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Am unrhyw ymholiad yn ymwneud â'r agenda hwn cysylltwch â Sharon Hughes  
(Rhif Ffôn: 01443 864281 E-bost: [hughesj@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:hughesj@caerphilly.gov.uk))

**Dyddiad: Dydd Mercher, 13 Hydref 2021**

Annwyl Syr/Fadam,

Bydd cyfarfod o'r **Pwyllgor Craffu Tai ac Adfywio** yn cael ei gynnal trwy Microsoft Teams ar **Dydd Mawrth, 19eg Hydref, 2021** am **5.30 pm** i ystyried materion a gynhwysir yn yr agenda canlynol. Gall cynghorwyr a'r cyhoedd sy'n dymuno siarad am unrhyw eitem wneud hynny drwy wneud cais i'r Cadeirydd. Mae croeso i chi ddefnyddio'r iaith Gymraeg yn y cyfarfod, a dylid rhoi cyfnod rhybudd o 3 diwrnod gwaith os ydych yn dymuno gwneud hynny.

Bydd y cyfarfod hwn yn cael ei recordio a bydd ar gael i'w weld trwy wefan y Cyngor, ac eithrio trafodaethau sy'n ymwneud ag eitemau cyfrinachol neu eithriedig. Felly, bydd delweddau/sain yr unigolion sy'n bresennol ac/neu sy'n siarad yn ystod ar gael i'r cyhoedd trwy'r recordiad ar wefan y Cyngor yn [www.caerffili.gov.uk](http://www.caerffili.gov.uk)

Yr eiddoch yn gywir,

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

**Christina Harrhy**  
PRIF WEITHREDWR

## A G E N D A

Tudalennau

- 1 I dderbyn ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb
- 2 Datganiadau o Ddiddordeb.

Atgoffi'r Cynghorwyr a Swyddogion o'u cyfrifoldeb personol i ddatgan unrhyw fuddiannau personol a/neu niweidiol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw eitem o fusnes ar yr agenda hwn yn unol â Deddf Llywodraeth Leol 2000, Cyfansoddiad y Cyngor a'r Cod Ymddygiad ar gyfer Cynghorwyr a Swyddogion.

A greener place Man gwyrddach



I gymeradwyo a llofnodi'r cofnodion canlynol:-

- |   |   |        |
|---|---|--------|
| 3 | Pwyllgor Craffu Tai ac Adfywio a gynhaliwyd ar 7fed Medi 2021.  | 1 - 6  |
| 4 | Ystyried unrhyw fater a gyfeiriwyd at y Pwyllgor hwn yn unol â'r drefn galw i mewn.                                 |        |
| 5 | Blaenraglen Waith y Pwyllgor Craffu Tai ac Adfywio.   | 7 - 20 |
| 6 | I dderbyn ac ystyried yr adroddiadau* Cabinet canlynol:-<br>1. Bwrdd Adfywio – Cynigion Prosiect – 15fed Medi 2021. |        |

*\* Os oes aelod o'r Pwyllgor Craffu yn dymuno i unrhyw un o'r adroddiadau Cabinet uchod i gael eu dwyn ymlaen ar gyfer adolygiad yn y cyfarfod, cysylltwch â Sharon Hughes, 01443 864281, erbyn 10.00 a.m. ar ddydd Llun, 18fed Hydref 2021.*

I dderbyn ac ystyried yr adroddiadau Craffu canlynol:-

- |   |   |         |
|---|---|---------|
| 7 | Grwpiau Rheoli Canol Trefi.                     | 21 - 34 |
| 8 | Monitro Cyllideb Cyfrif Refeniw Tai – Cyfnod 5. | 35 - 44 |
| 9 | Walïau cefn George Street, Cwmcarn.             | 45 - 62 |

## Cylchrediad:

**Cynghorwyr** M.A. Adams (Is Gadeirydd), J. Bevan, D. Cushing, C. Elsbury, R.W. Gough, L. Harding, A.G. Higgs, G. Kirby, Ms P. Leonard, Mrs G.D. Oliver, B. Owen, Mrs D. Price, J. Ridgewell (Cadeirydd), Mrs M.E. Sargent, W. Williams a B. Zaplatynski

A Swyddogion Priodol

## SUT FYDDWN YN DEFNYDDIO EICH GWYBODAETH

Bydd yr unigolion hynny sy'n mynychu cyfarfodydd pwyllgor i siarad/roi tystiolaeth yn cael eu henwi yng nghofnodion y cyfarfod hynny, weithiau bydd hyn yn cynnwys eu man gweithio neu fusnes a'r barnau a fynegir. Bydd cofnodion o'r cyfarfod gan gynnwys manylion y siaradwyr ar gael i'r cyhoedd ar wefan y Cyngor ar [www.caerffili.gov.uk](http://www.caerffili.gov.uk). ac eithrio am drafodaethau sy'n ymwneud ag eitemau cyfrinachol neu eithriedig.

Mae gennych nifer o hawliau mewn perthynas â'r wybodaeth, gan gynnwys yr hawl i gael mynediad at wybodaeth sydd gennym amdanoch a'r hawl i gwyno os ydych yn anhapus gyda'r modd y mae eich gwybodaeth yn cael ei brosesu.

Am wybodaeth bellach ar sut rydym yn prosesu eich gwybodaeth a'ch hawliau, ewch i'r Hysbysiad Preifatrwydd Cyfarfodydd Pwyllgor Llawn ar ein gwefan <http://www.caerffili.gov.uk/Pwyllgor/Preifatrwydd> neu cysylltwch â Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol drwy e-bostio [griffd2@caerffili.gov.uk](mailto:griffd2@caerffili.gov.uk) neu ffoniwch 01443 863028.



## HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY,  
7TH SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor J. Ridgewell - Chair  
Councillor M. Adams - Vice-Chair

Councillors:

D. Cushing, C. Elsbury, R. W. Gough, L. Harding, Ms P. Leonard, B. Owen, Mrs M. E. Sargent, W. Williams and B. Zaplatynski.

Cabinet Members:

Councillor. L. Phipps (Housing) and Councillor A. Whitcombe (Sustainability, Planning and Fleet).

Together with:

M. S. Williams (Corporate Director for Economy and Environment), A. Dallimore (Regeneration Services Manager), F. Wilkins (Housing Services Manager), S. Isaacs (Rents Manager), J. Roberts-Waite (Strategic Coordination Manager), M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer), S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer) and J. Lloyd (Committee Services Officer).

### RECORDING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chairperson reminded those present that the meeting was being recorded and would be made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. [Click here to view.](#)

#### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Bevan, A. G. Higgs, G. Kirby, Mrs G. D. Oliver and Mrs D. Price.

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor D. Cushing declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 6 in relation to recycling. The Corporate Director for Economy and Environment advised Members that the remit of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee is only in relation to the Regeneration and Planning element of the Directorate Performance Assessment Six Month Update 2020 report.

### **3. MINUTES – 20TH JULY 2021**

In response to a Members query the Scrutiny Officer agreed to recirculate previous responses in relation to the Dog Control PSPO Proposals report and security of void properties.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 20th July 2021 (minute nos. 1 - 7) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **4. CALL-IN PROCEDURE**

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

### **5. HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Scrutiny Officer presented the report which outlined details of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the period September 2021 to March 2022 and included all reports that were identified at the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 20th July 2021. Members were asked to consider the Forward Work Programme, alongside the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, prior to publication on the Council's website.

Reference was made to the Cabinet Forward Work Programme and clarification was sought as to how the Managing Service Risk at Alert Level Zero report will be monitored. The Corporate Director for Economy and Environment advised the Scrutiny Committee that the report will be considered by Cabinet and there will also be further update reports to Cabinet in terms of monitoring. Members were further advised that the general Corporate Risk Register and the Covid Risk Register are both regularly reviewed by the Corporate Management Team (CMT). The Covid Risk register is reviewed on a monthly basis and the Managing Service Risk at Alert Level Zero report will form part of that monitoring by CMT. It was highlighted that the Risk Register is a live document and available for Members to view.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme be published on the Council's website.

### **REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

Consideration was given to the following reports.

## **6. DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT SIX MONTH UPDATE 2020**

The Corporate Director for Economy and Environment introduced the report to present the Scrutiny Committee with a copy of the Economy and Environment Directorate Performance Assessment (DPA) which is part of the Council's new Performance Framework. Members were referred to the Directorate Performance Assessment at Appendix A and it was pointed out that the section on finance refers to the current year, however it should refer to the closure of the last financial year. Members were advised that a revised report will be sent out subsequent to the meeting.

Clarification and further information were sought in relation to the number of visitors to Cwmcarn Forest Drive. The Regeneration Services Manager provided the Scrutiny Committee with an update on the progress made in relation to Cwmcarn Forest Drive. Members were informed that Cwmcarn Forest Drive is now open and in collaboration with Natural Resources Wales over £1m has been spent in terms of resurfacing works and creating points of interest along the drive. It was highlighted that there are aspirations to turn it into a regional tourist attraction and funding has been secured from the regeneration board budget to appoint consultants to develop a masterplan.

A Member raised a query in relation to the complaints process and highlighted the number of complaints for the Community and Leisure Service. The Corporate Director for Economy and Environment provided an overview of the complaints received and an explanation of how and when they are dealt with. Members were informed that the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales has introduced a new regime where service requests are now classified as complaints, so there will be changes in terms of how complaints are captured and reported on.

The Corporate Director for Economy and Environment highlighted the work undertaken in terms of Regeneration and Planning and placed on record his thanks to the staff who have worked incredibly hard through the pandemic. In particular he highlighted the change to remote Planning Committee meetings and the business as usual approach by the Planning Service despite there being a 50% increase in planning applications. The Director also highlighted the excellent work that had been undertaken by the regeneration staff in terms of supporting businesses throughout the pandemic and working closely with staff in corporate finance to quickly process Welsh Government Covid grants to businesses. Members of the committee also expressed their thanks and asked that they be passed onto the staff concerned.

The Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee reviewed the Economy and Environment Directorate Performance Assessment and discussed, challenged and scrutinised the information contained within.

