fund the service, there is however a corporate contingency reserve of £800k available to finance any overspend during 2018/2019. The dry recycling contract with Newport Paper Company is being monitored closely as future contract rates will depend on factors such as the quality of waste/level of contamination in the waste streams collected and also resale markets for recycling materials. There is overspend in relation to CA sites (£49k) due to increased tonnage of waste being deposited at the CA sites and the associated increase in running costs. Initiatives are being considered to help reduce some of these cost pressures including introducing restrictions and better controls on the waste deposited at the CA sites. Vehicle running costs are showing £263k overspend primarily in relation to unscheduled repairs, cover vehicles due to downtime on the fleet and fuel costs. It is anticipated that the new Fleet Services contract will generate savings in vehicle running costs in the future. These overspends are partly offset by an anticipated reduction in vehicle purchases this financial year from deferring acquisitions and therefore reduced RCCO (£391k), albeit vehicles will still need replacing in subsequent years and adequate budget provision will be required to fund replacements. There is also a net staffing under spend of £198k primarily due to vacant posts in street cleansing services some of which are being held to support the Medium-Term Financial Plan savings requirement for 2019/20 partly offset by a £114k overspend in agency costs. HQ staffing also shows underspend of £79k due to vacant posts.
- 4.5.3 An underspend of £169k is projected for Parks & Countryside, Outdoor Facilities and Cemeteries. Cemeteries is reporting a £129k under spend due to income in excess of budget and reductions in maintenance expenditure. Any underspend in relation to cemeteries is ring fenced for future investment in cemetery infrastructure. Parks & Countryside combined is reporting underspend of £40k primarily due to staff vacant posts in outdoor facilities and HQ support, some of which is held vacant in support of the MTFP for 2019/2020. The tree maintenance budget is being monitored closely as there is a requirement to undertake essential tree works on a number of road by- passes.
- 4.5.4 Leisure Centres are reporting a net overspend of £50k, with a £250k shortfall in income targets being mostly offset by underspend in staffing & tutors and other operating costs. Income generation at the Leisure centres can vary depending on consumer demand, operational closures due to adverse weather (which was significant in the 2018 winter),

closures due to maintenance and refurbishments (Centre of Sporting Excellence this year due to renovation to the football pitch) and other factors, including this year, an apparent reduction in consumer demand due to the exceptionally hot summer. The recent Cabinet decision to apply a VAT exemption on the supply of sporting services following a legal challenge and a decision by the Court of Justice of the European Union (subsequently accepted by HMRC) to allow public bodies including local authorities to apply an exemption to VAT on sporting services, will result in additional leisure related income, which will assist in ensuring Leisure Centres can achieve their income budget targets. The overspend in Leisure centres is more than offset by underspend in Leisure HQ costs of £64k including customer services, marketing & training and uniforms.

- 4.5.5 Community Centres are at present projecting underspend of £46k on a £360k budget due to reductions in general maintenance and other operating costs and Caerphilly Adventures is reporting overspend of £27k as the service has suffered an element of disruption in its provision due to the move to Cwmcarn forest drive in the summer of 2018.
- 4.5.6 Vehicle Maintenance & Fleet Management is currently projecting overspend of £57k. The outturn position will be dependent on the value of work through the workshop over the next few months and the ability to finance fixed overheads.
- 4.5.7 Building Cleaning is at present reporting a break even budget this is due to income greater than budgeted offset by staff additional hours to cover sickness and holidays. The service is continually seeking to secure additional cleaning contract work to sustain employments levels and finance fixed overheads.

#### 4.6 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLANS (MTFP) SAVINGS 2018/2019

- 4.6.1 The 2018/19 revenue budget for Environment Directorate included targeted MTFP savings of £2.219million as summarised in table 2 below. The projected overspends and under spends discussed in the above paragraphs take account of these savings targets.

TABLE 2

<b>Service Division</b>	<b>Approved Savings 2018/2019 £000</b>
<b>Regeneration &amp; Planning Division</b>	<b>575</b>
<b>Infrastructure Services Division</b>	<b>732</b>
<b>Public Protection Division</b>	<b>295</b>
<b>Community &amp; Leisure Services Division</b>	<b>617</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,219</b>

- 4.6.2 Most of the £2.219million MTFP savings applied in 2018/2019 are being achieved or are expected to be achieved. However at present a number of MTFP savings are not being fully achieved and the position on these will be monitored closely, the under achieved MTFP savings include:

- Increased rental income industrial properties (£10k MTFP) not achieved due to shortfall in income as noted in paragraph 4.2.7
- Urban Renewal rental income from town centre events spaces (£10k MTFP) not achieved due to lower demand for events space
- Tourism Venues, increased income and expenditure realignment from Caerphilly Visitor Centre (£15k MTFP) not achieved due to reduced income as a result of disruption from refurbishment works to the public toilets and suspected impact of hot summer weather on

consumer demand.

- Tourism Llancaich Fawr staffing rotas and administration roles (£34k MTFP), £16k underspend in staffing, so not fully achieved. Also review of events at Llancaich Fawr (£10k MTFP), due to general shortfall in income generation as noted in paragraph 4.2.8.
  - Infrastructure, New Roads Street Works Act fee increases (£2.5k MTFP) not achieved as noted in paragraph 4.3.2 above
  - Infrastructure, bus shelter maintenance (£10k MTFP) not achieved due to overspend on bus station maintenance
  - Public Protection Catering, increased income from increasing prices at Primary schools (£54k MTFP) not being achieved due to present projected shortfall in primary school catering income as noted in paragraph 4.4.4
  - Public Protection Catering, increased charge for meals on wheels (£11k MTFP) not achieved due to due shortfall in income as noted in paragraph 4.4.4
  - Community & Leisure Countryside, leasing of buildings (£11.5k MTFP) not achieved as lease agreements not negotiated
  - Community & Leisure Waste Management & Cleaning, early retirement of two supervisors (£67k MTFP) not achieved as yet due to the late decision of both staff members not to retire, but offset by greater increased savings in other operational posts.
  - Community & Leisure, Caerphilly Adventures, increased income (£20k MTFP) not fully achieved as yet as noted in paragraph 4.5.5
- 4.6.3 Most of the unachieved MTFP savings are associated with additional income generation, which does have a greater risk of non-achievement, often due to the volatility in customer demand for services and factors outside the control of the service that can impact on usage and income levels (general economic climate, weather, consumer trends etc.)

## 5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 5.1 Effective financial management is a key element in ensuring that the Well-being Goals within the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 are met.

## 6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no potential equalities implications of this report and its recommendations on groups or individuals who fall under the categories identified in Section 6 of the Council's Strategic Equality Plan. There is no requirement for an Equalities Impact Assessment Questionnaire to be completed for this report.

## 7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 As noted in the table in paragraph 4.1.3 above some service under/over spends will be appropriated to ring fenced reserves including Social Services Transport (£140k overspend), Home To School Transport (£40k overspend) and Cemeteries (£129k underspend). In line with the Council's reserves protocol, general revenue underspends not subject to specific ring fencing are appropriated to Directorate strategic reserves and Council working balances on a 50/50 basis, however any Directorate over spends will be appropriated to Service Directorate reserves in full and will require funding from previous years reserve balances where they exist

or future years revenue budgets.

- 7.2 Based on current projections, combined general revenue overspend for the Directorate of £377k in relation to Regeneration & Planning, Infrastructure, Community & Leisure services and Public Protection would be appropriated to Communities Strategic reserve (this excludes ring fenced under/overspends noted in paragraph 7.1). If as noted in paragraph 4.5.2 overspend of £753k in relation to dry recycling treatment is funded from Council Corporate contingency reserves, the net general underspend for these Divisions will be £376k of which £188k would be appropriated to the Communities Strategic reserve and £188k to Council working balances. Consideration will be given to possible use of the contingency reserve at outturn when further updates of the financial position are reported.

## **8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Members will be aware that when setting the budget, MTFP savings were identified for the Communities Directorate in relation to vacancy management savings, these are reflected in the financial figures reported.

## **9. CONSULTATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no consultation responses, which have not been included in this report.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 Members are requested to note the contents of this report.

## **11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 11.1 The Council Budget is based on the achievement of both expenditure and income targets. In order to ensure that these are met and the Council's financial integrity is maintained Directors are required to review income and expenditure trends.

## **12. STATUTORY POWER**

- 12.1 Local Government Act 1972 and 2000.

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### Consultees

Councillor D.T Davies Chair Regeneration & Environment Scrutiny Committee  
Mark S Williams Interim Corporate Director of Communities  
Robert Hartshorn, Head of Community & Leisure, Policy and Public Protection  
Rhian Kyte, Head of Regeneration and Planning  
Marcus Lloyd, Head of Infrastructure  
Nicole Scammell Head of Corporate Finance and Section 151 Officer  
Steve Harris, Deputy Section 151 Officer  
Rose Shears, Finance Officer  
Jane Southcombe, Education Financial Services Manager  
Dave Roberts, Principal Group Accountant

Paul Adams, Senior Assistant Accountant  
Mike Jones, Interim Financial Services Manager Social Services

Background Papers:  
Divisional budget monitoring working papers 2018/2019

Appendices:  
Appendix 1A Budget Monitoring Report - Regeneration and Planning  
Appendix 1B Budget Monitoring Report - Infrastructure Services Division  
Appendix 1C Budget Monitoring Report - Public Protection Division  
Appendix 1D Budget Monitoring Report - Community and Leisure Services

Links to other Documents:  
Council Meeting 22/2/2018: Budget Proposals 2018/19 and Medium- Term Financial Strategy  
2018/2023 - Item No. 4  
<http://www.democracy.caerphilly.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=127&MId=11179>

<b>DIRECTORATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>Page No</b>	<b>Estimate 2018/19</b>	<b>Revised Estimate 2018/2019</b>	<b>Projected Outturn 2018/2019</b>	<b>Variance 2018/2019</b>
<b><u>REGENERATION &amp; PLANNING</u></b>					
<b>REGENERATION</b>					
<b>Senior Management Support</b>		<b>77,982</b>	<b>77,982</b>	<b>105,383</b>	<b>(27,401)</b>
<b>Business Support -</b>					
Business Support & Funding		433,213	433,213	386,554	46,659
Commercial Properties		(1,063,437)	(1,133,218)	(1,123,381)	(9,837)
		<b>(630,224)</b>	<b>(700,005)</b>	<b>(736,827)</b>	<b>36,822</b>
<b>Business Urban Renewal</b>		<b>297,045</b>	<b>297,045</b>	<b>316,465</b>	<b>(19,420)</b>
<b>Destination &amp; Events</b>					
Management, Marketing & Events		372,691	372,691	377,445	(4,754)
Tourism Venues		894,754	894,754	906,441	(11,687)
Blackwood Miners Institute		324,362	324,362	315,643	8,719
Arts Development		152,997	152,997	152,997	0
		<b>1,744,804</b>	<b>1,744,804</b>	<b>1,752,526</b>	<b>(7,722)</b>
<b>Community Regeneration</b>		<b>168,576</b>	<b>168,576</b>	<b>165,959</b>	<b>2,617</b>
<b>Legacy/C4W Grant Programmes</b>					
Expenditure		2,001,161	2,015,293	1,595,675	419,618
Grant Funding		(2,001,161)	(2,015,293)	(1,595,675)	(419,618)
		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
		<b>1,658,183</b>	<b>1,588,402</b>	<b>1,603,506</b>	<b>(15,104)</b>
<b>PLANNING</b>					
Strategic Planning		404,256	404,256	446,821	(42,565)
Development		332,384	332,384	253,729	78,655
Building Control		(30,845)	(30,845)	91,295	(122,140)
Land Charges		(9,849)	(9,849)	10,848	(20,697)
HQ, Corporate and Democratic Core		205,385	205,385	199,332	6,053
		<b>901,331</b>	<b>901,331</b>	<b>1,002,025</b>	<b>(100,694)</b>
<b>TOTAL NET BUDGET</b>		<b>2,559,514</b>	<b>2,489,733</b>	<b>2,605,531</b>	<b>(115,798)</b>

<i>ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE</i>	Page No	Estimate 2018/19	Revised Estimate 2018/19	Projected Outturn 2018/2019	Variance 2018/2019
<b><i>INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES DIVISION</i></b>					
<i>HIGHWAY OPERATIONS</i>		9,394,216	9,393,657	9,475,912	(82,255)
<i>ENGINEERING PROJECTS GROUP</i>		(99,873)	(99,873)	(127,264)	27,391
<i>TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERING</i>		567,051	567,051	537,512	29,539
<i>PASSENGER TRANSPORT</i>		1,751,908	1,751,908	1,728,875	23,033
<i>HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT</i>		6,831,258	6,831,258	6,871,560	(40,302)
<i>SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORT</i>		1,465,319	1,465,319	1,589,321	(124,002)
<i>NETWORK CONTRACTING SERVICES</i>		(146,017)	(146,017)	(200,000)	53,983
<i>ENGINEERING - GENERAL</i>		55,403	55,403	30,344	25,059
<b><i>TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE</i></b>		<b>19,819,265</b>	<b>19,818,706</b>	<b>19,906,260</b>	<b>(87,554)</b>

<i>DIRECTORATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT</i>	Page No	Estimate 2018/2019	Revised Estimate 2018/2019	Projected Outturn 2018/2019	Variance 2018/2019
<b><u>PUBLIC PROTECTION DIVISION</u></b>					
<i>TRADING STANDARDS</i>		794,619	794,619	746,499	48,120
<i>LICENSING</i>		51,183	51,183	79,880	(28,697)
<i>REGISTRARS</i>		67,848	67,848	54,506	13,342
<i>CCTV</i>		466,777	466,777	470,124	(3,347)
<i>COMMUNITY WARDENS</i>		355,019	355,019	322,332	32,687
<i>CORPORATE AND DEMOCRATIC COSTS (CDC)</i>		54,643	54,643	48,618	6,025
<i>HEALTH DIVISIONAL BUDGET</i>		244,869	244,869	251,169	(6,300)
<i>ENFORCEMENT</i>		641,124	641,124	591,149	49,975
<i>POLLUTION</i>		410,366	410,366	379,708	30,658
<i>FOOD TEAM</i>		571,716	571,716	541,392	30,324
<i>EMERGENCY PLANNING</i>		93,185	93,185	103,737	(10,552)
<i>CATERING</i>		3,483,837	3,483,278	3,476,301	6,977
<b><i>TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE</i></b>		<b>7,235,186</b>	<b>7,234,627</b>	<b>7,065,415</b>	<b>169,212</b>

