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(Tel: 01443 864267 Email: [houghk@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:houghk@caerphilly.gov.uk))

**Date: 12th September 2018**

Dear Sir/Madam,

A meeting of the **Caerphilly Homes Task Group** will be held in the **Sirhowy Room, Penallta House, Tredomen, Ystrad Mynach** on **Thursday, 20th September, 2018** at **5.00 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda. Councillors and the public wishing to speak on any item can do so by making a request to the Chair. You are also welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, both these requests require a minimum notice period of 3 working days, and a simultaneous translation will be provided if requested.

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

Yours faithfully,

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

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

A greener place Man gwyrddach



- 3 The minutes from the Caerphilly Homes Task Group held on 4th September 2018 will be presented at the next meeting on 1st November 2018.

To receive and consider the following reports and make recommendations to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee: -

- 4 Wellbeing Objective 5: Investment in Council Homes to Transform Lives and Communities - End of Year Report (2017/18). 1 - 18
- 5 WHQS - Acceptable Fails Update. 19 - 32
- 6 Year End Performance Report for Caerphilly Homes. 33 - 54

To receive and note the following information items: -

- 7 Complaints and Representations - Caerphilly Homes. 55 - 64
- 8 To receive any requests for an item to be included on the next available agenda.

**Circulation:**

Task Group Members: Ms L. Pewtner, Mrs D. Moore, Ms M. James, Ms R. Thompson, Mrs Y. Bryant, M. Davies, L. Harding, A. Hussey, Mrs B. A. Jones, Ms S. Jones, L. Phipps, Mrs D. Price, L.G. Whittle and Mr C. Davies,

And Appropriate Officers

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## CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 20TH SEPTEMBER 2018

**SUBJECT: WELLBEING OBJECTIVE 5 : INVESTMENT IN COUNCIL HOMES TO TRANSFORM LIVES AND COMMUNITIES - END OF YEAR REPORT (2017/18)**

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

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group (CHTG) with an update on performance made throughout 2017/18 against Wellbeing Objective, 5 prior to the report being presented to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The purpose of the objective is to utilise the substantial investment made by the Council in its tenants' homes, as part of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) programme, to help transform homes, lives and communities.
- 2.2 This report summaries progress made against the objective during 2017/18. For the reasons outlined in this report, achievement against the Wellbeing Objective has been deemed as **partially successful**.
- 2.3 Further detail on progress made during 2017/18 is provided in Appendix 1.

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 ***The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*** contains 7 well-being goals. When making decisions the act requires public bodies in Wales, including local authorities, to take into account the impact they could have on people living their lives in the future.
- 3.2 ***Improving Lives and Communities: Homes in Wales (Welsh Government, 2010)*** which sets out the national context on meeting housing need, homelessness, and housing-related support services.
- 3.3 ***The Caerphilly We Want (CCBC, 2018-2023) - Well-Being Plan: 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 ***Anti-Poverty Strategy (CCBC)***, which sets out a range of priorities to tackle poverty in the borough.

#### 4. THE REPORT

4.1 Welsh Government is committed to ensuring that all social housing is brought up to the WHQS. The Council is required to ensure that the housing stock meets the WHQS by the end of December 2020.

4.2 The WHQS guidance document requires all social landlords to ensure that it's properties are:-

- in a good state of repair
- adequately heated and insulated
- safe and secure
- contain up to date kitchens and bathrooms
- well managed
- located in attractive and safe environments
- suit the specific needs of the household.

Whilst each of the above items could contribute directly towards improving the health, safety and wellbeing of the household, there are other aspects of the programme that also contribute towards this objective

4.3 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 £150m and is projecting to invest over £220m by the end of the programme. This investment has resulted in the creation of 43 permanent jobs, 58 apprentices and 44 work placement opportunities, as well as supporting and providing expansion opportunities to local businesses.

4.4 The Council has adopted a 'phased block of works' approach to the delivery of the WHQS programme. This has entailed internal and external works being undertaken separately, which has meant that 'whole home compliance' was not anticipated to be significant until the latter part of the programme but is now beginning to be realised. Although some slippage has been experienced with the external works element, the achievement of the standard is on target to be delivered by the 2020 deadline.

4.5 The works undertaken to deliver this objective have helped to improve lives and communities by improving standards and conditions of our housing stock, which in itself will improve the safety, health and wellbeing of our tenants. At the end of March 2018, 73% of properties were compliant in relation to internal work and 46% for external work. Overall compliance was 35%. These figures changed from those reported previously following the completion of a validation exercise.

4.6 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. This work contributes to health and wellbeing improvements and towards addressing fuel poverty.

4.7 Part 6 of the WHQS requires all homes to be located in attractive and safe environments and the Council plans to invest circa £10.6m on a range of environmental improvements. This aspect of the programme is being approached in two distinct phases: phase 1- identifying minor repair and improvement works and phase 2 - carrying out an extensive community engagement exercise to identify further improvements. Works typically include improvements to communal steps, paths, fencing, walls, lighting, parking, but also can provide play areas/equipment, as well as supporting local community projects, and assisting to address problems relating to anti-social behaviour.

- 4.8 Part 7 of the WHQS requires that the accommodation provided should, as far as possible, suit the needs of the household, e.g. specific disabilities. To fulfil this requirement the Council has delivered a range of adaptations to tenants' homes, where a need has been assessed, to help promote independent living. This has included the installation of handrails, access ramps, disabled kitchens, walk in showers and 25 automatic door installations at our sheltered housing schemes. The Council has also worked with the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) regarding provisions to assist those tenants with a visual impairment. At the end of March 2018 1,713 adaptations had been provided through the WHQS programme in addition to approximately 4,916 adaptations provided to tenants by the Adaptations Team within Private Sector Housing.
- 4.9 The Council has proactively monitored tenant satisfaction levels since the start of the WHQS programme. Our data shows that tenants are generally happy with internal works (86%) and to a lesser extent for external works (70%).
- 4.10 The delivery of the WHQS programme remains challenging but is clearly making a significant contribution towards the successful achievement of this Wellbeing Objective. The programme continues to be financially viable, with the possibility of some additional borrowing being required towards the end of the programme. New arrangements introduced during 2017/18 means that the Council is well placed to deliver the WHQS programme in full by the 2020 deadline, with the substantial investment made helping to transform lives and communities.
- 4.11 In 2017, the Wales Audit Office completed a review of the Council's WHQS programme and made a series of recommendations, which have been addressed by the Council and contributed towards the programme delivery.

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

- 5.1 The summary of performance outlined in Section 4 and the detailed information provided in Appendix 1 demonstrates the positive contribution made by the Council, through the delivery of the WHQS programme, towards 6 of the 7 wellbeing goals:
- 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 equality impact assessment is not required as the report is for information purposes only.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no financial implications to this report, although, there may have been in respect of the individual actions undertaken to achieve the key priorities outlined in section 4.

## **8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no personnel implications to this report, although, there may have been in respect of the individual actions undertaken to achieve the key priorities outlined in section 4.

## **9. CONSULTATIONS**

9.1 The result of all consultations has been incorporated into this report.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 CHTG are asked to provide their views on the recommendations set out below, prior to the report being presented to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

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

10.3 Members are asked to determine if they agree that achievement against the Wellbeing Objective is deemed as “partially successful”.

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

11.1 Performance management scrutiny affords members the opportunity to challenge, inform and shape the future performance of the housing service.

## **12. STATUTORY POWER**

12.1 Local Government Measure 2009.

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Consultees: Cllr Lisa Phipps, Cabinet Member for Homes & Places  
Dave Street, Director of Social Services & Housing  
Shaun Couzens, Chief Housing Officer  
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer  
Paul Smythe, Housing Technical Manager  
Fiona Wilkins, Public Sector Housing Manager  
Claire Davies, Interim Private Sector Housing Manager  
Sue Cousins, Principal Housing Officer  
Lesley Allen, Principal Accountant (Caerphilly Homes)  
Rhys Lewis, Systems & Performance Manager  
Ros Roberts, Performance Manager  
Ian Raymond, Performance Management Officer

Appendices:

Appendix 1: End of Year Report - Wellbeing Objective 5: Investment in Council Homes to Transform Lives and Communities (2017/18)

## Wellbeing Objective 5 - Investment in Council Homes to Transform Lives and Communities

### End of Year Report 2017/18

#### In summary:

- Caerphilly Homes continues making good progress with its investment programme to deliver the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) across all its homes by the end of December 2020, having invested £152m since the start of the programme.
- The capital investment in homes has been used to support local businesses and create training and employment opportunities in the borough to help people back into work.
- Due to the complexity of home improvement works required, the programme is being delivered in a 'phased block of works' approach, (internal and external works being undertaken separately) which does not target 'whole home units' in one go, and so, did not deliver 'whole home compliance' in the early programme years. As this method of works progresses and overlaps (area by area), there will be an incremental (noticeable) increase in 'whole home unit compliance' as we approach the latter years of the programme.
- The delivery of the internal works element of the WHQS programme has progressed well despite the loss of one of our main contractors and is on target for completion by the 2020 deadline.
- The delivery of external works element of the WHQS programme has experienced slippage over the previous 3 years due to a number of challenges; however, significant improvements have been made during 2017/18 including the introduction of a DPS (Dynamic Purchasing System). Based on current performance, again this is on target for completion by the 2020 deadline.
- In order to meet Part 6, the Council commenced the WHQS environmental programme in 2016 and intends to invest circa. £10.6m in the ensuring that its homes are located in attractive and safe environments. Phase 1, which involved identifying minor repair and improvement works across the borough that have been completed. An extensive community engagement programme is currently underway to identify improvements that will be delivered as part of Phase 2 with many projects agreed and progressing.
- Part 7 of the WHQS requires the Council to ensure that 'as far as possible, improvements are undertaken to suit the specific requirements of the household'. In order to ensure compliance and meet the aspiration to transform lives and communities the Council has delivered a portfolio of adaptations as part of its improvement works thereby ensuring that people are able to remain independent in their homes for

longer. In some cases, this has involved simply the installation of handrails and in others it has involved the installation of ramps, disabled kitchens, walk in showers and RNIB provisions to assist those with a visual impairment. We have also completed 25 automatic door installations at our sheltered housing schemes.

- Tenant satisfaction for internal works continues to be good.
- Tenant satisfaction with external works has been below what is expected, however, this is currently under review.
- The programme continues to be financially viable, with some borrowing likely to be required towards the end of the programme.
- In 2017, the Wales Audit Office completed a programme review and submitted a series of recommendations to the Council, which have been addressed to improve programme delivery.
- The programme remains challenging, but improved progress throughout 2017/18 (with some new arrangements introduced to ensure momentum) has put the Council in a good position to deliver the WHQS programme in full by 2020.

Page 9 As of the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018, Council housing stock totalled 10,801 homes.

The WHQS investment programme has improved living conditions by making properties weathertight, improved heating, improved safety within the home through changes to layout, new energy efficient heating, electrical rewiring, improved accessibility, energy efficiency through additional insulation measures, external improvements, all contributing to improved health and wellbeing.

During the period covered by this report it has been assessed that achievement against the Well-being Objective is deemed to be **partially successful**.



## Action Plan for 2017/18

| <b>Service Area:</b>           |  | <b>Caerphilly Homes</b>  |   |  | <b>Long term priority.</b>   |
|--------------------------------|--|--|---|--|--|
| <b>A – Priority objective:</b> |  | <b>1. WO 5 - Investment in council homes to transform lives and communities.</b> |   |  |  |
| <b>B</b>                       | <b>Key Actions / Tasks</b>   | <b>Owner &amp; Completion Date</b>   | <b>Additional resource required?</b>  | <b>Success Criteria</b>                  | <b>Progress update (March 2018)</b>  |
| Page 7<br>1.                   | Delivery of the 2017/18 capital investment programme in respect of internal and external repairs and improvements. | WHQS senior management<br>March 2018   | A capital programme of £53.5m for 2017/18 was set.<br><br>Additional resource in relation to sheltered schemes was approved and recruitments made as and when required during the year. | Targets set for 2017/18 outputs are met. | Commitments were made to deliver 75% of internal properties and 40% of external properties being compliant to WHQS. Whilst it was originally determined that these commitments had been exceeded by the 31/03/18, since that time a new validation process has determined that we had fallen just short of the internal target, with only 73% of properties being compliant but exceeded the external target with 46% being made. Overall WHQS compliance 35%. No borrowing was required this year with expenditure being £42m which is lower than the budget but exceeds all previous annual expenditure and demonstrates the increase in momentum during 2017/18. The business plan therefore remains financially viable and the target for completion of the WHQS programme in full by 2020 continues to be achievable. |

|  |   |                         |   |   |  |
|--|---|-------------------------|---|---|--|
|  | <p>Enforcement of standards set out in the Charter for Trust by both the in house work force and contractors.</p> | <p>Project managers</p> | <p>Due to increase in workload COW and TLO resource was reviewed.</p> | <p>In house work force and contractors undertaking good quality work in an efficient and courteous manner. Satisfactory response to customer satisfaction survey.</p> | <p>This programme is driven and delivered in context with/by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WHQS Programme Criteria</li> <li>- WHQS Compliance Policy</li> <li>- WHQS Strategy/Action Plan</li> <li>- Tenant Communication Strategy</li> <li>- Focus on Delivery Charter</li> <li>- Charter for Trust Standards</li> <li>- Contract terms and conditions</li> </ul> <p>The contents of which 'sets the conditions for aspiration' and 'standards' of eventual works completions.</p> <p>Contractors and workforce regularly made aware of requirements and results are monitored through surveys, completions of work sign-off and tenant satisfaction.</p> <p>The Charter ensures that works completed to tenant's homes will be undertaken with respect and to give confidence. Some issues have been experienced with external contractors and their sub contractors in particular, as communication of the Charter for Trust through the whole supply chain appears to be inconsistent. Issues however have been reinforced when identified and emphasis raised at all pre-contract meetings.</p> |
|--|---|-------------------------|---|---|--|

