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Date: 24th February 2016

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, 1st March, 2016** 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

AGENDA

	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 19th January 2016 (minute nos. 1 - 16).	1 - 12

A greener place Man gwyrdach

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



- 4 Consideration of any matter referred to this Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.
- 5 To receive a verbal report by the Cabinet Member(s).
- 6 To receive and consider the following Cabinet Reports*: -
1. Review of a) The Corporate Complaints Policy and b) The Policy and Procedure for Dealing with Unacceptable Persistent and Unreasonable Actions by Complainants - 20th January 2016;
 2. Former Bedwellty School Site - 20th January 2016;
 3. Disposal of Duffryn House (Ty Dyffryn) (EXEMPT) - 20th January 2016;
 4. Bridgend County Council - Catalogue Supplies Service (EXEMPT) - 20th January 2016;
 5. Housing Revenue Account Charges - 2016-2017 - 3rd February 2016;
 6. WHQS Compliance Policy - 3rd February 2016;
 7. Small Lots - Review of Contract Arrangements - 3rd February 2016;
 8. Rowan Place - Progress Report and Sensitive Lettings Policy - 3rd February 2016;
 9. Re-Profiling of WHQS Programme and HRA Capital Programme 2016/17 - 3rd February 2016;
 10. Rowan Place Rhymney – Surrender of Lease on 70 Rowan Place and Transfer of Lease to 29 Rowan Place - 3rd February 2016;
 11. Budget Proposals 2016/17 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2016/2021 - 17th February 2016;
 12. WHQS External Works for Upper Penllwyn and Springfield Estates - 17th February 2016;
 13. Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (G.T.A.A) - 17th February 2016;
 14. Groundwork Wales Update - 17th February 2016.

**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, 29th February 2016.*

To receive and consider the following Scrutiny reports:-

- | | | |
|----|---|----------|
| 7 | Strategic Equality Plan and Objectives 2016-2020. | 13 - 84 |
| 8 | Review of Community Improvement and Community Safety Funds. | 85 - 90 |
| 9 | Council Tax Discretionary Reduction Policy - Section 13A (1) (C). | 91 - 100 |
| 10 | To record any requests for an item to be included on the next available agenda. | |

To receive and note the following information items*:-

- | | | |
|----|---|-----------|
| 11 | Treasury Management and Capital Financing Prudential Indicators Quarter 3 Monitoring Report (1st April 2015 to 31st December 2015). | 101 - 112 |
| 12 | Caerphilly Local Service Board Minutes - 1st September 2015. | 113 - 120 |
| 13 | Corporate Health and Safety Committee Minutes - 16th November 2015. | 121 - 126 |

14	Caerphilly Homes Task Group Minutes - 10th December 2015.	127 - 132
15	Caerphilly Homes Task Group Minutes - 27th January 2016.	133 - 136
16	Pensions/Compensation Committee Minutes - 25th January 2016.	137 - 138

**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, 29th February 2016.*

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
TUESDAY, 19TH JANUARY 2016 AT 5.30 P.M.

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, C.P. Mann,
D. Rees, 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, D.V. Poole (Housing)

Together with:

N. Scammell (Acting Director of Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer), S. Couzens
(Chief Housing Officer), P. Davy (Head of Programmes), L. Lucas (Head of Procurement),
M. Betts (Tenant and Community Involvement Manager), S. Isaacs (Rents Manager), D. Titley
(Corporate Customer Services Manager), F. Wilkins (Public Sector Housing Manager),
A. Price (Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer) and R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J.E. Fussell, G. Kirby, A. Lewis and J.
Taylor.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S. Morgan declared an interest in Agenda Item 10 (Leaseholder Charges and
Consultation Arrangements). Details are minuted with the respective item.

3. MINUTES – 10TH NOVEMBER 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee held on
10th November 2015 (minute nos. 1 – 12) be approved as a correct record and signed
by the Chair.

4. MINUTES – 7TH DECEMBER 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Special Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 7th December 2015 (minute nos. 1 – 7) 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 MEMBERS

The Scrutiny Committee received verbal reports from Cabinet Members D.V. Poole and Mrs B. Jones.