<i>DIRECTORATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT</i>	Page No	Estimate 2018/2019	Revised Estimate 2018/2019	Projected Outturn 2018/2019	Variance 2018/2019
<b><u>COMMUNITY &amp; LEISURE SERVICES</u></b>					
<b>WASTE MANAGEMENT</b>					
<i>Residual Waste</i>		2,331,900	2,331,900	2,646,054	(314,154)
<i>Organics recycling</i>		1,330,439	1,330,439	1,307,913	22,526
<i>Civic Amenity Sites</i>		2,989,173	2,989,173	3,037,773	(48,600)
<i>Waste Transfer Station</i>		108,839	108,839	160,910	(52,071)
<i>Dry Recycling</i>		2,175,012	2,175,012	3,107,712	(932,700)
<i>RCCO</i>		391,000	391,000	0	391,000
<i>Bulky Waste</i>		149,892	149,892	153,442	(3,550)
<i>Commercial Waste</i>		(538,660)	(538,660)	(396,185)	(142,475)
<i>Other Waste</i>		71,055	71,055	62,788	8,267
<i>Trehir</i>		126,224	126,224	125,612	612
<i>Sustainable Waste Management Grant</i>		(942,804)	(942,804)	(942,804)	0
<i>HQ Staff</i>		1,280,201	1,155,482	1,075,099	80,383
<b>CLEANSING</b>					
<i>Public Conveniences</i>		93,146	93,146	94,868	(1,722)
<i>Street Cleansing</i>		4,235,188	4,235,188	3,773,856	461,332
<b>GROUND MAINTENANCE AND PARKS</b>					
<i>Cemeteries</i>		(140,856)	(140,856)	(270,135)	129,279
<i>Allotments</i>		39,231	39,231	26,094	13,137
<i>Parks and Playing Fields</i>		1,705,503	1,705,503	1,790,421	(84,918)
<i>Playgrounds</i>		284,223	284,223	284,964	(741)
<i>Outdoor facilities</i>		274,003	274,003	220,892	53,111
<i>Community Assets Funding</i>		54,160	54,160	54,160	0
<i>Countryside</i>		1,092,071	1,092,071	1,092,624	(553)
<i>HQ Staffing</i>		1,009,471	1,009,471	949,184	60,287
<b>LEISURE SERVICES</b>					
<i>Leisure Centres</i>		2,594,077	2,593,518	2,579,753	13,765
<i>Sports &amp; Health Development</i>		20,024	20,024	20,699	(675)
<i>Outdoor Education</i>		143,091	143,091	170,282	(27,191)
<i>Community Centres</i>		359,855	359,855	313,287	46,568
		<b>21,235,458</b>	<b>21,110,180</b>	<b>21,439,263</b>	<b>(329,083)</b>
<i>Building Cleaning</i>		517,207	516,648	516,705	(57)
<i>Vehicle Maintenance &amp; Fleet Management</i>		(260,883)	(261,442)	(204,317)	(57,125)
<b>Total net expenditure Community &amp; Leisure Services</b>		<b>21,491,782</b>	<b>21,365,386</b>	<b>21,751,651</b>	<b>(386,265)</b>



## POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – FOR INFORMATION

**SUBJECT: CORPORATE SERVICES AND MISCELLANEOUS FINANCE 2018/19  
BUDGET MONITORING REPORT (PERIOD 7)**

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

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of projected revenue expenditure for the Directorate of Corporate Services and Miscellaneous Finance for the 2018/19 financial year.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report projects the anticipated final outturn for the Directorate of Corporate Services and Miscellaneous Finance based upon expenditure and income trends for the first seven months of the financial year.

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The contents of this report are in accordance with the Budget Strategy agreed by Council at its meeting on 22nd February 2018.
- 3.2 Effective financial planning and financial control contribute to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: -
- 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 Corporate Services

- 4.1.1 The Directorate of Corporate Services is currently forecasting an underspend of £1,091k for the 2018/19 financial year, full details of which are provided in Appendix 1.
- 4.1.2 Members are advised that the projected outturn for Education & Lifelong Learning is a net overspend of £518k, consequently overall the projected outturn position for Education and Corporate Services is an underspend of £573k. The net in year overspend for Education &

Lifelong Learning of £518k does not include an increase in the projected deficit position at closure for Cwmcarn High School. The full details with regards to the Education & Lifelong Learning position will be reported to Education for Life scrutiny committee in January.

4.1.3 The anticipated underspend of £103k in Corporate Finance relates in the main to delays in appointing to vacant posts together with vacancies which are being held to support the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) savings requirements for 2019/20 and some additional income.

4.1.4 The anticipated net overspend of £7k in Customer & Digital Services consists of:-

- A projected underspend of £143k on Procurement which relates in the main to vacancies still to be filled pending a revised structure being developed offset by reduced levels of income and a one-off refund.
- Customer First - £58k underspend which is due in the main to vacancies being held to support the Medium-Term Financial Plan savings requirement for 2019/20 offset by increased printing costs.
- IT Services - £217k underspend which is due in the main to vacancies being held to support the Medium-Term Financial Plan savings requirement for 2019/20.
- Central Services - £75k underspend due in main to vacancies being held to support the Medium-Term Financial Plan savings requirement for 2019/20.
- Agreement by Cabinet on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018 requires a transfer from underspends to a earmarked reserve of £500k to cover the investment in Digital Technology.

4.1.5 Legal & Governance is projecting a net underspend of £199k after allowing for the following to be ring-fenced and transferred to earmarked reserves: -

- Projected underspend on Members related expenditure of £10k. This is due in the main to underspend on Members Allowances which is partly off-set by costs on new equipment for the Members to facilitate a reduction in printing/photocopying costs.
- Projected underspend of £73k on Electoral Services. The Electoral Service underspends in non-election years are ring-fenced to fund overspends in election years.
- Agreed one-off funding from reserves to fund staff for a fixed term.

The net underspend of £199k for Legal & Governance is due in the main to vacant posts being held pending a review of the structure after the appointment of a new Head of Service.

4.1.6 There is an anticipated underspend of £176k in Business Improvement Services consisting of the following:-

- Management - £41k due to a delay in appointing to the vacant post of Interim Head of Business Improvement Services.
- Projected underspend of £44k in the Policy Team due in the main to staff reducing their working hours.
- Projected underspend of £72k in the Equalities and Welsh Language Team due in the main to delays in appointing to Translator posts.
- Projected small overspend in the Performance Management Unit.
- Projected underspend of £19k on the Community Safety budget due to a delay in filling a post.

4.1.7 There is a projected net underspend of £324k for Peoples Services mainly consisting of:-

- Human Resources projected net underspend of £182k due in the main to vacancies being held to support the Medium-Term Financial Plan savings requirement for 2019/20, after taking into account the agreed use of reserves for staff.
- CMT Support overspend of £6k due in the main to budget transferred not being sufficient to cover the new staffing structure. This is being monitored closely during the year.

- Trade Union Facilities project a small net underspend of £2k after taking into account the agreed one-off use of reserves to fund staff.
- Communications Unit - £10k underspend due in the main to an increased income on design and print work. This will be closely monitored in year.
- A projected underspend of £136k for Health & Safety, due in the main to salary savings due to delays in recruitment pending a revised structure being implemented to support the Medium Term Financial Plan savings requirement for 2019-20.

4.1.8 For Corporate Property (which forms part of the Communities Directorate) there is a net projected underspend of £263k, consisting of the following: -

- Management - £15k underspend due to various non salary related underspends.
- Energy - £12k underspend due mainly to a temporary reduction in hours of a member of staff.
- Estates - £48k overspend due mainly to a reduction in the anticipated level of fee income, which has been partially offset by staff vacancies. These will be monitored closely in year to try to mitigate the anticipated overspend.
- Non – operational Properties - £17k underspend mainly due to reduced utility costs being incurred.
- Corporate Facilities - £367k underspend mainly due to anticipated savings on various corporate properties. This also includes an anticipated £279k on Ty Duffryn which includes £197k of lease income for 2018-19, this aims to support the Medium Term Financial Plan savings requirement for 2019-20.
- Maintenance – Projected £185k overspend mainly due to the cost of clearing backlog statutory maintenance remedials. These will be monitored closely in year to try to mitigate the anticipated overspend. Many of these costs are one offs and once the backlog is cleared the rate of expenditure should reduce significantly.
- Building Consultancy – Projected £85k underspend due in the main to anticipated increased workload and associated fee income. These will be monitored closely in year.

4.1.9 There is a projected overspend of £38k on Housing Services which consists of the following:-

- General Fund Housing is expected to show a £5k overspend at this stage, although there are some offsetting over and underspends contributing to this position which includes an increase in spend for the Allocations Team as a result of managing the new Common Housing Register, additional spend for preventing homeless for the newly acquired short term accommodation at Clos Ceirw, against a projected underspend in Housing Advice.
- This service area includes a statutory duty for Temporary Accommodation which is demand led and difficult to predict but trends are showing an annual increase in the need for this service. This year the budget has had to rely on the income received for leasing out Ty Croeso which has normally been set aside as a renewal fund for future building maintenance works.
- The service, however, has received growth in the RSG settlement of a further £282k this year for homeless prevention of which about £160k is committed for the management fee recently deducted from the Local Housing Allowance formula but is still claimed via Housing Benefits. The remaining allocation is assumed to be utilised throughout the year as resources are being identified to meet our statutory duty, to include support for increased house sharing options for young homeless care leavers. Therefore this budget is currently anticipating a full spend at this stage pending commitments being identified in year. Any underspend will be requested to be carried forward.
- The temporary accommodation for families at Ty Fesen is assumed to be fully financed but this includes a £20k renewal fund that will be transferred to earmarked balances at year end.
- The projected overspend can be funded from service balances.

- Private Sector Housing is expected to show a £32k overspend at this stage. The main concern for this budget is the Agency Income Fee which has under-recovered in previous years. Budget reductions to assist with the MTFP programme have increased the concern. The fee income has historically been generated from the private housing capital programme which has reduced substantially over the years. This has recently been supplemented by additional fee income expected from the allocation of WHQS works to leasehold properties, but this is only received on completion of the works, and is unlikely to be sustainable once the WHQS has been achieved in 2020. Furthermore, a recent review of Home Repair Grants and the newly introduced loan scheme has shown a slow take up this year meaning the fee income has had to be reduced accordingly by some £70k. Again this is an area that is difficult to predict, although it is anticipated that access to the scheme will increase as it becomes more widely known. There is a projected underspend in salaries which will offset this overspend due to a restructure from the previous managers retirement. The projected overspend can be funded from service balances.

4.1.10 The following table provides a summary of progress in delivering agreed 2018/19 savings, all of these will be achieved in the current financial year: -

Section	Agreed MTFP Savings £'000	Progress against Savings £'000	Variance £'000
Corporate Finance	80.00	80.00	0.00
Corporate Property	197.00	197.00	0.00
Human Resources, Communication & Health & Safety	210.00	210.00	0.00
Information Technology	340.00	340.00	0.00
Policy	93.00	93.00	0.00
Private Housing	65.00	65.00	0.00
Procurement & Customer Services	165.00	165.00	0.00
Grand Total	1,150.00	1,150.00	0.00

## 4.2 Miscellaneous Finance

4.2.1 There is an overall projected underspend of £1,008k in Miscellaneous Finance.

4.2.2 There is a projected net underspend of £486k on Capital Financing budgets which is due to the following:-

- Temporary loans raised in 2018-19 to cover cashflow, offset by assumed borrowing in 2018/19 being deferred to 2019/20, this includes the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and HRA, partly offset by a reduced contribution from HRA for the debt costs due to the deferred borrowing.
- Provision of £242k to fund the ongoing liability of the Senior Officer, as agreed by Council on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2018.

4.2.3 There is a projected underspend of £216k on Miscellaneous Items due to a one off rebate from the "Cremation Services Joint Committee".

4.2.4 The remaining projected underspend for Miscellaneous Finance consists of the following: -

- War Widows Concessions - £10k
- Audit Fees - £60k net of recharges
- Subscriptions - £9k
- NNDR Authority Empty Properties - £131k.
- Class 1A NI - £42k
- Welsh Language - £53k

4.2.5 The projected overspend on the “Counsel fees” budget will be met from its earmarked reserve. The overspend is primarily due to costs incurred on childcare cases.

## **5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS**

5.1 Effective financial management including the effective utilisation of external grant funding is a key element in ensuring that the Well-being Goals within the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 are met.

## **6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 This report is for information purposes, so the Council's Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process does not need to be applied.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 As detailed throughout the report.

## **8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **9. CONSULTATIONS**

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

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 Members are requested to note the contents of the report.

## **11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

11.1 To ensure that Members are informed of the projected financial position for the Directorate of Corporate Services and Miscellaneous Finance.