## **7. CAERPHILLY HOMES DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT YEAR END REPORT 2020/21**

The Cabinet Member for Housing introduced the report to present the Scrutiny Committee with the year-end Caerphilly Homes Directorate Performance Assessment (DPA) which is part of the Council's Performance Management Framework. Members were informed that the DPA is the Directorate's self-assessment and forms part of the Council's overall self-assessment activity and provides information and analysis for the year ending 2020/21. Members were invited to discuss, challenge, and scrutinise the range of information in the DPA. The summary of conclusions as to the top 3 top achievements and 3 areas identified

as areas to improve upon or where there is further learning to be explored were highlighted.

It was highlighted that the Covid-19 pandemic has clearly had a significant impact on services this year with core services being considerably reduced and staff redeployed to support wider Corporate community initiatives, such as the Buddy Scheme. Performance has been impacted as a consequence but essential services have continued to be provided as well as assistance to the most vulnerable groups of clients. The Cabinet Member for Housing placed on record her thanks to all housing staff for their efforts during the Covid pandemic.

The Housing Services Manager provided the Scrutiny Committee with background information to the Caerphilly Homes Directorate Performance Assessment and highlighted the achievements and progress made. It was highlighted that Tenancy Support is one of the areas that has benefited from agile working and home working, as it has increased the capacity to support tenants.

During the course of debate concerns were raised regarding access to Housing Officers. The Scrutiny Committee was advised that there are no dates, at present, for staff to return to the Neighbourhood Housing Offices. Members were informed that some of the phone lines have been changed to increase access to staff and it was highlighted that all Housing Officers have direct lines and also receive enquires through the office. Members were advised to contact the Housing Services Manager if they are experiencing any difficulties regarding access to the Housing Officers, so enquires can be made to ascertain whether it is an IT issue or if further changes need to be made. It was noted that there have been some concerns as to who to contact in relation to the different areas. The Scrutiny Committee was informed that a spreadsheet is currently being produced which will provide all Members with a range of information in relation to the Housing Officers and areas of service. In response to a Members request, it was agreed that a similar document can be made available on-line for members of the public. Following on from previous discussions it was also agreed that a structure of the Housing department would be provided for Members.

During the course of discussion, the Housing Services Manager updated the Scrutiny Committee on the current position of the Neighbourhood Housing Offices and provided Members with information on initiating Community Surgeries. A Member sought further information on Community Surgeries and was advised that as they develop information will be available and publicised. The Officer explained that Members can attend with tenants to provide support or advocacy. Clarification was sought in relation to the increase in tenancy support. The Rents Manager provided Members with a detailed response and gave an overview of the process and different ways of working.

Reference was made to the average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant. The Scrutiny Committee was informed that performance has been significantly impacted during this financial year as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and the approach to delivering Disabled Facilities Grants was explained to Members. During the course of discussion, the importance of customer satisfaction was highlighted and the Housing Services Manager informed Members that the number of days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant is not a reflection on the service provided. Members were also informed that the performance indicator is currently being reviewed.

The Scrutiny Committee reviewed the Caerphilly Homes Directorate Performance Assessment and discussed, challenged and scrutinised the information contained within.

## **8. WELSH GOVERNMENT PROSPECTUS AND PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT PLAN (PDP)**

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report to seek the views of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee prior to the submission of the 2021/22 Programme Development Plan (PDP) and the Local Housing Market Assessment Prospectus to Welsh Government and to Cabinet on 15th September 2021. The report updated Members on the changes that have been made to the way in which the Welsh Government's Social Housing Grant is coordinated and allocated amongst partner housing associations and Caerphilly Homes. It was highlighted that to coincide with this change, Welsh Government have also introduced a series of new requirements including the introduction of a new grant regime and viability model which calculates the proportion of grant allowable on each scheme (known as the Standard Viability Model (SVM); a new Programme Development Plan (PDP) format and a requirement for a Local Housing Market Assessment (LMHA) Prospectus which sets out the housing need and priorities in each local authority area based on the LHMA. The Strategic Coordination Manager provided the Scrutiny Committee with a detailed summary of the report.

A query was raised regarding the Affordable Housing Programme monitoring and governance arrangements, in relation to Scrutiny involvement. The Strategic Co-ordination Manager made reference to detail in the appendices and advised Members that a report will be brought to the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee in early 2022 and further reports would be taken through the scrutiny process periodically.

Clarification was sought on housing need and demand and a Member enquired as to how the assessment showed a nil requirement overall for 2 and 3 bed general needs accommodation. It was outlined to Members of the Committee how this was not the case within his ward as there was a pressing need for 3-bedroom accommodation. The Strategic Co-ordination Manager highlighted how this section of the draft report represented the whole of the county borough which showed a predominant need for 1-person accommodation. It was also outlined Members how, in the future, it was the intention to develop diverse and inclusive housing provision based on evidence and need.

A Member raised concerns regarding the new zoning arrangements and a question was raised as to how this would impact on local delivery requirements. The Strategic Co-ordination Manager stressed the importance of working with new providers to gain an understanding of their development strategies in order to influence decisions on issues such as providing zero-carbon and accessible homes. A further question was raised regarding funding and whether or not the Council would eventually be competing with other housing providers for grant funding. The Strategic Co-ordination Manager outlined the current allocation from the Welsh Government and highlighted that in future there would be competition with housing associations, however there would still be an element of partnership working. Reference was made to appendix 3 of the report and the Officer responded to a number of queries raised in relation to two sites listed under summary of developments funded by the PDP.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the content of the report, PDP and draft LHMA Prospectus. The points raised by Members of the Scrutiny Committee will be incorporated into the report for presentation to Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

The meeting closed at 7.16 p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 19th October 2021, they were signed by the Chair.

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CHAIR





## **HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19TH OCTOBER 2021**

**SUBJECT: HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

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

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

- 1.1 To report the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Forward Work Programmes are essential to ensure that Scrutiny Committee agendas reflect the strategic issues facing the Council and other priorities raised by Members, the public or stakeholder.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To improve the operation of scrutiny.

### **5. THE REPORT**

- 5.1 The Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee forward work programme includes all reports that were identified at the scrutiny committee meeting on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021. The work programme outlines the reports planned for the period October 2021 to March 2022.
- 5.2 The forward Work Programme is made up of reports identified by officers and members. Members are asked to consider the work programme alongside the

cabinet work programme and suggest any changes before it is published on the council website. Scrutiny committee will review this work programme at every meeting going forward alongside any changes to the cabinet work programme or report requests.

- 5.3 The Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1, which presents the current status as at 27<sup>th</sup> September 2021. The Cabinet Work Programme is attached at Appendix 2. A copy of the prioritisation flowchart is attached at appendix 3 to assist the scrutiny committee to determine what items should be added to the forward work programme.

#### 5.4 **Conclusion**

The work programme is for consideration and amendment by the scrutiny committee prior to publication on the council website.

### 6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 No assumptions are necessary.

### 7. **SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 As this report is for information only an Integrated Impact Assessment is not necessary.

### 8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

### 9. **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

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

### 10. **CONSULTATIONS**

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

### 11. **STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 The Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Mark Jacques, Scrutiny Officer jacqu@carphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Dave Street, Corporate Director – Social Services and Housing

Mark S. Williams, Corporate Director of Communities  
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services/ Monitoring Officer  
Lisa Lane, Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer,  
Legal Services  
Councillor John Ridgewell, Chair of Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny  
Committee  
Councillor Mike Adams, Vice Chair of Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny  
Committee

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme
- Appendix 2 Cabinet Forward Work Programme
- Appendix 3 Forward Work Programme Prioritisation Flowchart

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Forward Work Programme - Housing & Regeneration

Appendix 1

Date	Title	Key Issues	Author	Cabinet Member
19/10/21 17:30	HRA Budget Monitoring Report (Period 5)		Allen, Lesley;	Cllr. Phipps, Lisa;
19/10/21 17:30	Town Centre Management Groups	Report on the revised format for the Town Centre Management Group meetings	Wilcox, Steve;	Cllr. Whitcombe, Andrew;
19/10/21 17:30	George Street Walls, Cwmcarn		Wilkins, Fiona;	Cllr. Phipps, Lisa;
30/11/21 17:30	Low Cost Home Ownership Report		Roberts-Waite, Jane;	Cllr. Phipps, Lisa;
30/11/21 17:30	Budget Monitoring Report (Period 5)	To inform Members of the most recent budget monitoring position for 2021/2022 for Communities Directorate Service Divisions	Roberts, David;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
30/11/21 17:30	Oakdale Housing Development	For Cabinet to consider the development options presented by Willmott Dixon on behalf of Caerphilly Homes, on the basis of need and viability with regard to the site of the former Oakdale Comprehensive School.	Roberts-Waite, Jane;	Cllr. Phipps, Lisa;
30/11/21 17:30	Newbridge to Risca Regeneration Masterplan	To obtain approval to consult on the Draft Newbridge to Risca Corridor Masterplan, the 4th of the Masterplans aligned under the regeneration Strategy "A Foundation for Success", which sets out the regeneration aspiration for the area for the next five years and beyond.	Kyte, Rhian;	Cllr. Whitcombe, Andrew;
01/02/22 17:30	HRA Charges (rent increase) report		Street, Dave;	Cllr. Phipps, Lisa;
01/02/22 17:30	Directorate Performance Report – Caerphilly Homes 6 monthly update		Street, Dave;	Cllr. Phipps, Lisa;
01/02/22 17:30	Budget Monitoring Report (Period 7)	To inform Members of the most recent budget monitoring position for 2021/2022 for Communities Directorate Service Divisions	Roberts, David;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
01/02/22 17:30	Information Item - HRA Budget Monitoring Report (Period 7)		Allen, Lesley;	Cllr. Phipps, Lisa;
15/03/22 17:30	HRA Budget Monitoring Report (Period 9)		Allen, Lesley;	Cllr. Phipps, Lisa;
15/03/22 17:30	Information Item - Budget Monitoring Report (Period 9)	To inform Members of the most recent budget monitoring position for 2021/2022 for Communities Directorate Service Divisions	Roberts, David;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;

