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**Date: 9th September 2015**

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, 17th September, 2015** at **5.00 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda.

Yours faithfully,

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

**Chris Burns**  
INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## A G E N D A

	Pages
1 To Appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair for the Ensuing Year.	
2 To receive apologies for absence.	
3 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.	
4 Terms of Reference.	

A greener place Man gwyrddach



To approve and sign the following minutes: -

5 Caerphilly Homes Task Group (WHQS) held 2nd July 2015 (Minute nos . 1 - 8). 1 - 6

To receive and consider the following report and make recommendations to Cabinet: -

6 Proposed Inspection Programme for Council Properties. 7 - 14

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

7 Remodelling of Sheltered Housing Schemes. 15 - 36

To receive and note report subject of Officer delegated decision but referred to CHTG for consultation: -

8 Community Improvement Fund. 37 - 40

To receive and note the following information items: -

9 Complaints and Representations - Caerphilly Homes. 41 - 48

10 Annual Review of the Tenancy Review Panel. 49 - 52

11 A Progress Report on the Development of a Common Housing Register & Common Allocation Policy. 53 - 58

12 Handling of Damp and Condensation Complaints - Update Report. 59 - 80

13 End of Year Report on the Housing Division's 2014/15 Service Plan. 81 - 110

14 To receive any requests for an item to be included in the next available agenda.

**Circulation:**

Task Group Members: L. Ackerman, Mrs G. Atkins, Mr C. Davies (Vice Chair), Miss E. Forehead, Ms J. Gale, K. James, Mrs B. A. Jones, Ms S. Jones, Miss A. Lewis, C.P. Mann, Mr M. McDermott, Mrs D. Moore, Mr J. Moore and D.V. Poole,

And Appropriate Officers



## CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP (WELSH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH  
(SIRHOWY ROOM) ON THURSDAY, 2ND JULY 2015 AT 5.00 P.M.

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PRESENT:

C. Davies- Vice Chair (Presiding)

### Task Group Members:

Ms L. Ackerman, Mrs G. Atkins, Ms E. Forehead, K. James, Mrs S. Jones, Miss A. Lewis, M. McDermott, and D.V. Poole.

R. Beasley (Project Manager & Co-ordinator), P. Davy (Head of Programmes), S. Isaacs (Senior Rents Officer), M. Lloyd (Deputy Head of Programmes), K. Watkins (Communications & Tenant Engagement Officer) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs B. Jones, C. Mann, J. Moore, Mrs D. Moore and Mrs D. Price.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mrs G. Atkins, Mr C. Davies, Mrs S. Jones, Miss A. Lewis and Mr M. McDermott as Council Tenants declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in all agenda items.

### 3. MINUTES – 21ST MAY 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 21st May 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 4. TENANT SUPPORT FOR UNIVERSAL CREDIT - PRESENTATION

R. Beasley and S. Isaacs provided the Caerphilly Homes Task Group with a presentation on Tenant Support for Universal Credit, following a Task Group Member request.

Universal Credits was introduced in Caerphilly Job Centres from May 2015, with a few claimants being transferred. Universal Credit combines 6 benefits/ tax credits into one single monthly payment and it is anticipated that through gradual movement, all claimants will be transferred to Universal Credits by 2019.

The Task Group noted that Universal Credits can be applied for online and would be paid to a household on a calendar monthly basis in arrears. There are concerns that the impact of payment changes could result in rent arrears for tenants, issues with online resources, budgeting skills, increase in existing debts through late payments and an increase in the use of loan sharks and pay day loans.

It was noted that Caerphilly are looking into Alternative Payment Arrangements for vulnerable Tenants, in which Housing Benefit would be paid directly to the Local Authority to ensure rent and arrears are paid. After a set period of time, the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) would contact the landlord/ Local Authority to confirm whether direct payments can be reinstated.

Discussions took place around Trusted Landlord Status, which would initially be awarded to Local Authorities and Social Landlords, however, extension is being considered to Private Landlords.

In preparation for the change, Caerphilly has implemented a number of changes such as Digital Support, Job Clubs with Caerphilly First, staff training and learning from previous welfare reforms.

Tenants can expect a number of new services to assist with the process, for example, tenants will be contacted and offered support as soon as they are notified about the changes, text reminders, direct debit for rent, facilities made available to pay cash and referrals to specialists for assistance.

A Task Group Member requested further information on the changes and impacts to Housing Benefit payments and Sanctioning of Job Seekers Allowance under Universal Credits. The Officers explained that Sanctions are still possible for certain elements of Universal Credits, however, Housing Benefit would still be paid to the claimant.

The Task Group thanked the Officers for the presentation and requested that it be forwarded to all Councillors for information.

## **5. CAERPHILLY HOMES COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

The report sought the views of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on a new communications strategy and action plan for implementation prior to its consideration at Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

Effective communications is essential to ensuring all stakeholders have an awareness of the Caerphilly Homes brand and are kept up to date on progress across the housing service. Key to effective communications is the delivery of timely messages, using a range of methods appropriate for specific target audiences. But more than simply sending messages out, effective communication also relies upon creating opportunities for open and transparent two way dialogue with stakeholders.

The draft strategy and action plan would replace the former 'Housing and WHQS Communications Strategy' which lapsed in 2015. The new draft strategy strongly advocates a 'one housing service' approach to communications in order to more effectively embed the Caerphilly Homes ethos throughout the division.

The Caerphilly Homes Task Group provided positive comments and feedback on the report and following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the officer's report, the Caerphilly Homes Task Group support a recommendation to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet to adopt the communications strategy and action plan.

## **6. WHQS POSITION STATEMENT**

The report provided an overview of the current position within the WHQS Programme and the challenges facing the Council to achieve the standard by 2020.

The Task Group noted that, following stock transfer ballot in 2012, an investment strategy, implementation plan and staffing structure was agreed and, with consideration for the transition period for transferring contracts from the former planned maintenance to the new WHQS arrangements, the new programme commenced in 2013/14. During 2013, a series of procurements were conducted to appoint the supply partner, and internal and external works contractors. However, a number of setbacks were experienced resulting in significant slippage and therefore, it has been necessary to implement a number of additional measures to increase capacity and spread the risks.

In addition, changing circumstances, including increased costs above the Savills budget estimates, unanticipated stock condition deterioration, and the HRAS buy out (Which resulted in a borrowing cap) pose constraints and challenges. The report outlined the current position and measures being taken to ensure that the objective of meeting WHQS by 2020 can still be achieved.

A Task Group Member wished it noted that, whilst there are significant challenges ahead, the programme is monitored and the Task Group is kept well informed on progress and developments, Good quality standards have been met, which has resulted in high levels of tenant satisfaction.

Discussions took place around the extensive works at Rowan Place and the impact on the remainder of the programme. The Task Group raised concerns around the communication and planning to of the programme. The Officer confirmed that, in addition to a number of other factors, Rowan Place has contributed to the slippage in the programme, due to the amount of work that was required, which was not anticipated based on the Savills survey.

The Keystone system was discussed and the Task Group sought further information on implementation delays. The Officer explained that the system required a great deal of populating in order to be fit for purpose and there was some reluctance from staff, however, with sufficient training and a clear understanding of the functionality of the system, the process has improved. In addition, it was noted that tablet technology has been procured, which enables staff to conduct surveys and complete forms, and upload that information electronically to Keystone.

Further information was sought on the works process, the length of notice given to tenants before works commence and notification of anticipated completion times. The Officer explained that a Charter for Trust was agreed between the Local Authority and Tenants and therefore a minimum of 10 days notice was to be provided to tenants prior to work commencing on site. Project Managers are required to ensure that deadlines are met by contractors and appropriate notice provided to tenants.

The Caerphilly Homes Task Group noted the report.

## **7. WHQS PERFORMANCE MONITORING 2014-15 (FULL YEAR)**

The Caerphilly Homes Task Group considered a report which outlined the arrangements in place to monitor and manage the performance of the WHQS programme for 2014-15.

Performance is monitored and managed formally via the WHQS Management Delivery Team meetings, which occur every month.

The Task Group noted that the WHQS internal works programme for 2014-15 included 889 properties. Within this programme 52 properties were surveyed and found to require no works. Of the remaining 837 properties, work on 556 was undertaken by the in-house workforce, supported by specialist sub-contractors. The remaining 281 properties were planned to be undertaken by the three main contractors; Keepmoat (Eastern Valleys); Contract Services (Lower Rhymney Valley); and Vinci (Upper Rhymney Valley). As of 5th June 2015, 439 properties within the in-house contractor programme were compliant in respect of their internal elements (73%). Details of compliance levels for each of the 31 contracts in the internal works programme 2014-15 are included in the report.

Customer surveys for measuring tenant satisfaction levels and compliance with service standards have been implemented for the internal works contracts. Results from the 104 surveys received demonstrated an overall satisfaction level for internal works of 90%. They also reveal that 93% of the standards measured within the Charter for Trust documents were achieved. An external works survey has been designed and will be implemented in 2015-16.

The Task Group were asked to note that whilst work continues to produce a performance dashboard for external works, details of works completed on the external works programme 2014-15 have not been entered into the Keystone system, therefore, performance information is currently not available.

A Member sought clarification on the number of properties within their ward which were identified for external works. Officers agreed to check the information and provide email feedback to the Task Group.

The Task Group discussed the outcome of the satisfaction surveys. A Member sought further information on the low level of satisfaction in one particular area. Officers highlighted that there was a concern with the clarity of how information is analysed as the questionnaire allows tenants to select "neither satisfied or dissatisfied". The number selecting this option will be reported in future.

Members discussed the issues that were highlighted within the report with some of the contactors and sought further information. Officers explained a number of issues have arisen with various contractors, which are dealt with on an ongoing basis. Contract Management is a critical role for the WHQS team to ensure that performance is managed in order to meet targets and quality standards.

A Task Group member requested further information on the work conducted with contractors and vulnerable tenants. Officers explained that there is no requirement for contractors to undertake a DBS check and it is the role Tenant Liaison Officer (TLO) to identify any vulnerable tenants and mitigate any issues in conjunction with the contractors.

The Caerphilly Homes Task Group thanked the Officer for the report and noted its contents.

## **8. TO RECEIVE ANY REQUESTS FOR AN ITEM TO BE INCLUDED ON THE NEXT AVAILABLE AGENDA**

The following requests were received: -

1. Miss A. Lewis queried when an update would be reported on the Common Housing Register and Common Housing Allocations Policy.
2. Miss A. Lewis queried when an update would be reported on the Housing Improvement Partnership (HIP).

3. Councillor E. Forehead requested a report on the number of Council House properties within the WHQS Programme which are 7.5 Meters in height or above (3-storey).

The meeting closed at 6.57 p.m.

Approved as a correct record subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 17th September 2015.

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CHAIR

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## CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 17TH SEPTEMBER 2015

**SUBJECT: PROPOSED INSPECTION PROGRAMME FOR COUNCIL PROPERTIES**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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- 1.1 The attached report, which proposed the introduction of regular property and tenancy inspections for Caerphilly Homes, was considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 14th July 2015, prior to its presentation to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group and thereafter Cabinet.
- 1.2 The report outlined the existing inspection arrangements and considered the option of introducing more formal arrangements for regular property and tenancy inspections for Caerphilly Homes. The report highlighted the potential benefits of a regular inspection programme to both tenants and Caerphilly Homes, the need for a structured approach and the proposed procedure to be implemented. Full details of the proposals were appended to the report.
- 1.3 Representatives of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group were invited to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting to summarise their views arising from the proposed inspection arrangements. They expressed concerns that the new programme could lead to an invasion of privacy and result in added cost pressures for tenants in respect of them carrying out repairs prior to an inspection. Representatives cited the additional resources that would be needed to inspect all Caerphilly Homes and the possible duplication of work (in that they had already been inspected as part of the WHQS programme). They suggested that instead of regular inspections, tenants who did not leave their homes in acceptable condition at the end of the tenancy should be charged for remedial works.
- 1.4 Officers gave assurances that they were not proposing a brand new inspection process but were seeking to make better use of the existing arrangements in place, and provided examples of how the process would be conducted. It was explained that formal arrangements would assist in early intervention measures and allow the Council to carry out their duty of care to tenants. A concern was also raised regarding the impact of these proposals on existing staff resources and it was confirmed that Officers would provide a progress update to Members in 12 months' time.
- 1.5 Following consideration of the report, and in taking into account the views of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group representatives, the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee unanimously recommended to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group (and thereafter Cabinet) that for the reasons contained therein:-
  - (i) consideration be given to pursue the introduction of regular property inspections for all Caerphilly Homes tenants as per the proposed procedure outlined in Section 4.4 of the Officer's report;
  - (ii) implementation of the proposal be reviewed and further annual reports be submitted to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group in order to monitor progress and evaluate the success of the procedure.

1.6 Members are asked to consider the recommendations.

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

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Report to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 14th July 2015 – Agenda Item 9



## **POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 14TH JULY 2015**

**SUBJECT: PROPOSED INSPECTION PROGRAMME FOR COUNCIL PROPERTIES**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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

- 1.1 To consider the introduction of regular property and tenancy inspections for Caerphilly Homes.
- 1.2 This report is being presented to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for consideration and thereafter submitted to Caerphilly Homes Task Group.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The report outlines the existing inspection arrangements and considers the option of introducing more formal arrangements for regular property and tenancy inspections for Caerphilly Homes.
- 2.2 The report highlights the potential benefits of a regular inspection programme to both tenants and Caerphilly Homes.

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

- 3.1 The Welsh Housing Quality Standard is intended to ensure that all local authority and housing association homes are improved and maintained to achieve specified standards.
- 3.2 The Single Integrated Plan 2013-2017 has a priority to “Improve standards of housing and communities, giving appropriate access to services across the County Borough.
- 3.3 The Council’s Local Housing Strategy “People, Property, and Places” has the following aim:  
  
“To provide good quality, well managed houses in communities where people want to live, and offer people housing choices which meet their needs and aspirations.”

### **4. THE REPORT**

- 4.1 At a recent Policy & Resources meeting Members requested Housing Management pursue the option for introducing regular tenancy inspections to improve the general management of properties, identify support for tenants and to monitor conditions.

## 4.2 Existing Arrangements

- 4.2.1 The Caerphilly Homes tenancy agreement states that the tenant is responsible for keeping the property, including garages and outbuildings, in a good state of interior decoration, repair and cleanliness. There is also a requirement to keep any garden, yard or forecourt, including hedges, which form part of the property in a cultivated and tidy condition.
- 4.2.2 Detailed property inspections are currently undertaken by Estate Management Officers (EMO's)/Surveyors when tenants notify of their intention to terminate their tenancy, as properties become vacant or when tenants request a mutual exchange or a housing transfer. This equates to detailed inspections being carried out to approximately 15% of the housing stock per annum.
- 4.2.3 EMO's/Surveyors also carry out general visits for other tenancy management purposes, for example when tenants request landlords consent to undertake alterations at the property, chasing outstanding debt, garden inspections or following up on complaints and will identify and report any issues or concerns relating to the property or tenancy during these visits. These issues may be dealt with as a breach of Conditions of Tenancy, or depending on the circumstances for referral to support agencies.
- 4.2.4 Repair Surveyors visit when necessary to inspect for repairs when they are reported by tenants. This could result in visits to approximately 30% (3,500) of the housing stock and again will result in the Surveyors identifying and reporting back to the EMO's any issues or concerns relating to the properties.
- 4.2.5 Tenant Support Officers visit to offer financial guidance and support for tenants who are in rent arrears, impacted by Welfare Reform or to assist those who request financial advice in order to prevent financial hardship. They report back any concerns identified with property conditions to EMO's. Visits are conducted to approximately 2500 properties per annum, which equates to 23% of the stock.
- 4.2.6 Garden inspections are currently undertaken by EMO's during the summer months. This is undertaken proactively whereby tenants receive prior notification of an inspection by letter. Any gardens identified as being unsatisfactory will be recorded and the garden procedure will be implemented. Gardens can also be identified whilst visiting an area for other reasons, or to follow up on complaints.
- 4.2.7 New tenants are visited one month after their tenancy start date by the EMO to ensure they are occupying the property and to provide detailed advice and guidance in relation to their Tenancy Agreement and their responsibility for tenancy conditions and requirements.
- 4.2.8 Annual gas servicing inspections are undertaken as a legal requirement. Although this service is carried out by external contractors, they may provide information to the Housing office if there are any particular concerns in relation to property or tenancy issues, but there is no contractual requirement for them to do so.
- 4.2.9 Currently internal property surveys are carried out in line with the investment programme for the purpose of WHQS improvement works. It is anticipated that Surveyors will visit approximately 3,500 properties per annum to undertake internal and external surveys. This provides a further opportunity for staff to report back to the relevant Housing office if any concerns are identified with property conditions, tenants or members of the household.
- 4.2.10 Estate walkabouts have been held in two neighbourhood housing areas to date. Tenants are invited to join housing officers on a walk to identify any issues with the general environment rather than with individual properties. However, there is potential to identify any problems with garden conditions, or unreported repairs. Further walkabouts are to be arranged.
- 4.2.11 Ad hoc inspections and visits are undertaken by various officers as and when any need is identified or on request as matters arise. This would include Tenancy Enforcement Officers

who attend properties for a variety of reasons often linked to Anti-Social Behaviour, breaches of tenancy or complaints. This would entail officers visiting approximately 1200 properties per annum with any tenancy/property concerns being reported back to the relevant EMO.

#### 4.3 Structured approach

- 4.3.1 Although it is clear from the above information that regular property inspections are undertaken, these tend to be on an ad-hoc basis by different officers and could include repeat visits to some properties although some properties may not be visited at all. It is proposed that a more structured approach is adopted to tenancy inspections for the long term benefit of tenants and Caerphilly Homes and a consistent process introduced to record and monitor any issues raised.
- 4.3.2 A more structured approach of regular tenancy inspections in all properties will enable Caerphilly Homes to encourage the development of better relationships with tenants, support tenancy sustainment, promote tenant involvement and raise tenants' awareness as to their obligations.
- 4.3.3 The inspections will provide data and records of conditions internally and externally at the properties and identify any other tenancy related issues to enable tenant information to be updated on the housing database.
- 4.3.4 Visiting personnel will be able to identify any unreported repair concerns, enquire as to the welfare of the tenant, make referrals or signpost the tenant for any necessary support services or assistance they may need.
- 4.3.5 There will be opportunities for housing staff to work positively with tenants for addressing rechargeable repairs and unauthorised tenant alterations.
- 4.3.6 The inspections will assist the housing staff in getting to know their tenants and confirm who is occupying the properties. There would also be the opportunity for identifying non-occupation, subletting and tenancy fraud concerns.
- 4.3.7 The housing staff will be able to build stronger relationships with tenants and provide potential opportunities for obtaining information for future tenant profiling.
- 4.3.8 As WHQS improvements progress, the inspections will assist in monitoring that these standards are maintained by the tenant and Caerphilly Homes.
- 4.3.9 The inspections will provide an opportunity to further develop the Authority's Accessible Housing Register by ascertaining the level of accessibility of the property for disabled tenants, thereby assisting in the future allocation of properties.
- 4.3.10 There will be a requirement for Caerphilly Homes to notify the tenant giving appropriate notice of its intention to carry out an inspection of the property.
- 4.3.11 A formal procedure and agreed record keeping arrangements will need to be introduced to complement this work so it is consistently applied across the borough.

#### 4.4 Proposed Procedure

- 4.4.1 Due to the number of properties in Council ownership, it is not considered practical to undertake annual inspections to every property utilising existing resources. However, as explained previously, inspections are already being undertaken for a large percentage of our stock on a regular basis and it is therefore proposed that such inspections are carried out in a more co-ordinated way with any issues recorded and actions monitored.
- 4.4.2 The procedure will involve sending out letters to advise tenants that an inspection will be taking place or by making appointments with tenants at the point of contact. However there

are concerns that there may be a number of instances where no access is provided to officers. This will require a follow up procedure which will add delays to the inspection and impact further on staff resources.

