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**Date: 4th November 2015**

Dear Sir/Madam,

A meeting of the **Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee** will be held in the **Sirhowy Room, Penallta House, Tredomen, Ystrad Mynach** on **Tuesday, 10th November, 2015** at **5.30 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda.

Yours faithfully,

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

**Chris Burns**  
INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## A G E N D A

	Pages
1 To receive apologies for absence.	
2 Declarations of Interest Councillors and Officers are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any business on this agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Officers.	
To approve and sign the following minutes: -	
3 Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 30th September 2015 (minute nos. 1 - 14).	1 - 8

**A greener place Man gwyrdach**

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



- 4 Special Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 22nd October 2015 (minute nos. 1 - 8). 9 - 18
- 5 Consideration of any matter referred to this Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.
- 6 To receive a verbal report by the Cabinet Member(s).
- 7 To receive and consider the following Cabinet Reports\*: -
1. Regulations of Investigatory Powers Act 200 (RIPA Corporate Review Policy) – 14th October 2015;
  2. Caerphilly Homes Communications Strategy and Implementation Plan – 14th October 2015;
  3. Remodelling of Sheltered Housing Schemes – 14th October 2015;
  4. Draft Savings Proposals for 2016/17 – 14th October 2015;
  5. Improving Governance Programme Update – 28th October 2015;
  6. Land at Eastview Terrace, Bargoed – 28th October 2015.

*\*If a member of the Scrutiny Committee wishes for any of the above Cabinet reports to be brought forward for review at the meeting please contact Rebecca Barrett, 01443 864245, by 10.00 a.m. on Monday, 9th November 2015.*

To receive and consider the following Scrutiny reports:-

- 8 Notice of Motion - Land Adjacent to Cefn Fforest Leisure Centre. 19 - 24
- 9 Adoption of the Common Allocation Policy. 25 - 128
- 10 Improvement Objective IO5 – Investment in Council Homes to Transform Lives and Communities. 129 - 138
- 11 To record any requests for an item to be included on the next available agenda.

To receive and note the following information items\*:-

- 12 Discretionary Rate Relief Applications. 139 - 144
- 13 Treasury Management and Capital Financing Prudential Indicators Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 Monitoring Report (1st April 2015 to 30th September 2015). 145 - 156
- 14 Review of Charitable Rate Relief Awards. 157 - 160
- 15 Write Off of Debts - 01/04/15 - 30/09/15. 161 - 162
- 16 The Use of Bed and Breakfast Accommodation for Emergency Housing.

		163 - 178
17	Caerphilly Local Service Board Minutes - 3rd March 2015.	179 - 188
18	Caerphilly Local Service Board Minutes - 2nd June 2015.	189 - 194
19	Caerphilly Homes Task Group Minutes - 17th September 2015.	195 - 200
20	Summary of Members' Attendance - Quarter 2 - 1st July 2015 to 30th September 2015.	201 - 204
21	Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme.	205 - 208

*\*If a member of the Scrutiny Committee wishes for any of the above information items to be brought forward for review at the meeting please contact Rebecca Barrett, 01443 864245, by 10.00 a.m. on Monday, 9th November 2015.*

**Circulation:**

Councillors L.J. Binding, Mrs P. Cook, C.J. Cuss, H.W. David (Chair), Miss E. Forehead, J.E. Fussell, C. Hawker, Ms J.G. Jones, G. Kirby, A. Lewis, C.P. Mann, S. Morgan (Vice Chair), D. Rees, R. Saralis, J. Simmonds and J. Taylor

And Appropriate Officers

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## POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON  
WEDNESDAY, 30TH SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 5.30 P.M.

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PRESENT:

Councillor H.W. David - Chair  
Councillor S. Morgan - Vice Chair

Councillors:

Mrs P. Cook, C.J. Cuss, J.E. Fussell, C. Hawker, Ms J.G. Jones, G. Kirby, A. Lewis,  
C.P. Mann, R. Saralis, J. Simmonds

Cabinet Members:

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

Together with:

N. Scammell (Acting Director of Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer), S. Couzens  
(Chief Housing Officer), P. Davy (Head of Programmes), G. Williams (Interim Head of Legal  
Services/Monitoring Officer), J. Green (Housing Manager for Older Persons Services),  
K. Williams (Private Sector Housing Manager), M. Betts (Tenant and Community Involvement  
Manager), B. Manners (Solicitor) and R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

### 1. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT – MEMBERSHIP CHANGE

It was noted that Councillor C.J. Gordon had recently stepped down from the Policy and  
Resources Scrutiny Committee. Members extended their thanks to Councillor Gordon for his  
valued contribution to the meetings.

Councillor J. Simmonds was welcomed to his first meeting of the Policy and Resources  
Scrutiny Committee.

### 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L. Binding, Miss E. Forehead and  
J. Taylor, together with Cabinet Member D.V. Poole (Housing).

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor J.E. Fussell declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 16 (Discretionary Rate Relief Applications), as he holds a volunteer role within the organisation referenced in this report. In that the report was an information item and it had not been brought forward for review, it was determined that there was no requirement for the Member to leave the meeting room, as the item would not be discussed.

### **4. MINUTES – 14TH JULY 2015**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 14th July 2015 (minute nos. 1 – 16) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **5. CALL-IN PROCEDURE**

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

### **6. REPORTS OF THE CABINET MEMBER**

The Scrutiny Committee received a verbal report from Cabinet Member Mrs B. Jones.

Councillor Mrs B. Jones, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, advised the Scrutiny Committee that the 2014/15 Statement of Accounts had been presented to Council the previous evening, and thanked the Council's Finance Team for all their hard work in the preparation of this report. She also made reference to the next round of Medium Term Financial Plan Savings for 2016/17, which would be discussed at a special meeting of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 7th December 2015.

The Scrutiny Committee were informed of a recent achievement by the Procurement Team, having reached the finals of the Social Enterprise Awards Wales 2015 within the "Buy Social" category. Members requested that their congratulations to all staff involved be placed on record.

Members were advised that the Welsh Purchasing Consortium (WPC) recently undertook a pan-Wales procurement process to acquire a new Public Protection System. Caerphilly Council was one of nineteen local authorities in Wales affiliated with the process. The system is designed to meet the needs of Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Licensing, Private Sector Housing, Waste Management, Community Safety, Outdoor Facilities and Bereavement service requests. This system will replace a number of ICT systems and offer enhanced functionality and mobility options for the services involved. It is to be implemented as a "Once for Wales" system, enhancing the opportunity for information sharing and collaborative working whilst delivering a return on investment pay-back period of approximately 3 years. The Council will begin live deployment of the system during February 2016.

Members were updated on the relocation of a number of departments from Pontllanfraith House to Penallta House. This is currently underway and progressing well, with the IT department assisting in the move in order to make the transition for staff as seamless as possible.

The Cabinet Member was thanked for her report and a query was raised regarding the availability of public transport for those staff relocating to Penallta House. Cabinet Member D.T. Hardacre responded to this query and outlined the location of the nearest bus stops to Penallta House. He explained that the Council were unaware of any staffing transport issues to date or any requirement for additional bus services, but that the situation would be closely monitored.

## **7. CABINET REPORTS**

None of the Cabinet reports listed on the agenda had been called forward for discussion at the meeting.

## **REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

Consideration was given to the following reports.

## **8. REMODELLING OF SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEMES**

Shaun Couzens (Chief Housing Officer) and Joanne Green (Housing Manager for Older Persons Services) presented the report, which had previously been considered by the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 17th September 2015. The report sought the views of 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, prior to its presentation to Cabinet.

The report also sought views on proposals for the six schemes to be omitted from the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) works programme, 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.

Officers explained that a review of all housing stock identified 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 six sheltered housing schemes were selected for feasibility studies. Full reasons for the identification of these particular schemes were outlined in the appendices to the report.

Discussion of the report ensued and a query was raised as to why other schemes identified as having long-term voids (outlined within Appendix A of the report) were not selected for omission from the WHQS programme. Officers explained that some of these properties were low in demand due to other factors such as location/environment and not because of the standard of these particular schemes.

Officers added that despite the small size of the identified schemes, they were generally in a very good state of repair and refurbishments had recently been carried out to a number of these properties. Members were also advised that it was proposed to postpone remodelling of these particular schemes until after 2020 (with completion of all properties to the Welsh Quality Housing Standard by 2025), but that works to some of these schemes could be completed prior to 2020, subject to feasibility and funding considerations.

Following consideration of the report, and in taking into account the views of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group (as detailed in the covering report), it was moved and seconded that the following recommendations be referred to Cabinet for approval. By a show of hands, this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that:-

- (i) the views of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group be noted;
- (ii) a full and comprehensive feasibility study be commissioned for the six sheltered housing schemes identified in the report (Castle Court, Waunfawr House, Ty Melin, Ynyswen, Britannia Court and St. Mary's Court);

- (iii) following a positive outcome of the feasibility study, the schemes be removed from the Welsh Quality Housing Standard programme with the intent 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. COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS – CAERPHILLY HOMES**

This report was considered in conjunction with the preceding report on the agenda (that of the Caerphilly Homes Communications Strategy and Implementation Plan).

Phil Davy (Head of Programmes), together with Mandy Betts (Tenant and Community Involvement Manager) presented the report, which provided 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. The report was previously presented to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 17th September 2015 as an information item, where its contents were received and noted.

Officers explained that 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 service 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 were detailed in the report.

Officers provided an overview of the contacts received between 1st April 2014 and 31st March 2015. Full details were contained in the report and included the contact type and the relevant service category. Officers also outlined the Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints received for 2014/15, together with details of those complaints referred to the Ombudsman. A number of recommendations were made by the Ombudsman during 2014/15 in relation to improvements required by the Housing division as a result of these complaints and these were also outlined within the report.

During the course of the ensuing debate, reference was made to the communication of the Council's Recharge Policy to Caerphilly Homes tenants (including that of the appeals process). Officers explained that matters relating to the Recharge Policy were not included in the list of complaints and representations, but that full details of the appeals process are communicated to tenants by letter, outlined in the Tenant Agreement and available on the Council's website. Tenants are also able to approach their tenant representative who will direct them to the appropriate officer in the event of any issues. Officers advised that such information could also be included in the tenant newsletter.

Members suggested that consideration be given as to how the Council's Recharge Policy will be communicated to Caerphilly Homes tenants as part of the new Caerphilly Homes Communications Strategy and Implementation Plan. Further details of this are minuted with the respective item.

Discussion took place in respect of the Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints outlined in the report and the processes involved in the progression of these complaints. Officers explained that the 'Progressed' column referred to the number of complaints that were escalated from a Stage 1 to Stage 2 complaint (and not the number of complaints that were resolved). Members were also advised that complainants can request their complaint be escalated straight to a Stage 2 investigation.

A Member queried the sole complaint progressed from Stage 1 to Stage 2 in respect of response repairs, explaining that a number of issues had been reported to them by tenants within their ward. Officers emphasised that this list only referred to formal complaints, and



that complaints are continually monitored and used as a means of analysing the service provided by Caerphilly Homes. Wherever possible, Officers will attempt to resolve issues informally before they reach the complaints stage. Members were also advised that details of all complaints received are regularly reported to the Audit Committee. The Member agreed to meet with relevant Officers following the meeting to receive further explanation on the recording of service requests and their progression to a Stage 1 or Stage 2 complaint.

A Member asked if a process could be put in place for Members to be kept informed of complaint outcomes, explaining that they often had to contact tenants to determine if an issue had been resolved. Officers advised that such a process would be difficult to administer in that many issues reported are treated as service requests, and as such it would depend on the nature of the complaint.

Officers also confirmed that an Independent Recharge Review Panel (comprising of officers, councillors and tenant representatives) had been established and would begin their work in the near future.

The Scrutiny Committee thanked Officers for their presentation and noted the contents of the report.

## **10. CAERPHILLY HOMES COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Phil Davy (Head of Programmes), together with Mandy Betts (Tenant and Community Involvement Manager) presented the report, which had previously been considered by the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 2nd July 2015. The report sought the views of Members on a new Caerphilly Homes Communications Strategy and Action Plan for implementation, prior to its presentation to Cabinet.

Officers explained that the new Communications Strategy had arisen from a communications review with stakeholders, comprising of a working group of tenants and staff. The review process asked a number of key questions, gave recognition to work undertaken to raise the Caerphilly Homes profile since the stock transfer ballot, and highlighted a number of areas where improvement is needed. Full details of the review were contained within the report.

The review determined that effective communications are 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. This includes the delivery of timely messages and using a range of methods appropriate for specific target methods (such as the use of social media). Effective communication also relies upon creating opportunities for open and transparent two-way dialogue with stakeholders.

The report therefore proposed that the draft Strategy and Action Plan replace the former 'Housing and Welsh Quality Housing Standard Communications Strategy' which elapsed earlier 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.

Arising from discussion during the course of the meeting, Members expressed a need for the Council's Recharge Policy to be clearly communicated to Caerphilly Homes tenants. As such, it was moved and seconded that subject to consideration being given as to how this Policy will be communicated to tenants, and in taking into account the views of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group (as detailed in the covering report), the Caerphilly Homes Communication Strategy and Action Plan be adopted. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that:-

- (i) the Caerphilly Homes Communications Strategy and Action Plan as appended to the report be adopted;

- (ii) consideration be given as to how the Council's Recharge Policy will be communicated to Caerphilly Homes tenants.

## **11. EMPTY HOMES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR**

Kenyon Williams (Private Sector Housing Manager) presented the report, which provided information in respect of the Authority's activities and opportunities for dealing with empty homes in the private sector within the county borough.

The report was prepared following a Member's request at the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting of 30th September 2015. The original request made reference to initiatives undertaken by other Local Authorities in respect of empty properties. Officers explained that there had been a delay in bringing this report to the Scrutiny Committee, as it had taken some time to establish the requirements of the report and also because the report involved two separate focuses.

The report detailed the extent of the problem of long-term empty homes in the private sector, the Authority's activities and performance in respect of any direct action taken to assist in bringing empty homes back into beneficial use, and the potential partnership opportunities that exist to assist in tackling the problem. Included in the report was the Authority's target year-on-year in respect of returning empty dwellings to occupation, together with the actual outcome achieved. Also included was a comparison with the All-Wales performance between 2012-2015 in respect of the number of empty dwellings within each local authority, and the number and percentage brought back into use. Members were advised that the success level in respect of bringing long-term empty homes back into use is very much dependent on staffing and financial resources.

Officers outlined the range of options available to local authorities when dealing with long-term empty homes. By far the most successful option is to provide advice and education to owners to bring about reoccupation of their properties by way of persuasion and agreement. Direct action is undertaken wherever possible, which can include financial assistance, various means of advice, referral to partner agencies, enforcement action (including statutory notices), and other enquiry methods. In cases where advice and education fails, there are a range of legislative options available to the Authority, including Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO), increased Council Tax, enforced sales and compulsory purchase.

Officers explained that given the relatively low level of resources available to tackle empty homes, there is a need for partnership opportunities to be undertaken wherever possible. However, Officers are unable to explore the opportunities presented when landlords and potential homeowners request details in respect of empty homes within the county borough, as due to Data Protection legislation, the Authority is unable to disclose even basic information as to the location of empty properties. To be able to do so would greatly assist Officers in raising the numbers of empty homes brought back into beneficial use.

It has therefore been proposed that the Authority writes to the owners of empty homes to outline the numerous benefits of bringing their property back into use. The letter would also ask interested owners if they would be prepared to allow the Authority to pass their contact details to interested partners, which would hopefully lead to successful partnership opportunities and greater numbers of long term empty homes being brought back into use. Officers added that the proposed Social Lettings Agency would also be promoted as a further opportunity when carrying out engagement with homeowners.

During the course of the ensuing debate, reference was made to the All-Wales performance comparison table for 2012-2015 included in the report, which detailed the number of empty dwellings within each local authority, and the number and percentage brought back into use. In comparing Caerphilly's performance against that of other local authorities, Members

queried the reasons why a number of other authorities were displaying better results. Officers explained that this could be due to a difference in the interpretation of what is considered to be “direct action” as outlined in the Performance Indicator guidance. It was emphasised that Caerphilly consider personal engagement with homeowners to be the means of meeting this criteria, which may be a contributing factor as to why they are performing lower than some other authorities. Officers confirmed that they would make further enquiries as to how their counterparts in other authorities interpret these indicators.

Members were also reminded that there are insufficient staff resources to meet empty homes targets, with the Authority having no dedicated Empty Property Officers, and that the majority of activity and subsequent achievement in respect of this function has been undertaken by the three District Environmental Health Officers based within the Private Sector Housing Team.

Discussion took place in respect of the benefits available to empty property owners (such as the Houses into Homes and the National Home Improvement Loan Schemes), and Officers gave details of how such schemes are communicated to the public. Officers agreed that should progress be made in respect of reducing the number of empty homes within the private sector, they would bring a further report back to the Scrutiny Committee.

Members thanked the Officers for their presentation and noted the contents of the report.

## **12. REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA CORPORATE POLICY REVIEW)**

Gail Williams (Interim Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer) presented the report, which sought the views of Members on proposed changes to the Council’s Corporate Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) Policy, prior to its presentation to Cabinet.

Members were informed that the Council is under an obligation to comply with legislative requirements and is subject to the provisions of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, Protection of Freedom Act 2012, and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Directed Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources) (Amendment) Order 2012 (S1 2012/1500). The report recommended changes to the Council’s current Corporate RIPA policy to ensure that the policy remains fit for this purpose.

Following a further internal review undertaken by the Council’s Interim Monitoring Officer, it was proposed that the current Policy be reviewed in its entirety to strengthen the governance arrangements around the RIPA process, more adequately address the comments of the Inspector in 2012, address the changes made in relation to the Acquisition of Communications Data which is now dealt with via the National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN), to reduce the number of Authorising Officers and to introduce a more formal training regime.

Members were asked to formally note that this Policy is not intended for use in connection with the surveillance of its employees and were reminded that the surveillance of employees is currently suspended pending the implementation of a specific policy and there are no current plans to progress this issue.

Discussion of the report ensued and in response to Members’ queries, Officers provided clarification on the legal wording contained within the report, and outlined the RIPA operations undertaken by Public Protection in relation to underage sales of alcohol and tobacco. Officers also gave assurances that the Policy had been thoroughly reviewed and that all associated procedures are and will continue to be stringently monitored.

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

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that:-

- (i) the contents of the Officer's report be noted;
- (ii) the changes to the Council's Corporate Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act Policy be approved.

### **13. REQUESTS FOR REPORTS TO BE INCLUDED ON THE NEXT AVAILABLE AGENDA**

Councillor C.J. Cuss requested a report in respect of the Council's engagement process for contractors/leaseholders.

### **14. INFORMATION ITEMS**

The Committee noted the following items for information, full details of which were included within the Officers reports. There were no items brought forward for review.

- (1) Capital Outturn 2014/15;
- (2) Corporate Services and Miscellaneous Finance 2015/16 Budget Monitoring Report (Period 4);
- (3) Treasury Management and Capital Financing Prudential Indicators Outturn Report for 2014/15;
- (4) Discretionary Rate Relief Applications;
- (5) Pensions/Compensation Committee Minutes – 13th July 2015;
- (6) Pensions/Compensation Committee Minutes – 28th July 2015;
- (7) Caerphilly Homes Task Group Minutes – 2nd July 2015;
- (8) Summary of Members' Attendance – Quarter 1 – 15th May 2015 to 30th June 2015;
- (9) Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme.

The meeting closed at 7.03 pm

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 10th November 2015, they were signed by the Chair.

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CHAIR



## **SPECIAL POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH  
ON THURSDAY, 22ND OCTOBER 2015 AT 5.30 P.M.**

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**PRESENT:**

Councillor H.W. David - Chair  
Councillor S. Morgan - Vice Chair

**Councillors:**

L. Binding, Mrs P. Cook, C.J. Cuss, Miss E. Forehead, C. Hawker, Ms J.G. Jones, G. Kirby,  
A. Lewis, R. Saralis, J. Simmonds

**Cabinet Members:**

Mrs C. Forehead (HR and Governance/Business Manager), D.V. Poole (Housing)

**Together with:**

S. Couzens (Chief Housing Officer), S. Cousins (Principal Housing Officer - Housing Portfolio), K. Williams (Private Sector Housing Manager), C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Research Officer), B. Davies (Solicitor) and R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

**Also present:**

Mr A. Clarke and Mr S. Dwyer (Cornerstone Support Services)  
Mr B. Gibbs and Mrs L. Watkins (Argoed Residents for a Safer Community)

### **1. CHAIR'S WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed representatives from Cornerstone Support Services (Mr Andrew Clarke and Mr Stephen Dwyer), together with representatives from Argoed Residents for a Safer Community (Mrs Lisa Watkins and Mr Ben Gibbs). All speakers were in attendance to make representations in respect of the use of bed and breakfast accommodation as emergency housing (Agenda Item No. 5).

In outlining the proceedings for the meeting, the Chair explained that there had been a change to the agenda running order, and that the Officer's report would be presented first, followed by representations from Cornerstone Support Services and Argoed Residents for a Safer Community. All parties would then be invited to participate in the subsequent discussion.

**2. BEREAVEMENT - COUNCILLOR GINA BEVAN**

The Chair referred to the sad news that Councillor Gina Bevan had recently passed away. All present stood for a moment of silence as a mark of respect.

**3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C.P. Mann, J.E. Fussell, D. Rees and J. Taylor.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor L. Binding declared an interest in Agenda Item 5 (The Use of Bed and Breakfast Accommodation for Emergency Housing). Details are minuted with the respective item.

**REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

Consideration was given to the following report.

**5. THE USE OF BED AND BREAKFAST ACCOMMODATION FOR EMERGENCY HOUSING**

During the course of the meeting, Councillor L. Binding declared a personal interest in this item that he is a volunteer with the Caerphilly Churches Night Shelter scheme. In that the interest was deemed to be non-prejudicial, Councillor Binding remained in the room during consideration of the report.

Kenyon Williams (Private Sector Housing Manager) presented the first part of the report, which was prepared in response to a presentation made at Council on 21st April 2015 by members of the Argoed Residents for a Safer Community. At the meeting of Council, the residents outlined their concerns in respect of the use of bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation for homeless persons. They called upon the Authority to support the Residents' Group in bringing about changes to legislation by ceasing its use of B&B accommodation for the housing of vulnerable persons in the county borough. The Interim Chief Executive had responded by advising Council that the use of B&Bs for temporary accommodation would be examined at a future meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee, and it was in response to this commitment that the report was prepared.

The report provided a comprehensive overview of the use of B&B accommodation within the county borough for clients presenting to the Authority as homeless. It detailed the Authority's activities prior to and following the implementation of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, which has introduced major changes to the way in which homeless clients must be assisted and housed. A number of statutory obligations are placed on Local Authorities when discharging their homelessness functions and the report detailed the procedures followed by Officers when dealing with cases of homelessness, together with the various options available to the Authority in respect of accommodating homeless persons.

The report outlined the legislative requirements applicable to B&B accommodation and the manner in which these are inspected by the Authority. As part of the substantial changes introduced by the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and the additional responsibilities now placed upon the Authority, the report referenced revised obligations to prison leavers and progress in respect of the development of the recently introduced Prison Leavers Pathway.

In preparing this report, data was collected on a local, Gwent-wide and national basis to outline the overall picture in respect of the use of emergency and temporary accommodation, which was referenced at various points throughout the report and its appendices.

Officers explained that the use of B&B establishments for emergency accommodation has proven necessary for many years throughout Wales. The Authority has relied on the use of privately-owned B&B establishments (within and outside of the county borough) to place clients whilst their homelessness situation is investigated. Following this, and depending on whether a full housing duty is owed to the homeless applicant, clients are either moved into temporary accommodation or into a social housing property, either from within the Authority's own stock or that of a Housing Association.

Placement of homeless clients within emergency or temporary accommodation is subject to careful consideration of all the risk information available at the time of presentation, but is often limited to the amount of information disclosed by clients at this time. Officers outlined the processes used to ascertain the client reasons for homelessness and determine whether the client meets one of the priority need categories. Officers also detailed the involvement of other agencies and how risk information is shared between the Council and the relevant support agency.

Members were informed that B&B accommodation used by Authorities for emergency housing purposes are classed as "Houses in Multiple Occupation" (HMOs), which are considered to be relatively high risk in terms of fire safety and thus are heavily regulated from a legislative perspective. Full details of the applicable legislation were listed within the report, and it was explained that the Authority operates a risk-based, rolling programme of inspection of HMOs to ensure legislative requirements are consistently met.

Officers outlined the process in cases of homelessness under the age of 18 and explained that B&B accommodation for young people is only accessed when all other accommodation options are unavailable, with the first preference being foster care/supported lodgings and the second for placement within a supported housing project. Homeless young people are always placed in supported accommodation where possible. However, some youngsters exhaust all these supported options and as a result, placement in a B&B becomes the only option available until an alternative can be sought.

Officers outlined details of the Authority's emergency housing process prior to the implementation of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 in April 2015. Previous to the new Act, clients presenting as homeless were placed in emergency accommodation either in a B&B or hostel-type accommodation. Following investigation, and depending on whether a full housing duty was owed to the applicant, clients would be temporarily housed either within accommodation provided via a Private Sector Housing scheme or one of the other types of supported accommodation available to the Authority.

Due to a shortage of supported accommodation, the Authority has occasionally resorted to the use of B&B accommodation instead, and the time taken for Officers to secure a suitable tenancy within the social housing stock has meant that some placements within emergency and temporary accommodation have lasted for a number of weeks/months.

Members were referred to Section 4.8 of the report, which provided comparative data on the number of homelessness households presenting to the Gwent Authorities for housing assistance over the past 3 years and the number of acceptances across each local authority.

It was explained that there are various types of emergency and temporary accommodation utilised across Gwent, with the nature of the provision and support available being dependant on local policy and funding availability. Within the county borough, the provision of such accommodation has historically been via a mixture of private providers (in the case of B&Bs) and Housing Association partners (in respect of hostel provision). However, the Authority has been actively seeking alternatives to B&B accommodation for a number of years, in part due to the changes in legislation but also to improve the level of support that can be provided to homeless clients.

The Authority owns a 10-room single persons hostel at Ty Croeso in Newbridge, but the costs of providing/adapting accommodation to achieve compliance with the relevant legislation are such that the opportunities for the creation of more in-house accommodation are severely limited. Partnership working with Housing Associations is therefore essential and by this arrangement a 13-unit facility for homeless families at Ty'r Fesen, Caerphilly has been secured, together with an 18-room facility for single homeless persons at Maes y Derwen, Tredomen. Discussions are currently taking place with a Housing Association partner to secure another 13-unit facility of supported accommodation which it is hoped will further reduce the Authority's reliance on the use of B&B accommodation for emergency purposes.

Officers explained that support for homeless clients whilst in B&Bs is provided on a floating basis, with the various support providers being notified each time a new client is placed. Hostel and refuge-type facilities provide in-house support and have a 24-hour staff presence. Clients who have been accepted as owed a full duty of housing and have moved on into the private sector leased accommodation are provided with floating support to assist them with their preparations for their move to independent living in a permanent tenancy. The nature of the support provided depends on the needs of each client but typically consists of access to education, healthcare, training programmes and financial management skills.

Members were referred to Section 4.12 of the report which included a comparative table on the use and type of emergency and temporary accommodation across the Gwent region. This outlined the use of Private Sector Leased (PSL) units, which are properties sourced from private sector landlords and thereafter leased through a partner Housing Association (Hafod) for use by the Authority's Emergency Housing Team. The property management is undertaken by Hafod and the Authority provides the tenancy support needs. These PSL properties have for many years provided the Authority with the facility to house homeless clients whilst they await their allocation of a secure tenancy.

In outlining the main reasons for homelessness, Officers referred Members to Section 5.1 of the report, which detailed the number of households accepted as homeless in priority need across Gwent in 2014/15. Also included in the report was a table which showed the annual costs of B&B provision to the Authority. Members were asked to note that gross expenditure in 2014/15 had significantly increased due to various operational changes undertaken throughout the year which had resulted in higher B&B costs. Households placed into B&B accommodation have predominantly been single person clients whose average length of stay was 39 days in 2013/14 and 29 days in 2014/15.

Suzanne Cousins (Principal Housing Officer – Housing Portfolio) then presented the second part of the report, which outlined the changes to the Authority's response to homelessness arising from the introduction of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 in April 2015.

The new Housing Act is specific to Wales and has introduced some major changes to the process of responding to homelessness. There is a new duty for the Authority to take all reasonable steps to prevent or alleviate homelessness actually occurring. In addition, the Authority can prevent homelessness occurring by sourcing and offering accommodation in the private rented sector, and prison leavers with no accommodation to return to are no longer owed a duty of housing, unless vulnerability is proven.

Officers explained that the new prevention duty requires the Authority to respond to the threat of homelessness much earlier when a client is threatened with homelessness. The aim is to work with the client and develop a personal housing plan to resolve their accommodation problems. Officers have to demonstrate that they have taken all reasonable steps to prevent or alleviate homelessness, with the client also having to help themselves and work towards achieving the aims of their personal housing plan. The duty to assist in the prevention of homelessness now applies to anyone approaching the Authority, and priority need only has relevance when the Authority is unable to prevent the client from becoming homeless and they are unintentionally homeless and have a local connection to the area.



The effect of re-focusing efforts to prevent homelessness occurring in the first instance has resulted in a need for fewer clients to be placed into B&B accommodation. To date the average number of clients/households residing in B&B since the legislation changed in April 2015 is 4 per week.

Officers also outlined changes to the process in respect of prison leavers, explaining that there is no longer a duty to accommodate prison leavers who have no fixed address to return to following release (unless they are considered vulnerable). Historically, prison leavers with a local connection to the borough would be accommodated in emergency accommodation whilst investigations were undertaken by Officers, and such accommodation has previously been via the use of B&Bs, Ty Croeso and private sector leased properties. The removal of this group from the automatic priority need status is already having the effect of further reducing the Authority's use of B&B accommodation.

Due to the removal of this automatic priority need status, the Welsh Government has recognised the need to develop the pre-planning of a prisoner's release into the community, and the National Pathway for Homelessness Services to Children, Young People and Adults in the Secure Estate has made sweeping changes to the process and places a number of obligations on various agencies. Whilst this procedural document has not been finalised at the time of writing, in practice the Prison Leavers Pathway and joint working practices (which will plan for the resettlement of offenders) has been in place since April 2015.

Officers also outlined the development of a Social Lettings Agency as a future response to homelessness, using private sector properties through a partner housing association and providing affordable tenancies with support. Officers are currently actively working with private sector owners in an effort to increase the availability of properties for this purpose, which will enable a speedier transition from emergency or temporary accommodation into well managed, suitable and affordable properties. The new Housing Act now permits the Authority to also discharge its housing duty into the private rented sector and so access to a local Social Lettings Agency will be a positive mechanism to further reduce the reliance on B&B accommodation.

In closing, Members were informed that both the existing and proposed activities outlined in this report to manage instances of homelessness are potentially under threat as a result of the uncertainty of future funding. This includes Welsh Government Transitional funding and Supporting People funding, and as a result it is difficult to plan for the recruitment of additional staff to meet the additional demands of the Housing (Wales) Act. There is also the financial implication of void costs in supported accommodation should the Authority successfully move away from the use of B&B accommodation, in addition to the continual pressure on Housing Benefit, which places further uncertainty on the financial support available in managing instances of homelessness.

The Officers were thanked for their report.

## **6. PRESENTATION – MR ANDREW CLARKE, CORNERSTONE SUPPORT SERVICES**

Mr Andrew Clarke from Cornerstone Support Services Limited was invited to address the Scrutiny Committee in respect of the use of bed and breakfast accommodation as a response to homelessness.

Mr Clarke introduced himself and his colleague (Mr Stephen Dwyer) to those present. Cornerstone Support Services are a voluntary organisation that deliver a positive support solution within local communities and work with key partners to address the issue of homelessness within South Wales.

With the aid of a slideshow presentation, Mr Clarke outlined the impact of B&B placements on the service user. He explained that clients feel a lack of connection to their placement and

they are faced with continual uncertainty in that it is difficult to judge how long they will be there before they are relocated to alternative accommodation. This has a knock-on effect in that clients struggle to connect to key services in the local area. There are also significant financial implications for those clients residing in B&B accommodation, in that there is a lack of kitchen/laundry facilities available and thus clients have to factor this cost into their finances.

Mr Clarke outlined some alternatives to B&B accommodation and the issues that needed to be taken into consideration in respect of each option. One alternative was the development of more hostels, but Mr Clarke explained the prohibitive development costs in respect of current austerity measures faced by local authorities. Members were advised that there was also a very strong public feeling against the placing of hostels within local communities. Consideration also needed to be given to the costs of voids within hostels in comparison to the costs of B&B accommodation.

A second alternative involved a quicker turn-around in respect of moving clients into temporary/supported accommodation. Mr Clarke outlined the processes that could be used in respect of this, including more efficient use of social housing and greater collaboration with key agencies. A third alternative included the use of Houses in Multiple Occupation from existing housing stock in different areas of the borough and the use of shorter, sharper interventions run in the same model as the Caerphilly Churches Night Shelter scheme.

Mr Clarke suggested a number of improvements that could be made to address the issue of homelessness in the county borough. These included higher impact interventions in respect of homelessness cases, a review of lengthy waiting lists and assessment periods, a focus on securing long-term housing options, assistance in property searches, and a focus on gaining a successful housing outcome at the start of the process.

In closing, Mr Clarke also proposed a number of suggestions in respect of risk assessments within emergency housing placements. These included a more open dialogue with all parties involved and a focus on the "Risk Management Planning Model", and empowering key officers to take the lead in homelessness cases as they have a wealth of experience in relation to the emergency establishments used and other related information in respect of homelessness cases.

Mr Clarke was thanked for his informative presentation.

## **7. PRESENTATION – MRS LISA WATKINS, ARGOED RESIDENTS FOR A SAFER COMMUNITY**

Mrs Lisa Watkins from Argoed Residents for a Safer Community was invited to make representation on behalf of the organisation.

Mrs Watkins explained that the Argoed Residents for a Safer Community were pleased that the new legislation has now been implemented and is helping to reduce homelessness, and that the association were also pleased to note that the average number of households placed in emergency B&B accommodation had been reduced.

However, she stated that the view of the association and local community had not changed and that it was felt that there had been little change for the people still residing within B&B accommodation. She explained that all the risks to personal and emotional safety remained and that the report made no solid promises for the future.

Mrs Watkins explained that Argoed Residents for a Safer Community wished to see an alternative to B&B accommodation provided and hoped that the Council would make a firm commitment to change their policy to cease the use of B&B establishments as temporary or emergency accommodation. She also referred to two local authorities in Wales where the use

of B&Bs as emergency accommodation had ceased and stated that the economical impact of using such establishments should be considered by the Council in these times of austerity.

Mrs Watkins highlighted concerns relating to the housing of prison leavers in B&B accommodation, explaining that this could potentially lead to a mix of vulnerable clients living under one roof. She expressed concerns in relation to the reliability of the risk assessment procedure and referred to a number of homeless charities and Assembly Members who were opposed to the use of B&B establishments as emergency accommodation.

Mrs Watkins also called for a dedicated support network to be provided to those in B&B accommodation and emphasised the importance of specially qualified support staff being accessible to those clients in need at all times. It was also felt by the Argoed Residents for a Safer Community that it is imperative that the Council secure another facility for supported accommodation, owing to the current housing shortage, which has led to placements in B&B accommodation lasting for weeks/months in some cases.

In closing, Mrs Watkins called on the Council to put pressure on the Welsh Government to reconsider its legislation and provision of funding in respect of the management of homelessness within the county borough.

Mrs Watkins was thanked for her presentation and the Chair confirmed that a copy of the presentations from both Mr Clarke and Mrs Watkins would be circulated to Members of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee following the meeting.

## **8. DISCUSSION ON THE USE OF BED AND BREAKFAST ACCOMMODATION FOR EMERGENCY HOUSING**

The Chair invited discussion on the contents of the Officer's report and the presentations of the guest speakers.

In response to a Member's query regarding the frequency of inspections for HMOs, Officers explained that there was a risk assessment regime in operation, whereby a property would be assessed to determine its number of risk elements (such as state of repair). Those HMOs deemed to have a higher number of risk elements are subject to more frequent inspection.

A Member queried the impact of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 on the number of clients placed in emergency B&B accommodation. Officers confirmed that there had been a significant reduction since April 2015, with only an average of 4 clients per week residing in B&B accommodation across the county borough. Previously clients could be living in such accommodation for an extended period of time, but the few cases are now being resolved more quickly, with the current clients residing at the B&Bs for under a month. Officers further explained that the Authority's first duty is to prevent homelessness and that a personal housing plan to resolve accommodation problems is put in place as soon as the threat of a homelessness situation arises. Officers also referred to the removal of the automatic priority need for prison leavers which had significantly further reduced the Authority's use of B&B accommodation, and outlined the success of the support given to offenders via the Prison Leavers Pathway.

Clarification was sought on the funding made available from Welsh Government to assist Authorities in meeting the additional demands of the Housing (Wales) Act, and whether any additional staff had been recruited as a result. Officers explained that Welsh Government Transitional funding had originally been promised for three years but had only secured commitment for the current financial year, which meant that the Authority were thus unable to recruit additional staff due to future funding uncertainty.

A Member raised a query regarding the percentage of homeless clients currently waiting to be housed. Officers outlined the use of private sector leased properties, which have for many

years provided the Authority with the facility to house those homeless households (who meet the statutory housing duty criteria) in suitable accommodation whilst they await their allocation of a secure tenancy. They confirmed that around 60% of those clients accepted as homeless are currently residing in private sector leased properties and are waiting to be housed in secure accommodation.

A query was raised as to the extent of how the Council had reduced its emergency placements in B&B over the past year. Officers explained that since April 2015, there were an average of 4 clients/households per week living in B&B accommodation, which was viewed as a positive step in the right direction. It was explained that this progression was further supported by the Council's three temporary accommodation facilities (Ty Croeso, Ty'r Fresen and Maes y Derwen).

On behalf of the Argoed Residents for a Safer Community, Mr Gibbs explained that a pressing concern of the association relates to situations where a range of vulnerable clients with different needs and backgrounds are all living within one establishment. He acknowledged that there had been a significant reduction in the number of emergency B&B placements but expressed concern at the possible dangers arising from a mix of client types. He further explained that over the last few months, he had been approached by a number of people previously placed in B&B accommodation, who had experienced intimidation from other clients and had felt very vulnerable as a result.

Reference was made to two local authorities in Wales that had discontinued the use of B&Bs as emergency accommodation. Officers confirmed that they would make enquiries with their counterparts in these councils to determine how this had been achieved.

A Member referred to the risk information considered by Officers at the time of presentation for emergency accommodation, querying whether complete information was being provided to staff or whether this was affected by data protection legislation. Officers explained that each scenario differed on a case-by-basis, which could often be emergency presentations, and that staff were reliant on the information available from the client and other agencies at the time of presentation. Discussion arose on the need to connect and share information with a wider range of agencies, and Officers confirmed that information sharing practices were continually being improved.

Members noted that the number of households accepted as homeless in priority need for 2014/15 (as detailed in Section 5.1 of the report) appeared to be higher in the Caerphilly county borough than in neighbouring local authorities. In outlining the assessment criteria used to verify such cases, Officers confirmed that all these cases were determined as a priority need.

Reference was made to a recent estimation that the number of people sleeping rough within the county borough had doubled, and discussion took place on the preventative measures and support mechanisms developed to address this issue.

In referring to the concerns of the Argoed Residents for a Safer Community regarding a mix of clients under one roof in B&B accommodation, a Member queried whether the same issues would arise by placing clients in a supported accommodation scheme. Officers explained that a detailed risk assessment would take place before placement in supported accommodation and that clients would be placed in a scheme with support appropriate to their needs. It was reiterated that emergency B&B accommodation was only used where clients could not be placed in a suitable supported scheme and that the Authority's first priority was to provide suitable supported accommodation, which was why a further facility of supported accommodation was in the process of being developed. Officers also explained that the main difference between emergency B&B accommodation and supported accommodation was that those clients in supported accommodation received intensive 24/7 support from a range of trained staff.