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13/10/2021 10:30	21st Century Schools – Band B Programme Update	To provide Cabinet with an update on the progress of the 21st Century Schools Band B programme.- Phase 1 & 2.	West, Andrea; Richards, Sue;	Cllr. Whiting, Ross;
13/10/2021 10:30	Car parking at Twyn Car Park and Blackwood High Street Car Park	To consider proposals to manage the interface between business/visitor parking at Twyn Car Park, Caerphilly and Blackwood High Street.	Williams, Mark S;	Cllr. Pritchard, James;
13/10/2021 10:30	Write-off of Debts Over £20,000 – Business Rates Arrears for Limited Companies	To seek Cabinet approval for the write-off of business rate debts for two limited companies where, in each case, the aggregated values per business are greater than £20,000.	Carpenter, John;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
13/10/2021 10:30	Outcome of Public Consultation on a Proposed Community Hall in Ty Sign, Risca	To report on the outcome of a public consultation and to seek the views of Cabinet on the request to lease land at Holly Road, Ty Sign, Risca for the purposes of building a new community hall.	Hartshorn, Robert;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
13/10/2021 10:30	Regeneration Project Board - Project Proposal	Funding from the Regeneration Board is requested to appoint a Multi-Disciplinary consultant team for a period of up to three years to support Council staff and facilitate the delivery of Caerphilly Town 2035	Kyte, Rhian;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;

13/10/2021 10:30	New Respite Facilities	To seek Cabinet approval to build two state of the art respite facilities, one for adults and one for children in order to replace existing facilities.	Williams, Jo;	Cllr. Cook, Shayne;
27/10/2021 10:30	Corporate Performance Assessments (CPA's)	To provide Cabinet with information and detailed analysis of performance for the period 01/04/20 to 31/03/21 and forms part of the Council's self-assessment activity.	Richards, Sue;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
27/10/2021 10:30	Local Housing Strategy	To seek Cabinet approval for the acquisition of the former Oakdale School site from the General Fund to the HRA and the development of the site by Willmott Dixon on behalf of Caerphilly Homes.	Roberts-Waite, Jane;	Cllr. Phipps, Lisa;
27/10/2021 10:30	Annual Performance Report and Corporate Plan 2018-2023	For Cabinet to consider the Council's Annual Performance Report which provides information and analysis of performance against the six well-being objectives for the period 01/04/20 to 31/03/21.	Roberts, Ros; Richards, Sue;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
27/10/2021 10:30	Urgent item - Payment to social care providers from WG Recovery Fund	WG funding available to support independent social services providers.	Williams, Jo;	Cllr. Cook, Shayne;



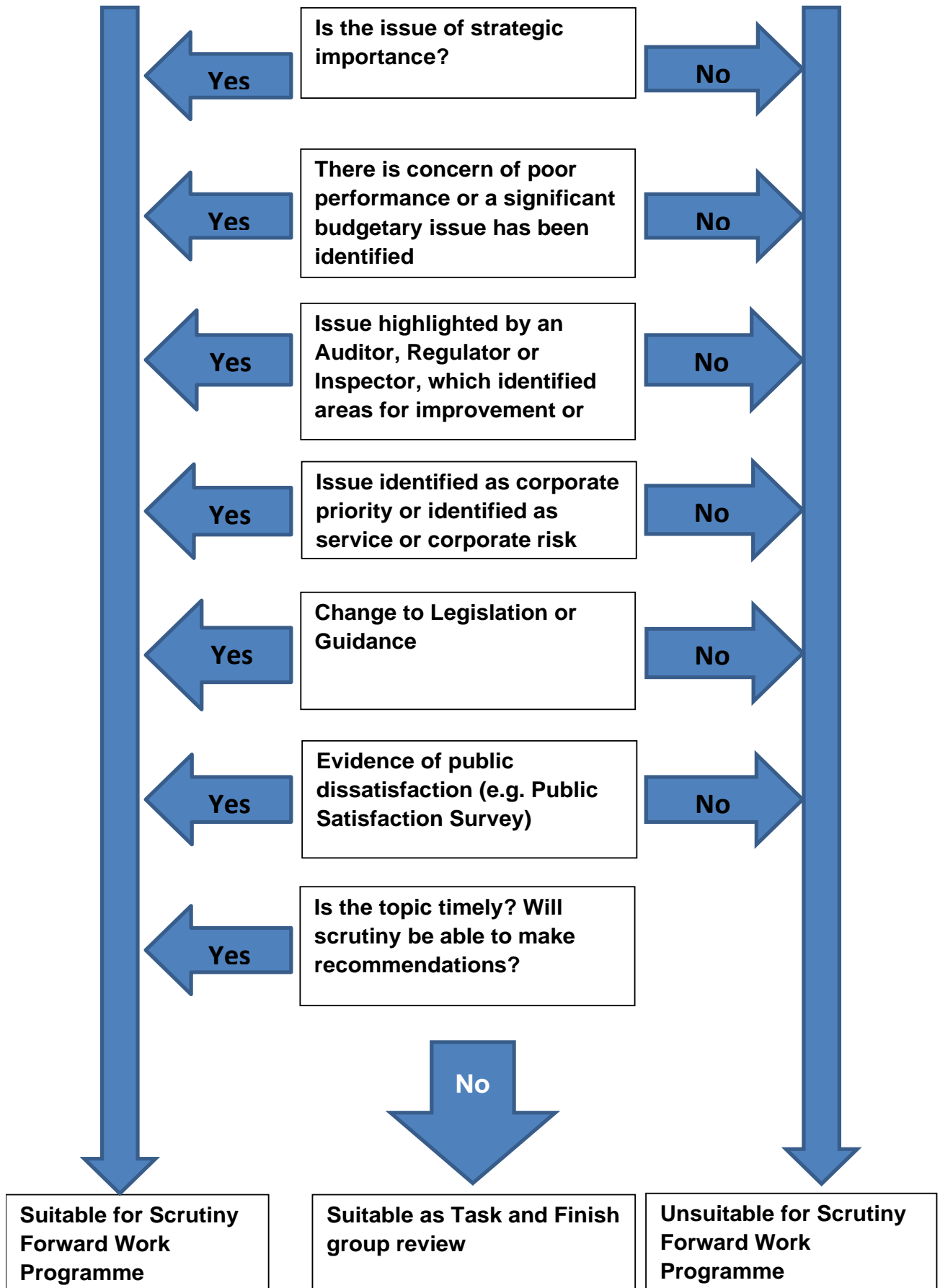
27/10/2021 10:30	Urgent Item – Land at Groveside Road, Oakdale – Alternative Allotment Provisions – Exempt Item	To seek Cabinet approval to purchase land in Oakdale for alternative allotment provision.	Roberts-Waite, Jane;	Cllr. Phipps, Lisa;
10/11/2021 10:30	Commercial & Investment Strategy	For Cabinet to note the progress made against the actions and success measures within the strategy during the first 12 months To seek an extension of an additional 12 months for the refresh of the Commercial & Investment Strategy to November 2022.	Camp, Victoria;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
10/11/2021 10:30	Homeless Project Plan	To provide Cabinet with the Rapid Rehousing and transitional plan which needs to be submitted to WG by June 2022.	Denman, Kerry;	Cllr. Phipps, Lisa;
10/11/2021 10:30	Dog Control PSPO Proposals	To consider the outcome of a public consultation, together with any recommendations from Scrutiny Committee, on proposals to amend and extend the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) relating to dog control to include the exclusion of dogs from marked sports pitches/areas	Hartshorn, Robert;	Cllr. George, Nigel;

10/11/2021 10:30	ASB/street drinking PSPO	To consider the outcome of a public consultation together, with any recommendations from Scrutiny Committee, on proposals to vary and extend the Public Spaces Protection Orders relating to anti-social behaviour and drinking alcohol in a public place	Hartshorn, Robert;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
10/11/2021 10:30	Town Centre Management Groups	Report on the revised format for the Town Centre Management Group meetings	Wilcox, Steve;	Cllr. Whitcombe, Andrew;
10/11/2021 10:30	George Street Walls, Cwmcarn	To seek approval to deploy Private Sector Housing Capital monies to assist private sector homeowners at George Street, Cwmcarn.	Wilkins, Fiona;	Cllr. Phipps, Lisa;
24/11/2021 14:00	Team Caerphilly Transformation Programme – 6 monthly update	To provide Cabinet with an update on progress against the Team Caerphilly Transformation Strategy	Richards, Sue;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
24/11/2021 14:00	Grass Cutting Regime	To seek the views of Cabinet in relation to grass cutting regimes across the county borough and proposals to enhance and promote bio-diversity following consultation with local members and presentation to Scrutiny Committee.	Hartshorn, Robert;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
24/11/2021 14:00	The principles of a regional approach to employability programme	To consider a regional approach to the provision of employment support programmes within the Cardiff Capital Region.	Kyte, Rhian;	Cllr. Marsden, Philippa;

24/11/2021 14:00	Business Rate Relief - WG Funding'	To seek Cabinet approval of a proposal for the distribution of targeted rated relief.	Carpenter, John;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
08/12/2021 10:30	Oakdale Housing Development	For Cabinet to consider the development options presented by Willmott Dixon on behalf of Caerphilly Homes, on the basis of need and viability with regard to the site of the former Oakdale Comprehensive School.	Roberts-Waite, Jane;	Cllr. Phipps, Lisa;
08/12/2021 10:30	Welsh Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032	For Cabinet to consider and approve the new 10 year plan.	Cole, Keri; Mutch, Sarah;	Cllr. Whiting, Ross;
08/12/2021 10:30	Low Cost Home Ownership	The LCHO (Low Cost Home Ownership) report will document the formulation, implementation and the publication of a new policy which governs the process by which the Council will sell homes to people living and/or working in the borough wanting to access homeownership but cannot afford to do so without some form of public subsidy.	Roberts-Waite, Jane;	Cllr. Phipps, Lisa;

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**Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme Prioritisation**



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## **HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19TH OCTOBER 2021**

**SUBJECT: TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUPS**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT**

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

- 1.1 To seek the views of the Scrutiny Committee on a proposed revision to the format of Town Centre Management Groups, prior to consideration by Cabinet. The revised format is being proposed to encourage business and other stakeholder attendance and involvement in the future development of our towns.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The existing Town Centre Management Groups (TCMGs) have operated for a number of years and have developed from their original purpose to focus on practical issues that relate to the town centres (such as car parking, anti-social behaviour and the effect of Traffic Orders) to also consider how best to promote town centres.
- 2.2 The current Terms of Reference were approved by Cabinet in September 2012, whereby membership of the TCMGs was defined as:
- Caerphilly County Borough Council (the appropriate Cabinet Member and Local Ward Members);
  - Gwent Police;
  - Community/Town Council;
  - Chamber of Trade and representatives of other constituted retail groups;
  - Shopping Centre Managers (where they exist);
  - Civic Society/Conservation Group (where they exist);
  - Other constituted organisations recognised by the Council as being stakeholders in the relevant town centre.