- 4.4.3 Continued no access may also have legal implications which again will incur costs and additional delays, but it is considered important that access to such properties is gained and the current Tenancy Agreement makes provision for this.
- 4.4.4 A revised procedure will provide a more co-ordinated approach with all relevant information gathered from inspections being recorded and held on a centralised database within each area office and on the individual property file. Any actions deemed necessary will be progressed and monitored by the relevant Housing Manager.
- 4.4.5 Where any issues are identified, these will be the responsibility of the EMO to address in conjunction with the appropriate service area or support agency. In relation to tenancy or property condition issues, it may be necessary for a further visit to be made by the relevant EMO, who will then be responsible for following the issues through to a satisfactory conclusion.
- 4.4.6 A new procedure is in the process of being developed for dealing with garden related issues to improve the process currently explained under item 4.2.5 which will include improved reporting mechanisms. The condition of gardens may also raise concerns in relation to internal property conditions and where poor gardens are identified, even if there is no answer at the property, a follow up inspection will be arranged to check on other property conditions. A monthly report is also being developed which will be made available to the Cabinet Member for Housing and relevant officers.
- 4.4.7 There will be a need to review our I.T. systems to ensure that any information gathered is accessible and highlights key information to system users to assist them in the way services are delivered.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Following on from 4.4.7 above, any review of I.T. systems must, under Equalities and Welsh Language legislation, be able to record the full range of protected characteristics and language requirements of all tenants. This is in order to be able to deal with any specific physical requirements regarding the tenancy and any inspection visit, and also around the way we communicate with tenants who have language or format requirements.
- 5.2 This ensures that the proposed inspection programme complies with specific Disability and Language duties under UK and Welsh legislation and the Council's own Strategic Equality Objectives 2 and 4, Physical Access and Communication Access.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There will be a requirement for existing staff within Caerphilly Homes to be made aware of these changes and their responsibilities to consider the issues contained with this report as part of their normal day to day duties.
- 7.2 The additional workload may have an impact on the performance of other routine housing management tasks and this will be monitored.

7.3 These inspections will be regarded as part of the existing roles and responsibilities of the officers concerned.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

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

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 That consideration is given to pursue the introduction of regular property inspections for all Caerphilly Homes tenants as under item 4.4.

9.2 That implementation of the proposal be reviewed and further annual reports be submitted to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group in order to monitor progress and evaluate the success of the procedure.

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

10.1 To improve tenant/landlord relationships and ensure properties are maintained to an acceptable standard.

10.2 To raise tenant awareness and promote full compliance with their conditions of tenancy.

10.3 To identify where tenant support is needed and to promote tenancy sustainability.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 There are no Statutory Powers associated with this report.

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Consultees: Shaun Couzens, Chief Housing Officer.  
Cllr Hefin David, Chair (Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee).  
Cllr Sean Morgan, Vice-Chair (Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee).  
Chris Burns, Interim Chief Executive.  
Cllr David Poole, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing.  
Julie Reynolds, Area Housing Manager.  
Debbie Bishop, Area Housing Manager.  
Joanne Green, Older Persons Housing Manager.  
Rachel Thornett, Tenancy Enforcement Manager.  
Sandra Isaacs, Rents Manager.  
Mandy Betts, Tenant & Community Involvement Manager.  
Karen James, Neighbourhood Housing Manager.  
Angela Hiscox, Neighbourhood Housing Manager.  
Gail Williams, Interim Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer.  
David A. Thomas, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities & Welsh Language).  
Rhys Lewis, Systems & Performance Manager.  
WHQS Project Board

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## CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 17TH SEPTEMBER 2015

**SUBJECT: REMODELLING OF SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEMES**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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

- 1.1 To seek the views of CHTG members on proposals for an in-principle agreement for feasibility studies to be undertaken for six sheltered housing schemes (Castle Court, Waunfawr House, Ty Melin, Ynyswen, Britannia Court and St Mary's Court) for remodelling.
- 1.2 To also seek views on proposals for the six schemes to be omitted from WHQS works programme if recommendations are supported, unless funding is available within the business plan to undertake work to one or two schemes depending on the detailed costs being within this budget.
- 1.3 The views of CHTG will be considered together with this report by Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and thereafter submitted to Cabinet for a decision.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 A number of sheltered housing schemes were identified through the 2012 stock appraisal of the sheltered housing review as not being fit for purpose. Five of the six schemes have bedsit accommodation.
- 2.2 The council recognises that older tenants need to be supported, wherever possible, in accommodation that is accessible and supports their rights to independence.
- 2.3 A review of all stock identifies that some schemes include properties and amenities that are inadequate and do not meet acceptable space standards. This information was considered alongside void levels and the ability to remodel and the six schemes proposed were identified.
- 2.4 Consultation has taken place with tenants and ward members to identify any concerns. All schemes were visited by officers and face to face meetings held with the residents to explain the options for their schemes. This was also followed up with a questionnaire that we sent to all tenants within the schemes. The majority of tenants appear complacent about the proposed changes although all schemes identified improvements that they would like to see. Ward members were in favour of the proposals but were keen to ensure that tenants were supported fully in the decant process and that funds were made available to ensure the projects were completed in full and that there was a firm commitment from the Council that the proposals would be delivered as soon as practically possible.

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

- 3.1 The Welsh Housing Quality Standard is intended to ensure that all local authority and housing association homes are improved and maintained to achieve specified standards.

- 3.2 The Single Integrated Plan 2013-2017 has a priority to “Improve standards of housing and communities, giving appropriate access to services across the County Borough.
- 3.3 The Council’s Local Housing Strategy “People, Property, and Places” has the following aim:  
“To provide good quality, well managed houses in communities where people want to live, and offer people housing choices which meet their needs and aspirations.”

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

- 4.1 Sheltered Housing was developed over 30 years ago to provide accommodation for older people who were relatively fit and active. As a person’s health and mobility deteriorated residential and nursing homes were then expected to fulfil a person’s accommodation requirements. Services have changed significantly over this time and current practice is to help people to continue to live as independently as possible at home.
- 4.2 Legislation, guidance and good practice supports people to live in their own homes for as long as they wish to do so with assistance, aids and adaptations as necessary. Sheltered accommodation can help address those needs but some sheltered council provision in the borough of Caerphilly is not fit for purpose.
- 4.3 A budget has been allocated within the Housing business plan to bring all our sheltered housing schemes up to the WHQ Standard, however it was clear when the review of the sheltered housing service was undertaken, that a number of our schemes were not capable of meeting the WHQS due to their size and layout and this was particularly the case in those schemes comprising bedsits. The business plan does include a budget for remodelling two of our schemes, but on further investigation, the amount allocated is deemed insufficient to bring the schemes up to the required standard.
- 4.4. It is therefore an opportune time to review our plans for the sheltered housing schemes. Due to the stock appraisal identifying a need for significant remodelling of six schemes, it would seem inappropriate to proceed with the WHQS works to these schemes without considering alternative options. Whilst providing tenants with new bathrooms and kitchens for example, these would still not meet the WHQ Standard in many cases and the funding could be better utilised by contributing to the cost of remodelling in order to make these schemes fit for purpose and meet the changing needs and demands of our tenants for the future.
- 4.5 **Audit of schemes – Principles and Values**
- 4.5.1 New build schemes should follow Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) principles and Designed for Life standards but to ensure our current stock is fit for purpose and provides a viable and desirable alternative option for our residents, standard principles should be applied for existing sheltered accommodation. These are defined as:-
- Properties are accessible and are suitable for people to receive care and support appropriately.
  - All properties have their own facilities including a separate bedroom.
  - The scheme has accessible communal facilities.
  - The scheme has a vibrant, active community.
- 4.5.2 When considering the above principles the sheltered housing stock was surveyed in relation to:
- Size of individual properties.
  - Long term voids.
  - Ability to remodel.

Appendix A, analyses the sheltered housing stock against these principles and the following schemes were identified as having bedsits or very small 1 bed flats; have a high incidence of long term voids and are considered capable of being remodelled to provide more suitable accommodation. These are all in the former Islwyn area and comprise Britannia Court, St Mary's Court, Waunfawr House, Castle Court, Ty Melin and Ynyswen. Two other schemes, Ysgwyddwgwyn and Alexandra Court also have small property sizes, but Ysgwyddwgwyn cannot be substantially altered due to its location on a hillside and Alexandra Court continues to be a very popular scheme (although this may want to be re-considered at a later date). Other schemes cannot be altered to become more accessible due to their location or inability to include facilities such as a lift.

- 4.5.3 Appendix B shows photographs of two bedsits. Typically, there is no window in the sleeping area, no area for eating and the kitchen is so small that often the fridge is in the hallway. Use of zimmer frames and wheelchairs are practically impossible due to the extremely limited size of property and there is an associated increased risk to tenants of trips and falls. A washing machine cannot be fitted into a kitchen in any of these schemes. An added problem due to the lack of circulation space, particularly in the bedsits, is that it is extremely difficult for carers to provide the level of support needed by some tenants, particularly if the individual is confined to bed as access is limited. There are also concerns regarding the ability of carers to ensure that a tenant's dignity is maintained in such a situation.
- 4.5.4 The six schemes have inadequate guest bedroom facilities and are rarely used in the current form. There are no scooter storage facilities and generally storage for tenant possessions is lacking. Some of the external space is poor and does not assist people who may have mobility issues, dementia or other cognitive impairments. Improved external and internal space would assist people with long term health conditions to be more healthy and improve their wellbeing.
- 4.6 The six schemes that have been identified are:
- Castle Court
  - Waunfawr House
  - Ty Melin
  - Ynyswen
  - St Mary's Court
  - Britannia Court
- 4.6.1 Initial plans have been drawn up for these schemes and the estimated costs of developing all six schemes would be over £3.2 million.
- 4.6.2 If the proposals were approved, it is likely that the number of properties available across all six schemes would reduce from 164 to 110. There would be a net loss in income but this would be offset by reduced void loss. It is anticipated that if the schemes are not remodelled there would be an increasing number of voids as the schemes become even more unpopular and fail to provide the standard and level of accommodation the tenants need and expect. Appendix C shows the proposed property sizes for each of the six schemes.
- 4.7 The numbers of voids in the six schemes has ranged from 2 to 8 per year per scheme. Appendix D shows the levels of voids over the past five years, the average duration time and reasons for refusals. The high number of long term voids confirms the unpopularity of these schemes.
- 4.8 Consultation with tenants, staff and ward members has taken place and the feedback from this can be found in section 8 and appendix E. In essence, the majority of consultees understand the reasons for the proposed remodelling and are supportive of the proposals.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 An EIA screening has been completed in accordance with the Council's Strategic Equality Plan and Supplementary Guidance and no potential for unlawful discrimination was identified. 2.2 above recognises that the council has considered the needs of older people, and the needs of people with disabilities are met as a matter of course in any remodelling and upgrading work. The consultation with tenants has not brought to light any other equalities-related issues.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 A comprehensive feasibility study will need to be commissioned. Appendix F shows indicative costs for updates to the six schemes. However, these costs do not include any external works or reconfigurations to communal areas apart from Castle Court.
- 6.2 All schemes have been budgeted for under WHQS and these savings would offset some of the costs required to remodel the schemes. A full cost appraisal for the work has not been undertaken but it is expected that each scheme will cost between £300,000 and £1 million.
- 6.3 Feasibility calculations will include savings from removal of long terms void costs, finance redirected from WHQS and income loss associated with reducing the number of properties.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Staff will be required to support tenants that may be decanted as part of the remodelling process but this will be managed through existing resources.
- 7.2 External consultants will carry out the feasibility study.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 Tenants at all six schemes were consulted in group meetings on what they felt about their current property, what changes they would like to see and what they considered would make the schemes fit for the future. Additionally, tenants received individual questionnaires to feedback their thoughts on their property and the overall scheme.
- 8.2 Five of the six schemes were either willing or laissez faire about remodelling their schemes. Only one scheme, St Mary's Court, strongly stated that they like their bedsits and would not want to consider changes. However, tenants at St Mary's Court also highlighted a number of issues with their scheme including the size of the property, lack of lift and issues with access.
- 8.3 Councillors representing the locations of schemes were informed of the consultations that had taken place and the feedback received. Whilst concerned about the wellbeing of the tenants, councillors also agreed that the principles for undertaking this project were desirable to ensure the viability of schemes in the future and to ensure that the future health and well being of tenants was not hampered by poor/unsuitable accommodation. Ward members were particularly concerned that the Council gives full commitment to ensure funds are available for this work to be done post 2020 and to demonstrate commitment to the remodelling proposals that, if financially viable, remodelling in one or more of the schemes commences prior to 2020.
- 8.4 Social Care has indicated that there is a growing demand for appropriate housing with people with dementia and people with physical disabilities. In particular, as people are supported to stay at home with domiciliary care, there is a growing prevalence of service users that are 'trapped' downstairs in one or two rooms as their property cannot be adapted and there is no suitable alternative for them to move to. This service area will shortly be undertaking its own review of accommodation for its service users and this will be used to further inform the feasibility study.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 It is recommended that a full and comprehensive feasibility study is commissioned for the six sheltered housing schemes identified in the report.
- 9.2 Following a positive outcome of the feasibility study that the schemes be removed from the WHQS programme with the intention of remodelling them post 2020, (with one or two before this time if financially viable,) with completion of all properties by the end of 2025.
- 9.3 That this report and the views of CHTG members be presented to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for consideration and thereafter Cabinet for a decision.

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

- 10.1 To ensure the long term viability of sheltered housing schemes.
- 10.2 To ensure older people have appropriate and suitable accommodation that meets their needs now and into the future.
- 10.3 To ensure that the sheltered housing schemes are DDA and RNIB compliant and can support people to live independently for as long as possible thus reducing dependence on social care and health services.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 Housing Acts 1985, 1996, 2004. This is a Cabinet function.

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Lesley Allen, Principal Accountant  
Cllr Hefin David, Chair (Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee)  
Cllr Sean Morgan, Vice-Chair (Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee)  
Chris Burns, Interim Chief Executive  
Cllr David Poole, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing  
Gail Williams, Interim Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer  
David A. Thomas, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities & Welsh Language)

### Appendices

- Appendix A - Analysis of sheltered housing schemes
- Appendix B - Images of existing bedsits
- Appendix C - Existing and Proposed Remodelling Property Sizes
- Appendix D - Voids Information
- Appendix E - Consultations
- Appendix F - Preliminary Budget Estimate of Costs

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## Appendix A

### Analysis of sheltered housing schemes

	under 31m2	31m2 - 40m2	over 40m2	Long term voids	Potential to remodel for sheltered
Castle Court	28		13	Yes	Yes
Ty Melin	17	15		Yes	Yes
Waunfawr House	16	0	5	Yes	Yes
St. Mary's Court	16		16	Yes	Yes
Alexandra Court	14		5	No	Yes
Britannia Court	13		5	Yes	Yes
Ysgwyddgwyn	13		11	Yes	No
Ynyswen	12		7	Yes	Yes
St. Gwladys Court	6		15	Yes - recently	Been done
Y Glyn	5		32	No	No
Ty Isaf	4	6	4	No	Yes
Hafod y Bryn		29		No	No
Ty Mynyddislwyn		28		Yes - recently	Yes
Ty Bedwellty		17	7	No	Yes
Highfield Court		14	6	No	Yes
Woodland View		1	20	Yes	No
Gwyddon Court	4		26	No	Yes
Bryn Road, Palmer Place			36	No	N/A
Glynderw			32	No	N/A
Glynsyfi			32	No	N/A
Greenacres			31	No	N/A
Grove 1			26	No	N/A
Grove 2			36	No	N/A
Heol Islwyn			32	No	N/A
Maesteg			27	No	No
Oaklands			31	No	N/A
Pleasant Place			31	No	N/A
Prospect Place			30	No	N/A
St. Clares			32	No	N/A
St. Peter's Close			29	No	N/A
The Willows			29	No	N/A
Waunrhydd			31	No	No
Horeb Court			20	No	No

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Appendix B – Images of existing bedsits. Permission granted by tenant.

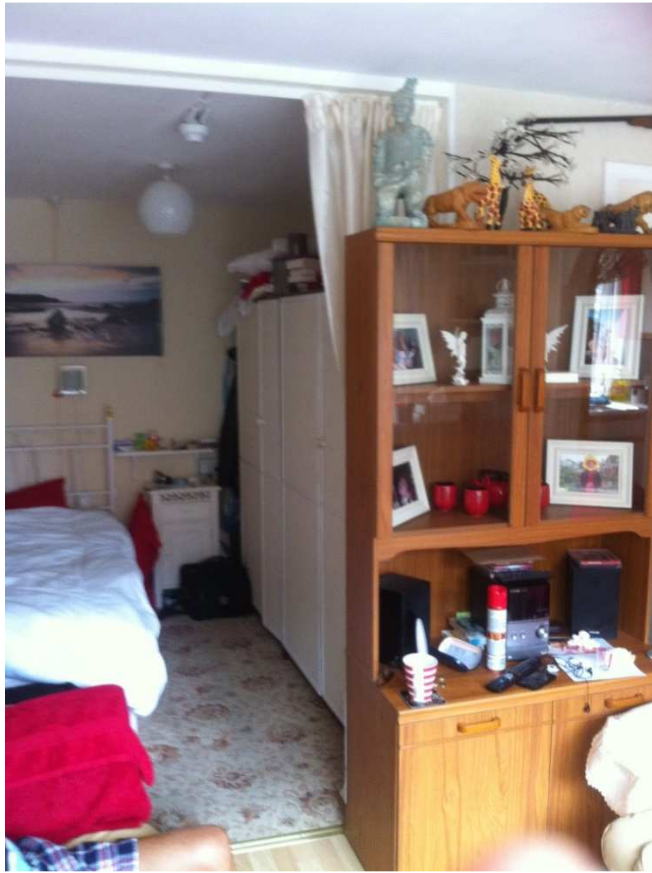


Photo take of occupied bedsit property from window in lounge.

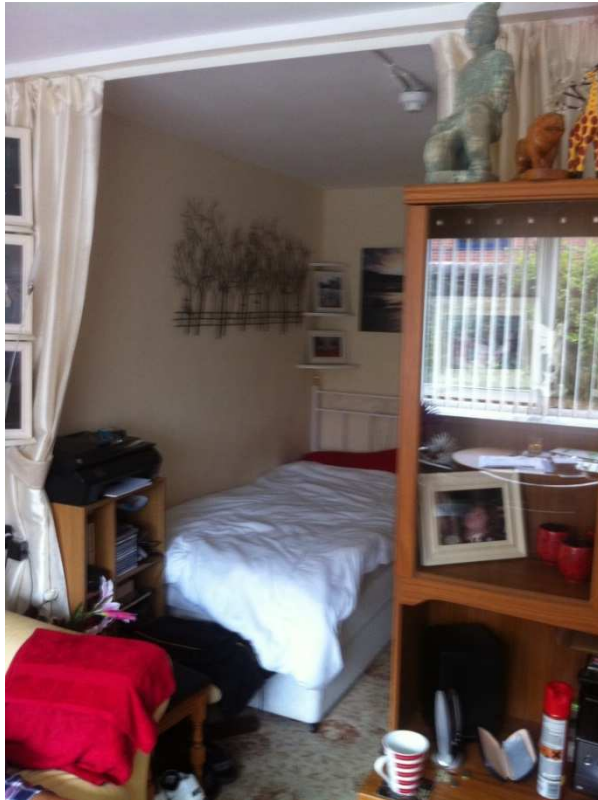


Photo of bedsit taken from corner of lounge. Note, that bedroom does not have a window.