Councillor D.V. Poole (Cabinet Member for Housing) gave an overview on progress in respect of the Welsh Quality Housing Standard programme (WHQS). Over 1,000 properties have benefitted from internal works between April-December 2015, with it anticipated that this will increase to around 1450 properties by March 2016. Although less than the original target set for the year, momentum has been established and if continuity in the issue of contract packages to all contractors is maintained, there can be confidence regarding the delivery of this aspect of the programme.

Members were advised of major challenges and further delays within the WHQS external works, which are partly due to contractor performance and partly due to the need to re-survey and amend the specification for the works. A decision to re-survey Council properties was instigated following concerns raised by the Project Board regarding cost escalation and the finding that some of the early external works were exceeding WHQS requirements. The problems have been further compounded as a result of limited tender returns, prices in excess of pre-tender estimates and instances of contractors declining work at the award stage. Nationally there have been reports of labour shortages within the construction industry which is causing contractors to increase prices and decline work.

The Cabinet Member also outlined resource issues within front-line roles in Housing Services, in that they are having difficulties in recruiting suitably qualified staff to fill these key roles. A number of posts have been filled by agency staff but suitable candidates are not always available, and therefore a number of other options are currently being explored.

Members were advised that a local resident, Lisa Evans, was recently nominated in the Residents and Communities category of the RESOLVE National Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) Awards by the Tenancy Enforcement Team. The Team nominated Lisa for her strength of character and determination when working with them to tackle neighbours who were causing anti-social behaviour in her community. The Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership worked together and with Lisa to resolve the issues. The evidence Lisa gave resulted in a Closure Order being granted by the courts and the person causing the anti-social behaviour being removed from their property.

The Scrutiny Committee were informed of the achievements of the Council's Housing Repair Services. They were recently shortlisted as finalists for an Association of Public Services Excellence (APSE) award for the Best Performing Authority in Building Maintenance. APSE is the UK's largest voluntary benchmarking service for local councils and it works with over 250 councils across the UK. The award is issued in recognition of performance data submitted for 2014/15 which covers a number of performance dimensions. Although Caerphilly did not win

the award it was an achievement to be nominated as one of the top ten best performers in the UK.

Members were advised that the Tenancy Support Officers continue to assist tenants to maintain their tenancies and to support them with the impacts of the welfare reform changes. In the first six months of 2015, the Council's support staff assisted 381 tenants to claim an additional £304,000 of income.

Discussion of the Cabinet Members report ensued and Members extended their congratulations to Housing Repair Services staff on their APSE award nomination. The Scrutiny Committee were also pleased to note the achievement of Lisa Evans and paid tribute to her efforts and tenacity in tackling anti-social behaviour in her community.

Mrs B. Jones (Cabinet Member for Corporate Services) presented her report and informed Members that the 12-week budget consultation period closed on Friday 8th January 2016. Consultation activities were extensive and the feedback received is currently being analysed. Reports will be prepared for Members' consideration as part of the budget setting process at the end of February.

An extensive Microsoft Exchange email upgrade was successfully completed in December 2015, which is providing improved performance and reliability across the Council's IT systems. The remaining departmental office moves arising from the closure of Pontllanfraith House are due to be completed by the end of January 2016, and have been highly successful with minimal impact to Council services. The Council's computer upgrade programme is also now nearing completion, which will improve performance and reduce computer compatibility and associated IT training issues.

Arising from the Cabinet Member's report, a query was raised regarding the costs of extending support for Microsoft XP and Office 2003 packages used by the Council, and it was agreed that this information be circulated to Members following the meeting.

The Cabinet Members were thanked for their reports.

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. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT CHARGES – 2016-2017

Shaun Couzens (Chief Housing Officer), together with Sandra Isaacs (Rents Manager) presented the report, which provided details of the proposed increased charges which are intended to be effective for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the 2016/17 financial year. The report sought the views of Members on the proposed increases contained therein, prior to its presentation to Cabinet.

Officers summarised the process involved in preparing the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget. Members were advised that a new rent policy came into effect from April 2015 (as part of the Welsh Government's (WG) new Policy for Social Housing Rents) which was

accepted by the Scrutiny Committee in the 2015/16 HRA Charges report. The policy sets a target rent band for each Authority whereby councils will have to adjust average rents for their properties in line with this banding. The uplift on the new rent policy is fixed for five years and uses the previous September Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation figure (as opposed to the RPI inflation figure), plus a 1.5% real increase to the average local authority rent, with further discretion for local authorities to apply an additional £2.00 per week increase. WG have announced the minimum rent uplift for 2016/17 to be 1.4% (which is CPI at -0.1% plus 1.5%). However if this increase is applied it will not meet the rent policy target rent band that has been set for CCBC.