All the above organisations (except for the Council and Town/Community Councils) have been required to nominate a representative to attend the TCMG meetings.

- 2.3 The number of active Chambers of Trade/retail groups has reduced since 2012 and it has been acknowledged that there has not been an appropriate level of business representation and engagement via the TCMGs. In order to address this, having regard for the available resources and the need to support post covid recovery, it is proposed to change the format and operation of the meetings to encourage increased business and other stakeholder attendance and engagement at the meetings.

- 2.4 Following successful business networking events held by the Business Enterprise and Renewal Team in 2018 & 2019, it is suggested that the meetings become breakfast/evening events that focus on information sharing and networking opportunities. By holding the events outside of the working day, business owners/representatives are more likely to be able to attend without impacting upon the operation of their business. It is also proposed that the meetings be held at a venue within each individual town centre to make attendance more convenient.
- 2.5 The Terms of Reference for the TCMGs will need to be amended in line with the proposals and a draft is included as an appendix (Appendix 1) to the report.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 That Members consider the proposal to trial an alternative model and recommend to Cabinet a 12-month trial period with the revised format of the TCMGs.
- 3.2 That a further report outlining the results of the trial period be considered after the trial period ends allowing a decision to be taken at that stage on the preferred model of delivery.

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 A revision to the format of the TCMGs will encourage the attendance and engagement of businesses and other town centre stakeholders at the meetings, which it is anticipated will make the Groups more effective in line with their Primary Purpose (as defined within the TCMG Terms of Reference).

### **5. THE REPORT**

#### **Background**

- 5.1 The existing Town Centre Management Groups have evolved historically from the practice of the former Rhymney Valley District Council, which operated Town Centre Management Committees for Caerphilly and Bargoed town centres. Following Local Government reorganisation in 1996, a report was presented to Caerphilly County Borough Council advocating that the Caerphilly Town Centre Management Committee model be continued in a revised format i.e. Town Centre Management Groups.
- 5.2 The 1996 report outlined that the Caerphilly TCMG would act as a consultative forum for proposals affecting the town centre, with a particular focus on practical issues such as:
- Traffic Orders & street lighting issues.
  - Car parking.
  - Collection of refuse.
  - Vandalism and anti-social behaviour.
  - Progress with the Caerphilly Development Strategy.
- 5.3 The group was to comprise representatives of:
- CCBC local Ward Members.
  - Police.
  - Chamber of Trade.



- Community Council.
  - CCBC Officers.
  - Castle Court Shopping Centre.
  - Civic Society.
- 5.4 The Council subsequently resolved to establish a Caerphilly TCMG, and this was quickly followed by similar groups in Bargoed and Blackwood. The remit of all three groups was to serve as a sounding board for opinions and suggestions regarding the town centre, and where financial or policy decisions were to be made to refer these back to the Council.
- 5.5 Following a significant number of developments in the early 2000s such as the publication of the Community Strategy, The Smart Alternative Regeneration Strategy and the Communities First programme, along with the appointment of a Town Centre Development Manager, it was felt that the TCMGs needed to refocus their role to concentrate on wider development issues and the promotion of the respective town centres. As such, the primary purpose of the TCMGs was redefined as a consultative forum for all stakeholders with an interest in the economic, physical, and social well-being of the town centres.
- 5.6 Revised Terms of Reference reflecting the changes outlined in paragraph 5.5 were presented to Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2005.
- 5.7 Following the success of the TCMGs in Bargoed, Blackwood and Caerphilly, it was felt that the TCMGs should be utilised in the other principal town centres within the County Borough. An Assistant Town Centre Manager was appointed in 2011 and the Council's "Unique Places" model of town centre management was subsequently expanded to Risca town centre, followed by Ystrad Mynach town centre.
- 5.8 To coincide with the additional town centre management operational model, the TCMG Terms of Reference were revised to include the establishment of TCMGs in Risca and Ystrad Mynach town centres. A provision was also included for Newbridge town centre as the sixth principal town centre in the County Borough.
- 5.9 The revised Terms of References were approved by Cabinet on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2012. The Terms of Reference have not been amended since.
- 5.10 When the TCMGs were first established, there was an underlying assumption of partnership operation. However, the engagement of retail businesses and other stakeholders within the TCMGs has been mixed. The operation of Chambers of Trade or other retail groups has dwindled in recent years, meaning that there has been little or no engagement with these key stakeholders via the TCMGs when the meetings were operating in their prior format (pre-Covid).
- 5.11 It should be noted that due to only constituted groups being able to attend TCMGs, the number of available business/retail representatives was limited.

## **Proposed new Business Engagement Model**

- 5.12 During 2018 and 2019 the Business Enterprise and Renewal Team held a series of Business breakfast events. The events were hosted by local businesses with invites being sent to other local companies.
- 5.13 The breakfast events were short, sharp, and focused and they included presentations by Officers and/or partner organisations on matters that were of interest/benefit to local business. This gave entrepreneurs the opportunity for discussion and the ability to share experiences and best practice. Importantly businesses were also able to network with each other and partner organisation representatives and importantly learn how to become involved with the Caerphilly Business Club.
- 5.14 These events were very well attended by the business community and positive feedback was received via evaluation questionnaires. In particular, it was noted that a local event being held outside of the working day made attendance convenient and did not interfere with operational requirements. Businesses also noted that the information provided at the events was of use to them and the operation of their businesses. A summary of the findings is included at Appendix 2.
- 5.15 Given the success of these events as a suitable forum for information-sharing and consultation with business, it is considered that this format should be replicated for business partners in our town centres.
- 5.16 The TCMG model is extremely resource intensive and it is considered that it does not presently engender the required sense of town centre ownership with the business community that is needed if our towns are to continue to be successful. It is therefore proposed to trial a series of breakfast and/or evening meetings at venues within each town centre over the next 12 months to determine if this alternative approach is more convenient and effective for business.
- 5.17 Invites will be sent to existing members of the TCMGs as well as the wider town centre business community (within the relevant town centre boundary, as identified in the Local Development Plan). The meetings will consist of presentations on pertinent information with group discussions and will provide opportunities for businesses to engage and network with each other and with partner organisations.
- 5.18 It is proposed that the formal TCMG meetings be suspended whilst the new approach is piloted, initially for a 12-month period.
- 5.19 The meeting structure will be more informal and encourage participation from attendees in wide group discussions or via conversations in the post-meeting networking. The networking opportunity will form part of the agenda to encourage participants to engage in this element of the meeting. Speakers and other organisations will be present to engage and answer questions or queries. Examples of subject matter that will be the focus of the breakfast/evening meetings are:
- Consultation on strategic documents that impact upon the town centre.
  - Partner organisation initiatives, such as those to reduce or combat retail crime.
  - Major developments, such as housing or employment sites.
  - Regeneration projects/initiatives.
  - Training/development opportunities.
  - Cyber security and technology support for businesses.
  - Presentations from organisations offering various support mechanisms for

businesses.

- 5.20 It is felt that this format will be more beneficial to all town centre stakeholders for a variety of reasons, including:
- The meetings will be held in a local venue at a time outside of business hours to enable business attendance.
  - Stakeholders can be represented even if they are not part of a formal organisation (such as a Chamber of Trade).
  - Expert speakers will be able to attend and offer advice and support on a wide range of aspects that are pertinent to town centres.
  - Attendees can network and facilitate business to business contact.
  - Workshop/training sessions can be delivered.
- 5.21 It should be noted that these meetings will be held physically wherever possible and virtually on occasion when Covid restrictions are operational.
- 5.22 It is recognised that the Terms of Reference will need to be amended to reflect the new format. A revised document is attached to this report at Appendix 1. Further to the 12-month pilot period a further report will be presented to Scrutiny and Cabinet to report on the pilot and to determine which town centre engagement model to pursue thereafter having regard for the findings from this pilot.
- 5.23 Members are asked to note that the Town Centre Improvement Group (TCIG) meetings will not be affected by the proposals and will be reconvened to feed into the revised stakeholder model.

## **Conclusion**

- 5.24 The business community is at the heart of our town centres and an engagement model that facilitates more business involvement is fundamental to making our town centres a success.
- 5.25 Due to low attendance by the business community at the TCMG meetings, it is felt that the revised format will encourage business and stakeholder involvement in the meetings and make them a more effective and dynamic consultative forum for business partners.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 It is assumed based on evidence from other successful business events that the suggested format will increase business and stakeholder attendance and engagement.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 The proposed changes to the format of the TCMG meetings will have a neutral impact on protected characteristics and people who are socio-economically disadvantaged.
- 7.2 The proposals will contribute to the existing delivery of the well-being objectives of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Corporate Plan. The recommendations in this report will assist the Authority in its duties as a public body

under the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to contribute to the following well-being goals:

- A prosperous Wales.
- A resilient Wales.
- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales.
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language; and,
- A Wales of cohesive communities.

7.3 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets out the sustainable development principles against which all public bodies in Wales should assess their decision-making. The aim of the legislation is to ensure the well-being of future generations through maximising the contribution public bodies make towards the well-being goals. The principle is also known as the five ways of working and the following are relevant in relation to this report:

- Long Term – Developing long-term aspirations and improvements to our town centres requires effective engagement with the town centre community.
- Prevention – Business and community concerns with town centre problems or issues can be raised quickly and effectively to prevent escalation and long-term implications.
- Integration – Private and public sector partnership is more effective through active engagement, which can be achieved through effective forums such as the TCMGs.
- Collaboration – The TCMGs are inherently collaborative groups when operating effectively.
- Involvement – The TCMGs aim to involve all interested parties in consultation and engagement.