## **12. STATUTORY POWER.**

12.1 Local Government Acts 1972 and 2003 and the Council's Financial Regulations.

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N. Scammell – Head of Corporate Finance & S151 Officer.  
S. Harris – Interim Head of Business Improvement Services.  
M. Eedy – Finance Manager.  
R Tranter – Head of Legal Services  
L Donovan – Head of Peoples Services  
L Lucas – Head of Customer & Digital Services  
C Harrhy, Interim Chief Executive

Lesley Allen, Principal Accountant, Housing.  
Shaun Couzens, Chief Housing Officer.  
D Street, Corporate Director Social Services  
Mark S Williams, Interim Corporate Director Communities  
Mark Williams, Interim Head of Property  
A. Southcombe, Finance Manager Corporate Services.  
Jane Southcombe, Finance Manager, Education, Lifelong Learning and Schools  
Cllr B. Jones, Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance &  
Governance.  
Cllr C. Gordon, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.  
Cllr L. Phipps, Cabinet Member for Homes & Places.

Appendices:  
Appendix 1

Corporate Services & Miscellaneous Finance 2018/19 Budget Monitoring Report  
(Period 7).

CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE	Original Estimate 2018/19	Revised Estimate 2018/19	Anticipated Outturn 2018/19	Anticipated Variance 2018/19
<b>SUMMARY</b>				
<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE &amp; DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION &amp; CORPORATE SERVICES</b>	460,085	367,177	296,243	70,934
<b>CORPORATE FINANCE</b>				
Financial services & Internal Audit	2,124,090	2,124,090	2,021,369	102,721
	2,124,090	2,124,090	2,021,369	102,721
<b>BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT SERVICES</b>				
Management		124,160	83,215	40,945
Policy	648,395	691,472	647,052	44,420
Equalities	384,562	384,562	312,319	72,243
PMU	223,534	226,888	227,185	(297)
Community Safety Partnership	82,093	82,093	63,215	18,878
	1,338,584	1,509,175	1,332,986	176,189
<b>LEGAL &amp; GOVERNANCE SUPPORT</b>				
Legal & Democratic Services	1,090,282	1,090,282	882,066	208,216
Agreed Use of One Off Reserves for Legal Services	(29,514)	(29,514)	(20,218)	(9,296)
Member Services	1,681,273	1,683,880	1,673,685	10,195
Ringfenced to Earmarked Reserves		0	10,195	(10,195)
Electoral Services	323,524	323,524	250,123	73,401
Ringfenced to Earmarked Reserves			73,401	(73,401)
	3,065,565	3,068,172	2,869,252	198,920
<b>CUSTOMER &amp; DIGITAL SERVICES</b>				
IT Services	4,085,463	4,042,386	3,825,289	217,097
Central Services	403,398	400,791	326,184	74,607
Procurement	314,726	314,726	171,375	143,351
Customer First	1,187,491	1,187,491	1,129,560	57,931
Earmarked Transfer to Reserves (Cabinet 31/10/18)			500,000	(500,000)
	5,991,078	5,945,394	5,952,408	(7,014)
<b>PEOPLES SERVICES</b>				
Human Resources	1,505,946	1,505,946	1,294,356	211,590
Agreed Use of One Off Reserves for Human Resources	(30,045)	(30,045)	0	(30,045)
CMT Support	0	108,135	114,158	(6,023)
Trade Union Facilities	88,151	88,151	87,115	1,036
Agreed Use of One Off Reserves for Trade Union Facilities	(61,447)	(61,447)	(62,497)	1,050
Communications Unit	308,953	308,953	298,567	10,386
Health & Safety	902,518	902,518	766,584	135,934
	2,714,076	2,822,211	2,498,283	323,928
<b>TOTAL CORPORATE SERVICES</b>	15,693,478	15,836,219	14,970,541	865,678
<b>CORPORATE PROPERTY SERVICES</b>				
Management	312,809	312,809	298,136	14,673
Energy	135,870	135,870	123,480	12,390
Estates	57,357	100,434	148,401	(47,967)
Non Operational Properties	130,051	130,051	112,627	17,424
Facilities	2,746,018	2,772,722	2,405,235	367,487
Maintenance	2,176,038	2,176,038	2,361,570	(185,532)
Building Consultancy	(201,931)	(201,931)	(286,788)	84,857
	5,356,212	5,425,993	5,162,661	263,332
<b>HOUSING SERVICES</b>				
General Fund Housing	1,317,617	1,317,617	1,323,006	(5,389)
Private Housing	326,020	326,020	358,470	(32,450)
Building Maintenance	0	0	0	0
	1,643,637	1,643,637	1,681,476	(37,839)
<b>TOTAL NON- CORPORATE SERVICES</b>	6,999,849	7,069,630	6,844,137	225,493
<b>TOTAL SERVICES</b>	22,693,327	22,905,849	21,814,678	1,091,171

FALSE

<i>MISCELLANEOUS FINANCE</i>	Original Estimate 2018/19	Revised Estimate 2018/19	Anticipated Outturn 2018/19	Anticipated Variance 2018/19
<b>MISCELLANEOUS FINANCE</b>				
<b>Staff Related Costs</b>				
Pension Contribution - Former Authorities Ongoing	1,215,689	1,215,689	1,215,689	0
Recharge to Education - Former Authorities	(189,629)	(189,629)	(189,629)	0
	<b>1,026,060</b>	<b>1,026,060</b>	<b>1,026,060</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Statutory Benefit Schemes</b>				
Council Tax RS	13,788,308	13,788,308	13,600,000	188,308
Ringfenced to Earmarked Reserves			188,308	(188,308)
DHP Rent allowances	56,808	56,808	56,808	0
DHP Rent Rebates	511,276	511,276	511,276	0
DHP Income	(568,084)	(568,084)	(568,084)	0
General Rent Allowances	28,543,432	28,543,432	28,543,432	0
Rent Rebates	27,456,591	27,456,591	27,456,591	0
Rent Allowance War Widow Concessions	35,000	35,000	25,000	10,000
Housing Benefit Subsidy	(56,000,023)	(56,000,023)	(56,000,023)	0
	<b>13,823,308</b>	<b>13,823,308</b>	<b>13,813,308</b>	<b>10,000</b>
<b>Levies Upon the Council</b>				
Coroner	200,946	200,946	200,946	0
Archives	209,092	209,092	209,092	0
Fire Service Authority	8,475,706	8,475,706	8,475,706	0
	<b>8,885,744</b>	<b>8,885,744</b>	<b>8,885,744</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Capital Financing</b>				
Debt Charges (Principal Repaid)	2,383,236	2,383,236	2,437,379	(54,143)
Debt Charges (Interest Payments)	8,977,172	8,977,172	8,194,817	782,355
Debt Charges (Debt Management Exp's)	42,285	42,285	42,285	0
Income from External Investments:	(600,000)	(600,000)	(600,000)	0
Rescheduling Discounts	(110,369)	(110,369)	(110,369)	0
Earmarked for specific funds/balances	846,498	846,498	846,498	0
Earmarked additional Provision Snr Officer (Council 13/12/18)			242,000	(242,000)
CERA (Capital Expenditure funded from Revenue Account)	2,604,319	2,604,319	2,604,319	0
	<b>14,143,141</b>	<b>14,143,141</b>	<b>13,656,929</b>	<b>486,212</b>
<b>Corporate and Democratic Core Costs</b>				
Bank Charges	189,698	189,698	189,698	0
Income from HRA	(31,907)	(31,907)	(31,907)	0
Income from DLO/DSO	(13,620)	(13,620)	(13,620)	0
External Audit Fees	484,076	484,076	404,076	80,000
Income from HRA	(81,422)	(81,422)	(67,966)	(13,456)
Income from DLO/DSO	(34,755)	(34,755)	(29,011)	(5,744)
Subscriptions	110,736	110,736	101,520	9,216
	<b>622,806</b>	<b>622,806</b>	<b>552,790</b>	<b>70,016</b>
<b>Grants to Voluntary sector</b>				
Assistance to Voluntary sector	179,333	179,333	179,333	0
	<b>179,333</b>	<b>179,333</b>	<b>179,333</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Private Finance Initiative</b>				
PFI Schools	2,340,304	2,340,304	2,340,304	0
PFI SEW	3,960,234	3,960,234	3,960,234	0
	<b>6,300,538</b>	<b>6,300,538</b>	<b>6,300,538</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Other</b>				
NNDR - Authority Empty Properties	130,608	130,608	0	130,608
Counsel Fees	330,720	330,720	500,000	(169,280)
Ringfenced from Earmarked Reserves			(169,208)	169,208
Careline	35,900	35,900	35,900	0
Carbon Management Scheme	28,170	28,170	28,170	0
Carbon Energy Tax	229,884	229,884	229,884	0
IT Replacement Strategy	131,842	131,842	131,842	0
PV Panel Maintenance		2,000	2,000	0
PV Panels Income	(40,600)	(42,600)	(42,600)	0
Risk Management Contribution	(456,511)	(456,511)	(456,505)	(6)
Class 1A NI	(60,000)	(60,000)	(102,000)	42,000
Welsh Language	53,157	53,157	0	53,157
City Deal	239,200	239,200	239,200	0
Matched Funding for Community Schemes	15,908	15,908	15,908	0
Targeted Rate Relief Scheme	77,000	77,000	77,000	0
Miscellaneous Items	4,631	4,630	(211,115)	215,745
	<b>719,909</b>	<b>719,908</b>	<b>278,476</b>	<b>441,432</b>
<b>TOTAL MISCELLANEOUS FINANCE</b>	<b>45,700,839</b>	<b>45,700,838</b>	<b>44,693,178</b>	<b>1,007,660</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE TO DIRECTORATE SUMMARY</b>	<b>68,394,166</b>	<b>68,606,687</b>	<b>66,507,856</b>	<b>2,098,831</b>

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## CABINET – 30TH JANUARY 2019

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON RESERVES**

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

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- 1.1 The attached report, which provided details of the usable reserves held by the Authority and included proposals for the use of reserves in some areas, was considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 15th January 2019, prior to its presentation to Cabinet.
- 1.2 The Appendix to the attached report provided details of the Authority's usable reserves as at 1st April 2018 of £109.796m, which is £10.8m lower than the level held the previous year. The report also included proposals for the use of Service reserves in respect of the Directorate for Education and Corporate Services, along with a proposed release of reserves across a number of areas for one-off spend. Members were reminded that these reserves can only be used once (typically for capital expenditure and contingent sums for potential unforeseen liabilities) and that it is strongly advisable that these are not used to fill the gaps where savings are required in respect of MTFP proposals.
- 1.3 Members noted the balance position on the General Fund (currently projected to be £10m as at 31st March 2019), details of HRA usable reserves (£5.090m as at 1st April 2018) and Capital Reserves (£39.808m as of 1st April 2018). It was noted that the use of these particular reserves are ring-fenced for specific purposes as set out in the report. The report also detailed the usable reserves for each Directorate (£31.605m for Corporate Services, £4.679m for Communities, £8.419m for Education and Lifelong Learning and £6.995m for Social Services). Work has been carried out to establish Directorate reserves which have the potential for release, and where identified, these were set out in bold throughout Sections 4.5-4.8 of the report for Members' consideration.
- 1.4 Additionally, the report set out details of service underspends for each Directorate, and it was explained that in line with the Reserves Strategy agreed by Cabinet in July 2016, a 3% cap has been placed on the cumulative amount that can be held by Directorates in service underspend reserves. As Corporate Services and Education & Lifelong Learning had exceeded this cap, the report therefore summarised proposals to utilise this excess accumulated underspend (totalling £0.764m). These proposals included support for the Capital Programme 21<sup>st</sup> Century Band B match funding, Post 16/Single Sec Review Resourcing, Digital Strategy Implementation, and Caerphilly 2022 Leadership Training and Development.
- 1.5 During the course of the ensuing debate, and in response to Members' queries, Officers elaborated on the reasons for the level of reserves held against some service areas, in particular those relating to Insurance and Waste Management. A Member suggested that consideration be given to the use of PFI reserves held long-term in view that they may not need to be utilised for several years. Officers explained the-way the PFI Sinking Fund works, and the fact that money would need to be taken from this reserve to top up the shortfall in respect of the funding from WG. It was always anticipate that this would be the case, and the External Auditors would expect to see a PFI Sinking Fund, hence these funds could not be released. A Member queried why a reserve was held for Cwmcarn High School overspend, and Officers confirmed that this reserve would be required and that a report on the overspend

would be presented to the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee. Members also queried the level of funds held in the Gwent Frailty Programme (£2.283m) and it was explained that this reserve is held by CCBC on behalf of the partnership which covers the whole Gwent region (with only a proportion of these funds belonging to CCBC).

- 1.6 Members referred to the separate Brexit report being presented to Cabinet on 16th January 2019 (and thereafter Council) which recommended that £1m be set aside in an earmarked contingency reserve (to be funded from the £20.8m unallocated reserves identified in the Update on Reserves report) to meet any financial implications arising from the Brexit process. The Scrutiny Committee expressed concerns that their view had not been sought on the use of this particular reserve, given that the Committee had been referenced in the recommendations for the Brexit report. Officers emphasised that all Members will have an opportunity to consider this particular proposal at full Council on 22nd January 2019.
- 1.7 It was also explained that the Update on Reserves report was seeking the Committee's support to release some reserves for specific uses, whereas the Brexit report would be seeking Council approval for the next step in order to allocate a portion of this released reserve to a specific fund for potential utilisation. In response to Members' queries, Officers also outlined the Council's responsibility to establish this contingency fund given a potential scenario where immediate access may be required and emphasised that should it not be needed, the funds will be transferred back to the pot for unallocated reserves.
- 1.8 Reference was made to the proposal to utilise some reserves to take forward the Council's Leadership Training and Development, and Members queried whether this was the appropriate time to allocate funds for training purposes, given the level of savings required of the Council. Officers explained that this training presents a unique opportunity to invest in leadership skills across the Senior Management network and will allow managers to build on their existing capacity and explore newer and more strategic ways of working. The training represents excellent value for money and will be made available to a wide section of the workforce, including staff in primary and secondary schools. Discussion also took place regarding the distribution of revenue generated from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Officers explained that expenditure takes place around the area from where this revenue is generated. Members were also advised that funding for new infrastructure (such as roads and schools) is usually generated from a number of sources and not merely the CIL.
- 1.9 Following consideration of the report and in noting its contents, the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee unanimously recommended to Cabinet that:-
- (i) the contents of the report be noted;
  - (ii) the accumulated underspend reserves above the 3% cap for Corporate Services and Education & Lifelong Learning be utilised as detailed in 4.9.2 of the report;
  - (iii) specific reserves relating to the Directorate of Education and Corporate Services totalling £1.5m be released and allocated towards 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Band B match funding;
  - (iv) funding totalling £20.08m (Capital reserves £16.227m, Council Tax Reduction Scheme 3m, Trehir reserve £350k, Members reserve £506k) be released from the various reserves as detailed throughout the report and set aside in the balance sheet for one-off expenditure.
- 1.10 Cabinet is asked to consider the report and the above recommendations.