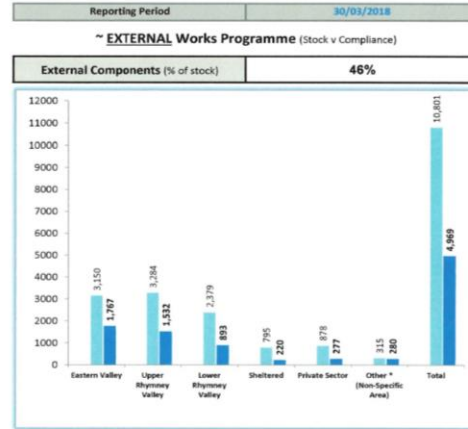
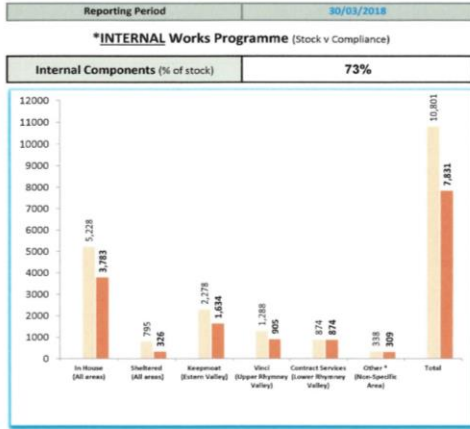
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|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|---|---|
| <p>3.</p> <p>Page 9</p> | <p>Delivery of a customer focussed programme with high levels of satisfaction.</p> | <p>Project managers</p> | <p>Due to increase in workload COW and TLO resource has been reviewed.</p> | <p>Satisfactory response to customer satisfaction survey, low number of complaints, which are mainly resolved quickly to satisfaction of complainant.</p> | <p>All works are delivered post survey and tenant notification. For internal elements agreed appointment/works are then discussed with the tenant and timetabled accordingly. Tenants are offered an element of choice on various products and letters confirming the scope of works and their choices are also sent to tenants, who are also provided with a period of time to reconsider. Notification letters sent to tenants in advance of external works provide a brief overview of the likely scope of works. Following feedback from tenants these letters are in the process of being reviewed.</p> <p>Compliments and complaints are regularly monitored, acted upon and recorded appropriately.</p> <p>An external works survey questionnaire has been fully implemented in a similar way to the existing internal survey.</p> <p>See customer satisfaction levels reported below.</p> |
|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|---|---|

|                          |  |  |  |  |  |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| <p>4.</p> <p>Page 10</p> | <p>To meet the requirements of Part 7 of WHQS by undertaking adaptations where these are identified.</p> | <p>Project managers advised by OT officers</p> | <p>A temporary increase in OT resource was introduced for 2017/18 to address additional OT assessments identified.</p> <p>The team is currently operating with only one surveyor with other surveyors being utilised as and when required.</p> | <p>Improved quality of life for tenants.</p> | <p>Prior to the recommendation of adaptation improvement works, an individual OT assessment is undertaken in order to identify the specific needs of the household. This applies to both the internal and external works programme.</p> <p>Where feasible, any approved, adaptations are built into the WHQS programme. In addition, further adaptations are provided through our private housing team following referrals from Social Services or as a result of direct referrals via the OT to CCBC Social Services.</p> <p>1,713 adaptations completed to date (within programme period); with approximately 4,916 adaptations provided to tenants by the Adaptations Team within Private Sector Housing.</p> |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|

|  |  |   |   |   |  |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|
|  | <p>Implement the environmental improvements to meet part 6 of the standard of attractive and safe communities.</p> | <p>Strategic Coordination Manager and environmental officers.</p> | <p>Resources in place. Additional consultancy support being provided for detailed scheme designs and feasibility.</p> | <p>The local environment within which tenants live is improved aesthetically and provides a safer community in which to live.</p> | <p>Campaign Publication Aug/Sept 2017:</p> <p>Communities throughout the borough are being asked to give ideas to improve their local area through a series of 'Shape Your Place' consultation events.</p> <p>The WHQS Environmental Programme is being supported by a £10.6m budget for council estates throughout the borough. Environmental officers, our partners, contractors and citizens are currently actively engaging to consider improvement opportunities and a series of events and online surveys online surveys created in order to seek views regarding environmental improvements.</p> <p>A series of clean-ups, new signage, improved amenities, communal bin storage facilities and additional parking spaces have already been completed in some communities.</p> <p>The WHQS Project Board have approved a number of major schemes which, will be integrated into existing programmes of work during 2018/19 for delivery. Engagement events are ongoing to identify projects throughout the county borough, which will be implemented between now and 2020. Major schemes have been approved in Nelson, Phillipstown, Penyrheol and Ty Sign.</p> |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|

|    |   |  |   |   |  |
|----|---|--|---|---|--|
| 6. | Identification and pursuit of external funding opportunities to support energy efficiency measures. | Project Manager and Strategic Coordination Manager | Re-allocation of workloads and joint working between the WHQS and Private Sector Housing teams. | Additional grant income awarded to undertake energy efficiency improvements to the housing stock which will assist with fuel poverty. | <p>Additional VVP funding was secured to increase the energy efficiency of private homes within Lansbury Park, resulting in a total VVP WG investment of £680,000 by March 2018. £1.4m has also been committed via the ARBED programme to deliver energy efficiency works.</p> <p>ARBED related works in Lansbury Park are being delivered by contractors – E.On and SERS.</p> |
|----|---|--|---|---|--|

**WHQS - STRATEGIC SCORECARD - LEVELS OF COMPLIANCE**  
(Standards Met - by Number of Properties)



**Financial Programme**

|                   | 12/13  | 13/14  | 14/15  | 15/16   | 16/17   | 17/18   | 18/19 Projected | 19/20 Projected | 2020 Projected |
|-------------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Budget (E ,000's) | 19,100 | 48,320 | 77,990 | 107,660 | 136,880 | 186,100 | 195,820         | 220,000         |                |
| Actual Spend      | 19,057 | 33,707 | 49,051 | 77,683  | 109,061 | 152,165 | 207,968         | 254,938         |                |
| Balance           | A3     | 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.

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

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

**External Works:** There are 10 main elements - Boundary walls, Doors, Drainage works, Fences/Railings/Gates, Curtilage works, Paths/Drives, Roofs, Stores/Sheds/Out buildings, 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

**Notes.**

Work schedules are delivered in a 'phased' (blocks of work) approach across each of the reported and distributed work areas and types of work (Int/Ext). The bar chart 'Targets' are Total Stock Values and the 'Results' are accumulative, as at the time of the Period Reporting Dates. Delivered works are reported by surveyors/contractors upon 'property compliance' (not upon compliance of individual components of work). The results reported above include 'Acceptable Fails'. The charts on this page excludes any works undertaken to leasehold properties.

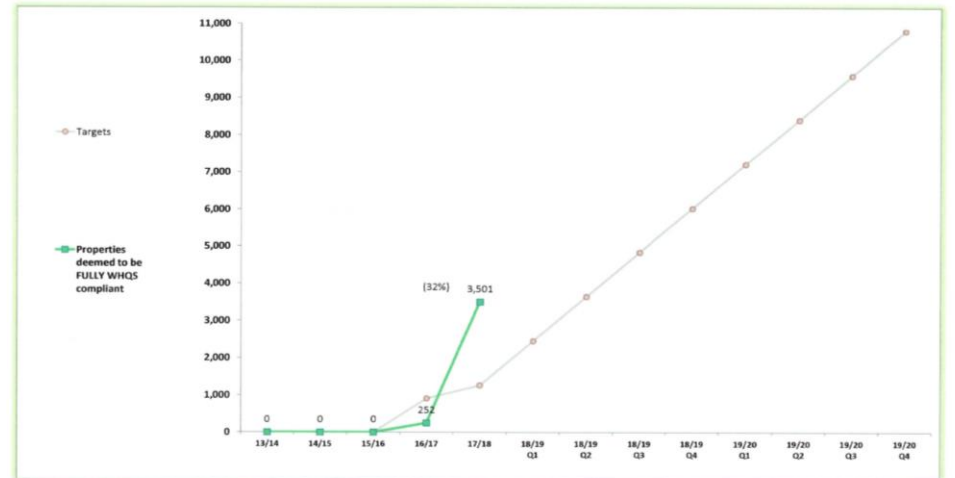
Tenant Satisfaction - shows a '% value' and a 'colour status' based on survey results attained and then compared to the following range;


Red = <= 50% (Needs urgent intervention)  
 Amber = > 50.1% < 79.9% (Needs close monitoring and some intervention)  
 Green = >= 80% (Acceptable)

**Internal Properties**  
 Acceptable fails on internal elements can be broken down as follows. These are based on surveyed properties as a percentage of total stock.  
 Number of properties with one element as an acceptable fail - 9% - 931 properties  
 Number of properties with two elements as an acceptable fail - 4% - 410 properties  
 Number of properties with three elements as an acceptable fail - 3% - 278 properties

*There are only 3 of the 4 elements (Kitchen, bathroom and heating) that can be included as an acceptable fail. Electrics will never form an acceptable fail due to our statutory duty to comply with health and safety regulations.*

**WHQS - Properties fully compliant (total stock)**



|  | <b>How quickly we do internal home improvements</b>   | <b>How quickly we carry out external home improvements</b>  |
|--|---|---|
|  | <p>The chart above shows the timetabling and delivery or compliance for <b>internal</b> property works, which has progressed generally well against the Authority's planned profile for improvements.</p> <p>Core components being: Kitchens, Bathrooms, Boilers and Central Heating, Electrical Systems (wiring), Mains - Smoke Detectors.</p> <p>This has been reflected in the level of customer satisfaction rates noted below.</p> | <p>The chart above shows the timetabling and delivery of <b>external</b> works which has achieved slow progress in previous years when compared to our planned profile but a stepped change is evident for 2017/18.</p> <p>Core components being: Roofs, Walls, Windows, External Doors, Insulation, Paths/Fences)</p> <p>This programme has experienced slippage, due to delays in putting satisfactory procurement arrangements in place, lack of contractor resources and inclement weather.</p> |
|  | <b>The tenant satisfaction levels of work done</b>  |    |
|  | <b>Internal Works – 86%</b>   | <b>External Works – 70% (small sample)</b>  |
| Very Satisfied   | 59%   | 42%   |
| Satisfied  | 27%   | 28%   |
| Neither  | 6%  | 6%  |
| Dissatisfied   | 3%  | 12%   |
| Very Dissatisfied  | 5%  | 12%   |
| <b>Overall Satisfaction (Very Satisfied + Satisfied)</b> | <b>86%</b>  | <b>70%</b>  |



## **Homes 'specifically adapted' as part of WHQS works to meet specific needs of household.**

A key element of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard is the requirement (Part 7) to deliver adaptations where appropriate in order to ensure that Council homes meet the individual needs of the occupants. As a consequence where a tenant advises that they have a diagnosed medical condition or experiencing difficulties with sight or mobility an OT (Occupational therapy) assessment will be undertaken by a qualified occupational therapist. The assessment will, if appropriate, include recommendations to the project managers on what adaptations should be undertaken in order to meet the needs of individuals within the household and ensure compliance with Part 7. Since the start of the programme in July 2013, 1,713 properties have received internal adaptations. These can range from handrails and relatively minor works to full kitchens especially adapted for wheelchair users, walk in showers, ramps and RNIB Visually Better kitchens and bathrooms for tenants with a visual impairment. We have also carried out 25 automatic door installations at our sheltered housing schemes. These improvements which are made as an integral part of the programme are helping tenants remain independently in their homes for longer and are thereby reducing the demand for social care. It is also resulting in a decrease in the number of adaptations requested via the Private Housing Service and Social Services.

## **Community Benefits**

In addition, the delivery of the WHQS programme and its ambition to transform lives and communities has led to the integration of community benefit targets into the supply partner and internal works contracts. To date, a total of 43 permanent, fulltime opportunities have been created as a result of the Council's WHQS investment in homes (this excludes 34 that were created by Contract Services (who are no longer operating) in the initial stage of the programme). 58 apprenticeships together with 44 work placement opportunities have been created by the Council and its supply partner / internal works contractors. There is room for improvement and more targets are anticipated to be delivered between now and 2020 as a result of the closer alignment between the programme targets and the WG funded Communities 4 Work, Communities 4 Work Plus and Legacy programmes delivered in house. A greater alignment will ensure that those who are furthest removed from the labour market are provided with the support and mentoring required to take advantage of any opportunities created as a consequence of the investment in tenants homes being made by the Council.

**This objective shows commitment/contribution to the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 by:**

| <b>Goal:</b>                              | <b>Comment</b>  |
|---|---|
| <b>Prosperous</b>                         | Due to the scale of this programme, it will be a substantial boost to the local economy including the creation of jobs, apprenticeships and training opportunities. The money spent improving homes, should be a catalyst to wider regeneration, improving lives and communities.   |
| <b>Resilient</b>                          | By addressing the physical environment infrastructure (homes and communities) to improve their conditions and ensure they are fit-for-purpose, enabling opportunities to change, allows for due regard to the wider aspects of being able to cope now and adapt to change in the future.  |
| <b>Healthier</b>                          | The main intention of this objective, other than improving homes, is to prevent further deterioration in the housing stock, which can adversely affect the health and wellbeing of the tenants.   |
| <b>More equal</b>                         | The long-term affordability of housing, effects of low incomes, fuel poverty and improving the quality of housing in the social sectors, are some of the main challenges existing in borough. Through delivery of this objective, the investments to local homes and communities (raising standards and quality) should help address poverty, health, and wellbeing in-equalities (living conditions, options, affordability, health and access to services). |
| <b>Cohesive Communities</b>               | This objective also contributes to the Welsh Government's own current objectives:<br>7. Connect communities through sustainable and resilient infrastructure and<br>9. Improve access to secure, safe, efficient and affordable homes.  |
| <b>Globally Responsible</b>               | Part of this programme has been to give due regard for the logistics and supplies of materials and contractors when arranging programmes of work, minimising the likely effects caused by production, transportation, actual developments/home improvements and disposal of waste – minimising the impact on our environment and climate.   |
| <b>Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language</b> | Not applicable  |

| <b>Working:</b>   | <b>Comment</b>   |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>Long-term</b>  | Through continued investment and improvements to both the internal and external environments of our social housing stock and specialised adaptations in accordance with the needs of some of our tenants, the achievements delivered, particularly through the WHQS programme, provides long-term improvements to the property, community and to the tenants' health and well-being. |
| <b>Prevention</b> | The works undertaken to deliver this objective, has helped to improve lives and communities and also helped tackle local unemployment through employee and contractor arrangements. Work completions within this objective, has also further improved the look and feel of the environment and helps prevent anti-social behaviour.  |

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
|                      | Improving standards and quality of the housing stock now, also aids future programmed maintenance and potentially reduce reactive maintenance schedules.   |
| <b>Involvement</b>   | Through an established governance and performance framework, tenants and local residents are consulted on the proposed property improvements and environmental works along with various initiatives, and are periodically informed of progress as part of the WHQS programme and objective delivery.   |
| <b>Collaboration</b> | 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. |
| <b>Integration</b>   | 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.  |

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## CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 20TH SEPTEMBER 2018

**SUBJECT: WHQS – ACCEPTABLE FAILS UPDATE**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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

- 1.1 To provide members with information on the application and volume of Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) elements classified as “Acceptable Fails”, and
- 1.2 To also explain the process for managing incidences of No Access on the programme for the surveying of properties and the completion of works on site, prior to presentation to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The WHQS is intended to ensure that all local authority and housing association homes are improved and maintained to achieve specified standards.
- 2.2 The WHQS guidance document also recognises that it may not be possible to bring all elements within a property up to the required standard. Such elements can be recorded as “acceptable fails”. This report provides details on the individual classification of acceptable fails and volumes of those for both internal and external elements.
- 2.3 Whilst the Council’s main WHQS programme commenced following the ballot on housing stock transfer in 2012, a number of properties benefitted from improvements prior to this date which met the standard. In addition, elements have also been renewed outside of the main WHQS programme by our Housing Repairs Operations team, either as a response repair or when a property became void. Any elements which met the standard separately to the main programme, therefore will be reassessed and if still in a satisfactory condition, are classed as “previously achieved”, and recorded as being compliant.
- 2.4 This report provides members with clarification on the Council’s application of previously achieved and acceptable fail elements and the impact they are having on the programme, the report also confirms the process followed where access cannot be obtained into properties.

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

- 3.1 The delivery of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) programme is coterminous with the aims of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 which requires public bodies to work towards a shared vision comprising 7 goals and adopt 5 “Ways of Working”. The 7 goals and the 5 Ways of Working will underpin the delivery of the programme and include planning and acting for the long term, integration, involvement, collaboration and prevention.