7.4 A full copy of the IIA can be accessed here:  
[Link to IIA](#)

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The cost of hiring appropriate venues and any other requirements for the meetings will be met through the Business Enterprise and Renewal Team's core Town Centre Management budget.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The organisation and running of the meetings will be incorporated into the Business Enterprise and Renewal Team's work programme. Officers from other departments may be required to attend meetings, but this is an established commitment from the established and long-term operation of the TCMGs.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 The draft report has been circulated to the consultees listed below and all comments incorporated into the report and/or the appendix.

10.2 Several consultees requested that meetings are held three times per year as opposed to two. As the new model is being trialled, two meetings will be held in each of the Principal Towns per year for the first twelve months, but the frequency of meetings

thereafter will be a consideration for the follow-up report.

10.3 Of those consultees that commented on the timing of meetings, an evening meeting was preferred.

10.4 One of the Blackwood members raised several specific queries on the report, which are addressed by way of officer responses in bold italics below:

10.4.1 It is essential to have more engagement and communication with traders outside of the formal meetings. ***This will resume as part of the Council's "Unique Places" model of town centre management, although it is important for members to recognise that during Covid the associated restrictions and necessary diversion of resources impacted upon this.***

10.4.2 That the Terms of Reference be amended to include representatives from taxi associations, Aldi, Asda, McDonald's, Blackwood Miners' Institute and the Local Health Board. ***Taxi Associations have not historically been invited to these groups, but the Terms of Reference have been amended to include them as an acknowledgement of them being stakeholders in the town centre. The Terms of Reference have also been amended to include local supermarkets, such as Aldi. It was also requested that membership be open to the landlord of The Marketplace Shopping Centre. The shopping centre will be invited and can nominate a representative who could be the centre manager or the landlord. The Local Health Board will be invited to specific meetings as and when required as guest speakers.***

10.4.3 That resources and engagement needs to be targeted, including an action plan with objectives and timescales, along with a definition of what resources the Council is putting in along with engagement procedures. ***The resources and engagement methods are outlined in paragraphs 5.12-5.23. The aim of the new model is to provide pertinent and appropriate information to businesses at the time of the meeting, as such it would be difficult to formulate an action plan for these groups.***

10.4.4 Can a summary of the feedback received at the breakfast meetings referred to in paragraph 5.14 be provided. ***This is included at Appendix 2.***

10.4.5 It was queried why TCMG Chairs were not invited to the breakfast events referenced in paragraph 5.14. ***For clarity, these were business networking events aimed at the private sector in a specific geographical area and were not town centre focused events.***

10.4.6 Why weren't the Community Safety, Argoed Town Council and Newbridge Members consulted on the report? ***The Council's Community Safety team will continue to be invited to meetings and will have the opportunity to engage where appropriate, as such they were not consulted on this report. Only Town/Community Councils whose boundary incorporates a principal town centre have been consulted on the report. Newbridge town centre does not currently operate under the Council's model of town centre management as it is not a Principal Town.***

10.4.7 It was requested that a business sector member sit on each Scrutiny Committee to provide input. ***This decision would be outside the remit of this report.***

10.4.8 Liaison with supermarket Community Champions on their engagement methods with community groups that operate within town centres was suggested. ***The TCSGs focus is on engagement with the business community, and as such the supermarket Community Champions would be able to attend the meetings as the supermarket's representative.***

10.4.9 The reporting mechanism for the TCMGs was also queried as they are not decision-making committees. ***As per the Terms of Reference, like any consultative committee, the minutes of the TCSGs are referred to the relevant Scrutiny Committee where appropriate and any matter requiring a decision is referred to Cabinet.***

## 11. STATUTORY POWER

12.1 Local Government Act 2000. This is a Cabinet function.

Author: Steve Wilcox, Principal Officer – Town Centres & Business Support,  
wilcosj@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Mark S. Williams, Corporate Director for Economy & Environment  
Rhian Kyte, Head of Regeneration & Planning  
Allan Dallimore, Regeneration Services Manager  
Paul Hudson, Business Enterprise & Renewal Team Leader  
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer  
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer  
Stephen Harris, Head of Business Improvement & S.151 Officer  
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services  
Cllr. Eluned Stenner, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Towns and Property  
Cllr. John Ridgewell, Chair of Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr. Mike Adams, Vice Chair of Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr. Alan Collis, Aberbargoed Ward Member (and Vice-Chair of Bargoed TCMG)  
Cllr. Alan Higgs, Aberbargoed Ward Member  
Cllr. Carol Andrews, Bargoed Ward Member  
Cllr. Tudor Davies, Bargoed Ward Member (and Chair of Bargoed TCMG)  
Cllr. Diane Price, Bargoed Ward Member  
Cllr. Lindsey Harding, Gilfach Ward Member  
Cllr. Nigel Dix, Blackwood Ward Member  
Cllr. Kevin Etheridge, Blackwood Ward Member  
Cllr. Andrew Farina-Childs, Blackwood Ward Member (and Vice-Chair of Blackwood TCMG)  
Cllr. Graham Simmonds, Cefn Fforest Ward Member  
Cllr. Tom Williams, Cefn Fforest Ward Member (and Chair of Blackwood TCMG)  
Cllr. Phillip Bevan, Morgan Jones Ward Member  
Cllr. Shayne Cook, Morgan Jones Ward Member  
Cllr. James Pritchard, Morgan Jones Ward Member  
Cllr. Christine Forehead, St. Martins Ward Member  
Cllr. Elaine Forehead, St. Martins Ward Member

Cllr. Barbara Jones, St. Martins Ward Member  
Cllr. Colin Elsbury, St. James Ward Member (and Chair of Caerphilly TCMG)  
Cllr. James Fussell, St. James Ward Member (and Vice-Chair of Caerphilly TCMG)  
Cllr. Stephen Kent, St. James Ward Member  
Cllr. Nigel George, Risca East Ward member (and Vice-Chair of Risca TCMG)  
Cllr. Arianna Leonard, Risca East Ward Member  
Cllr. Philippa Leonard, Risca East Ward Member  
Cllr. Robert Owen, Risca West Ward Member  
Cllr. Ross Whiting, Risca West Ward Member (and Chair of Risca TCMG)  
Cllr. Donna Cushing, Hengoed Ward Member  
Cllr. Teresa Parry, Hengoed Ward Member  
Cllr. Alan Angel, Ystrad Mynach Ward Member (and Chair of Ystrad Mynach TCMG)  
Cllr. Martyn James, Ystrad Mynach Ward member (and Vice-Chair of Ystrad Mynach TCMG)  
Bargoed Town Council  
Blackwood Town Council  
Caerphilly Town Council  
Gelligaer Community Council  
Risca Town Council

Background Papers:

Regeneration Scrutiny Committee – 13<sup>th</sup> December 2005, Agenda Item No. 7(1)  
Cabinet – 11<sup>th</sup> September 2012, Agenda Item No. 2(1)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Town Centre Stakeholder Groups Terms of Reference (2021)  
Appendix 2 Breakfast event feedback summary

## **Town Centre Stakeholder Groups Terms of Reference**

### **Primary Purpose**

To pilot the new model of town centre business engagement to enhance the town centre management function for the Principal Town Centres for an initial 12 months prior to reporting the outcome of the pilot to Scrutiny and Cabinet for consideration.

Town Centre Stakeholder Groups will operate in Bargoed, Blackwood, Caerphilly, Risca and Ystrad Mynach, as consultative and engagement forums for all stakeholders with an interest in the economic, physical and social well-being of the Principal Town Centres. Each Town Centre Stakeholder Group will:

- Maintain a dialogue between Council representatives and key stakeholders in the Town Centre;
- Act as the link between the services provided by the Council and the Town Centre business community;
- Influence and monitor the future development and diversification of the Town Centre;
- Assist in the development of regeneration initiatives which may impact upon the Town Centre;
- Contribute to the preparation of Placemaking Plans and Masterplans for the Town Centre;
- Consider operational issues that may affect the day-to-day running of the Town Centre.

### **Meeting Structure**

The meeting structure will be more informal and encourage participation from attendees in wide group discussions or via conversations in the post-meeting networking. The networking opportunity will form part of the agenda to encourage participants to engage in this element of the meeting. Speakers and other organisations will be present to engage and answer questions or queries. Examples of subject matter that will be the focus of the breakfast/evening meetings are:

- Consultation on strategic documents that impact upon the town centre.
- Partner organisation initiatives, such as those to reduce or combat retail crime.
- Major developments, such as housing or employment sites.
- Regeneration projects/initiatives.
- Training/development opportunities.
- Cyber security and technology support for businesses.
- Presentations from organisations offering various support mechanisms for businesses.

This format will be more beneficial to all town centre stakeholders for a variety of reasons, including:

- The meetings will be held in a local venue at a time outside of business hours to enable business attendance.
- Stakeholders can be represented even if they are not part of a formal organisation (such as a Chamber of Trade).
- Expert speakers will be able to attend and offer advice and support on a wide range of aspects that are pertinent to town centres.
- Attendees can network and facilitate business to business contact.



- Workshop/training sessions can be delivered.

It should be noted that these meetings will be held physically wherever possible and virtually on occasion when Covid restrictions are operational.

### **Membership**

- Chamber of trade;
- Representatives of town centre businesses;
- Local supermarket representatives;
- Community/Town Council;
- Shopping Centre Managers (where they exist);
- Civic Society/Conservation Group (where they exist);
- Taxi Association (where they exist);
- Youth Forum representative;
- Police;
- Caerphilly County Borough Council (the Cabinet Member for Customer, Performance and Enterprise and Local Ward Members).

Each organisation (with the exception of Town/Community Councils) will be able to send one representative. Town/Community Councils can nominate two representatives. The Clerk of relevant Town/Community Councils may also attend as a non-voting member.

### **Administrative Support**

Business Enterprise & Renewal Team – Caerphilly County Borough Council.

### **Frequency**

Stakeholder Meetings will take place as a minimum twice a year initially, and on any other occasion when the Cabinet Member for Customer, Performance and Enterprise deems appropriate.

### **Agendas**

It will be the responsibility of the Principal Officer – Town Centres & Business Support to prepare the Agenda. Any member of the Town Centre Stakeholder Group wishing for an item to be placed on the agenda, should send the request by e-mail, or in writing to the Principal Officer – Town Centres & Business Support, no later than fourteen days before the date of the meeting.