Mrs Lisa Watkins elaborated on the concerns of the Argoed Residents for a Safer Association in that the Authority sometimes placed a mix of clients in emergency B&B accommodation on the basis of very little information received from the client at the time of presentation. Officers reiterated that there had been a significant reduction in such placements and that the 4 clients/households currently placed in B&B accommodation were located in different establishments spread across the county borough, which should reduce any such issues.

In response to a Member's query, Officers gave assurances that there was a robust process in place in respect of the Prison Pathway Protocol for those prison leavers in need of emergency accommodation, which entailed risk and character assessments, and that there had been significant improvements made in respect of this area.

Members discussed the support available within B&B emergency accommodation and supported accommodation and suggested that this was an area that could be addressed further. Officers explained that they were limited in the support they could provide to clients based in B&B accommodation, in that such properties are privately owned and unable to accommodate Council staff 24/7. Members suggested that this was an issue that could be referred to the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee for further consideration.

A query was raised as to the Authority's remit to revoke their duty of care in certain instances and Officers confirmed that this could potentially apply to those clients who break establishment rules in emergency/supported accommodation or cause problems in the local community.

Discussion took place in respect of the costs entailed within emergency and supported accommodation, together with the potential for void costs in supported accommodation should the Authority successfully move away from the use of B&B accommodation. Officers outlined the processes in respect of those Housing Benefit payments and top-up payments made by the client. A query was raised as to whether it was cheaper for clients to live in supported accommodation than B&Bs and Mr Stephen Dwyer (Cornerstone Support Services) explained that there was less financial outlay to the client in supported accommodation in that kitchen and laundry facilities were available to them.

Officers also responded to queries in respect of ongoing funding for emergency and supported accommodation, explaining that the future of the Welsh Government Transitional funding would not become apparent until January 2016 but that there were indications that there would be cuts to the Supported People funding (which is critical to the successful delivery of many initiatives within the Homelessness field).

The Chair summarised the key points arising from the discussion:-

Having given due regard to the Officer's report, the representations made by all parties and the comments received from Members, the Chair summarised the three main points and comments arising from the discussion and expressed the need for these to be conveyed to the appropriate agencies:-

1. It is of key importance that relevant agencies collaborate in respect of the provision of emergency and supported accommodation in cases of homelessness.

As an aside, Officers were tasked with investigating further how other local authorities have successfully ceased the use of B&B accommodation.

2. With regard to the support for homeless clients whilst in B&B accommodation that is provided on a floating basis (as outlined in Section 4.11 of the Officer's report), it was proposed that a further report on this matter be presented to the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

3. The importance of the Welsh Government Transitional funding was emphasised, with it proposed that the views of the Scrutiny Committee on this matter be forwarded to the Welsh Government for consideration.

It was moved and seconded that these findings be endorsed as an accurate record of proceedings, and that they be appended to the Officer's report and presented to the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for ratification. By a show of hands, this was unanimously agreed. As such, it was unanimously agreed that subject to the inclusion of this additional information, the Officer's report be noted.

Following discussion with Officers, it was confirmed that the matter of B&B accommodation as emergency accommodation would be brought back to a future meeting of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for further review. An invitation to this meeting was extended to the representatives from Cornerstone Support Services Ltd and the Argoed Residents for a Safer Community.

The Chair thanked all those present for their valued contributions to the meeting and welcomed future progress on this matter.

The meeting closed at 7.05 pm.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 10th November 2015, they were signed by the Chair.

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CHAIR



## POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10TH NOVEMBER 2015

**SUBJECT: NOTICE OF MOTION – LAND ADJACENT TO CEFN FFOREST LEISURE CENTRE**

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

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To respond to a Notice of Motion asking that land adjacent to Cefn Fforest Leisure Centre be withdrawn from sale with immediate effect.
- 1.2 The report is seeking the views of members prior to its presentation to Cabinet.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 A number of Members have joined to submit a Notice of Motion asking that a previous decision of Cabinet to dispose of land that once formed a part of Cefn Fforest Leisure Centre be withdrawn from sale with immediate effect on the basis that such a sale “will put this piece of land at a disadvantage” under a forthcoming Strategic Review of Leisure Centres.
- 2.2 This report goes on to explain why the land in question no longer forms a part of the Leisure Centre and its sale will not compromise any on-site improvement that may or may not be identified as part of the Strategic Review of Leisure Centres.
- 2.3 Consequently the report recommends that the Notice of Motion be referred by Scrutiny to Cabinet.

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The disposal of this site would contribute to the following strategic objective:  
**Priority P2** of the Single Integrated Plan: *“Improve standards of housing and communities giving appropriate access to services across the county borough”*
- 3.2 Under its approved Asset Management Objectives, the Authority aims to manage its land and buildings effectively, efficiently, economically, and provide a safe, sustainable and accessible living and working environment for all users.
- 3.3 The Authority has a medium term financial plan (MTFP), which includes cost saving targets resulting from the disposal of assets.

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

- 4.1 A Notice of Motion signed by Councillors Jan Jones, Chris Hawker, Nigel Dix, Pat Cook, Alan Rees, Colin Durham, Roy Saralis and Jean Summers has been submitted for the following reason;

“In the Strategic Review of Leisure Centres it is said that Leisure Centres are constrained by surrounding neighbours so the potential for on-site improvement is limited. Cabinet’s decision on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 2013 to put up for sale a piece of land adjoining Cefn Fforest Leisure Centre will put this piece of land at a disadvantage under the review.

We believe therefore that it is only right and fair that the sale of land which is part of the Cefn Fforest Leisure Centre’s original site is withdrawn from sale and we request that this is done with immediate effect.”

- 4.2 The attached plan (Appendix A) identifies the boundary of the area of land that forms the subject of this report. The land is situated between a residential property (formerly the swimming bath’s Manager’s house) and the rear boundary of residential properties in Davies Street, Cefn Fforest.
- 4.3 There can be little doubt, and as stated in the Strategic Review of Leisure Centres, that on site improvement is often constrained by surrounding neighbours. At Cefn Fforest the Leisure Centre is within an area of open space within the village and if there were ever plans to develop the centre there is some space to do so, subject to Planning requirements and approval.
- 4.4 Originally the plot of land that is currently for sale formed part of the Leisure Centre’s grounds and acted as a buffer between the residents of Davies Street and the Leisure Centre. The land is fenced and is not accessible to the public.
- 4.5 Whilst the plot of land does technically form part of the Leisure Centre its importance to any future strategy for the Centre has been diminished by a decision of a former authority to sell privately the former bath’s Manager’s house, which originally was an integral part of the site. That sale rendered the plot of land now in question sandwiched between a private residence (the former bath’s Manager’s house) and residential properties in Davies Street.
- 4.6 Accordingly development of this land for on site Leisure Centre improvement cannot be foreseen as it would have a distinct negative impact on residents.

#### **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

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

#### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The sale of the land will produce a capital receipt. A formal offer at market value has been received for the purchase of the land.

#### **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are none.



## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 Local members have not been consulted on this response to the Notice of Motion. However their original opposition to the proposal to sell this plot of land was included in the report to Cabinet dated 27th November 2013.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 The Notice of Motion be duly considered by Scrutiny and referred to Cabinet in accordance with the Council's Constitution for a decision.

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

- 10.1 To be in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 Local Government Act 1972, Section 123.

Author: Colin Jones. Head of Performance and Property Services  
Consultees: Corporate Management Team  
Mark S.Williams. Head of Community & Leisure  
Gail Williams. Interim Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer  
Cllr D.Hardacre. Cabinet Member for Performance and Asset Management  
Cllr N. George. Cabinet Member for Community & Leisure

Background Papers:  
Cabinet Report 27<sup>th</sup> November 2013 "Land Adjoining Cefn Fforest Sports Centre"

Appendices:  
Appendix 1 of 1 Site Plan

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## POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10TH NOVEMBER 2015

**SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF THE COMMON ALLOCATION POLICY**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES**

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

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with an overview of the process undertaken to develop a common allocation policy and to seek Committee's approval to recommend to Cabinet that the existing allocations policy maintained by the Council be replaced with this new policy.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The policy has been developed in partnership with local housing associations and will be introduced alongside the common housing register.
- 2.2 The policy has been subjected to an extensive consultation process during its development and a full equality impact assessment has been undertaken.
- 2.3 This policy will replace the Council's existing allocations policy and will also apply to our housing association partners, who, upon request of the Council, will sign up to the new policy. This will provide a standardised and consistent way of allocating properties to all those on the common housing register who are seeking social housing within the borough.

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

- 3.1 The development of a 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);
  - *People, Property & Place: A Housing Strategy for Caerphilly County Borough*; and
  - Strategy Equalities Plan 2012 (CCBC).

### **4. THE REPORT**

#### Background

- 4.1 A common housing register can be defined as a group of landlords devising a single application form by which anyone seeking housing in their area can register their need and specify their housing preferences. Participating landlords then select their potential tenants from the single pool of applicants. Whereas, a common allocation policy can be described as a common set of rules that participating landlords will use to prioritise and select applicants for an offer of accommodation.

- 4.2 The common allocation policy is being developed jointly with the common housing register. Permission to develop the policy and register was established in October 2012:
- A report titled, 'Allocations Policy – Proposals For The Adoption Of A Banding System & A Common Housing Waiting List' was presented to Cabinet in December 2010. The report proposed substantial amendments to the way the Council assessed and prioritised applications for housing. The proposal contained within the report was agreed in principle but Cabinet delayed progression of the policy pending the outcome of the stock transfer ballot.
  - In October 2012, Caerphilly Homes Task Group endorsed the principle of jointly establishing a common housing register and common allocation policy and was ratified by the Cabinet Sub-Committee.
- 4.3 Between early and mid 2013, some exploratory meetings were held with housing association partners. At these meetings agreement in principle was secured to develop a common housing register and common allocation policy. It wasn't until late 2013 that the common allocation policy working group was formed. The group consisted of officers from both the Council and the housing associations. There was also representation on the group from two Caerphilly Homes tenant representatives.
- 4.4 The following organisations have all contributed to the development of the policy, either through attendance at working group meetings and/or via email:
- Aelwyd Housing Association
  - Cadwyn Housing Association
  - Caerphilly Homes
  - Linc Cymru Housing Association
  - Seren (incorporating Charter Housing Association and Derwen Cymru)
  - United Welsh Housing Association
  - Wales & West Housing Association
- 4.5 Each of the above organisations has given in principle support for the development of the common housing register and the common allocation policy. As it currently stands, each of these landlords maintain their own list of applicants and allocates to its properties using its own policy, with the exception of those housing associations who currently receive 100% nominations from the Council's waiting list. The implementation of the register and policy will create a single list of applicants and a single policy. The benefits of this approach are considered in the following paragraph.

#### Benefits of the approach

- 4.6 In addition to supporting the Council's wider strategic objective of creating balanced and sustainable communities the implementation of the common allocation policy will:
- Better reflect local pressures and priorities than the existing policy maintained by the Council and those of its housing association partners, and will provide a greater degree of flexibility to respond to changing pressures and priorities;
  - Improve the customer experience by requiring applicants to only register once to be considered for housing with more than one landlord and provides a more transparent system in terms of the way the priority an applicant is awarded is assessed;
  - Improve the way the social housing stock is currently utilised by creating a single list of applicants with a single point of contact for registration and advice; and
  - Ensure that all applicants for social housing are assessed in a consistent way.

#### Policy Development

- 4.7 As mentioned previously, the policy was developed through a working group approach. The benefits of this approach were the utilisation of the skills and experience housing associations had developed working with other local authorities in the region. In developing the policy the group looked at the following areas:

- Housing and other related legislation and the Welsh Government statutory *Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness (2012 & 2015)*.
- Common allocation policies that the housing associations were partner to in other local authority areas and other identified examples of good practice throughout the UK.
- A review of performance data, held by partners, on the application and allocations processes.

- 4.8 In the early stages of the project the group received two awareness raising sessions from Andy Gale, housing consultant, who has been commissioned by the UK Government, Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association to lead on allocations and homelessness related projects (and also acted as a critical friend to the Council throughout the project). The purpose of the two sessions was to discuss and formulate the underlying principles of the policy, including the banding system, preference categories and criteria in relation to offers of accommodation, unacceptable behaviour etc.
- 4.9 Two seminars were arranged for members, one at the beginning of the project and the second on completion of the draft policy. Both of the seminars were facilitated by Andy Gale. At the first session members were provided with an overview of the project and provided with an explanation of main areas to be covered by the common allocation policy. The second session provided members with the chance to discuss the content of the draft policy prior to the public consultation exercise taking place.
- 4.10 Project progress reports on the development of the common allocation policy and common housing register were presented to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group in May 2014 and September 2015.
- 4.11 In order to assist both the development of the common housing register and common allocation policy, landlords undertook a survey of applicants currently on the waiting list and of those people who had recently been rehoused. Information on the project have been regularly disseminated to the public via Newslines, the Council's and landlords' website and through the use of social media. A briefing paper was also produced for members and staff. A second briefing paper is planned for later this year.

#### Consultation Process

- 4.12 The development of the policy has been underpinned by an extensive consultation process that involved applicants, members, partner landlords and other stakeholders. The consultation process was undertaken in two stages:
- 4.13 Stage 1 – internal consultation: Once the working group had concluded its deliberations a first draft of the policy was produced. This draft was then circulated to partners for their initial comments. All comments received were reviewed by the Council and the policy updated accordingly. In light of the nature and level of changes made, the policy was recirculated to partners for any additional comments. The policy was updated in light of further comments received then finalised in preparation for the public consultation exercise.
- 4.14 Stage 2 – external consultation: It was agreed by the working group that the policy would be subject to a 12 weeks public consultation exercise, in-line with Welsh Government recommendations for policy consultations. The exercise started in November 2014 and concluded in February 2015. As part of the exercise the Council wrote to all applicants who might be potentially affected by the change in policy (approximately 8,000 people), i.e. those people currently on a waiting list maintained by either the Council or the housing associations. Applicants were asked to let us know their thoughts on the changes using an on-line survey. Paper copies were made available to those who were unable to use the on-line form. In total, 115 responses were received from applicants.
- 4.15 The Council also wrote to a number of housing and equality related organisations in the statutory, non-statutory and third sectors. This included Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Welsh Government, Gwent Police, Tai Pawb and Shelter Cymru. Only small number of responses was received.

- 4.16 Similarly to the internal consultation, all responses received via the public consultation were reviewed. Some of the responses required clarification and advice was sought from the Council's legal department and/or Andy Gale. A small number of responses from the consultation exercise were considered under the equality impact assessment process, which will be discussed in the next paragraph. All consultation responses have been recorded, along with the Council's response and whether any amendment was required to policy. Where applicable the policy was amended.

#### Equality Impact Assessment

- 4.17 The Equality Act 2010 places a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the impact of the development or review of services and policies. A small working group with a housing association representative was formed to lead on the equality impact assessment. The Council was assisted in this process by Tai Pawb, a third sector organisation promoting equality and social justice in housing. The equality impact assessment was carried out between March and July 2015 and consisted of an initial scoping exercise followed by a full assessment. Some minor amendments were made to the policy as a result of the equality impact assessment. In addition, a plan was devised containing actions that need to be carried out as part of the introduction of the common housing register. These actions centre mainly on monitoring of applications to identify whether in operation the policy discriminates against any groups with a protected characteristic, as defined by the *Equality Act 2010*. A copy of the equality impact assessment will be placed on the Council's website along with a copy of the policy.

#### Final Revision

- 4.18 The introduction of new legislation, brought about by the *Housing (Wales) Act 2014*, and the issuing of a revised *Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness* (April 2015) required further changes to be made to the policy. On the advice of Tai Pawb, these changes were not made until the equality impact assessment process had been completed. The changes were minor in detail and did not require further public consultation or the equality impact assessment to be updated. The policy and draft equality impact assessment was sent to partners one last time prior to the policy being finalised. This resulted in a few very minor amendments being made to the policy. As a final check, Andy Gale was asked to carry out a review of the policy. As a result of this review some minor amendments were made to the policy including strengthening the wording of the by-passing criteria.

#### Differences between old and new policies

- 4.19 There are some significant differences between the new policy and the Council's existing policy and the policies that the partner housing associations currently maintain. Below is a list of some of the changes that have been made:
- All applicants will only need to complete one application form to register with more than one landlord;
  - All applicants will be assessed by one organisation only (the Council), using one policy;
  - Replacement of the points system the Council currently uses with a 3 tier, banding system. Some landlords operate a choice based system in the borough and these will be closed;
  - A limit on the number of offers of accommodation. On the third unreasonable refusal the applicant will have their application suspended for 12 months;
  - A reduction in the number of categories awarded preference and a reclassification of the entitlement criteria for entry into these categories;
  - Incorporating good practice criteria in relation to British Armed Forces and Reserve Forces personnel and, if applicable, bereaved spouses and civil partners;
  - Adoption by all landlords of the Council's best match process for allocating accessible housing to disabled people;



- Introducing criteria which could delay consideration for an offer of accommodation until such a time as an applicant has moderated their behaviour; and
- Allows for the introduction of local lettings policies to address local issues, e.g. anti-social behaviour, reducing child densities, prioritising applicants who work etc.

### IT Development

- 4.20 A separate piece of work has been undertaken to assess the information technology (IT) requirements of the project. It was established by the IT working group that a new system was required to maintain the common housing register. The procurement of the new system was undertaken using UK Government's G-Cloud framework. The contract to provide the system was awarded by the Council in August 2015 to Abritas, a market leader in web-based housing IT systems.
- 4.21 The Council will pay for the capital costs of the new system and the first year's service and maintenance charge using funding received from Welsh Government. To comply with the criteria, it is imperative that the funding is drawn down and spent by the end of this financial year. To enable this to happen it was essential to commence work on the implementation of the new system as soon as possible, as any delays could result in the Council incurring additional costs. It is anticipated that the system will be ready to be implemented alongside the policy by July 2016, providing no delays in its development are experienced.

### Implementation of Policy

- 4.22 As discussed in the previous paragraph the policy will be jointly implemented alongside the common housing register. Prior to its implementation all housing association partners will be requested to voluntarily sign up to the policy. When the policy is implemented it will replace all existing policies currently in place. Given the in principle support provided at the beginning of the project and the level of on-going support to develop the policy, officers anticipate that all partner housing associations will voluntarily sign up to the policy.
- 4.23 A single list of applicants will be created from those people currently on the lists of all partners, although, this list will not come into force until the introduction of the policy and register. The Council will carry out an assessment of all applicants on the single list in accordance with the new policy. Applicants will be notified in writing of this assessment and given an opportunity to request a review of the result of their assessment. It is likely that as a result of the assessment, some applicants will gain priority, some may lose priority and some will retain the same level of priority. Until the assessment is completed, we are unable to quantify this.
- 4.24 To ensure compliance with the requirements of s.168 of the *Housing Act 1996*, a copy of the policy along with any associated procedures will be placed on the Council's website. A hard copy of the policy will be made available for inspection by members of the public to view on request at Penallta House, the area housing offices and customer service centres. Copies of the policy will be provided on payment of a reasonable fee, as yet to be decided. The Council will also publish a summary of the policy and provide a copy free of charge to any person who requests one.

### Monitoring & Review

- 4.25 The Council will work proactively with the landlords post implementation to ensure that the policy continues to meet its statutory obligations and determine whether it continues to meet its obligations to promote equality of opportunity. The Council will meet with landlords usually on a quarterly basis to review information on people applying for and being allocated social housing. The first large-scale review of the policy will be carried out with landlords 12 months after the date of the implementation of the policy to ensure that it remains compliant with legislation and good practice. Further reviews will then be carried out on a cyclical basis.

- 4.26 There is a statutory requirement to consult those people affected by a major change to the policy. A major change is regarded as a change which affects the relative priority of a large number people or significant changes to the associated procedures. Similarly to the public consultation exercise discussed above, the Council would need to write to everyone likely to be affected by proposed change and any organisations representing these groups of people. Less significant changes are not subject to the same level of consultation. Officers will seek the advice of the Council's legal department before deciding whether or not a change is major. Officers propose that all major amendments are reported to Cabinet along with details of any consultation undertaken and the outcome of any equality impact assessment undertaken. All other changes would be agreed between all partners, discussed with the Cabinet Member for Housing then signed off by the Chief Housing Officer.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The common allocation policy has been subject to an equality impact assessment (see paragraph 4.16). Some minor amendments were made to the policy as a result of the assessment and there are some actions around equality monitoring that will need to be addressed once the policy and register have been implemented.
- 5.2 The implementation of the common housing register will facilitate the collection of equalities monitoring data across all protected characteristics. This data will be reviewed on a quarterly basis to ensure to ensure that the common allocation policy complies with the Council's statutory obligations as defined by the *Equality Act 2010*.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Transitional homelessness funding received from Welsh Government will be used to pay for the capital costs of the purchase of the new IT system and the first year's service and maintenance charge, which combined is estimated to be £107,000.
- 6.2 Discussions are at an advanced stage with partners over the on-going funding of a revised staffing structure to manage the common housing register and the annually recurring service and maintenance cost for the new IT system. The cost of the structure in year 1 will increase by about £100,000, which is offset by using nearly £50,000 of transitional homelessness funding. The staffing costs will be apportioned between the General Fund, the Housing Revenue Account and through contributions from our housing association partners. The costs to the Housing Revenue Account and housing associations will be apportioned on the basis of stock size.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 It has been identified by officers that the existing staff structure is insufficient to manage the increase in workload expected with the introduction of the common housing register and common allocation policy. A business case for an enhanced staffing structure to manage the common housing register was approved by CMT in July 2015. The recruitment and selection process has now been completed and the new positions are beginning to be filled. All of the new positions will be recruited on a fixed term basis and will be reviewed with partners after 12 months to see whether they should be extended and the options for funding the continuation of these posts.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 Any views received as part of consultation have been incorporated into this report.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 That Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee recommends to Cabinet that the common allocation policy is formally adopted and that upon its implementation the Council's existing allocations policy is rescinded.
- 9.2 That Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee recommends to Cabinet that once the first review of the policy has been completed, as outlined in paragraph 4.25, the results are reported to Cabinet.

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

- 10.1 To ensure that the allocations policy continues to comply with legislation and good practice, and is able to respond to the changing housing needs that present themselves throughout the borough.
- 10.2 To ensure that best use is made of the social housing stock and the resources of the Council and its housing association partners.
- 10.3 To improve the customer experience by providing a transparent and simpler allocations system for people to use and understand.

## **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 on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness (Welsh Government, 2015).*
- 11.3 *Equality Act 2010.*

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Cllr Hefin David, Chair of Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee  
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Carol Price, Housing Manager, Linc Cymru Housing Association  
Karen Thomas, Head of Neighbourhoods, United Welsh Housing Association  
Craig Davis, Housing Options Officer, Wales & West Housing  
Emma Reeves-M<sup>c</sup>All, Policy and External Affairs Officer, Tai Pawb

Background Papers:

Equality Impact Assessment

Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness  
(Welsh Government, 2015)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Common Allocation Policy for Caerphilly County Borough - October 2015

Appendix 2 Appendices to Common Allocation Policy for Caerphilly County Borough

**Caerphilly County Borough Council**

**Common Allocation Policy for Caerphilly  
County Borough**

**November 2015**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This section outlines the legal context in relation to the allocation of social housing, those organisations signed up to the policy, the key objectives that underline this policy and other relevant information on how this policy is maintained.
- 1.2 Unless stated otherwise, all references in this policy to 'local authority' or 'Council' means Caerphilly county borough council. All references to either 'landlords' or 'partners' mean those housing associations listed in paragraph 1.7, plus Caerphilly Homes, the section which carries out the management of the Council's own housing stock.

### Legal Context

- 1.3 This policy sets out in detail who is and who is not eligible for social housing in the county borough and how the Council will make this assessment. It also sets out how applicants can apply for and access this housing, and the order in which they will be rehoused.
- 1.4 This policy has been developed in accordance with the [Code of Guidance for Local Authorities: Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness \(Welsh Government, 2015\)](#), associated legislation and the [Regulatory Framework for Housing Associations Registered in Wales](#) (Welsh Government, 2011).
- 1.5 Part 1 of the guidance provides information about the allocation of social housing under [Pt VI of the Housing Act 1996](#) by local authorities. It sets out the flexibility local authorities have in regard to meeting housing needs. Part 2 provides guidance on [Part 2 \(homelessness\) of the Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#). It provides information about how local authorities can meet their strategic responsibilities to tackle homelessness and to assist individual homeless people.
- 1.6 The following legislation and regulation applies only to the housing associations listed in paragraph 1.9:
  - (i) Section 170 of the Housing Act 1996 places a requirement on housing associations to 'co-operate to such an extent as is reasonable in the circumstances in offering accommodation to people with priority under the authority's allocations scheme.'
  - (ii) The Regulatory Framework for Housing Associations Registered in Wales places a requirement on housing associations to ensure that their work supports the local authority in its delivery of the strategic housing function.
  - (iii) Section 95 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 places a duty on housing associations to cooperate with local housing authorities in pursuance of their homelessness functions.

- 1.7 The policy has also been written in accordance with the requirements of [s.149 of the Equality Act 2010](#) and The Human Rights Act 1998.

#### Single Integrated Plan

- 1.8 This policy contributes towards the Council's wider strategic objectives of transforming homes, lives and communities, as outlined in [Caerphilly Delivers: The Single Integrated Plan \(2013-2017\)](#).

#### Participating Organisations

- 1.9 The policy has been developed by the Council in partnership with the following organisations:

- Aelwyd Housing Association;
- Cadwyn Housing Association;
- Linc Cymru;
- Seren Group (including Charter Housing & Derwen Cymru);
- United Welsh Housing Association; and
- Wales & West Housing.

- 1.10 Each of the housing associations listed in paragraph 1.9 have voluntarily signed up to this policy to ensure that all applicants applying for social housing in the county borough are provided with a single route of access and assessed using a single policy.

- 1.11 The contact details of each organisation can be found in Appendix 10.

#### Policy Objectives

- 1.12 The key objectives of this policy are underpinned by the fact that levels of housing need in the county borough are greater than the number of homes currently available to meet this need. Therefore, the objectives of this policy are to:

- (i) provide a fair and transparent system by which applicants can apply for and are assessed for social housing;
- (ii) provide good quality advice and support to enable applicants to make informed choices about their housing preferences;
- (iii) make the best use of all available social housing stock in the county borough, which includes reducing the number of void properties and void turnaround times;
- (iv) assist in the creation and maintenance of balanced and sustainable communities; and

- (v) make efficient use of the resources of the Council and those of the participating organisations.
- 1.13 The policy is based on a simplified banding system where applicants are placed into one of three bands depending on an assessment of their circumstances. Those assessed with the greatest need will be afforded the highest priority.
- 1.14 The Council and participating organisations will undertake periodic reviews of this policy both to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and that it continues to address identified housing needs in the county borough.

#### Publicising the Policy

- 1.15 To comply with s.168(1) of the Housing Act 1996, the Council will publish a summary of this policy and will provide a copy of the summary, free of charge, to any member of the public who requests one.
- 1.16 In addition, a full copy of the policy will be published on the Council's website. If requested the Council will provide full copies of the policy on payment of a reasonable fee. Links to the policy will be provided on the websites of participating organisations.

#### Policy Review

- 1.17 The Council will undertake a joint review of this policy at least every two years, with participating organisations, to ensure compliance with the current legislation and good practice, and more frequently in relation to the publication of significant case law.
- 1.18 Under s.167(7) of the Housing Act 1996, before adopting or altering this policy, the Council will:
- (i) send a copy of the draft, or proposed alteration, to every housing association in the county borough; and
  - (ii) ensure that those housing associations have a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposals.
- 1.19 Under s.168(3) of the Housing Act 1996, the Council will notify by letter, within a reasonable period, and consult with those affected by a major change to this policy. The Council will communicate with people in their preferred form, where this information is known (see paragraph 9.3). As part of the consultation, the Council will, in general terms, explain the effects of the change. This rule, however, will not be applied for minor changes.

### Equality Monitoring

- 1.20 In order to ensure the effectiveness of this policy and compliance with the relevant equality duties, the Council, in association with each landlord, will monitor information about who is applying for and being allocated social housing.
- 1.21 This information will be used as a basis for policy review and development, and to help establish whether identified outcomes are in-line with this policy's objectives. The monitoring will provide the Council with robust data to carry out equality impact assessments to identify whether this policy or updates to it directly or indirectly discriminate against anybody with a protected characteristic.

### Other Information

- 1.22 This publication is available in Welsh, and in other languages and formats on request. Mae'r cyhoeddiad hwn ar gael yn Gymraeg, ac mewn ieithoedd a fformatau eraill ar gais.

## **2. How Eligibility is Checked**

- 2.1 Anyone over the age of 16 years old may apply to be rehoused regardless of their housing need, subject to them meeting the eligibility criteria. This section outlines the eligibility criteria for an allocation of accommodation. It also sets out the criteria for allocations to existing tenants and other exemptions.

### Definition of an Allocation

- 2.2 For the purposes of Pt VI of the Housing Act 1996, a local authority allocates housing accommodation when it:
- (i) selects a person to be a secure or introductory tenant of housing accommodation held by them;
  - (ii) nominates a person to be a secure or introductory tenant of housing accommodation held by another person; or,
  - (iii) nominates a person to be an assured tenant (including an assured shorthold tenant) of housing accommodation held by a private registered provider of social housing or registered social landlord.

### Allocations to Existing Tenants & Other Exemptions From Part VI

- 2.3 Section 159(5) of the Housing Act 1996 provides that Pt VI of the same Act does not apply to allocations to existing secure tenants, unless the allocation is a transfer for which the tenant has applied. For example, Pt VI does not apply to transfers for management purposes (see paragraphs 8.2-8.4).
- 2.4 Section 160 of the Housing Act 1996 sets out other exemptions from the provisions of Pt VI. In summary, these include succession; assignment; transfers as a result of family proceedings; conversion of an introductory tenancy to a secure tenancy; and those rehoused as a result of a compulsory purchase, or from a defective dwelling.

### Eligibility Categories

- 2.5 Section 166(3) of the Housing Act 1996 obligates the Council to consider all applications for social housing that are made in accordance with the procedural requirements of this policy. It must, however, when considering applications, ascertain if an applicant is eligible for accommodation or whether they are excluded from allocation under s.160A of the same Act.
- 2.6 The following is a summary of the main categories of eligible applicants to whom the Council may allocate accommodation under Pt VI of the Housing Act 1996, taking account of nationality and immigration status. For the full criteria please refer to Chapter 2 of the Code of Guidance

for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation & Homelessness (2015):

- (i) Existing tenants;
- (ii) A person from abroad other than a person subject to immigration; and
- (iii) Persons subject to immigration control prescribed as eligible.

2.7 Welsh Ministers have prescribed classes of person who are to be considered eligible Allocation of Housing & Homelessness (Eligibility) (Wales) Regulations 2014. These are:

- (i) Refugees;
- (ii) Exceptional leave;
- (iii) A person with current leave to enter or remain in the UK with no condition or limitation, and who is habitually resident in the UK, Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and the Republic of Ireland;
- (iv) Persons who have been granted Humanitarian Protection; and
- (v) An Afghan citizen who, as a result of serving in the UK Government, has been granted permission to relocate to the UK, Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and the Republic of Ireland, and who is habitually resident in one of those areas will be eligible.

#### The Habitual Residence Test

2.8 The Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation & Homelessness (2015) details the factors that the Council should consider in determining whether an applicant is habitually resident in the Common Travel Area.

2.9 The criteria that determine whether a person from abroad is eligible for an allocation of accommodation or homelessness assistance are complex and the task of screening applicants extends beyond the normal requirements of evaluating applicants' housing circumstances. Where uncertainty arises about an applicant's immigration status, the Council may contact the UK Border Agency, using the procedures set out in Annex 5 of the Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation & Homelessness (2015), to confirm status. Before doing so, the Council will advise the applicant that an inquiry will be made. If at this stage the applicant prefers to withdraw their application, no further action will be required.

2.10 In instances where the Council is required to determine habitual residence, the applicant will not be actively considered for housing until

such time that it is satisfied that the applicant is habitually resident in the Common Travel Area and is, therefore, eligible for an allocation of accommodation.

- 2.11 The Council will monitor its performance in screening the immigration status of housing applicants to ensure that minority ethnic people, who are eligible for an allocation, are not denied housing and do not experience unreasonably long delays while their application is being determined.
- 2.12 As part of the assessment process, the Council will determine whether it may treat an applicant as ineligible under this test. Applicants will be notified in writing of the Council's decision and the grounds for the decision. Applicants will have the right to request a review of any decision made by the Council regarding their eligibility within 21 calendar days of receiving their notification letter (see paragraphs 9.12-9.16). The Housing Review Panel will consider all requests for a review (see paragraphs 7.41-7.45).

#### Asylum Seekers & Refugees

- 2.13 Asylum seekers are not eligible for an allocation of accommodation under Pt VI of the Housing Act 1996. Once a positive decision on their claim for asylum is received and they are awarded refugee status, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave to remain, and, therefore, are no longer subject to immigration control, then they may be entitled to an allocation of accommodation.
- 2.14 Applications received from asylum seekers will not be eligible to be admitted onto the common housing register until a positive decision on their claim for asylum is received and they are awarded refugee status, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave to remain.

#### Unacceptable Behaviour

- 2.15 Under s.160A(7) of the Housing Act 1996, the Council, where it is satisfied that an applicant, or a member their prospective household, is guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be its tenant, may treat the applicant as ineligible for an allocation. These same provisions will apply where the applicant elects to become a tenant of a housing association.
- 2.16 Section 160A(8) of the Housing Act 1996 provides that the only behaviour which can be regarded as unacceptable for these purposes is behaviour by the applicant or by a member of their household that would, if they had been a secure tenant of the Council at the time, have entitled the local authority to a possession order under s.84 of the [Housing Act 1985](#) in relation to any of the discretionary grounds in Pt I of Schedule 2, other than Ground 8. These are fault grounds and include behaviour such as:

- (i) non-payment of rent;
  - (ii) breach of tenancy conditions;
  - (iii) conduct likely to cause nuisance or annoyance; and
  - (iv) use of the property for immoral or illegal purposes.
- 2.17 It is not necessary for the applicant to have actually been a tenant of the Council when the unacceptable behaviour occurred. The test is whether the behaviour would have entitled the Council to a possession order if, whether actually or notionally, the applicant had been a secure tenant.
- 2.18 The Housing Assessment Panel will consider all cases where the Council considers it may treat an applicant or members of their prospective household as ineligible due to unacceptable behaviour (see paragraphs 7.33-7.40). Applicants will be notified in writing of the Panel's decision and the grounds for their decision. Applicants will have the right to request a review of any decision made by the Panel regarding their eligibility within 21 calendar days of receiving their notification letter. The Housing Review Panel will consider all requests for a review (see paragraphs 7.41-7.45).
- 2.19 This policy allows for applicants or members of their prospective household to be registered on the common housing register but suspended until such time as they have addressed current or past behavioural issues. The following criteria will apply where it is determined by either the Housing Assessment Panel (for applicants who are not social housing tenants of a partner landlord) or a partner landlord (for their own tenants) that the applicant or a member of their prospective household has:
- (i) failed to maintain their current or any previous social rented or private sector rented property within the terms of their tenancy agreement; or
  - (ii) committed acts causing or likely to cause nuisance or annoyance to their neighbours or others in the locality of where they live or where they previously have lived.
- 2.20 In such instances as described in paragraph 2.19 above, the applicant or members of their prospective household will be informed, by either the Council or a partner landlord, of the action(s) that they will need to demonstrate before the suspension will be lifted. This may include co-operation over a period of time with support agencies, social services or other organisations where the express outcome is that there is a significant improvement in their conduct. Any action required to be



undertaken must be reasonable and proportionate, and take into account the protected characteristics of the individual.

2.21 Cases determined by the Council will be submitted to the monthly Housing Assessment Panel meetings to decide whether sufficient action has been taken by the applicant to address the issue so that an offer of accommodation can be made. Partner landlords will determine cases for their own tenants.

2.22 The status of the application will be reconsidered when there is clear evidence that:

- (i) the applicant (or a member of their prospective household) has addressed their behaviour to the satisfaction of the Housing Assessment Panel (for applicants who are not social housing tenants of a partner landlord) or a partner landlord (for their own tenants); and
- (ii) there has been no cause for complaint against the applicant (or members of their prospective household) for a continuous period of 6 months from the point where action has been agreed with the applicant to address their or a member of their prospective household's behaviour or other identified problems.

2.23 All applicants can request a review of the decision to suspend their application. The review for applicants who are not social housing tenants of a partner landlord will be considered by the Housing Review Panel (see paragraphs 7.41-7.45). Tenants determined by partner landlord can request a review using the organisation's existing complaints procedure.

2.24 The Council will monitor all applications that are suspended to ensure that the criteria set out in paragraphs 2.19-2.23 is being applied fairly and consistently.

#### Property Related Debt

2.25 For the purpose of this policy the Council, when carrying out an assessment, will take into consideration all property related debts, associated with either a current or former tenancy with any social housing provider in the UK. Only debts that are both recoverable and not statute barred will be taken into consideration. These include any:

- (i) current or former tenancy rent arrears;
- (ii) outstanding re-chargeable repairs;
- (iii) current and former housing related service charge arrears;
- (iv) bed and breakfast charge arrears;

- (v) housing benefit overpayments; and
  - (vi) associated court costs.
- 2.26 Property related debts apply to both the applicant and members of their prospective household.
- 2.27 Where the property related debt is over £500 the application for housing would be automatically suspended. The applicant would not be actively considered for housing until such time as the Council is satisfied that the following criteria has been met:
- (i) entered into a repayment plan with the former landlord;
  - (ii) made a minimum of 13 consecutive weekly payments, at an agreed level; and
  - (iii) repaid a minimum of 25% of the debt.
- 2.28 This process can only be circumvented where the debt is repaid in full or in accordance with the criteria set out in paragraph 2.27. In order to encourage good financial management and discourage applicants from using doorstep lenders, who may charge high interest rate loans, lump sums of 25% or over but below 100% would not apply unless the 13-week minimum period has been satisfied.
- 2.29 Applicants with a housing related debt up to £500 could be considered for housing immediately providing that they had agreed and were actively following a repayment plan. Adherence with the plan must be checked by the landlord concerned prior to an offer of accommodation being made.
- 2.30 Where the applicant or a member of their prospective household has entered into a repayment plan to clear a property related debt before the application for housing was made, the criteria set out in paragraphs 2.25-2.29 would still apply.
- 2.31 The process set out in paragraph 2.27 may be circumvented where the Council believes that highly exceptional and significant circumstances exist, and the need to move is considered urgent. Although, this does not mean recovery of the debt will not be pursued by the relevant landlord. In such circumstances, a report will be submitted to the Housing Assessment Panel for consideration. Should the Panel decide to waive the criteria in paragraph 2.27, the applicant or a member of their perspective household must have entered into and be following a repayment plan before an offer of accommodation is made.

## Residential Criteria

- 2.32 Section 167 (2A) of the Housing Act 1996 provides that this policy may contain provision for determining priorities for reasonable/additional preference categories. The factors that the Council may take into account in determining priorities include any local connection (within the meaning of s.81 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014) that exists between a person and the local authority area.
- 2.33 For the purpose of this policy, residential criteria will exist where the Council is satisfied that an applicant or a member of their prospective household:
- (i) is clearly settled in the area, e.g. having lived in the county borough, by choice, for either six months out of the last 12 months or for three years out of the last five years;
  - (ii) has family living in county borough, e.g. parent(s), children, brother(s) or sister(s), grandparent(s) or grandchildren and foster carer(s) or legal guardian(s);
  - (iii) has employment in the county borough;
  - (iv) has special circumstances:
    - a. to be near specialist medical or support services that are only available in the county borough;
    - b. to provide medium or high level support, as defined by the Council, to a family member as outlined in point (ii);
  - (v) is a serving member of the British Armed Forces or who was serving in the British Armed Forces at any time in the five years preceding their application for housing, and has previously lived in the county borough;
  - (vi) who is a bereaved spouse or civil partner of someone who has served in the British Armed Forces, where:
    - (i) the bereaved spouse or civil partner has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in Ministry of Defence accommodation following the death of their service spouse or civil partner;
    - (ii) the death was wholly or partly attributable to their service; and
    - (iii) either the bereaved spouse or civil partner of the deceased service person was a former resident of the county borough.