- 3.2 The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) is intended to ensure that all local authority and housing association homes are improved and maintained to achieve specified standards. It is a Welsh Government requirement that the WHQS is achieved by 2020. The WHQS identifies 7 specific aims (Welsh Assembly) Government – Revised Guidance for Social Landlords – July 2008.
- 3.3 The Caerphilly Delivers - Single Integrated Plan 2013-2017 had a priority to “improve standards of housing and communities, giving appropriate access to services across the County Borough”.
- 3.4 Caerphilly County Borough Council 2013/17 Corporate Priorities included: CP7 - Invest in our Council homes and their communities to transform lives.
- 3.5 Caerphilly County Borough Council’s Well-being Objectives in 2017/18 included: WBO5 – Investment in Council homes to transform lives and communities.

#### **4. THE REPORT**

- 4.1 The Council has a housing stock of 10,775 properties and is investing approximately £220m in bringing homes up to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by 2020. At the end of July 2018 77% of properties were compliant in relation to internal works and 53% compliant for external works. Overall 41% of properties are WHQS compliant.
- 4.2 The delivery of the programme is following the WHQS revised guidance document (2008) issued by Welsh Government. Whilst the aim of WG is to bring all social homes in Wales up to the specified standard, the guidance document recognises that this may not be possible for all elements of work in all properties.

##### **Acceptable Fails**

- 4.3 Section 8 assessment of the guidance document sets out the use of “acceptable fail” criteria for individual elements of work within the standard. Furthermore, it states that an “acceptable fail” is only possible on individual elements and not the dwelling as a whole. In reality it is extremely unlikely that a whole property would be classed as an acceptable fail, as each property would be expected to receive an element of internal or external work.
- 4.4 An acceptable fail may only be used in one or a combination of the following:-
  - a) Cost of remedy
  - b) Timing of remedy
  - c) Residents choice
  - d) Physical constraint

##### **Cost and Timing of Remedy**

- 4.5 The landlord may deem it necessary to consider the cost effectiveness of some works such as undertaking structural changes to the property in order to enlarge living spaces/kitchen, or major civil engineering works to create the required level access areas to gardens. Due to the extent of work required, consideration may also be given to delaying the work for a more suitable time to undertake major improvements, e.g. when the property becomes void. The tenant’s circumstances will also be taken into account, e.g. where a tenant has significant health issues, the work may be delayed by mutual agreement.

##### **Residents Choice**

- 4.6 From the outset of the programme, tenant’s choice was a key factor for its successful delivery. Therefore, as part of this choice, if a tenant did not wish to have an element of work undertaken which did not compromise their health and safety, this would be recorded as an acceptable fail. In line with the guidance document, any element of work not carried out due to resident’s choice, would be addressed if/when the property became void.

## **Physical Constraint**

- 4.7 Due to the age, layout and location of some of the Council's housing stock, the standard may be unable to be fully met due to physical constraints e.g. the kitchen may be too small to achieve the required storage capacity, a garden may not lend itself to providing the required level amenity area due to its topography.
- 4.8 The Council is required to report on acceptable fails to WG on an annual basis and also submit its WHQS Compliance Policy which is reviewed on an annual basis. The Compliance Policy sets out how Caerphilly Homes is interpreting and applying the WHQS standard to ensure the principles of the guidance document are being adhered to.
- 4.9 It needs to be acknowledged, however, that whilst an element may be classified as an acceptable fail, a property may still have benefitted from other component improvements which were completed to the required standard. Also, even though an element may be classified as an acceptable fail, partial works or a complete renewal may have been carried out, but the standard may not have been achievable, e.g. a property may have benefitted from a complete new kitchen, but it may not achieve the required storage capacity.
- 4.10 Appendix 1 provides a detailed breakdown of the number of acceptable fails, recorded since the commencement of the programme. The information and process for recording acceptable fails will also be reviewed independently by our Internal Audit Service this financial year as a means of validating the data. Clearly the situation is constantly changing as we progress with the delivery of the programme and also as a result of tenants' circumstances and properties becoming void. The number of acceptable fails recorded for external works is lower than internals due to less properties having been completed and also as a result of such works not being affected by the 'resident choice' classification.

## **Previously Achieved**

- 4.11 Prior to the commencement of the main WHQS programme in 2014 a significant number of improvements were undertaken to properties which were to the WHQS standard by the Planned Maintenance scheme. Such works included bathrooms, kitchens, heating, electrical rewires, roofing, doors and windows, etc. In addition, individual elements/components are being renewed outside of the main programme by HRO either as a response repair or when the property becomes void.
- 4.12 These individual elements/components are being reassessed as part of our main programme, and this has determined that some meet the standard with no work being required. These elements are recorded as previously achieved and contribute to our overall compliance reports.
- 4.13 There are also instances where an element/component is in good condition, but may fall short of meeting the standard. This can be rectified by carrying out partial works, e.g. rather than fit a full heating system, a boiler only may be required. Also a kitchen may be in good condition but may fall short of meeting the standard due to the lack of storage capacity. This may be overcome by fitting the required number of additional kitchen units. Where such works are undertaken, these are recorded as physically completed properties and not "previously achieved" and also contribute towards our overall compliance.
- 4.14 Appendix 2 provides information on the numbers and types of work items which have been classed as "previously achieved", which is based on properties surveyed to date and information currently recorded within our asset management database.

## **No Access**

- 4.15 It is important that all attempts at gaining access to properties is undertaken to ensure the required works are completed in order that the maximum amount of properties meet the requirements of the WHQS. In the process of arranging for the WHQS works, tenants will receive a combination of various officer visits, e.g. TLO, Building Surveyor, Heating Surveyor, Electrical Surveyor, as well as letters and text messages.

- 4.16 Tenants have the choice to opt out of the improvement programme in relation to improvements to their kitchens, bathroom and heating system where these elements will be treated as an acceptable fail. However there is no option of refusing to upgrade the electrical installation within the property on the basis of health and safety. Access to every property is therefore essential to undertake a survey to establish if electrical works are required even though it is recognised that the majority of tenants allow access.
- 4.17 There are two stages of the Electrical No Access procedure, the first stage is for the surveying of the property and the second stage is for the completion of works on site. Both stages were initially reviewed in March 2018, were implemented in July 2018, and now incorporate a recharge for a missed appointment along with the issuing of a Notice Seeking Possession (NOSP) for any non compliance (See Appendix 3 No Access Procedure). At the time of writing this report there are approximately 390 properties being dealt with through the Electrical No Access procedure which equates to approximately four percent of the housing stock.

## 5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 5.1 The delivery of the WHQS improvement programme is coterminous with the aims of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) act 2015, in particular the 5 ways of working:-
- **Long Term:** the report includes continued investment and performance to achieve WHQS by 2020. This investment provides long term improvements to the property, community and to the tenants' health and wellbeing.
  - **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.
  - **Involvement:** Tenants and local residents are being consulted on the proposed property improvements and environmental works along with various initiatives that are part of the WHQS programme delivery.
  - **Collaboration:** The programme delivery is focused on internal collaboration, wider partnership arrangements with suppliers and contractors, joint working with the community and various other groups. The delivery of community benefits and tenant engagement by all involved with the WHQS programme is a key focus and is clearly demonstrable within its delivery.
  - **Prevention:** The works to improve lives and communities will help tackle local unemployment. It will further improve the look and feel of the environment and help prevent anti-social behaviour. Improving standards and quality, will aid future programmed maintenance and potentially reduce reactive maintenance schedules.

## 6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

## 7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The total expenditure on the WHQS capital programme for 2017/18 was £42.2m, of which £18m related to internal works and £17.5m related to external works, the remainder of the spend was in relation to fees, large scale voids, adaptations and garages. £32.1m of this spend was funded from the HRA as a revenue contribution. A further £7.3m was funded from Welsh Government in the annual Major Repairs Allowance (MRA), and £2.7m was received in environmental grants from Arbed and VVP.



- 7.2 Whilst forecasting future costs, historical information on previously achieved, partial works, and refusals are incorporated within the average cost for each internal element. These costs are fed into the business plan that is submitted to WG annually.
- 7.3 There has been no borrowing undertaken for the WHQS programme to date.
- 7.4 The 2017/18 HRA business plan was approved by WG in May 2017 as part of the annual MRA application, which evidences that the WHQS programme is financially viable and borrowing will not be required until 2018/19. As an update the 2018/19 business plan has also been submitted and approved by WG in July 2018 with a proposed programme of some £55.8m

## **8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The timetable pressure is increasing and there has to be the capacity within the staff resources to cope with the volume of work. Staff movement and recruitment difficulties remain a risk to the programme and have continued to be an issue during 2017/18.
- 8.2 Continued close management and monitoring of performance of the programme is essential to ensure that its delivery is not compromised in any way. The workload for the in-house team is increasing due to the sheltered housing schemes commencing and there is the possibility of them undertaking some of the work previously planned for Contract Services. Additional resources will be required to ensure performance in achieving the objective is maintained.

## **9. CONSULTATIONS**

- 9.1 All responses from consultations have been incorporated in the report

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 Members are asked to note the content of the report, prior to presentation to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

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

- 11.1 To advise Members of the application and volume of WHQS elements classified as “acceptable fails” or “previously achieved” along with explaining the process for managing No Access on the programme.

## **12. STATUTORY POWER**

- 12.1 Housing Acts 1985, 1996, 2004, Local Government Measures 2009 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

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Consultees:

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Cllr L Phipps      | - Cabinet Member for Homes and Places         |
| Dave Street        | - Director of Social Services and Housing     |
| Shaun Couzens      | - Chief Housing Officer                       |
| Robert Tranter     | - Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer |
| Jane Roberts-Waite | - Strategic Co-ordination Manager             |
| Fiona Wilkins      | - Public Sector Housing Manager               |
| Lesley Allen       | - Principal Accountant, Caerphilly Homes      |

|              |                                   |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| Rhys Lewis   | - Performance and Systems Manager |
| Ros Roberts  | - Performance Manager             |
| Ian Raymond  | - Performance Management Officer  |
| Alan Edmunds | - WHQS Project Manager            |
| Steve Greedy | - WHQS Project Manager            |
| Colin Roden  | - WHQS Project Manager            |

Background Papers:

Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)

WHQS Compliance Policy

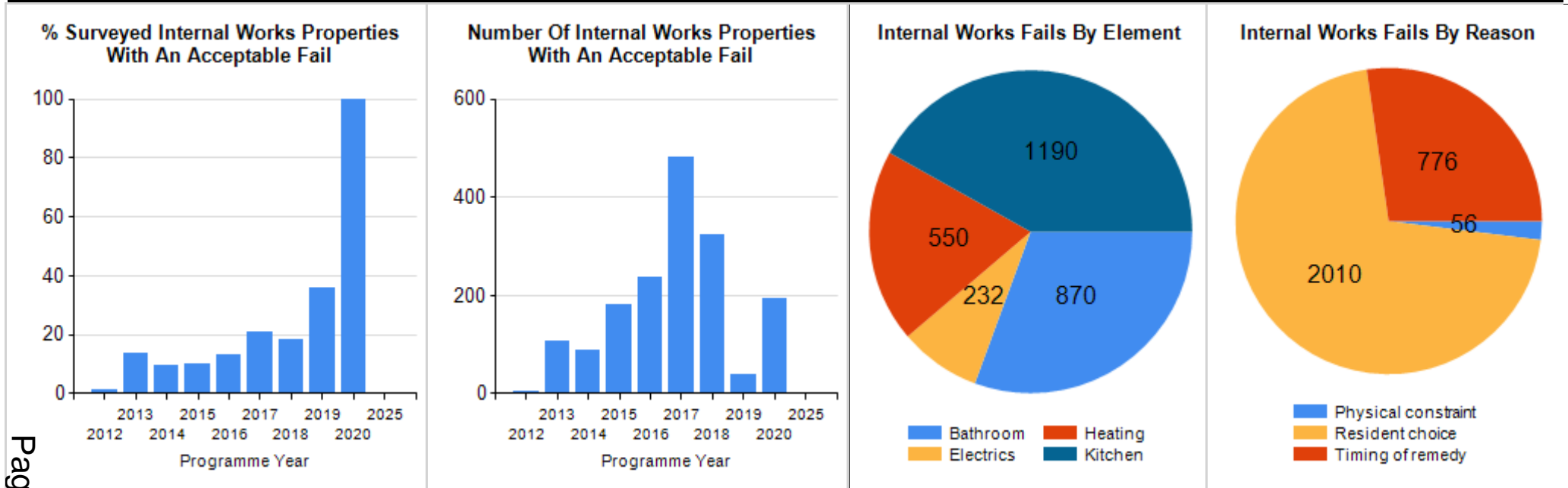
Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Acceptable Fails Data

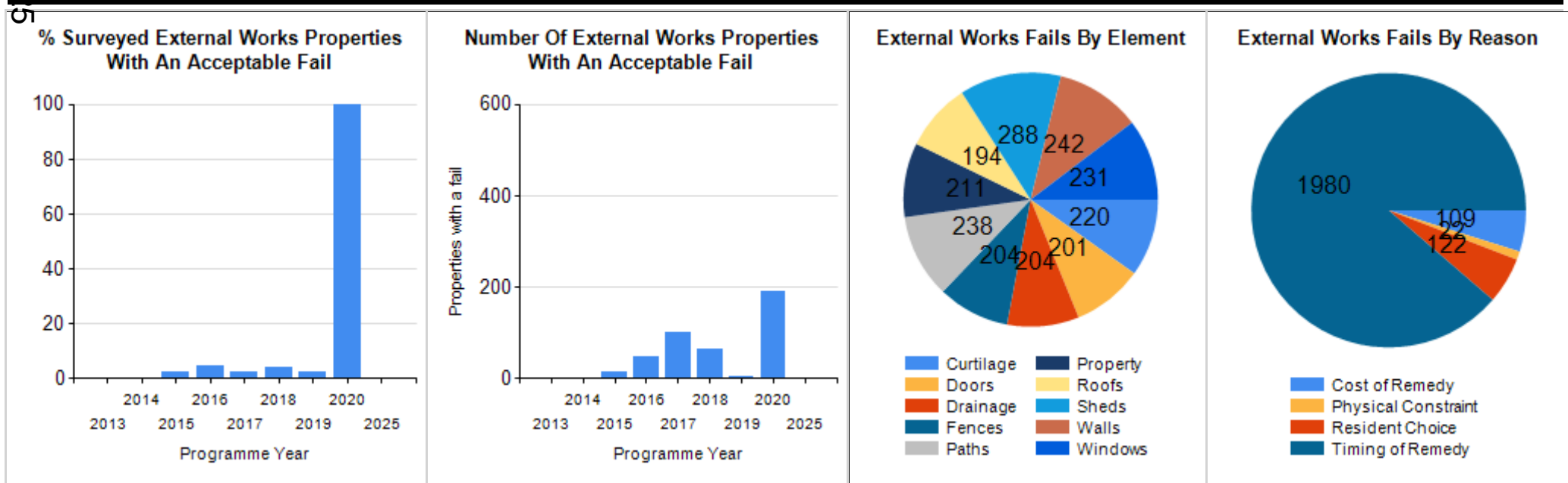
Appendix 2 – Previously Achieved Data

Appendix 3 - Electrical No Access Procedure

### Internal Works Fails for whole stock (10,775 properties)



### External Works Fails for whole stock (10,775 properties)



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## Appendix 2

| <b>Internal Works Achieved Previously for Properties Surveyed to date</b> |                       |                |                |                |                |                |                |                |                    |
|---|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <b>External Elements</b>  | <b>Financial year</b> |                |                |                |                |                |                |                | <b>Grand Total</b> |
|   | <b>2012/13</b>        | <b>2013/14</b> | <b>2014/15</b> | <b>2015/16</b> | <b>2016/17</b> | <b>2017/18</b> | <b>2018/19</b> | <b>2019/20</b> |                    |
| Internal – Bathroom   | 8                     | 161            | 98             | 113            | 296            | 460            | 315            |                | 1451               |
| Internal – Electrics  |                       | 309            | 361            | 192            | 27             | 48             | 37             |                | 974                |
| Internal – Heating  | 7                     | 545            | 648            | 1379           | 1378           | 1630           | 1475           | 349            | 7411               |
| Internal – Kitchen  | 9                     | 161            | 175            | 320            | 398            | 637            | 339            |                | 2039               |
| <b>Grand Total</b>  | <b>24</b>             | <b>1176</b>    | <b>1282</b>    | <b>2004</b>    | <b>2099</b>    | <b>2775</b>    | <b>2166</b>    | <b>349</b>     | <b>11875</b>       |