It was therefore proposed to apply a minimum rent increase of 3.5% per property from April 2016 to ensure compliance with the new rent policy and to maintain the viability of the Council's current business plan. Council tenants were consulted on whether the CCBC rent setting policy should change to take into account regional and energy efficiency factors that make up the WG rent matrix, with the majority in agreement that the existing policy should remain unchanged, and hence there is no intention to include these factors within the Council's rent setting policy.

The report also proposed increased service charges relating to the Council's Sheltered Housing Schemes. Officers explained that it was not proposed to increase the current guest room charge in sheltered housing complexes (in that a decrease in charges is being considered in order to increase their demand) and that a consultation exercise on alternative uses for these rooms is being arranged. Also outlined in the report were rent increases for Council-owned garages.

Consideration of the proposals ensued and discussion took place regarding the consultation exercise in respect of the rent setting policy and the mix of Council tenants surveyed. Officers outlined the processes used in contacting tenants to invite them to the consultation events and Members were informed that from 970 tenants who were invited to take part in the consultation, 56 tenants attended the events and a further 17 tenants attended a tenant information exchange. Those in attendance gave constructive and in-depth feedback on the proposals, with representation from a number of areas across the county borough.

Members suggested that it would be useful for the details of the demographic mix of tenants surveyed to be included in the report in order to demonstrate that tenants within the borough were fairly represented. Officers advised Members that the tenants who attended the focus groups were from all parts of the borough, lived in a variety of property types, were of mixed ages and held various employment status.

Discussion also took place in regards to the letting and use of Council-owned garages, the number of vacant garages within the Authority's portfolio, and a recently approved programme to improve and rationalise the Council's garage stock. In response to Members' queries, Officers confirmed that replacement hard standing parking would be considered in those cases where garages are removed, and that a 2% increase in garage rental charges was considered to be appropriate in line with the Council's plans to improve their existing garage stock.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the following recommendations be referred to Cabinet for approval. By a show of hands (and in noting there was 1 abstention), this was agreed by the majority present.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that:-

- (i) a minimum rent increase of 3.5% per property be applied from April 2016 to ensure compliance with the new rent policy and to maintain the viability of the current business plan, which is equivalent to an increase of CPI plus £1.63 (52

week basis);

- (ii) the current rent setting policy agreed in December 1997 remains in place;
- (iii) the variable service charge at sheltered complexes with communal facilities be set at £28.18 (bronze service), £30.63 (silver service) and £34.20 (gold service) over a 48 week basis from April 2016;
- (iv) the variable service charge in the four declassified sheltered schemes without communal facilities be set at £10.31 (bronze service), £12.76 (silver service) and £16.33 (gold service) over a 48 week basis from April 2016;
- (v) the service charge payable by residents of Tredegar Court be increased to £65.26 over a 48 week basis from April 2016;
- (vi) the meal cost at Tredegar Court be increased to £35.89 based on a 48 week basis from April 2016;
- (vii) the guest room charge for sheltered housing complexes be not increased from April 2016;
- (viii) the garage charges for Council and non-Council tenants be increased to £7.96 based on a 48 week basis from April 2016.

9. SMALL LOTS – REVIEW OF CONTRACT ARRANGEMENTS

Phil Davy (Head of Programmes) presented the report, which had been previously considered by the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 10th December 2015. The report proposed changes to the contract arrangements for external works in the Eastern Valleys and sought the views of Members on these proposals prior to its presentation to Cabinet.

Members were informed that the external works within the Eastern Valleys are being undertaken through a series of small lots contracts. Experience over the last 2 years has given rise to concerns that if continued reliance is placed on this method alone there are significant risks that this part of the WHQS programme will not be delivered by 2020. A review of the contract arrangements has concluded that the external works on 2 large estates (Cefn Fforest and Ty Sign) should be undertaken by alternative means and there is an opportunity to link this with the procurement of new contract arrangements for external works in the Lower Rhymney Valley.