Author: R. Barrett, Committee Services Officer, Ext. 4245

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Report to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 15th January 2019 - Agenda Item 11



## **POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 15TH JANUARY 2019**

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON RESERVES**

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

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

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

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The report provides details of the usable reserves held by the Authority as at the 1st April 2018 totalling £109.796m.
- 2.2 The report also includes proposals for the use of Service reserves in respect of the Directorate for Education and Corporate services, along with a proposed release of reserves for one off spend. The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider these proposals prior to the proposals being presented to Cabinet.
- 2.3 Members are reminded that reserves can only be used once. The use of reserves would typically include capital expenditure, contingent sums for potential unforeseen liabilities i.e. BREXIT and Invest to Save.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 Ensuring that adequate General Fund balances are maintained to meet any unforeseen expenditure and the establishment of specific reserves to meet known future financial commitments are key elements of prudent financial management.
- 3.2 Prudent financial management contributes to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015:-
  - A prosperous Wales.
  - A resilient Wales.
  - A healthier Wales.
  - A more equal Wales.
  - A Wales of cohesive communities.
  - A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.
  - A globally responsible Wales.

#### 4. THE REPORT

4.1 Appendix 1 provides details of the Authority's usable reserves as at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 totalling £109.796m. Members are asked to note that this reserve is £10.8m lower than the previous year. The following paragraphs provide a detailed commentary on the balances held.

#### 4.2 General Fund

4.2.1 The opening balance on the General Fund as at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 was £13.2m. After adjusting for 2018/19 in-year use of General Fund balances the projected position as at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 is a balance of £10m. This is summarised in the table below: -

	£m	£m
<b>General Fund Opening Balance as at 01/04/18</b>		<b>13.200</b>
<b>In-Year Use of General Fund Balance: -</b>		
- 2017/18 Council Tax Surplus to Support 2018/19 Budget (Special Council 22/02/18)	(1.400)	
- MTFP savings delivery fund (Cabinet 27/06/2018) (Council 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2018 )	(1.800)	
		<b>(3.200)</b>
<b>Projected General Fund Balance as at 31/03/19</b>		<b>10.000</b>

4.2.2 In line with the Council's Reserves Strategy the Section 151 Officer provides advice on the appropriate level of the General Fund Reserve annually as part of the budget setting process and this is subject to approval by Cabinet and Full Council. Typically, the Section 151 Officer has recommended in previous budget reports to Council that the minimum balance on the General Fund Reserve should be £10m i.e. circa 3% of the Council's net revenue budget. The 2019/20 budget report will be presented to Council on the 21<sup>st</sup> February 2019 and this will include recommendations on the use of the General Fund balance.

#### 4.3 Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

4.3.1 HRA funds must be ring-fenced and cannot be transferred into General Fund balances. The balance on the HRA usable reserves as at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 was £5.090m. Most of this funding will be utilised for the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) Capital Programme.

#### 4.4 Capital Reserves

4.4.1 The total capital reserves of £39.808m as at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 are ring-fenced for the Authority's Capital Programme. These reserves have been subject to a detailed review over the last six months and the outcome of this review has identified that there are £16.2m of reserves that are not allocated to any capital schemes. During the next few months Cabinet will need to be presented options to consider in respect of capital schemes that they wish to support financially. Scrutiny committees are able to discuss these reports, if they so wish, prior to Cabinet approval as they should be included in the Cabinet forward work programme.

#### 4.5 Corporate Services

4.5.1 The balance on Corporate Services reserves as at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 totalled £31.605m. The following table provides details of individual balances and the purpose of the reserves. Where funds are proposed for release they are highlighted as bold:-

Reserve	Amount £m	Description
Trehir Reserve	0.585	Required for potential works on former landfill site. <b>It has been established that £350k can be released from this reserve.</b>
Invest to Save Reserve	0.431	To provide repayable one-off financial support for service initiatives that deliver cashable savings. £250k of this balance is currently committed to purchase a Velocity Patcher for carriageway resurfacing works (agreed by Cabinet on the 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2014).
Insurance Earmarked Reserve	5.935	Self-insurance facility. The Authority's insurance excess is £250k. All claims below this level are funded through the insurance earmarked reserve.
Risk Management Reserve	0.564	To support risk management initiatives that mitigate insurance claims. Annual contributions to this reserve from Directorate revenue budgets have been reduced from 2016/17 onwards as part of approved savings to support the MTFP.
Corporate Property Service Initiatives Reserve	0.157	To support Corporate building schemes.
Electoral Admin Reserve	0.276	Cumulative balance on funding set aside annually for local elections.
Health & Safety Initiatives	0.262	To meet unavoidable cost pressures in Council establishments.
PC Replacement Reserve	0.797	This reserve funds the ongoing replacement of essential IT hardware and software across the Authority.
Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Equalisation Reserves	11.140	Committed to funding approved PFI Schemes.
Corporate Services Service Initiatives Reserves	9.767	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care-line (£245k) – Retained underspends on the Care First budget.</li> <li>• Counsel Fees (£608k) – Retained underspends on the Counsel Fees revenue budget.</li> <li>• Council Tax Reduction Scheme (£3.367m) – Retained underspends on the CTRS budget. The Welsh Government has currently only committed to a fully funded scheme until the end of 2019/20. <b>It is considered that £3m can be released from this reserve.</b></li> <li>• Apprenticeship Scheme (£852k) – Committed to ongoing apprenticeships (£530k) and for match-funding the ESF Inspire to Work project. (£322k).</li> <li>• Member Services (£606k) – Ring-fenced retained underspends on the Member Services budget. <b>It has been established that £506k can be released from this reserve.</b></li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary Sector Grants (£141k) – Retained underspends on the Grants to the Voluntary Sector budget. This budget is monitored by Members on the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel.</li> <li>• Municipal Mutual Insurance (MMI) Levy (£425k) – Funding set aside to meet future liabilities arising from the MMI Scheme of Arrangement.</li> <li>• Senior Officer Investigation (£220k) – Previously approved funding in respect of the ongoing investigation.</li> <li>• Replacement of IDOX Document Management System for Council Tax/Housing Benefits (£150k).</li> <li>• Contingency for one-off cost of MTFP staffing reductions (£381k).</li> <li>• Contingency for cost pressures in Waste Management (£800k).</li> <li>• Cwmcarn High Funding Deficit - funding set aside to meet the anticipated financial deficit that will remain following the closure of Cwmcarn High School.(£1.4m)</li> <li>• 2Yr fixed term grade 6 post HR (Sickness Absence Monitoring)(£60k)</li> <li>• 1yr Fixed Term Post Grade 7 in Corp Property (Electrician)(£35K)</li> <li>• 1yr Fixed Term Post Grade 10 in Corp Property (Land Sales)(£48K)</li> <li>• General Ledger Upgrade - funding of upgrade in 2018-19 to v5.5.(£189K)</li> <li>• AP Forensics Software (Fraud Monitoring) - Renewal of three year software licence to 2021.(£34K)</li> <li>• Income Management System Upgrade - cost of introducing new cash income system supplied by Capita in 2018-19.(£101K)</li> <li>• Access Rights Management Solutions (To aid GDPR)(£80K)</li> <li>• Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) maintenance. (£25K)</li> </ul>
Salix Finance	0.289	To support energy saving initiatives.
Retained Underspends Reserves	1.402	Accumulated service underspends. <b>It has been established that £500k can be released for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Band B match funding.</b>
<b>Total: -</b>	<b>31.605</b>	

4.5.2 Members will note from the above that £1.402m is held in 'Retained Underspends Reserves'. Cabinet has previously agreed a policy whereby service areas retain 50% of reported underspends at the financial year-end. Conversely, any service based overspends are carried forward by the service areas responsible for generating the overspends. This approach has worked well as there is full ownership and accountability by budget holders in respect of delivering a balanced budget. At its meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2016, Cabinet agreed a Reserves Strategy which included the introduction of a cap on the cumulative amount that can be held by Directorates in service underspend reserves. This will be covered in more detail in section 4.9 of this report.

#### 4.6 Communities

4.6.1 The balance on Communities reserves as at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 totalled £4.679m. The following table provides details of individual balances and the purpose of the reserves:-

Reserve	Amount £m	Description
DLO Surplus/Deficit	0.371	Retained cash surplus for Network Contracting Services (NCS) work arising from the Sirhowy Enterprise Way PFI contract.
Planning - Community Infrastructure Levy	0.533	Revenue generated from the Community Infrastructure Levy.
Planning - LDP Related Expenditure	0.131	Ring-fenced reserve for completion of a new CCBC Local Development Plan.
Highways – Service Specific Reserve.	0.500	Ring-fenced winter maintenance reserve.
Community Regeneration Fund	0.141	Approved grants to be drawn down.
Economic Development – Service Initiative Reserve.	0.027	£2k relates to footfall counters and £25k is ring-fenced for capital works to the Hafod Deg building.
Area Forum Reserve	0.044	This is being utilised to support agreed MTFP savings in this area.
Cemeteries Reserve	1.141	Funds set-aside to meet the capital cost of future land acquisition for Cemeteries and the development of that land..
General Fund Housing Service Initiatives Reserve	0.460	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renewal Fund for future building costs at Ty Croeso single persons' accommodation (£141k).</li> <li>• Renewal fund for the replacement of white goods and internal decoration at Ty Fesen family accommodation (£180k).</li> <li>• Shortfall in Shelter contract payments for 2017/18 to 2019/20 (£41k).</li> <li>• Homelessness prevention (£98k).</li> </ul>
Communities - Service Specific	0.300	Project Development Fund - fund created to develop City Deal projects to stimulate economic development in the area.
Retained Underspends Reserves	1.031	Accumulated service underspends. (Includes General Fund Housing of £758k)
<b>Total: -</b>	<b>4.679</b>	

#### 4.7 Education & Lifelong Learning

4.7.1 The balance on Education & Lifelong Learning reserves as at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 totalled £8.419m. The following table provides details of individual balances and the purpose of the reserves:-

Reserve	Amount £m	Description
Service Initiatives Reserve	1.726	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESF Bridges into Work (£537k) – Match-funding contribution (agreed by Cabinet 27/07/15).</li> <li>• ESF Working Skills for Adults (£267k) - Match-funding contribution (agreed by Cabinet 27/07/15).</li> <li>• Voluntary Early Release (VER) costs (£553k) – Required to meet ongoing liabilities in schools.</li> <li>• Fire Safety (£14k) – Earmarked reserve to fund fire alarm upgrades.</li> <li>• Transport Equalisation Account (£23k)</li> <li>• Inspire to Work (£22k)</li> <li>• Contribution to Grade 9 Fire Officer (£23k)</li> <li>• Traffic Calming Islwyn High. (£1k)</li> <li>• School Condition Surveys. (£74k)</li> <li>• Budget Pressures - Behaviour &amp; Mental Health (£173k)</li> <li>• Relief Supply Equalisation Account. (£39k)</li> </ul>
Schools PFI Earmarked Reserves	1.004	Contingent sum for unforeseen cost pressures for 2 PFI schools.
School Balances	2.039	Net overall retained underspends ring-fenced to schools.
Local Management of Schools (LMS) Contingency.	2.731	Accumulated underspends on LMS revenue budget. This reserve is maintained to support potential redundancy costs in schools, statutory maintenance costs and other unforeseen unavoidable cost pressures. It has been established that £500k can be released to support 21 <sup>st</sup> Century schools Band B match funding.
Accumulated Service Underspends	0.919	As per agreed policy (see paragraph 4.5.2).It has been established that £500k can be released for 21 <sup>st</sup> Century schools Band B match funding.
<b>Total: -</b>	<b>8.419</b>	

## 4.8 Social Services

4.8.1 The balance on Social Services reserves as at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 totalled £6.995m. The following table provides details of individual balances and the purpose of the reserves:-

Reserve	Amount £m	Description
Community Activities Reserve	0.069	To support trading activities in Day Centres.
Service Initiatives Reserve	1.686	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Therapeutic Fostering Service (£624k). Approved by Cabinet 13/04/16.</li> <li>• Operation Jasmine (£109k).</li> <li>• Finance IT System (£26k) – Required to deal with any unforeseen costs arising from the implementation of the Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS).</li> <li>• Gwent Frailty Programme (£200k) – To meet future Invest to Save loan repayments to the Welsh Government.</li> <li>• Gwent Safeguarding Partnership (£280k) – Contribution to partnership to 2018/19.</li> <li>• Children Services Pressures. (£158k)</li> <li>• Legal Administration re. Children Services Pressures. (£20k)</li> <li>• Invest to save trials. (£251k)</li> <li>• Solicitor Post. (£18k)</li> </ul>
Reserves Held for Partnerships	3.365	Reserves held on behalf of partnerships led by Caerphilly CBC: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Resource Centre (£50k).</li> <li>• SE Wales Shared Lives Scheme (£175k).</li> <li>• Youth Offending Service (£609k).</li> <li>• SE Wales Safeguarding Children Board (£299k).</li> <li>• SE Wales Emergency Duty Team (£51k Deficit).</li> <li>• Gwent Frailty Programme (£2.283m).</li> </ul>
Accumulated Service Underspends	1.875	As per agreed policy (see paragraph 4.5.2)
<b>Total: -</b>	<b>6.995</b>	