View from back of bedroom area in a bedsit through to lounge (unoccupied).



View from lounge into bedroom area in a bedsit (unoccupied).

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**Appendix C**  
Existing and Proposed Remodelling Property Sizes

	Existing				Proposed		
	Area m <sup>2</sup>	No.	Flat / Bedsit		Area m <sup>2</sup>	No.	Persons Flat
<b>Castle Court</b>	42.5	12	F	42.5	12	1P	
	30.5	27	B	46.5	6	1P	
				61.4	7	2P	
				61.0	1	Maisonette	
		<u>39</u>			<u>26</u>		
<b>St. Mary's Court</b>	45.7	16	F	45.7	16	1P	
	29.8	16	B	60.3	7	2P	
				43.8	1	1P	
		<u>32</u>			<u>24</u>		
<b>Ty Melin</b>	30.3	5	F	30.3	1	1P	
	30.3	10	F	38.5	9	1P	
	40.0	9	F	40.0	1	1P	
	33.0	6	F	47.4	7	2P	
	26.0	2	F	58.0	2	1P	
		<u>32</u>			<u>20</u>		
<b>Ynyswen</b>	42.0	6	F	42.0	6	1P	
	61.5	1	F	56.5	3	2P	
	27.6	12	B	41.1	2	1P	
				42.5	1	1P	
				34.4	1	1P	
				45.6	1	1P	
	<u>19</u>			<u>14</u>			
<b>Britannia Court</b>	29.8	14	F	41.7	4	1P	
	41.9	7	F	46.7	3	1P	
				57.6	1	2P	
				60.2	2	2P	
				66.8	2	2P	
				71.0	2	2P	
		<u>21</u>			<u>14</u>		
<b>Waunfawr House</b>	29.2	15	B	51.6	6	1P	
	41.6	5	F	59.7	3	1P	
	31.2	1	B	60.0	3	1P	
		<u>21</u>			<u>12</u>		

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## Appendix D

### Voids Information

#### Number of voids by financial year

Scheme	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Total voids
BRITANNIA CLOSE		1		4	2	7
CASTLE COURT	7	8	5	8	5	33
ST MARYS COURT	7	8	8	5	2	30
TY MELIN	5	5	8	5	2	25
WAUNFAWR HOUSE	4	4	4	1	2	15
YNYSWEN	4	2	3	4	3	16
<b>Total voids</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>116</b>

NOTE: Some voids are for longer than one year and therefore may distort data.

#### Voids duration (average in days)

Scheme	Avg duration (days)
BRITANNIA CLOSE	67
CASTLE COURT	133
ST MARYS COURT	72
TY MELIN	64
WAUNFAWR HOUSE	147
YNYSWEN	122
<b>Overall average</b>	<b>97</b>

#### Refusal reasons since 01/04/2011

Scheme	APPX OWN REQUEST	HOUSED BY HA	MEDICAL REASONS	OTHR-SEE NOTEPAD	PERSONAL REASONS	PROP CONDITION	PROP LOCATION	PROPERTY SIZE	Total refusals
BRITANNIA CLOSE	1			5			1	1	8
CASTLE COURT	1		1	13	4		2	9	30
ST MARYS COURT	10	1	5	17	1		7	9	50
TY MELIN	5		1	3	3		2	1	15
WAUNFAWR HOUSE			1	6	5	1	12	11	36
YNYSWEN	1			22	5	1	5	14	48
<b>Total refusals</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>187</b>

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## **Appendix E Consultation**

### **Tenant consultation**

Tenants were consulted through tenant meetings on the following dates.

2<sup>nd</sup> June 2015 – St Mary's, Castle Court and Britannia Court

4<sup>th</sup> June 2015 – Ty Melin, Waunfawr House and Ynyswen

Between 10 and 25 people attending each of the meetings, engagement was very good and tenants were willing to share their thoughts on the scheme in which they lived.

The following captures an overview of the discussion from each of the schemes.

#### **St Mary's Court**

- Bedsits suitable for many residents
- Bedsits not suitable for couples
- Guest bedroom not used as facilities poor and too expensive
- The scheme needs a lift
- Externally paths needs improving
- External signage needs improving

#### **Castle Court**

- Communal lounge and kitchen needs improving
- Scooter store required.
- Additional parking required.
- External improvements needed.
- Guest bedroom needs updating
- Tenants were generally concerned about what minor works could be done now rather than as part of the remodelling. Views included that they had little interest in five years time as they did not plan that far in advance.

#### **Britannia Court**

- Insufficient space in kitchen for fridge in some properties
- Would like more storage in all accommodation
- Scooter store required
- Accessible, automatically opening communal front door required. The current high slope to the scheme means that some tenants cannot leave the scheme independently.

#### **Ty Melin**

- Property described as a 'wendy house'
- Need a lift to all floors
- Improved ventilation throughout the scheme
- External improvements required
- Access for communal front door needs improving. Tenants and visitors to the scheme currently get soaked waiting for door to be opened.
- Would like CCTV

#### Waunfawr House

- Decorative improvements to communal lounge and hallways required.
- Bedsits are generally ok but desire larger kitchens.
- CCTV necessary
- External decorative improvements required.
- Hallway lights need to be on sensors and improved lux levels.

#### Ynyswen

- Change two bedsits into one flat
- Only remove communal bathroom if improvements to properties are made.
- Would prefer laundry facilities in flats.
- Guest bedroom is currently inadequate.
- External improvements required.
- Scooter store desired
- Communal front door heavy and difficulty in manoeuvring around scheme with mobility problems.

This was followed up with individual questionnaires to each of the schemes. The response rate was very positive with the following results

St Marys Court – 21 responses – 21. 5 identified that their property did not meet their needs.

Britannia Court – 15 responses. 2 felt their property did not meet their needs.

Castle Court – 13 responses. 4 felt their property did not meet their needs.

Waunfawr House – 17 responses. All respondees felt their property met their needs.

Ty Melin – 25 responses. 4 tenants reported that their homes did not meet their needs.

Ynyswen – 15 responses. 8 felt that their property did not meet their needs.

Detailed breakdowns are available on request but generally tenants felt that they chose sheltered housing for safety and security; to be near family and to get support from the Sheltered Housing Officer.

The most popular internal improvements requested were updated kitchens and bathrooms, improved doors and windows that are lighter and easier to use and space for a washing machine.

In the communal internal areas tenants wanted scooter storage, automatically opening communal front door and CCTV.

Externally tenants wanted CCTV, more presentable and safer paths and gardens and some garden furniture.

There were some scheme specific requests such as a lift at St Mary's Court.

#### **Ward member consultation**

Ward members were consulted on the proposals and the outcomes of the discussion with tenants. All councillors were given an opportunity to attend and express their views of the proposals. Councillors Adams and Gordon agreed to feedback to Councillor Kirby.

Consultation	Ward Member	Sheltered Scheme
7 <sup>th</sup> July	Cllr. Lewis and Cllr. Lloyd	Ty Melin
8 <sup>th</sup> July 2015	Cllr. Griffiths	Britannia Court and St Mary's Court
13 <sup>th</sup> July 2015	Cllr. Adams and Cllr. Gordon	Ynyswen
20 <sup>th</sup> July 2015	Cllr. Rees	Britannia Court and St Mary's Court
20 <sup>th</sup> August 2015	Cllr. Symonds	Waunfawr House and Castle Court

### Staff consultation

Sheltered and Estate Management staff working in the six schemes were informed of the proposals and asked their views. Staff felt that voids were often difficult to turnaround and there are rarely? applicants on the list looking for this type of accommodation. Staff were very positive about the proposed changes as it would provide modern suitable accommodation for older people.

Consultation	Staff group
19 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	Sheltered Housing working in Cluster 1 and 2
3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2015	Eastern Valley EMO's

Social services were asked their views on the current position of older person's housing and they are currently undertaking their own research in this area. Currently there are growing demands and pressures on particular client groups. This includes people with dementia and older adults with learning and physical disabilities. Accommodation that enables people to maintain their independence would assist social care and health services to provide other options to the people they support. In turn, this may alleviate some of the pressures on this service area.

### Other research

Housing providers across Wales have, or are in the process of reviewing their sheltered housing provision to ensure it meets the changing needs of the client group and also meets local and national guidance and legislation, such as Supporting People. A number of housing providers in the locality have made improvements to their stock. These include RCT Homes, V2C Homes and Monmouthshire Housing. Feedback from these providers suggest that previously unpopular, unsuitable stock has seen a robust remodelling programme resulting in no long term voids and very positive feedback from tenants. It is recommended that tenants affected by remodelling are assisted through a comprehensive decant process to ensure they are fully supported while the works are being undertaken. The experience of RCT Homes was written up as a Case Study in the Housing and Learning Network. ([www.housinglin.org.uk](http://www.housinglin.org.uk))

A number of housing providers across the UK have established standards for new build developments and these include minimum space requirements and other sheltered specific requirements to ensure that the property offer to older people encompasses the principles of homes that help people to be healthy and live well into the older age.

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## Appendix F

### Preliminary Budget Estimate of Costs for works to update and alter sheltered housing complexes.

	£	Number	£
<b>Ynyswen</b>			
Convert 3 bedsits into 2 flats	60,000	1	60,000
Convert bedsit / warden's flat into 2 flats	60,000	1	60,000
Convert 2 bedsits into 1 flat	40,000	3	120,000
Convert bedsit / meter room into 1 flat	30,000	1	30,000
Upgrade kitchens to make flats self contained	5,000	6	30,000
Preliminaries and Contingencies @ 20%			<u>60,000</u>
			<b>360,000</b>
<b>Castle Court</b>			
Convert 3 bedsits into 2 flats	40,000	7	280,000
Convert 2 bedsits into 1 flat	50,000	7	350,000
Works to Miscellaneous stores / mobility scooter parking / library / communal seating area	8,000	5	40,000
Preliminaries and Contingencies @ 20%			<u>134,000</u>
			<b>804,000</b>
Additional 8 car parking spaces	5,000		
<b>Ty Melin</b>			
Lift	120,000	1	120,000
Convert 4 flats into 3 flats	70,000	3	210,000
Convert 2 flats into 1 flat and ancillary space	40,000	7	280,000
Convert 2 flats into 1 flat	40,000	2	80,000
Upgrade kitchens to make flats self contained	5,000	2	10,000
Preliminaries and Contingencies @ 20%			<u>140,000</u>
			<b>840,000</b>
<b>St. Mary's Court</b>			
Convert 2 bedsits into 1 flat (inc. mobility scooter store)	50,000	8	400,000
Upgrade kitchens to make flats self contained	5,000	16	80,000
Preliminaries and Contingencies @ 20%			<u>96,000</u>
			<b>576,000</b>
<b>Britannia Court</b>			
Convert 2 bedsits into 1 flat	33,000	3	99,000
Convert 3 bedsits into 2 flats	60,000	1	60,000
Covert bedsit and part of lounge into flat	32,000	1	32,000
Covert 1 bedsit and warden's house into flat	36,000	2	72,000
Convert 1 bedsit and 2 flats into 2 flats	55,000	1	55,000
Covert bedsit and guest room into flat	27,000	1	27,000
Preliminaries and Contingencies @ 20%			<u>69,000</u>
			<b>414,000</b>
<b>Waunfawr House</b>			
Convert 2 bedsits into 1 flat		6	198,000
Convert 2 flats and 1 bedsit into 2 flats		3	180,000

Form new laundry in external store	1	8,500
Preliminaries and Contingencies @ 20%		<u>77,300</u>
		<b>463,800</b>

These estimates are exclusive of Fees, and subject to structural survey and asbestos survey.

No allowance for general works of improvement or maintenance in areas not directly affected by the works within the flats and bedsits



## CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 17TH SEPTEMBER 2015

**SUBJECT: COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT FUND**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

---

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

- 1.1 This report has been drafted for consultation purposes. Members of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group are requested to note the contents of the report and provide any comments or observations they may have to the report author / Head of Programmes (WHQS).
- 1.2 Funding decisions relating to the Community Improvement Fund will be made under delegated powers to the Head of Programmes (WHQS).

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Following the ballot in February 2012, the Council agreed that it would deliver the promises made in the Offer Document to tenants and deliver WHQS by 2019/2020. It also gave a commitment to delivering numerous additional benefits which were also outlined in the Offer Document, which would add value to the WHQS programme and help deliver the Council's ambition of using the £210 million WHQS investment as a catalyst to Transform Homes, Lives and Communities.
- 2.2 These additional benefits include the creation of a Community Improvement Fund that has been designed specifically to foster community development and cohesion by enabling community groups to bid for funding to support local initiatives and projects. It will fund projects that directly contribute towards the Council's aim of Transforming Homes, Lives and Communities and to one or more of the following Communities First priorities; developing prosperous communities, learning communities and healthier communities.
- 2.3 The Community Improvement Fund will provide a capital grant of up to £5,000 per project proposal. The grant must be spent within one year of the approval.
- 2.4 A maximum of £50,000 will be approved annually for multiple projects.
- 2.5 The Fund is intended to benefit community groups based within Caerphilly county borough and provide direct benefits to tenants and residents of the county borough.
- 2.6 Groups wishing to apply for funding need to be constituted and have a group bank account. New or emerging community groups need to partner with a constituted group / organisation who can apply for and administer any grant awarded on their behalf.
- 2.7 Groups also need to demonstrate that they have consulted with and engaged the local community in developing their project. The Community Improvement Fund will not support groups / projects that do not have the support of the community and will not benefit the wider community.

- 2.8 Grant funding awarded from the Community Improvement Fund can be used to improve the general appearance of estates, to provide new or improved parking, better lighting, planting, landscaping, or play areas. It could also be used by the local community to better increase their understanding of the needs of their area and to encourage greater participation in community activities.
- 2.9 Funding from the Community Improvement Fund is sought by TARRAGAN Educational Gardens.

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

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 The Council is committed to ensuring that the WHQS investment transforms not only homes but also lives and communities.
- 3.3 The Single Integrated Plan 2013-2017 has a priority to “improve standards of housing and communities, giving appropriate access to services across the County Borough”.
- 3.4 The Council’s Local Housing Strategy “People, Property, and Places” has the following aim:  
“To provide good quality, well managed houses in communities where people want to live, and offer people housing choices which meet their needs and aspirations.”

### **4. THE REPORT**

- 4.1 The CHTG is asked to consider an application to the Community Improvement Fund by TARAGGAN Educational Gardens.
- 4.2 The TARAGGAN project aims to encourage people living in Greater Bargoed to get involved in conservation and gardening by using the green space site that they currently have for outdoor recreation. TARAGGAN looks to introduce people who are inactive to live a healthier lifestyle by using the outdoor living environment for community allotment gardening. The project has enabled people to become more active, healthy & happy whilst continuing to build a strong intergenerational community spirit in the area and enable people to take pride in a local landmark.
- 4.3 TARAGGAN Educational Gardens was conceived as a project in 2007 and produced its first crop for picking in June 2010. Since then, the community allotment site has gone from strength to strength and has captured the minds of many residents in the local community as well as the support of partner agencies. The Committee has a waiting list of individuals and groups that have requested a plot.
- 4.4 The site is open roughly six days per week and the Committee are welcoming of any community member who wishes to come along and get involved, be it through sowing seeds, picking fruit or helping with the on-going maintenance of what is a fairly large site. TARAGGAN relies on the support of local community members as, without them, there would be no project. The Committee also sells produce to local residents i.e. flowers, plants, fruit/veg. etc.
- 4.5 The group is run by a dedicated committee of 7 volunteers. The committee estimates that approximately 200 volunteers pass through the gates in the summer months.



- 4.6 Over recent months, and with the support of Communities First, TARAGGAN's Committee have been granted a significant extension on land directly adjacent to their site, which formed the basis of an application to the Community Regeneration Fund. This brings into use an area of land that would otherwise have likely remained unused. TARAGGAN have secured this extension as part of their current lease and have completed the necessary procedures with the Council, which included a Public Open Spaces Advert and surveyors' fees. They have also been supported with a grant from the Technical Assistance Fund to help with the associated legal costs.
- 4.7 TARAGGAN is a popular allotment gardening facility and therefore has out-grown the size of its existing site. Expanding to its side will allow for further bedding plots to be created; this will include flat and raised beds to allow equal opportunities for all members of the local community. Towards the rear of the new parcel of land, drainage is poor, however, TARAGGAN aims to use this to its advantage and hopes to create a boggy marsh area which will support and enhance local wildlife that relishes this type of habitat.
- 4.8 TARAGGAN's Committee have worked hard to develop and maintain relationships with a number of key partner agencies delivering services in the locality, including Groundwork, Gofal and Communities First as well as statutory service providers such as the Department of Work and Pensions through work experience and placements. Local primary schools have also taken an active interest in the community gardening aspect and have plots of their own.
- 4.9 Letters of support have been received from Users, Gilfach Tenants and Residents Association, charitable groups, GAVO, Communities First, local Councillors and Assembly Members. Furthermore, evidence of a community consultation has been provided suggesting that the community are supportive of the current facility and the proposed expansion.
- 4.10 TARRAGON are seeking funding from the Community Improvement Fund to help part finance the costs associated with the expansion and redevelopment of the site.
- 4.11 The total cost of the project is £20,770.56. TARRAGON have applied to the Community Improvement Fund for a contribution of £3854.11.
- 4.12 The remaining £16,916.45 has been secured from other sources including the Community Regeneration Fund, Bargoed Town Council and Communities First.
- 4.13 TARRAGON Educational Gardens have provided two quotes for the work overall and provided a copy of their constitution.
- 4.14 The project is coterminous with the aims, objectives and award criteria of the Community Improvement Fund.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 An EqIA screening will be completed in accordance with the Council's Equalities Consultation and Monitoring Guidance and no potential for unlawful discrimination and for low level or minor negative impact have been identified, therefore a full EqIA has not been carried out.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Community Improvement Fund provides a capital grant to community groups of up to £5,000 to support community projects that meet one or more of the Communities First priorities and add value to the WHQS programme through improving the appearance of communities, amenities within communities and / or increasing participation by communities throughout the county borough.

6.2 An annual budget of £50,000 per annum is available.

6.3 TARRAGON Educational Gardens are seeking a contribution of £3854.11 from the Community Improvement Fund.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no personnel implications arising from the report.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

8.1 Positive support has been received from one of the local Ward Councillors.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 CTHG support the application by TARRAGON Educational Gardens on the basis that the expansion and redevelopment which will have a positive impact on the health and well being of tenants living within the adjacent housing area and subject to the following condition:

- Copies of relevant permissions including planning and change of use are submitted before any claims are made.

## **10. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 To deliver and meet the aims and objectives of the WHQS Programme.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 Housing Acts and Local Government Acts.

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## CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 17TH SEPTEMBER 2015

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

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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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 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The monitoring of complaints and representations is carried out to provide information on the level of satisfaction with the service provided by Caerphilly Homes. The results enable Managers to focus on areas of concern to improve services and monitor performance and ensure that similar problems are avoided in the future. Last year saw a corporate change in the complaints procedure with more 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.

### **4. THE REPORT**

- 4.1 The annual report is based on information collected during the financial year 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015. Complaints received about the Housing Service are recorded and responded to in line with the Council's 2 stage corporate complaints policy, implemented in April 2013, based on guidance issued by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. If, after following these 2 stages, the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint they can progress their complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

#### **4.2 Overall Numbers**

In addition to recording Stage 1, Stage 2 and Ombudsman complaints, Caerphilly Homes Customer Services Section also records any service requests received directly by the Customer Services Section and any housing related correspondence received by the Chief Executive. In general, contacts recorded as service requests relate to the first time the service area has been made aware of the issue concerned. Reasonable judgement is used, based on the information available at the time and these cases are often deemed to be 'business as usual' situations. However, if enquiries identify previous dealings on the same issue then the matter can be

escalated through the complaints procedure. It is not necessary for the contact to specifically state that they want the issue dealt with as a complaint as this would be determined from the detail of the contact and any previous dealings on the same subject. Service area managers provide weekly updates to the Customer Services Officers of any cases they are dealing with as a Stage 1 complaint.