- (vii) is a serving member or former member of the British Reserve Forces who has been affected by a serious injury, medical condition, or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service, and has previously lived in the county borough.
- (viii) has been provided with accommodation in the county borough under [s.95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999](#), unless paragraphs (v) a or b apply of Annex 7 of the Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness.

2.34 For the purposes of determining residential criteria, living in county borough will not include the following:

- (i) occupation of a mobile caravan, other than on a residential caravan site, as determined by the Council;
- (ii) occupation of a motor caravan that is not permanently sited on a residential caravan site;
- (iii) occupation of a holiday let which includes a hotel;
- (iv) living in bed and breakfast accommodation, unless placed there by the Council in pursuance of its homelessness duties ; or
- (v) occupation of a permanent building whilst on holiday.

2.35 Applicants currently living outside of the county borough who satisfy the criteria in paragraph 2.33 (ii) will be placed in band 3 irrespective of an award of preference unless exceptional circumstances exist, e.g. a person needs to live in a specific area to provide or receive support from family, and that accommodation is not realistically obtainable in that area with family, friends or in the private rented sector.

2.36 Applicants currently living outside of the county borough who satisfy the criteria in paragraph 2.33 (iii) will be placed in band 3 irrespective of an award of preference unless exceptional circumstances exist, e.g. a person's employment cannot be sustained without living in the area. Factors to be taken into consideration include nature and type of employment, the person's current address, availability and accessibility of public or private transport.

2.37 Those applicants who do not satisfy the residential criteria but are currently living in the borough by virtue of the fact that they are fleeing domestic abuse, hate crime, anti-social behaviour etc. will be referred to the homelessness team for assessment before a decision to award any preference is made.

- 2.38 The Council may choose to waive the residential criteria where the applicant or member of their prospective household is unable to establish a local connection with any area in the United Kingdom.
- 2.39 All applicants where residential criteria cannot be established to the satisfaction of the Council, irrespective of whether or not they would be awarded reasonable preference or additional preference, will be placed in Band 3, subject to the criteria set out in paragraph 3.41.

#### Applications from Owner-Occupiers

- 2.40 All applications received from owner-occupiers will be assessed in accordance with the following criteria, taking into consideration any financial resources (see paragraphs 2.46-2.52):
- (i) Applicants with no reasonable or additional preference, who are adequately housed and/or with the financial resources to meet their own housing needs will be admitted to the common housing register but will not be considered for housing until such a time as they have sold their home. Such applicants will be placed in Band 3. The effective date of registration will be from when the home is sold.
  - (ii) Applicants with a reasonable or additional preference but who are adequately housed and/or with financial resources to meet their needs will be placed in the band that matches their need. However, they will not be considered for housing until such a time as they have sold their home. The effective date of registration will be from when the home is sold.
  - (iii) Applicants with a reasonable or additional preference who are not adequately housed and do not have the financial resources to meet their own needs will be placed the band relevant to their reasonable preference. Applicants with no reasonable or additional preference will be placed in Band 3.
- 2.41 In relation to paragraph 2.40 (i) and (ii), sold means contracts have been exchanged between all concerned parties.
- 2.42 The Council may choose not to apply this criteria where the applicant or a member of their prospective household:
- (i) requires retirement housing and satisfies the age criteria of the preferred landlord;
  - (ii) is disabled (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) and has an assessed need for accessible housing. In addition, their current property will need to have been assessed by the Council as being unsuitable for their needs and cannot be made suitable due to cost (of the adaptation and/or to the individual to meet the

means test for Disabled Facilities Grants), structural difficulties or the property cannot be adapted within a reasonable amount of time; or

- (iii) has a severe mental health problem and their property is deemed likely by the Council to give rise to an imminent risk of harm and they do not have the financial means to carry out essential repairs.

- 2.43 All instances listed in points (i)-(iii) above, an assessment will be carried out to verify the circumstances in accordance with the criteria set out in section 7 of this policy.
- 2.44 The Council may also choose not to apply the criteria set out in paragraph 2.40 (i) and (ii) where a landlord has a property in a low demand area that has been classified as hard to let. In all other instances the criteria in 2.40 will stand.
- 2.45 Where the Council chooses not to apply the criteria and the applicant is actively considered for housing by a housing association before their property is sold, the landlord will only grant an assured shorthold tenancy until the property is sold. Upon confirmation of sale, the landlord will grant an assured tenancy. Those actively being considered by the Caerphilly Homes will be required to sign an addendum to their tenancy agreement.

#### Financial Resources

- 2.46 When assessing an application due regard will be given by the Council to the level of financial resources available to the applicant or a member of their prospective household, which would enable them to meet their own needs either through homeownership or renting privately. For the purpose of this policy, financial resources are defined as all household income, capital assets and savings, irrespective of where in the world they may be situated/held.
- 2.47 Households whose gross income, from all sources, exceeds £50,000 per annum and/or whose capital assets or savings exceed £50,000 may be admitted onto the common housing register. However, they will not actively be considered for housing until their financial resources no longer exceed the stated limits, irrespective of whether or not the applicant has been awarded reasonable or additional preference. The effective date of registration will commence from when the level of financial resources drops below the permitted limit.
- 2.48 The policy in relation to financial resources will be disregarded where the applicant requires retirement housing, in accordance with paragraphs 5.28-5.31. The policy will not be applied to those people applying for an intermediate product (low cost home ownership or intermediate renting), where separate criteria apply.

- 2.49 The following payments will be disregarded from the financial assessment:
- (i) lump sums, on-going pensionable awards and/or Guaranteed Income Payments received by a member of the British Armed or Reserve Forces as compensation for an injury, medical condition or disability whilst sustained on active service. This includes sums received from the War Pensions Scheme and the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.
  - (ii) compensation payments received by victims of crime or through personal injury claims.
- 2.50 The criteria set out in paragraph 2.47 may be waived for disabled people who require adapted accommodation classified as A1 or A2 (see Appendix 7). This will be subject to a recommendation from the occupational therapist (housing).
- 2.51 The criteria set out in paragraph 2.47 may be waived where paragraphs 4.7-4.11 apply (management discretion).
- 2.52 The Housing Assessment Panel will consider all cases where the criteria in paragraph 2.47 needs to be waived,

#### No Fixed Address

- 2.53 Applicants who are of no fixed address (NFA) can apply for housing. However, before the Council can complete an assessment of their circumstances, they will be required to provide relevant proof to verify their status:
- (i) where unemployed the applicant will be required to provide confirmation from Job Centre Plus, either a 'NFA 1 document' or the equivalent;
  - (ii) where employed the applicant will be required to provide confirmation from their employer; or
  - (iii) where self employed the applicant will be required to provide confirmation from the HM Revenue & Customs or a chartered accountant.

Where required, advice and support will be provided by the Council to assist the applicant to confirm their address status.

- 2.54 In addition, as part the Council's homelessness prevention work, all applicants registering for housing who are NFA will be referred to the Council's homelessness team, if they have not previously been referred.

2.55 Where an applicant is homeless and unable to provide relevant proof or is not willing to be referred to the homelessness team, an assessment of their circumstances will be carried out on the basis of the accommodation where they are known to frequent the most or their last known accommodation.



### 3. How Priority is Determined

- 3.1 This section sets out in detail the Council's priorities for rehousing applicants and the qualifying criteria used to award priority to applicants with a defined housing need.

#### Reasonable Preference

- 3.2 The allocation scheme has been designed to ensure that reasonable preference is given to all of the following categories of people, as set out in s.167(2ZA) of the Housing Act 1996:
- (i) people who are homeless (within the meaning of Pt II of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014);
  - (ii) people who are owed a duty by the local authority under section 66, 73 or 75 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014;
  - (iii) people occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions;
  - (iv) people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds including grounds relating to disability, and
  - (v) people who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the Council, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others).

#### Additional Preference

- 3.3 This policy has been framed in accordance with s.167(2) of the Housing Act 1996, thereby giving additional preference to particular descriptions of people who fall within the reasonable preference categories and who have urgent housing needs. Examples of people to whom the Council will consider giving additional preference within the policy include:

- (i) those owed a homelessness duty as a result of violence or threats of violence likely to be carried out and who as a result require urgent rehousing, including:
  - victims of domestic or other abuse;
  - victims of hate incidents; and
  - witnesses of crime, or victims of crime, who would be at risk of intimidation amounting to violence or threats of violence if they remained in their current homes.
- (ii) those who need to move because of urgent medical reasons. Including where an applicant's (or a member of their household's):

- Condition is expected to be terminal and re-housing is required due to unsuitable accommodation or to provide a basis for the provision of suitable care.
  - Condition is life threatening and the applicant's existing accommodation is a major contributory factor.
  - Planned discharge from hospital is imminent and there is no accommodation available to them that it is reasonable for them to occupy.
- (iii) an applicant with a reasonable prospect of an accommodation offer within a relatively short period who suddenly loses their existing home as a result of a disaster;
- (iv) any applicant who needs to move to suitable adapted accommodation because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability which he or she, or a member of their household, has sustained as a result of service in the British Armed Forces;
- (v) people needing accommodation as a result of leaving the British Armed Forces and the loss of military accommodation; and
- (vi) people under-occupying social housing and wanting to transfer to a smaller property, particularly in light of welfare benefit changes and the under-occupancy charge.

#### The Priority Banding Scheme – Criteria

- 3.4 This policy operates a needs-based, time and date ordered, banding system as described below. A summary of the bands and criteria can be found in Appendix 1. The bands have been devised to reflect a range housing needs in the county borough, from high to low. Therefore, those being assessed as eligible and in greatest need of housing will be placed in the highest band, subject to satisfying residential criteria (see paragraphs 2.32-2.39).

#### Band 1: Urgent Need to Move – Reasonable Preference PLUS Additional Preference

##### *Medical & Welfare Grounds: hospital discharge*

- 3.5 Additional preference may be awarded by the Council to those people who have:
- (i) somewhere to live on leaving hospital but it is unsuitable for their needs and cannot be made suitable through adaptations due to cost, structural difficulties or the property cannot be adapted within a reasonable amount of time.

- (ii) nowhere at all to live when they leave hospital may qualify for Band 1 if the need to move is urgent, as assessed by the Council, and all other reasonable housing options have been explored.

For points (i) and (ii) above, the occupational therapist (Housing) and/or Gofal will carry out an assessment of the need to move and, where applicable, make a recommendation on the type and size of accommodation required.

*Medical & Welfare Grounds: emergency medical or disability*

- 3.6 Additional preference will be awarded where, upon assessment, the Council is satisfied that either the applicant or member of their prospective household:
- (i) is currently receiving palliative care and urgently requires rehousing to facilitate the on-going provision of this care;
  - (ii) has a life limiting condition and their current accommodation is affecting their ability to retain independence or enable adequate care;
  - (iii) health is so severely affected by the accommodation that it is likely to become life threatening, e.g. applicant has severe mental health problems that are significantly exacerbated by their accommodation;
  - (iv) is disabled and, as a direct result of the limitations posed by the current property, are unable to carry out day-to-day activities or have difficulty in accessing facilities inside or outside their home. The award of additional preference will not be made where it has been assessed by the Council that rehousing would not facilitate a reduction in the limitations identified; or
  - (v) overcrowding in their current property leaves them at risk of infection, e.g. is suffering from late-stage or advanced HIV infection.

- 3.7 For points (i)-(v) above, the Council will undertake an assessment of an applicant's or a member of their prospective household's need to move and the type of accommodation required. Such assessments will take into consideration all supporting information and will be carried out in accordance with paragraphs 7.6-7.13.

*Medical & Welfare Grounds: release of adapted property*

- 3.8 Additional preference may be awarded where:

- (i) a social housing tenant living in the county borough no longer requires the adaptations in their current home and by moving will free up an adapted property which is capable of meeting the needs of a disabled person waiting for accommodation or, without significant expense, could be adapted to meet the needs of a disabled person.

This award may still be valid if the applicant requires adaptations, provided that the adaptations required are substantially different from those in their current home, as assessed by the Council.

*Medical & Welfare Grounds: domestic abuse, violence or harassment*

3.9 Additional preference will be awarded by the Council, where upon consultation with the relevant agencies, it is satisfied that the applicant or member of their prospective household is:

- (i) a high-risk victim of domestic abuse, who is subject to a MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference), as part of an agreed safety plan for high-risk victims; or
- (ii) suffering extreme violence, harassment or discrimination, whether a hate crime or otherwise, and that it is not safe for them to remain in their present home/locality.

Prior to the award being made, the Council will liaise with the relevant agencies to ensure that the threat of domestic abuse, violence or harassment would be significantly reduced via rehousing.

*British Armed Forces: former member, serious injury or loss of military accommodation*

3.10 An award of additional preference will be made to the following categories of people who:

- (i) left the British Armed Forces or British Reserve Forces within the last 5 years. In extenuating circumstance the Council may consider extending the 5 year period. In such instances a report would be presented to the Housing Assessment Panel for consideration;
- (ii) are serving members of the British Armed Forces or British Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of service; or
- (iii) are bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the British Armed Forces leaving services family accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner.

*Insanitary Housing Conditions: unsatisfactory housing conditions in the private sector*

3.11 Additional preference will be awarded to applicants:

- (i) that currently occupy a property where there is a statutory requirement to vacate due to a Demolition Order, Prohibition Order or clearance area (either by agreement or via compulsory purchase).
- (ii) whose living conditions pose an immediate threat to life or serious injury, as determined by an environmental health officer of the Council, and where there is no prospect of the issues being remedied in a period of time that the Council considers reasonable. However, if the issues are remedied before the applicant is re-housed, and the environmental health officer determines that no threats remain, the award will be rescinded.

*Medical & Welfare Grounds: serious threat to a child*

3.12 Additional preference will be awarded to an applicant where:

- (i) it has been established by the Council that a serious threat to the well-being of a child exists and that their accommodation is a contributory factor to the risk. These are cases where the Council can confirm that there is an urgent need to move to mitigate the risk to the child.

The award will only be made upon production of a satisfactory report from child's social worker supporting the requirement to move. The report will need to be countersigned by relevant the Social Services service manager.

*Homeless with a duty to secure or owed a duty as a result of violence or threats of violence*

3.13 Additional preference will be awarded to an applicant who is deemed by the Council to be:

- (i) in priority need and are owed a s.75 duty under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.
- (ii) owed a homelessness duty as a result of violence or threats of violence likely to be carried out and who as a result require urgent rehousing, including:
  - victims of domestic or other abuse;
  - victims of hate incidents; and

- witnesses of crime, or victims of crime, who would be at risk of intimidation amounting to violence or threats of violence if they remained in their current homes.
- 3.14 Applicants awarded additional preference under the criteria set out in paragraph 3.13 will be given one suitable offer of accommodation, as defined by s.59 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. If the offer is refused the homelessness duty will be ended and the reasonable preference award will be removed (s.84 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014).
- 3.15 Where the award of additional preference is removed the application will be reassessed by the Council and placed in the band that reflects the newly assessed needs of the applicant. The applicant may receive up to two further offers of accommodation, under the criteria set out in paragraphs 5.2-5.9, providing the 3 offer limit has not been exceeded, before their application is suspended for 12 months.
- 3.16 Applicants have the right to request a review of the decision to discharge the duty owed by the local authority under s.85 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. Reviews must be submitted in writing to the Council within 21 calendar days of the applicant receiving notification (see paragraphs 7.41-7.45). Applicants who accept an offer of accommodation made to them retain the right to request a review of the suitability of the accommodation.

*Medical or Welfare Grounds: move on from supported accommodation*

- 3.17 Additional preference will be awarded to an applicant who is determined by the Council to be ready for independent living:
- (i) on the recommendation of a support worker, is ready to move on from supported living in the county borough to independent housing and due to the nature and extent of their vulnerability, accommodation in the private rented sector would, through its short-term nature, have a detrimental effect on their well-being.

Before the award is made, ongoing support needs will need to have been assessed and, where appropriate, a support plan put in place to increase the chances of the tenancy succeeding.

- 3.18 If an application for housing is made before it has been determined by the Council that the individual is ready for independent living, taking into account information from the applicant's support worker and other agencies, the application will be placed in Band 1 and immediately suspended. The applicant will be able to request a review of the suspension via the criteria set out in paragraphs 7.41-7.45.

*Exceptional Circumstances – Management Discretion*

- 3.19 An award of additional preference will be made where:

- (i) due to highly exceptional and significant circumstances, an applicant needs to move urgently and the only way to expedite a move is through the use of management discretion (paragraphs 4.7-4.11).

3.20 In such circumstances, the Council will prepare a report for consideration by the Housing Assessment Panel. Should the Panel be satisfied that highly exceptional and significant circumstances exist and the need to move is urgent and could not be facilitated through normal means, then the applicant will be awarded reasonable preference with additional preference and placed at the top of Band 1, irrespective of waiting time.

*Extreme Financial Hardship – Welfare Reform*

3.21 An award of additional preference will be made where the applicant is:

- (i) under-occupying a social rented property in the county borough and is suffering extreme financial hardship, as a direct result of welfare reform, and is prepared to downsize to a more suitable property with fewer bedrooms.

3.22 The responsibility for undertaking a financial assessment lies with the relevant landlord, who will liaise directly with the Council. The decision to award additional preference lies solely with the Council and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The award will only be made where the applicant is prepared to move to a more suitable property with fewer bedrooms, which thereby contributes to the alleviation of the financial hardship.

Band 2: Need to Move – Reasonable Preference

*Homeless or Threatened With Homelessness*

3.23 Reasonable preference will be awarded to an applicant who is deemed by the Council to be:

- (i) homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 or Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014;
- (ii) owed a duty by a local authority under sections 66 and 73 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 or
- (iii) owed a duty by a local authority under section 190(2), 193 (2) or 195(2) of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 or who are occupying accommodation secured by any local authority under section 192(3).

- 3.24 Applicants awarded reasonable preference under the criteria set out in paragraph 3.23 will be given one suitable offer of accommodation, as defined by s.59 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. If the offer is refused the homelessness duty will be ended and the reasonable preference award will be removed (s.84 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014).
- 3.25 Where the award of reasonable preference is removed the application will be reassessed by the Council and placed in the band that reflects the newly assessed needs of the applicant. The applicant may receive up to two further offers of accommodation, under the criteria set out in paragraphs 5.2-5.8, providing the 3 offer limit has not been exceeded, before their application is suspended for 12 months.
- 3.26 Applicants have the right to request a review of the decision to discharge the duty owed by the Council under s.85 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. Reviews must be submitted in writing to the Council within 21 calendar days of the applicant receiving notification (see paragraphs 7.41-7.45). Applicants who accept an offer of accommodation made to them retain the right to request a review of the suitability of the accommodation.

*Insanitary Housing Conditions: unsatisfactory housing conditions in the private sector where there is one or more Category 1 hazards (excluding overcrowding).*

- 3.27 Reasonable preference is awarded to an applicant:
- (i) where an environmental health officer from the Council has determined that a private sector property (owner-occupied or tenanted) contains one or more serious Category 1 hazards, as defined by the [Housing Health & Safety Rating System](#). The award is made in respect of a significant risk to the health and well-being of the occupant(s), and where there is no prospect of the issues being remedied in a period of time that the Council considers reasonable for that situation; or
  - (ii) who lives in a House in Multiple Occupation, where a Suspended Prohibition Order is operative due to the lack of facilities and amenities for the number of occupants.
- 3.28 With regards to points (i)-(ii) above, if the Council is subsequently satisfied that all serious Category 1 hazards have been remedied the reasonable preference award will be rescinded.

*Under-Occupancy Grounds: under-occupying a social rented property*

- 3.29 Reasonable preference will be awarded to an applicant:
- (i) where they are under-occupying a social rented property in the county borough, are suffering financial hardship, as a direct



result of welfare reform, and are prepared to downsize to a more suitable property with fewer bedrooms.

In cases of extreme financial hardship, following assessment, an applicant may be awarded additional preference (band 1). The responsibility for undertaking a financial assessment lies with the relevant landlord, who will liaise directly with the Council. The decision to award additional preference lies solely with the Council and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- (ii) who is regarded by the Council as an older person who is living in a social rented property in the county borough and wishes to downsize from 2, 3, 4 or 5 bed family accommodation to retirement housing, where there is an identified need for the accommodation they will be vacating.

By older person we mean 60 years plus for those applicants requesting Caerphilly Homes or Wales & West housing association accommodation only, and 55 years plus for those people requesting accommodation with the other landlords, unless age dispensation is applied (see paragraphs 5.25-5.27). Applicants requesting rehousing with both types of landlord will need to meet the specific age criteria with the relevant landlord to be eligible for the award.

*Acute Overcrowding: as defined by the bedroom standard.*

3.30 Reasonable preference will be awarded to an applicant who:

- (i) the Council is satisfied is overcrowding their current accommodation by 2 or more bedrooms. For the purpose of this policy, overcrowding is defined by Department for Work & Pensions 'bedroom standard' (see Appendix 3). The assessment of overcrowding will be undertaken by the Council.

Reasonable preference will not be awarded to facilitate a move on a like for like basis.

3.31 Applicants who are determined by the Council to have either caused or exacerbated overcrowding by allowing family member(s) or other(s) to move into their property, after taking into consideration any cultural requirements, will not be awarded reasonable preference under this category – see paragraphs 6.34-6.37.

*Medical Grounds: where housing conditions exacerbates a serious medical condition or disability.*

3.32 Reasonable preference will be awarded for an applicant or member of their prospective household requiring accessible or adapted housing where upon assessment by the Council is it identified that:

- (i) the current accommodation directly exacerbates a recognised medical condition, is the direct cause of a medical condition or impacts on the ease of use of the facilities within their home for a disabled person. The award of reasonable preference will only be made where it has been assessed by the Council that rehousing would facilitate an improvement in wellbeing, taking into consideration all relevant supporting information.

*Medical & Welfare Grounds: child protection*

3.33 Reasonable preference will be awarded where:

- (i) there are children that are part of the application, who need to move and their accommodation has been assessed by the Council as being a contributory factor to the risk to the child.

3.34 The award will only be made where:

- (i) there is a child protection plan in place; and
- (ii) a report from the child's social worker supports the need to move, with rehousing being an important factor to the ongoing welfare of the child. The report will need to be countersigned by the relevant Social Services team manager.

*Medical & Welfare Grounds: domestic abuse, violence or harassment.*

3.35 Reasonable preference will be awarded to an applicant who:

- (i) needs to move due to domestic abuse, violence or harassment, where it has been assessed by the relevant agencies they are not in any immediate danger.

3.36 An assessment of an applicant's need to move will be made by the Council, who will liaise with the relevant organisations.

*Medical & Welfare Grounds: hardship grounds*

3.37 Reasonable preference will be awarded where an applicant:

- (i) needs to move to a particular locality within the county borough, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others). The Council will only award priority on hardship grounds in exceptional circumstances. It will be for the applicant to reasonably demonstrate to the Council's satisfaction that hardship would occur if they were not to be awarded priority.

3.38 For the purpose of this award, hardship relates to the need to move:

- (i) to take up or continue an employment opportunity not available elsewhere in the borough. Applicants will only be considered for this award where they do not live within a reasonable commuting distance of their place of current or prospective employment, taking into consideration their ability to use and the availability of public/private transport. The applicant will be required to provide the Council with confirmation of employment details from their employer;
- (ii) to be near relatives to give or receive support. The level and nature of the support will need to be substantial and ongoing, and must be related to a disability, severe mental health or medical condition or welfare issue. Additionally, it will need to be proven why the support cannot be provided using either public or private transport; or
- (iii) to gain access to healthcare and/or social services care. An award will be made where the applicant is able to demonstrate that they need to move to access healthcare and/or social services care, and cannot be reasonably be expected to use or there is no access to public or private transport, including provision put in place by the healthcare facility or social services.

*Medical or Welfare Grounds: move on from a residential care setting*

3.39 Reasonable preference will be awarded to an applicant who have been assessed by the Council as:

- (i) needing to move on from a residential care setting in the county borough and is regarded by social services as being vulnerable with a high level of housing need. To be eligible for this award they must be an “Eligible Child”, as defined by the [Children \(Leaving Care\) Act 2000](#), and be a young person at risk.

3.40 If an application for housing is made before it has been determined by the Council that the individual is ready for independent living, taking into account information from the applicant’s support worker and/or other agencies, the application will be placed in Band 2 and immediately suspended. The applicant will be able to request a review of the suspension via the criteria set out in paragraphs 7.41-7.45.

Band 3: Wants to Move – No Reasonable or Additional Preference, or Reasonable or Additional Preference & No Local Connection

3.41 All other categories of applicant not covered in Bands 1 or 2 will be placed in Band 3, this will include:

- (i) applicants who do not qualify for Reasonable Preference or Additional Preference but who would like to move to alternative

accommodation, irrespective of whether or not they have a local connection;

- (ii) applicants who qualify for Reasonable Preference or Additional Preference but are regarded by the Council as not having a local connection (see paragraphs 2.35-2.36); and
- (iii) all other applicants as specified by this policy.

#### Administration Of The Priority Banding Scheme

- 3.42 Entry into the bands is upon assessment only, which will be undertaken by the Council. Applicants will be placed in a band that matches their assessed needs. Applicants are then ranked in bands by time and date order.
- 3.43 Where an applicant with an award of reasonable or additional preference fails to satisfy the residential criteria the application will be placed in Band 3 (see paragraph 2.32-2.39).
- 3.44 Applicants may move up or down bands to reflect a change in their circumstances. Applicants moving up a band will have the effective date of registration reset to the date when the change in circumstances occurred. Applicants moving down a band will retain their original, effective date of registration (see paragraphs 6.13-6.17).
- 3.45 When a property becomes available to let, landlords will normally allocate the property to the person at the top of the list, who best matches the property and/or household size criteria. However, in certain circumstances, which are outlined in this policy, landlords may be required to bypass an applicant (see Appendix 2). Reasons for bypassing must be recorded and the Council will monitor these to ensure compliance with the policy.
- 3.46 The Council reserves the right to suspend an application on the common housing register where the applicant, or a member of their prospective household, has deliberately worsened their circumstances in order to increase their priority for housing (see paragraphs 6.34-6.37). In such circumstances, a referral will be made to the Housing Assessment Panel for consideration and determination of the action that may be taken (see paragraphs 7.33-7.40).

## 4. How Accommodation is Allocated

- 4.1 This section outlines the choices and preference applicants may express when registering for housing, discretion that the Council may use when prioritising applicants for housing and additional rules that the Council may implement to promote balanced and sustainable communities.

### Choice & Preferences

- 4.2 Under s.167 (1A) of the Housing Act 1996, this policy must include a statement on the Council's policy of offering eligible applicants a choice of accommodation or the opportunity to express preferences about housing accommodation to be allocated to them.
- 4.3 Against a backdrop of high levels of housing need, insufficient availability of accommodation to meet this the Council wishes to provide applicants with a wide range of choice over the preferences they can make over their housing. All applicants will, therefore, subject to criteria applied by each individual landlord (see Appendix 4), be able to express a choice of:
- landlord;
  - property type;
  - bedroom count, and
  - location.
- 4.4 Although, in the interests of community safety, the level of choice an applicant can express, as outlined in paragraph 4.3, may be restricted by the Council (see paragraphs 7.17-7.22).
- 4.5 The landlords provide housing in most parts of the county borough, although, the landlord, type and size of housing may vary from area to area. Applicants will be able to specify their locational preferences into the predefined housing areas. They will not normally, unless extenuating circumstances apply, for example a disability, medical condition or welfare requirement to be near to family or support networks to receive or provide support, be able to restrict their choices to street or property level. The Council will consider such requests.
- 4.6 Information on the social housing stock, including location, type and availability, will be provided to applicants as part of the application process and can also be found on the landlords' websites.

### Management Discretion

- 4.7 From time-to-time, there may be occasions where, due to highly exceptional and significant circumstances, an applicant needs to move urgently and the only way to expedite a move is through the use of

management discretion. Separate criteria apply to existing tenants of landlords party to this policy requiring a transfer of tenancy – see Management Transfers (paragraphs. 8.2-8.4).

- 4.8 In such circumstances, the Council will prepare a report for consideration by the Housing Assessment Panel. Should the Panel be satisfied that highly exceptional and significant circumstances exist and the need to move is urgent and could not be facilitated through normal means, then the applicant will be awarded with additional preference and placed at the top of Band 1, irrespective of time and date order.
- 4.9 Instances where the Panel may apply its discretion include:
- (i) threat to life;
  - (ii) emergency cases where the applicant's home is damaged by fire, flood or other disaster where it is not possible to repair the existing home, or if any work to repair is to take such a long period of time that there will be serious disruption to family life;
  - (iii) where on the advice of the police, the applicant requires rehousing immediately due to serious threats to one or more members of their household, or whose continuing occupation would pose a threat to the community;
  - (iv) where an applicant has an exceptional need that is not covered by this policy; and
  - (v) other exceptional circumstances as approved by the Panel.
- 4.10 Applicants awarded priority through management discretion will be made one reasonable offer of accommodation only, taking into consideration the needs of the applicant and members of their prospective household. In order to facilitate the move the Council may choose to disregard any of the preferences expressed by the applicant in paragraph 4.3. An unreasonable refusal of the offer will result in the award of preference being removed and the applicant being returned to their original place on the common housing register, subject to the criteria relating to refusal of offers.
- 4.11 All instances where management discretion is invoked and removed will be recorded and monitored by the Council to ensure that they do not disproportionately discriminate against particular groups of people.

#### Quota systems

- 4.12 The Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation & Homelessness (2015) allows the Council to introduce quota systems for particular groups of people to meet its wider strategic objectives of creating sustainable and balanced

communities. The local authority and participating organisations have decided against the use of quotas during the first year of operation of this policy. However, it reserves the right to introduce a quota system to ensure that the policy continues to meet its statutory obligations. Any future quota system will be agreed and reviewed by the Council in partnership with participating organisation. An equality impact assessment will be undertaken prior to introducing a quota system and, where applicable, upon the review of an existing quota system.

#### Local Letting Policies

- 4.13 Section 167(2E) of the Housing Act 1996 provides the statutory basis for local lettings policies. This section of the Act allows the Council to allocate accommodation to people of a particular description, whether or not they fall within the reasonable preference categories, provided that overall it is able to demonstrate compliance with its statutory requirements.
- 4.14 The following are examples of local letting policies that may be deployed under the common allocation policy. The list is for illustrative purposes and is not exhaustive:
- (i) Age restrictions;
  - (ii) Prioritising applicants seeking a transfer who have a positive tenancy history with no rent arrears and exemplary behaviour;
  - (iii) Policies that are geared towards encouraging applicants who work or volunteer to live in an area where for example there may be an area, or street with high numbers of working age households not in work;
  - (iv) Prioritising applicants who are key workers as defined by the Council;
  - (v) Restrictions on lettings to vulnerable households where there are already a concentration of supported tenants/residents in a street or block;
  - (vi) Lettings to childless households where there are high concentrations of children and young people living on a specific estate, street or block;
  - (vii) Disregarding household type or property matching rules to allow for example under-occupation to reduce child density or to account for future family growth; and
  - (viii) Ensuring that there is a balance of working and non-working households allocated to a new build scheme.

- 4.15 All local lettings policies will be monitored by the Council to ensure that overall this policy operates to give reasonable preference for allocations to applicants in the reasonable preference categories (s.167(2) of the Housing Act 1996). This means that the policy may include other priorities, as determined by the Council, such as promoting job related mobility etc., providing that they do not dominate the allocations and overall, the policy operates to give reasonable preference to those in the statutory reasonable preference categories over those who are not.
- 4.16 The Council and the landlords will agree the areas, estates, blocks or streets where a local letting policy may be appropriate and why.
- 4.17 There must be a clear evidence base for adopting a local lettings policy. A panel of at least 3 partners to the common allocation policy will agree each local lettings policy. One member of the panel must be the Council and one must be the landlord wishing to deploy a local lettings policy.
- 4.18 The panel will agree whether a local letting policy is appropriate based on the following test:
- (i) That there is a clear definition of the objective to be achieved by that particular local lettings policy;
  - (ii) That there is a clear evidence base to back up the need for a local lettings policy;
  - (iii) That any potential equality impact has been considered (see paragraph 4.20);
  - (iv) How long the local lettings policy is intended to operate; and
  - (v) When the policy should be reviewed (see paragraph 4.21).
- 4.19 The Council will keep a written record of each adopted or rejected local lettings policy. All current policies will be listed as an appendix to the online version of the common allocation policy so that the public can see which policies are in operation at any point in time.
- 4.20 Prior to being implemented and upon review, all local lettings policies will need to be equality impact assessed to ensure they do not discriminate against any of the protected characteristics listed in the [Equality Act 2010](#).
- 4.21 The Council and the relevant landlord, will monitor each local lettings policy to ensure that they are effective and are meeting their intended outcomes. They must be reviewed regularly, at predefined timescales, so that they can be revised or revoked where they are no longer



appropriate or necessary. A decision to extend a local lettings policy can only be made by the panel.

#### Annual Lettings Plans

- 4.22 The Council will periodically monitor all allocations made under this policy to ensure that it continues to meet its statutory obligations and its wider strategic objective of creating sustainable and balanced communities. It has agreed with participating organisations against using an annual lettings plan in the first year of operation of this policy. However, it reserves the right to introduce an annual lettings plan where it is found that the policy may not be meeting its statutory obligations or strategic objective.
- 4.23 Annual lettings plans will utilise the monitoring information to establish the percentage of lettings to be made to applicants within each band in the following year. Where applicable, the Council may choose to prepare them annually and will closely monitor all lettings made against the targets. Landlords will be expected to allocate their properties in-line with the plan to ensure that targets are achieved. The Council and participating organisations will publish all lettings plans on their websites.

## 5. How Offers Of Accommodation Are Made

- 5.1 This section outlines how offers of accommodation will be made and an applicant's right to refuse an offer. It also sets out the criteria used to determine household property requirements and accessible housing.

### Offers & Refusals

- 5.2 The Council has a statutory duty to determine the policy on offers and refusals, taking into account choice and preference options. Accordingly, it will closely monitor all offers made by the landlords and, where applicable, the reasons for refusals.
- 5.3 All applicants are entitled to receive 3 offers of accommodation based on the preferences they express on their application, e.g. landlord, property size and type, and area.
- 5.4 All offers of accommodation that are made in accordance with the stated preferences which are subsequently refused by the applicant, without justification, will be regarded by the Council as an unreasonable refusal. Upon the third unreasonable refusal, the application will be suspended for 12 months, effective from the date of the third refusal. In order to minimize the number of applicants being suspended, after each refusal, the Council will provide the applicant with advice and assistance to help them refine their preferences.
- 5.5 Applicants owed a homelessness duty by the Council under section 66, 73 or 75 of the of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 will be given one suitable offer under this legislation. If the offer is refused, and the homelessness duty is ended (s.193(2) of the Housing Act 1996 or the relevant section of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014), the applicant may receive up to two further offers under Pt VI of the Housing Act 1996, in accordance with the criteria set out in paragraphs 5.2-5.9, providing the 3 offer limit has not been exceeded, before their application is suspended. Where the homelessness duty is ended, the Council will automatically remove the preference awarded for homelessness. The application will be reassessed and the applicant placed in a band that reflects their newly assessed need.
- 5.6 All offers of accommodation will be made formally and will be subject to the necessary pre-tenancy checks, which will be carried out at or before the point of offer, to verify that the applicant's circumstances have not changed as to affect their eligibility and/or priority to receive the offer. For social housing tenants living in the county borough, a property inspection will be undertaken and a tenancy reference provided prior to an offer of accommodation being made. For social housing tenants living outside of the county borough and all private rented sector tenants, a tenancy reference will be requested.

- 5.7 In addition, some landlords will undertake an affordability assessment with the applicant(s) prior to them making an offer of accommodation. However, for applicants wanting to be rehoused by a housing association only, where the assessment identifies an affordability issue the housing association may choose to withdraw the offer (see paragraphs 5.13-5.16). In such instances, the offer will not be counted as an unreasonable refusal.
- 5.8 Applicants who refuse 3 offers of accommodation and are consequently suspended, have the right to request a review of this decision. A request for a review should be made in writing to the Council within 21 calendar days of receiving the notification letter, setting out the applicant's reason(s) for making the request. The Housing Assessment Panel will undertake the review.
- 5.9 Where the applicant is suspended for 12 months and there is a significant change in circumstances that materially affects the application, requiring the applicant(s) to be rehoused urgently, the Council will carry out a review of the application and send a report to the Housing Assessment Panel. Should the Panel decide to lift the suspension before the 12 month period expires the effective date of registration will be amended to the date the suspension was lifted. Any review of the Panel's decision will be carried out in accordance with the criteria set out in paragraphs 7.41-7.45.

#### Period for Considering an Offer

- 5.10 All offers of accommodation will be made in writing, using the applicants' preferred language and/or method of communication. Offers may be sent in the post or via email, depending on the personal choices specified at the point of application. Applicants will be allowed 3 working days from the receipt of the letter to make a decision about the offer of accommodation (see paragraph 5.11). When adhering to this timescale, landlords will need to take into consideration the personal circumstances of the applicant, which may include:
- (i) difficulty for an applicant who is working or has a child or other care commitments to make arrangements to view the property;
  - (ii) the property's distance from the applicant's current accommodation;
  - (iii) where acceptance of the offer would involve a child changing schools or create difficulties for members of the household maintaining work or training;
  - (iv) need for advocate / support worker / health professional to be present at the viewing;

- (v) the availability / timings of essential furniture or public funding to enable the applicant to move; or
- (vi) the individual's circumstances, with consideration for individuals with protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

5.11 The deemed day of delivery is as follows:

- (i) 1<sup>st</sup> class post is the second day after it was posted;
- (ii) For electronic methods, it is the second day after the day on which it was transmitted; and
- (iii) For hand delivery, it is the day after it was delivered.

5.12 Applicants not responding to an offer of accommodation within timescales set out within the offer letter, no less than 3 working days, will be deemed by the Council to have refused the offer, unless extenuating circumstance apply.

#### Withdrawal of Offers

5.13 In exceptional circumstances, a landlord may choose to withdraw an offer of an accommodation. This may be done at any stage before the tenancy agreement has been signed. Reasons for withdrawing an offer include but are not limited to:

- (i) where the property fails to become vacant;
- (ii) where the property is found to be unsuitable for the applicant's or a member of their perspective household's needs;
- (iii) where it comes to light that the applicant or a member of their perspective household has a property related debt (see paragraphs 2.25-2.31);
- (iv) in the interest of community safety or the safety of the applicant or a member of their perspective household (see paragraphs 7.17-7.22);
- (v) in relation to offences related to information given or withheld by either the applicant or a member of their perspective household (see paragraphs 6.18-6.23);
- (vi) where the applicant's or a member of their perspective household's circumstances change or new information comes to light, which either changes their priority, makes them ineligible for the property or makes them ineligible to appear on the common housing register;

- (vii) where the landlord requires the property for an emergency reason;
  - (viii) where it is found that the landlord has made an offer in error;
  - (ix) where the applicant has been asked to provide supporting documentation by either the Council or the landlord and fails to do so;
  - (x) where it is found that a prospective tenant of a housing association is going to under occupy their property, using the social size criteria (see Appendix 3), and, therefore, cannot satisfy their prospective landlord that they can afford the rent; or
  - (xi) The applicant is a tenant of the social landlord making an offer and their property has failed the required tenancy inspection.
- 5.14 A decision by the landlord to withdraw an offer of accommodation will be made by a housing manager or equivalent.
- 5.15 Where an offer of accommodation is withdrawn, the landlord will write to the applicant explaining reasons for the withdrawal. The landlord will also notify the Council of all instances where an offer of accommodation is withdrawn so that reasons for withdrawal can be recorded and monitored.
- 5.16 A withdrawn offer will not be counted as an offer of accommodation for the purposes of the three offer rule. In instances where the applicant cannot satisfy the affordability criteria set down by the housing association and an offer of accommodation is withdrawn the applicant(s) will be contacted by the Council and provided with advice on alternative housing options.