| <b>External Works Achieved Previously for Properties Surveyed to date</b> |                       |                |                |                |                |                    |
|---|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| <b>External Elements</b>  | <b>Financial Year</b> |                |                |                |                | <b>Grand Total</b> |
|   | <b>2014/15</b>        | <b>2015/16</b> | <b>2016/17</b> | <b>2017/18</b> | <b>2018/19</b> |                    |
| External – Boundary walls   | 2                     | 631            | 889            | 967            | 430            | 2919               |
| External – Doors  | 50                    | 404            | 464            | 343            | 327            | 1588               |
| External – Drainage works   | 52                    | 858            | 1208           | 1273           | 446            | 3837               |
| External – Fences Railings Gates  |                       | 163            | 136            | 93             | 49             | 441                |
| External – Misc works within curtilage                                    | 50                    | 791            | 879            | 976            | 306            | 3002               |
| External – Paths Hardstandings Drives                                     | 18                    | 386            | 347            | 255            | 106            | 1112               |
| External – Roofs and associated components                                |                       | 85             | 19             | 222            | 4              | 330                |
| External – Stores (sheds and outbuildings)                                | 52                    | 216            | 460            | 121            | 90             | 939                |
| External – Windows  |                       | 494            | 522            | 735            | 226            | 1977               |
| External – Works to property  |                       | 334            | 348            | 538            | 136            | 1356               |
| <b>Grand Total</b>  | <b>224</b>            | <b>4362</b>    | <b>5272</b>    | <b>5523</b>    | <b>2120</b>    | <b>17501</b>       |

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## Caerphilly Homes

### Electrical No Access Procedure for Staff

|                   |                        |                               |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Version: 3</b> | <b>Date: July 2018</b> | <b>Review Date: July 2020</b> |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Lead Officer:</b>      | <b>Debbie Bishop/Alan Edmunds/Steve Greedy/Gareth Harris</b>             |
| <b>Approved By:</b>       | <b>Shaun Couzens/Fiona Wilkins</b>                                       |
| <b>Responsible Staff:</b> | <b>Planned Maintenance Planner<br/>Area/Neighbourhood Housing Office</b> |

#### Purpose:

- To ensure a consistent approach across all areas in relation to managing the process when dealing with 'No Access' to a property to undertake an electrical survey as part of planned maintenance works or to gain access to undertake the works once the survey has been completed.
- To ensure a joined up approach between Planned Maintenance and Area/Neighbourhood Housing Offices

Also refer to:

Recharge Procedure  
 Non-Occupation Procedure  
 No Access Procedure  
 Abandoned Property Procedure  
 Asbestos No Access Procedure

The Welsh Government (WG) has introduced the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS), which requires all Councils to bring its homes up to a required standard. The WHQS means that all Council homes need to be:

- In a good state of repair
- Safe & secure
- Adequately heated, fuel efficient & well insulated
- Contain up-to-date kitchens & bathrooms
- Well managed
- Located in attractive & safe environments
- Suit the specific needs of the household

It is important that Caerphilly Homes make all attempts at gaining access to properties to ensure the required works are completed so the maximum amount of properties meet the requirements of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS).

However tenants can opt out of the improvement programme in relation to improvements to their kitchens, bathroom and heating system but there is no option of refusing to allow Caerphilly Homes to upgrade the electrical installations, due to the health and safety implications. Therefore access to every property is essential to undertake a survey to establish what electrical work is required.

It is recognised that the majority of tenants do allow access. However in cases where either the tenant has refused access or where the tenant fails to contact us in relation to making an appointment, the following procedure must be followed.

## 1. PROCEDURE – SURVEY

1.1 The Planner is responsible for arranging the initial appointment by sending **ELEC APP 1** letter which informs the tenant of the date of the appointment and giving either an AM or PM time slot. The tenant has 10 days to contact the Planner if the date or time is not suitable in order for other arrangements to be made.

1.2 At the same time that the letter is sent out to the tenant an appointment for the Surveyor is made in Total. This will automatically create a text message if a mobile phone number is logged into the system, and will again repeat the message the day before the appointment.

1.3 If the tenant contacts the Planner to make alternative arrangements **ELEC APP2** letter must be sent to confirm the new agreed appointment time.

\*\*\*\*\*

1.4 If the tenant is not at home at the appointed time Planner to **consult with the Asbestos Team** to establish if access is required for an asbestos survey. If so any further legal action must include both surveys.

\*\*\*\*\*

1.5 Planner to send **ELEC APP 3** letter and an email to the Area/Neighbourhood Housing Office (Housing office inbox) requesting that a **NOTICE OF SEEKING POSSESSION (NOSP)** be issued. A/NHO to also raise recharge for the no access appointment – refer to Recharge Procedure.

**It is important that if at any time the tenant provides access that the A/NHO is advised so that any action can be suspended or cancelled.**

1.6 On receipt of the e-mail from the Planner, A/NHO to make all appropriate checks on the housing system i.e. tenancy basic notepad, rents diary pages, with Social Services etc. to establish any vulnerability or disability which must be taken into account prior to any action being taken. Where there are concerns or a Support Worker involved all attempts must be made to engage the tenant to allow access. Where there appears no other involvement with support services a **NOSP** is to be prepared which is to be served by hand to the property.



- 1.7 No legal action can take place until the 28 days notice expires. Therefore if the tenant makes contact an appointment is to be made which **must** be within the 28 day notice period. Providing access is given on the appointment date no further action is required and the NOSP becomes redundant. It is important that the Planner notify the A/NHO of the appointment details confirming if the appointment has been kept or not.
- 1.8 In the event that access remains unavailable following the [ELEC APP3](#) letter and expiry of the 28 days [NOSP](#) being served Planner to email the Area/Neighbourhood Housing Office to advise and must provide copies of all letters sent, together with any notes of other attempts to contact the tenant i.e. telephone calls, visits to property etc.
- 1.9 A/NHO to send all correspondence to Legal to proceed to court for no access.
- 1.10 It is normal for the Court to award a 28 day postponed possession order to allow the tenant a further opportunity to make an appointment and allow access. If the tenant does not attend Court a copy of the Court Order is sent to the Tenant giving clear instructions on how to prevent further legal action. Following the Court Hearing the planner will be responsible for arranging an appointment by sending [ELEC APP4](#) letter. If the tenant allows access no further action is taken, and the possession order is redundant.
- 1.11 If the tenant fails to allow access during the postponed period, the Planner to advise the A/NHO who will present the case to the Tenancy Review Panel for permission to seek an eviction notice from the Court.
- 1.12 When the tenancy ends the electrical survey and works will be undertaken during the void period.

## **2. PROCEDURE – WORKS**

- 2.1 TLO issues Pre-Commencement letter to tenants
- 2.2 Foreman/Site Supervisor visits tenant, approximately 10 days prior to works starting. An agreed start date is discussed with tenant
- 2.3 If No Access on agreed date, and where electrical work is required,, TLO/Foreman to update No Access information in Keystone
- 2.4 Admin Support Officer to run a weekly Keystone report to identify all No Access relating to Electrical Work
- 2.5 The Admin Support Officer (ASO) is responsible for arranging an appointment with the tenant, and will issue [ELEC WORKS 1](#) letter which informs the tenant of the date of the appointment. The tenant has 10 days to contact ASO if the date or time is not suitable in order for other arrangements to be made.
- 2.6 If the tenant contacts ASO to make alternative arrangements [ELEC WORKS 2](#) letter must be sent to confirm the new agreed appointment time.
- 2.7 If access is not available at the appointed time ASO to send [ELEC WORKS 3](#) letter and an email to the Area/Neighbourhood Housing Office (Housing office inbox) requesting that a

NOTICE OF SEEKING POSSESSION (NOSP) be issued. A/NHO to also raise recharge for the no access appointment – refer to Recharge Procedure.

It is important that if at any time the tenant provides access that the A/NHO is advised so that any action can be suspended or cancelled.

- 2.8 On receipt of the e-mail from ASO, A/NHO to make all appropriate checks on the housing system i.e. tenancy basic notepad, rents diary pages, with Social Services etc. to establish any vulnerability or disability which must be taken into account prior to any action being taken. Where there are concerns or a Support Worker involved all attempts must be made to engage the tenant to allow access. Where there appears no other involvement with support services a NOSP is to be prepared which is to be served by hand to the property.
- 2.9 No legal action can take place until the 28 days notice expires. Therefore if the tenant makes contact an appointment is to be made which **must** be within the 28 day notice period. Providing access is given on the appointment date no further action is required and the NOSP becomes redundant. It is important that the ASO notify the A/NHO of the appointment details confirming if the appointment has been kept or not.
- 2.10 In the event that access remains unavailable following the [ELEC WORKS 3](#) letter and expiry of the 28 days [NOSP](#) being served ASO to email the Area/Neighbourhood Housing Office to advise and **must** provide copies of all letters sent, together with any notes of other attempts to contact the tenant i.e. telephone calls, visits to property etc.
- 2.11 A/NHO to send all correspondence to Legal to proceed to court for no access.
- 2.12 ASO to advise the Contracts Manager that Legal action is being taken, and that the property is to remain on the contract for the works to be completed on conclusion of the legal action.
- 2.13 It is normal for the Court to award a 28 day postponed possession order to allow the tenant a further opportunity to make an appointment and allow access. If the tenant does not attend Court a copy of the Court Order is sent to the Tenant giving clear instructions on how to prevent further legal action. Following the Court Hearing the Planner will be responsible for arranging an appointment by sending ELEC APP4 letter. If the tenant allows access no further action is taken, and the possession order is redundant.
- 2.14 If the tenant fails to allow access during the postponed possession period, ASO to advise the A/NHO who will present the case to the Tenancy Review Panel for permission to seek an eviction notice from the Court.
- 2.15 When the tenancy ends the electrical survey and works will be undertaken during the void period.



## CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 20TH SEPTEMBER 2018

**SUBJECT: YEAR END PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR CAERPHILLY HOMES**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with an overview of the performance of the services provided by Caerphilly Homes during 2017/18, to set out the key service priorities for the period 2018 to 2023 and highlight any potential challenges that may affect the successful delivery of these priorities, prior to the report being presented to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report provides members with an overview of performance of the service provided by Caerphilly Homes during 2017/18.
- 2.2 The report also sets the priorities for the period 2018 to 2023 that will deliver further service improvements and identifies a number of potential challenges that may affect the successful delivery of these priorities.
- 2.3 The performance of Caerphilly Homes for 2017/18 is considered overall to be good and continues to build on performance from previous years. We have identified aspects of the service that require improvement and will work closely with stakeholders to introduce changes that will result in improved services and performance. Our priorities for the period 2018 to 2023 will aim to deliver further service improvements and will ensure that we are able to respond proactively to the needs and aspirations of those who use our services. We have identified a number of challenges that may affect our ability to implement these service improvements successfully. However, the service is currently regarded by the Housing Management Team to be well placed to respond to these challenges.

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 ***The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*** contains 7 well-being goals. When making decisions the act requires public bodies in Wales, including local authorities, to take into account the impact they could have on people living their lives in the future.
- 3.2 ***Improving Lives and Communities: Homes in Wales (Welsh Government, 2010)***, which sets out the national context on meeting housing need, homelessness, and housing-related support services.
- 3.3 ***The Caerphilly We Want (CCBC, 2018-2023) - Well-Being Plan: 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 **Anti-Poverty Strategy (CCBC)**, which sets out a range of priorities to tackle poverty in the borough.

#### 4. THE REPORT

4.1 Caerphilly Homes delivers a range of services to people living in the private and social sectors, and to people who may be homeless or threatened with homelessness. It consists of four main sections:

- i) Housing Repair Operations;
- ii) Private Sector Housing;
- iii) Public Sector Housing; and
- iv) Welsh Housing Quality Standard.

4.2 As part of the corporate service improvement process, Caerphilly Homes has undertaken a review of the performance of the service to identify and evaluate the performance of the service against pre-defined areas, aspects of the service that require improvement and any challenges facing the delivery of the service. The self-evaluation exercise informs the development of the service plan.

4.3 The following priorities were identified in the 2017/18 service plan:

- i) Investment in homes to transform lives and communities (Wellbeing Objective 5).
- ii) Undertake a number of initiatives to address low demand in council housing.
- iii) Complete the de-pooling of service charges from rents exercise in sheltered housing.
- iv) Carry out an options appraisal into the remodelling of a number of our sheltered housing schemes, including assessing the potential for redevelopment.
- v) Consider the potential impact of further welfare reforms, including local housing allowance, on existing and prospective council and housing association and private rented sector tenants and identify solutions to mitigate the impact.
- vi) Reviewing our ICT requirements including replacement of the Capita system, taking into consideration the collection, use and maintenance of data from the customer profiling exercise, and mobile working.
- vii) Implement a new management charge schedule for leaseholders.
- viii) Full operational implementation of the Rent Smart Wales scheme.
- ix) Development of key strategic housing documents to inform future service provision.
- x) Contribute towards addressing the issues, which related in Lansbury Park being identified as the most deprived area in Wales (WIMD 2014).

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

##### **Housing Repair Operations**

4.5 The section provides a responsive repairs and maintenance service to the council housing stock of 10,801 properties, completing approximately 28,000 repairs per annum, in addition to supporting the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) section with both the internal and external capital investment programme. It consists of 175 members of staff (FTE), including multi-trade maintenance operatives, with an annual reactive maintenance turnover of £7.8m. There is a further budget of £4.1m for planned projects and cyclical maintenance, utilising external contractors, that support the in-house workforce with the service and repair of all heating and hot water systems, stair-lift and hoist lifting equipment, in addition to the statutory maintenance of 34 sheltered housing schemes.

4.6 Overall, the section continues to strive towards improving the way it delivers its services. Significant cost savings continue to be generated through improved productivity brought about by the extension of mobile working, the multi skilling of operatives, retaining more work in-house, reducing the necessity to travel, and a reduction in administration and overhead costs. Performance and customer satisfaction levels have remained high.