Between 1st April 2014 and 31st March 2015 the Customer Services Section of Caerphilly Homes recorded a total of 520 contacts from the public and/or their representative. This is in comparison with 434 between 1st April 2013 and 31st March 2014.

Function Area	Chief Exec		Service Request	
	2013/14	2014/15	2013/14	2014/15
Response Repairs	22	12	82	121
Housing Management	25	29	41	67
Antisocial Behaviour	4	1	29	65
Allocations	33	29	13	8
Homelessness	4	12	4	7
WHQS Internal	2	1	10	12
Heating	1	4	6	9
Sheltered Housing	3	1	5	10
Grants	7	2	3	5
WHQS External			6	6
Rents	1	2	3	5
Adaptations	2	1	1	5
Energy Works		2	3	
Enforcement Action	2			4
Planned Maintenance	2		3	
Leaseholder		2	2	
Other	1		2	
Housing Register	1		1	1
Tenant Participation				1
Void Property			1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>326</b>

The number of contacts received via an advocate was 167 compared with 148 in 2013/14. Examples of the type of advocates used include MP, AM, Councillors, other tenants and family members.

#### 4.3 Praise and Thanks

Records are also kept of any praise or thanks received by Caerphilly Homes. In 2014/15 there were 44 recorded. This is in comparison with 42 for 2013/14. These covered a number of service areas, as detailed below :-

Praise or Thanks		
	2013/14	2014/15
Rents	15	8
Allocation	0	3
Leaseholder Services	0	1

Housing Management	1	5
Responsive Repairs	13	14
Tenancy Enforcement	1	0
Tenant Participation	1	0
Sheltered Housing	4	3
WHQS	7	2
Private Landlord	0	2
Homelessness	0	2
Adaptations	0	2
Housing Development	0	1
Handy Person Scheme	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>44</b>

#### 4.4 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.

During 2014/15 60 Stage 1 complaints were recorded for Caerphilly Homes compared with 81 in 2013/14. There were 36 Stage 2 complaints in 2014/15 compared with 28 in 2013/14. Of the 36 Stage 2 complaints received in 2014/15, 13 had progressed from a Stage 1.

As detailed in the table below the largest number of Stage 1 complaints (17) related to housing management issues. Only 2 of these cases were not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction and progressed to a Stage 2. An analysis of the Stage 1 housing management complaints shows that they were in relation to a variety of aspects of the service including gardens, mutual exchanges, successions and garages.

The majority of the 14 Stage 1 complaints recorded for WHQS (internal works) related to whether or not new kitchens would be fitted and most of these cases were resolved at Stage 1 with only 4 progressing to Stage 2.

The 10 response repair Stage 1 complaints were in relation to the quality of service provision and workmanship. Only 1 of these cases was not resolved to the tenant's satisfaction and progressed to a Stage 2.

Function Area	Stage 1		Stage 2		Progressed	
	2013/14	2014/15	2013/14	2014/15	2013/14	2014/15
Housing Management	11	17	13	21	4	2
WHQS (Internal)	16	14	4	6	4	4
Response Repairs	23	10	2	1	1	1
Allocations	6	3	3	0	1	0
Leaseholders	7	4	1	3	0	1
Grants	3	0	1	0	0	0
Planned Maintenance	3	1	1	0	1	0
Anti Social Behaviour	2	0	0	0	0	0
Heating	2	2	1	0	0	0

Sheltered Housing	2	0	1	0	1	0
WHQS (External)	2	3	0	1	0	1
Adaptations	1	0	0	0	0	0
Enforcement Action	1	2	1	2	1	2
Homelessness	1	2	0	1	0	1
Rents	1	2	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>

The majority of Stage 2 complaints (21) related to the Housing Management function. 17 of these cases were in relation to recharges and the remaining cases related to parking, a garden and a mutual exchange.

There were 6 WHQS (internal) Stage 2 complaints which related to kitchen and bathroom installations. 2 of the kitchen complaints were in relation to the decision not to replace the kitchen under WHQS and the third complaint was about the quality of service and time taken to complete the works. 2 of the bathroom complaints were in relation to the size of the baths being fitted and the remainder was about the general conduct of the workforce.

Of the 3 Stage 2 complaints recorded against Leaseholders, 1 case related to a decision not to compensate the leaseholder when he replaced his internal doors, 1 case related to the council replacing doors with fire doors and the remaining case related to the monitoring of the cleanliness and tidiness of the communal areas.

#### 4.5 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 2014/15.

Function Area	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld
<b>Stage 1</b>			
Housing Management	14	1	2
Response repairs	6	2	2
WHQS (internal)	7	2	5
WHQS (external)	0	2	1
Allocations	3	0	0
Leaseholders	2	1	1
Homelessness	2	0	0
Rents	2	0	0
Heating	2	0	0
Planned maintenance	1	0	0
Enforcement action	2	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>

<b>Stage 2</b>			
Housing Management	9	3	9
WHQS (internal)	4	1	1
WHQS (external)	0	1	0
Rents	0	0	1
Leaseholder	3	0	0

Response repairs	1	0	0
Homelessness	0	1	0
Enforcement action	0	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>

#### Stage 1's - Upheld

There were 5 WHQS (internal) Stage 1 complaints upheld. One was in relation to the original decision not to renew the kitchen, but on further inspection it was agreed it should be replaced. One case involved an incident of a kitchen cupboard falling off the wall. An apology was provided, the cupboard was renewed and the contractor was reminded to use adequate fixings. Another case involved a tenant being left without toilet facilities at the end of the working day resulting in an out of hours call. An apology was provided and the contractor was reminded of the need to provide essential services. The remaining 2 cases related to the length of time the works took, the quality of the workmanship and the conduct of the workforce. In these cases several actions were agreed to rectify the works and the contractors were reminded of the code of conduct.

There were 2 response repair Stage 1 complaints upheld. In one case an apology was provided for the delay in ordering a new back door and providing the tenant with incorrect information. The remaining case involved work to a chimney breast which caused disruption to the owner/occupier next door and an apology was provided.

There were 2 stage 1 complaints upheld in relation to housing management issues. In one case the tenant received a refund of rent as the property occupied had been recorded as 3 bedrooms instead of 2. The remaining case related to a sole tenant appealing the original decision giving him notice to leave the property following his ex-partner terminating her interest in the tenancy. The sole tenant was allowed to remain at the property.

The WHQS (external) stage 1 complaint upheld related to ongoing issues with a leak on the soil pipe. The contractor was instructed to carry out the required repair to a satisfactory standard.

The stage 1 complaint upheld for leaseholder services related to a disputed charge to the leaseholder for replacement windows. On further investigation the charge was removed.

#### Stage 2's - Upheld

There were 9 housing management Stage 2 complaints upheld. 8 of these cases related to recharges to tenants which were later removed. In the remaining case rent charged to a new tenant, who returned the keys the same day, was withdrawn.

The 1 WHQS (internal) stage 2 complaint upheld was in relation to the fitting of a bath instead of a shower. An easy access shower was later fitted.

The 1 stage 2 complaint upheld in relation to rent was a case where former tenant arrears originally charged were later withdrawn.

There were 2 stage 2 complaints upheld in relation to private sector housing where works in default were undertaken. In one case the wording of the required notice failed to specify all the works required and in the other case a second required notice was not served. Officers have been reminded of the importance of correct procedures being followed.

#### 4.6 Ombudsman Complaints

There were 5 housing related cases referred to the Ombudsman during 2014/15, which is the same number as those referred during 2013/14. In 4 of these cases the Ombudsman decided not to investigate. The remaining case was in relation to the way a housing application was

assessed, with specific reference to the possibility of homelessness. The Ombudsman investigated this case and upheld the complaint, with several recommendations. The applicant has received a letter of apology for any failings in the assessment of the application together with an award of £1000 in recognition of any impact of these failings. All of the Ombudsman's recommendations have been accepted and actioned. These are detailed in the Learning from Complaints section (4.9).

The report for 2013/14 noted that, at that time, there was an ongoing Ombudsman case in relation to the length of time an applicant had been on the waiting list without receiving an offer of accommodation. The Ombudsman concluded that the complaint was upheld and made several recommendations. The applicant has received a letter of apology for any failings in the assessment of the application together with a payment of £500 in recognition of any impact of these failings. All of the Ombudsman's recommendations have been accepted and actioned. These are detailed in the Learning from Complaints section (4.9).

#### **4.7 Response Target Times**

The Customer Service Section monitors the performance in responding to all contacts recorded by the section, within the corporate timescales. In 2014/15, 94% of complaints and representations were responded to within the agreed timescales compared with 88% in 2013/14.

#### **4.8 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.

During 2014/15 the Ombudsman made several recommendations in relation to improvements required by the Housing division, with specific reference to the assessment of housing applications. These recommendations have all been actioned and include the following:

- All Housing staff have undergone records management training
- Allocations staff have been reminded of the importance of ensuring housing applications are correctly pointed in accordance with the Allocations policy
- Guidance has been developed on the factors for consideration when applying discretion in relation to the removal of time points
- Housing Allocation staff have been reminded of the need to consider applying discretion and the need to demonstrate that discretion has been considered.
- Appropriate staff have been trained in the circumstances when the Council's homelessness duty may be triggered and documentation has been reviewed to satisfy that it supports the early recognition of when a homelessness duty may be triggered.
- Allocation staff have undertaken training in relation to housing legislation and statutory guidance
- Allocation staff have undertaken additional communication training from a mental health organisation
- An audit has been carried out of the Housing Advice and Allocations record keeping methods

With regards to Private Sector Housing, staff have been reminded that the extent of works carried out in default should reflect the wording of the notice. Works in default should be carefully specified and only those works identified on a notice can be undertaken.

In relation to WHQS works, site managers have been reminded that they should consult with private residents in adjoining properties to ensure satisfaction with works completed on council properties.

In respect of complaints relating to recharges made to tenants, a new recharge policy has been introduced, incorporating a revised appeals procedure which will include the use of an independent Recharge Review Panel comprising Senior Housing Officers, a Councillor and a Tenant.



## **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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## CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 17TH SEPTEMBER 2015

**SUBJECT: ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE TENANCY REVIEW PANEL**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update to The Caerphilly Homes Task Group on the outcomes of cases presented to the Tenancy Review Panel.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Tenancy Review Panel was set up in June 2014. This report provides information on the cases presented to the panel from June 2014 to May 2015. During this period 51 cases were considered by the panel.
- 2.2 A recommendation was made to the Chief Housing Officer in all of the 51 cases that an eviction warrant should be applied for.
- 2.3 The recommendations were agreed by the Chief Housing Officer and eviction warrants were applied for in all cases.
- 2.4 This report provides further information on these cases including reasons for the application of the eviction warrant and outcomes of the execution of these warrants.

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 **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.
- 3.2 **Caerphilly Delivers (Single Integrated Plan, 2013): P2:** *“Improve standards of housing and communities, giving appropriate access to services across the county borough.”*
- 3.3 **People, Property, Places: A Housing Strategy for Caerphilly County Borough** provides the context for the provision of housing and related services in the county borough.

### 4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 It was agreed at a Council Meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2013 that a Tenancy Review Panel would be introduced to scrutinise proposed eviction decisions prior to progressing cases to court and make recommendations to the Chief Housing Officer.
- 4.2 The first meeting of the panel took place on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

- 4.3 During the period 19<sup>th</sup> June 2014 to 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015 - 51 cases were considered by the panel. The table below details the reasons for these applications.

<b>Reason of application for warrant</b>	<b>Number of applications</b>
Rent Arrears	41
No access to carry out gas servicing	5
Anti social behaviour issues	2
Illegal occupant	2
Unsatisfactory garden condition	1
<b>Total number</b>	<b>51</b>

- 4.4 A substantial amount of support is offered to tenants by our Tenancy Support Officers prior to the cases being presented to the panel. In addition, in many cases additional independent support is also offered by outside agencies such as the Citizens Advice Bureau and Shelter. Cases are only referred to the panel when all avenues of support and assistance have been exhausted and the breach of tenancy is still ongoing.
- 4.5 The panel recommended in each of the 51 cases highlighted above that an application be made to the County Courts for a warrant of possession of the properties. These recommendations were agreed by the Chief Housing Officer.
- 4.6 An application to the County court was made in each of the 51 cases and eviction dates received.
- 4.7 Eviction dates were obtained on the 51 cases however only 33 evictions actually progressed and the properties taken back. When an eviction date is received tenants have the right to apply to the County Court to have the eviction warrant set aside. In cases of rent arrears tenants may pay the debt or a lump sum to reduce the balance which would also result in the eviction being set aside. The table below provides further details on the outcomes:

<b>Reason for application of warrant</b>	<b>Outcome – evicted</b>	<b>Outcome – set aside by court Eviction not carried out</b>	<b>Outcome – paid in full/part paid Eviction not carried out</b>
Rent arrears	24	9	8
Failure to allow access for gas servicing	4	1	0
Illegal occupant	2	0	0
Anti Social Behaviour breach	2**	0	0
Garden conditions	1	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>

\*\* One of the anti-social behaviour evictions resulted in the property being returned as part of a closure order and the eviction was not formally carried out as the tenant left as a result of the closure order

- 4.8 The household make up of the 33 tenants evicted from their properties is shown in the below table.

<b>Reason for application of warrant</b>	<b>House hold – family Eviction carried out</b>	<b>House hold – single Eviction carried out</b>	<b>House hold – couple Eviction carried out</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Rent arrears	6	15	3	24
Failure to allow access for gas	1	3	0	4

servicing				
Illegal occupant	0	2	0	2
Anti Social behaviour breach	1		1	2
Garden conditions	1	0	0	1
TOTALS	9 **	20	4	33

*\*\* In 5 of the 9 cases there were dependent children as part of the household. In each of these 5 cases the tenant had left the property prior to the eviction being carried out.*

- 4.9 When the evictions were carried out in 88% (27) of cases the tenants were not there and had either abandoned the property or left prior to the eviction. In many cases property conditions were very poor and showed evidence of other breaches of tenancy i.e. non occupation, anti-social behaviour and unsatisfactory property conditions.
- 4.10 It is important to note than none of the cases presented to the Tenancy Review Panel involved tenants affected by the spare room subsidy (“bedroom tax”) or the benefits cap. No eviction warrants have been requested for tenants where rent arrears have arisen as a direct result of these welfare changes.
- 4.11 Tenants of Caerphilly Homes who are affected by welfare reform changes receive ongoing support from Tenancy Support Officers. These officers have a specific role created in October 2012. They discuss with tenants the impacts of the benefits changes and choices available to them, also providing them with the relevant support.
- 4.12 Tenants have been assisted by the Tenancy Support Officers to apply for discretionary housing payments to help them to meet the additional costs relating to the welfare reform changes. It must be pointed out however that there are increasing demands on the Discretionary Housing Payment budget with the amount available in Caerphilly County Borough this year (2015/16) reducing from £428k to £381k.
- 4.13 A report was presented to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 2nd June 2015. This report sought approval on a revised policy for administration of the discretionary assistance fund. The report stressed that Discretionary Housing Payments are principally short term financial support towards long term sustainable solutions.
- 4.14 It is hoped that we can continue to support tenants and report that no eviction cases have been presented to the panel for tenants whose arrears are a direct result of the welfare reform changes. However this will be increasingly challenging over the forthcoming years with additional pressures being placed on the Discretionary Housing Payment fund and further changes being rolled out to the welfare system.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no equalities implications associated with this report.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The total rent arrears in the 32 cases where eviction warrants were executed amounted to £76,350. These are now classed as former tenant arrears and recovery work will continue to collect these outstanding amounts.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no personal implications associated with this report.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

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

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 That this report is noted for information.

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

10.1 To ensure members of the Caerphilly Task Group are aware of the work and outcomes of the tenancy review panel

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 There are no Statutory Powers associated with this report.

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## CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 17TH SEPTEMBER 2015

**SUBJECT: A PROGRESS REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMON HOUSING REGISTER & COMMON ALLOCATION POLICY**

**REPORT BY: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members of the CHTG with an update on the progress being made on the development of the common housing register and common allocation policy. This update builds upon a previous update report to CHTG in May 2014.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 A number of working groups have been established to progress key elements of the project.
- 2.2 A 12-week consultation exercise has been completed on the draft policy.
- 2.3 The council has awarded Abritas the contract to provide a new IT system to manage the common housing register.

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 By designing a system that markedly improves the experience of customers, by providing fairness and flexibility in terms of outcome and process, the development of a common housing register and common allocation policy links to the following strategies:
- the national housing strategy for Wales – *'Improving Lives and Communities'* (Welsh Government, 2010);
  - Caerphilly Delivers: The Single Integrated Plan (2013-17); and
  - *People, Property & Place: A Housing Strategy for Caerphilly County Borough.*

### 4. THE REPORT

#### Common allocation policy

- 4.1 Development of the common allocation policy has been coordinated by a small working group, which consists of two tenants and officers from the council and housing associations. A draft policy was prepared by the group for public consultation. Prior to the public consultation exercise taking place two rounds of internal consultation were carried out.
- 4.2 The public consultation exercise lasted for 12 weeks and was conducted between November 2014 and February 2015. As part of the exercise the council wrote to those people currently on its own waiting list and/or on the housing associations waiting lists, circa 8,000 applicants.

The purpose of the letter was to notify people of the proposed changes and to seek their views. In addition, an on-line survey was produced and posters placed in several locations around the borough including main council offices, housing offices, libraries, customer first centres, leisure centres and medical centres. Paper copies of the survey were made available, in English and Welsh.

- 4.3 A £50 prize cash draw was provided to incentivise residents to complete the survey. A total of 107 residents completed the survey. The draw was made by the Chief Housing Officer and the winner was a council tenant from the Penyrheol area. In addition, a number of responses were received from external organisations such as Tai Pawb and the Royal British Legion. All responses received as part of the consultation exercise were reviewed by a small working group of officers who judged whether the draft policy required amendment. On points of law, advice was sought from legal services.
- 4.4 The common allocation policy has been produced in accordance with the relevant legislation and the Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness (Welsh Government, 2012). In April 2015, Welsh Government issued a revised code which has required a large-scale review of the draft policy to ensure that it continues to comply with guidance. In addition, Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 came into force in February 2015, which covers homelessness. The policy has been amended in light of the revised code and new legislation.
- 4.5 The council has a legal duty to assess the impact of its policies and services, to ensure that they do not adversely discriminate against groups of people with a protected characteristic, as defined by the Equality Act 2010. A small working group of council officers together with a representative from the housing associations and an officer from Tai Pawb (an organisation promoting equalities and social justice in housing) was set up to lead on the completion of an equality impact assessment. The assessment highlighted some minor changes and these have been made to the policy. In addition, it was highlighted that the quality of equalities monitoring data collected by the social landlords partner to the common housing register project varied considerably. Consequently, an action emanating from the assessment is to ensure that data is captured and used more robustly once the new policy is introduced. This action will be facilitated by the procurement of a new IT system, which is covered later in this report.
- 4.6 The policy will need to be formally adopted by the Council and discussions are on-going with committee services as to which committee the policy is presented. Prior to being presented to committee the draft policy has been sent to partners to advise them of the changes that have been made as a result of the consultation exercise, the equality impact assessment and changes required by the revision of the code of guidance. It is expected that the policy will be formally adopted by the end of October 2015, after which time housing associations will be requested to sign up to the policy. The policy will be introduced in 2016, jointly with the common housing register.