#### Property Related Criteria

- 5.17 Unless a restriction is placed on an application (see paragraphs 7.17-7.22), applicants are able to express a preference for landlord, bedroom count and property type in accordance with the criteria set out by each landlord (see Appendix 4 and 5). In order to make the best use of the housing stock, the landlords may apply restrictions on who is eligible to be accommodated in certain property types and sizes.
- 5.18 Family designated accommodation (2, 3, 4 & 5 bedroom housing) is allocated by the landlords in accordance with the criteria set out in Appendix 4.
- 5.19 Household members who are temporarily living away from home, for example in Further Education or the British Armed Forces (Regular or Reserves), may be included as part of the application. However, the

individual will need to confirm in writing to the Council that they wish to be re-housed with the household. Until such a time as the Council receives the written confirmation the application will be assessed as the individual not being part of the household.

- 5.20 Priority for accommodation designated by landlords as accessible, including bungalows, will be allocated to applicants who have been assessed by the Council as requiring such accommodation (see paragraph 5.28-5.31).
- 5.21 Expectant mothers who would be entitled to an additional bedroom on the birth of their child or children must provide a copy of their Maternity Certificate (MAT B1) to verify a pregnancy and confirm the expected week of confinement. Where proof is provided the application may be amended to reflect an increase in household size and the need for a larger property, subject to the household criteria applied by each landlord.
- 5.22 If the applicant or a member of their household is an approved foster carer with Caerphilly county borough council, one extra bedroom will be allowed under the household size criteria (see Appendix 4) for use by a foster child or children. If the applicant or a member of their prospective household ceases to be an approved foster carer or their approval is revoked at any stage before an offer of accommodation is made, the additional room entitlement will cease to apply.
- 5.23 In exceptional circumstances landlords may also choose to overlook the property related criteria so that they may take account of the specific needs of the household:
- (i) Where because of a disability or medical condition an applicant or member of their prospective household requires a specific size and type of accommodation. In such instances the requirement will need to have been recommended by either the Council's occupational therapist (Housing) or Gofal;
  - (ii) Where the applicant or a member of their household requires support from a carer who needs to sleep in the home and they cannot reasonably be expected to share a bedroom with another member of the household; and
  - (iii) For hard to let properties where no suitable applicants can be found who satisfy the relevant criteria.

For points (i) and (ii) above, a report will need to be submitted by the Council to the Housing Assessment Panel.

- 5.24 Many of the landlords party to this policy allocate their properties in strict accordance with the social size criteria. Therefore, an applicant who has overnight access to a child may not necessarily be allocated a

property with an additional bedroom with one of these landlords. Although, for their low demand properties, these landlords reserve the right to overlook this criteria.

#### Age Related Criteria

- 5.25 All landlords apply minimum age related criteria to social housing designated as retirement housing (see Appendix 6). Applicants can only apply for this type of housing if they meet the criteria or are given special dispensation as outlined in paragraphs 5.26 and 5.27 below.
- 5.26 Age dispensation may be granted by the Council where:
- (i) an applicant or a member of their prospective household has a disability or medical condition and has been assessed by either the Council's occupational therapist (Housing) or Gofal as requiring retirement housing; or
  - (ii) the property has been deemed hard to let by the landlord and there are no suitable applicants on the common housing register in the required age range.
- 5.27 Requests for age dispensation for people aged 50 years old and over will be considered by the Council. The Housing Assessment Panel will consider requests from people aged less than 50 years old.

#### Accessible Housing

- 5.28 Accessible housing is a term given to properties which enable disabled people to live independently. These may be properties that have already had major adaptations carried out, are suitable for adaptation or through design are suitable with no additional adaptation works necessary, e.g. some properties built to [Design Quality Requirements](#). In order to address the severe shortage of such accommodation in the county borough, and thereby make best use of the social housing stock, priority for such accommodation will be given to people, who have been assessed by the Council as requiring accessible accommodation.
- 5.29 In order to establish the requirement for accessible housing the Council may need to undertake an assessment of the housing needs of the applicant and prospective members of their household (see paragraphs 7.6-7.11). Following assessment a recommendation will be made by the occupational therapist (Housing) on the level of accessibility a property should have. The landlords must adhere to the recommendation when matching applicants to available properties.

Coding is used by the landlords as a means of identifying the degree of accessibility a property offers. This is primarily in relation to the access

to and circulation within the property but also to the potential for the property to be adapted, e.g. stair lifts (see Appendix 8).

- 5.30 All properties owned and managed by the landlords should be coded to indicate the level of accessibility, either before becoming vacant or at the point it becomes vacant. When allocating accommodation, landlords will be required to ensure that disabled applicants or those with a medical condition requiring accessible or adapted accommodation are matched with a property that most closely meets their needs, taking into consideration the 'best match shortlisting criteria' (see Appendix 9).
- 5.31 Where a property has been coded as accessible or adapted, it may be necessary, in some instances, to overlook an applicant with a lesser requirement for such housing, irrespective of time and date order, to ensure a best match. This criterion will also apply to new build properties, which have been specifically designed to meet the needs of an individual applicant.



## 6. How to Make an Application

- 6.1 The common housing register provides applicants with a single point of access to all social housing in the borough. This section sets out how applicants can apply for this housing.

### Who can Apply

- 6.2 Anyone aged 16 and over can apply if their current address is their only home, or sole residence, and they are not already registered on the common housing register on someone else's housing application.
- 6.3 In law, a minor cannot hold a legal estate in land. Therefore, if the applicant is aged between 16 and 17 years old, they may be required by their prospective landlord to provide details of a trustee and/or a guarantor before they can actively be considered for housing. The trustee/guarantor maybe an appropriate adult or a social worker. The Council will be able to provide advice to 16 and 17 year olds on trustees and guarantors to ensure that they are not prevented from accessing housing.
- 6.4 Applications from ineligible applicants will not be registered.

### Making an Application

- 6.5 Applications can be made either on-line, over the telephone or in person at designated locations across the county borough.
- 6.6 A home visit service will be provided:
- (i) in exceptional circumstances only, where the person is unable to use one of the methods listed in paragraph 6.5 due to infirmity, disability or vulnerability (see paragraphs 6.32-6.33); or
  - (ii) where a home visit is deemed necessary to clarify the circumstances of the applicant or a prospective member of their household.
- 6.7 All applications for housing must be made in accordance with this policy, using the standard form.
- 6.8 All applications for housing will be assessed by the Council in accordance with this policy and underlying procedures. The Council carries out this assessment to ensure that the applicant and members of the prospective household are eligible to be admitted to the common housing register, ascertain the level of preference they might receive and to take into consideration any other grounds that might materially affect their application.

### Housing Solutions Interview

- 6.9 Where an applicant has been initially assessed as having a housing need which places them in a reasonable preference category and, as a result, is placed in either Band 1 or 2, before their application is made active, they will be required to complete a housing solutions interview. The purpose of the interview is to ensure that those applicants, with either an urgent or fairly urgent need to move, are provided with good quality housing advice to enable them to make informed choices about their housing preferences. Once the interview has been undertaken, and providing there are no outstanding pieces of information required to enable the Council to complete its assessment, the application will be made active.
- 6.10 Those applicants assessed as being in Band 3 will not be required to complete a housing solutions interview at this stage, unless otherwise requested. Their applications will be made active immediately, providing the Council is in receipt of all the information it requires to complete its assessment.
- 6.11 All housing solutions interviews will be completed within 14 days of the application being submitted, unless there are circumstances beyond the control of the Council which prevents the interview from taking place. The date of the interview will have no bearing on the effective date of registration (see paragraphs 6.13-6.17).

### Notification of Registration

- 6.12 The Council will inform the applicant in writing of the following information when they are accepted onto the common housing register:
- (i) effective time/date of registration;
  - (ii) application reference number;
  - (iii) address details;
  - (iv) all people named in the application;
  - (v) the areas, property types and size that the applicant has selected and is entitled to;
  - (vi) the priority band and how it has been calculated; and
  - (vii) the landlord(s) they wish to be rehoused with.

### Time & Date of Registration

- 6.13 Priority within bands is determined by the length of time the applicant has been placed in that band. This may either be the time and date of registration or the time and date of entry into a priority band.
- 6.14 Where an applicant drops out of a priority band (Band 1 or 2) and into Band 3 their effective date will return to their original date of registration.
- 6.15 Where a new but incomplete application is made active (see paragraphs 6.24-6.27) and placed in Band 3 pending further information to verify an award of reasonable preference, the effective date will remain as the date of registration, irrespective of whether the award is subsequently made. Paragraphs 6.13-6.14 will apply for subsequent changes in priority.
- 6.16 Where a suspension on an application is lifted, then the effective date of registration will change to the date of when the suspension was lifted, except in the case of self-suspension (see paragraphs 6.38-6.40).
- 6.17 See paragraphs 2.40 (points i & ii) for the additional criteria applied to owner-occupiers.

### Criminal Records

- 6.18 In the interests of community safety, all applicants and members of their prospective household will be required to disclose any pending court cases or unspent criminal convictions. Where the information is disclosed the Council may seek further information to ascertain whether they are likely to be regarded as ineligible due to unacceptable behaviour (see paragraphs 2.15-2.31) and/or pose a serious risk to a community where they might be rehoused (see paragraphs 7.17-7.22). The Council may also seek this information where it believes that the applicant or a member of their prospective household failed to disclose the required information.
- 6.19 Such requests for information will be carried out in accordance with paragraphs 9.8-9.11 and 7.5.

### Offences Related to Information Given or Withheld by Applicants

- 6.20 Under Pt VI of the Housing Act 1996, the applicant or a member of their prospective household may commit a criminal offence if they:
- (i) knowingly or recklessly give false information; or
  - (ii) knowingly withhold information which the Council have reasonably required the applicant to give.

The offence is punishable on summary conviction of a fine not exceeding level 5 of the standard scale of fines for summary offences.

- 6.21 Circumstances where the Council may choose to initiate criminal proceedings include:
- (i) any false information given in application for social housing;
  - (ii) any false information given in response to subsequent review letters or other updating mechanisms; or
  - (iii) any false information given or submitted by applicants during the proceedings of a review.
- 6.22 Where it comes to light that an applicant or a member of their prospective household may have committed a criminal offence in relation to paragraph 6.20, the application will be suspended whilst the Council carries out a full investigation of the circumstances. Where necessary a report surrounding the circumstances will be presented to the Housing Assessment Panel for consideration. Providing the applicant or member of their prospective household has not been deemed ineligible (see paragraphs 2.15-2.18), the Panel may choose to suspend the application for a period of up to but not exceeding 12 months, depending on the severity of the offence.
- 6.23 Where the applicant has been made either a full or provisional offer of accommodation, the landlord may choose to withdraw the offer and make a referral to the Council (see paragraphs 5.13-5.16). In such instances, the applicant will not actively be considered for housing, as per paragraph 6.22.

#### Incomplete Applications

- 6.24 Incomplete applications may not be made active until such time as the Council is satisfied that it has in its possession all of the information it requires to complete its assessment. A checklist of the required information will be attached to the application form to assist applicants complete their applications quickly, without any undue delays.
- 6.25 Although, there may be occasions where an incomplete application can be made active. This will generally apply where an application is complete except for evidence to substantiate an award of preference. In such instances, at the applicant's request, the application may be made active and placed in Band 3 and considered for housing immediately.
- 6.26 An award of preference will not be made until such time as the Council is in possession of the information it requires to make the award. When the Council is satisfied that the information is complete, the

award of reasonable preference can be made and, providing the applicant satisfies the residential criteria, the application will be placed in either Band 1 or 2, depending on their assessed level of need.

- 6.27 All incomplete applications will be cancelled after a period of 28 calendar days of inactivity from the applicant where information has been requested and not been provided. This cancellation does not prevent the applicant making a subsequent application at a later date. Although, the effective date of registration will not be backdated to an early application.

#### Change of Circumstances

- 6.28 As the circumstances of applicants change, so may their eligibility, priority and housing requirements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to inform the Council of a change of circumstances and, where requested, provide proof of the change. Notification of a change in circumstances should be done without undue delay and within a reasonable period of time, taking into consideration the needs of the applicant.
- 6.29 Examples of a change in circumstances include but are not limited to:
- (i) a change of address or contact details, for either themselves or members of their prospective household;
  - (ii) a change in their medical condition or disability (either existing or newly acquired);
  - (iii) additional family members or other people they wish to add to their application (It will be for the Council to decide whether they will allow additional people to join the application);
  - (iv) any family member or any other person on the application who has left the accommodation; and
  - (v) any significant changes in income, savings or assets, which is likely to have a material effect on the application.
- 6.30 It does not follow that every change in circumstance will result in a change in priority. The Council will verify and assess the extent of the change to ascertain whether this will result in a change in priority. However, given the nature of the banding system, only significant changes in circumstance are likely to result in a change in prioritisation. Applicants will not actively be considered for housing whilst the change of circumstance is being verified, where this is found likely to have a material affect to their application.
- 6.31 Applicants who are promoted into a higher band because of a change in circumstances will have their effective date of registration changed to

the date the circumstances changed. Applicants remaining in the same band will keep their current date. Applicants demoted to a lower band will retain their original date of registration.

### Home Visits

- 6.32 In order to complete its assessment of the application, or to update a completed assessment, the Council may need to undertake a home visit. Such visits may be carried out in the following circumstances where the applicant or a member of their prospective household:
- (i) is unable to attend the Council's office due to a physical or mental health condition which prevents them from attending a Council office or would cause a significant delay in completing their application due to support needs;
  - (ii) states that they have a disability or medical condition that is significantly affected by their current housing circumstances or their accommodation no longer meets due to the disability or medical condition;
  - (iii) may be living in insanitary housing conditions; and
  - (iv) in other exceptional circumstances where a home visit is required to verify any aspect of the application.
- 6.33 As far as is reasonably practicable, all applicants will be visited in their current home by their prospective landlord prior to an offer of accommodation being made. The purpose of the visit is to verify the applicants' circumstances to ensure an offer of accommodation can be made.

### Worsening Own Circumstances

- 6.34 Worsening own circumstances is regarded by the Council as either a deliberate act or failure to do something that resulted in a change of circumstances in order to gain priority. Examples of worsening own circumstances include but are not limited to:
- (i) moving from suitable accommodation to less settled or overcrowded accommodation;
  - (ii) giving up affordable and suitable private rented accommodation which they are able to maintain, to move in with other relatives, creating a situation of overcrowding and/or sharing of bathroom/kitchen and/or a split household;
  - (iii) requesting or colluding with a landlord or family member to issue them with a Notice to Quit;

- (iv) where a homeless applicant is deemed intentionally homeless by the Council due to unacceptable behaviour; or
  - (v) deliberately overcrowds their property by moving in friends and/or other family members who have never lived together previously and/or have not lived together for a long time, and subsequently requests rehousing to larger accommodation.
- 6.35 Where an applicant or a member of their prospective household has been found to worsened their own circumstances then the application may be suspended for up to 12 months. The length of suspension will depend on the severity of the case. Therefore, only the most severe cases are likely to be suspended for the full 12 months.
- 6.36 In such instances, a report produced by the Council will be referred to the Housing Assessment Panel for consideration and determination (see paragraphs 7.33-7.40). The applicant will be informed in writing of the Panel's decision and, where appropriate, their right to a review of the decision.
- 6.37 When the suspension is lifted and the application is made active, the effective date of registration will be reset to the date the suspension ended.

#### Self-Suspensions

- 6.38 This policy has been designed to give priority to those people requiring rehousing either urgently or fairly urgently. Applicants will not, therefore, be permitted to suspend their own application for housing, unless extenuating circumstances exist which mean they are not currently ready to be considered for rehousing. These include but are not limited to:
- (i) family bereavement;
  - (ii) hospitalisation;
  - (iii) holiday; and
  - (iv) work commitments.
- 6.39 In such circumstances the applicant will be permitted to self-suspend their application for up to 28 calendar days. Applicants will not be permitted to self-suspend more than twice in a 12 month period. The date of suspension will be valid from the day the applicant notifies the Council. The effective date of registration will remain unchanged by a self-suspension.

- 6.40 In extenuating circumstances, upon request from the applicant, the Council may grant the applicant permission to extend the period from 28 days.

#### Right to Buy / Acquire Applications

- 6.41 Applicants who make a right to buy or right to acquire application will have their housing application suspended pending the outcome of their application. Where the right to buy or right to acquire application is subsequently withdrawn, the suspension will be lifted and the applicant will actively be considered for housing. The effective date of registration will remain unchanged.
- 6.42 Where an applicant completes the purchase of their council or housing association home and wishes to remain on the common housing register, the applicant will be required to notify the Council of the change in circumstances. In such instances, the application will be reassessed in relation to the new circumstances.

#### Annual Review of Applications

- 6.43 In order to ensure that the information held on the common housing register is accurate and up-to-date, thereby ensuring that the applicant is ready to receive an offer of accommodation, the Council will carry out a review of all applications on or around the anniversary of their original date of registration, or more frequently if operational requirements dictate.
- 6.44 To remain on the common housing register, all applicants will be required to respond to the review within 14 calendar days. Applicants failing to respond within 14 calendar days will be sent a reminder. If there is no response within 14 calendar days of the reminder, the application will be cancelled and removed from the common housing register. A response after this time will be considered as a new application, unless the criterion in paragraph 6.47 applies.

#### Cancelled Applications

- 6.45 The Council reserves the right to remove applications from the common housing register in the following instances:
- (i) at the applicant's own request;
  - (ii) once the applicant has been rehoused;
  - (iii) upon a change in circumstance which now renders the applicant ineligible to remain on the common housing register;
  - (iv) following failure to respond to an annual review of their application;



- (v) following failure to respond to correspondence in connection with their housing application; and
  - (vi) where an applicant has knowingly and wilfully given false or misleading information, or has not disclosed relevant information, in connection with their application, which now renders them ineligible (under the direction of the Housing Assessment Panel).
- 6.46 The Council will notify applicants whose applications are cancelled and removed from the common housing register in writing. If the applicant's current address is unknown, the Council will retain a copy of the letter for the applicant to collect.
- 6.47 Unless extenuating circumstances apply, cancelled applications will not be reinstated. Applicants wanting to rejoin the common housing register will, therefore, be required to make a new application. Where extenuating circumstances exist, which meant that the applicant could not have reasonably prevented their application from being cancelled, the Council may choose to reinstate the application with their original date of application.

## 7. How Applications are Assessed

- 7.1 This section sets out the different types of assessment the Council may undertake to assess an application.

### General Assessment

- 7.2 All applications for housing will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with this policy. The Council will have responsibility for carrying out the primary assessment of the application and may, where necessary, contract out part of the assessment to a specialist organisation, e.g. Gofal for mental health assessments.
- 7.3 The reason the Council assesses each application is to ensure that the applicant or a member of their prospective household:
- (i) is eligible to be admitted on to the common housing register (see section 2);
  - (ii) to ascertain the level of priority they might receive (see section 3);
  - (iii) to ensure a match to the most suitable type of accommodation that meets the household's needs (see section 4).
  - (iv) to verify the accuracy of the information provided (see section 6); and
  - (v) to take into consideration any other grounds that might affect their application (see section 7).
- 7.4 The application and any award of priority made by the Council will be based on the information provided by the applicant. Incomplete applications will not be made live. Where the information is not forthcoming, the Council will delete all incomplete applications after 28 calendar days (see paragraphs 6.24-6.27).
- 7.5 The Council may require additional information to establish eligibility and/or priority, or to substantiate the accuracy of the information supplied. Organisations that the Council may contact and share information with include but is not limited to:
- UK Border Agency;
  - other departments within the local authority;
  - other local authorities or housing associations;
  - the police;
  - the probation and/or prison services;
  - health professionals including GP's;

- Department for Work & Pensions;
- Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency;
- a former landlord(s);
- a solicitor(s);
- mortgage provider;
- Land Registry; and
- voluntary sector support agencies.

### Medical Assessments

- 7.6 This policy seeks to promote the social model of disability. Therefore, medical assessments are carried out by the Council to ensure that applicants or members of their prospective household are matched with accommodation which meets their needs and actively promotes their independence and wellbeing.
- 7.7 As part of the application process all applicants are asked a series of questions to establish if they or a member of their prospective household has a medical condition and/or disability and whether their existing accommodation affects their independence and wellbeing. Where a medical condition or disability is disclosed by the applicant, their application will be referred to the occupational therapist (Housing) for assessment. An application may also be referred to the occupational therapist (Housing) when the applicant notifies the Council of a change in an existing or newly acquired medical condition or disability.
- 7.8 The role of the occupational therapist (Housing) is to establish the extent to which the current housing situation effects the individual's ability to live independently and their overall wellbeing. The occupational therapist (Housing) will recommend the preferred type of accommodation needed together with an indication of the level of urgency and, where applicable, whether an award of reasonable or additional preference should be made.
- 7.9 Not all applicants, with a recognised medical condition, who are referred to the occupational therapist (Housing) will receive an award of reasonable or additional preference (see paragraphs 3.2-3.3). This will be because the Council has concluded that rehousing would not necessarily improve the independence and wellbeing of the applicant or a member of their prospective household. In such instances, the occupational therapist (Housing) will recommend the type of accommodation required, taking into consideration long-term needs of that applicant.
- 7.10 Where an applicant or a member of their prospective household has a recognised medical condition or disability but the occupational therapist (Housing) determines that a highly accessible or adapted property is not a determining factor in the promotion of independence and wellbeing, a code is attached to the application as an indicator as to the

type of accommodation required (see paragraph 5.28-5.31), taking into consideration the accessibility and long-term needs of the applicant.

- 7.11 In the absence of the occupational therapist (Housing) the Council may choose to use a trusted assessor / occupational therapist to undertake medical assessments and/or associated tasks.

#### Mental Health Assessments

- 7.12 Where the applicant or a member of their prospective household indicates on their application that their current housing situation is significantly detrimental to their mental health and well-being the Council will refer the application to Gofal for assessment. Similarly to the medical assessment procedure, Gofal will establish the extent to which the current housing situation is impacting on the individual, due to the mental health problem, and will make a recommendation to the Council on the type of accommodation required, together with an indication of the level of priority required.
- 7.13 Not all mental health conditions initially identified and referred to Gofal will necessitate the need for rehousing or greater priority. In such instances, the applicant will be permitted to apply for housing but will not receive an award of preference.

#### Environmental Health Assessments

- 7.14 At the point of application, all applicants will be asked about their current housing situation by the Council to establish whether there is any disrepair in their property. Where an applicant, living in the private sector, indicates that their property is in serious disrepair, a referral will be made to an environmental health officer (housing) from the Council.
- 7.15 The purpose of the environmental health assessment is to:
- (i) determine whether there are any serious category 1 hazards in existence, using the Housing Health & Safety Rating System;
  - (ii) determine whether a recommendation for reasonable or additional preference should be made in respect of the application; and
  - (iii) where applicable, work with the landlord to remedy the problem(s).
- 7.16 The process in paragraphs 7.14 and 7.15 will also apply where the Council is notified of the disrepair via a change in circumstances.

## Risk Management

- 7.17 In the interests of community safety, where there is good reason to believe that either the applicant or a member of their prospective household poses a risk to an individual or community, the Council will work closely with the relevant agencies to assess the level of risk prior to an offer of accommodation being made. The purpose of the assessment will be to establish the nature and level of risk, whether the applicant is ineligible due to unacceptable behaviour, and to ensure that if the applicant is re-housed, the risk is minimised and managed.
- 7.18 A risk assessment may be required irrespective of whether an applicant or a member of their prospective household has satisfied the test of unacceptable behaviour (see paragraphs 2.15-2.31).
- 7.19 These provisions may apply but are not limited to people:
- (i) who have been charged with or convicted of a serious sexual offence or violent crime who are seeking rehousing for themselves or their family because of the fear of retaliatory violence;
  - (ii) released from custody having served a sentence for a serious sexual offence or crime of violence;
  - (iii) being discharged from institutional care whose history includes offences of a violent and/or sexual nature; or
  - (iv) with a history of drug, alcohol or other substance misuse who have been convicted of related offences.
- 7.20 In order for the assessment to be completed, the Council will liaise with agencies such as the police, the probation service, social services or health care professionals. As a result of the assessment, the Council may choose to place restrictions on the landlord, location and property type for which the applicant is eligible. Such restrictions placed on the application will be agreed jointly between the various agencies.
- 7.21 The Council will notify applicants or prospective members of their household who are subjected to a risk assessment in writing. The application will not actively be considered for housing until such a time as the Council is satisfied that the assessment has been completed.
- 7.22 Any person whose entitlement to rehousing is restricted under the provision of paragraphs 7.16-7.21 will be notified, in writing, of the grounds and their right to review the decision.

### Financial Assessments

- 7.23 At the point of application the Council will undertake a financial assessment to verify whether the applicant or a member of their prospective household has sufficient resources that would enable them to meet their own needs either through homeownership or renting privately (see paragraphs 2.40-2.45 and 2.46-2.52). Financial resources assessed include all household income, capital assets and savings, irrespective of where in the world they may be situated/held.
- 7.24 The landlords may also undertake financial assessments as part of their tenancy sustainability checks (see paragraphs 7.25-7.27). Where applicable, the landlord criteria is shown in Appendix

### Tenancy Sustainability

- 7.25 In order to promote sustainable and cohesive communities, all tenants will be provided with practical support from their landlord to help them manage their home and abide by the terms of their tenancy agreement. Prospective tenants may be required to complete a financial assessment to assess their ability to pay their rent and other housing related costs, prior to them being made an offer of accommodation.
- 7.26 Where it is found that a prospective tenant of a housing association is going to under occupy their property, using the social size criteria (see Appendix 3) and cannot satisfy their prospective landlord that they can afford the rent, the landlord will not actively consider them for housing. If the circumstances change and it is found that the applicant can now satisfy the affordability criteria, the restriction on their rehousing will be removed.
- 7.27 Where it comes to light, after an offer of accommodation has been made, that a prospective tenant of a housing association cannot satisfy the affordability criteria set down by the housing association, the offer of accommodation may be withdrawn (see paragraphs 5.13-5.16). In such instances, the applicant will be contacted by the Council and provided with advice on alternative housing options.

### Extra Care Housing

- 7.28 There are currently 3 extra care schemes in the county borough, which provide housing and support to enable people to maintain their independence. The schemes are designed to meet the needs of older people who require some care and support. Care staff are based at these schemes to support the needs of people who live there whilst giving them the security and privacy of their own home.
- 7.29 The 3 extra care schemes are:

- (i) Cefn Glas, Blackwood, managed by Charter Housing Association;
- (ii) Tredegar Court, Crosskeys, managed by the Council; and
- (iii) Plas Hyfryd, Caerphilly, managed by United Welsh Housing Association.

7.30 The landlords listed in paragraph 7.29 will be responsible for assessing the suitability of applicants applying for extra care housing in their respective scheme before an offer of accommodation is made.

7.31 To satisfy the suitability criteria for extra care housing the applicant must:

- (i) be 50+ years of age, unless exceptional circumstances exist, and be unable (or likely to become unable) to continue living independently in their current home; eligibility for the scheme will be considered on the basis of the applicants assessed need.

7.32 Applicants assessed by the landlord as being unsuitable for extra care housing will be informed in writing by the landlord, setting out the grounds for their decision. Applicants have the right to request a review of the decision within 21 calendar days of receiving their notification letter in accordance with the criteria set out in paragraphs 9.12-9.16.

7.33 Applicants failing the suitability test will be provided with information from the Council on the other housing options available to them.

#### Housing Assessment Panel

7.34 The Housing Assessment Panel will meet on a monthly basis or more frequently if required. The role of the Panel will be to consider and make decisions on applications that have been forwarded to it by the Council.

7.35 The Panel will be responsible for considering the circumstances where an applicant or a member of their prospective household:

- (i) may be ineligible due to unacceptable behaviour;
- (ii) may be suspended due to unacceptable behaviour;
- (iii) worsens their own circumstances to increase priority;
- (iv) knowingly or recklessly makes a statement which is false, or knowingly withholds information;
- (v) requires a risk assessment before being rehoused;

- (vi) is aged under 50 years old and requires age dispensation to move into retirement housing;
  - (vii) requires rehousing via the management discretion criteria; and
  - (viii) consider cases where the circumstances are such that they may lead to an applicant being bypassed for an offer of accommodation other than in accordance with the bypassing criteria set out in paragraph 2.5 of Appendix 2.
- 7.36 When exercising its discretion the Panel may choose to call on the expertise of another organisation for assistance when dealing with a particularly difficult and/or complex case. In addition, the Panel will also have the discretion to waive the criteria in relation to current or former rent arrears in extenuating circumstances.
- 7.37 The Panel will consist of senior representatives from the following organisations:
- Private Sector Housing – Caerphilly CBC (principal housing officer – housing portfolio, chair);
  - Private Sector Housing – Caerphilly CBC (occupation therapist – Housing);
  - Social Services – Caerphilly CBC (service manager or equivalent);
  - Partner landlords (housing manager or equivalent); and
  - Additional members may be co-opted on as and when required.
- 7.38 To be considered quorate, at least five people will need to be present at the meeting, from at least two different organisations.
- 7.39 The Panel will base their decision on all available information. Therefore, applicants or their representatives will not be required to attend Panel meetings. To allow time for consideration, any supporting information should be submitted by the applicant to the Council at least 7 calendar days before the date of the meeting, although, depending on the type and detail of the information, this timescale can be waived at the discretion of the Council.
- 7.40 Applicants will not actively be considered for housing whilst the Panel is reviewing their application. Applicants will be notified in writing of any Panel decision and, where applicable, the grounds. Applicants will also be notified of their right to review a decision made by the Panel.

#### Housing Review Panel

- 7.41 The role of the Housing Review Panel is to consider reviews from applicants relating to decisions made by the Housing Assessment Panel regarding:



- (i) a decision to make an applicant or a member of their prospective household ineligible from being considered for an offer of accommodation;
  - (ii) the removal of reasonable preference;
  - (iii) the non award of additional or reasonable preference for medical, mental health, social, welfare or hardship reasons; and
  - (iv) other unforeseen cases, at the discretion of the Panel.
- 7.42 All reviews will need to be submitted in writing to the Council by the applicant, or a representative acting on their behalf, within 21 calendar days of being notified of a decision. The Panel will consider and determine the review within 56 calendar days of the request and will notify the applicant in writing of the outcome of their review including the reasons if the original decision is confirmed.
- 7.43 The Panel will consist of three people, all of whom must not have been involved in the original decision. It will include:
- (i) Private Sector Housing Manager (Caerphilly CBC); and
  - (ii) two senior representatives from participating organisations (one per organisation).
- 7.44 The applicant is permitted to attend the Panel meeting in person or to be represented by a support worker or advocate. The applicant must notify the Council of their decision to attend the meeting so that adequate provision can be made for their attendance. To allow time for consideration, any supporting information should be submitted by the applicant to the Council at least 7 calendar days before the date of the meeting, although, depending on the type and detail of the information, this timescale can be waived at the discretion of the Council.
- 7.45 The Panel's decision is final and any challenge of that decision can only be made through the Public Sector Ombudsman for Wales (see paragraph 7.47) or a judicial review.

### Complaints

- 7.46 The Council and all participating landlords signed up to this policy are committed to dealing effectively with any complaints you might have about the application process. All complaints must be made to the Council in accordance with the [corporate complaints policy](#), which can be found on its website.

### Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

- 7.47 Where the applicant considers that their application has not been dealt with fairly and/or are dissatisfied with the outcome of a review, they have the right to make a complaint to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales. For further information please contact:

[Public Services Ombudsman for Wales](#)

1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae  
Pencoed  
CF35 5LJ

Tel: 0300 790 0203

Fax: (01656) 641199

Email: [ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk](mailto:ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk)

## 8. Tenancy Management

- 8.1 This section sets out those aspects of the allocations process that relate specifically to the management of the tenancy.

### Management Transfers

- 8.2 There may be occasions where the Council requires a tenant to move for good management reasons. Such transfers, which must be initiated by the Council, are considered an exempt allocation for the purposes of this policy under s.159(5) and s.160 of the Housing Act 1996.
- 8.3 For the purpose of this policy, landlords may initiate management transfers. Examples of management transfers include:
- a temporary decant to allow repairs to a property to be carried out;
  - succession;
  - assignment;
  - transfers as a result of family proceedings;
  - conversion of an introductory tenancy to a secure/assured tenancy; and
  - those rehoused as a result of a compulsory purchase order.
- 8.4 Although management transfers are exempt allocations under this policy, the landlords have agreed that all transfers will be recorded on the common housing register. This is to ensure that the Council has accurate information about housing needs in the county borough for strategic planning purposes.

### Joint Tenancies

- 8.5 Under s.160A (1)(c) of the Housing Act 1996, the Council shall not allocate housing accommodation to two or more people jointly if any one of them is a person from abroad who is ineligible, or is a person who is being treated as ineligible because of unacceptable behaviour (see paragraphs 2.15-2.31).
- 8.6 Taking into consideration the circumstances of each application, a joint tenancy will normally be granted where household members can demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the landlord, a long-term commitment to the home, e.g. adults sharing accommodation as family, partners, friends or unpaid live-in carers.
- 8.7 When making an offer of accommodation, landlords should ensure that applicants are made aware of the option of creating a joint tenancy including the legal and financial implications and obligations. Where the landlord refuses to create a joint tenancy, they will need to provide the applicants with clear, written reasons for the refusal.

### Joint to Sole Tenancy

- 8.8 In the event of relationship breakdown, resulting in one partner terminating a joint tenancy, landlords may, at their discretion, grant a new tenancy to the partner remaining in occupation only. In such instances a new tenancy will be created but only after the 28-day notice period has elapsed. However, in the following circumstances, landlords may refuse to grant a new tenancy:
- (i) due to a property related debt (see paragraphs 2.25-2.31);
  - (ii) where the tenant is now ineligible on the grounds of his/her behaviour (see paragraphs 2.15-2.24);
  - (iii) where the size/type of accommodation no longer matches the requirements of the households (see paragraphs 5.17-5.24); or
  - (iv) where the applicant currently resides in but no longer requires accessible housing (this criterion may be overlooked by the landlord where it is found that no demand for the property exists).

### Mutual Exchanges

- 8.9 All of the social landlords operating in the borough subscribe to organisations such as [Homeswapper](#), which match social housing tenants wanting to swap their homes – defined in law as a mutual exchange. If you are a social housing tenant, you have the right to swap your home with another social housing tenant. To be able to do this you must first get your landlord's written consent, which can only be refused in certain circumstances. Your landlord will be able to provide you with further information on mutual exchanges, as these fall outside of the scope of this specific policy – for their contact details please see Appendix 10.

### Domestic Household Pets

- 8.10 Each landlord will maintain their own policy in relation to applicants keeping domestic household pets upon being rehoused. Applicants will, therefore, be required when completing their application to declare whether they require rehousing with their pet(s).
- 8.11 Applicants will be allowed to keep domestic household pets when rehoused, except in the circumstances defined by the policies of each individual landlord. Applicants with pets may not, therefore, be eligible to be rehoused in certain types of properties, i.e. those with shared common hallways and/or access points.
- 8.12 These policies will not generally be applied to assistance dogs that are trained to assist a disabled person.

## **9. Other Information**

- 9.1 This section sets out information on equalities, support, data protection and information sharing, the review process and intermediate products.

### Equalities Duty

- 9.2 The Council will regularly monitor the application process to ensure that people with a protected characteristic, as defined in the Equality Act 2010, are not discriminated against. All applications will be assessed on their individual merits, taking into consideration the circumstances of the household and the information provided to the Council at the point of application.

### Language, Interpretation & Other Support

- 9.3 It is the intention of the Council to communicate with all applicants in their preferred format. Applicants will be asked to specify their preferred format when applying for housing.
- 9.4 In order to assist applicants applying for housing, the Council will make available language and interpretation support to those who have difficulty speaking or reading English, or who are visually and/or hearing impaired.
- 9.5 Where requested, the Council will provide assistance to support applicants during all aspects of the application process including, but not limited to, filling out an application form, completing an annual review, requesting a review of their application.
- 9.6 The Council will ensure that any information and advice it publishes in relation to this policy is available in Welsh, and in other languages and formats on request.
- 9.7 Landlords will need to ensure that similar levels of support are made available to their prospective tenants.

### Confidentiality & Data Protection

- 9.8 The Council will ensure that all information provided to it by applicants, and by third parties in relation to an application, is treated in strictest confidence. In doing so, the Council will ensure that it complies fully with the requirements of the [Data Protection Act 1998](#), in relation to the way it stores and processes the information it holds on applicants, and with s.166(4) of the Housing Act 1996. This undertaking is also extended to all participating landlords that are signed up to this policy.

### Information Sharing

- 9.9 The local authority and participating organisations are signed up to a protocol, which governs the way information is shared for the purpose of maintaining the common housing register. The information sharing protocol has been developed in-line with the framework produced by [The Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information](#). The protocol ensures that information is shared between organisations safely and securely. This and, where applicable, other protocols will be utilised by the Council to verify any aspect of the application to ensure that it fulfils all statutory requirements.
- 9.10 As part of the application process, applicants will be required to consent to their personal information being shared for the purpose of being rehoused. Those applicants unwilling to consent to their information being shared will be considered by the Council not to have completed their application and, consequently, will not be admitted onto the common housing register (see paragraphs 6.24 & 6.27). Paragraphs 6.26-6.27 will not apply in this instance.
- 9.11 An applicant may request at any time that the information held on their application by the Council is, where applicable, shared with a support worker or advocate. The Council will not share this information until such a time as the applicant has provided it with disclosure authorisation, usually in the form of signed or informed consent.

### The Right to be Notified of a Decision & to Request a Review

- 9.12 In accordance with s.167(4A) of the Housing Act 1996, the Council will notify applicants in writing of any decision it makes to render either the applicant, or a prospective member of their household, ineligible on the grounds of unacceptable behaviour.
- 9.13 The applicant also has the right, on request, to be informed of any decision relating to the application, which has been, or is likely to be, taken into account, by either the Council or participating landlord, when considering whether or not to make them an offer of an allocation.
- 9.14 Applicants may request a review of a decision mentioned in either of the two paragraphs above or in respect of s.160A(9) of the Housing Act 1996 regarding those who are ineligible or who may be treated as such on the grounds of unacceptable behaviour.
- 9.15 A request for a review should be made in writing to the Council within 21 calendar days of receiving notification of a decision. Either the applicant or their representative, acting on their behalf, can make the request for a review. The review will be considered by the Housing Review Panel and will be completed within 56 calendar days from the date of request. The Council will inform the applicant in writing of the outcome of the review.

- 9.16 Where the review is regarding eligibility, relating either to a person from abroad, unacceptable behaviour, or financial resources, the applicant will not be actively considered for housing until the outcome of the review is known.

Low Cost Home Ownership & Intermediate Rent

- 9.17 All applications for intermediate products, such as low cost home ownership & intermediate renting, will be made through the common housing register to ensure that applicants have access to a wide range of housing options to meet their needs. Assessment of their suitability for intermediate products, however, is governed by a separate, stand-alone policy.