**Town Centre Stakeholder Groups  
Appendix**

**Wards Eligible To Attend Town Centre Stakeholder Meetings**

**Bargoed TCSG** - Aberbargoed, Bargoed, Gilfach

**Blackwood TCSG** - Blackwood, Cefn Fforest

**Caerphilly TCSG** - Morgan Jones, St. Martins, St. James

**Risca TCSG** - Risca East, Risca West

**Ystrad Mynach TCSG** - Hengoed, Ystrad Mynach

**Caerphilly Business Breakfast Network Events 2018/19**  
**Evaluation Summary**

1. Was the duration of the event

Too Long	Too Short	Just Right
7%	5%	88%

2. Was the event beneficial for your business needs?

Yes	No
94%	6%

3. Did you make any new contacts that might lead to new business?

Yes	No
80%	20%

4. Which day would you prefer breakfast events to be held on?

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
10%	29%	27%	25%	9%

5. How would you rate your overall satisfaction of this event?

Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
73%	22%	4%	1%

6. Would you attend another breakfast network event?

Yes	No
96%	4%

Venue/Arrangements

Were you happy with:

7. The venue?

Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
71%	20%	8%	1%

8. The seating?

Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
70%	22%	6%	2%

9. The catering?

Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
65%	27%	7%	1%

10. The Speaker?

Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
83%	9%	8%	0%

11. The administration of the event?

Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
86%	11%	3%	0%

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## HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19TH OCTOBER 2021

**SUBJECT: HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET MONITORING – PERIOD 5**

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

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

- 1.1 To inform Members of the projected position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the 2021/22 financial year, based on the income and expenditure movements of the first 5 months of the year. The HRA capital programme which is predominantly funded by the HRA is also included within this report

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Members will be aware of the distinction between the HRA, which is funded by rental income received from council tenants, and General Fund Housing activities, which fall under the General Fund and are funded via Council Tax and the Revenue Support Grant (RSG). Although there is a clear separation of these funds, the majority of council tenants rent is funded from housing benefits which are derived from the taxpayers' purse and therefore value for money must always be sought.
- 2.2 The HRA budget for 2021/22 is £51.7m with its main components consisting of £17m of salaries, £8m of capital financing charges, £4.6m of building maintenance & response repairs (net of salaries), £2.7m of internal service recharges, and £15.6m of revenue contributions to fund the WHQS programme. There is also a budget of £11.5m for the PAMS (Post Asset Management Strategy) which is recharged fully to the Capital Programme and predominantly covers the maintenance of the WHQS programme, voids and remodelling works. The spend on the HRA is self-financed mainly by the rental income we collect from our Council Tenants, of which about 72% is funded by Housing Benefits. The main projected variances on the HRA are explained below.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Members are requested to note the contents of the report.

#### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To ensure that Members are informed of the financial position of the Housing Revenue Account.

#### **5. THE REPORT**

##### **5.1 Introduction**

- 5.1.1 The HRA has a projected under spend of £1.8m for the end of 2021/22 financial year, which represents about 3.6% of the total HRA budget. This is based on the income and expenditure patterns for the first 5 months of the year together with knowledge of the service from the respective managers. The main variances are summarised below, and full financial details are provided in Appendix 1.
- 5.1.2 At this stage there is a need to commit £1.05m of this underspend towards two areas as one-off expenditure items. Firstly, whilst Housing are in the process of migrating to a new IT system, there is a need to ensure continuity of service and to address potential migration issues as we transition to the new system. Housing therefore need to maintain technical support with the current IT support provider for the next 6 months at a cost of approx. £53k.
- 5.1.3 Secondly, £1m additional funding is required to address extensive scour and loss of riverbank support immediately behind residential properties along Montclair Avenue, Blackwood where Caerphilly Council retained the riparian ownership and liability of the watercourse. Cabinet agreed on the 29<sup>th</sup> September that total funding of £1.5m be made available to deliver this scheme (including £500k that had previously been committed within the HRA under the Contingency budget).

##### **5.2 Salaries & Mileage (£801k under spend)**

- 5.2.1 Salaries and associated costs within the HRA are currently expected to underspend by some £801k which represents about 5% of the salary budget. There are some offsetting over and under spends in this area given the volume of staff which includes sickness cover, requests for reduced hours and timing for filling vacant posts

##### **5.3 Non-Pay Related (£193k under spend)**

- 5.3.1 Part of this underspend (£93k) is associated with office related costs such as stationery, photocopying and postage, mainly as a result of offices not being occupied because of Covid-19 restrictions. These savings are likely to increase throughout the year until a decision is made on returning to the office in the future. Budgets can then be aligned more appropriately.
- 5.3.2 A further £100k underspend is attributable to budgets that are service specific such as, allocation recharges, tenant participation and utility charges within our sheltered schemes. Some costs however have increased due to Covid-19 restrictions such as security of void properties, and Council Tax charges on void properties.

##### **5.4 Building Maintenance & Response Repairs (£605k under spend)**

- 5.4.1 This area is currently projecting an underspend of some £605k. This is predominantly within the cyclical and revenue projects which includes damp proofing, non – DLO works, sheltered & infrastructure projects. Expenditure on the Housing Response Operations (HRO) budget is anticipating a £331k underspend overall which includes salaries and non-

pay savings identified in 5.2 & 5.3 above. There is currently a reduced spend on sub-contractors and materials as a result of Covid recovery and is projected based on the spend to date. However, spend is likely to increase to account for the backlog of repairs that the team were unable to complete during the pandemic. Furthermore, indications are being reported of an increase in material prices nationally which could affect contractor's ability to procure supplies efficiently.

5.4.2 A budget of £11.5m has been allocated for the In-House team who support the capital programme. The work involved includes the final delivery of the WHQS Programme, maintenance of the WHQS programme through the PAMS programme, sheltered remodelling and some void works. There is a nil cost to the HRA because the cost is fully recharged to the capital programme. However, there is a predicted underspend of £2.7m due to reduced expenditure on sub-contractors, materials and salary savings which means this will be passed onto the capital programme in year. Covid-19 had a detrimental effect on the commencement of the PAMS programme which has been reprofiled to fit in with the revised completion of WHQS. Members will be aware that Welsh Government have confirmed that the extended deadline for authorities to achieve WHQS is now December 2021. Members are informed, however, that Caerphilly Homes was on target to meet our June 2020 deadline had the pandemic not occurred and are confident of completion prior to the revised deadline.

#### 5.5 **Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) (£171k under spend)**

5.5.1 Current forecasts on the HRA debt charges are slightly lower than budgeted, due to a higher level of capital receipts in the previous year, which has resulted in a lower Minimal Revenue Provision (MRP) charge and interest charge.

5.5.2 Further borrowing to complete the WHQS programme this year is not anticipated. This is due to the £10m underspend the previous year which has been carried over to fund the remainder of the WHQS work.

5.5.3 The 2021/22 Housing Business Plan shows borrowing from 2022/23 and 2023/24 of £17.7m to fund the commitments built into the plan for increasing housing supply.

#### 5.6 **Income (£110k variance)**

5.6.1 Variations represent less than 0.5% of the total income budget and includes a 7.5% reduction on the service charges to tenants due to restricted use of communal areas during Covid.

#### 5.7 **Revenue Contributions to Capital Outlay (RCCO)**

5.7.1 The HRA allows for some £15.6m of revenue contributions towards finalising and maintaining the WHQS programme.

5.7.2 The HRA RCCO allocation will fund the capital spend this year in addition to the £7.3m Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) from Welsh Government. The MRA allowance will need to be utilised first as this funding does not carry over into financial years.

5.7.3 Although there is some predicted underspend on the In-house workforce delivery team, it is assumed that the RCCO will be fully utilised at this stage, and HRA balances will receive the reduction first, but any variations will be reported in further budget monitoring reports throughout the year. The internal WHQS programme for the in-house team has been completed with a small number outstanding with one contractor due to be completed by the end of September 2021. External work also has a small number outstanding but has been

extended to December 2021 due to one contractor going into administration.

5.7.4 Total capital spend to period 5 is some £1.9m which is predominantly WHQS work. Spend is lower this quarter compared to previous years quarters for a number of reasons. This year we are focussing on finalising the last tranche of properties to meet WHQS which although smaller in volume to previous years, is taking longer to complete due to Covid restrictions. Reduced expenditure will inevitably arise from the delay in progressing with the PAMS programme but any savings are retained within Housing. In previous years, HRA underspends and capital slippage was earmarked towards completing the WHQS programme. Going forward, as we finalise the achievement of WHQS, any surpluses should be redirected into increasing housing supply.

5.7.5 WHQS Internal works as at the end of period 5 is 99.89% compliant

5.7.6 WHQS External works as at the end of period 5 is 99.72% compliant

5.7.7 Full WHQS compliance (where properties have achieved both internal and external compliance on a contract basis) is 99.41%.

## 5.8 HRA Working Balances

5.8.1 Working balances at the start of 2021/22 financial year were £14.1m. The majority of this is derived from underspends in 2020/21 as reported in previous reports and will be utilised this year against the remainder of the WHQS Programme if needed.

## 5.9 COVID-19

5.9.1 Members will recall the significant financial impact Covid-19 had on the HRA last financial year, with no support from Welsh Government. Whilst some costs have reduced (eg buddy schemes) we have tried to absorb some of the costs going forward, although there are still some areas that are experiencing higher cost levels than normal (eg additional vehicles for social distancing), and of course we still require a suitable level of PPE equipment. However, as mentioned earlier in the report, there are some offsetting savings such as office related costs and mileage due to the majority of staff working from home.

## 6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 The projected outturn position is based on actual income and expenditure details for the first five months in the 2021/22 financial year. However, spend and income activity has been unprecedented during this time which makes it difficult to compare results to preceding years or indeed forecast for future years.

## 7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 An IIA has not been completed to accompany this report as it is for information.