#### Procurement of new CHR IT system

- 4.7 A working group of officers from the council and housing associations was set up to fully assess the information and communication technology (ICT) requirements of the common housing register project. Taking direction from the common allocation policy working group, the ICT group produced a mini-specification for an IT system to maintain the common housing register. The key requirements which the group looked at were improving the customer experience and reducing the administrative burden on staff to free up their time to provide good quality housing advice. The current housing management system (Capita Housing) was assessed against the mini-specification. It was found that the system did not meet several of the key requirements, many of which were fundamental to the new approach to allocations and housing advice that was being developed by the common allocation policy working group. A recommendation was made to the Chief Housing Officer to replace the existing system, the cost of which will be covered in full by grant funding.



- 4.8 The purchase of the new system is subject to procurement rules. The working group has worked closely with procurement services and corporate IT to develop a full system specification and then undertake the procurement process. The procurement exercise was completed using the G-Cloud government framework. As part of this process staff from the council and housing associations attended a number of system demonstrations.
- 4.9 The contract to provide the new system was awarded by the council in August 2015 to Abrisas, a market leader in housing IT solutions. Officers from the council are now working closely with Abrisas to scope the project requirements, which will include the implementation of 3 modules – common housing register, choice based lettings (utilised solely by the council and housing associations for the ability to advertise new build and low demand properties) and homelessness.
- 4.10 It appears to be custom amongst local authorities in Wales that the initial capital costs of purchasing the IT system are funded in full by councils. On-going costs are then apportioned between the partners. The council proposes funding the cost of the new system using transitional homelessness funding, which it has received from Welsh Government for use during the financial year 2015/16.
- 4.11 The council intends to recruit a project manager to oversee the implementation of the project from the partners' perspective. This role will be responsible for working closely with their counterpart from Abrisas to ensure that project deadlines and milestones are met.
- 4.12 The go-live date of the implementation of the common housing register has been amended from April 2015 to April 2016 to allow for the completion of the procurement process and a full assessment of the ICT requirements of the project. Abrisas has advised the council that due to capacity reasons it is unable to commence the project until mid-September which would mean that the system may not be implemented and tested before the beginning of May 2016. Officers from the council will be working with Abrisas in the forthcoming weeks and months to see whether the system can be implemented ahead of this time.

#### Staffing Arrangements

- 4.13 All partners agree that the council is best placed to take on the day-to-day management of the common housing register. This will involve creating a single list of applicants from those people currently on the council's and housing associations' waiting lists. It is estimated that the size of the list will be between 6,000-7,000 applicants. There are currently 5,000 applicants on the council's waiting list, including suspended applicants. A scoping exercise has been undertaken to assess the staffing requirement to manage the single list, taking into consideration all new working practices. A briefing paper on the funding of the common housing register, including staffing and IT requirements, is being produced. It is estimated that the current structure will need to increase by up to 6 members of staff (full time equivalent).
- 4.14 It is anticipated that the implementation of the common housing register will see an initial increase in work loads of the allocation team. This is due to the requirement to create a single list, remove the points system and replace with a band system, carry out a full registration of those applicants only on the housing association lists (as the information held by these organisations is inadequate for our purposes), where necessary carry out medical assessments for those applicants only registered with the housing associations and undertake a property assessment exercise to identify levels of accessibility for disabled people. Much of this work will need to commence prior to the system going live and it is anticipated that workloads will reduce once much of this work is completed. The council, therefore, proposes appointing a number of the new posts on fixed-term contracts, with a review carried out after 12 months to assess the on-going requirement to retain these posts.
- 4.15 The council also proposes to utilise transitional homelessness monies to part fund those eligible posts, whilst this funding stream is available. The effect of this will be to minimise the impact of increased costs on all parties, including the council which will be the largest

benefactor. In terms of the on-going funding of the common housing register, it is proposed in the funding paper that the current level of General Fund contribution is maintained, and that the remaining costs are apportioned between landlords on the basis of stock size. Once the funding paper has been finalised, second stage discussions with partners will be take place.

#### Next steps

- 4.16 Prior to the implementation of the common housing register in 2016 the following actions will need to be completed:
- Common allocation policy to be presented to relevant committee for formal adoption;
  - Funding arrangements finalised and agreed by partners;
  - Appointment of a project manager;
  - The implementation of the new IT system will need to be completed and tested;
  - Single list of applicants will be need to be drawn up and registration process completed;
  - All applicants to be contacted in writing to explain the reassessment process, its impact on their application and provide them with the opportunity to review an adverse decision; and
  - Associated procedures to be drawn up and, where applicable, equality impact assessed.

### **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The council is working closely with Tai Pawb to identify any equality implications during the project.
- 5.2 The common allocation policy has been subject to an equality impact assessment, as outlined in paragraph 4.5. Where applicable all related procedures will be subject to this process.

### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Budgets have been identified by the head of service and principal accountant (housing finance) to cover the capital costs of the new IT system (General Fund) and the councils contribution for the revenue costs of the new IT system and staffing costs (General Fund and Housing Revenue Account). Other financial implications have been covered in paragraph 4.15.

### **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 On-going consideration is being given to the additional staffing requirements within the allocation team, as outlined in paragraph 4.13-4.15, and the IT project manager, as outlined in paragraph 4.11.

### **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 All responses from consultees have been incorporated into this report.

### **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 This report is for information purposes only. Members of the CHTG are asked to note its content.

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

- 10.1 This report is submitted to provide members of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group with an update on progress in relation to the establishment of a Common Housing Register and Common Allocations Policy and therefore the recommendation is that the report be noted.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.
- 11.2 Code of Guidance for Local Authorities: Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness 2015.

Author: Mark Jennings, Housing Strategy Officer  
Consultees: Chris Burns, Interim Chief Executive  
Nicole Scammell, Interim Director of Corporate Services  
Cllr. D. Poole, Cabinet Member for Housing  
Shaun Couzens, Chief Housing Officer  
Phil Davy, Head of Programmes  
Kenyon Williams, Private Sector Housing Manager  
Fiona Wilkins, Public Sector Housing Manager

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## CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 17TH SEPTEMBER 2015

**SUBJECT: HANDLING OF DAMP AND CONDENSATION COMPLAINTS –  
UPDATE REPORT**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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- 1.1 The report was originally requested by Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee and was considered at their meeting held on the 14th July 2015.
- 1.2 The report is now presented to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group for information.

**Author:** Andrew Jeffries – Principal Contracts Manager  
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**Appendices:**

**Appendix 1:** Report to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 14th July 2015 – Agenda Item 14

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## POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 14TH JULY 2015

**SUBJECT: HANDLING OF DAMP AND CONDENSATION COMPLAINTS – UPDATE REPORT**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the previous report on Handling of Damp and Condensation Complaints submitted on 30th September 2014 as requested by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The original report considered the incidence of damp and condensation in the Council's housing stock and was based on data for the last six years. This report provides an update following the winter period of October 2014 to March 2015.

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The response Repair Policy will assist the council in meeting the aims and priorities detailed in the following strategies:
- 3.2 **National Housing Strategy:** The Welsh Assembly Government's National Housing Strategy 'Better Homes for People in Wales' (2001) has key themes of quality and choice. The WAG vision for housing "*wants everyone in Wales to have the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing*".
- 3.3 **Single Integrated Plan** (*Prosperous Caerphilly – P2*) "*Improve standards of housing and communities, giving appropriate access to services across the County Borough*"
- 3.4 **Local Housing Strategy:** Property Theme: "*Providing the opportunity for everyone to live in affordable, sustainable, good quality housing, regardless of tenure.*"  
And links specifically to Strategic Aim 6: Housing Management, "*To provide good quality, well-managed homes in communities where people want to live, and offer people housing choices which meet their needs and aspirations.*"

### 4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 During the period October 2014 to March 2015 the Council's housing Surveyors visited 650 individual properties carrying out 748 inspections this resulted in 366 works orders for damp related problems 52 (14%) of which were repeat visits. This compares with the previous report which stated 45% were repeat visits.

- 4.2 The previous report highlighted the difficulty identifying the common causes of dampness. This was identified as an area for improvement. A simple coding system has been devised and implemented at the point the repair is reported and/or inspected and is employed in Table 1. This provides a breakdown of the total number and type of works order related to dampness which have been received during this period and compares it with the same period last year.

**Table 1**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Number 13/14</b>	<b>Number 14/15</b>
<i>D1</i>	<i>Condensation/mould due to tenants lifestyle</i>	220	158
<i>D2</i>	<i>Condensation due to structural issues (Cold Bridge) voids in CWI</i>	132	128
<i>D3</i>	<i>Penetrating damp, salting, rubble in cavity</i>	6	13
<i>D4</i>	<i>Rising damp</i>	0	1
<i>D5</i>	<i>Wet Cavity Insulation</i>	124	24
<i>D6</i>	<i>Roof Leak e.g. missing tile, perished felt, defective flashings</i>	40	16
<i>D7</i>	<i>Chimney leak</i>	34	15
<i>D8</i>	<i>Door/window leak</i>	40	9
<i>D9</i>	<i>Render failure</i>	14	2
<b>TOTAL:</b>		610	366

- 4.3 It will be noted from Table 1 that damp issues are reported most frequently when all categories are grouped together, i.e. D2-9 however, there is still a high incidence of condensation related to tenants' life-styles.
- 4.4 To provide assistance in this area the damp and condensation information leaflet has been improved with revised text and the addition of pictures to illustrate typical problems. This is issued and explained to all tenants who experience such problems and is included within the tenant's handbook for all new housing allocations. A short video has also been put together which can be accessed from the housing website and YouTube channel. This provides a simple animated explanation of damp and condensation issues as a means of helping tenants to identify the possible cause of such problems and how they can be overcome. The leaflet and video were both developed in consultation with our tenants and feedback has been extremely positive. A copy of the revised leaflet has been provided as Appendix 1.
- 4.5 The other causes of dampness are related to building defects often highlighted by energy improvement works where cold bridging in various forms becomes more pronounced, e.g. concrete lintels, blocked cavities, missing or incorrectly fitted insulation.
- 4.6 Damp related to leaks from the plumbing in the property or other types of leak e.g. gas leaks have been removed from the data in order to provide as clear a picture as is possible, as in addition to leaks from the plumbing in the property it included other types of leaks, e.g. gas leaks. Table 2 provides a breakdown of damp and condensation related complaints based on ward for winter 2013/14 and winter 2014/15 and Appendix 2 provides the same information broken down to street and area level for 2014/15.
- 4.7 In order to improve the way we deal with this area of our service, additional training has been provided to our Surveyors, Tenant Liaison Officers, Tenant Support Officers and Estate Management Officers in order that they can better diagnose the causes of damp related problems, as well as identifying the contributing factors for condensation. This has also equipped officers to better advise and guide tenants on how they can help to overcome such problems.



**Table 2**

<b>Ward</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
ABER VALLEY	9	14
ABERBARGOED	20	12
ABERCARN	15	15
ARGOED	12	4
BARGOED	32	23
BEDWAS TRETTHOM MACHN	27	22
BLACKWOOD	22	13
CEFN FFOREST	33	14
CROSSKEYS	8	4
CRUMLIN	16	7
DARREN VALLEY	3	1
GILFACH	6	3
HENGOED	24	18
LLANBRADACH	3	2
MAESYCWMMER	5	3
MORGAN JONES	17	12
MORIAH	23	11
NELSON	5	3
NEW TREDEGAR	39	25
NEWBRIDGE	18	5
PENGAM	7	4
PENMAEN	5	1
PENYRHEOL	36	18
PONTLLANFRAITH	42	16
PONTLOTTYN	15	14
RISCA EAST	26	14
RISCA WEST	16	13
ST CATTWG	34	25
ST JAMES	26	18
ST MARTINS	7	0
TWYN CARNO	50	25
YNYSDDU	5	4
YSTRAD MYNACH	4	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>366</b>

#### 4.8 Data Analysis

4.8.1 Since the external wall insulation and render system scheme was completed to the blocks of flats in Gelligaer, we have seen a fall in calls to this estate (33 calls resulting in 18 works orders in 2014/15 as opposed 59 calls resulting in 21 works orders in 2013/14). Similar schemes have been carried out in other parts of the borough notably Fochriw where it has been reported that substantial savings in energy bills have been achieved. In addition tenants have reported their homes are cooler in the summer months. Significantly, only one report of dampness was received during 2014/15 compared to 102 complaints received over the preceding six years.

4.8.2 In the last report it was stated we had submitted a bid to the Welsh Government for grant funding to a number of areas, including Phillipstown, to carry out energy efficiency works, which would include over-cladding. This work is now on site and nearing completion.

- 4.8.3 The remainder of the properties in Gelligaer are also included for an over-clad system as part of the WHQS external works programme and a bid for ECO funding has been submitted to undertake this work.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment is not needed because the issues covered are for information purposes only, therefore the Council's full EIA process does not need to be applied.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The response repair budget over the last 3 years has been set £7.8m. Over the past 10 years it has fluctuated to address demands on various priorities, but overall has increased by 5% since 2004/5 to 2014/15.
- 6.2 Any increase in works to address dampness related issues will obviously impact on the repairs budget, so it is pleasing to note that the energy efficiency works undertaken are having a positive impact, not just on reducing pressure on the budget, but also assisting to address instances of fuel poverty by reducing tenants' energy bills.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no direct personnel implications.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 Consultation has taken place with relevant officers, Cabinet Member for Housing, Chair and Vice Chair of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and the Repairs and Improvement Group, all views and opinions have been included in the report.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 This report is for information purposes only and advises Members of the Policy and Resources Committee on the progress being made to tackle damp and condensation issues to the Council's housing stock.

## **10. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 This report has been submitted at the request of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and provides an update on the report submitted the previous year in relation to damp and condensation in council housing. The report is for information.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 Section 80 – Environmental Protection Act 1990, Housing Health and Safety Rating System.

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Consultees: Chris Burns, Interim Chief Executive.  
Nicole Scammell, Acting Director of Corporate Services & Section 151 Officer.  
Cllr David Poole, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing.  
Cllr Hefin David (Chair) Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr. Sean Morgan (Vice-Chair) Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee  
Shaun Couzens, Chief Housing Officer.  
Paul Smythe, Housing Repair Operations Manager.  
Mark Jennings, Housing Strategy Officer.  
Repairs & Improvement Group Members  
Fiona Wilkins, Public Sector Housing Manager.  
Area/Neighbourhood Managers  
Phil G. Davy, Head of Programmes.  
WHQS Project Board

Appendices:

Appendix 1: 'Keeping your Home Free from Damp & Condensation' leaflet  
Appendix 2: Data Analysis based on Street and Area level

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# KEEPING YOUR HOME FREE FROM DAMP AND CONDENSATION



## Is your home damp?

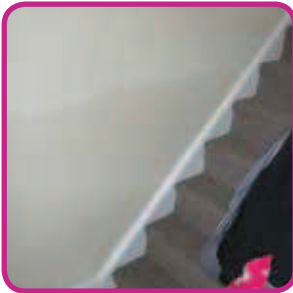
Damp is generally caused by a fault in the structure of the building. There are two basic types of damp:

**Penetrating damp** happens when water enters your home through an external defect. Examples are:

- A crack in a wall or a loose roof tile.
- Leaking waste pipes or overflows.
- Rain seeping through the roof where a tile or slate is missing, spilling from a blocked gutter, penetrating around window frames, leaking through a cracked pipe or from a leaking chimney.



This damp will often show as dark patches on walls and ceilings which get worse when it rains.



**Rising damp** occurs when there is no damp course or there is a problem with the damp course or membrane and water rises from the ground into the walls or floor.

Symptoms of rising damp are a tide mark up to 1 metre above the floor with peeling wallpaper and crumbling and salt stained plaster. Skirtings and other timbers may also show signs of rot.

***These causes of damp rarely have black mould and often leave a 'tidemark'.***

If you do not think the damp comes from any of these causes, it is probably condensation.

## What is condensation?

Condensation occurs at any time but is most noticeable during cold weather; it does not matter if it is raining or dry. It starts as moisture in the air, usually produced by cooking, washing, or drying clothes indoors on radiators. When it hits cool surfaces such as walls, mirrors, wall tiles and windows it condenses and forms water droplets. The moist air rises when it is warm and often ends up on ceilings and in upstairs rooms which are cooler than the rest of the house. Condensation can be found in corners, on or near windows, in or behind wardrobes and cupboards.



A typical family of four can produce 15 litres of this moisture every day.

Persistent condensation can result in mould growth, which will show up as patches of black spots on walls and ceilings. Mould can also affect clothing, furniture and shoes where it will often turn them green.

## First steps against condensation

You will need to take proper steps to deal with the condensation, but meanwhile there are some simple measures you can take right away.

- Open the windows a little to ventilate the room and let fresh air in every day.
- Wipe down the windows and sills every morning and wring out the cloth.
- Avoid drying clothes on the radiators in your home.



## First steps against mould

First treat the mould already in your home. If you deal with the basic problem, mould should not reappear. If you suffer with respiratory problems it may be best to get someone to do this for you.

## **To kill and remove mould:**

- Wipe down walls and window frames with a good quality fungicidal wash, these can be obtained from most good DIY stores in the decorating aisle. If possible choose one that carries a Health and Safety approval number. Always follow the instructions carefully including the use of rubber gloves and face mask if required. Do not use bleach or bleach based products.
- Ensure all the mould is thoroughly cleaned and cleared before redecorating and walls are allowed to dry out for at least a week.
- After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould. Note that this paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints or wallpaper. When wallpapering, use a paste containing a fungicide to prevent further mould growth.
- Should any mould reappear, wash it off immediately with warm soapy water.
- Mould may be a symptom of something more serious which requires specialist attention. If you suspect this to be the case then report it to your local housing office.

***The only lasting way of avoiding severe mould is to reduce condensation as much as possible.***



# How to avoid condensation

These four steps will help you reduce the condensation in your home.

## 1. Produce less moisture

Some ordinary daily activities produce a lot of moisture very quickly.

- To reduce the amount of moisture when cooking, cover saucepans and do not leave kettles boiling.
- Do not use paraffin and portable flue less bottled gas heaters as these heaters put a lot of moisture into the air – one gallon of gas or paraffin produces about a gallon of water.
- Put washing outdoors to dry if you can. Or put it in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or fan on.
- If you have a tumble dryer make sure you vent it to the outside; DIY kits are available for this. If it is a condensing dryer opening a window in the room it is in, will allow for some extra ventilation when it is in use.



## 2. Ventilate to remove the moisture

You can ventilate your home without making draughts. Ventilation is necessary to get rid of moisture being produced all the time, including that from people's breath.



- Keep a small window ajar or the small plastic 'trickle' ventilator in the top of the window open when someone is in the room.
- Open the windows for a short while every day to 'turn the air over' and remove stale air.

- Ventilate the kitchen and bathroom when in use. This means opening the windows wider and using an extract fan if you have one fitted. Leave the windows open, or the fan on for as long as possible after you have finished, or until the condensation has cleared.
- Close the kitchen and bathroom doors when these rooms are in use. Doing this will help stop the moisture reaching other rooms like bedrooms which are often cooler and more likely to get condensation.
- Allow space for the air to circulate in and around your furniture. Open doors to ventilate cupboards and wardrobes leave space between the backs of wardrobes and the wall. Position wardrobes and furniture against internal walls rather than against outside walls, wherever possible.
- Do not block permanent ventilators they are there for a purpose.
- Use the plastic 'trickle' ventilators in the top of your windows as much as possible.

### 3. Insulating your home and draught proofing of windows and outside doors

Insulation in the loft, cavity wall insulation and draught proofing of windows and outside doors will help keep your home warm and you will have lower fuel bills as well. When the whole home is warmer, condensation is less likely.