**Performance in 2017/18**

4.7 Examples of achievements made during 2017/18 include:

- In December 2017, the section was again finalists in the Best Performing Authority in the UK for Building Maintenance by the Association of Public Services Excellence (APSE) Performance Networks, having previously won the award in 2016.
- In addition to providing the repairs and maintenance services, the section also supported the WHQS programme by completing over 118 kitchens replacements, 112 bathroom replacements, 80 electrical rewires, 94 central heating upgrades, 323 IG door replacements, 39 fibreglass flat roofs. 121 void properties were also improved internally to meet the WHQS.
- Assumed responsibility for the management and monitoring of statutory maintenance services following transfer from the WHQS team and established new contractual arrangements for their delivery. These services include gas, stair lift and hoist servicing, along with Legionella testing and fire risk assessment works within sheltered housing and performance across all areas of our statutory maintenance have improved.

**Key Performance Indicators:**

| Key Performance Indicators                                  | Previous Year 2017/18 |                    | Progress / Comments  |
|---|-----------------------|--------------------|--|
|   | Target                | Actual             |  |
| The average end of tenancy voids costs.                     | £4,500                | £5,422             | 2016/17 - £7,430.<br><br>The reduction is due to more properties having already been brought up to the WHQ standard as part of the main programme.   |
| Number of WHQS works completed by HRO by category of works. | N/A                   | 815<br>(121 voids) | 2016/17 – 504 (144 Voids)<br><br>The reduction in WHQS works completed to void properties is as a result of the progress made on the main WHQS internal works programme where the majority of properties have been now been completed.   |
| Number of backlog repairs pending at year-end.              | N/A                   | 1,319              | Repairs are prioritised and allocated a completion target, depending on the nature of the repair, ranging from 1-66 days. This means there will always be a continual work in progress backlog of pending repairs within appointment diaries, which increases and decreases throughout the year. |

|   |      |                       |  |
|---|------|-----------------------|--|
| Number of complaints received.  | N/A  | 4<br>(23,114 repairs) | 21 complaints in 2016/17 (from 27,605 repairs completed).  |
| Number of repairs carried out to tenant's homes.  | N/A  | 23,114                | 27,605 in 2016/17.<br>A reduction in the number of repairs carried out is associated with the works completed on the WHQS programme. |
| % of repairs undertaken as appointments (Qtly accum - Year to date)                               | 97%  | 100%                  | 99.96% in 2016/17.   |
| Average number of working days taken to complete a planned repair (08)                            | 66   | 42                    | 48 days in 2016/17.  |
| Average number of working days taken to complete a routine repair (03/05)                         | 25   | 8                     | 10 days in 2016/17.  |
| Average number of working days taken to complete an emergency repair (02)                         | 1    | 0.11                  | 0.11 days in 2016/17.  |
| Percentage of emergency jobs completed on time (within 24 hours) (02)                             | 100% | 99.56%                | 99.43% in 2016/17.   |
| Percentage of non emergency jobs not subject to call back/complaint (right first time) (03-05-08) | 98%  | 97.68%                | 98.43% in 2016/17.   |
| Percentage of planned repairs completed on time (08)  | 90%  | 90.37%                | 84.96% in 2016/17.   |
| Percentage of routine repairs completed on time (03/05)   | 95%  | 98.21%                | 97.10% in 2016/17.   |

|  |          |             |  |
|--|----------|-------------|--|
| Tenant Survey: % of customers satisfied with the Repairs Services they receive                   | 100%     | 100%        | 99.67% in 2016/17.<br>2017/18:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent - 71.79%</li> <li>• Good - 25.68%</li> <li>• Satisfactory - 2.53%</li> </ul>  |
| Percentage of Materials Recycled   | 80%      | 87.90%      | 86.5% in 2016/17.  |
| Total Fuel Used by the HRO fleet (Yrly)  | £215,000 | £161,671.49 | £163,079.95 in 2016/17.  |
| Number of vehicles per operational employee (Yrly)   | 0.63     | 0.65        | 0.60 vehicles in 2016/17.<br><br>0.02 above target due to operatives finishing employment and not being replaced. At present the vehicles are long-term hires, also we have 8 final year apprentices working on their own who are allocated a vehicle. |
| Percentage of voids completed on time  | 96.50%   | 97.26%      | 95.16% in 2016/17.   |
| Refurbishment voids turnaround (average number of calendar days keys held by in-house workforce) | 60       | 31.66       | 62.88 days in 2016/17.   |
| Routine voids turnaround (average number of calendar days keys held by in-house workforce)       | 11.50    | 12.47       | 11.73 days in 2016/17.   |
| Compliance in relation to gas servicing.   | 100%     | 99.22%      | As the properties not serviced within 12 months were due to access issues, the introduction of forced entry has resulted in improved performance, with this expected to continue into 2018/19.   |

### Private Sector Housing

4.8 The section is responsible for the provision of major and minor works of adaptation for disabled persons living in the public and private sectors, improving the condition of homes in the private sector through individual grants, area renewal schemes and regulation. The section maintains the council's housing register and is responsible for the delivery of homelessness services. It is also assisting in the delivery of the WHQS programme, by project managing external works to leasehold blocks of flats throughout the borough and supporting the transformation of Lansbury Park in relation to the energy efficiency scheme to privately owned properties.

- 4.9 The section is also responsible for managing and monitoring the implementation of Rent Smart Wales scheme and aims to bring long-term empty homes back into beneficial use.
- 4.10 For reporting purposes, the common housing register, allocations and homelessness service is also included within this section.
- 4.11 The section consists of 65 members of staff (FTE) with a budget of £6.2m (£3.3m capital (for grants), £1.1m capital (for loans) and £1.8m (net) revenue).
- 4.12 Analysis of performance and customer satisfaction information tells us that, despite ongoing budget pressures, overall, the section continues to provide a wide range of good quality services.

### **Performance in 2017/18**

4.13 Examples of achievements in 2017/18 include:

- Increased access into the private rented sector for those people who are either homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- Utilised an under-occupied residential block of flats in Rhymney to provide a supported housing options scheme for predominantly single people aged 16 plus.
- Worked in partnership with the local churches and a contracted support provider, over the winter months, to provide shelter and support in the borough to 19 rough sleepers.
- Completed a re-assessment of the requirement for the provision of emergency, supported accommodation in the borough for homeless people.
- Undertaken the necessary preparatory work in readiness for delivery of the Gwent Regional Homeless Strategy 2018-2022.
- Successfully managed and monitored the implementation of Rent Smart Wales
- Undertaken a range of activities to increase awareness of the Rent Smart Wales (RSW) service, including newspaper adverts, posters / flyers, merchandise etc.
- Signed the Memorandum of Understanding between the Single Licensing Authority and all councils in Wales, in relation to service standards and roles associated with the Rent Smart Wales service.
- Delivery of Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and public sector adaptations, and reviewed processes aimed at improving performance.
- Delivered energy efficiency initiatives to privately owned properties.
- Supported the energy efficiency initiative at Lansbury Park, resulting in the improvement of private properties.
- Achieved WHQS compliance on 342 properties, of which 64 were leasehold properties and 277 were council stock.



**Key Performance Indicators:**

| Key Performance Indicators   | Previous Year 2017/18 |        | Progress / Comments   |
|--|-----------------------|--------|---|
|  | Target                | Actual |   |
| Enquiry to approval times - Disabled Facilities Grants (days).   | 145                   | 168    | 163 days in 2016/17.<br><br>Although, there has been a 5-day increase during 17/18, 43 additional mandatory DFG grants were processed, with the same staff resources. There has been a review of procedures and interventions have been put in place, resulting in a general trend of improvement. (Q1 - 183 days. Q2 - 179 days. Q3 - 159 days and Q4 - 150 days)  |
| Enquiry to approval times - Home Repair Grants (days)  | 255                   | 360    | 298 days in 2016/17.<br><br>The key officer relating to the processing of this type of grant was on long-term sickness absence resulting in the officer ending their employment with the Authority. Following this, the post remained vacant for a further 10 months, only being filled in February 2018, following repeated recruitment drives. We were unable to reallocate resources due to competing pressures, linked to DFGs, WHQS. |
| Enquiry to approval times Public Sector Adaptations (days)   | 63                    | 107    | 131 days in 2016/17.<br><br>Although, there has been an increase in the number of days during 17/18, 43 additional mandatory DFGs were processed, with the same staff resources. There has been a review of procedures and interventions have been put in place, resulting in a general trend of improvement, compared with 2016/17. (Q1 - 116 days. Q2 - 94 days. Q3 - 110 days and Q4 - 111 days).                                      |
| Percentage of persons receiving adaptations who stated they were satisfied with the appointed contractor | 96%                   | 99%    | There is no figure for 2016/17. New PI.<br><br>This figure reflects the provision and activities of an effective in house Agency Service who oversee adaptation schemes on the clients' behalf.   |

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| Percentage of persons receiving adaptations who stated they were satisfied with the length of time it took to provide their adaptation (Qtly)  | 92% | 93%  | There is no figure for 2016/17. New PI.<br><br>This figure reflects, in part, the provision and activities of an effective in house Agency Service who oversee adaptation schemes on the clients' behalf. This level of satisfaction also reinforces the national opinion that the statutory performance indicator for waiting times for DFGs is extremely misleading and is no longer fit for purpose. |
| Percentage of persons receiving adaptations who stated they were satisfied with the service received overall (Qtly)  | 96% | 98%  | There is no figure for 2016/17. New PI.<br><br>This figure reflects, in part, the provision and activities of an effective in house Agency Service who oversee adaptation schemes on the clients' behalf.   |
| Percentage of Home Repair Grant recipients who stated they were satisfied with the appointed contractor  | 96% | 100% | There is no figure for 2016/17. New PI.<br><br>This figure reflects the provision and activities of an effective in house Agency Service who oversee repair schemes on the clients' behalf.   |
| Percentage of Home Repair Grant recipients who stated they were satisfied with the length of time taken to complete work.  | 92% | 100% | There is no figure for 2016/17. New PI.<br><br>This figure reflects the provision and activities of an effective in house Agency Service who oversee repair schemes on the clients' behalf.   |
| The average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant (Annual)<br>N.B in this PI 'average' reflects the inclusion of all schemes of adaptation in excess of £1,000 irrespective of the size of the schemes which will range from as little as £1500 for something like a stair lift installation to as much as £50,000 in respect of the more complex schemes involving lifting, hoisting and where necessary bedroom/ bathroom extensions. | 280 | 292  | 282 days in 2016/17.<br><br>Although, there has been a 10-day increase during 17/18, 43 additional mandatory DFG grants were processed, with the same staff resources. There has been a review of procedures and interventions have been put in place, resulting in a general trend of improvement. (Q1 - 316 days. Q2 - 296 days. Q3 - 280 days and Q4 - 268 days)                                     |

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| The average number of days taken to deliver a LA tenant adaptation other than a DFG<br>N.B in this PI 'average' reflects the inclusion of all schemes of adaptation in excess of £1,000 irrespective of the size of the schemes which will range from as little as £1500 for something like a stair lift installation to as much as £30,000 in respect of the more complex schemes involving lifting, hoisting and where necessary bedroom/ bathroom extensions. | 175   | 184   | 221 in 2016/17.<br><br>Although, the target for 2017/18 has not been met, there has been a significant decrease of, on average, 37 days to deliver an adaptation scheme compared to 2016/17.   |
| The number of applications on the Common Housing Register  | N/a   | 4,264 | Active applications only.  |
| % of applicants suspended on the Common Housing Register.  | 10%   | 8.38% | 8.42% of applicants in 2016/17.  |
| The number of new affordable housing units provided during the year as a percentage of all new housing units provided during the year  | N/A   | 42%   | 2016/17 data - 75% (163 of 216 properties).<br><br>42% (51 out of 121 properties). The 2017/18 data was only submitted to Welsh Government in mid-July 2018 and its status is currently unverified and subject to change.  |
| Houses in Multiple Occupation - Number of assessments carried out under the Housing Act 2004, by property type   | N/A   | 43    | 70 in 2016/17. These properties are inspected against a risk-based programme. This figure is compliant with the CCBC Houses in Multiple Occupation Risk Assessment Inspection Programme.   |
| Single Occupancy - Number of assessments carried out under the Housing Act 2004, by property type  | N/A   | 433   | 468 in 2016/17. This figure is reflective of the high number of service requests undertaken as part of their duties by the 3 District Environmental Health Officers based within Private Sector Housing.   |
| Percentage private sector dwellings returned to occupation that had been unoccupied for more than 6 months due to direct action from CCBC (Qtly accum)   | 4.30% | 4.70% | 6.40% in 2016/17 (65 properties). 4.70% for 17/18 related to 46 properties. In 17/18 demolition orders were served on 2 problematic long term empty properties. A substantial amount of officer's time was taken up with the matter, following receipt of an appeal. This work is not reflected in the PI, as neither property will be returned to occupation. |

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|---|-----|-------|--|
| The average number of days that all homeless households spent in bed and breakfast accommodation.   | 30  | 14.47 | 17.32 days in 2016/17.   |
| The number of people provided with financial assistance by the homelessness team to access accommodation in the private rented sector (excluding temporary accommodation).  | N/A | 201   | 231 people in 2016/17.   |
| Cases who have had homelessness prevented (linked to a national PI Table 1.3 – Eligible, threatened with homelessness, prevention assistance provided (Section 66)).  | N/A | 432   | In 2016/17 - 73.27% (447:610).<br>In 2017/18 - 75.65% (432/571). |
| Cases who have had their risk of homelessness relieved by providing alternative accommodation (linked to a national PI Table 1.4 – Eligible, homeless, subject to duty to help to secure (Section 73)).   | N/A | 136   | In 2016/17 - 46.2% (243:525).<br>In 2017/18 - 33.17% (136/410).  |
| The number of people determined as homeless as a percentage of the number of people threatened with homelessness who approach the Council for assistance (linked to a national PI Table 1.5c – Eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need (Section 75)). | N/A | 95    | In 2016/17 - 81% (67:82).<br>In 2017/18 - 70.89% (95/134).       |

### Public Sector Housing

- 4.14 The section is responsible for the day-to-day delivery of the landlord services function to council tenants (10,801 council owned houses, managing 414 leaseholder properties and 929 garages) in accordance with all statutory requirements and council policies. It consists of 108 members of staff (FTE) with a budget of £6m p.a. and income collection of £51m p.a.
- 4.15 Performance information shows that we are currently sustaining high standards of service delivery. Although, we are unable to compare our performance against housing management services in other areas, due to the absence of national benchmarking data. Discussions are currently ongoing with Welsh Government to agree a standard across Wales that can be used for future benchmarking. This is likely to be in place by 2019/20. There are some areas of weakness that we are aware of, such as low demand for certain property types and areas, and are actively working to address. It is becoming increasingly more challenging in the current environment with significant legislative changes to maintain standards of performance against targets.

## Performance in 2017/18

4.16 Examples of achievements made in 2017/18 include:

- We have carried out a review to identify opportunities to re-designate council housing stock to meet changing demands.
- Completed an options appraisal into the remodelling of a number of our sheltered housing schemes, including assessing the potential for redevelopment.
- Considered the potential impact of further welfare reforms on existing and prospective council tenants and began to identify solutions to mitigate the impact.
- Fully implemented a new service charging regime for tenants in sheltered housing schemes, based on recovery of actual costs incurred.
- Introduced mobile working devices to a number of service areas, including Floating Support and Rents.
- Began implementation of a programme to bring our sheltered housing schemes up to the WHQS.