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**Caerphilly County Borough Council**

**Appendices to Common Allocation Policy for  
Caerphilly County Borough**

**November 2015**

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## Appendix 1: Summary of the Banding Scheme

<b>Band 1: Urgent need to move due to reasonable preference PLUS additional preference</b>	<b>Examples of Qualifying Circumstances / Summary of Criteria</b>
<p>Medical &amp; Welfare Grounds: hospital discharge.</p> <p>Reasonable Preference category s167(2)(iv)</p>	<p>Additional preference may be awarded to those people who have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) somewhere to live on leaving hospital but it is unsuitable for their needs and cannot be made suitable through adaptations due to cost, structural difficulties or the property cannot be adapted within a reasonable amount of time.</li> <li>(ii) nowhere at all to live when they leave hospital may qualify for Band 1 if the need to move is urgent, as assessed by the Council, and all other reasonable housing options have been explored.</li> </ul> <p>For points (i) and (ii) above, the occupational therapist (Housing) and/or Gofal will carry out an assessment of the need to move and, where applicable, make a recommendation on the type and size of accommodation required.</p>
<p>Medical &amp; Welfare Grounds: emergency medical or disability.</p> <p>Reasonable Preference category s167(2)(iv)</p>	<p>Additional preference will be awarded where, upon assessment, the Council is satisfied that either the applicant or member of their prospective household:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) is currently receiving palliative care and urgently requires rehousing to facilitate the on-going provision of this care;</li> <li>(ii) has a life limiting condition and their current accommodation is affecting their ability to retain independence or enable adequate care;</li> <li>(iii) health is so severely affected by the accommodation that it is likely to become life threatening, e.g. applicant has severe mental health problems that are significantly exacerbated by their accommodation;</li> <li>(iv) is disabled and, as a direct result of the limitations posed by the current property, are unable to carry out day-to-day activities or have difficulty in accessing facilities inside or outside their home. The award of additional preference will not be</li> </ul>

	<p>made where it has been assessed by the Council that rehousing would not facilitate a reduction in the limitations identified; or</p> <p>(v) overcrowding in their current property leaves them at risk of infection, e.g. is suffering from late-stage or advanced HIV infection.</p> <p>For points (i)-(v) above, the Council will undertake an assessment of an applicant's or a member of their prospective household's need to move and the type of accommodation required. Such assessments will take into consideration all supporting information and will be carried out in accordance with paragraphs 7.6-7.13.</p>
<p>Medical &amp; Welfare Grounds: release of adapted property.</p> <p>Reasonable Preference category s167(2)(iv)</p>	<p>Additional preference may be awarded where:</p> <p>(i) a social housing tenant living in the county borough no longer requires the adaptations in their current home and by moving will free up an adapted property which is capable of meeting the needs of a disabled person waiting for accommodation or, without significant expense, could be adapted to meet the needs of a disabled person.</p> <p>This award may still be valid if the applicant requires adaptations, provided that the adaptations required are substantially different from those in their current home, as assessed by the Council.</p>
<p>Medical &amp; Welfare Grounds: domestic abuse, violence or harassment.</p> <p>Reasonable Preference category s167(2)(iv)</p>	<p>Additional preference will be awarded by the Council, where upon consultation with the relevant agencies, it is satisfied that the applicant or member of their prospective household is:</p> <p>(i) a high-risk victim of domestic abuse, who is subject to a MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference), as part of an agreed safety plan for high-risk victims; or</p> <p>(ii) suffering extreme violence, harassment or discrimination, whether a hate crime or otherwise, and that it is not safe for them to remain in their present home/locality.</p> <p>Prior to the award being made, the Council will liaise with the relevant agencies to ensure that the threat of domestic abuse, violence or harassment would be</p>

	significantly reduced via rehousing.
Armed Forces: former members, serious injury or loss of military accommodation	<p>An award of additional preference will be made to the following categories of people who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) left the British Armed Forces or British Reserve Forces within the last 5 years. In extenuating circumstance the Council may consider extending the 5 year period. In such instances a report would be presented to the Housing Assessment Panel for consideration;</li> <li>(ii) are serving members of the British Armed Forces or British Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of service; or</li> <li>(iii) are bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the British Armed Forces leaving services family accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner.</li> </ul>
<p>Insanitary Housing Conditions: unsatisfactory housing conditions in the private sector</p> <p>Reasonable Preference category s167(2)(iii)</p>	<p>Additional preference will be awarded to applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) that currently occupy a property where there is a statutory requirement to vacate due to a Demolition Order, Prohibition Order or clearance area (either by agreement or via compulsory purchase).</li> <li>(ii) whose living conditions pose an immediate threat to life or serious injury, as determined by an environmental health officer of the Council, and where there is no prospect of the issues being remedied in a period of time that the Council considers reasonable. However, if the issues are remedied before the applicant is re-housed, and the environmental health officer determines that no threats remain, the award will be rescinded.</li> </ul>
<p>Medical &amp; Welfare Grounds: serious threat to a child.</p> <p>Reasonable Preference category s167(2)(iv)</p>	<p>Additional preference will be awarded to an applicant where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) it has been established by the Council that a serious threat to the well-being of a child exists and that their accommodation is a contributory factor to the risk. These are cases where the Council can confirm that there is an urgent need to move to mitigate the risk to the child.</li> </ul>

	<p>The award will only be made upon production of a satisfactory report from child's social worker supporting the requirement to move. The report will need to be countersigned by relevant the Social Services service manager.</p>
<p>Statutory Homeless Grounds: Homeless with a duty to secure or owed a duty as a result of violence.</p>	<p>Additional preference will be awarded to an applicant who is deemed by the Council to be:</p> <p>(i) in priority need and are owed a s.75 duty under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.</p> <p>(ii) owed a homelessness duty as a result of violence or threats of violence likely to be carried out and who as a result require urgent rehousing, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• victims of domestic or other abuse;</li> <li>• victims of hate incidents; and</li> <li>• witnesses of crime, or victims of crime, who would be at risk of intimidation amounting to violence or threats of violence if they remained in their current homes.</li> </ul> <p>Applicants awarded additional preference under the criteria set out in paragraph 3.13 will be given one suitable offer of accommodation, as defined by s.59 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. If the offer is refused the homelessness duty will be ended and the reasonable preference award will be removed (s.84 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014).</p>
<p>Medical or Welfare Grounds: move on from supported accommodation.</p> <p>Reasonable Preference category s167(2)(iv)</p>	<p>Additional preference will be awarded to an applicant who is determined by the Council to be ready for independent living:</p> <p>(i) on the recommendation of a support worker, is ready to move on from supported living in the county borough to independent housing and due to the nature and extent of their vulnerability, accommodation in the private rented sector would, through its short-term nature, have a detrimental effect on their well-being. Before the award is made, ongoing support needs will need to have been assessed and, where appropriate, a support plan put in place to increase the chances of the tenancy succeeding.</p> <p>If an application for housing is made before it has been determined by the Council that the individual is</p>

	<p>ready for independent living, taking into account information from the applicant's support worker and other agencies, the application will be placed in Band 1 and immediately suspended. The applicant will be able to request a review of the suspension via the criteria set out in paragraphs 7.41-7.44.</p>
<p>Exceptional Circumstances – Management Discretion</p>	<p>An award of additional preference will be made where:</p> <p>(i) due to highly exceptional and significant circumstances, an applicant needs to move urgently and the only way to expedite a move is through the use of management discretion (paragraphs. 4.7-4.11).</p> <p>In such circumstances, the Council will prepare a report for consideration by the Housing Assessment Panel. Should the Panel be satisfied that highly exceptional and significant circumstances exist and the need to move is urgent and could not be facilitated through normal means, then the applicant will be awarded reasonable preference with additional preference and placed at the top of Band 1, irrespective of waiting time.</p>
<p>Extreme Financial Hardship – Welfare Reform</p>	<p>An award of additional preference will be made where the applicant is:</p> <p>(i) under-occupying a social rented property and is suffering extreme financial hardship, as a direct result of welfare reform, and is prepared to downsize to a more suitable property with fewer bedrooms.</p> <p>The responsibility for undertaking a financial assessment lies with the relevant landlord, who will liaise directly with the Council. The decision to award additional preference lies solely with the Council and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The award will only be made where the applicant is prepared to move to a more suitable property with fewer bedrooms, which thereby contributes to the alleviation of the financial hardship.</p>

<p><b>Band 2: Need to Move – Reasonable Preference</b></p>	<p><b>Examples of Qualifying Circumstances / Summary of Criteria</b></p>
<p>Homeless or Threatened With Homelessness</p>	<p>Reasonable preference will be awarded to an applicant who is deemed by the Council to be:</p>

	<p>(i) homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 or Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014;</p> <p>(ii) owed a duty by a local authority under sections 66 and 73 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 or</p> <p>(iii) owed a duty by a local authority under section 190(2), 193 (2) or 195(2) of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 or who are occupying accommodation secured by any local authority under section 192(3).</p> <p>Applicants awarded reasonable preference under the criteria set out in paragraph 3.23 will be given one suitable offer of accommodation, as defined by s.59 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. If the offer is refused the homelessness duty will be ended and the reasonable preference award will be removed (s.84 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014).</p>
<p>Insanitary Housing Conditions: unsatisfactory housing conditions in the private sector where there is one or more Category 1 hazards (excluding overcrowding).</p> <p>Reasonable Preference category s167(2)(iii)</p>	<p>Reasonable preference is awarded to an applicant:</p> <p>(i) where an environmental health officer from the Council has determined that a private sector property (owner-occupied or tenanted) contains one or more serious Category 1 hazards, as defined by the <a href="#">Housing Health &amp; Safety Rating System</a>. The awarded is made in respect of a significant risk to the health and well-being of the occupant(s), and where there is no prospect of the issues being remedied in a period of time that the Council considers reasonable for that situation; or</p> <p>(ii) who lives in a House in Multiple Occupation, where a Suspended Prohibition Order is operative due to the lack of facilities and amenities for the number of occupants.</p> <p>With regards to points (i)-(ii) above, if the Council is subsequently satisfied that all serious Category 1 hazards have been remedied the reasonable preference award will be rescinded.</p>
<p>Under-Occupancy Grounds: under-occupying a social rented property</p>	<p>Reasonable preference will be awarded to an applicant:</p> <p>(i) where they are under-occupying a social rented</p>



<p>Reasonable Preference category s167(2)(iii)</p>	<p>property in the county borough, are suffering financial hardship, as a direct result of welfare reform, and are prepared to downsize to a more suitable property with fewer bedrooms.</p> <p>In cases of extreme financial hardship, following assessment, an applicant may be awarded additional preference (band 1). The responsibility for undertaking a financial assessment lies with the relevant landlord, who will liaise directly with the Council. The decision to award additional preference lies solely with the Council and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>(ii) who is regarded by the Council as an older person who is living in a social rented property in the county borough and wishes to downsize from 2, 3, 4 or 5 bed family accommodation to retirement housing, where there is an identified need for the accommodation they will be vacating.</p> <p>By older person we mean 60 years plus for those applicants requesting Caerphilly Homes or Wales &amp; West housing association accommodation only, and 55 years plus for those people requesting accommodation with the other landlords, unless age dispensation is applied (see paragraphs 5.25-5.27). Applicants requesting rehousing with both types of landlord will need to meet the specific age criteria with the relevant landlord to be eligible for the award.</p>
<p>Acute Overcrowding: as defined by the bedroom standard.</p> <p>Reasonable Preference category s167(2)(iii)</p>	<p>Reasonable preference will be awarded to an applicant who:</p> <p>(i) the Council is satisfied is overcrowding their current accommodation by 2 or more bedrooms. For the purpose of this policy, overcrowding is defined by Department for Work &amp; Pensions 'bedroom standard' (see Appendix 3). The assessment of overcrowding will be undertaken by the Council.</p> <p>Reasonable preference will not be awarded to facilitate a move on a like for like basis.</p> <p>Applicants who are determined by the Council to have either caused or exacerbated overcrowding by allowing family member(s) or other(s) to move into their property, after taking into consideration any cultural requirements, will not be awarded reasonable</p>

	preference under this category – see paragraphs 6.34-6.37.
<p>Medical Grounds: where housing conditions exacerbates a serious medical condition or disability.</p> <p>Reasonable Preference category s167(2)(iv)</p>	<p>Reasonable preference will be awarded for an applicant or member of their prospective household requiring accessible or adapted housing where upon assessment by the Council is it identified that:</p> <p>(i) the current accommodation directly exacerbates a recognised medical condition, is the direct cause of a medical condition or impacts on the ease of use of the facilities within their home for a disabled person. The award of reasonable preference will only be made where it has been assessed by the Council that rehousing would facilitate an improvement in wellbeing, taking into consideration all relevant supporting information.</p>
<p>Medical &amp; Welfare Grounds: child protection.</p> <p>Reasonable Preference category s167(2)(iv)</p>	<p>Reasonable preference will be awarded where:</p> <p>(i) there are children that are part of the application, who need to move and their accommodation has been assessed by the Council as being a contributory factor to the risk to the child.</p> <p>The award will only be made where:</p> <p>(i) there is a child protection plan in place; and</p> <p>(ii) a report from the child’s social worker supports the need to move, with rehousing being an important factor to the ongoing welfare of the child. The report will need to be countersigned by the relevant Social Services team manager.</p>
<p>Medical &amp; Welfare Grounds: domestic abuse, violence or harassment.</p> <p>Reasonable Preference category s167(2)(iv)</p>	<p>Reasonable preference will be awarded to an applicant who:</p> <p>(i) needs to move due to domestic abuse, violence or harassment, where it has been assessed by the relevant agencies they are not in any immediate danger.</p> <p>An assessment of an applicant’s need to move will be made by the Council, who will liaise with the relevant organisations.</p>
<p>Medical &amp; Welfare Grounds: hardship grounds.</p>	<p>Reasonable preference will be awarded where an applicant:</p>

<p>Reasonable Preference category s167(2)(iv)</p>	<p>(i) needs to move to a particular locality within the county borough, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others). The Council will only award priority on hardship grounds in exceptional circumstances. It will be for the applicant to reasonably demonstrate to the Council's satisfaction that hardship would occur if they were not to be awarded priority.</p> <p>For the purpose of this award, hardship relates to the need to move:</p> <p>(i) to take up or continue an employment opportunity not available elsewhere in the borough. Applicants will only be considered for this award where they do not live within a reasonable commuting distance of their place of current or prospective employment, taking into consideration their ability to use and the availability of public/private transport. The applicant will be required to provide the Council with confirmation of employment details from their employer;</p> <p>(ii) to be near relatives to give or receive support. The level and nature of the support will need to be substantial and ongoing, and must be related to a disability, severe mental health or medical condition or welfare issue. Additionally, it will need to be proven why the support cannot be provided using either public or private transport; or</p> <p>(iii) to gain access to healthcare and/or social services care. An award will be made where the applicant is able to demonstrate that they need to move to access healthcare and/or social services care, and cannot be reasonably be expected to use or there is no access to public or private transport, including provision put in place by the healthcare facility or social services.</p>
<p>Medical or Welfare Grounds: move on from a residential care setting.</p> <p>Reasonable Preference category s167(2)(iv)</p>	<p>Reasonable preference will be awarded to an applicant:</p> <p>(i) needing to move on from a residential care setting in the county borough and is regarded by social services as being vulnerable with a high level of housing need. To be eligible for this award they must be a former "Relevant Child", as defined by the <a href="#">Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000</a>, and be a young person at risk.</p>

	<p>If an application for housing is made before it has been determined by the Council that the individual is ready for independent living, taking into account information from the applicant's support worker and/or other agencies, the application will be placed in Band 3, unless they satisfy any of the other additional or reasonable preference criteria. When it has been determined that the individual is ready to move on, an awarded of Band 2 will be made by the Council.</p>
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<p><b>Band 3: Wants to Move – No Reasonable or Additional Preference, or Reasonable or Additional Preference &amp; No Local Connection</b></p>	<p><b>Examples of Qualifying Circumstances / Summary of Criteria</b></p>
<p>All other categories of applicant not covered in Bands 1 or 2.</p>	<p>All other categories of applicant not covered in Bands 1 or 2 will be placed in Band 3, this will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) applicants who do not qualify for Reasonable Preference or Additional Preference but who would like to move to alternative accommodation, irrespective of whether or not they have a local connection;</li> <li>(ii) applicants who qualify for Reasonable Preference or Additional Preference but are regarded by the Council as not having a local connection (see paragraphs 2.35-2.36); and</li> <li>(iii) all other applicants as specified by this policy.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2: Bypassing Criteria

- 2.1 This appendix to the common allocation policy sets out the circumstances where any of the landlords party to this policy may bypass an applicant who is next in line to be made an offer of accommodation.
- 2.2 All landlords agree that:
- (i) blanket bans should not be used; and
  - (ii) bypassing an applicant who would be next in line for an offer of accommodation will only be taken according to the criteria agreed and set out in this policy.
- 2.3 Although landlords may wish to retain:
- (i) exception rules that do not form part of the common allocation policy, e.g. rules relating to the size of accommodation to be offered; and
  - (ii) exemption rules in relation to domestic household pets.
- 2.3 All parties have agreed, as far as possible, to abide by a common set of rules and to keep exceptions to a minimum but all recognise the need for each organisation to manage their dwellings appropriately.
- 2.4 To support the efficient operation of this policy, the Housing Assessment Panel will meet monthly, or more frequently if parties agree, to review cases due an offer of housing, where their circumstances may lead to the applicant being bypassed or where there are exceptional circumstances that do not fit the examples listed in paragraph 2.5 but may still lead to the possibility of an applicant being bypassed. The Panel is therefore able to anticipate problem cases and agree an action plan under which an offer may or may not proceed.
- 2.5 The following is a list of examples that landlords may use of bypass an applicant due an offer of accommodation. They include but are not limited to:
- (i) Incomplete information;
  - (ii) Not eligible for property type
  - (iii) No response to offer within predefined timescales;
  - (iv) A sensitive letting; and
  - (v) A restriction placed on rehousing.
- 2.6 Other instances where a landlord may need to bypass an applicant due an offer of accommodation include where:

- (i) the applicant may be vulnerable and considered not yet ready to sustain a tenancy; or
  - (ii) it is considered there may be a risk to the applicant or others and a sensitive let may need to be planned.
- 2.7 It is not possible to describe every situation where an applicant may be bypassed. Individual cases that fall outside the criteria will need to be discussed by the Housing Assessment Panel. However, it is important that vulnerable applicants do not end up being bypassed because of a lack of pre offer planning resulting in an offer not being made because of a lack of information or of an appropriate support package.
- 2.8 Where there are applicants who are extremely vulnerable or considered to pose a risk to themselves or others the case should be submitted to the Housing Assessment Panel meeting to decide whether they are ready to sustain a tenancy and what support package is required so that an offer of accommodation can be made.
- 2.9 The type of information to be considered by the Housing Assessment Panel may include:
- (i) details of any long-term illness, health problem, or disability that requires specific or specialist housing, care or support;
  - (ii) details of other care and support needs, for example because of vulnerability due to learning difficulties;
  - (iii) details of proposed, existing and previous packages of care provision provided by statutory or other bodies where known;
  - (iv) relevant and reasonable information with regard to previous history of anti-social behaviour that might impact on the safety of the community; or
  - (v) type of accommodation moving from and any additional available accommodation history.
- 2.10 The reasons that applicants are bypassed will be recorded on the common housing register IT system and monitored to ensure compliance with the by-passing criteria.
- 2.11 Unless paragraph 2.12 applies, the landlord will be required to inform an applicant by telephone, email or letter of the reasons why they have been by-passed. This is to allow the applicant to address the reasons why they have been by-passed and to prevent this from happening again in the future, e.g. non-compliance with a debt repayment plan. The landlord will refer the applicant to the common housing register

team to receive advice and assistance on preventing them from being by-passed.

- 2.12 The landlord will not be required to inform the applicant when the by-pass is undertaken because the applicant does not meet the required property related criteria, i.e. for sensitive lets, non pet access etc.
- 2.13 Any dispute arising from the refusal by a landlord to make an offer of accommodation to an applicant where any partner believes this is contrary to the agreed policy shall be resolved in accordance with the following procedure:
- (i) Within 2 days of a concern being raised, the Council's nominated officer shall meet with a nominated officer from the landlord where the claim is that an offer has not been made for a reason not covered in the policy and all parties shall use all reasonable endeavours to settle the dispute amicably, in good faith.
  - (ii) If the dispute cannot be resolved through (i) above it will be referred to the Council's senior officer with overall responsibility for the common housing register and, depending on the organisations involved, the Council's Chief Housing Officer or Chief Executive of the housing association, who shall use best endeavours to discuss the matter within 2 days of the dispute being referred to them and shall use all reasonable endeavours to settle the dispute amicably and in good faith.

### Appendix 3: Social Size Criteria – Bedroom Count

The rules allow 1 bedroom for:

- every adult couple (married or unmarried);
- any other adult aged 16 or over;
- any 2 children of the same sex aged under 16;
- any 2 children aged under 10;
- any other child (other than a foster child or child whose main home is elsewhere);
- children who can't share because of a disability or medical condition; and
- a carer (or team of carers) providing overnight care.

One spare bedroom is allowed for:

- an approved foster carer who is between placements, but only for up to 52 weeks from the end of the last placement; and
- a newly approved foster carer for up to 52 weeks from the date of approval if no child is placed with them during that time.

Category	Social Size Criteria Bedroom Size
Adult aged 16 or over	1 bed
Adult aged 16 or over plus 1 child	2 bed
Adult aged 16 or over plus 2 children aged under 10	2 bed
Adult aged 16 or over plus 2 children of the same sex aged under 16	2 bed
Adult aged 16 or over plus 3 children	3 bed
Adult aged 16 or over plus 4 children (4 children aged under 10)	3 bed
Adult aged 16 or over plus 4 children (2 children of the same sex aged under 16 plus 2 other children of the same sex aged under 16)	3 bed
Adult aged 16 or over plus 4 children (2 children aged under 10 plus 2 children of the same sex aged under 16)	3 bed
Adult aged 16 or over plus 4 children (with a configuration other than listed above)	4 bed
Adult couple (married or unmarried)	1 bed
Adult couple plus 1 child (married or unmarried)	2 bed
Adult couple (married or unmarried) plus 2 children aged under 10	2 bed
Adult couple (married or unmarried) plus 2 children of the same sex aged under 16	2 bed
Adult couple (married or unmarried) plus 3 children	3 bed
Adult couple (married or unmarried) plus 4 children (4 children aged under 10)	3 bed
Adult couple (married or unmarried) plus 4 children (2	3 bed



children of the same sex aged under 16 plus 2 other children of the same sex aged under 16)	
Adult couple (married or unmarried) plus 4 children (2 children aged under 10 plus 2 children of the same sex aged under 16)	3 bed
Adult couple (married or unmarried) plus 4 children (with a configuration other than listed above)	4 bed

## Appendix 4: Household Size Criteria

Category	Aelwyd	Cadwyn	Caerphilly CBC	Charter	Derwen Cymru	Linc Cymru	United Welsh	Wales & West
Adult aged 16 or over	1 bedroom flat/bedsit, 2 bedroom flat – 55+ years only	1 bedroom flat	1 bedroom flat/bedsit, 2 bedroom flat	1 bed flat/bedsit		1 bed flat/bedsit	1 bed flat/bedsit	1 bedroom flat/studio
Adult aged 16 or over plus 1 child	N/a	2 bedroom flat	2/3 bedroom house/flat/maisonette	2 bedroom flat or house		2 bedroom flat/house	2 bedroom flat/house	2 bedroom
Adult aged 16 or over plus 2 children aged under 10	N/a	2 bedroom flat	2/3/4 bedroom house/flat/maisonette	2/3 bedroom house		2 bedroom flat/house	2 bedroom flat/house or 3 Bed house	2 bedroom
Adult aged 16 or over plus 2 children of the same sex aged under 16	N/a	2 bedroom flat	2/3/4 bedroom house/flat/maisonette dependent on local lettings	2/3 bedroom flat or house		2 bedroom flat/house	2 bedroom flat/house or 3 bedroom house	2 bedroom
Adult aged 16 or over plus 3 children	N/a	N/a	3/4 bedroom house/flat/maisonette	3/4 bedroom house		3/4 bedroom house	3/4 bedroom house	3 bedroom
Adult aged 16 or over	N/a	N/a	3/4	3/4		3/4	3/4/5	3 bedroom

plus 4 children (4 children aged under 10)			bedroom house/flat	bedroom house		bedroom house	bedroom house	
Adult aged 16 or over plus 4 children (2 children of the same sex aged under 16 plus 2 other children of the same sex aged under 16)	N/a	N/a	3/4 bedroom house/flat	3/4 bedroom house		3/4 bedroom house	3/4/5 bedroom house	3 bedroom
Adult aged 16 or over plus 4 children (2 children aged under 10 plus 2 children of the same sex aged under 16)	N/a	N/a	3/4 bedroom house/flat/maisonette	3/4 bedroom house		3/4 bedroom house	3/4/5 bedroom house	3 bedroom
Adult aged 16 or over plus 4 children (with a configuration other than listed above)	N/a	N/a	3/4 bedroom house/flat/maisonette	4 bedroom house		4 bedroom house	3/4/5 bedroom house	4 bedroom
Adult couple (married or unmarried)	N/a	1 bedroom flat	1/2 bedroom flat/house/maisonette	1/2 bedroom flat		1 bedroom flat/house	1 bed flat (2 bed house or flat if downsizing from a 3/4/5 bedroom house)	1 bedroom
Adult couple plus 1 child (married or unmarried)	N/a	2 bedroom flat	2/3 bedroom	2 bedroom flat or		2 bedroom flat or	2 bed flat or house	2 bedroom

			house/flat/ maisonette	house		house		
Adult couple (married or unmarried) plus 2 children aged under 10	N/a	2 bedroom flat	2/3 bedroom house/flat/maisonette	2/3 bedroom house		2 bedroom house	2/3 bedroom flat/house	2 bedroom
Adult couple (married or unmarried) plus 2 children of the same sex aged under 16	N/a	2 bedroom flat	2, 3, 4 bedroom house/flat/maisonette	2/3 bedroom house		2 bedroom house	2/3 bedroom flat/house	2 bedroom
Adult couple (married or unmarried) plus 3 children	N/a	N/a	3/4 bedroom house/flat	3/4 bedroom house		3 bedroom house	3/4 bedroom house	3 bedroom
Adult couple (married or unmarried) plus 4 children (4 children aged under 10)	N/a	N/a	3/4 bedroom house/flat	3/4 bedroom house		3/4 bedroom house	3/4/5 bedroom house	3 bedroom
Adult couple (married or unmarried) plus 4 children (2 children of the same sex aged under 16 plus 2 other children of the same sex aged under 16)	N/a	N/a	3/4 bedroom house/flat	3/4 bedroom house		3/4 bedroom house	3/4/5 bedroom house	3 bedroom
Adult couple (married or unmarried) plus 4 children (2 children aged under 10 plus 2 children of the same sex aged	N/a	N/a	3/4 bedroom house/flat	3/4 bedroom house		3/4 bedroom house	3/4/5 bedroom house	3 bedroom

under 16)								
Adult couple (married or unmarried) plus 4 children (with a configuration other than listed above)	N/a	N/a	4 bedroom house	4 bedroom house		4 bedroom house	4/ 5 bedroom house	4 bedroom

## **Appendix 5: Affordability Assessment Criteria**

[Include here copies of the landlords' individual affordability criteria.]

## Appendix 6: Minimum Age Related Criteria For Retirement Housing

	<b>Older People's Housing</b>	<b>Sheltered Housing</b>
<b>Aelwyd</b>	55+	N/a
<b>Cadwyn</b>	N/a	N/a
<b>Caerphilly CBC</b>	60+	60+
<b>Charter</b>	N/a	N/a
<b>Derwen Cymru</b>	55+ (50+ with disability)	N/a
<b>Linc Cymru</b>	55+	55+
<b>United Welsh</b>	55+	55+
<b>Wales &amp; West</b>	60+ (55+ with medical)	60+ (55+ with medical)

## Appendix 7: Categories of Disability

The Council uses the criteria below to match disabled people to suitable housing which closely suits their needs:

<b>Property Classification</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
<b>A1</b>	Independent wheelchair user. Will require ground floor accommodation or vertical lift access to alternative floors. Access to property must be level or ramped to a maximum of 1:12. The accommodation will need to be entirely wheelchair accessible i.e. door widths to a minimum of 780mm.
<b>A2</b>	Dependant wheelchair user. Will require ground floor accommodation or vertical lift access to alternate floors. Access to the property must be level or ramped to a maximum of 1:12. Internally full access to the property may not be necessary but essential rooms will need to have minimum door widths of 780mm.
<b>B1</b>	Semi ambulant person who is unable to negotiate steps or stairs, or who is dependent on a wheelchair out of doors. The property will need to be ground floor or have either stair lift or vertical lift access to alternate floors. Access to the property will need to be level or ramped to a minimum of 1:12.
<b>B 2</b>	Semi ambulant person who is able to negotiate a limited number of steps. The property may be ground floor or have either stair lift or vertical lift access to alternate floors. Access to the property does not need to be level but should have a limited number of steps with handrail provision.
<b>C</b>	An ambulant person who is able to negotiate steps and stairs on a limited basis.



## Appendix 8: Accessible Housing Classifications

The Council uses the criteria below to identify accessible housing and match disabled applicants with suitable accommodation based on their specific requirements:

Property Classification	Criteria
A1	A highly adapted or purpose built property, providing wheel chair access throughout. Access to alternative levels will need to be achieved by a stair lift or vertical lift and access to the property would need to be level or ramped to a maximum of 1:12 gradient. All doorways to be a minimum of 780mm clear opening.
A2	A property allowing wheelchair access to main facilities, i.e. bathing, living and sleeping facilities. Access to alternative floors will need to be achieved by a stair lift or vertical lift Access to the property will need to be level or ramped to a maximum gradient of 1:12.
B1	A ground floor property, first floor property with lift access or a two-storied property allowing either a stair lift or vertical lift access to the first floor. Access to the property should be level or ramped to a maximum gradient of 1:12.
B2	A ground floor property, first floor property with lift access or a two-storied property allowing stair lift access to the first floor. Access to the property should have a maximum of three steps.
C1	A first floor property so facilities are on one level. Lift access to first floor not essential. Access to the property should have a maximum of six steps.
C2	A two storied property with WC facilities on both levels. Lift access to first floor not essential. Access to the property should have a maximum of six steps.
C3	Ground floor property with maximum 6 steps.
D	A property not suitable for adaptation.

## Appendix 9: Best Match Shortlisting Criteria

If an A1 property becomes void then the process will be:

Stage	Action
1.	Shortlist category A1 applicants in band 1. If no suitable applicants found then go to next stage.
2.	Shortlist A1 applicants in band 2. If no suitable applicants found then go to next stage.
3.	Shortlist A2 applicants in band 1. If no suitable applicants found then go to next stage.
4.	Shortlist A2 applicants in band 2. If no suitable applicants found then go to next stage.
5.	Consider A1 applicants in band 3. If no suitable applicants found then go to next stage.
6.	Consider A2 applicants in band 3. If no suitable applicants found then allocate from main list.

If an A2 property becomes void then the process will be:

Stage	Action
1.	Shortlist A2 applicants in band 1. If no suitable applicants found then go to next stage.
2.	Shortlist A2 applicants in band 2. If no suitable applicants found then go to next stage.
3.	Consider A2 applicants in band 3. If no suitable applicants found then allocate from main list.

If a B1 property becomes void then the process will be:

Stage	Action
1.	Shortlist category B1 applicants in band 1. If no suitable applicants found then go to next stage.
2.	Shortlist B1 applicants in band 2. If no suitable applicants found then go to next stage.
3.	Consider B1 applicants in band 3. If no suitable applicants found then allocate from main list.

If a property becomes void with usable adaptations (major) in situ, the process would be:

Stage	Action
1.	Shortlist category B1 applicants in band 1. If no suitable applicants found then go to next stage.
2.	Shortlist B1 applicants in band 2. If no suitable applicants found then go to next stage.
3.	Consider B1 applicants in band 3. If no suitable applicants found then allocate from main list.

## Appendix 10: Contact Details

Copies of this policy will be made available to the public to view at the following locations:

Organisation	Contact Details			
	Address	Telephone	Email	Web Site
Aelwyd Housing Association	56-58 Richmond Road Cardiff CF24 3ET	02920 481203	<a href="mailto:enquiries@aelwyd.co.uk">enquiries@aelwyd.co.uk</a>	<a href="http://www.aelwyd.co.uk">www.aelwyd.co.uk</a>
Cadwyn	197 Newport Road Cardiff CF24 1AJ	029 2049 8898	<a href="mailto:info@cadwyn.co.uk">info@cadwyn.co.uk</a>	<a href="http://www.cadwyn.co.uk">www.cadwyn.co.uk</a>
Caerphilly CBC	Penallta House Tredomen Park Ystrad Mynach Hengoed CF82 7PG	01443 815588	<a href="mailto:housing@caerphilly.gov.uk">housing@caerphilly.gov.uk</a>	<a href="http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk">www.caerphilly.gov.uk</a>
	Housing Advice Section Gilfach Bargoed CF81 8ND	01443 873552		
Charter Housing	The Old Post Office Exchange House High Street NP20 1AA	01633 212375	<a href="mailto:lettings@charterhousing.co.uk">lettings@charterhousing.co.uk</a>	<a href="http://www.charterhousing.co.uk">www.charterhousing.co.uk</a>
Derwen Cymru	6 <sup>th</sup> Floor Clarence House Clarence Place Newport NP19 7AA	01633 261990	<a href="mailto:info@derwencymru.co.uk">info@derwencymru.co.uk</a>	<a href="http://www.derwencymru.co.uk/">http://www.derwencymru.co.uk/</a>
Linc Cymru Housing Association	387 Newport Road Cardiff CF24 1GG	0800 072 0966 or 02920 473767	<a href="mailto:contactcentre@linc-cymru.co.uk">contactcentre@linc-cymru.co.uk</a>	<a href="http://www.linc-cymru.co.uk">www.linc-cymru.co.uk</a>
United Welsh Group	Y Borth 13 Beddau Way Caerphilly CF83 2AX	0800 294 0195 029 2085 8100	<a href="mailto:tellmemore@unitedwelsh.com">tellmemore@unitedwelsh.com</a>	<a href="http://www.unitedwelsh.com">www.unitedwelsh.com</a>
Wales & West	3 Alexandra	0800 052	<a href="mailto:contactus@wwha.co.uk">contactus@wwha.co.uk</a>	<a href="http://www.wwha.co.uk">www.wwha.co.uk</a>

Housing	Gate Ffordd Pengam Tremorfa Cardiff CF24 2UD	2526 029 2041 5300 Minicom: 0800 052 2505	<a href="http://wha.co.uk">wha.co.uk</a>	<a href="http://.uk">.uk</a>
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## **POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10TH NOVEMBER 2015**

**SUBJECT: IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE IO5 – INVESTMENT IN COUNCIL HOMES  
TO TRANSFORM LIVES AND COMMUNITIES**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES**

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

- 1.1 To provide a 6 month update of progress against Improvement Objective (IO5) - Investment in Council homes to transform lives and communities for the 2015/16 financial year.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 For the first 6 months of 2015/16 the objective has been assessed as partially successful. There has been steady progress with the internal works contracts since April 2015, although only 66% of the original target has been achieved against the number of properties that were profiled for the first 6 months. However, re-profiling has resulted in this increasing to 73%. Maintaining continuity of work for all internal works contracts has been difficult due to delays with asbestos surveys, a backlog of OT referrals, and timescales for meter moves.
- 2.2 The programme of external works in the Eastern Valleys (small lots) has run on from the 14/15 financial year causing knock on delays for this year's work programme. The first contract in Markham has now been completed (53 properties). Another six contracts are due for completion October/November (126 properties). Two contracts have commenced in the Upper Rhymney Valley (338 properties). Although there is a significant pipeline of external works contracts to follow, the 15/16 programme is not anticipated to be completed until late in 2016. External works typically include roofing, doors and windows, external wall insulation, paths, fencing, retaining walls, etc. Absorbing the slippage is challenging due to the knock on impact to future years. A re-profiling of the programme from 2016/17 through to 2019/20 is currently in preparation and will underpin the capital programme for 2016/17.

### **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. The Welsh Government requires that the standard is achieved by 2020.
- 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".

3.4 The WHQS Programme contributes to the Council's anti poverty strategy launched in June 2015.

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

4.1 The Local Government Measure 2009 requires all Council authorities in Wales to set and publish a set of priorities called Improvement Objectives.

4.2 The Wales Audit Office (WAO) uses Improvement Objectives and other data/information to evaluate the Council's likelihood of improvement and the level of actual improvement that is achieved for the citizens of Caerphilly.

4.3 In 2012 the Council's tenants voted to remain with the Council as their landlord. This was based on a commitment that all Council homes would be brought up to WHQS by 2019/20.

4.4 There were a number of major setbacks during 2014/15 resulting in significant slippage and a large underspend.

4.5 A report was presented to Cabinet in February 2015 on a revised investment strategy and this provided the basis for the capital programme for the current financial year. The re-profiled programme that was approved in February 2015 was front end loaded in an attempt to catch up on the slippage. However this has presented challenges with some contractors under resourcing the work resulting in too many properties being open for unacceptably long periods of time. This in turn has placed a strain on the Council's resources to maintain contact with tenants leading to complaints.

4.6 In respect of internal works, progress has been made with work completed to 745 properties by the end of September. This is lower than the target due to a combination of reasons. The main current concern is continuity of work for all contractors due to delays with asbestos surveys, a backlog of OT referrals and timescales for meter moves. Action is being taken to address all these matters. Internal improvements relate to the modernisation of kitchens and bathrooms, rewires and energy efficient heating systems.

4.7 The external works programme has continued to slip due in the main to slow progress with some of the small lots contracts in the Eastern Valleys. Only one contract has reached completion for 53 properties in Markham. However, there are a number of contracts that will be completed within the next couple of months involving 120 properties. Two external works contracts have commenced in the Upper Rhymney Valley in Phillipstown (160 properties) and New Tredegar (178 properties). Realistically a major part of the 15/16 external works programme is not expected to be completed until late 2016.

4.8 Three Environmental Officers are now in post making it possible to begin the engagement process with tenants/residents on the Council's estates to explore the opportunities for environmental enhancement schemes.

4.9 A further re-profiling of the programme is necessary and this will aim to smooth out the numbers of properties for all contractors so there is a more consistent number per year for the internal works. This will involve community sequence changes and some properties will be removed from 15/16 to 16/17.

4.10 The re-profiling will be presented to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group in December and this will be the basis of the capital programme for 2016/17.

4.11 Process changes continue to be introduced to maximise the efficiency of the staff resources and include the outsourcing of kitchen designs and the use of the OptiTime system for controlling surveyor appointments. Currently there are some critical gaps in front line areas which are subject to redeployment/recruitment including Clerk of Works and Tenant Liaison Officers.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Capital Programme for 2015/16 is £36.2m. Expenditure for period April to September is £10.0m. Although £3.9m relates to contracts that should have been completed in 2014/15.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Additional staff resources have been or are in the process of being recruited to strengthen the team, particularly in front line areas (e.g. Clerk of Works, Surveyors, TLOs).

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 Comments received from consultees have been incorporated within the report.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 Members are asked to note the content of the report and to agree or challenge the judgement of partially successful at the half year stage.

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

- 10.1 To advise members of the progress made at the half year stage in meeting the improvement objective and to gain agreement on the judgement of the service as to progress made to date.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 Local Government Measures 2009.

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Consultees:	Cllr D Poole	-	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing
	Cllr D Hardacre	-	Cabinet Member for Performance & Asset Management
	C Burns	-	Interim Chief Executive
	N Scammell	-	Acting Director of Corporate Services & S151 Officer
	C HARRY	-	Corporate Director – Communities
	C Davies	-	Chair Caerphilly Homes Task Group
	Cllr E Forehead	-	Vice Chair Caerphilly Homes Task Group
	S Couzens	-	Chief Housing Officer
	M Lloyd	-	Deputy Head of Programmes
	R Roberts	-	Performance Manager
	I Raymond	-	Performance Management Officer

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Improvement Objective 5 Scorecard

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# Improvement Objectives

## IO5 - Investment in Council homes to transform lives and communities

### Outcomes:

The Welsh Government and this Council believe that everyone in Wales should have the opportunity to live in a good quality home within a safe and secure community. To help achieve this, the physical standard and condition of existing housing must be maintained and improved to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS). The standard is seven main parts:

- In a good state of repair
- Safe and secure
- Adequately heated, fuel efficient and well insulated
- Contain up-to-date kitchens and bathrooms
- Well managed (for rented housing)
- Are located in attractive and safe environments
- Meet and suit the specific requirements of the household (as far as reasonable and practicably possible). For example, catering for specific disabilities.

We will aim to ensure all council homes meet the WHQS, helping to improve the quality of life for people who live in those homes. The programme of work will create long-term arrangements, which will help sustain local jobs, offer skills development and training opportunities, and deliver wider community benefits.

By 2020, we want our communities to know:

- We delivered the best quality home improvements scheme to our tenants
- We did it with them and not to them
- Their homes created real jobs in our communities
- We delivered the whole project on time and in budget

These ambitions can only be achieved with the entire Council and tenants and other key stakeholders working together and we are confident that with their support this Programme will transform council homes, the lives of our citizens and our communities.