### 4. Heat your home a little more

In cold weather, the best way to keep rooms warm enough to avoid condensation is to keep low background heating on all day, even when there is no one at home. This is very important in flats and bungalows and other dwellings where the bedrooms are not above a warm living room. Remember to provide background ventilation at the same time.

The council is committed to improving the energy efficiency of tenants' homes as part of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) programme. This is being done via a mixture of measures such as insulation and heating upgrades, along with the provision of extractor fans. If you have not yet had this work done it will be programmed as part of the delivery to achieving WHQS.

## Points to remember

### Produce less moisture:

- Cover saucepans.
- Dry clothes outdoors.
- Ventilate your tumble dryer to the outside.
- Avoid using paraffin or flue-less bottled gas heaters.

### Ventilate to remove moisture:

- Ventilate all the time, especially when someone is at home.
- Increase ventilation of the kitchen and bathroom when in use and shut the door.
- Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes.
- Do not block permanent vents.
- Keep 'trickle' ventilators open as much as possible.

### Heat your home a little more

- If possible, keep low background heat on all day, with background ventilation.
- Find out about benefits, rebates and help with fuel bills.

If you are having difficulty with heating bills contact your energy supplier about alternative tariffs or contact our Tenancy Support Officers, through your local housing office, who may be able to help.

## Further information and help with costs

For further advice please contact our Energy Advisor on Free phone 0800 0854145 who will be able to advise you about your entitlement to grant aid for improving the energy efficiency of your home.

If you are a council tenant and are aware of a defect which is causing a damp problem you should report the matter to your local area or neighbourhood housing office without delay.

Contact details for all the housing offices are provided below.

### Area Housing Offices

Upper Rhymney Valley  
Area Housing Office  
Gilfach House  
William Street  
Gilfach  
CF81 8ND  
Tel: 01443 873535  
urvaho@caerphilly.gov.uk

Graig-y-Rhacca  
Neighbourhood Housing Office  
Grays Gardens  
Graig-y-Rhacca  
Machen  
CF83 8TW  
Tel: 02920 853050  
Fax: 02920 868997  
graigyrhaccanho@caerphilly.gov.uk

Eastern Valleys Area Housing Office  
Pontllanfraith House  
Blackwood Road  
Pontllanfraith  
NP12 2YW  
Tel: 01495 235229  
Fax: 01495 235036  
eastvalleyaho@caerphilly.gov.uk

Lansbury Park  
Neighbourhood Housing Office  
45 Attlee Court  
Lansbury Park  
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CF83 1QU  
Tel: 02920 860917  
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This publication is available in other languages and formats on request.

**Data Analysis Based on Street and Area Level**

Street	Area	Properties	Repairs	Properties Repaired	Percentage
BRYN CARNO	RHYMNEY	25	2	2	8.00
GLANYNANT	RHYMNEY	19	1	1	5.26
GLAN YR AFON	RHYMNEY	28	4	5	14.29
HEOL UCHAF	RHYMNEY	12	4	4	33.33
HEOLYTWYN	RHYMNEY	22	3	3	13.64
ISFRYN	RHYMNEY	16	2	2	12.50
PENYDRE	RHYMNEY	26	2	2	7.69
PHILLIPS WALK	RHYMNEY	41	4	5	9.76
ROWAN PLACE	RHYMNEY	68	1	1	1.47
GOLWG Y MYNYDD	RHYMNEY	18	1	1	5.56
RAMSDEN STREET	RHYMNEY	9	2	2	22.22
BROOKFIELD AVENUE	RHYMNEY	9	1	1	11.11
FORGE CRESCENT	RHYMNEY	13	1	1	7.69
GARDEN CITY	RHYMNEY	5	1	1	20.00
HAFODYMYNYDD	RHYMNEY	25	1	1	4.00
IDRIS DAVIES PLACE	RHYMNEY	10	1	1	10.00
NURSERY CRESCENT	RHYMNEY	23	1	1	4.35
TANYBRYN	RHYMNEY	82	1	1	1.22
DANYGRAIG	PONTLOTTYN	25	4	4	16.00
MERCHANT STREET	PONTLOTTYN	4	2	3	50.00
MOUNT STREET	PONTLOTTYN	13	2	2	15.38
RIVER ROAD	PONTLOTTYN	7	2	3	28.57
SOUTHEND TERRACE	PONTLOTTYN	1	1	1	100.00
SUNNYVIEW	PONTLOTTYN	10	1	1	10.00
ALEXANDER STREET	ABERTYSSWG	2	1	1	50.00
HEOL Y BRYN	FOCHRIW	13	1	1	7.69
JUBILEE ROAD	NEW TREDEGAR	22	1	1	4.55
GLYNSYFI	NEW TREDEGAR	20	3	3	15.00
GREENFIELD STREET	NEW TREDEGAR	20	3	3	15.00
LONG ROW	NEW TREDEGAR	23	3	3	13.04
RHOSYN GWYN	NEW TREDEGAR	8	1	1	12.50
FIELD TERRACE	PHILLIPSTOWN	6	1	1	16.67
JONES STREET	PHILLIPSTOWN	29	3	3	10.34
MEADOW TERRACE	PHILLIPSTOWN	14	2	3	14.29
PENRHYN TERRACE	PHILLIPSTOWN	4	1	1	25.00
PRITCHARDS TERRACE	PHILLIPSTOWN	16	2	2	12.50
BIRCHGROVE	TIRPHIL	21	1	1	4.76
CEFN Y MYNYDD	TIRPHIL	13	1	2	7.69
BRISTOL TERRACE	BRITHDIR	6	1	1	16.67
BYRON ROAD	ABERBARGOED	5	1	1	20.00
COMMIN ROAD	ABERBARGOED	6	1	1	16.67
MILTON CLOSE	ABERBARGOED	4	1	1	25.00
PANTYFID ROAD	ABERBARGOED	14	3	3	21.43

## Appendix 2

Street	Area	Properties	Repairs	Properties Repaired	Percentage
RHIWAMOTH STREET	ABERBARGOED	5	1	1	20.00
ROCKLEIGH AVENUE	ABERBARGOED	9	1	1	11.11
WILLIAM FORBES BUNGALOWS	ABERBARGOED	22	3	3	13.64
WILLIAM STREET	ABERBARGOED	3	1	1	33.33
HEOLDDU DRIVE	BARGOED	2	2	2	100.00
HEOLDDU GROVE	BARGOED	24	1	1	4.17
MOUNT PLEASANT	BARGOED	8	1	1	12.50
OAKLANDS	GILFACH	24	5	5	20.83
LEWIS CRESCENT	GILFACH	10	1	1	10.00
VERE PLACE	GILFACH	14	2	2	14.29
ASH PLACE	GILFACH	24	3	3	12.50
BEECH COURT	GILFACH	14	2	2	14.29
BRYNTEG	GILFACH	9	1	2	11.11
HEOL BRYCHAN	GILFACH	13	1	1	7.69
HEOL Y MYNYDD	GILFACH	19	1	1	5.26
OAK PLACE	GILFACH	16	2	2	12.50
PARK VIEW	GILFACH	61	3	3	4.92
ANEURIN BEVAN AVENUE	GELLIGAER	46	3	3	6.52
CLAERWEN	GELLIGAER	46	5	7	10.87
GAER PLACE	GELLIGAER	7	2	2	28.57
GREENHILL PLACE	GELLIGAER	35	3	3	8.57
HAMAN PLACE	GELLIGAER	14	1	1	7.14
HEOL EDWARD LEWIS	GELLIGAER	32	1	1	3.13
ST CATTWGS AVENUE	GELLIGAER	28	1	1	3.57
WAUN RHYDD	GELLIGAER	22	4	5	18.18
LLWYN ONN	PENPEDAIRHEOL	11	1	1	9.09
ASHGROVE	HENGOED	9	2	2	22.22
BEECH DRIVE	HENGOED	8	1	1	12.50
HENGOED HALL CLOSE	CEFN HENGOED	10	1	2	10.00
THE BUNGALOWS	HENGOED	10	1	1	10.00
CHURCHFIELD CLOSE	TIRYBERTH	21	1	1	4.76
HILL STREET	YSTRAD MYNACH	6	2	2	33.33
PANTYCELYN STREET	YSTRAD MYNACH	13	1	1	7.69
BIRCH CRESCENT	CEFN HENGOED	22	3	3	13.64
HENGOED AVENUE	CEFN HENGOED	4	1	1	25.00
LANSBURY AVENUE	CEFN HENGOED	68	2	2	2.94
THREE ELMS CLOSE	CEFN HENGOED	8	2	4	25.00
WOODLAND PLACE	CEFN HENGOED	5	2	2	40.00
GLENCOED	MAESYCWMMER	14	1	1	7.14
GWERNA CRESCENT	MAESYCWMMER	11	1	1	9.09
HILL VIEW	MAESYCWMMER	12	1	1	8.33
TAI SIRIOL	NELSON	9	2	2	22.22
YNYS LAS	NELSON	18	1	1	5.56
Street	Area	Properties	Repairs	Properties	Percentage

## Appendix 2

		Repaired				
CEFN ILAN	ABERTRIDWR	25	5	5	20.00	
GRAIG Y FEDW	ABERTRIDWR	7	2	2	28.57	
ILAN ROAD	ABERTRIDWR	42	1	1	2.38	
PLAS CWM PARC	SENGHENYDD	41	2	3	4.88	
TAN Y BRYN TERRACE	SENGHENYDD	29	3	3	10.34	
GEORGE STREET	CWMCARN	37	7	8	18.92	
HIGH MEADOW	ABERCARN	25	1	1	4.00	
NANTCARN ROAD	CWMCARN	17	2	2	11.76	
PENRHIW TERRACE	ABERCARN	10	2	2	20.00	
RAILWAY TERRACE	ABERCARN	8	1	1	12.50	
TWYN PLACE	ABERCARN	3	1	1	33.33	
PLAS CAE LLWYD	LLANBRADACH	22	1	1	4.55	
SCHOOL STREET	LLANBRADACH	21	1	1	4.76	
THOMASVILLE	ENERGLYN	23	1	1	4.35	
BRYNGLAS	PENYRHEOL	24	2	2	8.33	
GELLI DEG	PENYRHEOL	15	1	1	6.67	
HEOL ANEURIN	PENYRHEOL	46	4	4	8.70	
PENYBRYN	PENYRHEOL	48	1	1	2.08	
PLEASANT PLACE	PENYRHEOL	23	1	1	4.35	
FIRST AVENUE	TRECENYDD	30	1	1	3.33	
SECOND AVENUE	TRECENYDD	26	3	3	11.54	
THE CRESCENT	TRECENYDD	24	3	3	12.50	
WEST AVENUE	TRECENYDD	7	1	1	14.29	
BYRON PLACE	CROESPENMAEN	12	1	1	8.33	
LLANERCH ROAD	TRINANT	21	2	2	9.52	
PANDY ROAD	CROESPENMAEN	4	1	1	25.00	
PRINCESS CRESCENT	TRINANT	15	1	1	6.67	
TRINANT TERRACE	TRINANT	32	2	2	6.25	
DYFED DRIVE	CHURCHILL PARK	11	1	1	9.09	
DYLAN DRIVE	CHURCHILL PARK	16	2	2	12.50	
GLYN DERW	CHURCHILL PARK	26	4	4	15.38	
STANLEY DRIVE	CHURCHILL PARK	13	2	2	15.38	
WAUNFACH STREET FLATS	CAERPHILLY	12	1	1	8.33	
HEOL Y NANT	BRYNCENYDD	1	1	1	100.00	
NANTGARW ROAD	CAERPHILLY	1	1	1	100.00	
BRYNGLAS	BEDWAS	15	1	1	6.67	
BRYNAWEL	BEDWAS	11	1	1	9.09	
BRYNHEOL	BEDWAS	16	1	1	6.25	
BRYNTEG	BEDWAS	7	2	2	28.57	
EAST AVENUE	BEDWAS	9	1	1	11.11	
ASHGROVE	TRETHOMAS	3	1	1	33.33	
BRYN Y FRAN AVENUE	TRETHOMAS	11	1	1	9.09	
GROVE ESTATE	TRETHOMAS	38	3	3	7.89	
BRYNHYFRYD TERRACE	MACHEN	4	1	1	25.00	

## Appendix 2

Street	Area	Properties	Repairs	Properties Repaired	Percentage
BURNS CLOSE	GRAIG Y RHACCA	10	1	1	10.00
DICKENS COURT	GRAIG Y RHACCA	37	2	2	5.41
KEBLE COURT	GRAIG Y RHACCA	60	3	4	5.00
LONGFELLOW GARDENS	GRAIG Y RHACCA	54	1	1	1.85
SHELLEY COURT	GRAIG Y RHACCA	31	1	1	3.23
THE CRESCENT	MACHEN	12	1	1	8.33
BLAENBLODAU STREET	NEWBRIDGE	12	1	1	8.33
CAERBRYN	PENTWYNMAWR	11	1	1	9.09
CARLYON ROAD	PANTSIDE	11	1	1	9.09
HILARY ROAD	PANTSIDE	4	1	1	25.00
MAESGWYN	PENTWYNMAWR	3	1	1	33.33
ALEXANDER COURT	LANSBURY PARK	60	2	2	3.33
ATLEE COURT	LANSBURY PARK	51	2	2	3.92
BUXTON COURT	LANSBURY PARK	51	2	2	3.92
GRAHAM COURT	LANSBURY PARK	59	4	4	6.78
GREENWOOD COURT	LANSBURY PARK	20	1	1	5.00
HALDANE COURT	LANSBURY PARK	23	2	2	8.70
MAXTON COURT	LANSBURY PARK	51	3	3	5.88
TREVELYAN COURT	LANSBURY PARK	37	2	2	5.41
MOUNTAIN VIEW	MARKHAM	45	3	3	6.67
PENYLAN ROAD	ARGOED	19	1	1	5.26
ADDISON STREET	BLACKWOOD	10	1	1	10.00
APOLLO WAY	BLACKWOOD	17	1	1	5.88
ATLEE ROAD	BLACKWOOD	10	1	1	10.00
CHARTIST WAY	BLACKWOOD	28	1	1	3.57
GREENWOOD ROAD	BLACKWOOD	12	1	1	8.33
LEWIS LEWIS AVENUE	BLACKWOOD	18	1	1	5.56
MONTCLAIRE AVENUE	BLACKWOOD	15	2	2	13.33
TREE TOPS AVENUE	BLACKWOOD	8	1	1	12.50
TWYNYFFALD ROAD	CEFN FFOREST	13	2	3	15.38
WAUN LLWYN CRESCENT	BLACKWOOD	13	1	1	7.69
CENTRAL AVENUE	CEFN FFOREST	4	1	2	25.00
DAVIES STREET	CEFN FFOREST	4	1	1	25.00
DERWENDEG AVENUE	CEFN FFOREST	9	2	2	22.22
DYLAN AVENUE	CEFN FFOREST	23	2	2	8.70
PENYBRYN AVENUE	CEFN FFOREST	12	1	1	8.33
TWYN GARDENS	CEFN FFOREST	32	1	1	3.13
TY BEDWELLY	CEFN FFOREST	16	1	1	6.25
WAUNBORFA ROAD	CEFN FFOREST	6	1	1	16.67
SYDNEY COURT	UPPER TRELYN	5	1	1	20.00
CWRT Y WAUN	FAIRVIEW	11	2	2	18.18
EDWARD STREET	FAIRVIEW	11	1	1	9.09
ISLWYN CLOSE	PENGAM	11	1	1	9.09
SCHOOL STREET	FLEUR DE LYS	1	1	2	100.00



## Appendix 2

Street	Area	Properties	Repairs	Properties Repaired	Percentage
TREKENNING	PARK TERRACE	1	1	1	100.00
BRYNTEG AVENUE	PONTLLANFRAITH	31	3	4	9.68
FLEUR DE LYS AVENUE	PONTLLANFRAITH	24	1	1	4.17
HEOL TRELYN ROAD	PONTLLANFRAITH	11	2	2	18.18
HIGHMEAD	PONTLLANFRAITH	23	1	1	4.35
HILL VIEW	PONTLLANFRAITH	26	4	5	15.38
TY MYNYDDISLWYN	PONTLLANFRAITH	10	1	1	10.00
WARREN COURT	PONTLLANFRAITH	1	1	1	100.00
WOODLAND ROAD	PONTLLANFRAITH	6	1	1	16.67
RISCA ROAD	CROSSKEYS	27	3	3	11.11
WAUNFAWR GARDENS	CROSSKEYS	33	1	1	3.03
GRAIG VIEW	YNYSDDU	6	1	1	16.67
ISLWYN CLOSE	YNYSDDU	6	1	1	16.67
ISLWYN ROAD	WATTSVILLE	21	2	2	9.52
BRITANNIA CLOSE	RISCA	12	1	1	8.33
CLYDE STREET	RISCA	16	3	3	18.75
DANYGRAIG					
BUNGALOWS	RISCA	3	1	1	33.33
FIELDS ROAD	RISCA	4	1	1	25.00
RAGLAN STREET	RISCA	6	1	1	16.67
ST MARYS COURT	RISCA	16	3	3	18.75
TANYBRYN	RISCA	9	1	1	11.11
TY ISAF CRESCENT	RISCA	3	2	2	66.67
CHANNEL VIEW	RISCA	25	3	3	12.00
ELM DRIVE	TY-SIGN	50	1	1	2.00
FAIRVIEW AVENUE	TY-SIGN	13	1	1	7.69
FORSYTHIA CLOSE	TY-SIGN	23	1	1	4.35
HOLLY ROAD	TY-SIGN	59	5	5	8.47
MANOR WAY	TY-SIGN	44	2	3	4.55

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## CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 17TH SEPTEMBER 2015

**SUBJECT: END OF YEAR REPORT ON THE HOUSING DIVISION'S 2014/15 SERVICE PLAN**

**REPORT BY: CHIEF HOUSING OFFICER**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group (CHTG) with an end of year update on progress made against the key outcomes contained within the 2014/15 divisional service plan.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The 2014/15 service plan was produced in accordance with corporate guidance issued by the performance management unit.
- 2.2 The service planning process allows the housing management team to focus the efforts of the division on increasing efficiency and maximising the effectiveness of the range of services that are provided.
- 2.3 For the reasons outlined in section 4 of this report and the appended part 6 extract of the service plan, performance throughout the year is regarded by the housing management team as being partially successful.

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 **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.
- 3.2 **Caerphilly Delivers (Single Integrated Plan, 2013): P2:** *“Improve standards of housing and communities, giving appropriate access to services across the county borough.”*
- 3.3 **People, Property, Places: A Housing Strategy for Caerphilly County Borough** provides the context for the provision of housing and related services in the county borough.

### 4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The 2014/15 service plan is produced in accordance with corporate guidance issued by the performance management unit. The plan covers the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015.
- 4.2 The key outcomes listed below were selected by the housing management team. Key outcomes 1 and 2 were also corporate Improvement Objectives during 2014/15.

1. Investment in homes to transform lives and communities (IO5).
2. Improve the availability of private and public sector housing to reduce the number of residents who may become homeless (IO6).
3. Following the adoption of a revised Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy, there is a need to develop an administrative base for the provision of Home Improvement Repayment Loans, HMO Loans and Loans provided via the proposed National Loan Scheme.
4. Development of Older Persons Service following Sheltered Housing Review.
5. Reduce the number of long-term empty properties and bring existing empty properties back into beneficial use.
6. Improve & increase access to affordable housing to include the development of a Common Housing Register, Common Allocations Policy and Social Lettings Agency.
7. Improve the quality and standards of the response maintenance and voids service.