### Key Performance Indicators

| Key Performance Indicators  | Previous Year 2017/18 |        | Progress / Comments  |
|---|-----------------------|--------|--|
|   | Target                | Actual |  |
| The average number of calendar days taken to let lettable units of accommodation during the financial year for permanent accommodation (Annual) | 69                    | 84.52  | <p>This PI reflects the total void time for a property in debit, from end of one tenancy to commencement of a new tenancy.</p> <p>64.26 days in 2016/17.</p> <p>HRO are refurbishing an increasing number of voids to WHQS necessitating longer void periods.</p> <p>Over the course of the year, a number of Hard To Lets (HTLs) were re-let and the average re-let time for these was 183.4 days, which adversely affects the overall result.</p> <p>The average re-let time for non-HTLs was 66.35 days, which is within the target.</p> <p>Additionally, we have recently introduced a pilot scheme to market a number of HTLs on Rightmove, through a pilot partnership agreement with a local estate agent. This has resulted in the successful allocation of a number of properties that had previously been void and available for let for an extended period.</p> |

|   |       |       |   |
|---|-------|-------|---|
| Percentage of Council Housing Stock that is Empty (Qtly - Yr to date)   | 1.80% | 1.76% | <p>Stock = 10,801. Number of voids on 31/03/2018 = 190.</p> <p>This is in line with 1.8% of vacant social housing stock across Wales as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 (latest available data).</p> <p>2016/17 - stock = 10,821. Number of voids on 31/03/2017 = 203.</p>  |
| The number of Council tenants who are affected by welfare reform and under-occupying that successfully downsized to alternative Council accommodation.  | N/a   | 4     | <p>16 in 2016/17.</p> <p>Most affected tenants have lived in these properties for many years, consider them their home, and are very reluctant to move. These tenants continue to be assisted by our Tenant Support Officers (TSOs).</p>  |
| Percentage of tenants satisfied with visit by a Tenant Support Officer.   | 97%   | 97%   | <p>99% in 2016/17.</p> <p>1,977 tenants were visited and over the year. 502 telephone surveys completed (25% surveyed).</p>   |
| The total amount of rent arrears owed by former tenants in permanent accommodation which were written off as unrecoverable during the financial year as a percentage of the total rent collectable for the financial year (Qtly accum - Year to date) | 0.50% | 0.52% | <p>Value written off as unrecoverable - £277,736.93. Write off level only slightly higher than same period last year i.e. 0.52% compared with 0.51% (£267,833 in March 2017).</p> <p>We actively pursue recovery of debts from former tenants when able to locate them, including the use of debt collection agencies. If recoverable and non statute barred debts are written off we retain a record of the debt and are able to write them back into debit if we subsequently locate the former tenant or they reapply for housing.</p> |
| The total amount of rent lost due to lettable units of permanent accommodation being empty as a percentage of the total rent debit for the financial year (Qtly accum - Year to date)   | 1.90% | 2.29% | <p>Void loss has increased on the same period the previous year, i.e. 2.29% compared with 1.93% previous year.</p>  |

|  |                 |                 |   |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|---|
| <p>The total amount of rent arrears owed by current tenants in the following types of accommodation as a percentage of the total rent collectable for the financial year - Permanent Accommodation (Qtly accum - Year to date)</p> | <p>3.00%</p>    | <p>2.29%</p>    | <p>Void loss has increased to 2.29% (£1,198,742) compared with 1.93% previous year (£995,286).</p> <p>The increase in the average number of calendar days has a consequential impact on the void loss. The local lettings policy in Rowan Place, demolition proposals in River Road, consideration of remodelling proposals for some sheltered schemes and an increase in WHQS works for void properties, are all appropriate management interventions but each contributes to rent loss.</p> |
| <p>The total amount of rent arrears owed by current tenants as a percentage of the total rent collectable for the financial year - Permanent Accommodation (Qtly accum - Year to date)</p>   | <p>3.00%</p>    | <p>2.98%</p>    | <p>£1,576,665.</p> <p>Welfare reform changes i.e. benefits cap and under occupation continue to impact on rent arrears. A slight increase on the same period last year, i.e. 2.73% (£1,436,000). However, the final week of the year included Good Friday, which resulted in reduced income for the final week of the year.</p>   |
| <p>The number of council tenants referred for money and debt advice as a direct result of face to face support on the impact of welfare reforms</p>  | <p>40</p>       | <p>51</p>       | <p>197 in 2016/17.</p> <p>This figure has reduced as a number of tenants now access CAB support as self-referrals or through their gateway service.</p>   |
| <p>The number of council tenants affected by welfare reforms who were visited in their own homes and provided with advice and support to minimise the impact of the changes</p>  | <p>2,000</p>    | <p>1,977</p>    | <p>2,183 in 2016/17.</p> <p>Slightly below the annual target due to maternity leave of an officer and training of replacement. We have increased the TSO staff level to 5 in April 2018 from 4 to try to assist the increasing number of tenants requiring support.</p>   |
| <p>The value of financial savings generated for tenants as a direct result of face to face support on the affect of welfare reforms</p>  | <p>£250,000</p> | <p>£903,508</p> | <p>£338,143 in 2016/17.</p> <p>We have well exceeded our target this year. The Welsh Water reduction scheme <i>Help U</i> has been promoted to our tenants through the TSO staff and through telephone marketing. Our Welfare benefits advisor has also been very successful in achieving additional welfare benefits for tenants.</p>  |

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| The number of people supported by tenancy support officers to access benefits they are entitled to [council housing only] | 1,200 | 1,640  | 1,965 people in 2016/17.<br>The welfare benefits adviser has been successful in assisting tenants. Within the rents section we have also been successful in the promotion of the Welsh Water <i>Help U</i> scheme.   |
| Legal action resulting in a Court Order will be reasonable and proportionate to the number of ASB referrals               | 2%    | 1.88%  | 1.27% (8/628 referrals) in 2016/17.<br>13 cases out of 690 referrals for anti-social/nuisance behaviour with links to the housing management function resulted in a court order. The 13 cases included 1 Undertaking, 4 Injunctions, 1 Closure Order, 6 Suspended Possession Orders and 1 Outright Order for Possession.   |
| Maximise the use of the VIP to support tenants at risk of losing their homes  | 8     | 13     | The number of referrals to the Valleys Inclusion Project.<br>10 referrals in 2016/17.  |
| Satisfaction with the way ASB complaints are handled by the Tenancy Enforcement Section (TES).                            | 90%   | 94.40% | 87.5% in 2016/17. A response rate of 22.2% (32/144)<br>54 survey cards returned out of 295 sent out. (2 dissatisfied, 1 very dissatisfied).  |
| Number of applications to the County Court for a warrant of eviction.   | N/a   | 104    | In 16/17 it was 76. Primary reason was rent arrears (95 cases). A substantial amount of support is offered to tenants by Tenancy Support officers, Tenancy Enforcement Officers and Estate Management Officers prior to applications being made to the Court. In addition, in many cases independent support is also offered by outside agencies such as Gofal, Shelter and CAB. |
| Number of tenant households evicted from their properties.  | N/a   | 21     | In 16/17 it was 36 (16 were rent arrears).<br>When an eviction date is received tenants have the right to apply to the County Court to have the eviction set aside and officers continue to try and work with the tenants to avoid progressing to eviction.  |



## Welsh Housing Quality Standard

4.17 The section consists of 65 members of staff (direct delivery) charged to the WHQS programme and 38 dedicated support staff funded by the HRA. The key areas of work are the delivery of a multi-million pound, annual capital programme. There are also WHQS related works managed through the revenue response budget and charged to the WHQS programme in relation to WHQS voids and heating installations (circa £2m). In addition, there is circa 174 in-house workforce assigned to the WHQS programme with a profile of £12m spend in 2017/18. The WHQS investment programme includes internal and WHQS works to our sheltered schemes in addition to the general stock works, environmental improvement and the provision of adaptations to meet tenants' specific needs, as well as community benefits which are all aimed at transforming homes, lives and communities.

### Performance in 2017/18

4.18 Examples of achievements made in 2017/18 include:

- Delivery of the 2017/18 capital investment programme, (£42m), in respect of internal and external repairs and improvements.
- Monitoring of standards set out in the Charter for Trust by both the in-house workforce and contractors.
- Delivery of a customer focussed programme with high levels of satisfaction recorded.
- Meet the requirements of Part 7 of WHQS by undertaking adaptations recommended by Occupational Therapist (OT) officers.
- Implementation of the Environmental Programme Engagement Plan in accordance with the timetable agreed with WHQS Project Board, including minor wall repairs, installation of fencing, benches and bollards along with general tidying up of areas and carpark maintenance and repair.
- Monitoring expenditure to retain a financially viable business plan.
- Review performance data and introduce a validation process to ensure the accuracy and timeliness of the information provided.
- Review the no access procedure to maximise compliance and address health and safety issues.
- Address recommendations made following the Wales Audit Office (WAO) review.
- Maximise community benefits.

### Key Performance Indicators:

| Key Performance Indicators   | Previous Year<br>2017/18 |                | Progress / Comments  |
|--|--------------------------|----------------|--|
|  | Target                   | Actual         |  |
| Number of homes brought to WHQS as recorded on annual return to Welsh Government. (The number of houses that have achieved WHQS standard in the year). | 4,000                    | 3,501<br>(32%) | 252 homes in 2016/17. The figure provided excludes acceptable fails. Due to the way in which the programme is configured (internal and external works undertaken in different sequence), the compliance rate for whole property completion has increased as contracts in communities overlap (Appendix 1). |

|  |       |                |   |
|--|-------|----------------|---|
| Number of homes compliant with WHQS in respect of their external elements          | 4,754 | 4,969<br>(46%) | 1,129 homes in 2016/17. This is higher than the figure originally reported to WG following a validation process (44%).  |
| Number of homes compliant with WHQS in respect of their internal elements          | 8,347 | 7,831<br>(73%) | 6,057 in 2016/17. This is lower than the figure originally reported to WG following a validation process (76%). The loss of one of the main contractors also impacted on performance. |
| Number of homes adapted as part of WHQS works to meet specific needs of household. | N/a   | 1,713          | 430 in 2016/17.<br><br>There are no targets set as it is only from the surveys that you can identify if there are specific tenant needs. If identified these works are implemented.   |
| Tenant satisfaction levels for internal works.                                     | 80%   | 86%            | 85 in 2017/18.  |
| Tenant satisfaction levels for external works.                                     | 80%   | 70%            | No data for 2017/18 as surveying did not start until September 2017.  |
| Charter for Trust Standards  | 90%   | 80%            | 85% in 2016/17.   |
| Expenditure against budget finance.  | £53m  | £42m           | Highest level of spend to date. See comments below.   |

The total expenditure on the WHQS capital programme for 2017/18 was £42.2m: £18m on internal works and £17.5m on external works, with the remainder of the spend covering fees, large-scale voids, adaptations and garages. £32.1m of this spend was funded from the HRA as a revenue contribution. A further £7.3m was funded from Welsh Government through the annual Major Repairs Allowance (MRA), and £2.7m of regeneration/environmental grants via the Arbed and Vibrant & Viable Places (VVP) programmes. There has been no borrowing undertaken for the WHQS programme to date.

The 2017/18 HRA business plan was approved by Welsh Government in May 2017 as part of the annual MRA application, which evidences that the WHQS programme remains financially viable. Borrowing to supplement existing funds will not be required until 2018/19. Expenditure at the end of March 2018 totalled £152m against an approved budget of £220m for the delivery of the full programme.

### **Key priorities for 2018 to 2023**

4.19 The key priorities for the service for the period 2018 to 2023, as contained in the Corporate Plan (2018-23), are as follows:

- i) All council housing is improved to meet the WHQS by the end of 2020.

- ii) Implement an asset management strategy to maintain the condition of the housing stock following WHQS attainment (December 2020).
- iii) Provide support to improve housing conditions in the owner-occupied sector.
- iv) Increase the provision of new, affordable, social housing that meet the ‘Lifetime Homes’ principles and identified needs, whilst supporting the governments’ innovative housing programme.
- v) Deliver adaptations to support the health and well-being of people in their homes and maximise the delivery and appropriate use of accessible homes.
- vi) Increase the supply of housing through a number of initiatives e.g. by supporting opportunities to bring long-term, empty homes back into use; purchasing properties, conversions.
- vii) Promote the development of a healthy and vibrant private rented sector as a viable housing option.
- viii) Prevent homelessness and tackle rough sleeping.
- ix) Prevent tenancies from failing by providing a range of housing related support (including those affected by financial hardship, mental health issues or physical disabilities); and
- x) Help reduce fuel poverty by making homes more energy efficient and providing people with advice on how best to heat their homes.
- xi) Undertake a review of all housing stock, including sheltered accommodation to ensure the best use of our assets is being made, that these remain affordable, are of good quality and meet the changing needs of our customers.

### **Potential challenges to service delivery**

- 4.20 There are a number of challenges, varying in size and complexity, which may affect the successful outcome of the key priorities outlined in paragraph 4.19. Many of these challenges are external in origin and, therefore, the Council will have little or no control or influence over.
- 4.21 The main challenges include national economic, welfare and housing policy and legislative frameworks (Welsh and UK governments), demographic changes, staff capacity to prioritise existing tasks and take on new tasks, Medium Term Financial Plan consideration and in-house expertise to make best use of exploring new and emerging technologies.

### **Monitoring arrangements**

- 4.22 The delivery of the key priorities outlined in 4.19 above, will be monitored through the following methods:

| <b>FREQUENCY</b> | <b>MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS</b>   |
|------------------|--|
| Weekly           | Review financial & operational performance reports<br>Consider weekly workloads.   |
| Monthly          | WHQS Project Board<br>Performance data review meetings<br>Service plan review meetings<br>Financial and operational performance and strategy review meetings.<br>Financial monitoring meetings (capital) |
| Bi-monthly       | Financial monitoring meetings (revenue)  |

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 6 weekly  | Caerphilly Homes Task Group (WHQS)<br>Housing management team meeting  |
| Quarterly | Aspireview updated and reviewed<br>Performance management meetings<br>Performance management unit review support meeting<br>Performance management reports – Aspireview<br>Progress reports to chief officer |
| 6 monthly | Reports to Policy and Resources scrutiny committee and Cabinet<br>Progress reports to head of service<br>Performance management meeting  |
| Annually  | Performance development reviews for all staff<br>Benchmarking (APSE)<br>Aspireview updated and reviewed<br>Year end report to head of service<br>Year end report to P&R scrutiny committee                   |

## 5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

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

## 7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no financial implications to this report, although, there may be in respect of the individual actions that will be undertaken to achieve the key priorities outlines in paragraph 4.19.

## 8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no personnel implications to this report, although, there may be in respect of the individual actions that will be undertaken to achieve the key priorities outlines in paragraph 4.19.

## 9. CONSULTATIONS

9.1 Responses from consultations have been incorporated into this report.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 Members are asked to consider the content of this report and, where appropriate, question and challenge the performance presented, prior to presentation to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

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

- 11.1 Performance management scrutiny affords members the opportunity to challenge, inform and shape the future performance of the housing service and the priorities presented within this report for the period 2018 to 2023.

## **12. STATUTORY POWER**

- 12.1 Local Government Measure 2009.