# Improvement Objectives

## IO5 - Investment in Council homes to transform lives and communities

### 2015-16 - Six Month Progress Summary

We assessed this objective and judged it to be partially successful for the year 2015/16 so far because:

#### Page 134 **What have we done well over the last 6 months?**

There has been steady progress with the internal works contracts since April 2015, although only 66% of the original target has been achieved against the number of properties that were profiled for the first 6 months. However, re-profiling has resulted in this increasing to 73%. Maintaining continuity of work for all internal works contracts has been difficult due to delays with asbestos surveys, a backlog of OT referrals, and the timescales of meter moves.

The programme of external works in the Eastern Valleys (small lots) has run on from the 14/15 financial year causing knock on delays for this year's work programme. The first contract in Markham has now been completed (53 properties). Another six contracts are due for completion October/November. Two contracts have commenced in the Upper Rhymney Valley. Although there is significant pipeline of external works contracts to follow the 15/16 programme is not anticipated to be completed until late in 2016. Absorbing the slippage is challenging due to the knock on impact to future years.

#### **What areas do we need to improve on, and how are we going to do it?**

A re-profiling of the programme from 2016/17 through to 2019/20 is currently in preparation and will underpin the capital programme for 2016/17. Action has been taken to address the problems with the asbestos surveys; a prioritisation of the backlog of OT referrals and procedures are being tightened to ensure orders for meter moves are placed at the right time to avoid hold ups with the utility companies.

## IO5 - Investment in Council homes to transform lives and communities

### Actions

Title	Comment	RAG	Overall Status	% Complete
1. Secure the appointment of critical front line staff (e.g. Surveyors, Clerk of Works, Tenant Liaison Officers)	Five Clerks of Works appointed; three surveyors posts have been advertised. Recruitment to vacant TLO positions is outstanding.	⊖	Partially Completed	50
2. The continued delivery of the capital investment programme in respect of internal and external repairs and improvements	Implementation of the 15/16 Capital Programme is progressing. April to September expenditure was £10.0m against a budget of £36.2m, although £3.9m relates to contracts that should have been completed in 2014/15.	⊖	In Progress	25
3. The continued pursuit of external funding opportunities to support energy improvement measures	ECO grant funding is being pursued but no commitment secured as yet.	⊖	Not Yet Started	0
4. The understanding and importance of carrying out timely and sensitive adaptations that meet specific needs of certain individual households	There is a significant backlog of referrals but capacity has been increased with the appointment of a second OT officer and temporary surveyor.	⊖	Partially Met	25
5. Adhere to the standards set out in the Charter for Trust. This applies to both the in house workforce and contractors	Continuity of work packages for contractors has led to reduced lead times making adherence to some of the standards impossible to achieve.	⊖	Partially Met	25
6. Achieve and maintain the high levels of tenant satisfaction with the work undertaken to their homes	Overall satisfaction generally remains high but there have been particular problems in one area due to under resourcing by the contractor.	⊖	In Progress	50
7. The promotion, uptake and success of bids submitted to the Community Improvement Fund, enabling community projects to add further benefits to communities across the County Borough	The number of applications remains very low.	⊖	In Progress	0

## IO5 - Investment in Council homes to transform lives and communities

## How much did we do?

Title	Actual	Target	Intervention	RAG	Result 12 Months Ago	Comment
Number of homes compliant with WHQS in respect of their internal elements	745.00	2242.00	1332.00	↑	471	This is an annual target.
Number of homes compliant with WHQS in respect of their external elements	53.00	2275.00	1531.00	↓	103	This is an annual target.
Number of homes brought to WHQS as recorded on annual return to Welsh Government (The number of houses that have achieved WHQS standard in the year)		909.00	809.00		123	This figure is reported annually.

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## How well did we do it?

Title	Actual	Target	Intervention	RAG	Result 12 Months Ago	Comment
Internal work (all 4 components) completed within 20 days of start of works		90.00	80.00		Data not avail due to data collection system failure	This KPI can be measured with Keystone but is dependent on programme information being input (target start and completion dates for all properties). Due to current continuity issues there is insufficient lead time to enable this to happen at present.
Charter for Trust Standards - The Charter for Trust developed in consultation with tenants and staff sets out the standards that tenants can expect when work is being undertaken in their homes, which will be assessed by specific questions on the customer satisfaction survey	83.00	90.00	85.00	↓	93	Currently below target but based on a limited number of completed survey.

**IO5 - Investment in Council homes to transform lives and communities****Is anyone better off?**

Title	Actual	Target	Intervention	RAG	Result 12 Months Ago	Comment
Number of tenants whose homes have been adapted as part of the WHQS works to meet their specific needs	65.00				233	Unable to set forward targets. This is dependant on the needs identified when delivering WHQS programme, therefore we are unable to set targets for this.
% of tenants whose homes have been improved internally through the WHQS programme are satisfied with the completed works (The percentage of tenants who's house meets the WHQS standard that are satisfied	85.00	80.00	72.00	↓	90	

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## POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10TH NOVEMBER 2015

**SUBJECT: DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF APPLICATIONS**

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

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out details of applications for discretionary rate relief and notes the decision proposed by the Interim Head of Corporate Finance under delegated powers.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Council is able to assist a wide range of voluntary and sporting organisations by granting rate relief. This report contains details of applications received for discretionary rate relief and the proposals for the determination of the applications to be formally implemented on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of November 2015.

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The granting of rate relief is a very cost effective way in which the Council can pursue its Regeneration objective by giving financial assistance to local organisations.

### 4. THE REPORT

#### 4.1 Background

- 4.1.1 Under the Council's Scheme of Delegation applications for discretionary rate relief submitted to the Council are determined by the Council's Head of Corporate Finance.
- 4.1.2 The determination is exercised following consideration of the Council's Policy on discretionary rate relief supplemented by guidance from Welsh Government and Central Government.

#### 4.2 The Applications

##### Sense – The National Deafblind and Rubella Association

- 4.2.1 An application for top-up discretionary rate relief has been received from the above charity in respect of their premises at Unit 3 Bevan House, Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly from 20<sup>th</sup> August 2015 onwards.
- 4.2.2 The organisation is a registered charity and has therefore already been awarded 80% mandatory rate relief in accordance with rating legislation.

- 4.2.3 Members should be aware that currently the Authority would bear 75% of any top-up discretionary rate relief awarded, with the Welsh Government Pool bearing the remaining 25%.
- 4.2.4 To be eligible for discretionary rate relief, the organisation must satisfy the following conditions:
- a) the organisation or institution occupying the premises must not be established or conducted for profit;
  - b) each of the organisation's main objects must be charitable, or otherwise philanthropic or religious, or concerned with education, social welfare, science, literature, or fine arts;
  - c) the use of the premises must be wholly or mainly charitable, or the premises must be wholly or mainly used for recreational purposes;
  - d) where the premises is wholly or mainly used for recreational purposes, all or part of it must be occupied by an organisation not established or conducted for profit.
- 4.2.5 The charity's objects are:
- To support and promote the interests of persons who are deafblind or who have a hearing or vision impairment, including those with additional impairments or persons who are suffering from the congenital effects of rubella.
- 4.2.6 The organisation's articles state that the property and funds of the charity must be used only for the promotion of the charity's objects.
- 4.2.7 The articles also state that, on the dissolution of the charity, any assets remaining would be used firstly to meet any liabilities and then directly for the organisation's objects and by transfer to any other charity for the same or similar purposes. This satisfies the discretionary rate relief requirement for remaining assets to be used for charitable or non-profit making purposes.
- 4.2.8 Sense has confirmed that the new services operating in Caerphilly provide support to people in the local area who have a severe loss of both their sight and hearing i.e. they are classed as being deafblind. This service ranges from 2 hours to 30+ hours per week. Facilities within the building include a sensory room and fully adapted kitchen which is aimed at enabling the deafblind person to remain as independent as possible in their own accommodation. The development of these services arose from a survey of the availability of accessible and appropriate facilities for people with profound needs in and around the Caerphilly area which revealed an absence of sufficient such services.
- 4.2.9 The charity has contracts with this Authority for this and other support packages, as well as supporting people in neighbouring local authority areas.
- 4.2.10 There is no membership requirement as the organisation will provide a service to whoever wishes to access the facilities.
- 4.2.11 The charity has been set up specifically to carry out the objects given in point 4.2.5 above and is not established or conducted for profit. In addition, the organisation's main objects are either wholly or mainly charitable, or concerned with religion, philanthropy, social welfare and education, as required under the regulations. It is also clear that the use of the premises is wholly or mainly charitable.
- 4.2.12 The business rate liability of the organisation's premises in Caerphilly from 20<sup>th</sup> August 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 is £21,483. If the Authority were to grant 20% top-up discretionary rate



relief, the cost to the Authority of awarding the relief at current levels would be £3,222 with the Welsh Government pool bearing the remainder of £1,074.

4.2.13 The Authority's policy for an organisation registered as a charity with the Charity Commission and occupying one or more rating assessments within the Authority's area with a cumulative rateable value not exceeding £100,000 is to award 20% top-up discretionary relief.

4.2.14 Taking the above matters into consideration, it appears that 'Sense' and its use of the premises with a £72,500 rateable value satisfies all of the relevant qualifying criteria.

4.2.15 **Proposal (to be implemented on 17<sup>th</sup> day of November 2015):**

**20% top-up discretionary rate relief be awarded.**

Glofa Navigation Cyf

4.2.16 An application for discretionary rate relief has been received from the above charity in respect of their porta cabin at Navigation Colliery, Navigation Industrial Estate, Crumlin from 12<sup>th</sup> January 2015 onwards.

4.2.17 The organisation is a registered charity and has therefore already been awarded 80% mandatory rate relief in accordance with rating legislation.

4.2.18 Members should be aware that currently the Authority would bear 75% of any top-up discretionary rate relief awarded, with the Welsh Government Pool bearing the remaining 25%.

4.2.19 To be eligible for discretionary rate relief, the organisation must satisfy the following conditions:

- a) the organisation or institution occupying the premises must not be established or conducted for profit;
- b) each of the organisation's main objects must be charitable, or otherwise philanthropic or religious, or concerned with education, social welfare, science, literature, or fine arts;
- c) the use of the premises must be wholly or mainly charitable, or the premises must be wholly or mainly used for recreational purposes;
- d) where the premises is wholly or mainly used for recreational purposes, all or part of it must be occupied by an organisation not established or conducted for profit.

4.2.20 The objects of the charity are:

- To work with other constituted groups to preserve the Welsh Historic Industrial Architecture of the Navigation Colliery, Crumlin and its grounds, and to bring the colliery buildings back to a sustainable standard for the benefit of all;
- To provide an educational resource while linking historic routes through the valley;
- To create a regeneration programme on this grade 2 and grade 2\* listed site, thus helping to create apprentice and skilled jobs in the Crumlin area;
- To enhance the quality of life in the area and bring added value to the valley.

4.2.21 The organisation's constitution states that the income and property of the charity must be used only for the promotion of the charity's objects.

4.2.22 The colliery in Crumlin was built between 1907 and 1911 at a time when South Wales was the world's largest coal exporter; it still has 11 separately listed buildings as well as other listed

surrounding structures – the winding houses, fan house, chimney and power-house are all grade 2\* listed. The charity has 15 dedicated community volunteers who are working hard, along with the Prince's Regeneration Trust, to prevent further deterioration, maintain the site and safeguard the future of the buildings.

- 4.2.23 There is no fee payable for membership which is open to any individual; currently all members reside within the Caerphilly County Borough.
- 4.2.24 The charity has been set up specifically to carry out the objects set out in point 4.2.20 above and is not established or conducted for profit. In addition, the organisation's main objects are either wholly or mainly charitable, or concerned with religion, philanthropy, social welfare and education, as required under the regulations. It is also clear that the use of the premises is wholly or mainly charitable.
- 4.2.25 The business rate liability of the organisation's premises in Crumlin from 12<sup>th</sup> January 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 is £310. If the Authority were to grant 20% top-up discretionary rate relief, the cost to the Authority of awarding the relief at current levels would be £46 with the Welsh Government pool bearing the remainder of £16.
- 4.2.26 The Authority's policy for an organisation registered as a charity with the Charity Commission and occupying one or more rating assessments within the Authority's area with a cumulative rateable value not exceeding £100,000 is to award 20% top-up discretionary relief.
- 4.2.27 Taking the above matters into consideration, it appears that the organisation known as 'Glofa Navigation Cyf' and its use of the premises with a £530 rateable value satisfies all of the relevant qualifying criteria.
- 4.2.28 **Proposal (to be implemented on 17<sup>th</sup> day of November 2015):**

**20% top-up discretionary rate relief be awarded.**

Cardiff Consortium (Charities) trading as Pre-Loved Furniture

- 4.2.29 An application for top-up discretionary rate relief has been received from the above charity in respect of their premises at 113 High Street, Blackwood from 28<sup>th</sup> July 2015 onwards.
- 4.2.30 The organisation is a registered charity and has therefore already been awarded 80% mandatory rate relief in accordance with rating legislation.
- 4.2.31 Members should be aware that currently the Authority would bear 75% of any top-up discretionary rate relief awarded, with the Welsh Government Pool bearing the remaining 25%.
- 4.2.32 To be eligible for discretionary rate relief, the organisation must satisfy the following conditions:
- a) the organisation or institution occupying the premises must not be established or conducted for profit;
  - b) each of the organisation's main objects must be charitable, or otherwise philanthropic or religious, or concerned with education, social welfare, science, literature, or fine arts;
  - c) the use of the premises must be wholly or mainly charitable, or the premises must be wholly or mainly used for recreational purposes;
  - d) where the premises is wholly or mainly used for recreational purposes, all or part of it must be occupied by an organisation not established or conducted for profit.

4.2.33 The objects of the charity are:

- The prevention or relief of poverty in Cardiff and surrounding area by providing furniture and household items, and services to individuals in need and/or charities, or other organisations working to prevent or relieve poverty.

4.2.34 The organisation's articles state that the property and funds of the charity must be used only for the promotion of the charity's objects.

4.2.35 The articles also state that, on the dissolution of the charity, any assets remaining would be used firstly to meet any liabilities and then directly for the organisation's objects and by transfer to any other charity for the same or similar purposes. This satisfies the discretionary rate relief requirement for remaining assets to be used for charitable or non-profit making purposes.

4.2.36 Cardiff Consortium (Charities) has confirmed that it serves the local community at its premises in Blackwood by offering work experience placements in the shop, by offering good quality furniture for a low cost; the shop also includes a mini café. In providing this service the charity has been able to reduce the amount of waste which goes to landfill it is also able to offer volunteering opportunities to those who have struggled to gain employment, enabling the volunteers to gain new and practical skills.

4.2.37 The charity states that it has links with Jobcentre Plus in Blackwood, GAVO, Working Links, and Groundworks in providing work experience placements for local unemployed people.

4.2.38 There are currently 28 members and there is no fee payable for membership.

4.2.39 The charity has been set up by volunteers specifically to carry out the objects given in point 4.2.33 above and is not established or conducted for profit. In addition, the organisation's main objects are either wholly or mainly charitable, or concerned with religion, philanthropy, social welfare and education, as required under the regulations. It is also clear that the use of the premises is wholly or mainly charitable.

4.2.40 The business rate liability of the organisation's premises in Blackwood from 28<sup>th</sup> July 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 is £6,287. If the Authority were to grant 20% top-up discretionary rate relief, the cost to the Authority of awarding the relief at current levels would be £943 with the Welsh Government pool bearing the remainder of £314.

4.2.41 The Authority's policy for an organisation registered as a charity with the Charity Commission and occupying one or more rating assessments within the Authority's area with a cumulative rateable value not exceeding £100,000 is to award 20% top-up discretionary relief.

4.2.42 Taking the above matters into consideration, it appears that the Cardiff Consortium (Charities) and its use of the premises with a rateable value of £19,250 satisfies all of the relevant qualifying criteria.

4.2.43 **Proposal (to be implemented on 17<sup>th</sup> day of November 2015):**

**20% top-up discretionary rate relief be awarded.**

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 This report is to advise Members of the proposed determination of the application(s) for discretionary rate relief so the Council's full Equalities Impact Assessment process does not need to be applied.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 These are contained within the report.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no personnel implications.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

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

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 Members note the proposed determination of the application(s) for discretionary rate relief under delegated powers which will be implemented on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of November 2015.

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

10.1 As set out throughout the report.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

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Consultees: Cllr B Jones, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Corporate Services  
Nicole Scammell, Acting Director of Corporate Services & Section 151 Officer  
Stephen Harris, Interim Head of Corporate Finance

Background Papers:

Rate Relief Application Forms, contact ext 3421



## **POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10TH NOVEMBER 2015**

**SUBJECT: TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND CAPITAL FINANCING PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS QUARTER 1 AND QUARTER 2 MONITORING REPORT (1ST APRIL 2015 TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2015)**

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

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

- 1.1 To present Members with details of Treasury Management activities and Capital Financing, together with the related Prudential Indicators for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015.
- 1.2 To review the Treasury Management Strategy for 2015/16 as set out in the Annual Investment Strategy and Capital Financing Prudential Indicators Report.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services 2009, which was adopted by the Council on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2010, sets out a framework of operating procedures, which is encompassed in the Treasury Management Practices (TMPs). TMP6 (Reporting Requirements and Management Information Arrangements) provides for the submission of monitoring reports to the appropriate Committee on a quarterly basis.
- 2.2 Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2003, The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Wales) Regulations 2003 [The Capital Regulations], and the CIPFA's "The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities" [the Code], the Authority is obliged to approve and publish a number of indicators relevant to Capital Finance and Treasury Management.
- 2.3 The Authority's Annual Investment Strategy and Capital Financing Prudential Indicators for 2015/16 were approved by Council on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

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

- 3.1 Treasury Management Strategy 2015/16 as agreed by Council on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

## **4. THE REPORT**

### **4.1 Treasury Management**

#### **4.1.1 Borrowing Activity**

The current policy of internal borrowing is not sustainable in the long-term, but where prudent the policy of internal borrowing will be utilised. As at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 the internal borrowing position was £8m.

The Annual Treasury Management Strategy approved by Council in February 2015 indicated that there would be a need to borrow £12.3m in 2015/16 to part fund the General Fund Capital Programme. £5.0m of this total would be met through supported borrowing approvals £4m for Bargoed Cinema and £3.3m LGBI 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools. The Authority will not be borrowing for Bargoed Cinema as the project has been terminated. A further £75.9m was planned to be borrowed for the HRA Subsidy Buyout as reported to Members on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014.

During the period covered by this report a single PWLB loan of £75.9m was raised for the HRA and for the purpose of exiting the Subsidy arrangement. The loan was raised on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2015 at a rate of 4.17% and will be held for 21.6 years. Loan proceeds were transferred to the Welsh Government that resulted in the Authority exiting the Subsidy arrangement. No General Fund borrowing has been undertaken as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

Borrowing rates during the reported period have remained volatile and have averaged higher than the forecasted rates as reported in the 2015/16 Treasury Management Strategy, but remain lower than the budget rate. Although Economic recovery in the UK continues to strengthen, falling inflation is considered to be a threat towards UK economic recovery, as well as external global. Since PWLB rates are priced off UK Gilts, the trend for Gilt yields remain on an upward path in the medium term with continuing concerns about the Eurozone, and other geo-political events, weighing on risk appetite, while inflation expectations remain subdued. The uncertainties surrounding the timing of UK and US monetary policy tightening, and the Chinese stock market led turmoil, are likely to prompt short term volatility in gilt yields.

During the period covered by this report, PWLB loans to the value of £4.53m were repaid on maturity. Such loans had an average interest rate of 5.46%. £30k of the WRU Loan was also repaid. Total debt outstanding as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015 was £289.4m and comprised of £249.2m PWLB loans; £40m market loans (LOBOs); and £240k WRU loan.

The Authority holds four LOBO (Lender's Option Borrower's Option) loans with a total value of £40m. Two of the four loans have a six monthly interest rate review option. With respect to all four LOBO loans the lender has the option to propose an increase in the interest rate at set dates, following which the Authority has the option to either accept the new rate or to repay the loan at no additional cost. £20m of these LOBOs had options reviewed during quarter one, none of which were exercised by the lender. As at 30<sup>th</sup> September a further £30m of LOBOs have options that will be reviewed during the remainder of 2015/16 financial year. This represents 10.4% of the Authority's debt portfolio that is subjected to variable interest rate movement, which is within the Council's determination of 30%. The Authority acknowledges there is an element of refinancing risk even though in the current interest rate environment lenders are unlikely to exercise their options.

#### **4.1.2 Rescheduling**

The Annual Strategy allows for the utilisation of debt rescheduling providing for both in year and future year savings and additional revenue resources. No rescheduling opportunities presented themselves during the period covered by this report.

#### 4.1.3 Long-Term Investments

During the reported period the Authority was holding £19.6m of long-term investments where the maturity date is greater than 365 days. These investments are in accordance with the new Investment Strategy. The long-term investments comprise of covered bonds with UK banks/ building societies and have an AAA rating. The covered bonds are secured investments and collateralised against the counterparty's assets.

#### 4.1.4 Short-Term Investments (Deposits) – Up to 364 Days

The value of short-term deposits as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015 was £126.5m and is made up of a spread of periods up to 2.5 years. The average rate for these deposits was 0.61%, which is a significant improvement over placing deposits with the Debt Management Office (DMO) who continue to pay a rate of 0.25%. The rate of return is above the target rate, as detailed in the Annual Treasury Management Strategy report to Council, of 0.25%. The improvement in returns reflect the Authority's change in investment strategy and lending to high creditworthy counterparties that consist of banks; building societies; supranational institutions; the DMO, local authorities; and corporates using a range of investment products such as corporate bonds; covered bonds; cash deposits and treasury bills. Whilst the returns have improved, the riskiness of the investment portfolio has been quantified with a weighted average credit score equivalent to an AA rating. The UK government is currently rated by two credit rating agencies at AA+. Therefore the Authority's portfolio is one notch below the UK Government rating.

The portfolio as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015 comprised of the following types of investments:

<b>Counterparty</b>	<b>Investment Product</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>£m</b>
Banks	Certificate of Deposits	Financial	19.4
Banks & building societies	Fixed-term cash deposits	Financial	24.0
Banks & building societies	Covered bonds	Financial	9.6
Corporates	Bonds	Automobile/ Transport Infrastructure/ Utilities/ Insurance	24.5
Debt Management Office	Fixed-term cash deposits	UK Government	12.1
Local Authorities	Fixed-term cash deposits	Public sector	1.3
Supranational Institutions	Bonds	Sovereign/ Financial	5.5
UK Government	Treasury Bills	UK Government	30.1
<b>Total Investments as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015</b>			<b>126.5</b>

#### 4.1.5 Economic Outlook

Economic growth slowed in Q1 2015 to 0.4%, year-on-year growth to March 2015 was 2.7%. Q2 2015 GDP growth was confirmed at 0.7%, with year/year growth showing slight signs of slowing, decreasing to 2.4%. GDP has now increased for ten consecutive quarters, breaking a pattern of slow and erratic growth from 2009. The annual rate for consumer price inflation (CPI) briefly turned negative in April, falling to -0.1%, before fluctuating between 0.0% and 0.1% over the next few months. In the August Quarterly Inflation Report, the Bank of England projected that GDP growth will continue around its average rate since 2013. The Bank of England's projections for inflation remained largely unchanged from the May report with them expecting inflation to gradually increase to around 2% over the next 18 months and then remain there in the near future.

The outcome of the UK general election largely fought over the parties' approach to dealing with the consequences of the structural deficit and the pace of its removal, saw some very big shifts in the political landscape and put the key issue of the UK's relationship with the EU at the heart of future politics.

The US economy slowed to 0.6% in Q1 2015 due to bad weather, spending cuts by energy firms and the effects of a strong Dollar. However, Q2 GDP showed a large improvement at a twice-revised 3.9% (annualised). The Fed decided not to act at its September meeting as many had been anticipating to increase interest rates as a result of global economic conditions, but have signalled rates rising before the end of the calendar year.

Eurozone/ Global economies- Whilst the Greek issue has been resolved for now after tense negotiations, global economies continue to remain at risk from economic shocks. August and September saw the Chinese stock market (Shanghai Composite Index) which had risen a staggering 50%+ since the beginning of 2015, dropped by 43% in less than three months with a reported \$3.2 trillion loss to investors, on the back of concerns over growth and after regulators clamped down on margin lending activity in an effort to stop investors borrowing to invest and feeding the stock market bubble. In August the People's Bank of China changed the way the yuan is fixed each day against the US dollar and allowed an aggressive devaluation of the currency. This had a negative impact on Asian, European and US markets impacting currencies, equities, commodities, oil and metals. Chinese stocks have recovered marginally since and are trading around the same level as the start of the year. Concerns remain about slowing growth and potential deflationary effects.

Outlook for Q3 and Q4 2015/16: Arlingclose's expectation for the first rise in the Bank Rate (base rate) remains the second calendar quarter of 2016. The pace of interest rate rises will be gradual and the extent of rises limited. The appropriate level for Bank Rate for the post-crisis UK economy is likely to be lower than the previous norm. It is expected that the bank rate will remain between 2.0% and 3.0%. There is also sufficient momentum in the US economy for the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates in 2015, although risks of issues from China could possibly push this back as witnessed in August 2015. Forecasted Bank Rate is shown in the table below.

	Sep-15	Dec-15	Mar-16	Jun-16	Sep-16	Dec-16	Mar-17	Jun-17	Sep-17	Dec-17	Mar-18	Jun-18	Sep-18	Average
Official Bank Rate														
Upside risk			0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.32
Arlingclose Central Case	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.75	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.25	1.25	1.50	1.50	1.75	1.75	1.08
Downside risk				-0.25	-0.25	-0.50	-0.50	-0.75	-0.75	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-0.70

#### 4.1.6 Counterparty Update

All three credit ratings agencies have reviewed their ratings in the past six months to reflect the loss of government support for most financial institutions and the potential for varying loss given defaults as a result of new bail-in regimes in many countries. Despite reductions in government support many institutions have seen upgrades due to an improvement in their underlying strength and an assessment that that the level of loss given default is low.

At the end of July 2015, the Authority's treasury advisors, Arlingclose, advised an extension of recommended durations for unsecured investments in certain UK and European institutions following improvements in the global economic situation and the receding threat of another Eurozone crisis. A similar extension was advised for some non-European banks in September, and certain non-rated UK building societies also being extended.

In September 2015, Volkswagen (VW) was found to have been cheating emissions tests over several years in many of their diesel vehicles. This scandal is still playing out and the full extent of the financial implications yet to become clear, with potential wider economic implications to Germany since the German car making industry accounts for a large chunk of exports (17.9% of Germany's €1.1 trillion in exported goods last year).



The Authority currently holds two VW Financial Services corporate bonds with a total nominal value of £3.7m, which mature in May 2016. Whilst Arlingclose recommend suspending VW (as non-financial corporate bond counterparty) for new investments, the Authority has been advised to hold existing investments with VW until maturity. The ratings of the VW Group were placed on Rating Watch Negative by Fitch, CreditWatch with negative implications by S&P and the outlook revised to negative by Moody's. Moody's also revised the outlook on VW Financial Services to negative.

#### 4.1.7 Local Authority Counterparty Limits

This report seeks to clarify the monetary and duration limits that need to apply when lending to local authorities, which is not clear from Appendix 3 of the approved Treasury Management Strategy 2015/16. In its current wording local authorities are classified under the Government category. For future guidance the Authority can only lend £5m up to 5 years with a local authority.

### 4.2 **Prudential Indicators**

#### 4.2.1 Capital Financing Requirement

The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) measures the Authority's underlying need to borrow for a capital purpose. In accordance with best professional practice, the Authority does not associate borrowing with particular items or types of expenditure. In practice, the raising and repaying of loans is determined primarily by professional / expert advice, and may not necessarily take place in the relevant year. In order to create an operating environment within which the Treasury Manager can legitimately react to appropriate advice, the various authorised limits as identified in Appendix 1 are set at a level in excess of the CFR. In the financial year to date, the Authority has been operating within the approved limits.

Appendix 2 shows a projected CFR value of £342.66m as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. The actual CFR as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 was £273.49m. The increase in the projected CFR is due to the HRA Subsidy buyout and treating the cost of buyout as capital expenditure.

#### 4.2.2 Prudential Indicators – “Prudence”

The Prudential Indicators for Treasury Management are shown in Appendix 1 and the Authority is currently operating within the approved limits.

#### 4.2.3 Prudential Indicators – “Affordability”

There is a requirement to analyse and report the capital financing costs, and express those costs as a percentage of the net revenue streams of the Authority. These are identified in Appendix 2 and currently show a projected reduction from the original budget.

#### 4.2.4 Capital Expenditure and Funding

A summary of capital expenditure and funding is attached at Appendix 3 and shows no change against the planned position. The Capital Strategy Group is currently reviewing this and an update will be provided in the next Treasury Management monitoring report.

## 5. **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 As detailed throughout the report.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

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

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

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

10.1 Compliance with the CIPFA "Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services".

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 Local Government Acts 1972 and 2003.

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A. Southcombe – Finance Manager, Corporate Services  
Cllr B. Jones- Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

### Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Treasury Management Prudential Indicators – Prudence

Appendix 2 – Capital Finance Prudential Indicators – Affordability

Appendix 3 – Capital Expenditure and Funding

## Appendix 1 Treasury Management Prudential Indicators- Mid Year report (Quarters 1 & 2)

	<b>Budget 2015-16</b>	<b>Estimated 2015-16</b>
	<b>£k</b>	<b>£k</b>
<b>Authorised limit for external debt -</b>		
Borrowing	375,328	371,002
Other long term liabilities	37,869	37,869
<b>Total</b>	<b>413,197</b>	<b>408,871</b>
<b>Operational boundary for external debt -</b>		
Borrowing	300,262	296,801
Other long term liabilities	37,869	37,869
<b>Total</b>	<b>338,132</b>	<b>334,671</b>
Capital Financing Requirement	356,324	342,655
<b>Upper limits for interest rate exposure</b>		
Principal outstanding on borrowing	300,262	296,801
Principal outstanding on investments	65,000	110,000
<b>Net principal outstanding</b>	<b>235,262</b>	<b>186,801</b>
<b>Fixed rate limit – 100%</b>	235,262	186,801
<b>Variable rate limit – 30%</b>	70,579	56,040
<b>Upper limit for total invested for over 364 days</b>	<b>40,000</b>	<b>40,000</b>

	<b>Upper Limit</b>	<b>Lower Limit</b>
<b>Maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing</b>		
<b>Under 12 months</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Over 12 months and within 24 months</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Over 2 years and within 5 years</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Over 5 years and within 10 years</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Over 10 years</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>

	<b>Budget 2015/16</b>	<b>Estimated 2015/16</b>
	<b>£k</b>	<b>£k</b>
<b>Gross Debt and Net Debt</b>		
Outstanding Borrowing	300,262	296,801
Other long term liabilities	37,869	37,869
<b>Gross Debt</b>	<b>338,132</b>	<b>334,671</b>
Less investments	65,000	110,000
<b>Net Debt</b>	<b>273,132</b>	<b>224,671</b>

	<b>Budget 2015/16</b>	<b>Estimated 2015-16</b>
	<b>£k</b>	<b>£k</b>
<b>Gross and The CFR</b>		
Gross Debt	338,132	334,671
CFR	356,324	342,655
CFR Breached?	No	No

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## Appendix 2 - Prudential Indicators - Capital Finance- Mid Year report (Quarters 1 & 2)

<b>Ratio of Financing costs to net revenue stream</b>	<b>Budget 2015/16</b>	<b>Estimated 2015/16</b>
<b>General Fund</b>	<b>£k</b>	<b>£k</b>
Principal repayments	8,437	7,821
Interest costs	9,418	8,667
Debt Management costs	60	44
Rescheduling discount	-226	-226
Investment income	-163	-426
Interest applied to internal balances	847	768
<b>Total General Fund</b>	<b>18,374</b>	<b>16,649</b>
Net revenue stream	<b>324,413</b>	<b>324,413</b>
<b>Total as percentage of net revenue stream</b>	<b>5.66%</b>	<b>5.13%</b>
<b>Housing Revenue Account</b>	<b>£k</b>	<b>£k</b>
Principal repayments	914	852
Interest costs	2,082	5,687
Rescheduling discount	-58	-58
Debt Management costs	15	23
<b>Total HRA</b>	<b>2,953</b>	<b>6,504</b>
Net revenue stream	41,000	41,000
<b>Total as percentage of net revenue stream</b>	<b>7.20%</b>	<b>15.86%</b>

<b>Estimate of incremental impact of capital investment on Council Tax and Housing Rents</b>	<b>Budget 2015/16</b>	<b>Estimated 2015-16</b>
<b>General Fund</b>	<b>£k</b>	<b>£k</b>
Unsupported borrowings - principal	493	493
- interest	643	643
Loss of investment income	36	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,172</b>	<b>1,172</b>
<b>Impact on Band D council tax</b>	<b>19.67</b>	<b>19.67</b>
<b>Housing Revenue Account</b>		
Loss of investment income	217	217
Unsupported borrowings - principal	1,509	1,509
- interest	3,771	3,771
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,497</b>	<b>5,497</b>
<b>Impact on average weekly rent</b>	<b>0.09</b>	<b>0.09</b>

*This is a notional calculation*

<b>Capital financing requirement [end of year position]</b>	<b>Budget 2015/16</b>	<b>Estimated 2015-16</b>
	<b>£k</b>	<b>£k</b>
Council Fund	239,890	225,651
Housing Revenue Account	116,434	117,004
<b>Total Authority</b>	<b>356,324</b>	<b>342,655</b>

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### Appendix 3 - Capital Expenditure and Funding- Mid Year report (Quarters 1 & 2)

	Budget 2015/16	Estimated 2015-16
Expenditure	£k	£k
Council Fund	14,861	14,861
Housing Revenue Account	36,290	36,290
<b>Total</b>	<b>51,151</b>	<b>51,151</b>
<b>Funding</b>		
Surplus/ (Deficit) Balance b/f	1,624	1,624
RCCO - Senior Pay (GF)	52	52
RCCO- 12/13 Debt Management Saving (14/15 RCCO Budget)	128	128
Borrowings - Supported (GF)	4,985	4,985
General Capital Grant - WG	3,033	3,033
Customer First Capital Budget Underspend	122	122
Borrowings - Unsupported (GF)	2,000	2,000
General Fund Working Balances	4,845	4,845
Capital Receipts 2014/15	43	43
RCCO- (HRA)	28,700	28,700
Capital Receipts (HRA)	260	260
Borrowings - Unsupported (HRA)	-	-
Major Repairs Allowance (HRA)	7,330	7,330
<b>Total</b>	<b>53,122</b>	<b>53,122</b>
<b>Surplus C/f</b>	<b>1,971</b>	<b>1,971</b>

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## **POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10TH NOVEMBER 2015**

**SUBJECT: REVIEW OF CHARITABLE RATE RELIEF AWARDS**

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

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

- 1.1 This report sets out details of a review carried out in respect of those ratepayers receiving charitable (mandatory and/or discretionary) rate relief that has been undertaken by the Interim Head of Corporate Finance under delegated powers.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Council is able to assist a wide range of voluntary and sporting organisations by granting rate relief. This report contains details of a review carried out in respect of those ratepayers receiving charitable (mandatory and/or discretionary) rate relief and notes the outcome of the review.

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

- 3.1 The granting of rate relief is a very cost effective way in which the Council can pursue its Regeneration objective by giving financial assistance to local organisations.

### **4. THE REPORT**

#### **4.1 Background**

- 4.1.1 Under the Council's Scheme of Delegation applications for charitable (mandatory and/or discretionary) rate relief submitted to the Council are determined by the Council's Head of Corporate Finance.
- 4.1.2 The determination of mandatory and/or discretionary rate relief is exercised following consideration of the relevant rating regulations relief supplemented by guidance from Welsh Government and Central Government. In respect of discretionary rate relief, consideration is also given to the Council's Policy on discretionary rate relief.
- 4.1.3 Periodically ratepayers currently receiving discretionary rate relief have their applications reviewed in order that the Head of Corporate Finance can be satisfied that the rate relief should continue.

## 4.2 The Review

- 4.2.1 The review commenced in the financial year 2012/13 and was concluded in January 2015. Unfortunately, it did take longer than expected to obtain the necessary documentation to verify continuing entitlement to relief in respect of a number of relief cases.
- 4.2.2 Members should be aware that the Welsh Government Pool bears the full cost of any mandatory charitable rate relief awarded. Currently, the Authority bears 10% of any non-profit making discretionary rate relief awarded, with the Welsh Government Pool bearing the remaining 90%. In respect of top-up discretionary rate relief, the Authority bears 75% of relief awarded, with the Welsh Government Pool bearing the remaining 25%
- 4.2.3 The review involved issuing an explanatory letter to ratepayers receiving charitable rate relief and enclosing a review application form which needed to be completed and returned with supporting evidence to enable the relief to continue.
- 4.2.4 Once the review documentation had been received, reasonable steps were taken to verify the details and determine whether or not the ratepayers remained entitlement to receive the relief.
- 4.2.5 It should be noted that there are currently 280 cases receiving charitable (mandatory and /or discretionary) rate relief. As a result of the review, 4 organisations have been notified in writing that the relief was being withdrawn as they have failed to respond to the review; it remains open to these organisations to make a new application for rate relief at any time.
- 4.2.6 As at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2015, the Authority had awarded the following levels of rate relief during 2015/16:

Relief Type	Welsh Government Pool Contribution		CCBC Contribution		Total Relief Awarded
Mandatory Charitable Relief	100%	£1,241k	Nil	£Nil	£1,241k
Non-Profit Making Discretionary Relief	90%	£301k	10%	£33k	£334k
Top-Up Discretionary Relief	25%	£68k	75%	£206k	£274k
			<b>Total CCBC Cost</b>	<b>£239k</b>	

## 5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report is for Members' information so the Council's full Equalities Impact Assessment process does not need to be applied.

## 6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 These are contained within the report.

## 7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

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

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 Members note the details of a review carried out in respect of those ratepayers receiving charitable (mandatory and/or discretionary) rate relief and the outcome of the review.

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

10.1 As set out throughout the report.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 Sections 43 and 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

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Consultees: Cllr B Jones, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Corporate Services  
Nicole Scammell, Acting Director of Corporate Services & Section 151 Officer  
Stephen Harris, Interim Head of Corporate Finance

Background Papers:

Rate Relief Application Review Forms, contact ext 3421

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## POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10TH NOVEMBER 2015

**SUBJECT: WRITE-OFF OF DEBTS – 01/04/15 – 30/09/15**

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

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with a summary of outstanding debts which have been written-off in accordance with the policy previously agreed by Cabinet.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report provides details of debts written-off for Council Tax, Business Rates, Council House Rents, Sundry Debtors and Housing Benefits overpayments.

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Council's budget is partly funded by Council Tax, Rents and other sources of miscellaneous income. In order to ensure that these resources are available to meet all the Council's objectives the Authority will always seek to maximise income collection.

### 4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The Council collects very large sums of money from residents and local businesses each year and inevitably there are instances of non-payment. A 'firm but fair' approach has always been adopted and all legal means are pursued to recover monies owed.
- 4.2 The regular writing-off of uncollectable debts is an important financial discipline. The Council would be criticised by External Audit if debts remained in the accounts when there is little likelihood of recovery. The table below provides a summary of debts written-off for the period 01/04/15 to 30/09/15.

	Total Amounts Written Off In Period (£)	Total Budgeted Income/Grant 2015/16 (£m)	% of Total Income/Grant Written-off In Period (%)	% of Total Income/Grant Written-off 2014/15 (Full Year) (%)
Council Tax	107,375	63.4	0.17	0.36
Business Rates	164,857	40.5	0.41	1.28
Council House Rents	141,989	50.5	0.28	0.61
Sundry Debtors	141,994	24.3	0.58	0.72

4.3 Whilst the sums shown above are significant it is important to put them into context. The column entitled "% of Total Income/Grant Written-off In Period" shows the write-offs expressed as a percentage of the "Total Budgeted Income/Grant 2015/16", i.e. monies due to the Council. For comparison purposes the Full-Year percentages for 2014/15 are also included in the table.