4.3 Under each key outcome sits a series of actions, which were carried out in order to achieve the intended outcome, performance indicators to measure progress of those actions and risks which identify the impact and likelihood of the actions not being fully/successfully completed.

4.4 The actions contained within the service plan were monitored throughout the year using the following methods:

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Monitoring Arrangement</b>
Weekly	Review financial & operational performance reports Consider weekly workloads
Fortnightly	WHQS Project Board
Monthly	Aspireview review meetings Service plan review meetings Financial and operational performance and strategy review meetings. Financial monitoring meetings (capital)
Bi-monthly	Financial monitoring meetings (revenue)
6 weekly	Caerphilly Homes Task Group (WHQS) Housing management team meeting
Quarterly	Ffynnon updated and reviewed Performance management meetings Performance management unit review support meeting Performance management reports – Aspireview Progress reports to chief officer
6 monthly	Reports to scrutiny committees (policy and resources and regeneration and environment) and cabinet Progress reports to chief officer Performance management meeting
Annually	Performance development reviews for all staff Benchmarking (APSE) AspireView updated and reviewed Year end report to chief officer

4.5 At the end of each quarter throughout the year progress made against the actions contained within the service plan was recorded and reported to the housing management team. This process provided the housing management team with the opportunity to address any areas of underperformance and, where appropriate, impose measures to address these areas.

4.6 Throughout the year officers have submitted individual performance management reports to the CHTG.

4.7 Information on the progress made against the two Improvement Objectives was maintained throughout the year on Aspireview (performance management software). Half yearly and end of year reports on both Improvement Objectives were presented to Policy & Resources scrutiny committee for consideration.

4.8 In terms of some of the actions carried out during 2014/15 that have been successful:

- Drew down Welsh Government Arbed funding to provide energy efficiency measures to around 317 properties in Phillipstown both public and private sector.
- Strengthened the homelessness prevention service to respond to the challenges presented by the change in legislation.
- Fully implemented a new service model for older persons housing services.
- Drew down £341,893.52 from the House into Homes scheme for 7 loans valuing in that have provided 15 additional units of accommodation. In addition we drew down a further £88,424 in anticipation of the completion of 4 further loans, which will provide 4 further units of accommodation.
- Worked closely with partner housing associations to develop a draft common allocation policy ready for public consultation.
- Introduced a new re-let standard for void council properties.

4.9 In terms of some of the actions carried out during 2014/15 that have been partially successful or unsuccessful:

- Partially completed the WHQS capital investment programme in respect of internal and external repairs and improvements (42%).
- At a local level the review was not fully developed for the existing pre-release prison protocols with the prison service, as due to the complexity it was determined that this would be progressed at a national level. We are, therefore, actively working at a national level to achieve this.
- Delayed in confirming outsourcing of certain aspects of the administration of home improvement repayment loans.
- Delayed in completing the review of Tredegar Court extra care scheme.
- Delayed in carryout the public consultation exercise on the common allocation policy.
- Delayed in upgrading the housing repair operations section repairs management system to Total Mobile 5.

4.10 Full details of progress made throughout the year are included in Appendix 1.

4.11 The key outcomes contained within the 2015/16 service plan are:

1. Investment in homes to transform lives and communities (IO 5).
2. To successfully complete the relocation of staff from Pontllanfraith House.
3. We want to change existing working practices to strengthen the homelessness prevention function.
4. A reduction in the waiting time for a disabled facilities grant (DFG).
5. Tackling the effects of welfare reform & Universal Credit.
6. Realigning different aspects of the service area to support the WHQS programme.
7. Ensuring that the service area is adequately prepared to deal with the legislative change brought about by the introduction of different Parts of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.
8. Implement initiatives to address empty properties in the social and private sectors.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 An equalities impact assessment (EIA) is not needed because the issues covered in this report are for information purposes only, therefore, the council's full EIA process does not need to be applied.

5.2 Where applicable, EIAs have been carried out on individual actions / projects contained within the service plan.

5.3 The equalities improvement and monitoring form within the service plan (pp. 67-73) contains a series of statements detailing how our services contribute to the promotion of equality of opportunity.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Many of the service plan actions are financed from existing budgets. The requirement for additional resources is listed clearly in the plan against the relevant action(s)/task(s).

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications arising directly out of this report.
- 7.2 Any personnel implications relating to individual action(s)/task(s) contained within the service plan, where applicable, are listed against the relevant action(s)/task(s).

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 All responses from consultees have been incorporated into this report.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 That CHTG Members consider the contents of the report and note progress in meeting the delivery of the key outcomes and agree with the judgement made in paragraph 2.3.

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

- 10.1 N/a

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 *Local Government Measure 2009* requires improvement objectives to be approved by the council's executive function.
- 11.2 Some of the actions contained within the service plan are carried out as part of a statutory function, e.g. homelessness, the enforcement of conditions in the private rented sector, disabled adaptations etc.

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Consultees: Chris Burns, Interim Chief Executive  
Cllr. David Poole, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing  
Nicole Scammell, Interim Director of Corporate Services  
Shaun Couzens, Chief Housing Officer  
Phil Davy, Head of Programme (WHQS)  
Kenyon Williams, Private Sector Housing Manager  
Fiona Wilkins, Public Sector Housing Manager  
Coin Jones, Head of Performance & Property Services  
Ian Raymond, Performance Management Officer  
WHQS Project Board

Appendices:  
Appendix 1 – Part 6 extract of the 2014/15 Service Plan

## Part 6 ACTION PLAN 2014 - 2015

<b>Service Area:</b>	<b>Caerphilly Homes, WHQS Team</b>	<i>Please link priority and actions to, single plan, corporate priority and /or improvement objective where appropriate below:</i>
<b>A Priority (what do we want to achieve)</b>	<b>IO5: Investment in homes to transform lives and communities.</b>	<i>(As listed in Appendix C, D and E)</i>

B	Actions/Tasks	Progress	Owner & Completion Date	Additional resource required?																					
Page 85  1	<p>Delivery of the 2014/15 capital investment programme in respect of internal and external repairs and improvements.</p> <p>Note:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The original external works programme for the Upper Rhymney Valley are delayed due to issues that have arisen with the Procurement process. The internal works contracts are anticipated to start in October 2014.</li> <li>Figures relate only to properties rescheduled to the 14/15 financial year.</li> </ol>	<p>Progress will be monitored on a regular basis via CHTG, WHQS Project Board and WHQS Management Group. Data will be collected via the Keystone system and a live position maintained via a number of dashboards that are specifically designed to monitor and manage the WHQS Programme. There will be a half-year and full year report presented to CHTG.</p> <p>Q1:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>Internal compliance</u></th> <th style="text-align: center;">Nos</th> <th style="text-align: center;">% of full year</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Eastern Valleys</td> <td style="text-align: center;">37</td> <td style="text-align: center;">6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LRV</td> <td style="text-align: center;">60</td> <td style="text-align: center;">12%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>URV</td> <td style="text-align: center;">31</td> <td style="text-align: center;">9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"> </td> </tr> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>External compliance</u></th> <th></th> <th></th> </tr> <tr> <td>LRV</td> <td style="text-align: center;">11</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Q2: Internal works have been completed on 167 properties. External works have been completed on 57 properties. In respect of the overall 2014/15 programme, this represents 7.5%.</p>	<u>Internal compliance</u>	Nos	% of full year	Eastern Valleys	37	6%	LRV	60	12%	URV	31	9%	 			<u>External compliance</u>			LRV	11	2%	<p style="text-align: center;">Area Project Managers Systems &amp; Performance Manager</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mar 2015</p>	<p>The WHQS Programme is funded by the HRA and is subject to large variances. Additional costs are being managed within the overall financial envelope set by the business plan.</p>
<u>Internal compliance</u>	Nos	% of full year																							
Eastern Valleys	37	6%																							
LRV	60	12%																							
URV	31	9%																							
<u>External compliance</u>																									
LRV	11	2%																							

Page 86		<p>Q3: See report to CHTG 11.12.14. Major slippage during 2014/15 financial year has necessitated a review of the investment strategy over the remaining five years of the programme. The slippage will cause additional pressure due to the increase in the volume of properties that will need to be completed over a shorter timescale.</p> <p>One of the three internal works contracts commenced in November 2014, the other two in January 2015. The externals works programme in the Upper Rhymney Valley is anticipated to commence in April 2015.</p> <p>Q4: Internal works have been completed to 599 properties. External works have been completed to 103 properties. (These figures are inclusive of Rowan Place). Together this represents 42% of the revised programme agreed for the 14/15 financial year.</p>		
	2	<p>Pursue external funding opportunities to support energy improvement measures (under the Energy Companies Obligation [ECO], Arbed or similar Government initiatives).</p>	<p>Success will be assessed by the amount of external funding received and/or the number of homes benefiting from energy efficiency measures.</p> <p>Q1: An Arbed bid submitted for Phillipstown / Senghenydd was unsuccessful although Phillipstown has been put on the reserve list for funding.</p> <p>A specification has been prepared for ECO, which is currently with procurement services who are making the final preparations for tender. It is anticipated that the tender will be sent out in September.</p>	S Martin Energy Officer



Page 87		<p>Q2: Welsh Government has provisionally approved the Arbed bid for Phillipstown. Full approval is dependant on the scheme managers (Melin Homes) surveying the properties. The scheme is expected to cover around 317 properties that include 92 Council properties. The funding estimated at £2.7m will meet the cost of external wall insulation and replacement of inefficient boilers.</p> <p>Q3: Arbed funding approved for energy efficiency measures to around 317 properties in Phillipstown both public and private sectors..</p> <p>Q4: At the end of March 2015, 40% of the energy efficiency works have been completed to the properties in Phillipstown. The scheme has been extended until the end of June 2015. Two energy providers have responded to an Eco tender which is subject to ongoing evaluation.</p>		
	Adhere to the standards set out in the Charter for Trust. This applies to both the in house workforce and contractors.	Responses received via the customer satisfaction surveys are recorded within Keystone. Issues raised by tenants will be investigated and where there is, justification will be rectified.	Area Project Managers, Systems & Performance Manager	No
		Q1: Customer satisfaction in this quarter was measured at 92%.		
		Q2: Due to the limited number of completed contracts data in respect of compliance with the Charter for Trust standards is not yet available for 2014/15. For 2013/14 the overall compliance figure was 92%.		
Q3: Customer satisfaction surveys to date show that the target for compliance with the Charter for Trust standards is being met.				
Q4: Compliance with the Charter for Trust standards has exceeded the target at 93%.				
3				

4	Achieve high levels of tenant satisfaction with the work undertaken to their homes.	Responses received via the customer satisfaction surveys are recorded within Keystone. Tenant dissatisfaction will be investigated and where there is justification action will be taken to try to address the situation. Sample face-to-face surveys are undertaken by tenants.	Area Project Managers, Systems & Performance Manager	No
		Q1: Customer satisfaction in this quarter was measured at 92%.		
		Q2: Due to the limited number of completed contracts satisfaction data is not yet available for 2014/15. For 2013/14 the overall satisfaction rate was 92%.		
		Q3: Customer satisfaction surveys to date show that high levels of tenant satisfaction are being maintained in excess of the target.		
		Q4: Customer satisfaction for the year was 90% which exceeds the target.		
5	Promote the Community Improvement Fund to benefit within communities across the county borough.	Early applications to the fund have identified numerous practical difficulties that can arise from grant applications. Officers will signpost groups to sources of support in order to make successful applications to the fund. Information will be regularly disseminated to ensure there is awareness of the fund.	J Roberts-Waite Strategic Co-ordination Manager – WHQS Programme	No
		Q1: 1 application approved. The Rhymney Allotments Society has been awarded £5,000 to improve access to the allotments including the installation of a handrail and ramp and the tarmacing/concreting of existing pathways.		
		Q2: Four new applications under the Community Improvement Fund have been received. Two of these applications will be the subject of consultation with Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 30th October 2014.		

		Q3: Despite continued promotion of the Community Improvement Fund few applications have been received.		
		Q4: Two Community Improvement Fund Applications have been approved during 14/15. Due to the low number of applications being received, the fund will be reviewed during 15/16 and consideration given to whether it should be discontinued.		
Page 89	Carry out adaptations to meet specific needs of individual households.	Q1: No information provided.	P Davy Head of Programme	No
		Q2: No information provided.		
		Q3: The adaptations are a response to circumstances that arise when tenants are visited at the survey stage. To date 31 properties have had adaptations incorporated where this has been identified as a requirement for the tenants. This action will be ongoing as the need arises.		
		Q4: Properties have had adaptations incorporated as part of the improvement work during 14/15. Note there is no target as such works are in response to need identified during the WHQS surveys. Total number completed adaptations during 14/15 has to be confirmed as various data sources have to be compared.		

## Part 6 ACTION PLAN 2014 - 2015

<b>Service Area:</b>	<b>Caerphilly Homes, Private Sector Housing</b>	<i>Please link priority and actions to, single plan, corporate priority and /or improvement objective where appropriate below:</i>
<b>A Priority (what do we want to achieve)</b>	<b>IO6: We want to prevent homelessness wherever possible by working collaboratively with a range of partners to provide a holistic homelessness prevention service.</b>	<i>(As listed in Appendix C, D and E)</i>

B	Actions/Tasks	Progress	Owner & Completion Date	Additional resource required?
Page-90	Restructure the Housing Options & Homelessness Advice team functions to offer a person centred casework service.	<p>Q1: Action completed. Physical restructure has been completed with a relocation of several officers to form a Homelessness Prevention team. We have assessed the ability of our IT to ensure we can report the required data to comply with the new legislation.</p> <p>Further restructuring of the team to take place in 2015/16 on receipt of Welsh Government transitional homelessness funding.</p>	S Cousins Mar 2015	No
	Provide mediation/early intervention support to households at risk of becoming homeless to remain in their homes.	<p>Q1: The success of this action is measured on the number of tenancies sustained for at least 6 months. Performance data will be reported from Q2 onwards.</p> <p>Q2: The success of this action is measured on the number of tenancies sustained for at least 6 months. To date we have handled 77 cases, providing a range of support to enable people to remain in their homes. This action is linked to PI 5 and will be reported on at the end of Q4.</p> <p>Q3: An additional 6 referrals were made in Q3.</p>	S Cousins Mar 2015	No

		Q4: A total of 128 new enquiries for homelessness advice and assistance received during the year. This included working proactively with tenants and landlords to maintain tenancies, which in turn has increased landlord confidence.		
3	Provide support to households to sustain new tenancies accessed through the Housing Allocations and Advice Centre	Q1: Two specialist support officers are in post and have succeeded in a number of cases to prevent a homelessness presentation being made.	S Cousins Mar 2015	No – funding provided by supporting people
		Q2: To date we have handled 77 cases, providing a range of support to enable people to remain in their homes. This action is linked to PI 5 and will be reported on at the end of Q4.		
		Q3: An additional 3 referrals were made in Q3.		
		Q4: A total of 50 cases of tenancy sustainability support have been opened in this quarter, ranging from rents arrears and evictions to benefits advice.		
4	Work with private sector landlords to increase the level of affordable accommodation available through the development of a social lettings agency, accessible to any household regardless of benefit dependency.	Q1: Report to be considered at Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee in Q2.	S Cousins Mar 2015	Yes £114k (TBC)
		Q2: The report went to Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee on 30th September and will be considered by Cabinet in Q3 (1st October 2014). A draft business case has been produced and consideration of suitable office space has commenced. We can now progress receipt of transitional funding awarded to the authority from Welsh Government in April 2015 for homeless prevention measures. Action now deferred pending this funding.		
5	Review and, where necessary, revise the existing pre-release prison protocol to empower prisoners to plan for their accommodation needs on release.	Q1: Participated in an all-Wales review of homelessness prison leavers and assessment of the impact of the change in priority need status due to be removed from the legislation in 2015.	S Cousins Mar 2015	No

		Q2: Initially this task was going to be undertaken on a local level but has since become a national issue. Therefore, progress is dictated by the homelessness network, which is now leading on this task. Some research, commissioned by Welsh Government, has been undertaken by the WLGA and is due to be considered. We will continue to play an active role in the completion of this task. Action consequently closed down.		
9 Page 92	Produce guidance for all landlords (public and private) on the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010 to promote non-discriminatory practice by all housing providers.	Q1: Draft guidance produced, report going to P&R scrutiny committee in October.	S Cousins Mar 2015	No
		Q2: Draft guidance produced, report going to Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee in October 2014. Draft guidance will be considered by the Caerphilly Homes Task Group prior to going to Policy & Resources Scrutiny in October 2014.		
		Q3: Action completed – guidance published and circulated. Training for landlords is also being rolled out.		
7	Host a specialist domestic abuse support worker to provide early intervention support, target hardening services and person centred support to prevent homelessness in relation to domestic abuse victims and their families.	Q1: Advice from procurement services requires that a tender process must be completed to progress this task. Tender process documents to be completed and submitted in Q2.	S Cousins Mar 2015	No – funding from existing budget ((£31.5k)
		Q2: Procurement process has been completed. We expect contract to be awarded in Q3 and commence in Q4.		
		Q3: A 2-year contract, with an option to extend for 12 months, was awarded to Llamau Women's Service. Service to go live in Q4.		
		Q4: Officer in post based at Housing Allocations and Advice Centre. Post holder commenced position on 9 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2015.		

Improve both the working relations with prison accommodation services to prepare prisoners for their release and the level of assistance provided to prison leavers by support agencies on their release.

Q1: In response to changes in legislation, we have established contact with prisons in the South Wales region in an attempt to improve pre-planning on release.

Q2: No change from Q1.

Q3: A process is in place to deal with MAPPA cases. Processes need to be put in place to deal with other cases. We are considering the use of transitional homelessness funding (Welsh Government) to fund a regional prison coordination worker who will work with the prisons on our behalf. A meeting has been set up with partner authorities in Q4 to progress this.

Q4: The prison leavers pathway is still under development with WG. New processes introduced by WG who have engaged Prison Link Cymru and Community Resettlement Company to do all preparatory work with offenders. Housing and Supporting People leads in Gwent have met and have drafted a local protocol in partnership with Gwent Police and National Offender Management Service. Housing and SP leads within Gwent to meet in May 2015 to jointly fund a regional housing coordinator.

S Cousins  
Mar 2015

No

## Part 6 ACTION PLAN2014 - 2015

<b>Service Area:</b>	<b>Caerphilly Homes, Private Sector Housing</b>	<i>Please link priority and actions to, single plan, corporate priority and /or improvement objective where appropriate below:</i>
<b>A Priority (what do we want to achieve)</b>	<b>3. Following the adoption of a revised Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy, there is a need to develop an administrative base for the provision of Home Improvement Repayment Loans, HMO Loans and Loans provided via the proposed National Loan Scheme.</b>	<i>(As listed in Appendix C, D and E)</i>

B	Actions/Tasks	Progress	Owner & Completion Date	Additional resource required?
Page 94  1	Creation of a suitable database to facilitate home improvement repayment loans.	<p>Q1: No progress during Q1 – still awaiting more details of National Loans Scheme that will form the basis of the CCBC model.</p> <p>Meeting organised for September with Powys CC to share good practice with an authority who are already experienced in the field of loans. Will assist the setting up of administrative processes.</p> <p>Q2: Meeting with Powys took place to share good practice and consider possible administrative processes.</p> <p>Received update/training from WG (29/9) on proposals for National Loans Scheme that will form basis of the CCBC model. Proposed launch date delayed until Q3/Q4.</p> <p>Initial consideration to use of existing Civica systems for data recording for loans following confirmation from Civica that no bespoke package available for loans.</p>	F Wilkins Dec 2014	No



		Q3: Action completed. Corporate consideration being given to long-term future of Civica. Decision taken to manage HIRLs using Ms Excel and use of grant system in Civica in short-term.		
2	Enter into discussions with Credit Union in respect of outsourcing certain aspects of loan administration.	Q1: Initial discussions undertaken at a meeting held on 9 <sup>th</sup> June. Agreement in principle now in place with the Credit Union regarding administration. Further information by way of a loans report to scrutiny committee in Q3.	K Williams & F Wilkins Jun 2014	No
		Q2: Following National Information Event, Regional meeting held which supported the use of a Credit Union or similar organisation for elements of Loan administration. Procurement issues now need to be investigated in respect of securing a suitable external Service Provider.		
		Q3: Agreement reached with procurement services to operate a pilot scheme with Smart Credit Union. SCU to prepare scheme and provide indication of costs.		
		Q4: Meeting with Credit Union to be held on 14 <sup>th</sup> April 2015 with a view to effecting practical implementation of the local scheme in conjunction with National Loan scheme.		
3	Adoption of National Loan Scheme to operate alongside In-house schemes.	Q1: No progress to date – National Loan Scheme unlikely to be operable until October 2014. Report to Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee intended for Q3.	F Wilkins Oct 2014	No
		Q2: National Information Event held on 29 <sup>th</sup> November that now suggests formal launch will be January 2015. Report being prepared for Policy and Resources Committee on 12 <sup>th</sup> November 2014. Launch date delayed until Q.4.		
		Q3: Further meeting with Credit Union 1/12/14 – on target for commencement of loans in line with national launch on 29/1/15.		