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Consultees: Cllr Lisa Phipps, Cabinet Member for Homes & Places  
Dave Street, Director of Social Services & Housing  
Shaun Couzens, Chief Housing Officer  
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer  
Paul Smythe, Housing Technical Manager  
Fiona Wilkins, Public Sector Housing Manager  
Claire Davies, Interim Private Sector Housing Manager  
Sue Cousins, Principal Housing Officer  
Lesley Allen, Principal Accountant (Housing), Corporate Services  
Rhys Lewis, Systems & Performance Manager  
Ros Roberts, Performance Manager, Corporate Services  
Ian Raymond, Performance Management Officer

Appendices:  
Appendix 1 – WHQS Quarter 4 Scorecard - Internal & External Property Compliance Chart

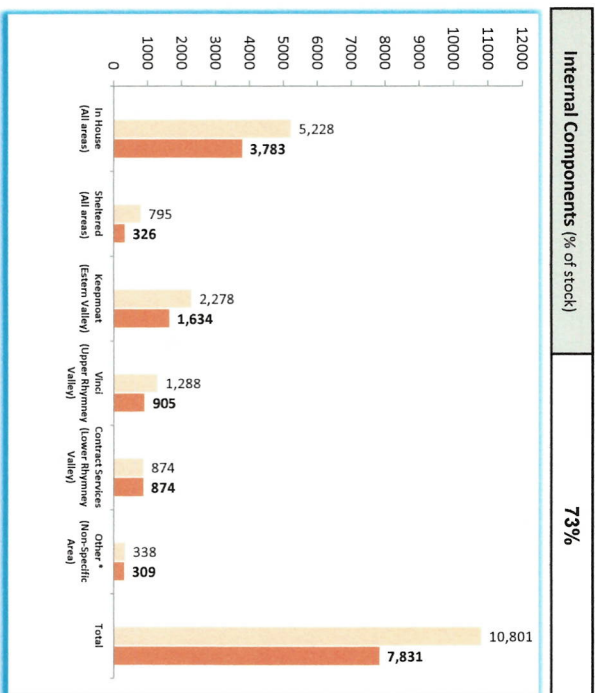
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**WHQS - STRATEGIC SCORECARD - LEVELS OF COMPLIANCE**  
(Standards Met - by Number of Properties)

**APPENDIX 1**

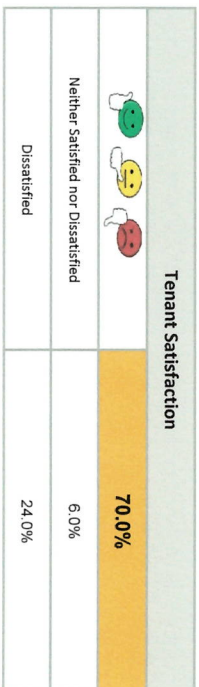
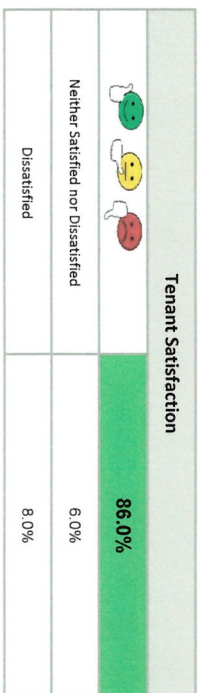
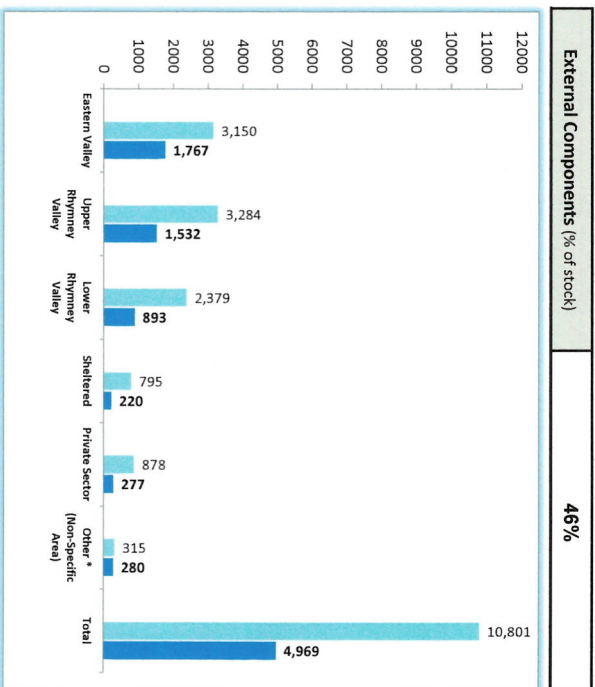
Reporting Period: 30/03/2018

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



Reporting Period: 30/03/2018

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



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

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

**External Works:** There are 10 main elements - Boundary walls, Doors, Drainage works, Fences/Railings/Gates, Curtilage works, Paths/Drives, Roofs, Stores/Sheds/Out buildings, 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

**Notes:**

Work schedules are delivered in a 'phased' (blocks of work) approach across each of the reported and distributed work areas and types of work (Int/Ext). The bar chart 'Targets' are Total Stock Values and the 'Results' are accumulative, as at the time of the Period Reporting Dates. Delivered works are reported by surveyors/contractors upon 'property compliance' (not upon compliance of individual components of work). The results reported above include 'Acceptable Fails'. The charts on this page excludes any works undertaken to leasehold properties.

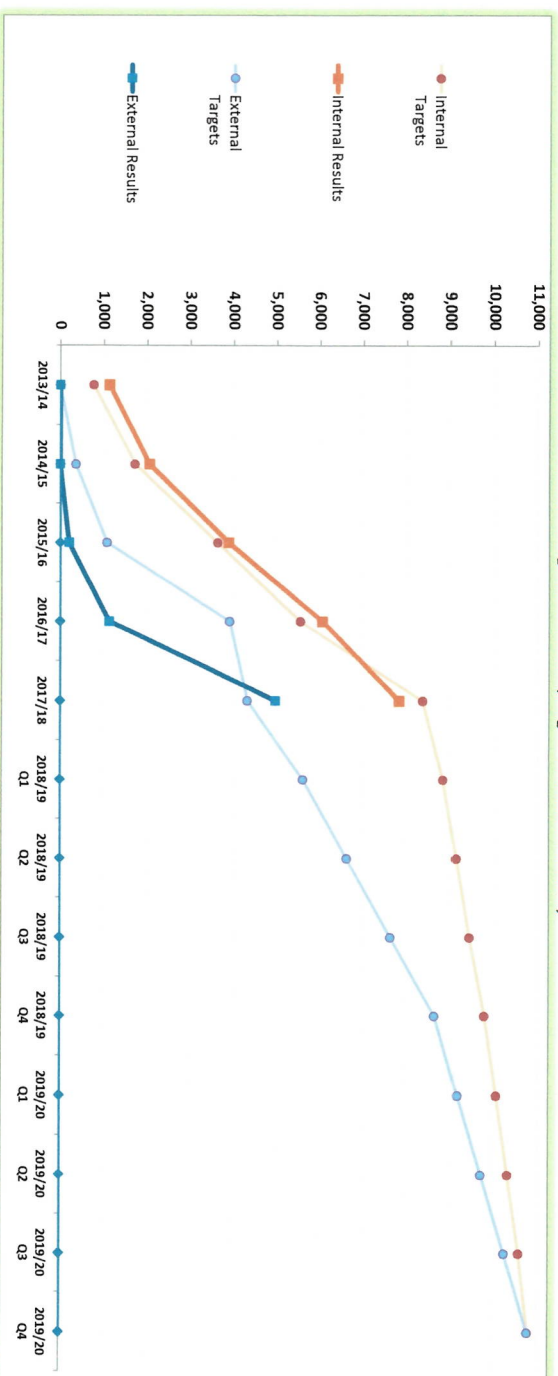
Tenant Satisfaction - shows a '% value' and a 'colour status' based on survey results attained and then compared to the following range:

Red = <= 50% (Needs urgent intervention)  
 Amber = > 50.1% < 79.9% (Needs close monitoring and some intervention)  
 Green = >= 80% (Acceptable)

**Internal Properties**

Acceptable fails on internal elements can be broken down as follows. These are based on surveyed properties as a percentage of total stock.  
 Number of properties with one element as an acceptable fail - 9% - 931 properties  
 Number of properties with two elements as an acceptable fail - 4% - 410 properties  
 Number of properties with three elements as an acceptable fail - 3% - 278 properties

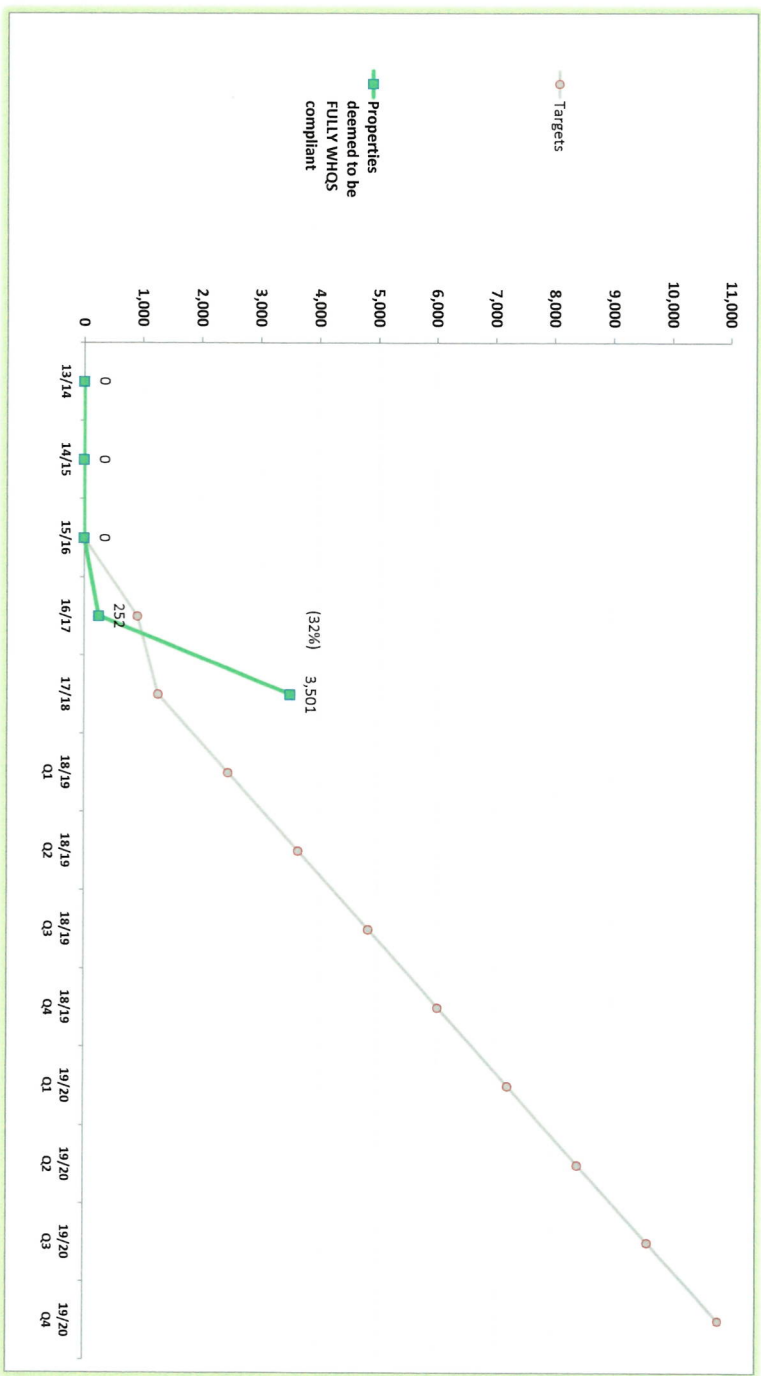
*There are only 3 of the 4 elements (Kitchen, bathroom and heating) that can be included as an acceptable fail. Electrics will never form an acceptable fail due to our statutory duty to comply with health and safety regulations.*



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

**WHQS - Properties fully compliant (total stock)**



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## CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 20TH SEPTEMBER 2018

**SUBJECT: COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS – CAERPHILLY HOMES**

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

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

- 1.1 To provide information on contacts in relation to complaints and representations received by the Authority's Housing Customer Services Section, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.

### **2. SUMMARY**

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

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

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

### **4. THE REPORT**

- 4.1 The annual report is based on information collected during the financial year 1st April 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. Complaints received about the Housing Service are recorded and responded to in accordance with the Council's 2 stage corporate complaints policy which was implemented in April 2013. This was based on guidance issued by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. If, after following these 2 stages, the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint they can progress their complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

## 4.2 Overall Numbers

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

Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 the Customer Services Section of Caerphilly Homes recorded a total of 682 contacts from the public and/or their representative. This is in comparison with 581 between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017. There has been a significant increase in the pace of delivery for the WHQS external works programme and it is considered that this is the reason for the additional number of service requests received during 2017/18.

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

| Function Area        | Chief Exec |            | Service Request |            |
|----------------------|------------|------------|-----------------|------------|
|                      | 2016/17    | 2017/18    | 2016/17         | 2017/18    |
| Response Repairs     | 12         | 10         | 95              | 92         |
| Housing Management   | 32         | 48         | 95              | 88         |
| Antisocial Behaviour | 4          | 3          | 33              | 51         |
| Allocations          | 34         | 37         | 11              | 14         |
| Homelessness         | 4          | 10         | 4               | 11         |
| WHQS Internal        | 7          | 12         | 73              | 79         |
| Heating              | 0          | 3          | 10              | 23         |
| Sheltered Housing    | 3          | 2          | 5               | 7          |
| Grants               | 7          | 8          | 4               | 4          |
| WHQS External        | 1          | 16         | 28              | 76         |
| Rents                | 2          | 3          | 4               | 3          |
| Adaptations          | 1          | 3          | 1               | 4          |
| Energy Works         | 1          | 0          | 0               | 0          |
| Enforcement Action   | 1          | 0          | 1               | 1          |
| Leaseholder          | 4          | 1          | 0               | 1          |
| Other                | 1          |            | 1               | 0          |
| Tenant Participation | 0          | 0          | 0               | 1          |
| Private Landlord     | 0          | 1          | 1               | 1          |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>114</b> | <b>157</b> | <b>366</b>      | <b>456</b> |

4.3 The number of contacts received via an advocate was 224 compared with 168 in 2016/17. Examples of the type of advocates used include MP, AM, Councillors, other tenants and family members.

#### 4.4 Praise and Thanks

Records are also kept of any praise or thanks received by Caerphilly Homes. In 2017/18 there were 78 recorded. This is in comparison with 66 for 2016/17. These covered a number of service areas, as detailed below :-

| <b>Praise or Thanks</b> |                |                |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|
|                         | <b>2016/17</b> | <b>2017/18</b> |
| Rents                   | 5              | 7              |
| Allocation              | 0              | 1              |
| Leaseholder Services    | 4              | 3              |
| Housing Management      | 7              | 8              |
| Responsive Repairs      | 21             | 18             |
| Tenancy Enforcement     | 2              | 4              |
| Tenant Participation    | 6              | 1              |
| Sheltered Housing       | 3              | 8              |
| WHQS                    | 11             | 20             |
| Homelessness            | 0              | 1              |
| Adaptations             | 2              | 1              |
| Heating                 | 3              | 2              |
| Handy Person Scheme     | 1              | 0              |
| Grants                  | 1              | 4              |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>66</b>      | <b>78</b>      |

#### 4.5 Stage 1 and Stage 2 Complaints

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

There were 45 Stage 1 complaints recorded for Caerphilly Homes in 2017/18 compared with 70 in 2016/17. There were 24 Stage 2 complaints in 2017/18 compared with 31 in 2016/17. Of the 24 Stage 2 complaints received in 2017/18, 15 had progressed from a Stage 1 complaint.