## 8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 As detailed throughout the report.



## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

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

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

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

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Cllr M Adams, Vice Chair Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr L Phipps, Cabinet Member for Housing & Property  
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A Edmunds, WHQS Implementation Project Manager  
J Fellows, Housing Repair Operations Manager  
J Roberts-Waite, Strategic Co-ordination Manager  
S Isaacs, Rents Manager  
K Denman, Housing Solutions Manager  
R Williams – Group Accountant (Treasury & Capital)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 HRA Financial Plan 2021/22 period 5

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## Appendix 1

Housing	Estimate 2021/22	Projected Outturn 2021/22	Variance 2021/22
<b><u>HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT</u></b>	£	£	£
<b><u>SUMMARY</u></b>			
GENERAL MANAGEMENT	1,874,613	1,816,661	57,952
CAPITAL FINANCING	8,083,135	7,912,569	170,566
CENTRAL RECHARGES	2,745,024	2,745,024	-
STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE	1,919,958	1,782,701	137,257
PUBLIC SECTOR HOUSING	6,086,179	5,708,323	377,856
SUPPORTED HOUSING	-	-	-
BUILDING MAINTENANCE SERVICES	31,018,422	29,992,552	1,025,870
<b>GROSS EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>51,727,331</b>	<b>49,957,830</b>	<b>1,769,501</b>
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>(51,727,331)</b>	<b>(51,838,246)</b>	<b>110,915</b>
<b>(SURPLUS)/DEFICIT CONTRIBUTION (TO)/FROM WORKING BALANCES</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(1,880,416)</b>	<b>(1,880,416)</b>
<b><u>HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT</u></b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b><u>GENERAL MANAGEMENT</u></b>	<b>1,874,613</b>	<b>1,816,661</b>	<b>57,952</b>
<b><u>CAPITAL FINANCING COSTS</u></b>			
Interest Charge	5,660,208	5,492,672	167,536
Principal	2,372,927	2,369,897	3,030
Debt Management	50,000	50,000	-
Rescheduling Discount	-	-	-
<b>EXPENDITURE TO HRA SUMMARY</b>	<b>8,083,135</b>	<b>7,912,569</b>	<b>170,566</b>
<b><u>CENTRAL RECHARGES</u></b>			
Central Recharges	2,248,134	2,248,134	-
Grounds Maintenance recharge to HRA	496,890	496,890	-
<b>EXPENDITURE TO HRA SUMMARY</b>	<b>2,745,024</b>	<b>2,745,024</b>	<b>-</b>

<b><u>HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT</u></b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b><u>STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE</u></b>			
Housing Strategy and Development	1,919,958	1,782,701	137,257
Transforming Lives and Communities	-	-	-
<b>EXPENDITURE TO HRA SUMMARY</b>	<b>1,919,958</b>	<b>1,782,701</b>	<b>137,257</b>
<b><u>HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT</u></b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b><u>PUBLIC SECTOR HOUSING</u></b>			
Landlord General	349,520	316,533	32,986
Sheltered Accommodation	1,516,702	1,361,447	155,255
Holly Road Community Support	4,782	4,791	(9)
Eastern Valley Area Housing Office	821,998	855,674	(33,676)
Upper Rhymney Area Housing Office	895,888	837,352	58,536
Lower Rhymney Valley Area Housing Office	31,002	33,361	(2,359)
Lansbury Park Neighbourhood Housing Office	322,495	303,378	19,117
Graig Y Rhacca Neighbourhood Housing Office	303,759	287,040	16,719
Housing Allocations Contribution	128,845	112,889	15,956
Tenants & Communities Involvement	371,885	352,429	19,456
Leaseholders Management	46,635	31,710	14,925
Tenancy Enforcement	338,675	326,693	11,982
Rents	991,213	922,245	68,968
Community Wardens	(37,219)	(37,219)	-
<b>EXPENDITURE TO HRA SUMMARY</b>	<b>6,086,179</b>	<b>5,708,323</b>	<b>377,856</b>

<b><u>HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT</u></b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b><u>RESPONSE REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE</u></b>			
<b>Employee Expenses net of recharges</b>	<b>655,194</b>	<b>615,424</b>	<b>39,770</b>
<b>Repairs &amp; Maintenance on Housing Stock</b>			
Responsive Repairs	10,873,564	10,542,864	330,700
Revenue Contribution to Capital – WHQS Programme	15,589,241	15,589,241	-
Group/Planned Repairs (priorities 5 & 8)	-	-	-
Void Repairs (priority 6)	-	-	-
Depot Recharges	100,000	100,000	-
Revenue Projects	1,894,000	1,402,454	491,546
Planned Cyclical	1,762,600	1,607,476	155,124
Planned Programme	-	-	-
	<b>30,219,405</b>	<b>29,242,035</b>	<b>977,370</b>
<b>Transport Related</b>	<b>15,980</b>	<b>15,010</b>	<b>970</b>
<b>Supplies and Services</b>	<b>127,843</b>	<b>120,083</b>	<b>7,760</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE TO HRA SUMMARY</b>	<b>31,018,422</b>	<b>29,992,552</b>	<b>1,025,870</b>

<b><u>HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT</u></b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b><u>INCOME</u></b>			
<b><u>Rents – Dwelling</u></b>			
Gross Rent – Dwellings	(46,165,179)	(46,766,886)	601,707
Gross Rent – Sheltered	(4,675,807)	(4,071,621)	(604,186)
Gross Rent – Hostel	-	-	-
Voids – General Needs Dwelling/Sheltered	1,271,025	1,109,121	161,904
Additional Income O/Side Rent Debit (WHQS)	-	(1,333)	1,333
Voids – Hostel	-	-	-
<b>Net Rent</b>	<b>(49,569,961)</b>	<b>(49,730,720)</b>	<b>160,759</b>
<b><u>Rents – Other</u></b>			
Garages	(351,694)	(351,191)	(503)
Garage Voids	117,099	116,002	1,097
Shop Rental	(54,488)	(54,488)	-
	<b>(289,083)</b>	<b>(289,677)</b>	<b>594</b>
<b><u>Service Charges</u></b>			
Sheltered – Service Charges	(1,271,043)	(1,217,429)	(53,614)
Sheltered – Heating & Lighting	(106,268)	(83,193)	(23,075)
Sheltered & Dispersed – Alarms	-	-	-
Catering Recharge – Sheltered Accommodation	-	-	-
Voids Schedule Water	114,507	82,355	32,152
Non Scheduled Water Rates	(31,914)	(26,014)	(5,900)
Welsh Water Commission	(560,569)	(560,569)	-
Leaseholder – Service Charges	-	-	-
	<b>(1,855,287)</b>	<b>(1,804,850)</b>	<b>(50,437)</b>
<b><u>Government Subsidies</u></b>			
Housing Subsidy	-	-	-
	-	-	-
<b><u>Interest Receivable</u></b>			
Mortgage Interest	-	-	-
Investment Income	(10,000)	(10,000)	-
	<b>(10,000)</b>	<b>(10,000)</b>	-
<b><u>Miscellaneous</u></b>			
Miscellaneous	-	-	-
Private Alarms	-	-	-
Ground Rent	(3,000)	(3,000)	-
	<b>(3,000)</b>	<b>(3,000)</b>	-
<b>INCOME TO HRA SUMMARY</b>	<b>(51,727,331)</b>	<b>(51,838,246)</b>	<b>110,915</b>



## HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19TH OCTOBER 2021

**SUBJECT: GEORGE STREET REAR WALLS, CWMCARN**

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

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval to deploy Private Sector Housing Capital monies to assist private sector homeowners at George Street, Cwmcarn to fully participate in a priority retaining wall and steps replacement programme planned for council owned properties during 2021/22 and 2022/23. The scheme will not be able to proceed without inclusion of the privately owned properties.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The rear retaining walls of properties at 1 to 46 George Street, Cwmcarn, are in an advanced state of structural disrepair. Caerphilly Homes is due to undertake a retaining wall replacement programme to the council owned properties at George Street in order to achieve compliance with WHQS as most of these properties are currently designated as 'acceptable fails due to timing and remedy'.
- 2.2 Officers, having studied the defective walls and associated party structure steps consider that, due to the design and construction of the existing structures, the programme to the 30 Council owned properties can only be achieved if the walls and steps to the 16 privately owned properties are undertaken at the same time. Realistically, however, to encourage full participation by private owners would inevitably require the offer of financial assistance in the form of grant aid.
- 2.3 This report looks at the reasons for the renewal programme being undertaken and for proposing to offer support to the private owners in the form of 100% grant aid. The report also outlines potential funding sources to facilitate such an offer.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that, in addition to the Housing Revenue Account funding the works required to the Council properties:

- Financial support be offered to homeowners at 1 to 46, George Street for the renewal of the rear retaining walls and steps and associated works in the form of a 100% grant.
- Funding for the inclusion of private sector properties in the scheme should be made available from existing Private Sector Housing Capital balances.
- That Members endorse the recommendation prior to Cabinet approval

#### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To facilitate the improvement of Council properties in George Street, Cwmcarn in order to achieve the Welsh Housing Quality Standard and to address the significant structural disrepair of the retaining walls and steps in George Street, by adoption of an holistic, tenure blind strategic approach to the physical regeneration of George Street by way of a Group Repair scheme.

#### **5. THE REPORT**

- 5.1 1 to 46 George Street, Cwmcarn comprise pre 1919 traditionally constructed terraced properties constructed along the contours of the valley. The properties are two storey to the front elevation. three storey to the rear, with basements accessed externally. The rear door into the properties is at first floor level, accessed first via shared party steps to the garden then jointly constructed steps up to the rear door.
- 5.2 All are large 4 bed houses, 16 of which are now privately owned, although it is likely that all would have originally been within Council ownership. Historically a small number were proactively marketed for sale when void due to high maintenance costs and low demand and others were sold through the Right to Buy. Caerphilly Homes have a limited number of 4 bed homes with most in high demand for families with 3 or more children. However, the George Street properties are low demand, primarily due to the tiered and steeply sloping gardens.
- 5.3 In order to improve the rear gardens the levels of many have been raised in an ad hoc manner by various tenants and owners, and some Council properties have been let in a condition that has not allowed the ingoing tenant to start their tenancy with a readily useable garden space. The design and condition of the rear of the properties means that many families with very young children are not able to use the rear gardens at all.
- 5.4 Most of the Council owned walls are likely to have been pointed under a planned maintenance contract some 15 to 20 years ago. Most walls are heavily overgrown with a covering of vegetation. Whilst generally the walls are upright there is evidence of disrupted pointing, missing stonework, some movement and bulging within them to varying degrees with some overloaded by ad hoc structures constructed above.
- 5.5 The issue of the rear walls has been raised over many years and in 2015 routine repairs were placed on hold pending WHQS, due to the scale and difficulty of the project. The rear walls to numbers 33 & 34 collapsed in January 2015 and the rear lane was temporarily closed for safety reasons. Surveys of the retaining walls were undertaken by colleagues in Property Services and Building Control with the rear wall to number 18 identified as dangerous and taken down by Caerphilly Homes in



February 2015. Emergency powers were used by Building Control to demolish the retaining wall of a private property in June 2016.