## 4.9 Cap on Retained Underspend Reserves

4.9.1 As mentioned in paragraph 4.5.2, at its meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2016 Cabinet agreed a Reserves Strategy which included the introduction of a cap on the cumulative amount that can be held by Directorates in service underspend reserves. This cap is set at 3% of the net revenue budget for each Directorate and where this is exceeded then proposals must be presented to utilise the excess or a justification must be made to hold the reserves above the 3% level. The following table summarises the 2018/19 net budget for each Directorate, the balance on underspend reserves as at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 and whether the cap has been exceeded:-

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>2018/19 Net Budget £m</b>	<b>Reserve Balance £m</b>	<b>3% Cap £m</b>	<b>Excess Above Cap £m</b>
Corporate Services	21.262	1.402	0.638	0.764
Communities	44.423	1.031	1.333	-
Education & Lifelong Learning	32.994	0.919	0.990	-
Social Services	89.262	1.875	2.678	-

4.9.2 The following table summarises proposals to utilise or retain the excess accumulated underspend reserves for Corporate Services: -

<b>Directorate/Proposal</b>	<b>£m</b>
<b>1) Corporate Services Excess</b>	<b>0.764</b>
<b>Proposals: -</b>	
- <b>Support Capital Programme 21<sup>st</sup> Century Band B match funding</b>	<b>(0.500)</b>
- <b>Post 16/Single Sex Review Resourcing</b>	<b>(0.064)</b>
- <b>Digital Strategy Implementation</b>	<b>(0.100)</b>
- <b>Caerphilly 2022 Leadership training and Development</b>	<b>(0.100)</b>
	<b>0.764</b>

## **5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS**

5.1 The establishment and management of reserves are key elements of effective financial management which assists the achievement of the Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

## **6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 As detailed throughout the report.

## **8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **9. CONSULTATIONS**

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

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 Members of the Scrutiny Committee are asked to:-

- 10.1.1 Note the content of the report.
- 10.1.2 Support a recommendation to Cabinet that accumulated underspend reserves above the 3% cap for Corporate Services and Education & Lifelong Learning be utilised as detailed in the table in paragraph 4.9.2 of this report.
- 10.1.3 Support a recommendation to Cabinet that specific reserves relating to the Directorate of Education and Corporate services totalling £1.5m be released and allocated towards 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Band B match funding.
- 10.1.4 Support a recommendation to Cabinet that funding totalling £20.08m(Capital reserves £16.227m,CTRS £3m,Treher reserve £350k,Members reserve £506k) is released from various reserves detailed throughout the report and set aside in the balance sheet for one off expenditure.

## **11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

## **12. STATUTORY POWER**

- 12.1 The Local Government Acts 1998 and 2003.

Author: Nicole Scammell, Head of Corporate Finance & S151 Officer  
E-mail: [scammn@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:scammn@caerphilly.gov.uk) Tel: 01443 863130

Consultees: Corporate Management Team  
Andrew Southcombe, Finance Manager, Corporate Finance  
Dave Roberts, Principal Group Accountant, Corporate Services  
Mike Eedy, Finance Manager, Environment  
Jane Southcombe, Finance Manager, Education & Lifelong Learning  
Mike Jones, Interim Financial Services Manager, Social Services  
Lesley Allen, Principal Accountant, Housing  
Steve Harris, Interim Head of Business Improvement services  
Rob Tranter Head of Legal services and Monitoring Officer  
Cllr David Poole, Leader  
Cllr Barbara Jones, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Governance

Background Papers:  
Cabinet (27/07/16) – Reserves Strategy  
Special Council 31<sup>st</sup> July 2018 –Financial Accounts 2017/18

Appendices:  
Appendix 1 List of Usable Reserves

List of Usable ReservesAppendix 1

Directorate / Service Area	Description	Opening Balance 1.4.2017	Opening Balance 1.4.2018	Earmarked For Potential One Off Funding of Capital Schemes
<b>1 General Fund</b>				
Corporate	General Fund	-17,832,917	-13,199,563	0
<b>Total General Fund</b>		<b>-17,832,917</b>	<b>-13,199,563</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>2 Housing Revenue Account</b>				
Housing Revenue Account	Various	-16,821,209	-5,089,887	
<b>Total HRA</b>		<b>-16,821,209</b>	<b>-5,089,887</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>3 Capital Reserves</b>				
Capital Earmarked Reserves	Various	-16,357,993	-22,135,481	12,226,452
Useable Capital Receipts	Various	-11,538,476	-8,523,024	2,849,235
Capital Grants Unapplied	Various	-9,812,874	-9,149,391	1,151,363
<b>Total Capital Reserves</b>		<b>-37,709,344</b>	<b>-39,807,896</b>	<b>16,227,050</b>
<b>4 Corporate Services</b>				
Corporate	TREHIR RESERVE	-584,549	-584,549	350,000
Corporate - Capital	RESERVE - INVEST TO SAVE	-271,829	-430,936	
Insurance Fund	INSURANCE EARMARKED RESERVE	-5,903,893	-5,935,367	
Insurance Fund	RISK MANAGEMENT RESERVE	-690,285	-563,980	
Property Services	SERVICE INITIATIVES RESERVE	-157,392	-157,392	
Corporate Services	ELECTORAL ADMIN RESERVES	-460,999	-276,144	
Corporate Services	HEALTH & SAFETY INITIATIVES	-262,606	-262,606	
Corporate Services	CORPORATE PC REPLACEMENT RESER	-1,080,668	-797,407	
Corporate Services	SEW PFI EQUALISATION RESERVE	-2,266,095	-1,880,206	
Corporate Services	EDUC PFI EQUALISATION RESERVE	-9,634,173	-9,259,726	
Corporate	SERVICE INITIATIVES RESERVE	-1,609,218	-2,844,240	
Corporate Services	SERVICE INITIATIVES RESERVE	-5,128,875	-6,921,650	3,506,000
Property - Capital	SALEX FINANCE	-223,963.03	-288,892.10	
Property Services - Building Consultancy	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	-54,203	-54,203	
Corporate Services	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	-1,303,896	-1,347,599	500,000
<b>Total Corporate Services</b>		<b>-29,632,644</b>	<b>-31,604,898</b>	<b>4,356,000</b>

**5 Communities**

Infrastructure	DLO SURPLUS / DEFICIT C/F	-300,750	-370,975	
Planning	COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY	-251,143	-533,173	
Planning	SERVICE INITIATIVES RESERVE	-130,527	-130,527	
Infrastructure	SERVICE INITIATIVES RESERVE	-500,000	-500,000	
Economic Development and Tourism	RESERVE - COMMUNITY REGEN FUND	-135,693	-141,611	
Economic Development and Tourism	SERVICE INITIATIVES RESERVE	-12,835	-26,542	
Planning	RESERVE - AREA FORUM	-70,499	-44,085	
Community and Leisure Services	RESERVES - CEMETERIES	-932,453	-1,141,020	
General Fund Housing	SERVICE INITIATIVES RESERVE	-329,208	-460,107	
Communities Directorate	SERVICE INITIATIVES RESERVE	0	-300,000	
Communities Directorate	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	-339,012	-688,367	
Economic Development and Tourism	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	-4,152	-198	
General Fund Housing	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	-162,760	-195,824	
Private Housing	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	-115,950	-102,235	
Trading Standards	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	-31,011	-31,011	
Environmental Health	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	-13,720	-13,720	

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<b>Total Communities</b>		<b>-3,329,712</b>	<b>-4,679,395</b>	<b>0</b>
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**6 Education & Lifelong Learning**

Education and Lifelong Learning	SERVICE INITIATIVES RESERVE	-1,055,595	-1,725,825	
Education and Lifelong Learning	PFI SCHOOLS EARMARKED RESERVES	-869,921	-1,004,683	
Schools	RESERVES - DELEGATED SCHOOLS	-2,331,965	-2,038,810	
Education and Lifelong Learning	RESERVES LMS EARMARKED	-2,657,113	-2,731,165	500,000
Education and Lifelong Learning	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	-1,369,571	-918,866	500,000

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<b>Total Education and Lifelong Learning</b>		<b>-8,284,164</b>	<b>-8,419,349</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>
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**7 Social Services**

Social Services	RESER - SOC SERV COMM ACTIVI	-65,858	-68,621	
Social Services	SERVICE INITIATIVES RESERVE	-1,906,344	-1,686,129	
Social Services	RESERVES HELD FOR PARTNERSHIPS	-2,121,413	-3,365,471	
Social Services	RESER - UNDER/ OVER SPEND C/F	-2,872,587	-1,875,152	

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<b>Total Social Services</b>		<b>-6,966,202</b>	<b>-6,995,373</b>	<b>0</b>
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<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>-120,576,193</b>	<b>-109,796,360</b>	<b>21,583,050</b>
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## CABINET - 30TH JANUARY 2019

**SUBJECT: CCBC COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

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

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet's endorsement of the draft CCBC Communication and Engagement Strategy 2019 – 2022.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The council is committed to ensuring that the whole organisation communicates effectively and efficiently with stakeholders from all sections of the community.
- 2.2 Effective communication and engagement is critical if we are to deliver quality services and develop a two way flow of information between the council and our key audiences.
- 2.3 A new Communication and Engagement Strategy has been developed which sets out the council's approach to delivering its communications activity and outlines the principles which will underpin this work.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 The new Strategy will complement and reflect the council's Corporate Plan and agreed Wellbeing Objectives.
- 3.2 The Strategy is also closely aligned to the priorities contained within the Cabinet Commitments and fits alongside other key corporate documents such as the council's Marketing Strategy, the CCBC Engagement Strategy and the LSB Engagement Strategy.

### **4. THE REPORT**

- 4.1 The new Communications and Engagement Strategy will run from 2019 to 2022 and sets out the way the council will communicate with a wide range of audiences. It takes us from the reality of where we are now to the aspirations of the future and is backed up by a detailed action plan.
- 4.2 The strategy sets out the principles of how we will communicate with openness and transparency, in a simple, non-technical way that people will be able to understand. It also sets out the various communication channels and tools we will use to reach as many people as possible with our key messages.
- 4.3 Local authorities across Wales are facing unprecedented financial challenges and this position is unlikely to change over the next 3-4 years so effective communication, along with extensive community engagement, will form a key part of managing this difficult process.

- 4.4 There is also a need to reflect the ever changing communications landscape – particularly with regards to the increasing popularity of digital and social media channels.
- 4.5 The way people receive, digest and share information is changing, so it is vitally important that the authority keeps up with this agenda. That said, we also need to consider the needs of other sections of the community who may prefer more traditional channels of communication.
- 4.6 The Strategy will enable the organisation to adopt a more joined up approach to communications and will help position effective communications at the core of all the authority's work.
- 4.7 The Strategy will be delivered by the corporate Communications Unit, based at Penallta House and Tredomen House (design and print teams). The team are responsible for delivering the following key services:
- Media management
  - Public engagement (alongside colleagues in Corporate Policy)
  - Corporate events management
  - Internal communications
  - Advertising
  - Graphic design
  - Print services
  - Brand management
  - Twinning

4.8 **New Campaign-based approach to Communications**

4.9 The strategy outlines a new strategic campaigns approach to our communications activity, which will support our corporate priorities, help enable more focus on strategic activities and champion the organisation's objectives.

4.10 It will help give the organisation a clear voice - a strong narrative with a few overarching key messages, which are what the organisation wants residents, businesses and visitors to 'think' when thinking of Caerphilly County Borough Council.

4.11 The new campaign themes are as follows:

**'IMPROVING... INVESTING... INSPIRING'**

*Supporting Wellbeing Objective 1 - improving education opportunities for all*

**'A GREAT PLACE TO DO BUSINESS'**

*Supporting Wellbeing Objective 2 – enabling employment*

**'YOUR HOMES, YOUR FUTURE'**

*Supporting Wellbeing Objective 3 - addressing the availability, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough, and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve people's wellbeing*

**'CONNECTING PEOPLE, CONNECTING PLACES'**

*Supporting Wellbeing Objective 4 - promoting a modern, integrated and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity and minimises the adverse impacts on the environment.*

**'HEALTHY LIVES, HEALTHY SPACES'**

*Supporting Wellbeing Objective 5 - creating a county borough that supports a healthy lifestyle, in accordance with the Sustainable Development principle within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.*

## **‘CREATING CARING COMMUNITIES’**

*Supporting Wellbeing Objective 6 - supporting citizens to remain independent and improve their wellbeing*

## **‘THE CAERPHILLY CONVERSATION’**

*Supporting the work of the council’s business transformation programme and engagement with residents around the council’s Medium Term Financial Plan.*

### **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 All Communications activity will comply with the requirements of the authority’s statutory duties under Equalities and Welsh language legislation.
- 5.2 In doing so, all of the key communication channels will be undertaken bearing in mind the Equalities and Welsh language requirements. The Communications Unit will continue to work closely with the Equalities and Welsh Language Team to ensure this works effectively and in a practical way.
- 5.3 The council is committed to representing the needs and aspirations of all sections of the community and our communications output must reflect this.

### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no immediate financial implications linked to the development of the strategy.

### **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The strategy will be delivered by the council’s Corporate Communications team, but every member of staff across the organisation needs to take ownership of the principles underlined within the document.

### **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 This report reflects the views of the consultees listed below.
- 8.2 All members of the Communications Unit have also been consulted as part of the development of the strategy.

### **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 Members are asked to approve the draft Communications and Engagement Strategy 2019 – 2022.

### **10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 To ensure the council has a robust Communications and Engagement Strategy in place to help the organisation develop a clear corporate narrative with strategic support from the corporate Communications Team.