4.4 In addition to the totals in the table in paragraph 4.2, £37,978 has also been written-off to date during 2015/16 in relation to invoices raised for overpayments of Housing Benefits (total invoices raised during the period £816,868).

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 As detailed in the report.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

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

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

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

10.1 To ensure that Members are informed of sums written-off during the 2015/16 financial year.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 Local Government Act 1972 and 2000.

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Consultees: Nicole Scammell, Acting Director of Corporate Services & S151 Officer

Cllr B Jones, Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

John Carpenter, Council Tax & NNDR Manager

Sandra Isaacs, Rents Manager

Amanda Main, Housing & Council Tax Benefits Manager

Terry Thomas, Principal Incomes Officer



## **POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10TH NOVEMBER 2015**

**SUBJECT: THE USE OF BED AND BREAKFAST ACCOMMODATION FOR  
EMERGENCY HOUSING**

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

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- 1.1 The attached report was considered at a Special Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting on 22nd October 2015, having been prepared in response to a presentation made at Council on 21st April 2015 by members of the Argoed Residents for a Safer Community. At that meeting, the residents outlined their concerns in respect of the use of bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation for homeless persons and called upon the Authority to support the Residents' Group in bringing about changes to legislation by ceasing its use of B&B accommodation for the housing of vulnerable persons in the county borough. The Interim Chief Executive responded by advising Council that the use of B&Bs for temporary accommodation would be examined at a future meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee.
  - 1.2 The report provided a comprehensive overview in respect of the use of bed and breakfast accommodation within the county borough for households presenting to the Authority as homeless. It detailed the Authority's activities prior to and following the implementation of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, which has introduced major changes to the way in which homelessness clients must be assisted and housed. It outlined the statutory obligations placed on Local Authorities when discharging their homelessness functions and the procedures operated by Council Officers when dealing with persons presenting as homeless, together with the various options available to the Authority in respect of where homeless persons are accommodated.
  - 1.3 The report outlined the legislative requirements applicable to bed and breakfast accommodation and the manner in which these are inspected by the Authority. It also referenced revised obligations to prison leavers and progress in respect of the development of the recently introduced Prison Leavers Pathway.
  - 1.4 During the course of the meeting, and in addition to the presentation of the Officer's report, the Scrutiny Committee received presentations from Cornerstone Support Services and Argoed Residents for a Safer Community in respect of the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for emergency housing.
  - 1.5 Having given due regard to the Officer's report, the representations made by all parties and the comments received from Members, the Chair summarised the three main points and comments arising from the discussion and expressed the need for these to be conveyed to the appropriate agencies:-
    1. It is of key importance that relevant agencies/partners and local authorities collaborate in respect of the provision of emergency and supported accommodation in cases of homelessness.

As an aside, Officers were tasked with investigating further how other local authorities have successfully ceased the use of B&B accommodation.

2. With regard to the support for homeless clients whilst in B&B accommodation that is provided on a floating basis (as outlined in Section 4.11 of the Officer's report), it was proposed that a further report on this matter be presented to the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.
  3. The importance of the Welsh Government Transitional funding and Supporting People funding was emphasised, with it proposed that the views of the Scrutiny Committee on this matter be forwarded to the Welsh Government Ministers for consideration.
- 1.6 It was moved and seconded that these findings be endorsed as an accurate record of proceedings, and that they be appended to the Officer's report and presented to the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for ratification. By a show of hands, this was unanimously agreed. As such, it was unanimously agreed that subject to the inclusion of this additional information, the Officer's report be noted.
- 1.7 It was confirmed that the matter of B&B accommodation as emergency accommodation would be brought back to a future meeting of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for further review. An invitation to this meeting was extended to the representatives from Cornerstone Support Services Ltd and Argoed Residents for a Safer Community.
- 1.8 Members are asked to note for information purposes the findings arising from the meeting (as summarised within this covering report).

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

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Report to Special Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 22nd October 2015 – Agenda Item 5





## **SPECIAL POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 22ND OCTOBER 2015**

**SUBJECT: THE USE OF BED AND BREAKFAST ACCOMMODATION FOR  
EMERGENCY HOUSING**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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

- 1.1 This report has been prepared following a presentation to the meeting of full Council on 21st April 2015 by members of the Argoed Residents for a Safer Community. The residents outlined their concerns in respect of the use of Bed and Breakfast (B&B) accommodation for homeless persons and called upon the Authority to support the Residents Group in bringing about changes to legislation by ceasing its use of B&B accommodation for the housing of vulnerable persons in the county borough. The Chief Executive responded by advising Council that the use of B&B's for temporary accommodation would be examined at a future meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee and it is in response to this commitment that this report has been prepared.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The report provides information in respect of the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation within the county borough for households presenting to the Authority as homeless. The report provides information relating to the Authority's activities both before and after the implementation of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, which has introduced major changes to the way in which homelessness clients must be assisted and housed.
- 2.2 The report outlines the statutory obligations placed on Local Authorities when discharging their homelessness functions and describes the procedures operated by officers working within the Housing Advice and Emergency Accommodation teams when dealing with persons presenting as homeless. The various options available to the Authority in respect of where homeless persons are accommodated are also outlined.
- 2.3 Bed and Breakfast accommodation used for the purposes of emergency housing is quite heavily regulated and both the legislative requirements applicable to such accommodation and the manner in which the Authority inspects such accommodation are outlined within the report.
- 2.4 The report highlights the substantial changes introduced by the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and the subsequent additional responsibilities now placed upon the Authority in relation to the prevention of homelessness. Specific mention is made in respect of Authorities' revised obligations to prison leavers and progress in respect of the development of the recently introduced Prison Leavers Pathway is also provided.
- 2.5 In preparing this report officers have collected data on the provision of emergency accommodation not only on a Caerphilly CBC basis but also a Gwent-wide and national basis

to outline the local, regional and national picture in respect of the use of emergency and temporary accommodation. This data is provided at various points throughout the report as well as in Appendices.

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

- 3.1 10 Year Homelessness Action Plan For Wales – 2009-2019, which sets out some guiding principles for the development and delivery of homelessness services.
- 3.2 Caerphilly Delivers: The Single Integrated Plan (2013-17); linking to the Prosperous, Safer Caerphilly and Healthier Caerphilly themes.
- 3.3 *People, Property & Places: A Housing Strategy for Caerphilly County Borough*, linking to aims 1 and 4.
- 3.4 Caerphilly Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan 2015-3018.

### **4. THE REPORT**

#### **Emergency and Temporary Accommodation**

- 4.1 The use Bed and Breakfast (B&B) establishments for emergency accommodation has, throughout Wales, proved necessary for many years. This Authority has relied upon the use of privately owned B&B establishments at several locations within and, on occasion, outside the county borough to place individuals and families into B&B for periods of time whilst their homelessness situation is under formal investigation. Following investigation, and depending on whether a full housing duty is owed to the homeless applicant the Authority has either moved clients into temporary accommodation (B&B and Hostel) or directly into a social housing property, either from within the Authority's own stock or that of a Housing Association.
- 4.2 Placement of homeless households within any of the emergency and temporary accommodation is subject to careful consideration of all the risk information available at the time of presentation for emergency accommodation. The process for identifying risk associated with new homeless households has, however, often been limited to the amount of information disclosed by clients at the time of presentation.
- 4.3 The Housing Advice Officer would conduct an interview at the Housing Advice Centre and gather information on the reasons for homelessness, housing history and information to assess whether the household was in one of the priority need categories (and therefore potentially owed a duty to secure accommodation). The homelessness application form would also be used to record involvement with other agencies such as the GP, Psychiatrist, Hospital, Social Worker, Support Worker, Probation Worker, Drug and Alcohol Issues, Health Visitor, Solicitor, and Schools attended by children if any. If the household had any housing history with the Authority, database checks would then be carried out to gather further background information.
- 4.4 The Housing Advice Officer's main duty would be to assess the household's need for emergency accommodation and to work with the Emergency Housing Manager to source a suitable vacancy. Throughout the initial homelessness interview, the Housing Advice Officer would consider any risk to other households placed in the emergency or temporary accommodation and any risk to staff. Risk information would be shared with the Emergency Accommodation Team and thereafter provided to the relevant support agency. Data protection rules restrict the further sharing of personal information with other parties.
- 4.5 The type of Bed and Breakfast accommodation used by Authorities for emergency accommodation purposes are, in housing terms, classified as Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's). Unsurprisingly, given their relatively high risk (e.g. in relation to fire safety) they are heavily regulated from a legislative perspective as follows:

1. Housing Act 2004 - (In relation to physical standards and, where appropriate, licensing).
2. Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Wales) Regulations 2006 - (in relation to standards of management).
3. Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation)(Wales) Order 2006 - (in relation to space standards, amenities, heating and management standards and restrictive placements).
4. Gas Safety Regulations – (in relation to the safety of gas appliances)
5. Electrical Safety Regulations – (in relation to the electrical installation within the premises).

Within the Caerphilly County Borough the Authority operates a risk based, rolling programme of inspection of HMO's. Inspections are undertaken by experienced Housing Environmental Health Officers to ensure legislative requirements are consistently met.

- 4.6 Within the Social Services Directorate the 16 Plus Team work with both Looked After and homeless young people with no recent or current involvement with Social Services. B&B accommodation for young people is only accessed when all other accommodation options are unavailable. The first preference for young people under 18 would be foster care or supported lodgings and the second would be a place within a supported housing project. Homeless young people are always placed in supported accommodation where possible.

There are, however, some young people who unfortunately have exhausted all the supported accommodation options and as a result, placement in B&B becomes the only option available until an alternative can be sought.

- 4.7 Prior to the implementation of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 in April 2015, households belonging to one of the priority need categories (see Appendix 1), who were either homeless on the day of presentation, or were threatened with homelessness within 28 days of presentation were statutorily entitled to make a homelessness application to the Authority and be provided with emergency accommodation either within B&B or hostel type accommodation. Whilst in the emergency accommodation, the Authority's Housing Advice Officers would investigate the full details of each case and determine whether the homeless applicant was owed a full housing duty.

Those to whom a full housing duty was owed would then be temporarily housed either within accommodation provided via a Private Sector Leasing scheme (a service managed by a Housing Association partner) or else in one of the various other types of supported accommodation available to us i.e. The Countryman for young single homeless clients, Ty Croeso for older single homeless clients, and Ty'r Fesen for families. Due to a shortage of supported accommodation, the Authority has resorted to the use of B&B accommodation in these cases. The time taken for Housing Advice Officers to provide a secure tenancy within the social housing stock, considered to be suitable for the household (such as area and size) has meant that placements in emergency and temporary accommodation have lasted for weeks or even months.

- 4.8 The following table provides data on the number of homelessness households presenting to the Gwent Authorities for housing assistance for the past 3 years:

**Homelessness presentations and acceptances\* across Gwent**

	CCBC		Newport		Torfaen		Mon		BI Gwent	
	Pres'tion	Accepted	Pres'tion	Accepted	Pres'tion	Accepted	Pres'tion	Accepted	Pres'tion	Accepted
2012/13	425	245	1000	475	285	140	415	220	505	135
2013/14	374	225	995	370	255	125	390	170	555	140
2014/15	410	260	930	320	265	120	250	110	495	145

\*Acceptances refers to households who were eligible for housing assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need.

- 4.9 There are various types of emergency and temporary accommodation being utilised across Gwent, with the nature of the provision and support provided being governed generally by local policy and funding availability. Within the Caerphilly County Borough the provision of such accommodation has historically been via a mixture of private providers in the case of B&B's and predominantly Housing Association partners in respect of hostel provision. The Authority has, however, been actively seeking alternatives to B&B accommodation for a number of years, in part due to the changes in legislation but also to improve the level of support that can be provided to homeless clients.
- 4.10 The Authority owns one 10 room single persons hostel at Ty Croeso in Newbridge, however, the costs of providing or adapting accommodation to achieve compliance with the legislation applicable to emergency accommodation are such that the opportunities for the creation of more in-house accommodation such as Ty Croeso are severely limited. Partnership working with our Housing Association colleagues is, therefore, critical and by this arrangement the Authority has been able to secure a 13 unit facility for homeless families at Ty'r Fesen, Caerphilly and more recently an 18 room facility for single homeless persons at Maes y Derwen, Tredomen. Officers are also currently in discussions with a Housing Association partner with a view to securing another 13 unit facility of supported accommodation which it is hoped will further reduce the Authority's reliance on the use of B&B accommodation for emergency purposes.
- 4.11 Support for homeless clients whilst in B&B's is provided on a floating basis, with the various Support Providers being notified each time a new client is placed. Hostel and refuge type facilities provide in-house support and have a 24 hr staff presence. Support for households who have been accepted as owed a full duty of housing and have moved on into the private sector leased accommodation are provided with floating support to assist them with their preparations for their move to independent living in a permanent tenancy. The nature of the support provided depends on the needs of each household but would typically consist of access to education, healthcare, training programmes and financial management skills.
- 4.12 The following table provides data on the use and type of emergency and temporary accommodation across the Gwent region. Within the table, PSL (for the Caerphilly area) refers to Private Sector Leased units, which are properties sourced from private sector landlords and thereafter leased through a partner Housing Association (Hafod) for use by the Authority's Emergency Housing team. The PSL properties are located throughout the county borough and comprise of one, two and three bedroom properties. The property management (repair and maintenance) is undertaken by Hafod and the Authority provides the tenancy support needs. These PSL properties have for many years provided the Authority with the facility to house homeless households to whom we have a statutory housing duty in suitable accommodation whilst they await their allocation of a secure tenancy. The following table shows the use of temporary accommodation in Gwent for the past three years; however Appendix 2 shows the full data set for Wales.

**Use of B&B across Gwent**

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
<b>CCBC</b>			
B&B	25	45	35
PSL	35	45	45
Hostels/Refuge**	10	35	35
<b>Newport</b>			
B&B	30	10	25
PSL	105	125	115
Hostels/Refuge	45	45	70
<b>Torfaen</b>			
B&B	*	*	*
PSL	50	35	30
Hostels/Refuge	30	30	20

<b>Mon</b>			
B&B	*	*	15
PSL	90	85	100
Hostels/Refuge	5	15	20
<b>BI Gwent</b>			
B&B	5	*	10
PSL	15	15	25
Hostels/Refuge	15	15	15

\*denotes data either not available or not sufficiently robust for publication

\*\*Hostels and Refuge includes Women's Refuge provision

## 5. REASONS FOR HOMELESSNESS

5.1 The main reasons for a person or household to present as homeless were and still are:

- Family breakup
- Rent arrears
- Mortgage repossession
- Fleeing domestic violence
- Leaving the armed forces or prison with no accommodation to return to
- Parents or family no longer willing to accommodate

The table below outlines some statistics for Gwent during 2014/15:

### Households accepted as homeless in priority need 2014/15

	CCBC	Newport	Torfaen	Mon	BI Gwent
Households with dependant children or pregnant women	60	135	50	50	20
Physical or mental health vulnerability	40	45	10	20	55
Vulnerable young people	30	35	15	5	10
Person fleeing domestic violence	50	60	15	25	15
Prison leavers with no accommodation to return to	70	40	20	5	45

For comparison purposes Appendix 3 shows the same data on an all Wales basis.

5.2 Apart from a few cases of mortgage repossession and domestic violence, the majority of households presenting as homeless have been in receipt of welfare benefits which includes the housing benefit element. The cost of emergency and temporary accommodation has been largely covered by Housing Benefit except for the cost of B&B for which a small top-up payment is made by the applicant. Initial outlay payments are made by the Emergency Housing Manager to the respective B&B provider and the costs are recovered from the Housing Benefit section.

5.3 The following table shows the annual cost to the Authority of B&B provision:

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Gross Expenditure	£345,638.72	£357,531.39	£432,658.08
Net Expenditure	£15,124.79	£4595.25	£53,324.63

It is noticeable that the figures for 2014/15 are significantly different to those of the previous two years. Gross expenditure increased due to various operational changes undertaken throughout the year which resulted in higher individual B&B costs. In comparison to B&B costs, gross expenditure for the family accommodation Ty'r Fesen was £456,452 (2013/14) and £473,057 (2014/15). The Ty'r Fesen scheme is self financing therefore at nil cost to the Authority

- 5.4 The nightly cost of B&B accommodation varies from establishment to establishment. There are no contractual obligations between the Authority and the individual establishment owner and no prepayment arrangements to reserve or pre allocate rooms for the Authority's use is in place. Prior to making any placement arrangements B&B premises are visited and inspected to establish suitability in accordance with the legislative provisions outlined in section 4.5 above. The proprietors and/or on-site management are also subject to enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks prior to the Authority making final decisions regarding the use of the premises. Occupancy at B&B's used by the Authority's homeless clients has been on a needs basis, with no guaranteed or agreed level of income for the various B&B providers. Households placed into B&B have predominantly been single person households whose average length of stay for 2013/14 was 39 days and for 2014/15 was 29 days.

## **6. CHANGES TO THE HOMELESSNESS AGENDA AND REDUCING THE USE OF B&B ACCOMMODATION**

### **The Housing (Wales) Act 2014**

- 6.1 The new Housing Act, specific to Wales, has introduced some major changes to the process of responding to homelessness:
- There is a new duty to take all reasonable steps to prevent or alleviate homelessness actually occurring
  - The Authority can prevent homelessness occurring by sourcing accommodation in the private rented sector
  - If a household cannot be prevented from becoming homeless and the Authority has a duty to house them, the property offered does not have to be a council property but can be in the private rented sector.
  - Prison leavers with no accommodation to return to are no longer owed a duty of housing, unless vulnerability is proven.

The new prevention duty requires the Authority to respond to the threat of homelessness much earlier when a household is threatened with homelessness. The aim is to work with the household and develop a personal housing plan to resolve their accommodation problems by either assisting them to remain at their current accommodation (providing it is suitable) or to source alternative suitable accommodation. The Housing Advice Officers have to demonstrate that they have taken all reasonable steps to prevent or alleviate homelessness; however, the household also have to help themselves and work towards achieving the aims of their personal housing plan.

- 6.2 The duty to assist in the prevention of homelessness applies to anyone approaching the Authority, regardless of whether they are in a priority need category. Priority need only has relevance when the Authority is unable to prevent the household from becoming homeless and they are unintentionally homeless and have a local connection to the area.
- 6.3 The effect of re-focusing our efforts to prevent homelessness occurring in the first instance has meant that fewer clients have needed to be placed into B&B accommodation. To date the average number of households residing in B&B since the legislation changed in April 2015 is 4 per week.

- 6.4 The main change to the priority need categories in Wales is that there is now no longer a duty to accommodate prison leavers who have no fixed address to return to following release (unless they are considered vulnerable). Historically, any prison leaver with a local connection to the borough, having no accommodation available for them to return to, would be accommodated in emergency accommodation whilst investigations were undertaken by the Housing Advice Officers. In the Caerphilly County Borough emergency accommodation for single homeless households, including prison leavers has previously been via B&B, Ty Croeso and private sector leased properties.
- 6.5 Due to the significant number of prison leavers returning to the Caerphilly county borough area following release (37% of single person homeless households in 2014/15) the removal of this group from the automatic priority need status is already having the effect of further reducing the Authority's use of B&B accommodation.

## **7. DEVELOPMENT IN THE PRISON LEAVER PATHWAY**

- 7.1 In removing the automatic priority need status for offenders leaving custody with no address to return to, Welsh Government recognised the need to develop the pre-planning of a prisoner's release into the community. The National Pathway for Homelessness Services to Children, Young People and Adults in the Secure Estate (currently in consultation document format), has made sweeping changes to the process and places duties on various organisations to:
- Commence the accommodation resettlement plan at reception into custody.
  - Provide assistance through the newly established Community Rehabilitation Company to assist the prisoner to resolve any accommodation issues whilst in prison and keep the resettlement plan under review until release.
  - Notify the local authority of prison leavers who will have no address to return to at the point of release, for assessment of vulnerability and assessment of priority need status.
  - An Offender Manager in the Community, assigned to the offender, will be required to complete a risk assessment and this will be used by the Authority to assess the offender's priority need status and statutory entitlement to housing.
- 7.2 Whilst the procedural document has not been finalised at the time of writing, in practice, the prison leaver pathway and joint working practices to plan for the resettlement of offenders has been in place since April 2015. The Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) are a distinctly separate set of multi-agency arrangements used to plan the release and resettlement of the more serious offenders.

## **8. SOCIAL LETTINGS**

- 8.1 For some time the Authority has been preparing to develop its own lettings agency, using private sector properties through a partner housing association and providing affordable tenancies with support. To this end Officers are currently actively working with private sector owners in an effort to increase the availability of properties for this purpose. The additional housing resource available to the Homelessness and Housing Advice team will enable a speedier transition from emergency or temporary accommodation into well managed, suitable, affordable properties. The new Housing Act now permits the Authority to also discharge its housing duty into the private rented sector and so access to a local Social Lettings Agency will be a positive mechanism to further reduce the reliance on B&B accommodation.

## **9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 This report is for information purposes, so the Council's EqIa process does not need to be applied.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The report itself is an information item and so brings no financial implications. Members should be aware, however, that both the existing and proposed activities outlined in this report are potentially under threat as a result of the uncertainty of future funding such as:

- Welsh Government Transitional funding has been made available to assist Authorities in meeting the additional demands of the Housing (Wales) Act. Originally promised as three year funding it has now only secured commitment for the current financial year. The uncertainty of future Transitional funding severely hinders forward planning.
- Supporting People (SP) funding is critical to the successful delivery of many initiatives within the Homelessness field. Cuts are already proposed to future SP funding which may well affect future service delivery.
- The Authority's ambition to move away from the use of B&B accommodation in favour of managed supported accommodation if not carefully considered (in terms of the amount of accommodation we secure) brings the potential for void costs during periods of unoccupation.
- Housing Benefit is constantly under pressure.

## **11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no personnel issues. This report is for information purposes only.

## **12. CONSULTATIONS**

12.1 Any views of the consultees listed below have been incorporated into the report.

## **13. RECOMMENDATIONS**

13.1 That Members note the contents of the report.

## **14. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

14.1 To provide the Committee with relevant information in respect of the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation following a commitment to do so at the full Council meeting of 21st April 2015.

## **15. STATUTORY POWER**

15.1 Housing Act 1996, Homelessness(Suitability of Accommodation)(Wales) Order 2006, Housing Act 2004, Housing (Wales)Act 2014.

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Consultees: Cllr Dave Poole - Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing  
Cllr Hefin David – (Chair) Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr Sean Morgan – (Vice Chair) Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee  
Chris Burns – Interim Chief Executive  
Dave Street – Corporate Director, Social Services  
Christina Harry – Corporate Director, Communities.  
Shaun Couzens - Chief Housing Officer



Fiona Wilkins - Public Sector Housing Manager  
Paul Smythe - Housing Repair Operation Manager  
Claire Davies - Principal Housing Officer (Strategy and Standards)  
Janine Edwards – Interim Service Manager, Social Services  
Rhianne Iles – Accommodation Manager, Social Services  
Lee Clapham – Emergency Housing Manager  
Malcolm Topping – Supporting People Manager  
Lesley Allen - Principal Accountant  
Housing Advice Team

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 - Priority Need categories of households who may present to a local authority as homeless
- Appendix 2 - Households accommodated temporarily by local authority area and accommodation type
- Appendix 3 - Households accepted as homeless in priority need 2014/15

## **Appendix 1:**

### **Priority Need categories of households who may present to a local authority as homeless.**

- A pregnant woman
- A person with whom a dependent child resides
- A person who is vulnerable as a result of some special reason (for example: old age, physical or mental illness or physical or mental disability)
- A person who is homeless or threatened with homelessness as a result of an emergency such as fire, flood or other disaster
- A person who is aged 16 or 17
- A person who has attained the age of 18, but not the age of 21, who is at particular risk of sexual or financial exploitation
- A person who has attained the age of 18, but not the age of 21, who was looked after, accommodated or fostered at any time while under the age of 18
- Is vulnerable due to leaving the armed forces
- Is vulnerable having served a custodial sentence or remanded in custody by the order of the court.

## Appendix 2

### Households accommodated temporarily by local authority area and accommodation type

Period: 2014-15 Annual

Housing > Homelessness > Temporary accommodation > Households accommodated temporarily by local authority area and accommodation type

		Total accommodated at the end of quarter						Total accommodated at the end of quarter
		Private sector accommodation (1)	Public sector accommodation (2)	Hostels and women's refuges	Bed and breakfast	Other	Homeless at home	
Wales		855	440	475	195	*	85	2,050
Wales	Isle of Anglesey	*	*	*	*	*	*	15
	Gwynedd	45	20	15	*	*	*	85
	Conwy	70	*	10	10	*	*	90
	Denbighshire	55	*	*	5	*	*	65
	Flintshire	*	*	*	55	*	*	60
	Wrexham	*	45	25	15	*	*	85
	Powys	10	20	*	*	*	15	50
	Ceredigion	40	45	5	*	*	10	95
	Pembrokeshire	*	*	10	*	*	45	55
	Carmarthenshire	65	*	5	*	*	*	70
	Swansea	*	35	5	10	*	*	50
	Neath Port Talbot	*	*	25	*	*	*	25
	Bridgend	25	5	25	5	*	*	70
	Vale of Glamorgan	45	25	20	*	*	*	90
	Cardiff	165	240	155	*	*	*	560
	Rhondda Cynon Taf	20	*	15	10	*	*	45
	Merthyr Tydfil	*	*	*	5	*	*	5
	Caerphilly	45	*	35	35	*	5	115
	Blaenau Gwent	25	*	15	10	*	*	50
	Torfaen	30	*	20	*	*	*	50
	Monmouthshire	90	*	5	*	*	*	100
	Newport	115	*	70	25	*	*	210

Data source: statswales.wales.gov.uk June 2015. Welsh Government

## Households accommodated temporarily by local authority area and accommodation type

Period: 2013-14 Annual

Housing > Homelessness > Temporary accommodation > Households accommodated temporarily by local authority area and accommodation type

		Total accommodated at the end of quarter						Total accommodated at the end of quarter
		Private sector accommodation (1)	Public sector accommodation (2)	Hostels and women's refuges	Bed and breakfast	Other	Homeless at home	
Wales		910	440	510	185	*	245	2,295
Wales	Isle of Anglesey	15	10	*	5	*	5	35
	Gwynedd	50	20	20	10	*	10	105
	Conwy	95	*	10	5	*	*	110
	Denbighshire	30	*	*	10	*	*	40
	Flintshire	5	10	5	25	*	*	45
	Wrexham	5	30	15	10	*	*	65
	Powys	*	*	20	*	*	100	125
	Ceredigion	50	30	5	*	*	25	110
	Pembrokeshire	*	*	10	*	*	85	100
	Carmarthenshire	85	5	10	*	*	*	100
	Swansea	*	35	15	15	*	*	65
	Neath Port Talbot	*	20	40	10	*	*	70
	Bridgend	30	5	30	10	*	*	75
	Vale of Glamorgan	50	20	20	*	*	*	90
	Cardiff	180	250	160	*	*	*	590
	Rhondda Cynon Taf	15	*	5	15	*	*	40
	Merthyr Tydfil	*	*	*	5	*	10	25
	Caerphilly	45	*	35	45	*	10	130
	Blaenau Gwent	15	*	15	*	*	*	35
	Torfaen	35	*	30	*	*	*	65
	Monmouthshire	85	*	15	*	*	*	100
	Newport	125	*	45	10	*	*	180

Data source: statswales.wales.gov.uk June 2015. Welsh Government

## Households accommodated temporarily by local authority area and accommodation type

Period 2012/13 Annual

Housing > Homelessness > Temporary accommodation > Households accommodated temporarily by local authority area and accommodation type

		Total accommodated at the end of quarter						Total accommodated at the end of quarter
		Private sector accommodation (1)	Public sector accommodation (2)	Hostels and women's refuges	Bed and breakfast	Other	Homeless at home	
Wales		1,010	380	505	300	10	320	2,525
Wales	Isle of Anglesey	55	15	*	10	*	5	90
	Gwynedd	60	25	20	15	5	15	145
	Conwy	105	*	10	10	*	*	125
	Denbighshire	35	*	*	*	*	*	40
	Flintshire	10	30	15	60	*	*	115
	Wrexham	45	10	25	10	*	*	95
	Powys	*	*	20	10	*	130	160
	Ceredigion	45	35	5	*	*	20	105
	Pembrokeshire	*	*	10	*	*	85	95
	Carmarthenshire	80	*	10	*	*	*	100
	Swansea	*	35	15	20	*	*	65
	Neath Port Talbot	*	25	10	*	*	*	35
	Bridgend	30	*	25	25	5	*	90
	Vale of Glamorgan	20	20	20	20	*	20	95
	Cardiff	190	180	180	*	*	*	545
	Rhondda Cynon Taf	20	*	*	40	*	*	60
	Merthyr Tydfil	15	*	5	*	*	10	35
	Caerphilly	35	*	10	25	*	*	70
	Blaenau Gwent	15	*	15	5	*	*	35
	Torfaen	50	*	30	*	*	*	80
	Monmouthshire	100	*	20	15	*	25	155
	Newport	105	*	45	30	*	15	195

Data source: statswales.wales.gov.uk June 2015. Welsh Government

### Appendix 3: Households accepted as homeless in priority need 2014/15

	Households with dependant children or pregnant women	Physical or mental health vulnerability	Vulnerable young people	Person fleeing domestic violence	Prison leaver with no accommodation to return to
CCBC	60	40	30	50	70
Newport	135	45	35	60	40
Torfaen	50	10	15	15	20
M'mouth	50	20	5	25	5
Bl. Gwent	20	55	10	15	45
Anglesey	20	15	0	0	0
Gwynedd	55	20	10	25	25
Conwy	60	25	20	25	45
Denbighshire	35	5	0	10	25
Flintshire	35	15	0	5	25
Wrexham	65	40	5	40	30
Powys	75	50	15	20	10
Ceredigion	35	25	0	15	10
Pemb's	55	30	15	5	10
Carm's	185	75	50	65	25
Swansea	350	100	15	125	135
Neath PT	85	30	0	30	30
Bridgend	55	35	30	65	25
VoG	110	40	5	10	65
Cardiff	500	80	25	65	140
RCT	40	40	25	20	70
Merthyr	5	0	0	10	15

Data source: statswales.wales.gov.uk June 2015. Welsh Government

## Caerphilly Local Service Board



Bwrdd Iechyd  
Aneurin Bevan  
Health Board



Heddlu  
Gwent  
Police



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

### Notes of Meeting

Held at 9:00am on Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2015

Core Room 1.3, Ty Penallta

#### Present:-

Cllr Keith Reynolds (Chair)	Chair of Caerphilly LSB and Leader of Caerphilly County Borough Council
Chris Burns	Interim Chief Executive, Caerphilly County Borough Council
Judith Paget	Chief Executive, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
Julian Knight	Chief Superintendent, Gwent Police (representing Chief Constable Jeff Farrar)
James Owen	Deputy Director, Expert Services & People Division, Welsh Government
Martin Featherstone	Chief Executive, Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations

#### In attendance:-

Joanne Jones	Information Governance Manager, CCBC
Richard Howells	Head of Information Governance, ABUHB
Katy Stevenson	Greener Lead & Acting Chief Executive, Groundwork Wales
Paul Cooke	Team Leader, Sustainable Development, CCBC
Rob Hartshorn	Anti Poverty Champion & Head of Public Protection, CCBC
Howard Rees	Programme Manager, CCBC
Alison Palmer	Community Planning Coordinator (Notes)

#### Apologies:-

Jeff Farrar	Chief Constable, Gwent Police
David Jenkins	Chair, ABUHB

Point	Matter	Action
1.	<b>Welcome:</b> Cllr KR welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2.	<b>Previous Notes and Matters Arising:</b> The notes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.  JP noted the previously reported difficulties in obtaining health data which had been followed-up and asked to be kept informed of any further issues. HR reported that he had been working with Cath Gregory (ABUHB) and the Wellbeing Improvement Network to revise the data collection plan.	

Point	Matter	Action
	<p>MF commented that it had been helpful to hold the previous meeting in Rhymney as a change from the normal meeting venue and welcomed the opportunity to do the same again. CB and JO also commented on the value of the site visit and the Chair agreed that other venues could be considered. HR suggested that meetings need not be held on Council premises and opened the opportunity to partners to host future meetings. JP offered the facilities of Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr and KS suggested Groundwork's Furniture Revival in Rhymney which members could see after the meeting.</p>	HR
3.	<p><b><u>Update on 'Caerphilly Delivers' - the LSB Single Integrated Plan:</u></b></p> <p>a. <b><u>Presentation on Greener Caerphilly Outcome:</u></b>  Katy Stevenson, Chief Executive of the newly merged Groundwork Wales and Greener Caerphilly Outcome Lead Officer (assisted by PC) presented the report on the Greener Caerphilly theme. KS began by explaining the wider Greener Caerphilly partnership of 28 members and the leadership group of 6 organisations which she chaired. KS noted that the Greener Caerphilly Annual Report could be downloaded which gave greater detail of the breadth of the work undertaken under the theme and included a matrix providing a clear picture of the contribution made by the Greener group partners to the work of the other Outcome themes. She noted that Groundwork was frequently seen only as an environmental group and their work was very much with people and the environment. KS went on to deliver a PowerPoint presentation, highlighting work under the three Priorities of the Greener Caerphilly Outcome theme:</p> <p><b>G1 Improving Local Environmental Quality:</b> KS highlighted CCBC's position as 3<sup>rd</sup> best in Wales for managing fly-tipping, and noted the success of the Caerphilly Environmental Quality funding provided to 8 projects in the county borough to support work contributing to the aims of the Greener Caerphilly theme. An example was given of the Healthy Rivers project on the Sirhowy River, which saw the removal of barriers, river clean-up and the salmon project, resulting in enhancing the ecological status of the river being raised to "good".</p> <p><b>G2 Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change:</b> The objectives for this Priority related to renewable energy, education and carbon reduction. KS highlighted examples of the wind turbines at Oakdale, the Eco-Schools project with 64 achieving green flag status and 14 with Platinum status. Education for Sustainable Development was also included in the curriculum and the Solar Schools project had seen 16 schools and 1 education centre have solar systems installed which included an education pack. KS also reported on the success of the recycling projects; the new outlets for Furniture Revival in Blackwood and Caerphilly, the Community Repaint project working in collaboration with waste sites to collect and remix paint for resale or distribution free, Book Revival, and Community Re-floor – refurbishing and recycling carpet and carpet tiles.</p> <p><b>G3 Environment for Health:</b> KS reported on a number of significant projects to utilise the outdoors to support health improvement including the Groundwork Wales wide Go Green for Health (£800k) project which would pilot activities in Neath, Wrexham and Mid-Valleys West in Caerphilly county borough, managed from the Pontllanfraith office. The project will launch with a walk to coincide with Comic Relief and an innovative recording and tracking system will be used to monitor participation. Groundwork will be working with partners such as the ABUHB, GPs, etc. to encourage take up. KS also updated members on the Come Outside! Project run by NRW, linking community development, youth work and health professionals which had so</p>	



Point	Matter	Action
	<p>far seen 1,300 people involved in developing healthier lifestyles and 500 young people (NEETS) encouraged back into education.</p> <p><b>Issues/Opportunities:</b> KS/PC explained that whilst the Caerphilly SIP was one of the few with a Greener theme, there were increasing pressures to maintain the priority. Environmental issues were not necessarily seen as a priority during times of overall financial pressures where all themes were facing budget difficulties. A number of decisions such as car parking charges at country parks, reducing funding allocation, and charging for waste could also have implications for the environment.</p> <p>PC noted that there were opportunities for collaborative work through the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill particularly through the work on climate change mitigation/adaptation which would be a responsibility of all statutory bodies.</p> <p>Cllr KR thanked KS/PC for the presentation which had provided so many positives. Members asked a number of questions regarding the level of participation in projects and the profile of participants i.e. numbers of children and young people, older people etc. KS noted that children and young people and those who were middle aged were more of a target for Groundwork activities than older members of the community although they were not precluded. It was also acknowledged that projects were good at recording levels of activity but had not been as good at evaluating the progress made and there was a need to improve the analysis of impacts. MF/JP referred to the issue of data analysis and the links to the anti- poverty strategy and to other themes i.e. people from Lansbury Park and older people using the countryside; health improvement and the link to walking for long term health and lower incidence of falls. KS agreed to talk to the Go Green for Health programme manager to ensure links were made.</p> <p>CB/PC referred to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill and the requirement on all public bodies to look at how they would reduce their energy consumption and carbon footprint. HR noted that PC had asked for a sustainability/greener contact to work with and asked if the LSB members could identify a lead in each of their organisations for him to work with. JK identified Kieran McHugh in Gwent Police and JP identified Gill Richardson in ABUHB.</p>	<p>KS</p> <p>LSB</p>
<p>b.</p>	<p><b><u>Other Outcome Highlight/Exception Reports:</u></b></p> <p>HR reminded members that as well as the full presentation from one of the Outcome theme Lead Officers at each meeting, highlight/exception reports from all Outcome theme Lead Officers are also circulated.</p> <p><b>Prosperous Caerphilly:</b></p> <p>HR asked members to note the report, in particular progress against priorities and the update note on European funding. It was noted that CCBC had been able to utilise substantial European funding in previous rounds for regeneration in the county borough, the most recent of which was now coming to an end. Officers were working to develop bids for the new round of funding although there was concern that the new round would have a more national and/or regional focus providing fewer opportunities locally.</p> <p>CB noted the recent publication of the Capital region strategy and the Metro concept for SE Wales which would include better public transport, rail electrification, etc., commenting it would be important to attract businesses into the borough to develop Caerphilly as an area of growth and to that effect discussions were taking place with the Caerphilly Business Forum. It was</p>	

Point	Matter	Action
	<p>important this opportunity for the county borough was reflected in the LDP identifying Caerphilly as a prime location with lower costs and a workforce. Members noted the progress report and funding update.</p> <p><b>Safer Caerphilly:</b> Members were asked to consider three areas of work from the Safer Caerphilly Outcome theme. The development of a substance misuse resource centre and services at Hafod Deg, which the LSB had visited at the previous meeting, were continuing and were on track to complete the spend by the end of the financial year.</p> <p>The change in WG funding for domestic abuse services was highlighted, noting that the G7 meeting had agreed to regionalise the service across Gwent, with Newport CC acting as lead. There was concern that with regionalisation in the short to medium term there would be a gap in support for “survivors” of DA locally until the new structure settles down and this would pose a greater risk to “survivors”. This was noted and remitted to the Safer Caerphilly Delivery Group to liaise with the Regional DA Steering Group and ensure that any risk is identified and mitigated against. An update report to be produced for consideration at the next LSB.</p> <p>The report highlighted the new Counter Terrorism and Security Bill putting the requirement for public bodies to play a part in the PREVENT programme on a statutory footing. It was noted that the legislation would require that public facing staff from public bodies would need to be “trained” to enable them to identify the risk of radicalisation. Whilst JK expressed concern that there was a slow response from partners to engage in the programme i.e. the train the trainer session on 13<sup>th</sup> March had received a low response, it was acknowledged that there was a need to understand what the training might entail, time involved, whether it could be e-learning as there was already pressure on staff time. It was noted that the Safer Caerphilly Delivery Group were awaiting more information and that the Chair, Superintendent Marc Budden was in discussion with Rob Hartshorn to ensure CCBC was ready for the legislation. CB suggested that it would be appropriate to run an awareness session at the CCBC Management Network which would help to raise the profile of PREVENT and any training needs, HR noting that a good number of staff had already received training over the last couple of years within CCBC, ABUHB and other public bodies. MF offered to support the work through GAVO having wider communication with the third sector and JK acknowledged that third sector organisations had taken part in previous training. The report was noted.</p> <p><b>Learning Caerphilly:</b> The contents of the report were noted and the request for the removal of the performance measure 01 on NEETS (as the identified project was now finished and the information is captured elsewhere) was agreed.</p> <p><b>Healthier Caerphilly:</b> It was noted that the report concentrated on priority H5 – “to ensure people are supported to live in their own communities to lead safe, fulfilled and independent lives”. Social Services and the NCNs were an integral part to the delivery of the priority together with public health. JP noted the positive report and congratulated the CCBC on the support provided for people to remain in their own homes and communities.</p>	<p><b>Safer Lead</b></p> <p><b>Safer Lead</b></p> <p><b>CB</b></p>
c.	<p><b><u>Voluntary Sector and GAVO Update:</u></b> MF identified a number of priority areas of work. He drew members’ attention to the headline statistics for support for volunteers. MF gave members an</p>	