As detailed in the table below the largest number of Stage 1 complaints (25) related to housing management issues. An analysis of the Stage 1 housing management complaints shows that they were in relation to a variety of aspects of the service including issues with garages, property conditions, request for rent free period, request to remove ramped access and railings, garden condition and compensation for electric used. 8 of these cases were not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction and progressed to Stage 2 complaints.

There were 6 WHQS (external works) Stage 1 complaints. These related to delays in carrying out the works, carrying out works without prior notice, location of metal storage containers, noise generated from the works, and entering the garden of a private property without giving notice. 3 of these cases were not resolved to the tenant's/resident's satisfaction and progressed to a Stage 2.

| Function Area         | Stage 1 |         | Stage 2 |         | Progressed |         |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------|---------|
|                       | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2016/17    | 2017/18 |
| Housing Management    | 19      | 25      | 8       | 11      | 4          | 8       |
| WHQS (Internal)       | 14      | 3       | 7       | 3       | 5          | 1       |
| Response Repairs      | 16      | 3       | 7       | 1       | 6          | 1       |
| Allocations           | 5       | 2       | 1       | 0       | 0          | 0       |
| Leaseholders          | 4       | 1       | 4       | 2       | 4          | 1       |
| Grants                | 1       | 1       | 0       | 1       | 0          | 0       |
| Anti Social Behaviour | 2       | 2       | 1       | 1       | 1          | 1       |
| Sheltered Housing     | 1       | 0       | 2       | 0       | 1          | 0       |
| WHQS (External)       | 8       | 6       | 1       | 3       | 1          | 3       |
| Private landlord      | 0       | 1       | 0       | 1       | 0          | 0       |
| Homelessness          | 0       | 1       | 0       | 1       | 0          | 0       |
| <b>TOTAL</b>          | 70      | 45      | 31      | 24      | 22         | 15      |

The majority of stage 2 complaints related to the Housing Management function. There were 11 cases in all. 3 of these cases related to issues with garages and the remainder included landlord's consent, decoration allowance, neighbour dispute, re-let standard, noise from WHQS works, request to remove ramp and railings, complaint that works requested by tenant were carried out after the tenant vacated and a request to incorporate additional land at the side of a property following adaptation works.

There were 3 WHQS (internal) Stage 2 complaints. 2 related to the general quality of service and workmanship provided by the contractor and 1 related to the delay in starting the works.

There were 3 WHQS (external) Stage 2 complaints. 1 related to the general quality of service and workmanship provided by the contractor, 1 related to the delay in starting the works and 1 related to claims operatives had been onto an owner/occupier's property without his consent.

#### 4.6 Outcome of Stage 1 and Stage 2 Complaints

The outcome of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints is recorded as not upheld, partially upheld or upheld. The table below shows the outcomes recorded for all Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints recorded for 2017/18.

| Function Area         | Not Upheld | Partially Upheld | Upheld   | Did Not Proceed |
|-----------------------|------------|------------------|----------|-----------------|
| <b>Stage 1</b>        |            |                  |          |                 |
| Housing Management    | 22         | 2                | 0        | 1               |
| Response repairs      | 1          | 2                | 0        | 0               |
| WHQS (internal)       | 1          | 2                | 0        | 0               |
| WHQS (external)       | 5          | 1                | 0        | 0               |
| Allocations           | 2          | 0                | 0        | 0               |
| Leaseholders          | 1          | 0                | 0        | 0               |
| Homelessness          | 1          | 0                | 0        | 0               |
| Grants                | 0          | 0                | 1        | 0               |
| Anti Social Behaviour | 2          | 0                | 0        | 0               |
| Private landlord      | 1          | 0                | 0        | 0               |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>36</b>  | <b>7</b>         | <b>1</b> | <b>1</b>        |

| <b>Stage 2</b>     |           |          |          |          |
|--------------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Housing Management | 10        | 1        | 0        | 0        |
| WHQS (internal)    | 1         | 0        | 2        | 0        |
| WHQS (external)    | 1         | 2        | 0        | 0        |
| Leaseholder        | 2         | 0        | 0        | 0        |
| Response repairs   | 0         | 0        | 1        | 0        |
| Homelessness       | 0         | 1        | 0        | 0        |
| Private landlord   | 1         | 0        | 0        | 0        |
| ASB                | 1         | 0        | 0        | 0        |
| Grants             | 1         | 0        | 0        | 0        |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>17</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>0</b> |

#### 4.6.1 Stage 1's

There was only 1 Stage 1 complaint upheld in 2017/18, compared with 10 in 2016/17. The case related to poor workmanship and the time taken to complete works under a Disabled Facilities Grant. An apology was provided and areas for improvement were discussed with the contractor. The works were later completed to the resident's satisfaction.

4.6.2 There were 2 response repair Stage 1 complaints partially upheld in 2017/18, which is the same as 2016/17. One case related to an owner/occupier next door to a council property having the shared chimney stack removed. Unforeseen works were identified which the resident objected to paying for. In addition the works carried out accidentally resulted in soot entering the living room, causing damage to furnishings. An apology was provided and, as a gesture of goodwill for the inconvenience caused, it was agreed the Council would cover the cost of the additional works. The resident was not satisfied with the outcome and the complaint progressed to a stage 2. The second partially upheld case was in relation to works carried out following a report of damp in the kitchen. The tenant claimed the issue had been ongoing for several years with no resolution. Enquiries showed that a number of jobs had been carried out but in this case it had been a process of elimination to identify the actual cause. An apology was provided for any inconvenience caused and arrangements were made for all necessary works to be completed as soon as possible. These were carried out to the tenant's satisfaction.

4.6.3 There were 2 stage 1 complaints partially upheld in relation to housing management issues in 2017/18, compared with 4 in 2016/17. One case related to an owner/occupier objecting to paying 50% of the costs for removing a joint chimney stack as not all promised work was carried out. The invoice was reduced in recognition of the work charged for but not undertaken. The second case was in relation to the time taken to carry out work to a garage. The tenant handed his keys in months before the work started. Enquiries showed the delay was due to officers waiting for crucial asbestos information. An apology was provided with an assurance the works were now being carried out.

4.6.4 There was 1 WHQS (external) stage 1 complaint partially upheld in 2017/18, compared with 4 in 2016/17. This related to a tenant's concern that no warning was given before soffit was removed, which potentially contained asbestos. An apology was provided for not giving prior notice together with an assurance that the soffit was removed under controlled conditions.

4.6.5 There were 2 stage 1 complaints partially upheld for WHQS (internal works) in 2017/18, compared with 4 in 2016/17. The first case was in relation to a decision not to renew a tenant's kitchen under WHQS. Following a visit by the Project Manager it was identified that some units needed to be repaired and some units and worktops needed to be replaced. The second case related to the length of time to complete the internal works and the general service provided. An apology was provided for any inconvenience caused and the contractor was instructed to complete any outstanding works.

#### 4.6.6 Stage 2's

There were 2 stage 2 complaints upheld for WHQS internal works in 2017/18, compared with 4 in 2016/17. One case related to failure to start the WHQS works on the proposed date and the disruption this caused to the elderly tenant. Problems were being experienced with the contractor being able to resource the required works at this property and others within the contract. This property was removed from the contract and an alternative contractor appointed to undertake the works. An apology was provided for all the inconvenience caused. The second complaint was in relation to the way carpets and floorboards were relayed following works carried out by a contractor to rewire the property. The contractor returned on a number of occasions to try to resolve the issues but ceased trading before a satisfactory outcome could be achieved. Alternative arrangements were made for the Council's own Housing Repair Operations team to complete any outstanding works to the tenant's satisfaction. An apology was provided for any inconvenience caused.

4.6.7 There was 1 stage 2 complaint partially upheld for housing management in 2017/18, which is the same as during 2016/17. This case related to an owner/occupier complaining about the condition of the council tenant's garden next door. The complaint revolved around the unsightly nature and smell of dog excrement and the apparent lack of action being taken by the Housing Department. Officers from within the Housing Department followed the procedures for dealing with breaches of tenancy in relation to garden conditions and also liaised with officers of the Council's Public Protection team. It was explained to the complainant that this could be a lengthy process and the matter was still ongoing. It was acknowledged that Housing Officers may not have consistently been proactive in monitoring the conditions at the property following periods of improvement and an apology was provided for this. The complainant was not satisfied with the outcome and took his complaint to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman was satisfied with the processes being followed by the Council and did not investigate the complaint.

4.6.8 There was 1 stage 2 complaint upheld for response repairs in 2017/18 which is the same as 2016/17. The case escalated from a stage 1 and was in relation to the removal of a shared chimney stack and the costs involved to the owner/occupier. On further investigation it was noted there had been some misunderstanding of the charges involved, created by the wording in correspondence to the owner/occupiers. It was also accepted that the elderly tenants had to wait an unreasonable time for a professional cleaning company to attend to address the accidental soot damage caused to furnishings. The charge to the owner/occupier was reduced in recognition of these issues.

4.6.9 There were 2 stage 2 complaints partially upheld for WHQS external works in 2017/18, compared with 0 for 2016/17. Both cases escalated from stage 1. One complaint was from an owner/occupier in relation to the lack of information provided to residents about the programme of works as well as the general standard of service and work provided by the contractor whilst carrying out the works. Several meetings and site visits were undertaken by senior Housing Officers and representatives of the contractor involved to identify any improvements possible to the service provided. The second case related to delays in WHQS works starting, the disruption caused and outstanding works. On further investigation a couple of issues were acknowledged and arrangements were made for the contractor to return to make good. New supervisory staff were placed on site and an apology was provided for the delays.

4.6.10 There was 1 stage 2 complaint partially upheld relating to the Homelessness service in 2017/18, compared with 0 in 2016/17. This was in relation to the assessment of the applicants' homeless applications and the customer service provided by various officers. On investigation it was found the applications had been dealt with in accordance with the relevant legislation and guidance, however, it was agreed officers would be reminded of the Council's policies on customer service and recommend additional refresher training, as appropriate.

#### 4.7 **Ombudsman Complaints**

There were 6 cases referred to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales after they had followed the Council's corporate complaints procedure in 2017/18, compared with 8 in 2016/17. The Ombudsman decided not to investigate in 5 of these cases. To date, the Ombudsman has not made a decision on the remaining case.

#### 4.8 **Response Target Times**

The Customer Services Section monitors the performance in responding to all contacts recorded by the section, within the corporate timescales. 94% of complaints and representations were responded to within the agreed timescales during 2017/18, which is the same as during 2016/17.

#### 4.9 **Learning from Complaints**

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

- 4.9.1 When asked to complete a Housing Adaptation customer survey form a private resident complained about the poor service she had received from the council and contractor while undergoing adaptation works at her property to install a wet room and ramped access. The resident complained that the concerns she raised during the works were not taken into consideration, including the length of time taken to complete the works and the contractor's performance and workmanship. Following receipt of the form the Principal Housing Officer, based within the Private Sector Housing section, made arrangements to visit the resident and carry out an investigation into the issues raised as a stage 1 complaint. The investigation identified problems with the contractor as well as some communication issues on all sides. The contractor was instructed to carry out some remedial works at the property, which were completed to the client's satisfaction and agreed to make improvements in the areas highlighted to improve the experience for all clients. This complaint was upheld. Lesson learned – any issues raised will be communicated back to officers and the adaptations team will monitor and support the contractor to ensure all concerns are addressed. A new Builders Monitoring data base will be introduced which will help identify any weaknesses in the future.
- 4.9.2 An elderly tenant's son complained on behalf of his mother regarding a succession of delays and conflicting information regarding the start of the WHQS internal works at his mother's home. Having raised his concerns with various officers and no satisfactory outcome achieved the complaint was escalated straight to a stage 2. The complainant stated that when the kitchen and bathroom were surveyed and final plans agreed it was initially proposed that the works would start very shortly but, in any event, three weeks' notice would be given and if this was not convenient the start date could be postponed. This was important to the tenant and her family as all preparatory works would be carried out by the family members. In order to avoid his mother having to cope with any undue inconvenience, noise and dust generated from the works it was the complainant's intention to either accommodate his mother at his home or ensure she was taken out for the day, as necessary. The tenant was eventually given a start date so the family made the necessary arrangements to empty cupboards and accommodate the tenant as best as possible. The complainant then documented a number of delays, changed plans, lack of information and workmen not turning up when expected, all of which caused inconvenience and upset to his mother. These issues were linked to problems with the contractor at the time, which eventually resulted in them going into liquidation. An apology was provided and the property was given to an alternative contractor to carry out the works, which were later completed to the tenant's satisfaction. The complaint was upheld. Lesson learned - improve communications with tenants when issues are identified with a contractor.

4.9.3 Following a report from the tenant of a 'misted' double glazed kitchen unit an appointment was arranged for the glazier to call to measure for a replacement unit. When the glazier attended, at the agreed appointment slot, there was no answer. Attempts were made to contact the tenant, while the glazier was outside, but these were unsuccessful. The tenant subsequently received a recharge for the missed appointment which he appealed against, stating he was out in his back garden when the glazier called and he didn't understand why he needed to be there anyway as the window could be measured from the outside. The decision at the informal review and first stage formal review was the recharge should remain. This was based on the fact the tenant had received a letter giving the specific date and time slot for the appointment and the glazier would have remained at the property for several minutes whilst colleagues attempted to contact him on both his home and mobile number. The tenant was not satisfied with this decision and requested a second stage formal review. This was then considered by the recharge review panel, comprising an independent senior housing officer, tenant and Councillor. The panel's recommendation to the Chief Housing Officer was the recharge should remain as all reasonable efforts were made to contact the tenant in line with the no access procedure. However, after further consideration the Chief Housing Officer decided the recharge should be withdrawn as it was acknowledged the appointment letter did not make it clear enough that the tenant would be expected to be present to allow access into the property and he could have reasonably assumed the measuring could have taken place from outside. Lesson learned – letter amended to advise tenants they are required to provide access into the property when measuring for double glazed units.

#### 4.10 Recharge Panel

The independent Recharge Review Panel was established in July 2016, in order to deal with any second stage formal appeals against recharges. The panel consisted of a Senior Housing Officer, a Councillor and a Tenant. During the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 the panel reviewed 5 recharge appeals. In all 5 cases the recommendation to the Chief Housing Officer was that the recharge should remain. However, in one case, the Chief Housing Officer overturned the decision and the recharge was withdrawn. With regards the recharge review panel itself, a report was approved by Cabinet, in March 2018, that the Rechargeable Repairs and Appeals Panel be discontinued and all second stage formal reviews be investigated using a process that mirrors the second stage of the Corporate Complaints Procedure.

### 5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

### 6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None.

### 7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None.

### 8. CONSULTATION

8.1 Consultation responses have been considered within this report.



## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 This report is for information purposes only.

## **10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

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

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