## 11. STATUTORY POWER

### 11.1 The Local Government Act 1986, Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity in Wales.

Author:	Stephen Pugh	Communications Manager
Consultees:	Christina Harrhy	Interim Chief Executive
	Ed Edmunds	Director of Education and Corporate Services
	Mark Williams	Interim Director of Communities
	Dave Street	Director of Social Services
	Cllr Dave Poole	Leader of Council
	Cllr Colin Gordon	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
	Lynne Donovan	Head of People Services
	Anwen Cullinane	Senior Policy Officer
	Rob Tranter	Head of Legal Services / Monitoring Officer

Appendices:	
Appendix 1	Communications Strategy
Appendix 2	CCBC Media Protocol

Sending the **right** message



# CaerphillyComms

CCBC Communications  
& Engagement Strategy  
2019 - 2022



Man gwyrddach i fyw, gweithio ac ymweld  
A greener place to live, work and visit

Page 185



# CONTENTS

<b>WHAT IS THIS DOCUMENT?</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>A DIFFERENT APPROACH...</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>AN EXCITING NEW AGENDA</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>FOREWORD BY THE LEADER</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>WHO WE ARE &amp; WHAT WE DO</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>OUR COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>HOW WILL WE DO THIS?</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>OUR 'CRYSTAL CLEAR' COMMUNICATIONS COMMITMENT</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING THE STRATEGY</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>A CAMPAIGNS APPROACH TO COMMUNICATIONS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>DEVELOPING OUR INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGNS FOR 2019-2023</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>DIGITAL BY DESIGN</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW DOES THIS STRATEGY FIT IN WITH THE WIDER PICTURE?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>IMPROVING INTERNAL COMMUNICATION</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>SUPPORTING THE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT PORTFOLIO (BIP)</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>EVALUATION AND MEASUREMENT</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>WHO TO CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION</b>	<b>18</b>

This publication is available in Welsh, and in other languages and formats on request.  
Mae'r cyhoeddiad hwn ar gael yn Gymraeg, ac mewn ieithoedd a fformatau eraill ar gais.

# WHAT IS THIS DOCUMENT?

This Communications Strategy has been developed to help define the way Caerphilly County Borough Council engages with its residents, partners, businesses and all our other key audiences.

As a council, we're committed to delivering quality, value for money services for Caerphilly county borough residents. The effectiveness of how we deliver our vision is determined, to a significant extent, by the quality of our communications and engagement.

All aspects of our communications and engagement can have an impact on the council's work and reputation. This strategy outlines the approach we will take to ensure our communications and engagement activity is fit for purpose and helps to achieve our vision.

It also defines how we as an organisation will listen and respond to what our audience is telling us in return.

The strategy sets out the principles of how we will communicate with openness and transparency, in a simple, non-technical way that people will be able to understand.

It also sets out the various communication channels and tools we will use to reach as many people as possible with our key messages.



## A DIFFERENT APPROACH...

Local Government is facing significant financial pressures, which are likely to increase over the next few years, therefore the scope of the authority's communications activity may be limited in comparison to previous years, but our challenge is to find new, innovative and cost-effective ways of doing things differently in the future.

The communication landscape has also changed dramatically over recent years and the old, outdated 'SOS' approach ('send out stuff') is simply not good enough in the 21st century.

We must engage in a meaningful way with our audiences using a wide range of communication channels and techniques (both digital and traditional) in order to foster trust and confidence in the organisation.

Our approach needs to be more 'human' and conversational, which better reflects the tone and style of modern social media and digital communication.

Rather than being driven by the demands of the organisation in an ad-hoc, reactive manner, we need instead to adopt a strategic, campaign-based approach to our communications which is aligned to the key priorities and aspirations of the council.

We also need to change the tone of our messages so that our residents are aware of the difficult decisions that lie ahead. Some of these decisions will be unpopular and we will be forced to deliver services in a different way – or not at all. Therefore it is important that our community understands the reasons behind this. **We need to address misconceptions, challenge misinformation and help 'set the record straight' whenever we can.**

## AN EXCITING NEW AGENDA

As well as the challenges highlighted above, there are also a number of exciting opportunities for the authority to deliver services in a new way in future and effective communications needs to be a key part of this process.

The Cardiff Capital Region City Deal will bring major opportunities for investment and employment to the Caerphilly county borough and it is vitally important that CCBC is seen as a key partner in this exciting new venture. We need to communicate the importance of this partnership to our communities and highlight the benefits it will bring to our area in the future.

The digital landscape is also changing rapidly and there are a number of new and exciting opportunities to do things differently in terms of communication, engagement, customer interaction and service delivery. The Communications Team need to be at the forefront of this agenda.

# FOREWORD BY THE LEADER

*"I firmly believe that we are an excellent local authority which has developed a reputation for delivering effective services to all sections of the community from the 'cradle to the grave'.*

*We need to celebrate our success, promote our good work and ensure that we listen to the community, so that we can adapt to their ever-changing needs. It is also important that we protect and promote our reputation at every opportunity. Therefore it is critical that we have a robust Communications Strategy in place which provides clear focus and direction for the authority over the next three years and beyond.*

*In addition, the way we communicate as a society is also rapidly changing and we are seeing a greater shift towards digital and social channels. We must keep up with this pace of change and ensure that our communication and engagement activity reflects these emerging trends.*

*That said, we must also ensure that we take an inclusive approach to the way we communicate. Therefore our communication activity will be tailored to meet the diverse range of needs and abilities of all the people within our community.*

*This Communication and Engagement Strategy will ensure that we have a planned and well thought out approach to our communication activity in future. It will also ensure that the team has clear direction and purpose so that it can support the needs of the organisation at every level.*

*We have an award winning Communications Team who have helped play a key role in supporting the organisation through some very difficult times over recent years.*

*This document is a blueprint for our commitment to communication in the future and will underpin the team's work going forward."*



**Cllr Dave Poole**  
Leader of Council



# INTRODUCTION

Caerphilly County Borough Council is committed to providing a consistent, innovative and cost-effective communication service in order to keep residents and other key stakeholders informed and engaged, as well as helping to improve our reputation.

The council wants to ensure that its priorities, values and ambitions are communicated to, and understood by, all our key stakeholders including our residents, our workforce, our partners and the local businesses community

One of the council's greatest assets is our reputation - our good name and the way people perceive us. Communication plays an important role in both protecting and promoting an organisation's reputation. Establishing and maintaining our reputation helps build trust with the community and builds confidence in the authority.

In terms of the wider context, Local Government in Wales is changing. Budgets are reducing, the workforce is shrinking and we will be required to deliver our services in a different way over the next few years.

This means that difficult decisions will need to be made and tough, unpopular choices are inevitable. As the organisation changes and responds to these pressures it is essential that we communicate effectively at all times.

In addition to this, the communication landscape is changing at a rapid pace. Social and digital has become the main way of communicating for many people, as well as being their main source of news and information.

It is important that we continue to build on our use of social media as a key tool to engage and converse with our communities - rather than broadcasting **at them**.

Effective communication and engagement is vitally important in helping to influence the behaviour and attitudes of our residents. Just by way of an example, we want people to recycle more and waste less; be fit and active; increase the use of country parks; travel more by public transport; be energy efficient etc - these are just a few behaviours that can be influenced by communication and delivering clear messages.

Effective communication and engagement will help us clearly explain and deliver the organisation's key priorities. It is important that we continuously review, refresh and improve the way that we communicate to ensure we are sending and receiving the right message at the right time

## REACH

We will use a wide range of channels to communicate with our audiences. This includes social, digital and traditional methods.

## ENGAGE

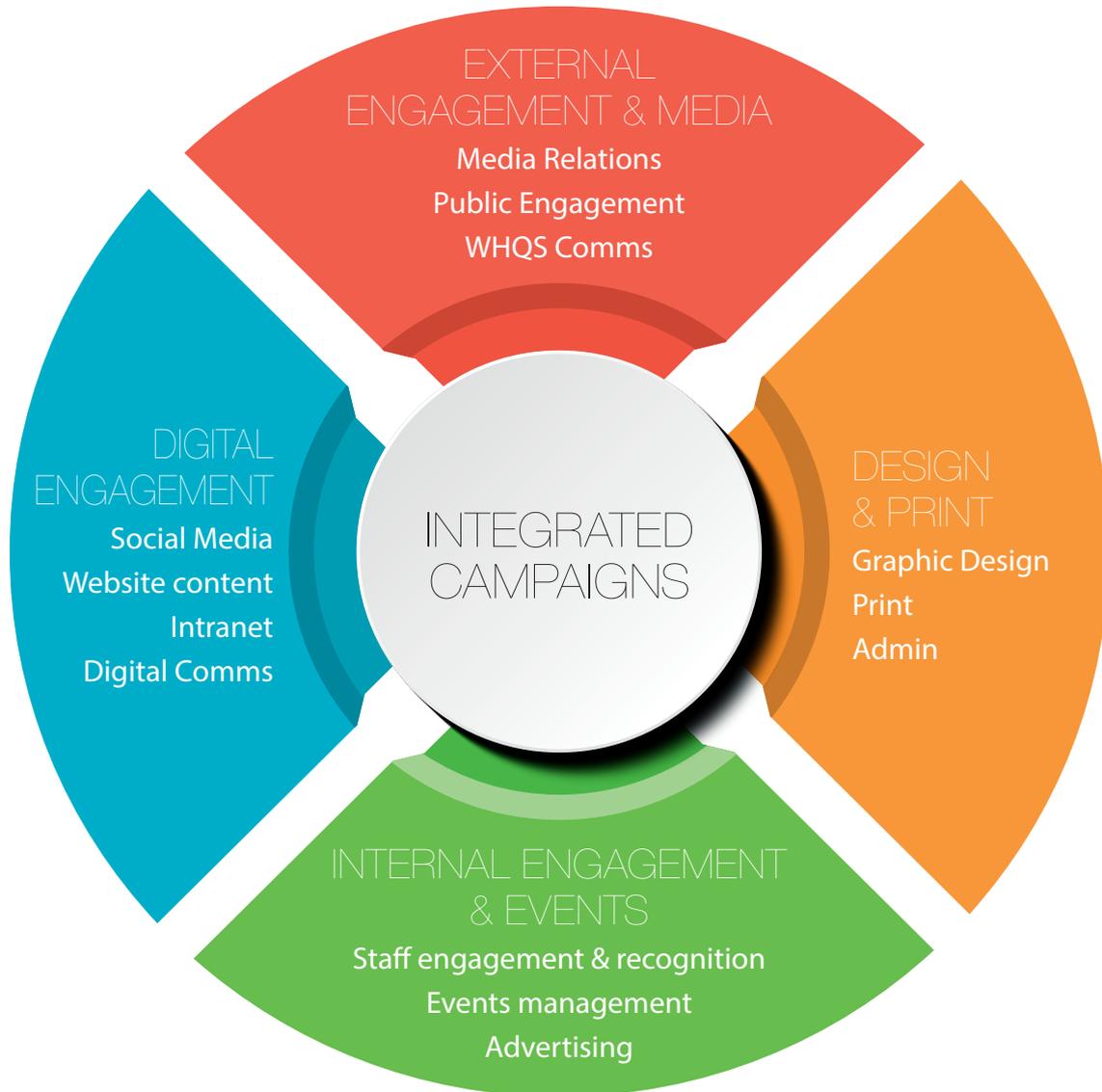
We will ensure that our communication is timely, relevant, informative and uses plain English. We want to create engaging content for all our audiences

## CONVERT

We will work hard to change behaviours and attitudes by providing relevant information so that our audiences are able to make informed and considered choices.

# WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

The Communications Team is based in Penallta House, Ystrad Mynach (with Print and Graphic Design functions based nearby in Tredomen House).



The team provides professional communication support to the whole organisation and is able to offer clients a range of bespoke services across the following areas:

## **MEDIA MANAGEMENT**

We work hard to promote and protect the council's reputation, as well as keeping our residents informed. We pride ourselves on applying a dynamic, forward thinking approach to proactive and reactive media management. **All incoming media enquiries must be handled by the Communications Team who will log and respond with an agreed corporate response. (See Media Protocol – Appendix 1)**

## **ADVERTISING**

In line with statutory requirements, we offer an accurate, on time and professional service. We ensure advertising services are fully compliant by offering advice and guidance where necessary and secure the best discounts through effective negotiation. **All the authority's paid for advertising must be placed via the Communications Team who will oversee all aspects of the booking and placement process.**

## **CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT**

Effective consultation and engagement promotes two way communication, which ensures residents are able to influence the way we shape and deliver our services.

**Any consultation and engagement activity undertaken by the authority must be done in conjunction with the Communications Team and the Policy Unit to ensure we comply with agreed standards.**

## **EVENT MANAGEMENT**

Showcasing the council's services with a professional approach and careful attention to detail, we create a lasting impression when planning corporate events.

**The Communications Team are a key point of contact for any corporate events such as openings, launches, Ministerial & Royal visits, VIP activities etc.**

## **GRAPHIC DESIGN**

Creating professional, efficient, imaginative, cost effective and trustworthy design solutions to assist council services in targeting their audiences and help customers identify with the CCBC brand. **All the authority's design requirements are to be undertaken by the in-house team to ensure we comply with agreed standards (eg Welsh Language, corporate branding, equalities etc).**

## **INTERNAL COMMUNICATION**

Promoting and fostering internal engagement by adopting a whole authority approach through the use of effective internal communication channels. The Communications Team facilitate a range of internal communication activities to keep the workforce engaged and updated.

## CAMPAIGN MANAGEMENT

Creating effective communications campaigns require clarity, creativity and the highest possible attention to detail – all of which we offer with a tailored service to suit all budgets. The Communications Team can offer expertise in delivering effective integrated campaigns using a range of communication channels - both owned and earned.

## CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

The team work closely with the senior leadership of the organisation and other partner agencies in emergency situations to ensure all communication is co-ordinated effectively.