Point	Matter	Action
	<p>overview of the restructuring taking place within GAVO, identifying the need for the closure of the Ystrad Mynach office as a drain on resources, and the re-location of staff to seven bases within the community in the borough to protect front-line delivery; e.g. the CF team in the hubs with the CF staff, Play teams in Hengoed and Pontygwindy and the Sunflower project in Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr, with back-office functions based in GAVO HQ at Newport. MF advised that Satellite offices were still under consideration.</p> <p>MF reported on the early meeting with the new CEO of WCVA, Ruth Marks and the meeting with Torfaen Voluntary Alliance and Judith Paget to look at closer working across the ABUHB footprint. He noted that a new Gwent wide development post supported by the OPCC and GAVO/TVA was out to advert but that a number of European funded posts for social enterprise and Making the Connections were ending which highlighted the difficulty in balancing traditional support to groups and the requirements of changing legislation on the third sector. He noted that GAVO were developing thematic groups which would link with strategic priorities and support the involvement of the third sector.</p> <p>GAVO was working with partners to review the traditional calendar of events in the county borough and MF reported on on-going discussions to take the "One Beat" event out into the community as 4 smaller events to enable greater public involvement. JP noted her interest in the move of "One Beat" and the difficulty of balancing the need for a visible celebration of volunteering and the engagement of the public at a local level whilst keeping the profile high. HR questioned the potential resource implications of the changes.</p> <p>MF noted that the Volunteering Awards would be maintained as a high profile corporate event but would have new categories of award to reflect community activity.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Update on LSB ESF Projects</b> HR noted that all Caerphilly LSB ESF projects have either concluded or were coming to an end on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2015.</p> <p>Lead Officers for the Personal Information Sharing Project were welcomed and delivered their report and PowerPoint as follows:</p> <p><b>a. Personal Information Sharing:</b> JJ began by giving LSB members an overview of the project objectives to develop 6 WASPI protocols to support personal information sharing based on previous work and to develop an innovative training framework. JJ outlined the completed protocols and those that were on-going. Using a Team around the Family/GAVO Play Work team case study JJ explained how the protocols had worked in practice. JJ noted the positive external evaluation by 20<sup>o</sup> Consulting, the very successful information sharing conference at the end of 2014 which showcased the level of collaboration, involvement of partners including the third sector and the information commissioner. JJ also outlined the innovative training package developed as part of the project including an e- learning module, supporting Apps and information leaflets, etc. RH went on to explain that information sharing could not stop at the end of the ESF project and that the exit strategy looked at how the work needed to continue. He highlighted the challenges of embedding information sharing good practice in partner organisations and the greater challenge of resourcing the work to develop ISPs once the funding for the WG WASPI team ended in March 2016. The maintenance of the national register of ISPs and the quality assurance role of the national WASPI team were areas of work that would</p>	

Point	Matter	Action
	<p>also need to continue in some form. Subsequently the LSB were asked to consider a number of recommendations:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue collaboration through Information Sharing Group</li> <li>2. Promote embedding of information sharing discussions at the start of new projects/initiatives</li> </ol> <p>Consider the following resource options:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Large statutory organisations across Wales part-fund a post to quality assure ISPs and provide support nationally</li> <li>b) CLSB partners combine resources for a post to support information sharing across the Caerphilly LSB</li> <li>c) Continue with existing in-house resource – limited ability to provide support due to increasing demands on time</li> <li>d) Do nothing</li> </ol> <p>LSB members discussed the success of the project and how it might be supported in future to ensure that the momentum was not lost and that protocols developed already continued to work. RH expressed concern that without a support officer in place progress of embedding information sharing could slow.</p> <p>Suggestions were made that there might be a stronger case for funding from partners to develop support on a Gwent wide basis but members were aware of issues in relation to new posts in the financial climate and secondments were suggested as a possible alternative. The strong links to safeguarding were acknowledged and it was suggested that there should be some discussion with the regional safeguarding board.</p> <p>Following extensive discussion it was agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project and recommendations for on-going support should be presented at the G7 group to canvas and illicit support from regional partners.</li> <li>• A “costed” business case/ proposal be drawn-up to support the presentation to G7, giving the benefits of a post to support progress on personal information sharing on a pan-Gwent basis.</li> </ul> <p>The continuation of the Information Sharing Steering Group was agreed.</p>	<p>JJ/RH</p> <p><b>LSB</b> <i>(arrangements made for presentation at next G7 mtg)</i></p> <p>JJ/RH</p>
<p><b>b.</b></p> <p><b>c.</b></p>	<p><b>Vulnerability Intelligence:</b> The project report by Jonathan Pinkney (Regional Project Officer) had been previously circulated and was noted. HR reported on the dissemination event in February, introduced by the Chief Constable Jeff Farrar. HR noted that the project had proved the concept of multi-agency data sharing to support preventative work around identified vulnerable individuals but further work would need to be done to develop beyond concept. It was noted that JF had indicated that he would be taking the outcome of the project to the G7 to make them aware of the potential, to the WG ESGV (which he chairs) and onwards to Public Service Leadership Panel. The report was noted.</p> <p><b>Passport Programme:</b> A briefing paper on the Passport Programme had been previously circulated. Members noted the success of the project and noted with disappointment that there was unlikely to be any further EU money to support its continuation. KR expressed concern that the benefits to individuals and partners would be lost and hoped that continuation funding could be found. Discussions had taken place with Jobs Growth Wales but with no feedback to date. JO agreed to discuss the programme with WG colleagues to explore options and feed-back to the LSB as a matter of urgency.</p>	<p>JF</p> <p>JO</p>

Point	Matter	Action
d.	<p><b>Programme Manager (Partnership Development and Collaborative Improvement):</b>            HR reported that the EU funding for his post had now finished and all project reporting and paperwork had been submitted to WG/WEFO. The project had concluded in November, 2014. He reported on an application submitted for grant funding from the WG LSB Development Fund for up to £30,400 to part-fund the post up to March 2016 to focus on the preparation work for the changes to the LSB (into PSB) and single planning process identified in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill. LSB members noted the report and application process.</p>	
5. a.	<p><b><u>LSB Anti-Poverty Priority:</u></b>  <b>Draft CCBC Anti Poverty Strategy:</b>            Rob Hartshorn updated LSB members on the development of the draft CCBC Anti-Poverty Strategy, previously circulated. He noted his previous report that there were many anti-poverty initiatives taking place through the Council's core work but that the information and outcomes had not been captured in one place. The strategy was intended to provide a strategic focal point for the work to enable services to see their contribution to the LSB priority. He noted that the circulated draft strategy was being consulted on externally to seek feedback and support for the principle of a strategy. It would be going through the due CCBC processes during April/May, 2015.</p> <p>LSB members commented on the structure noting it was well structured, easy to read, with clearly measurable objectives. CB noted that the value of the document to the Council was to show services how they contribute to the wider issue of poverty. CB referred to the workshop on Lansbury Park at the Standing Conference highlighting the multi-agency practitioner group brought together to look at solutions to the poverty experienced in that ward given that it was now the most deprived ward in Wales (WIMD). He noted that a management board was being brought together to give oversight and legitimacy to the work being undertaken and that the next meeting would focus on education. The commencement of the WHQS work in the area including environmental improvements which tied in well to the strategy was noted. The first meeting of the group had met with residents of the houses that had already been improved.</p> <p>JP reported on the work being undertaken to investigate the links between deprivation and cancer survival and the poor uptake of screening. RH commented that whilst a substantial number of services were being delivered in the Lansbury Park area the issue was uptake and work was being considered under the Living Longer Programme to address that. JP agreed to make screening reports available if required.</p> <p>RH responding to a question from MF confirmed that the timeline for the roll out of the strategy was not yet set as it may develop into a broader partnership strategy. Thinking forward to the development of PSBs and wellbeing plans, and recognising that whilst it would identify council work, it was acknowledged that very little of that was done in isolation without partners, it was agreed it could become a reporting mechanism for all anti-poverty work. Members agreed that this was an ideal project for the LSB as it required all partners input if it was to succeed in raising the aspirations of people living in these areas of deprivation</p> <p>It was suggested that a future meeting of the LSB could take place in Lansbury Park. RH was thanked for his work and that of the Anti-Poverty Task Group to date.</p>	

Point	Matter	Action
6.	<p><b><u>The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill:</u></b></p> <p>A briefing note had been previously circulated and some discussion regarding the sustainable development elements of the Bill had already taken place. HR updated members on the progression of the Bill through the National Assembly for Wales legislative process, mentioning 290 amendments to date and was due to go to plenary session (Stage 3) on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2015. There were some concerns about the ambitious nature of the Bill as overarching legislation from which other legislation would cascade. There were also questions regarding the resource implications.</p> <p>HR circulated a process (“Architecture”) diagram and it was noted that the legislation would place a great deal of responsibility on individual organisations to identify how their actions will contribute/effect future generations, in ten year “bites” up to 2050. He explained how LSBs would become Public Service Boards with the role to deliver the Wellbeing Plan.</p> <p>HR reported on the previous day’s conference and the launch of the “Wales We Want” report by the Sustainable Development Commissioner. The report followed the “national conversation” organised by Cynnal Cymru which had identified 7 foundation themes from the comments received from organisations and the public. He agreed to circulate the links to the document and presentations. He noted that KS had given a presentation on Groundwork Wales at the Conference and its sustainability principles but there had been no mention throughout the conference of the experiences of LSBs in producing and delivering their Single Integrated Plans.</p> <p>He raised the issue of the change in membership from the LSB to the PSB and the statutory duties of future PSBs. CB suggested that there might not be a huge change to the way of working as the SIP would need to be updated in future based on a needs assessment anyway. Members also commented on the future changes to the political landscape proposed. It was suggested that guidance that will be issued as the Bill moves forward would give more clarity for its practical application and that this LSB was well placed to move forward as a PSB.</p> <p>In discussing future membership KR referred to the previous request from the Police and Crime Commissioner to become a member of the LSB, noting that they would be a statutory member in future. It was agreed that the PCC be invited to join the LSB and attend the next scheduled meeting.</p>	<p>HR (circulated on 4/3/15)</p> <p>HR (actioned on 4/3/15)</p>
7.	<p><b><u>Caerphilly Armed Forces Community Covenant:</u></b></p> <p>HR updated on the previously circulated report, highlighting the positive development, progress and activity of the Caerphilly Armed Forces Forum (CAFF) noting his attendance at a national MOD event where it was clear that Caerphilly were well in advance of other areas. He reported on the appended CAFF Activity Programme update noting that the work had been undertaken within existing resources and no dedicated budget.</p> <p>KR expressed his thanks to all members of CAFF who should be justifiably proud of the achievements to date, as indeed he is as Chair of the LSB.</p>	
8.	<p><b><u>Feedback on the Standing Conference 30<sup>th</sup> January 2015:</u></b></p> <p>HR noted that very positive feedback had been received on the conference held on 30<sup>th</sup> January. Presentations had been circulated to delegates and a report would be produced based on the workshops in due course and lodged on the LSB website. He informed members that the 12<sup>th</sup> June at Llancaiach had been identified for the next Standing Conference and a diary marker</p>	

Point	Matter	Action
	<p>would be circulated once approved. He asked members who had attended for any feedback and asked if they wished to continue the Anti-Poverty theme at the next event.</p> <p>JO acknowledged the success of the event with very good presentations including the young people from Rhymney School Council. He felt that there had been a lot of enthusiasm to engage with the subject and the next conference should continue to build on the theme. CB suggested that the January Conference had been very much about the data and the June conference should be a signal to partner organisations for them to identify actions they can take. HR asked members to contact him with any further ideas for the theme which he would be able to confirm at the next LSB on 2<sup>nd</sup> June.</p>	<p>LSB</p>
9.	<p><b><u>Information Items:</u></b> Items circulated for information were noted.</p>	
10.	<p><b><u>Any Other Business:</u></b> There was no further business.</p>	
11.	<p><b><u>Date of Next Meeting:</u></b> At 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2015 at a venue to be agreed.</p>	<p>HR</p>

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## Caerphilly Local Service Board



Bwrdd Iechyd  
Aneurin Bevan  
Health Board



Heddlu  
Gwent  
Police



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

### Notes of Meeting

Held at 9:00am on Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2015  
Core Room 1.3, Ty Penallta

#### Present:-

Cllr Keith Reynolds (Chair)	Chair of Caerphilly LSB and Leader of Caerphilly County Borough Council
Chris Burns	Interim Chief Executive, Caerphilly County Borough Council
Alison Shakestaff	Director of Therapies & Health Sciences, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (representing Judith Paget, Chief Executive)
Nick McLain	Chief Inspector, Gwent Police (representing Chief Constable Jeff Farrar)
James Owen	Deputy Director, Expert Services & People Division, Welsh Government
Shelley Bosson	Chief Executive, Office of the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner

#### In attendance:-

Kath Peters	Community Safety Manager
Howard Rees	Programme Manager, CCBC
Alison Palmer	Community Planning Coordinator (Notes)

#### Apologies:-

Jeff Farrar	Chief Constable, Gwent Police
David Jenkins	Chair, ABUHB
Ian Johnson	Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner
Martin Featherstone	Chief Executive, Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations

Point	Matter	Action
1.	<b>Welcome:</b> Cllr KR welcomed everyone to the meeting including Shelley Bosson, Nick McLain and Alison Shakestaff who were attending for the first time.	
2.	<b>Previous Notes and Matters Arising:</b> The notes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.  It was noted that the next meeting on 1 <sup>st</sup> September would take place at Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr with thanks to Judith Paget for offering to host the meeting.	

Point	Matter	Action
	<p>Pg. 4: CB reported that the proposed presentation to the management network on the PREVENT programme had not yet taken place. It was agreed that Kath Peters/Rob Hartshorn would contact CB to arrange a space on a forthcoming agenda.</p> <p>Pg. 5: The LSB ESF Information Sharing project presentation to G7 had not been given as the meeting had been cancelled. However the project team have delivered a presentation at a recently held national Information Records Management conference at the Celtic Manor.</p> <p>Pg. 6: It was noted that JF had not yet taken the Vulnerability Intelligence project feedback to the G7.</p> <p>Pg. 7: Passport programme. JO reported discussions with WG colleagues where the disappointment of the LSB had been highlighted at the lack of continuation funding for the successful Passport Project. CB hoped there would be more news by the next meeting.</p> <p>Anti Poverty Strategy: The progress of the CCBC Anti-Poverty Strategy through council processes was noted, including scrutiny that evening and full Council on 9<sup>th</sup> June. The role of partners in delivering the strategy was vital and it was agreed that a copy would be circulated to members.</p> <p>Lansbury Park: CB updated members on the work focussed on Lansbury Park being the most deprived ward in Wales according to the recent WIMD report. A task group had been set up to take a holistic approach to the issue which had also provided a workshop session at the last Standing Conference. The group had undertaken a walkabout around the estate with elected members to look at the issues and talk to residents. It was noted that the WHQS work would have a major impact when complete, including the external cladding, kitchens and bathrooms. The group had met with education colleagues from primary and secondary to look at tracking the progress of children to see what schools they were attending and what package of measures could help tackle issues. The next focus of the group would be health and they would be in touch with ABUHB colleagues to look at health issues. CB suggested that the LSB might wish to consider this again at a future date when they could see how the work was progressing.</p>	<p>KP/RH</p> <p>JF</p> <p>HR</p>
<p>3.</p> <p>a.</p>	<p><b><u>Update on ‘Caerphilly Delivers’ - the LSB Single Integrated Plan:</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Presentation on progress on the Safer Caerphilly Outcome:</u></b>  Chief Inspector Nick McLain (Gwent Police) and Kath Peters (Community Safety Manager CCBC) delivered a presentation outlining progress on the Safer Caerphilly Outcome theme and an update on 10,000 Safer Lives, detailed in the previously circulated Highlight report and scorecard. NMc explained that he would try to present the data in a different way to the circulated scorecard to make it easier to see trends and referred members to the slides highlighting the reduction in anti-social behaviour (ASB) incidents from 2012 - 2015 as an example. He noted the successful partnership actions to focus on diversionary activities during events such as Halloween and bonfire night as a factor in reducing ASB incidents and the joint tasking approach, making use of information from all partners to effectively focus responses. He noted the four strikes ASB process as being an effective tool for managing offenders and highlighted the greater use of social media and the OWL system across the borough.</p>	

Point	Matter	Action
	<p>He went on to update on recorded crime for the same period looking at the Caerphilly picture in relation to national crime figures. He explained the change in approach to recording crime and noted that in Caerphilly county borough Gwent Police had succeeded in recording more crime but had also been successful in reducing crime. He noted that Chief Constable Jeff Farrar was the national lead on crime statistics. He highlighted the successes of partnership working on integrated offender management for priority offenders, and youth offenders, noting the huge reduction in first time offenders, also acknowledging the early education through schools and the flexible approach such as the Project Bernie (grass fires) working party. He noted the investment by Gwent Police of "body-cams" for every officer which would roll out from September.</p> <p>NMc turning to domestic abuse, noted the worrying increase in reported incidents particularly in the north of the borough, possibly through people becoming more confident in reporting incidents or it being previously seriously under-reported. He noted the focus on it as a priority area of work and the MARAC process which he felt was working, and in answer to a question from SB, particularly with repeat offenders.</p> <p><b>10,000 Safer Lives update:</b>  KP then continued the presentation to examining the "10,000 Safer Lives" initiative which the WG has stated would now cease. She noted that the LSB had been previously asked by WG to comply with the 11 standards. The new Act would supersede these with some standards encompassed within the Act and forthcoming statutory guidance. The new regional DA team will support statutory and third sector in implementing the Act and statutory guidance and will report to the WG National Advisor. Many of the standards had already been achieved i.e. the MARAC process. SB highlighted the OPCC funding provided on a Gwent footprint and it was noted that the new team hosted by Newport would work with the Victims Hub in Blackwood. However some concern had been expressed about local delivery and support for victims.</p> <p>KP explained the new duties on the Public sector including the requirement for the LA and LHB to produce a shared domestic abuse strategy. A national training framework would provide different levels of training from level 1 to 5 and as Gwent was an early adopter it would pilot the training. The guidance included the appointment of local champions at member/officer level.</p> <p>NMc took members back through the remainder of the scorecard and highlighted the strength of partnership working which was second to none in Caerphilly county borough. He identified the challenges of budget cuts leading to reductions in service which would make it difficult to maintain public confidence. KP also highlighted the difficulty in achieving the duty of conducting annual strategic assessments due to lack of analytical capacity. She noted that a Safer Gwent strategy was currently being developed which will provide some evidence for the review of the scorecard in the third quarter. They were undertaking a light touch review at present as some actions were completed and new work needed to be included. They were also looking to work more strategically with work divided into neighbourhood policing and community safety teams. The work of the "Positive Futures" initiative in Newport was noted, highlighting that the initiative had ben rolled out to local hotspot areas and now taking referrals.</p> <p>NMc noted the huge operational changes for Gwent Police but acknowledged the excellent support from all partners which was much appreciated. KP and NMc were thanked for their presentation the contents of which were noted.</p>	

Point	Matter	Action
b.	<p><b><u>Other Outcome Highlight/Exception Reports:</u></b>  HR reminded members that as well as the full presentation from one of the Outcome theme Lead Officers at each meeting, highlight/exception reports from all Outcome theme Lead Officers are also circulated. He noted that scorecards had also been circulated it being the end of the performance year.</p> <p><b>Prosperous Caerphilly:</b>  CB reported on the emerging Cardiff Capital region and City Deal initiatives, with the latter bid being put together by the 10 authorities in the region to draw down national funding to support the initiative. He noted that this could be an exciting opportunity to bring economic development to the county borough with the current review of the Local Development Plan and work being undertaken with the Business Forum to put together a strategy for growth. It was agreed that it would be useful to look at this at a future meeting.</p> <p><b>Learning Caerphilly:</b>  HR noted the very positive report on Flying Start in the county borough and highlighted the integrated approach being undertaken to work together with Communities First and Families First continuing the success of all three WG Anti-Poverty programmes locally.</p> <p><b>Healthier Caerphilly:</b>  HR noted the previous difficulties in populating the Healthier Caerphilly outcome theme scorecard due to data not being easily accessible in the form required. He noted the outcomes had been reviewed and the scorecard and plan were being updated accordingly. He advised of the proposal for the Wellbeing Network (WIN) to take responsibility for the whole plan instead of the current split between the Neighbourhood Care Networks (NCNs) and WIN, with the latter becoming the Healthier Caerphilly Outcome delivery group, similar to the Safer structure. The revised structure and reporting mechanism was approved.</p> <p><b>Greener Caerphilly:</b>  HR noted the comprehensive report on the three specific priority areas demonstrated through case studies. The Greener Caerphilly delivery group had reviewed the actions and wished to make some changes to the priorities which would then be reflected in the new action plan. LSB members noted the report and approved the revision process.</p> <p>HR noted that the Greener Caerphilly delivery group (and the Living Environment Partnership previously) has always had representation from the Countryside Council for Wales and now its successor organisation Natural Resources Wales (NRW). As NRW would become a statutory member of the Caerphilly Public Service Board (from April, 2016) he asked members to consider if it would be appropriate to invite them to become members of the LSB in advance of the changes. JO noted that NRW were already gearing up to meet the commitment of representation at all PSBs in future and had already been invited to join elsewhere. It was agreed that the Chair would write to NRW formally inviting them to join the LSB.</p> <p><i>(Chair's Note: Chief Executive of NRW invited and has nominated Jon Goldsworthy Operations Manager to be the NRW representative on the LSB/PSB).</i></p>	<p>HR/KR  <i>(see Chair's Note)</i></p>
c.	<p><b><u>Voluntary Sector and GAVO Update:</u></b>  Apologies for the meeting had been received from MF. The circulated report was noted.</p>	

Point	Matter	Action
4.	<p><b><u>Update on LSB ESF Projects:</u></b>            HR reported that the evaluation report and recommendations on the national WG LSB ESF programme had been received and the WG responses circulated to LSB members for information/observations. He noted the three projects in the county borough included being:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passport programme</li> <li>• Information Sharing</li> <li>• Vulnerability Intelligence</li> <li>• Programme Manager</li> </ul> <p>HR also highlighted the previously circulated national evaluation report on the Role of LSB support officers, noting that LSBs operated very differently across Wales. Whilst many of the recommendations focussed on WG, the WG responses placed greater expectations on the future operation of Public Service Boards.</p>	
5.	<p><b><u>The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, 2015:</u></b>            HR reported that the Bill had received Royal Assent on 29<sup>th</sup> April and was now an Act. WG were currently working with different teams on producing draft guidance for its implementation, which was being circulated to various networks for pre-consultation comment. It was hoped that the full guidance would be circulated prior to the new year. He noted that there were a large number of events taking place led by different organisations including the Early Adopters programme led by the WLGA, WG events and Cynnal Cymru conferences. The process currently appeared very disjointed and un-coordinated including some key events taking place on the same day. It had been raised at the WG LSB support team meeting.</p> <p>CB reported that the new Commissioner had yet to be appointed and JO noted that the role would be advertised.</p> <p>It was explained that Welsh Ministers would be setting national indicators that local PSBs would have to respond to. It was agreed that it would be useful to see a timetable detailing the proposed commencement. Members expressed concern that hopefully there would be a more reasonable timescale to work to develop the Wellbeing Assessment unlike with the SIP. It was noted that Tim Peppin was working on it for the WLGA and some local authorities had already taken on some aspects of the Act in readiness. HR reported that Paul Cooke would be attending another event on 23<sup>rd</sup> June.</p> <p>SB noted that some LSBs were already looking at working in a shadow format, one or two of the other boards will be inviting additional members now to develop an understanding of how people are working already. It was explained that the WG policy intent was that this process was intended to be a fundamental and step-change, with LSBs formally ceasing and PSBs commencing as new bodies from April, 2016.</p> <p>CB noted that Caerphilly CBC had been one of the early adopters but had put it on hold. He considered that the workshop looking ahead to 2050 had not been particularly productive as it was difficult to project forward thirty years but Caerphilly was well placed to take the next step.</p>	
6.	<p><b><u>Standing Conference 12<sup>th</sup> June 2015:</u></b>            HR reported that the January Standing Conference report had been published on the website, with a hyperlink to the document circulated to all.</p> <p>The next Standing Conference would take place on 12<sup>th</sup> June and would take forward the recommendations from the previous LSB meeting to build on the</p>	

Point	Matter	Action
	<p>last conference and to further develop the anti-poverty theme to look at economic recovery.</p> <p>The Conference entitled “Not Standing Still.....Economic Recovery in Caerphilly” will receive a keynote presentation delivered by Peter Slater (Industrial Communities Alliance) on closing the prosperity gap, followed by locally themed presentations by Rhian Kyte (CCBC) on the LDP, the Chair of Caerphilly Business Forum giving a private sector perspective and Gareth Jones (Welsh ICE) looking at innovation. There would then be themed workshops. There would also be a repeat of the foodbank collection.</p>	
7.	<p><b><u>Information Items:</u></b> Items circulated for information were noted.</p>	
8.	<p><b><u>Any Other Business:</u></b> There was no further business. Cllr KR closed the meeting with thanks to those who had attended.</p>	
9.	<p><b><u>Date of Next Meeting:</u></b> At 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2015 at Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr, Ystrad Fawr Way, Ystrad Mynach, Hengoed CF82 7EP.</p>	



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

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH  
(SIRHOWY ROOM) ON THURSDAY, 17TH SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 5.00 P.M.

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PRESENT:

C. Davies- Chair  
E. Forehead – Vice Chair

### Task Group Members:

Ms L. Ackerman, Ms J. Gale, K. James, Mrs B. Jones, Mrs S. Jones, M. McDermott, Mrs D. Moore, J. Moore and D.V. Poole.

S. Couzens (Chief Housing Officer), P. Davy (Head of Programmes), P. Smythe (Housing Repair Operation Manager), M. Betts (Community Participation Officer), J. Green (Housing Manager - Older Persons Services), J. Carter (Senior Housing Officer), S. Isaacs (Senior Rents Officer), M. Jennings (Housing Strategy Officer), C. Evans (Committee Services Officer)

### 1. TO APPOINT A CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR THE ENSUING YEAR.

It was moved and seconded that C. Davies be appointed as Chair of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group for the ensuing year and by a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that C. Davies be appointed Chair of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group for the ensuing year.

It was moved and seconded that E. Forehead be appointed as Vice Chair of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group for the ensuing year and by a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that E. Forehead be appointed as Vice Chair of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group for the ensuing year.

### 2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs G. Atkins, Miss A. Lewis and C. Mann.

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr C. Davies, Mrs B. Jones, Mrs S. Jones, Mrs D. Moore, J. Moore, and Mr M. McDermott as Council Tenants declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in all agenda items.

#### **4. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

At a meeting earlier in the week the Tenant Representatives of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group had met and discussed the Terms of Reference. It was noted that some minor revisions to the Terms of Reference were required and an updated Terms of Reference would be considered at the next meeting of the Task Group.

#### **5. MINUTES – 2ND JULY 2015**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 2nd July 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **6. PROPOSED INSPECTION PROGRAMME FOR COUNCIL PROPERTIES**

The report, which was considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 14th July 2015 (when representatives of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group were invited to give their views), proposed the introduction of regular property and tenancy inspections for Caerphilly Homes and sought the views of the Task Group prior to its consideration by Cabinet.

The Caerphilly Homes Task Group highlighted concerns for the privacy of tenants and raised concerns about the inspection programme and standards. Officer's clarified that the inspections would be conducted by a variety of existing officers including Tenancy Enforcement Officers and Estate Management Officers, as part of their normal role and are intended to ensure that properties are being maintained to an acceptable standard, and identify any tenancy related issues, such as Health and Safety, Mental Health and Child Protection and signpost for support where required.

Having fully considered the report and the recommendations contained therein, the Caerphilly Homes Task Group recommended that Cabinet adopt the Proposed Inspection Programme for Council Properties.

By a show of hands, and in noting there was 1 against and 1 abstention, the recommendations were supported by the majority present.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that: -

- (i) Members note the views of the CHTG as detailed in the covering report.
- (ii) 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;
- (iii) 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.

#### **7. REMODELLING OF SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEMES**

The report was considered by the Caerphilly Homes Task Group (CHTG) on the 17th September 2015. It sought views 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, prior to its consideration at Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, and thereafter Cabinet.



The report also sought the views on proposals for the six schemes to be omitted from WHQS works programme, 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.

The Caerphilly Homes Task Group highlighted concerns for tenants within these schemes and the postponement of WHQS works. Officers highlighted that many of the bedsits are not fit for purpose and there are a higher number of voids within the Schemes. Officers also highlighted the fact that beyond the bedsits and flats, the schemes themselves lacked adequate facilities for our vulnerable tenants as circulation space and access throughout the schemes was limited, particularly for those with mobility or health issues. Therefore, it was proposed that the works take place following 2020 until 2025, remodelling the schemes to meet WHQS standards and become fit for purpose.

Having fully considered the report and the recommendations contained therein, the Caerphilly Homes Task Group recommended that the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee support the Remodelling of the Sheltered Housing Schemes and recommend its adoption at Cabinet.

By a show of hands, and in noting there were 3 against, the recommendations were supported by the majority present.

RECOMMENDED to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and thereafter Cabinet for a decision : -

- (i) Members note the views of the CHTG as detailed in the covering report.
- (ii) A full and comprehensive feasibility study is commissioned for the six sheltered housing schemes identified in the report.
- (iii) Following a positive outcome of the feasibility study, the schemes be removed from the WHQS programme with the intent 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.

## **8. COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT FUND**

The report provided details of an application made for funding from the Community Improvement Fund by TARRAGON Educational Gardens. The TARRAGON 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. TARRAGON Community Gardens have applied for £3,854.11 from the Community Improvement Fund, to help finance the expansion and redevelopment of the site.

The total cost of the project is estimated to be a total of £20,770.56, and two quotes for the entire project have been included, along with a copy of their constitution with the application. The remaining £16,916.45 has been secured from other sources including the Community Regeneration Fund, Bargoed Town Council and Communities First.

The Task Group thanked the Officer for the report and following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the Caerphilly Homes Task Group support the application made by TARRAGON Educational Gardens. 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 the application 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.

## **9. COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS – CAERPHILLY HOMES**

J. Carter (Senior Housing Officer) and M. Betts (Community Participation Officer) provided an overview of the report, which highlighted the contacts in relation to complaints and representations received by the Authority's Housing Customer Services Section, from 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015.

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 procedure, which were outlined within the report.

The Task Group thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued. Financial implications were discussed as a result of compensation payments and staff time. A Member suggested that Complaints be resolved sooner and lessons learnt from recent cases where possible, in order to avoid further costs.

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

## **10. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE TENANCY REVIEW PANEL**

S. Isaacs presented the report which highlighted the outcomes of cases presented to the Tenancy Review Panel.

The Tenancy Review Panel was set up in June 2014. It was noted that during the period of June 2014 to May 2015, 51 cases were considered by the Panel and a recommendation was made to the Chief Housing Officer that an eviction warrant should be applied for in all cases.

The Task Group noted further information on the cases, reasons for the applications and outcomes of the warrants, as outlined within the report.

A Task Group Member sought further information on the Homelessness and Housing application process for previously evicted tenants. It was noted that a process is in place which would allow a previous Council tenant to be housed within the Authority, following an eviction from Private Rented accommodation, however, the arrears would be incorporated within the new tenancy agreement and support processes would be put in place, if deemed necessary.

The Task Group discussed the report and data within and sought clarification on the amount of arrears that would be successfully retrieved by the Authority. It was noted that there were 32 cases for eviction, which totalled £76,000 in arrears and it was unlikely that the Authority would recover this amount. The Task Group were asked to note that the eviction process is a long process and is used as a last resort and a variety of support services are offered to the tenant before eviction notice is served.

The Caerphilly Homes Task Group noted the report.

## **11. A PROGRESS REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMON HOUSING REGISTER AND COMMON ALLOCATION POLICY**

M. Jennings (Housing Strategy Officer) provided the Task Group with an update on the progress being made in the development of the Common Housing Register and Common Allocation Policy, and builds upon a previous update report to CHTG in May 2014.

Task Group Members noted that a number of working groups have been established to progress key elements of the project, a 12-week public consultation exercise had been undertaken on the draft allocation policy and that, Abris was awarded the contract to provide a new IT system to manage the Common Housing Register.

The Task Group thanked the Officer for the report and sought further information on the tender and award process for the IT System. It was noted that a number of IT systems were considered through various partners and organisations and following considerable research, the contract was awarded via the G Cloud framework to Abris, area market leader in common housing register IT systems.

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

## **12. HANDLING OF DAMP AND CONDENSATION COMPLAINTS – UPDATE REPORT**

The report, which was presented to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 14th July 2015 is an update report and was originally presented to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee in September 2014.

The original report provided data from the last six years in relation to incidence of damp and condensation in the Council's Housing stock. The update report provided details of incidence following the winter period of October 2014 to March 2015.

The Task Group noted that, as a result of the previous report, an area for improvement was highlighted in the difficulty identifying the common causes of dampness within properties. As a result, a simple coding has been devised and implemented at the point the repair and provides a breakdown of the total number and type of works order related to dampness which has been received during the period and compares it with the same period last year.

It was noted that there are varying types of damp issues which include a high incidence of condensation related to tenants' lifestyles; dampness related to building defects often highlighted by energy improvement works and damp related leaks from the plumbing in the property or other types of leaks.

Additional training has been provided to relevant Officers in order to assist in effective diagnosis of causes of damp related problems and revisions have been made to the damp and condensation leaflet and the Task Group received a demonstration of the updated video, which is available on Social Media, YouTube and disk for tenants.

The Task Group thanked the Officer for the report and video and sought information on the costs of producing the video. The Officer highlighted that considerable improvements have been made to in-house technologies in order to bring communications into the 21st Century and promoting awareness via Community Groups, Tenant Groups and through relevant Officers. The Task Group noted that production costs were inexpensive and aims to remedy a number of issues.

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

The report provided the Task Group with an end of year update on progress made against the key outcomes contained within the 2014/15 divisional service plan.

The 2014/15 service plan was produced in accordance with corporate guidance issued by the performance management unit and 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.

The Task Group noted those key priority areas that had either been fully or partially successful.

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

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

The following requests were received:-

1. Councillor E. Forehead requested advice on the progress of a previous request for 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 6.25 p.m.

Approved as a correct record subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 29th October 2015.

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CHAIR



## **POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10TH NOVEMBER 2015**

**SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE – QUARTER 2 – 1ST JULY  
2015 TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2015**

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

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

- 1.1 To report Members' levels of attendance at scheduled meetings of Caerphilly County Borough Council.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The report details the attendance of Members at scheduled meetings throughout the Quarter 1st July to 30th September.

### **3. THE REPORT**

- 3.1 Appendix 1 details Members' attendance for quarter 2 (1st July 2015 to 30th September 2015), at the following meetings:

- Council;
- Cabinet;
- Scrutiny Committees;
- Planning Committee;
- Audit Committee;
- Democratic Services Committee; and
- Sustainable Development Advisory Panel.

- 3.2 The information is compiled from attendance sheets signed by Members at these meetings.

- 3.3 The appendix also allows for a comparison with the same period in the preceding two years. When making comparisons to previous quarters/years, please note that overall averages given are the weighted average to reflect the number of meetings in each quarter.

- 3.4 Details for the next quarter (1st October 2015 to 31st December 2015) will be reported to the next appropriate meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

### **4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

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

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

**6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

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

**7. CONSULTATIONS**

7.1 None.

**8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 That Members note the content of the report.

**9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 To inform Members of attendance levels at scheduled meetings of Caerphilly County Borough Council from the Annual Meeting of Council, 2015.

Author: A. Dredge (Committee Services Officer)

Background Papers:  
Member attendance sheets

Appendices:  
Appendix 1 Schedule of Members' Attendance 2013 to 2016

## Quarterly Summary of Attendance Levels (Percentages)

### AGM to AGM

	2013-2014					2014-2015					2015-2016				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Council	87	82	82	88	<b>85</b>	84	84	75	84	<b>82</b>	84	80			
Crime & Disorder		69		94	<b>82</b>		81		56	<b>69</b>		75			
Education For Life	72	75	69	75	<b>73</b>	66	65	81	72	<b>71</b>	69	78			
Health, Social Care & Wellbeing	75	66	78	69	<b>72</b>	75	73	74	85	<b>77</b>	63	64			
Regeneration and Environment	69	63	81	84	<b>74</b>	81	80	77	78	<b>79</b>	78	81			
Policy & Resources	69	78	84	85	<b>79</b>	78	77	88	77	<b>80</b>	94	84			
Planning Committee	75	82	85	89	<b>83</b>	85	75	73	75	<b>77</b>	65	83			
Audit Committee	83	75	67	83	<b>77</b>	58	83	58	92	<b>73</b>	75	83			
Democratic Services Committee	69		69	75	<b>71</b>	88	75	69	88	<b>80</b>	69	88			
Sustainable Development Advisory Panel	64	64		64	<b>64</b>		82	55	73	<b>70</b>	55				
<b>Average Attendance per quarter</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>80</b>			
Cabinet	95	82	92	93	<b>91</b>	93	93	95	91	<b>93</b>	83	86			

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## **POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10TH NOVEMBER 2015**

**SUBJECT: POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

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

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

1.1 To report the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

### **2. SUMMARY**

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

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

3.1 The operation of scrutiny is required by the Local Government Act 2000 and subsequent Assembly legislation.

### **4. THE REPORT**

4.1 The Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme identifies reports that are due to be presented to scrutiny during the period November to January 2016 and have followed consultation process which includes key stakeholders and the public.

4.2 For information, the latest Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1.

### **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

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

### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

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

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 That Members note the Forward Work Programme.

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

10.1 To improve the operation of scrutiny.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 The Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Catherine Forbes-Thompson Scrutiny Research Officer  
Consultees: Angharad Price, Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer and Head of Democratic Services

Appendices:  
Appendix 1 Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

## APPENDIX 1

<b>Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme – November to January 2016</b>		
<b>Subject Area</b>	<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Proposed Meeting Date</b>
Pre-decision Scrutiny	Common Allocation Policy	10 <sup>th</sup> November 2015
	Medium Term Financial Plan	7 <sup>th</sup> December 2015 - Special
	Customer Services Strategy	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
	Rowan Place – progress report and sensitive lettings policy	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
	Council Tax Discretionary Reduction Policy	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
	Re profiling of WHQS Programme and HRA Capital Programme 2016/17	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
	WHQS Compliance Policy	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
	Small Lots – Review of Contract Arrangements	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
Consultation & Information	Council Tax and Business Rate: Increase in Court Fees	7 <sup>th</sup> December 2015 - Special
	Review of Charitable Rate Relief Awards (for information)	10 <sup>th</sup> November 2015
	Discretionary Rate Relief Applications (information)	10 <sup>th</sup> November 2015
Performance Management; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WAO Service Performance Reports</li> <li>• Improvement Objectives</li> <li>• Council Self-evaluation</li> <li>• Service Improvement Plans</li> </ul>	IO5 – Investment in Council homes to transform lives and communities	10 <sup>th</sup> November 2015?

## APPENDIX 1

Subject Area	Report Title	Proposed Meeting Date
<b>Monitoring of Authority's Financial Resources</b>	Reserves Strategy	10 <sup>th</sup> November 2015
	Write Off of Debts	10 <sup>th</sup> November 2015
	Treasury Management & Prudential Indicator Monitoring – Qtrs. 1 & 2	10 <sup>th</sup> November 2015
	Corporate Services & Miscellaneous Finance Budget Monitoring – Period 7	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
Monitoring of Authority's Financial Resources	Capital Budget Monitoring Report – Period 7	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
	Whole Authority Budget Monitoring 2015/16	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
	Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Monitoring Report	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
Ombudsman Reports	No reports for this area	
Task and Finish Group	No reports for this area	
Members/ Public Requests, Call-ins & CCfA	Leaseholder Charges	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
Scrutiny of Designated Persons and Other Organisations	No reports for this area	