- 5.6 It has not been possible to adequately enforce tenancy conditions as the gardens have become increasingly inaccessible for residents. Whilst it was initially anticipated that the issues to the rear retaining walls and steps would be addressed by the WHQS programme in 2019/20 the sheer scale and complexity of the required scheme of works and the perceived inability to address the Council properties in isolation from those that were privately owned rendered this impossible and, whilst significant external works were undertaken to the houses and upper steps, only minimal works were undertaken to most rear gardens. When cleared, it was identified that many had been contaminated with sewage due to fractures along the length of the main sewer which had not been noticed because the areas were so overgrown. Remedial works were undertaken by Welsh Water in late 2019.
- 5.7 For WHQS purposes the Council properties have been classified as 'acceptable fails due to timing and remedy' but it is considered that these walls now need to be rebuilt as a matter of some urgency. Walls to two adjoining Council owned properties (5 & 6) have now deteriorated to such an extent that they have just had to be taken down for safety reasons and the gardens battened back as a temporary measure pending the outcome of this report. Colleagues in Property Services have undertaken topographical surveys and produced construction drawings and anticipated costings for the renewal of the walls and steps in the street, and the creation of safe, useable gardens, and have confirmed that, from a practical perspective, due to the design and construction of the existing walls and steps the scheme cannot be undertaken without inclusion of the private sector properties.
- 5.8 It is recognised that the ultimate responsibility for maintenance of the private sector properties falls to the owner and, in most other planned maintenance schemes, owners having exercised their right to buy are not afforded financial assistance to repair their homes in line with the planned maintenance ambitions of the council in respect of its own stock. There is though merit in making an exception in respect of George Street for the reasons stated above. In addition, strategically planned renewal has enormous benefits in respect of economies of scale, quality control and a finished product that is both aesthetically pleasing and represents value for money.
- 5.9 A 'tenure blind' approach such as this has been taken on a number of occasions previously by way of Housing Action Area initiatives, Priority Neighbourhood schemes and Renewal Area activity. Whilst funding for such schemes has, in the main, come from Welsh Government, we have on occasions used corporate capital funding for work programmes, including at Graig Y Rhacca and Lansbury Park.
- 5.10 It is estimated that the rebuilding of the walls and steps will cost around £44,000 per pair of properties, although this may be reduced if agreement can be reached with residents on providing a single continuous wall rather than renewing the lower rear steps, which would also improve and increase the size of the gardens. Whilst the cost of the works to the Council properties can be funded from the Housing Revenue Account, this funding stream cannot be utilised for the private sector properties. Using the cost estimates, full participation by the homeowners would require budget provision of £352,000. To maximise participation 100% grants would need to be awarded without applying a means test or post grant ownership conditions, by way of a Group Repair scheme.
- 5.11 There is funding available to assist owners at George Street using underspends in the Private Sector Housing Capital Programme, with Covid restrictions significantly

affecting private sector housing programmes in 20/21. There are also capital monies available from improvement grant deposit balances.

## **Conclusion**

- 5.12 The rear retaining walls and party steps to the 30 Council and 16 privately owned properties at 1 to 46 George Street are in an advanced state of disrepair and are required to be renewed as soon as possible in order to ensure the safety of residents and the wider community, and the integrity of the housing stock. A comprehensive reconstruction scheme has been developed and funding has been identified for the works required to the Council owned homes, however these walls and steps cannot be renewed in isolation from the walls and steps of the adjoining private sector properties. Approval is being sought to deploy approximately £352,000 of available Private Sector Housing Capital monies for the cost of reconstruction works to the private sector properties by way of a Group Repair Scheme.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 The projected costs are estimated to reflect the prepared reconstruction proposal but will be subject to a full tender process in line with Standing Orders. Current contractor and material shortages make it difficult to provide accurate estimates at this time.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 As the report proposes that 100% grant assistance be offered to the private owners of properties at 1 to 46, George Street and that no post completion grant conditions would be imposed requiring that the grants be repaid an Integrated Impact Assessment is not required.
- 7.2 If the proposal is approved a comprehensive engagement exercise would be undertaken with the residents of 1 to 46, George Street regarding the proposals, and to seek consent from the individual private owners to proceed with the proposed scheme of works.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The total cost of the scheme is approximately £1m, of which the HRA will be responsible for £660k, in relation to the proportion of council tenanted properties. The remainder of the scheme relates to the proportion of private owners and will be approximately £352k. Officers are satisfied that funding for the private sector element of this initiative can be made available from within the existing Private Sector Housing Capital Budget allocation and balances, and funding is available from the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme for the works required to the Council owned properties.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications arising from this report.

## 10. CONSULTATIONS

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

## 11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 N/A

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	Cllr Mike Adams	- Vice Chair Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
	Cllr Lisa Phipps	- Cabinet Member for Housing
	Cllr Denver Preece	- Local Ward Member, Abercarn
	Cllr Andrew Whitcombe	- Local Ward Member, Abercarn
	Dave Street	- Corporate Director Social Services & Housing
	Stephen R Harris	- Head of Corporate Finance & S151 Officer
	Lesley Allen	- Principal Group Accountant, Housing
	Alan Edmunds	- WHQS Implementation Project Manager
	Jason Fellows	- Housing Repair Operations Manager
	Claire Davies	- Private Sector Housing Manager
	Neil Challenger	- Principal Housing Officer (Technical)
	Julie Reynolds	- Landlord Services Manager
	Elizabeth Willington	- Area Housing Manager
	Tracy Lundy	- Housing Manager

Appendix 1 - Photographs of George Street

Appendix 2 – Street plan

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Appendix 1 – George Street Walls



Rear Elevations of George Street.





Example of Shared Lower Steps



Example of Upper Steps





Examples of Rear Retaining Walls



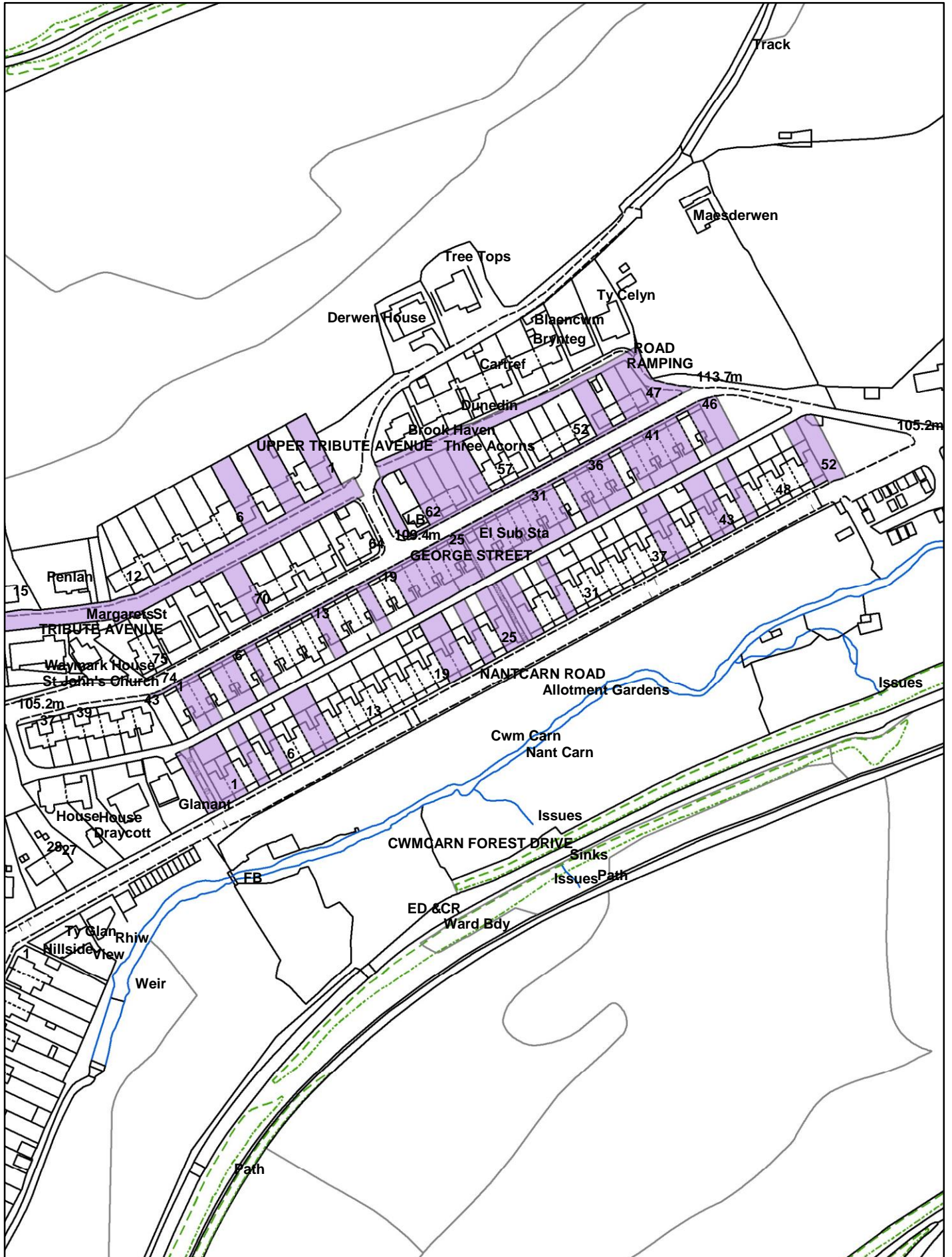
Examples of Rear Retaining Walls







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