## PRINT SERVICES

Delivering high quality print services to meet deadlines, we offer a full range of printing capabilities using the latest printing technology combined with a skilled and dedicated team. **All the authority's print requirements are to be undertaken by the in-house team to ensure we comply with agreed standards (eg Welsh Language, corporate branding, equalities etc).**

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Building an effective social media network with thousands of followers, we have been successful in creating a far reaching two way channel of communication. Developing an engaging strategy has allowed us to position the council as one of the leaders in Wales. The Communication Team are responsible for the authority's main corporate accounts and can also advise other departments about social media use.

## TWINNING

The Communications Team is responsible for maintaining and fostering the long-standing partnership links with Ludwigsburg (Germany) and Pisek (Czech Republic).



# OUR COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES

Through effective communications and engagement, our key objectives are to:

- Inform and engage with residents, businesses, visitors, partners and other stakeholders about the council's aims and key priorities, the services it provides and how they can get involved in shaping decisions.
- Maintain a strong and recognisable council brand and identity - utilising the strategic communications campaigns to effectively do this.
- Promote and uphold the council's reputation.
- Ensure that our workforce is involved and engaged through good internal communications, so that they are well placed to represent and champion the council in the community.

## HOW WILL WE DO THIS?

The communications landscape is ever changing, and to continue to innovate, we will focus on the following:

1. Put in place a comprehensive communications strategy that provides clear direction for the council - that's what this document is all about.
2. Further enhance our digital communications - We want to create engaging content across a range of channels - especially digital and social.
3. Less broadcasting and more 2-way communication and engagement - Let's have a real conversation with real people.
4. Tailor our communications and engagement to maximise impact - using insight to tailor activity to reach different audiences more effectively.
5. More focus on positive and proactive communication through a campaign model - we do lots of good things that people would love to know more about.
6. Help our community understand local government, including our challenges - Now more than ever it is important that the community are aware of the pressures facing public services and the need to do things differently in future.
7. Maintain a strategic approach to communications and engagement – by focussing on the priorities contained in the Corporate Plan.

# OUR 'CRYSTAL CLEAR' COMMUNICATIONS COMMITMENT

As effective, professional communicators we will always strive to achieve best practice and deliver a clear, helpful and informative communications service for the whole organisation.

- Crystal Clear - We are completely transparent and unclouded
- Crystal Clear - We are straight to the point
- Crystal Clear - We want to ensure residents/staff/Cllrs clearly understand their role and responsibilities
- Crystal Clear - Our message is simple and delivered in Plain English / Welsh

Our Crystal Clear communications activity will help:

1. Set the record straight
2. Address misconceptions
3. Manage community expectations
4. Deliver difficult information and messages
5. Myth-busting



Our overall approach means that:

- We will always be open, honest, impartial and factual
- We will communicate in a timely manner with concise, up to date information
- We will avoid jargon wherever possible and communicate in Plain English
- We will engage and listen more – not just broadcast – as we want to encourage a two way flow of communication.
- We will always strive to ensure value for money in everything we do
- We will listen to feedback and seek insight to help improve the way we communicate
- We will embrace digital communication - particularly social media - but will not lose sight of the importance of more traditional channels too.
- We will continuously learn, develop and evolve in order to provide a more effective service
- We will be inclusive and accessible in our communication using languages and formats best suited to our audiences

# PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING THE STRATEGY

We need to have a firm foundation, a set of agreed principles which are reflected in everything we do.

These should be the bedrock of our communications activity and act as a guarantee that our actions are sound and that they fit the values of the council.

## **STAFF FIRST**

Staff should be well informed about issues which affect the organisation and impact upon them as employees. Being well-informed means they can participate fully in our drive to be an excellent council and an employer of choice. In all our communications activity we will endeavour to provide staff with access to information in advance of the media and the public. Only then can we demonstrate that our staff are valued as employees and ambassadors for the council.

## **GOOD COMMUNICATION IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY**

Every employee is involved in communication activity whether formal or informal as an integral part of his or her role. Whether this involves internal or external communications, all employees need to take responsibility for ensuring they communicate clearly and effectively.

## **EFFECTIVE INTERNAL COMMUNICATION DRIVES CULTURE CHANGE AND IMPROVES PERFORMANCE**

Internal communications is not seen as an 'add on', an activity that is voluntary or a luxury when budgets are tight. Without it, we will not become the council we want to be.

## **MANAGERS NEED TO BACK THEIR COMMITMENT TO COMMUNICATIONS**

This requires action to break down any 'silo' mentality which may exist. A willingness to use directorate and divisional resources in a different way in order to maximise communication objectives.

# A CAMPAIGNS APPROACH TO COMMUNICATIONS

Our residents do not live their lives within organisational boundaries. In the course of a day, they may be a parent, a carer, a commuter, an entrepreneur and much more besides. They are unlikely to think of themselves as council 'service users' or 'customers'.

A strategic campaigns approach to our communications, that supports our corporate priorities, will help enable more focus on strategic activities and champion the organisation's objectives.

It will help give the organisation a clear voice - a strong narrative with a few overarching key messages, which are what the organisation wants residents, businesses and visitors to 'think' when thinking of Caerphilly County Borough Council.

## **WE WILL:**

- Build campaigns with clearly defined audiences in mind, to ensure a sharper focus on customers and stakeholder groups, therefore increasing the relevance of the information they receive.
- Develop our campaigns using a series of communications activities with a common objective or theme, and design them with the aim of influencing the audience's perceptions or effect a desired behaviour change.
- Change the focus simply from communications outputs (press coverage, social media reach etc) to real benefits for the community.

The organisation will execute seven strategic communications campaigns each year, which have clearly defined links to the councils Corporate Plan, are fully evaluated throughout and support the seven key Cabinet Commitments.

The campaigns will be developed in line with the Government Communication Services' model, which advocates five clearly defined development areas; objectives, audience/insight, strategy, implementation/tactics and scoring/evaluation.

## **THIS APPROACH WILL ALSO ALLOW US TO DEVELOP OUR CAMPAIGNS INTO:**

- Being more digital and audience focussed - empowering others to generate their own content
- Maximising the Communications Team's resources - utilising the campaigns to strongly communicate the council's key messages
- Having solid in-built evaluation techniques to measure effectiveness and impact
- And create genuine change - either through perceptions or actual behavioural change

The campaigns approach will develop a story for Caerphilly County Borough Council over the coming years - and help in building the council's 'brand' as a county borough that has much to offer.

The approach will work to complement the council's existing Place/Destination Marketing Strategy, which is delivered by a dedicated Marketing team based within the Communities directorate.

Place/Destination marketing refers to the activity an organisation carries out to differentiate itself from others and promote its unique characteristics, and is particularly used in encouraging increased tourism to an area. This form of marketing activity has clearly defined target audience demographics and often has increasing revenue as its primary aim.

The campaigns model supports this approach by striving to communicate seven key concepts that differentiate Caerphilly county borough and promote its unique characteristics - for example, that Caerphilly is a strong and vibrant place to do business and that it is a place that invests in its young people and future generations.

# DEVELOPING OUR INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGNS FOR 2019-2023

Our communications campaigns for 2019/2023 will support the Wellbeing Objectives outlined in the council's Corporate Plan 2018-2023.

The campaigns will support our corporate priorities, help enable more focus on strategic activities and champion the organisation's objectives.

They are:

## **'IMPROVING... INVESTING... INSPIRING'**

Supporting Wellbeing Objective number one - improving education opportunities for all

## **'A GREAT PLACE TO DO BUSINESS'**

Supporting Wellbeing Objective number two - enabling employment

## **'YOUR HOMES, YOUR FUTURE'**

Supporting Wellbeing Objective number three - addressing the availability, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough, and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve people's wellbeing

## **'CONNECTING PEOPLE, CONNECTING PLACES'**

Supporting Wellbeing Objective number four - promoting a modern, integrated and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity and minimises the adverse impacts on the environment

### **'HEALTHY LIVES, HEALTHY SPACES'**

Supporting Wellbeing Objective number five - creating a county borough that supports a healthy lifestyle, in accordance with the Sustainable Development principle within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

### **'CREATING CARING COMMUNITIES'**

Supporting Wellbeing Objective number six - supporting citizens to remain independent and improve their wellbeing

### **'THE CAERPHILLY CONVERSATION'**

Supporting the work of the council's business transformation programme and engagement with residents around the council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

## DIGITAL BY DESIGN

Over the last decade we have seen a digital revolution. People are more connected than ever before and the way they search for and receive information and news has changed significantly as a result.

This strategy sets a clear ambition to drive forward a new approach to digital communication.

We will need to continually develop and build new ways of communicating and engaging with our audiences and stakeholders, to develop strong, enduring and mutually beneficial relationships.

### **OUR DIGITAL OBJECTIVES**

We will effectively manage our digital and social media channels by linking them to our strategic objectives and work streams.

Our main objectives will be to:

- Produce a Digital Contents Planner including key dates for national, local and council related information and initiatives. This will allow us to deliver timely and relevant messages to our target audience using our digital communications channels.
- Build a strong network of residents and stakeholders online to create strong social capital.
- Engage residents in a two-way conversation about our work and their views.
- Share partner and stakeholder messages (Schools, PSB, WG etc).
- Encourage staff and members to support, promote and take part in our online conversations.

- Develop a 'Digital Dashboard' to allow us to review and monitor the usage and effectiveness of our current digital channels. We would use this information to consider discontinuing those channels that are ineffective and to consider using alternative channels.
- Produce a monthly digital report/digest of what featured on our digital channels. What worked and what didn't.

## **DIGITAL MEDIA AUDIT**

The Communications Team will audit all service area-managed social media channels to review access permissions, frequency and quality of posts. Identify additional services that would benefit from social media. Identify use of additional social media channels, e.g Instagram, What's App, Pinterest, etc.

Look into place based community social media accounts, e.g. to support the Council's ambition of thinking digital by design and empowering residents to get online and support local communications and engagement on neighbourhood issues such as dog mess, anti-social behaviour or information about local services. It can be used to support Customer Services directly deal with complaints via our social media channels.

# HOW DOES THIS STRATEGY FIT IN WITH THE WIDER PICTURE?

This strategy does not exist in isolation. It is designed to complement and enhance a range of other key strategies that are being delivered across the organisation such as the council's marketing strategy, the Corporate Plan and Wellbeing Objectives as well as the Cabinet's Commitments.

## **SUPPORTING CABINET'S COMMITMENTS**

The council's Cabinet has agreed a set of commitments and values for CCBC, so it is important that our communications activities are closely aligned to these principles.

### **CABINET'S COMMITMENTS:**

- We will always do our best to protect jobs and services within the current challenging financial climate.
- We will build on CCBC's reputation as an innovative, high performing local authority.
- We will ensure we have an engaged and motivated workforce.
- We will always strive to ensure CCBC delivers value for money in everything it does.

- We will help protect the most vulnerable people in our society and make safeguarding a key priority.
- We will always welcome feedback and consider the views of residents, staff and other key stakeholders.

We will be open, honest & transparent in everything we do.

## **SUPPORTING CCBC'S STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

The Local Government Measure 2009 requires all local authorities in Wales to set and publish a set of priorities called Improvement Objectives, however the introduction of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WBFGA) also places a legal requirement for public bodies to set and publish Well-being Objectives.

As there is a cross over between the two legislations, authorities (including CCBC) are treating the two requirements as one outcome, to publish one set of Well-being Objectives and the Wales Audit Office and Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) have endorsed this approach.

The council's Well-being Objectives for 2018-2023 have now been agreed and these will have a key influence on the Communication Team's activities – particularly in terms of the 'Campaign' work that is planned over the next 3 years.

Our communications work will be aligned to these 6 key objectives and reflect what is being done to deliver these within the community

## IMPROVING INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

A lot of work is currently being done to improve internal communication and engagement across the organisation.

The authority recognises that effective and meaningful internal engagement can deliver significant benefits in terms of morale, productivity and a sense of building a 'Team Caerphilly' ethos.

We also recognise that our excellent workforce is our biggest asset and many CCBC employees live within the county borough, therefore they are valuable advocates and ambassadors for the authority.

Much work has been done to develop the Corporate Plan and Wellbeing Objectives, as well as the Cabinet's new Commitments, therefore it is appropriate that staff are encouraged to develop their own set of values and behaviours which fit in with and reflect the overarching corporate position.

The creation of a new values and behaviours framework for staff would be the 'last piece of the jigsaw' and will provide the organisation with a clear sense of purpose and direction at all levels.

# THE ROAD TO 2022



Effective communication and engagement will be a critical element in the delivery of the council's business transformation programme.

The Communications Team plays a lead role in this transformation programme and a significant amount of work has been undertaken over the past two years as part of this agenda including:

**STAFF SURVEY** - A comprehensive staff survey was undertaken in 2017 and the feedback has been provided to employees in a number of ways (Intranet, email updates, printed summaries, team briefings).

**STAFF ROADSHOWS** - Six corporate staff roadshows for employees at all levels across the authority were held in the spring 2018. They followed on from a successful pilot held for staff from the Communities Directorate in 2016.

**AUDIT OF EXISTING INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS** - An audit of existing internal communication methods across all Heads of Service has been undertaken.

**CCBC INTRANET** - A cross directorate working group was established in late 2016 to drive the development of a new staff Intranet to replace an old, outdated version. IT Services then developed a pilot Intranet site that was trialled and launched in 2018.

**BLOGS** - The Interim Chief Executive had already established a regular blog and these had been widely welcomed by staff as a way to receive updates and find out more about the real person behind the blog and not just the 'corporate line'. The Leader of Council and the rest of CMT are also now producing regular blogs and the next stage is to explore the use of video blogs.

**'ASK THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'** - The initiative was launched in January 2017 to enable staff to pose a question, make a suggestion, raise a concern or provide feedback. This can be done online via a dedicated email address or by submitting printed 'postcards' for staff without access to a PC.

**CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS** - The Customer Services Team developed a set of new customer service standards that are being adopted by all staff across the authority (not just customer services staff).

**CABINET COMMITMENTS** - The Communications Unit worked closely with Cabinet and CMT in 2017 on a key piece of work to develop a vision and a clear set of values for the organisation going forward.

**Next Steps.....**

**STAFF NEWSLETTER** - It is recognised that the development of a new staff newsletter (printed and digital) would be a beneficial addition to our ongoing communication and engagement work – particularly for hard to reach staff.

**STAFF RECOGNITION AWARDS** - Staff reward and recognition (or lack of) was a key theme that emerged from the recent roadshows and via other feedback channels, therefore the council is keen to pursue the development of a new initiative to formally recognise staff across the organisation.

**GOV DELIVERY** - CCBC is currently using a widely recognised Granicus product called GovDelivery. It is primarily being used for external audiences at present (eg jobs, events, service disruption, traffic updates, school closures etc), but the product is equally effective for use in an internal facing way.

**PLASMA SCREENS** - There are a variety of different TV and plasma screens located at numerous council sites across the county borough. These include libraries, leisure centres, corporate receptions, staff rest areas in depots etc, but at present there is no over-arching strategy to ensure that there is consistency in the quality, frequency or timeliness of the information and messages that they display.



## EVALUATION AND MEASUREMENT

The Communications Unit, like other departments across the organisation, utilise Service Plans and the online monitoring tool Ffynnon to evaluate performance against a series of benchmarking standards.

It is these performance mechanisms which play a key role in measuring current performance and in setting aspirational targets and goals for improving the service and output provided by the Communications Team across the council.

An action plan has been developed to support this strategy which sets out key milestones in terms of our service delivery over the next three years. More detailed quarterly planners are developed to steer the team's workload and these are fed into the council's Corporate Management Team and the Cabinet's PDM meeting for consideration each quarter.

A focus on the importance of monitoring and evaluation should be at the heart of all work undertaken by the Communications Unit

## LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The Communications Team and its activities are bound by the Welsh Government's Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity in Wales in both spirit and in letter.

We are also bound by the council's own constitution along with the various policies and procedures adopted by the organisation.

## WHO TO CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION

### **STEVE PUGH (COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER)**

01443 864264

pughs@caerphilly.gov.uk

### **HAYLEY LANCASTER (SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER)**

01443 864380

lancah@caerphilly.gov.uk

**[www.caerphilly.gov.uk](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk)**

**CCBC MEDIA PROTOCOL  
(2019)**

**Introduction:**

Caerphilly County Borough Council has working protocols to support and govern all of its communications and marketing activity – including media relations.

The aim is to promote clearly, honestly and openly the council's services, activities and decisions to key stakeholders and work to position the council accurately and positively, while offering a professional service to local and national media.

**1. Scope**

The Communications and Engagement Strategy 2019-2022 prescribes the values and standards of:

- Openness and honesty in all communications
- The use of plain language
- Effective monitoring of success and reporting back mechanisms
- Ensuring all communications and marketing actions are relevant
- Being innovative and cost effective in all communication and marketing activities
- Creating greater awareness of the council's services through the universal use of the corporate brand
- Helping people to give their views and ideas in ways that are easy for them, and ensure effective feedback mechanisms are in place to inform people how their input affected decisions

The protocol applies to everyone who is employed by Caerphilly County Borough Council in any capacity, or anyone who represents the council in some way, including:

- All council members of all political parties
- All permanent staff and managers, full-time or part-time, at all levels
- Temporary staff or staff employed on an agency or freelance basis
- Staff working for the council on secondments from other organisations or staff jointly appointed with another organisation

## **2. The Protocol**

The Communications Unit will operate, on behalf of the authority, a central corporate media service, both proactive and reactive. It is accepted that councillors with political messages will interact with the media independently, but they will not purport to speak as the corporate voice of the council without liaising with the Communications Unit.

## **3. Media relations – working protocols for staff**

No officer or service area from the council may issue media releases, media statements, organise a press conference or invite the media to a council event without the support and knowledge of the Communications Unit. Neither must they place news announcements on the council's website without clearance from the Communications Unit.

No member of staff should speak to any publication, radio or television station on council matters without the knowledge and guidance of the Communications Unit.

All media enquiries must be routed directly through the Communications Unit. If an officer is contacted directly by a local or national journalist, the protocol is to:

- Take the name of the journalist, the publication they represent and their contact details (telephone number and email address)
- Advise the journalist to contact the Communications Unit in the first instance (by calling 01443 864264/01443 864380) or offer to transfer the call
- Notify the Communications Unit immediately if the call was not transferred and provide the journalist's contact details. The Unit will then contact the journalist directly.

The only exception of this policy is where officers are responding to media or press queries in their capacity as members of professional bodies in relation to their field of work. In this instance, officers are welcome to contact the Communications Unit for advice or assistance.

Officers are also asked to notify the Communications Unit of any issues which may be of future media interest so that appropriate statements can be prepared in advance of any enquiries if necessary.

#### **4. Day to day media contact**

As a matter of course, all media enquiries are to be directed in the first instance to the Communications Manager and/or the Senior Communications Officer for their attention.

Upon receiving a media enquiry, full details of the nature of the request must be recorded, including details of exactly what is requested, the date and time that the request was submitted, the reporter/researcher's contact details and the deadline for responding to the query.

Where these officers are unavailable to receive the request, other members of the Communications Unit will be required to accurately record full details of the enquiry for action at the earliest opportunity.

Reactive statements should be signed off and approved by an appropriate senior officer of the council, preferably by a Head of Service (and/or Cabinet Member if appropriate). Where this isn't possible given time constraints, a reactive statement should be approved by a relevant Service Manager before it is released to the media.

Where enquiries are covered substantially by pre-agreed lines, the Communications Unit need not seek specific clearance before using them.

Where a media statement is requested in response to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request, the statement should be signed off and approved, preferably by the relevant Head of Service, but if this isn't possible due to time constraints, by the relevant Service Manager.

Every effort will be made to meet genuine media deadlines. Officers who are asked by the Communications Unit for assistance in responding to press enquiries should do so without delay to enable media deadlines to be met wherever possible.

#### **5. Accepting media enquiries**

While it is acknowledged, mainly due to the often complex nature of media enquiries, that the majority will be received via email, the way and method that audiences use to correspond is changing.

Media enquiries will also be accepted through the council's corporate digital media accounts only ([www.facebook.com/caerphillycbc](http://www.facebook.com/caerphillycbc) and

[www.twitter.com/caerphillycbc](http://www.twitter.com/caerphillycbc)) during business hours. The response to the enquiry will also be published in the same manner in which the request was received.

While the Communications team will accept media enquiries over the telephone, the team reserve the right to request the enquiry in writing in instances where the query is complex in nature. This will ensure the request is processed promptly, and that the content of the enquiry is fully understood.

As a rule, even when requests are received over the telephone, for openness, transparency and to ensure strong governance, the team will supply a written statement in response to the query.

## **5. Working protocols for members**

It is right that the public should hear what their democratically elected members have to say on political issues and general policy. However, there is an absolute requirement for elected members to distinguish between:

- When they represent the council in speaking to the media
- When they give their personal views, or those of their political parties

When members are representing the council, and commenting on operational or service matters, they must work with the Communications Unit to deliver a full and accurate response. Only statements through the Communications Unit constitute corporate statements, and members should not comment to the media without the facts being provided by the Communications Unit. This is in the public interest and in line with avoiding any potential of the council being brought into disrepute.

No elected member should issue a media release or statement, or organise a press conference, concerning council business or operations without the involvement of the Communications Unit.

All corporate communications activity conducted by the authority is subject to restrictions under law, which prohibits the support of activity which is, or might appear to be, party political.

## **6. Working protocols for the media**

The council does not wish to be involved in any notions of 'spin'. Instead we will concentrate on being open and transparent in promoting council services and how to access them, the democratic process and how to engage in it, and the

council's decisions or plans and what they mean to Caerphilly county borough communities.

The Communications Unit will never knowingly mislead the media, public or staff on any issue. The Unit will work with the media to aim to ensure that any publicity describing the council's policies, aims, decisions and services will be objective, concentrating on facts and explanation, and what the council aims to achieve for the people of the county borough.

The council will not comment on information provided to the media anonymously, or comment on quotes that will not be attributed.

The council will make committee meetings open to the media, and encourage them to attend– offering good facilities for reporting the meeting. In return, the media are not permitted to enter council buildings unless invited to by the council, nor will it invade the privacy of individual staff members. Instead, they will direct their questions to the Communications Unit only.

These protocols and principles are designed to help the media do a demanding job, and the council will seek to provide a professional and responsive service within the framework set out in this document.

## **7. Media release approval process**

The Communications Unit is tasked with producing a high volume of news stories to keep the public and the media informed of council services and initiatives, and to encourage public involvement in decisions.

In managing the communication of issues that are likely to attract public interest, the Communications Unit will also work to inform key stakeholders, including employees, in good time.

The council will operate a corporate approach to media relations. All news releases and statements will be issued through the Communications Unit only.

Media releases concerning day to day council business must be approved by the relevant departmental senior officer before being released to the press or media. Media releases concerning policy or committee decisions should be approved, where possible, by the relevant Head of Service and Cabinet Member, although if this isn't possible due to time constraints, it should be signed off by the author of the report.

In all instances, in media releases where Cabinet Members are quoted, their sign off must be received before the media release is issued. The only exception to this is where express permission is received from the Communications Manager or Senior Communications Officer.

Officers, as a rule, are not quoted in media releases or statements. Instead, any quote will be attributed to the Cabinet Member with the relevant portfolio.

The only exceptions are where it is appropriate to attribute a quote to a member of the Corporate Management Team in certain circumstances, or during the pre-election period, where attributing quotes to politicians is prohibited.

Where media releases are produced in partnership with other agencies, such as Police, Fire, Health, Voluntary Sector or other funders including the Welsh Government, sign off must be received from all parties concerned before the media release or statement is issued.

Media releases will be available to all staff via the Intranet and posted bilingually on the council's external website on the date of publication, wherever possible.

#### **8. Media interviews:**

The Communications Unit will approach the Leader and Cabinet Members in the first instance to respond to media bids for interviews on matters of policy or council business.

The Unit will also identify a number of designated senior officers who will be able to give in depth broadcast and printed media interviews on operational and technical matters.

Structured training may be provided to members to maximise the effectiveness of the council's message delivery.

#### **9. Digital media:**

The last decade has seen a digital revolution, with people now more connected than ever before.

The council continually strives to develop and build new ways of communicating and engaging with its audiences to develop strong, enduring and mutually beneficial relationships.

The council has a Social Media Policy for its staff, adopted in October 2015 and supported by the council's Code of Conduct, which outlines the standards of behaviour required by

employees using social media, both on behalf of the council and in a personal capacity.

Council also adopted a Social Media Protocol for Members in October 2014, which sets out clearly how elected members ought to interact with social media, both as county councillors and private individuals.

This protocol is also supported by national guidance from the Welsh Local Government Association, published in March 2018 titled:

- Social Media – A guide for Councillors (<http://www.wlga.wales/SharedFiles/Download.aspx?pageid=62&mid=665&fileid=344>) and
- Councillors guide – handling online abuse (<http://www.wlga.wales/SharedFiles/Download.aspx?pageid=62&mid=665&fileid=1504>)

## **10. Legal framework:**

A strict legal framework binds publicity or public statements issued by the council, which must operate within the Local Government Act and The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Government Publicity

## **11. Use of Embargoes**

Embargoes will only be used when considered essential:

- When media releases are linked to a launch event
- When an issue of confidentiality requires it
- When it is required by a third party (e.g. an external body announcing funding support).

Embargoes are not legally enforceable and are adhered to by general local agreement.

For more information contact:

**Steve Pugh**  
**Communications Manager**  
**01443 864264**  
**077680 95924**  
**pughs@caerphilly.gov.uk**

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## CABINET – 30<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2019

### PUBLIC INTEREST TEST – EXEMPTION FROM DISCLOSURE OF DOCUMENTS PARAGRAPHS 14 AND 16 OF SCHEDULE 12A LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

**SUBJECT: FUNDING FOR SETTLEMENT OF CONTRACT CLAIM**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM DEPUTY MONITORING OFFICER**

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I have considered grounds for exemption of information contained in the report referred to above and make the following recommendations to the Proper Officer:-

#### **EXEMPTIONS APPLYING TO THE REPORT:**

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) (Paragraph 14).

Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings (Paragraph 16).

#### **FACTORS IN FAVOUR OF DISCLOSURE:**

There is a public interest in the way in which the Council funds and settles contractual claims.

#### **PREJUDICE WHICH WOULD RESULT IF THE INFORMATION WERE DISCLOSED:**

The Report includes legal advice in relation to the settlement of the contract claim. The report also contains detailed information about the financial affairs of a third party and disclosure of such information could breach their right to privacy of their financial business affairs.

#### **MY VIEW ON THE PUBLIC INTEREST TEST IS AS FOLLOWS:**

That paragraphs 14 and 16 should apply.

In relation to paragraph 16, the exemption is absolute and there is no right to require the information is made public.

In relation to paragraph 14, I am mindful of the need to ensure the transparency and accountability of public authorities for decisions taken by them in relation to settlement of contractual claims. However disclosure of the information contained in the report could breach the rights of a third party to privacy in respect of their financial//business affairs.

On that basis I feel that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. Members are asked to consider these factors when determining the public interest test, which they must decide when considering excluding the public from this part of the meeting.

**RECOMMENDED DECISION ON EXEMPTION FROM DISCLOSURE:**

On the basis set out above I feel that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, and that the report should be exempt.

Signed:  Dated: 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019

Post: Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer

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I accept/do not accept the recommendation made above.

Signed:   
Proper Officer

Date: 22/1/19.

# Agenda Item 11

By virtue of paragraph(s) 14, 16 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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