		Q4: Meeting with Credit Union to be held on 14 <sup>th</sup> April 2015 with a view to effecting practical implementation of the scheme.		
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## Part 6 ACTION PLAN 2014 - 2015

<b>Service Area:</b>	<b>Caerphilly Homes, Public Sector Housing</b>	<i>Please link priority and actions to, single plan, corporate priority and /or improvement objective where appropriate below:</i>
<b>A Priority (what do we want to achieve)</b>	<b>4. Development of Older Persons Service following Sheltered Housing Review</b>	<i>(As listed in Appendix C, D and E)</i>

B	Actions/Tasks	Progress	Owner & Completion Date	Additional resource required?
Page 97  1	Implementation of new service model for Older Persons Services, following approval of the Sheltered Housing Review Report 09.09.13.	New clusters working well and all schemes receiving daily (Mon-Fri) cover. Meet and Greets organised for May and June 2014.	Mar 2015 G North/ J Green	No
Q1: All 'meet and greet' meetings completed. All 32 sheltered schemes and Tredegar Court extra care scheme had visits. Pleasant Place was held back until Q3 and major works had been completed. Attendance at each 'meet and greet' varied from 20% to over 90% depending on the nature of the scheme.				
Q2: Additional pressure experienced by staff to cover all schemes through the summer period. This was managed successfully with all schemes receiving Sheltered Housing Officer presence. Needs assessments undertaken for every person in a sheltered scheme. Regular tenants meetings started in all schemes.				
Q3: Six monthly reviews commencing. No concerns being raised by tenants. Older Person Working Group ended as 'task and finish' exercise complete.				
		Q4: Action completed.		

2	All posts in the new service model for Older Persons Services to be filled as agreed.	Posts for Floating Support Officer and Activities Coordinator currently at advert stage.	Sept 2014 G North/ V Parsons/ J Green	No
		Q1: 3 x Floating Support Officers in post.		
		Q2: Senior post filled. Activities post re-advertised as post holder resigned for personal reasons. Expected to be completed by Dec 2014.		
		Q3: Activities Coordinator appointed and will be in post Jan 2015.		
		Q4: Action completed.		
3	Handyman service to be further explored.	Proposal has been discussed at R&I group. To be submitted to OPWG in June/July 2014 for consideration.	Dec 2014 G North/J Green	No
		Q1: Reported to and supported by OPWB in June.		
		Q2: Handyman service developed and due to go live in Q3.		
		Q3: Action completed. A handyman service available across all areas.		
		Q4: Action completed.		
4	Consider WLGA proposals for transparent service charges and implementation. Consider in line with whole service area.	Service charges have been reviewed and details have been included in the annual HRA account. This action will continue this work further.	Mar 2015 G North/ J Green/ V Parsons	No
		Q1: No specific progress to report.		
		Q2: Work has continued on identifying scheme specific utility charges to be applied in Q3. Costs for service charge have been investigated and further works are required in some areas.		
		Q3: JG due to meet with Lesley Allen after year-end to look at how they can split the figures down further.		
		Q4: Service charges for grounds maintenance and cleaning being broken down to be charged on a scheme basis. This work will continue into 2015/16.		

5	Develop reporting procedures for Supporting People to meet the requirements of the funding.	<p>Procedures in place to manage and monitor supporting people costs based on the use of the CSM module - Housing Academy system.</p> <p>Q1: CSM module and procedures implemented.</p> <p>Q2: Procedures in place – action completed during Q2.</p>	Sept 2014 G North/ V Parsons	No
6	Review of Tredegar Court, Extra Care Housing	<p>Review of Extra Care Housing in context of changes within social services and whether the scheme is fit for purpose in relation to others in Caerphilly and surrounding areas.</p> <p>Q1: No specific progress to report.</p> <p>Q2: Officer responsible for review has been redirected to decommissioning of hard-wired alarms. This work will commence post Dec 2014 to be completed Mar 2015.</p> <p>Q3: No further progress made in Q3. Hindered by long-term sickness of Senior Sheltered Housing Officer.</p> <p>Q4: Review now fully underway and will be complete by summer 2015.</p>	Nov 2014 G North/ J Green	No
7	Explore improvements to the existing sheltered housing accommodation by producing designs/plans and conduct a feasibility study (detailed plans to be prepared for consideration)	<p>Work is ongoing around major refurbishments to one scheme but other major refurbishment requirements will be aligned to the WHQS programme. Plans have been produced for one sheltered housing scheme and discussions are ongoing about the preparation of a full set of plans for all other schemes.</p> <p>Q1: No specific progress to report.</p> <p>Q2: No further progress made in Q2.</p> <p>Q3: Discussion on-going in relation to redevelopment of certain schemes that will now sit outside the WHQS schedule. Discussion taking place with the private sector housing team and UWHA on developments in Deri area.</p>	Mar 2015 G North/ J Green/ V Parsons	Additional funding is required. Final costs are subject to quotations.



Q4: Six schemes have been identified as requiring further investigation and will be subject to a report in September 2015.

## Part 6 ACTION PLAN 2014 - 2015

<b>Service Area:</b>	<b>Caerphilly Homes</b>	<i>Please link priority and actions to, single plan, corporate priority and /or improvement objective where appropriate below:</i>
<b>A Priority (what do we want to achieve)</b>	<b>5. Reduce the number of long-term empty properties and bring existing empty properties back into beneficial use.</b>	<i>(As listed in Appendix C, D and E)</i>

B	Actions/Tasks	Progress	Owner & Completion Date	Additional resource required?
Page 101 - 1	Deploy additional staff resources towards the Empty Homes Initiative	Consent secured from Head of Service, enquiries currently ongoing regionally as to comparable staffing levels/pay structures.	K Williams September 2014	TBC by Sept 2014
		Q1: Limited success as a result of regional enquiries. Job Description and Person Specification for assistant post to the Housing EHO Team will be prepared during Q2. Funding for post, however, not yet confirmed.		
		Q2: Job description/person specification now prepared and awaiting evaluation. Funding for post still being sought.		
		Q3: We have been unable to identify sufficient revenue to fund the post. Retirements during 2015 may assist us in this process but, due to future MTFP pressures (20% savings for 16/17 and 17/18), at this time we cannot give an absolute guarantee this will transpire		
		Q4: Task abandoned for 2014/15 – however annual PI target has been surpassed within existing resources.		
2	Continued promotion of national “Houses Into Homes” scheme	Funding still available for interest-free loans that will continue to be offered to prospective owners whilst regional funds remain available.	I Burgess (Scheme ongoing – recyclable)	No

		<p>Q1: The council currently has first call on regional funding so Houses Into Homes Loans continue to be offered to demand.</p> <p>Further loan funding totalling £34,549.02 has been drawn down from the central pot in anticipation of the completion of 2 further loans, which will provide 2 further units of accommodation.</p> <p>Q2: Funding is still available for the Houses Into Homes Loan scheme and will continue to be offered to owners and prospective owners whilst this remains the case.</p> <p>We have currently paid out on 6 separate loans valuing in total £316,893.52 and which will provide 14 units of accommodation.</p> <p>Further loan funding totalling £63,424 has been drawn down from the central pot in anticipation of the completion of 3 further loans, which will provide 3 further units of accommodation.</p> <p>Q3: Funding is still available for the Houses Into Homes Loan scheme and will continue to be offered to owners and prospective owners whilst this remains the case.</p> <p>We have currently paid out on 7 separate loans valuing in total £341,893.52, which will provide 15 units of accommodation.</p> <p>Further loan funding totalling £63,424 has been drawn down from the central pot in anticipation of the completion of 3 further loans, which will provide 3 further units of accommodation.</p>	funding)	
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		<p>Q4: Funding is still available for the Houses Into Homes Loan scheme and will continue to be offered to owners and prospective owners whilst this remains the case.</p> <p>We have currently paid out on 7 separate loans valuing in total £341,893.52 and which will provide 15 units of accommodation.</p> <p>Further loan funding totalling £88,424 has been drawn down from the central pot in anticipation of the completion of 4 further loans, which will provide 4 further units of accommodation.</p>		
Page 103	More challenging PI Targets – raised from 3.6% to 4.0%	<p>Will be monitored quarterly via Ffynnon</p> <p>Q1: Performance for Q1 is in excess of target despite extra staff resources having yet been secured.</p> <p>Q2: As can be evidenced by the PI for empty properties (C1), returns up to Q2 of 2014/15 show that we are on target to meet the annual target for returning empty properties back into use.</p> <p>Q3: As can be evidenced by the PI for empty properties (C1), returns up to Q3 of 2014/15 show that we are on target to exceed the annual target for returning empty properties back into use.</p> <p>Q4: PI target surpassed (Target 36) – 42 long term empty homes brought back into beneficial use during 2014/15 as a result of direct action by the private sector housing team.</p>	I Burgess 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2015	No

## Part 6 ACTION PLAN2014 - 2015

<b>Service Area:</b>	Caerphilly Homes	<i>Please link priority and actions to, single plan, corporate priority and /or improvement objective where appropriate below: (As listed in Appendix C, D and E)</i>
<b>A Priority (what do we want to achieve)</b>	<b>6. Improve &amp; increase access to affordable housing to include the development of a Common Housing Register, Common Allocations Policy and Social Lettings Agency.</b>	

B	Actions/Tasks	Progress	Owner & Completion Date	Additional resource required?
Page 104	1.1 Work in partnership with housing associations and tenants to prepare a draft common allocation policy for consultation.	Q1: A series of meetings were held with the housing associations and tenants to prepare a draft document. Writing of the draft will take place in Q2.	M Jennings Aug 2014	No
		Q2: Action completed – draft policy finalised for external consultation. Two rounds of internal consultation completed before the external consultation commences.		
1	1.2 Carry out a 12-week consultation on the policy (Aug-Oct 2014).	Q1: Action linked to the completion of B1.1. It is scheduled to commence in Q2.	M Jennings Oct 2014	No
Q2: Commencement of consultation exercise delayed until Q3. Project timescales have changed and the requirement to commence consultation in Q2 has been relaxed.				
Q3: Consultation exercise commenced in Q3 and will close in Q4. An on-line survey has been produced, letters sent to applicants on all waiting lists and a letter sent to identified stakeholders.				
Q4: Consultation completed on 23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2015. 115 on-line surveys completed and a small number of responses received from stakeholders.				

	1.3 Consider consultation responses and amend policy where appropriate.	Q1: Action linked to the completion of B1.2. It is scheduled to commence in Q3.	M Jennings Oct 2014	No
		Q2: This action is linked to 1.2 and will now commence in Q4.		
		Q3: No progress in Q3 – see 1.2 above.		
		Q4: Currently in progress. Expected to be completed by the end of May 2015.		
	1.4 Carry out an equality impact assessment on the finalised policy.	Q1: Action linked to the completion of B1.3. It is scheduled to commence in Q3.	M Jennings Nov 2014	No
		Q2: This action is linked to 1.2 and 1.3 and will now commence in Q4.		
		Q3: No progress in Q3 – see 1.2 and 1.3 above.		
		Q4: Currently in progress. Scoping exercise completed. Data requested from partners to complete full EIA. Task expected to be completed by the end of June 2015.		
	1.5 Council to formally approve the policy.	Q1: Action linked to the completion of B1.4. It is scheduled to commence in Q4.	M Jennings Apr 2015	No
		Q2: Will commence in Q4.		
		Q3: Now likely to commence after Q4 due to the delay in starting action 1.2 above.		
		Q4: Awaiting the completion of 1.3 and 1.4.		
	1.6 Assess and plan for the ICT requirements of the common housing register and common allocation policy.	Q1: The assessment is currently on-going. Four systems demonstrations have taken place with the main CHR IT providers. The next stage is to produce a list of system requirements in order to carry out the assessment.	R Lewis Aug 2014	TBC
		Q2: Action completed – assessment completed. Decision taken to procure a new IT system. Work commenced on producing a detailed IT specification.		
2	Work with private sector landlords to increase the level of affordable accommodation available through the development of a social lettings	Q1: A report proposing the development of a social lettings agency will be considered by Cabinet in Q2.	S Cousins Mar 2015	Yes £114k (TBC)

	agency, accessible to any household regardless of benefit dependency.	Q2: The report went to Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee on 30th September and will be considered by Cabinet in Q3 (1st October 2014). A draft business case has been produced and consideration of suitable office space has commenced. We can now progress receipt of transitional funding awarded to the authority from Welsh Government in April 2015 for homeless prevention measures. Action now deferred pending this funding.		
Page 106	Seek members' approval on the agreement of the details a leasing model and permission to progress a pilot site(s).	Q1: Two sites have been identified. A report has been drafted and is currently with property services prior to wider internal circulation. The report is expected to go to Cabinet before October 2014.	K Fortey Oct 2014	No
		Q2: Report is out for wider consultation and is expected to go to Cabinet in late November 2014.		
		Q3: A report seeking members' approval will be presented to Cabinet on 21 <sup>st</sup> January 2015.		
		Q4: Action completed. Cabinet approved the delivery of the leased model on two sites within the county borough at Watford Road, Caerphilly and Windsor Colliery, Abertridwr. Officers are currently working on the delivery of the scheme.		

## Part 6 ACTION PLAN 2014 - 2015

<b>Service Area:</b>	<b>Caerphilly Homes</b>	<i>Please link priority and actions to, single plan, corporate priority and /or improvement objective where appropriate below:</i>
<b>A Priority (what do we want to achieve)</b>	<b>7. Improve the quality and standards of the response maintenance and voids service.</b>	<i>(As listed in Appendix C, D and E)</i>

B	Actions/Tasks	Progress	Owner & Completion Date	Additional resource required?
Page 107	Introduce an appointment system for Housing Surveyors for Pre/Post repair inspections.	Appointment system will form part of the Total Mobile 5 upgrade currently with IT/Legal and Procurement to agree.	P Smythe Nov 2014	Yes 1 x Planner (Grade 6)
		Q1: Total Mobile 5 upgrade has been agreed and an order has been placed so that the upgrade can commence, incorporating the electronic appointment system for both pre/post inspections. A manual appointment system has been introduced as a pilot within one housing area.		
		Q2: Following the placement of the order, the project group agreed to concentrate on going live with the basic solution (Transfer from V4 to V5 on existing mobile solution) by the end of the year. The electronic appointment system will then follow on in the new year. The manual appointment system has however been extended to include all areas.		

		<p>Q3: Testing is currently ongoing regarding basic solution of V5 upgrade , the electronic appointment system will follow once fully tested and implemented. Anticipated date to go live on electronic appointment system June 2015.</p> <p>Q4: Testing on the surveying solution to commence testing in May/June 2015. The system will go live when testing has been completed.</p>		
	Upgrade Housing Repair Operations, Repairs Management system to Total Mobile 5.	<p>Meetings ongoing with IT/ Legal/Procurement to agree upgrade requirements in line with the contract. Currently the cost of the upgrade is in dispute</p> <p>Q1: Total Mobile 5 upgrade has been agreed and an order has been placed.</p> <p>Q2: IT have had to build new servers to receive the upgrade, these have since been completed. A project manager has been appointed and will be preparing a project plan confirming timescales for the upgrade. Looking to go live on the basic solution by December 2014.</p> <p>Q3: Delays in IT with uploading V5, system has now been uploaded into a test environment and we aim to go live at the end of January 2015.</p> <p>Q4: System went live in February 2015. There have been delays with rolling out the new devices resulting from network issues, which is on-going. All devices are in the process of being replaced. If network issues persist then roaming sim's may need to be considered in order to receive better network coverage (mainly Rhymney area).</p>	P Smythe Oct 2014	No
3	Introduce new Relet Standard for Void Properties.	Draft Relet Standard currently with Tenants representatives of the Repairs & Improvement group as part of the consultation process before the Relet Standard is agreed.	P Smythe/G North/D Bishop (R&I Group)	No

		<p>Q1: The Relet Standard report was agreed at the Caerphilly Home Task Group on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2014. Procedures are now being developed in order to implement the new standard.</p> <p>Q2: New procedures have been developed including workshops held with relevant staff in order to go live in October 2014. A further report will now be submitted to Policy &amp; Resources scrutiny committee regarding voids costs.</p> <p>Q3: Action completed. A revised relet standard was introduced in October 2014.</p>	Aug 2014	
Page 109	Introduce Sub -Contractor Schedule of Rates for Housing Repair Operations.	All rates are currently been checked for accuracy of detailed specifications and costs before sending out to tender	P Smythe/JF/AJ/NA Oct 2014	No
		Q1: Tender document is in the process of being finalised in order to go out to tender in September 2014.		
		Q2: A number of changes had to be made to the tender documents in consultation with Procurement to ensure contract compliance before going out to tender.		
		Q3: Due to WHQS taking priority with contracts, Procurement have requested an extension on timescales. Tender is now anticipated to go out in February 2015.		
		Q4: In line with Q3 we are still awaiting confirmation from procurement when the contract can go out to tender.		
5	Implement Robert Price Single Source Supply arrangement for Response Maintenance resulting in future closure of in house stores.	To undertake bench marking exercise of material costs before commencing with first of the transfer process for RP to supply consignment stock to stores before proceeding any further with the arrangement	K Webb July 2014	No

		<p>Q1: Bench marking exercise still ongoing. First stage of the transfer process with the supply of consignment stock commenced on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2014. The next stage will be looking at delivering materials to void properties.</p> <p>Q2: Following the transfer of all consignment stock into the main stores, the collection order and direct purchase order process was deemed as a priority by the Head of Procurement in order to comply with the terms of the contract. Procedures are currently being developed for both of these ordering elements.</p> <p>Q3: Stores procedures still being developed with a view to closing stores once all procedures have been completed.</p> <p>Q4: In line with Q3, procedures are still being developed. A date to close stores has been agreed for November 2015.</p>		
	Measure customer satisfaction performance to all the above tasks.	<p>20% telephone customer satisfaction surveys currently recorded for all small type works completed without a pre-inspection, the next stage is to start recording 100% face-to-face customer satisfaction surveys when post inspecting larger types works that have required a pre-inspection.</p> <p>Q1: Pilot exercise of face-to-face customer satisfaction surveys commenced in the east of the borough. Currently still developing the system before extending out to the rest of the borough.</p> <p>Q2: Pilot exercise was extended to include all areas within the borough in September 2014.</p> <p>Q3: Action completed. System now operational and extended borough wide.</p>	P Smythe Sept 2014	No