Officers referred to Section 4.17 of the report, which suggested that the Caerphilly location restriction remain for the residual value of the small lots work. Members were advised that it was proposed to make an amendment to the report in that this location restriction be removed (and that therefore tender invites for small lots contracts would be extended to include contractors located outside the county borough).

During the course of the ensuing debate, discussion took place regarding the rationale behind the proposal to remove the Caerphilly location restriction and Members sought assurances that the change in these contract arrangements would be of long-term benefit to the Authority. Officers explained that due to a change in the market conditions, there is a shortage of local contractors to fulfil the available small lots contracts (and therefore a need to extend the location criteria to include a wider geographical area).

Members expressed a wish to see local contractors used wherever possible to fulfil small lots contracts and discussion took place as to the feasibility of preference being afforded to such

businesses. Officers outlined the associated procurement process, explaining that should the location restriction be removed, all bids would be assessed using a fixed set of criteria and that priority could not be given to local Caerphilly contractors. Members were reminded of the support and encouragement given by the Authority to local businesses and were assured that this would continue. Members requested that their views on this matter be reported to Cabinet.

Arising from discussion during the course of the meeting, and in taking into the recommendation of Officers in respect of the removal of the Caerphilly location restriction for small lots contracts, it was moved and seconded that an amendment be made to Recommendation (iii) of the Officer's covering report to reflect this proposal.

Subject to this amendment, and by a show of hands and the majority present (and in noting there was 1 abstention) it was agreed that the Review of Contracts Arrangements in relation to Small Lots be supported. As such, it was

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that:-

- (i) there be a reduction in the amount of work to be procured via small lots over the remaining period of the programme in view of the risks of not completing this by March 2020;
- (ii) the external works on the Ty Sign and Cefn Fforest estates be incorporated within the procurement of new contract arrangements for external works in the Lower Rhymney Valley;
- (iii) the adoption of 2 value bands be supported for small lots contract packages over the remainder of the programme period, subject to review in light of tender returns, and the Caerphilly location restriction for the residual value of the small lots work be removed;
- (iv) the Project Board continue to endorse the award of any small lot contract with a final tendered sum that exceeds the upper limit of either value band range where appropriate.

10. LEASEHOLDER CHARGES AND CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

Councillor S. Morgan declared a prejudicial interest in that he is a property landlord and owns a leased premises, and left the meeting during consideration of the item.

Mandy Betts (Tenant and Community Involvement Manager), together with Shaun Couzens (Chief Housing Officer) presented the report, which had been prepared following a Member's request at a previous Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting for information on leaseholder charges and consultation arrangements. The report focused on leasehold arrangements within block of flats and outlined the types and proportion of charges payable by leaseholders, the options available for payment of charges and the process followed to comply with the legal requirement to consult leaseholders when charges for works are likely to exceed set thresholds.

Of the 417 flat leaseholders within the Council's housing stock who have subsequently bought their property under the Right to Buy scheme, approximately 50% of these properties are sub-let, bringing in rental income for the leaseholder. The Council has continuing responsibilities to maintain the external structure and communal areas of the blocks of flats and the leaseholder has responsibility for maintaining the inside of the flat. A list of general repair responsibilities was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

Chargeable items are determined by the leaseholder's lease, which also stipulates the share that the leaseholder has to proportionally contribute towards repair charges for their building. This contribution is towards charges for any repairs to the outside of the block and to communal areas within the blocks. Charges are billed annually for response repairs, ground rent, building insurance and a management fee. Response repairs are now charged using the schedule of rates as this will provide a more accurate charge for the actual work undertaken, and ground rent is currently a maximum of £10 per year. The current management fee of £10 per year, which is very low compared with other social landlords (some charge £80-£100 per year), is currently under review.

Major maintenance works are billed separately at the end of the contract, with chargeable items determined by the lease. However, there are variations in the types of lease in existence and full details of these were outlined in the report. The administration charge for major works is levied at 10% which is also currently under review but compares favourably with fees charged by other services. With the external works undertaken as part of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) investment programme, major works costs could be substantial in some cases as they could include rectification of structural defects, re-roofing, re-rendering, replacement doors, paths, fences. There are, however, payment options in place to assist leaseholders with these costs, and details of these were contained within the report.

The consultation arrangements for leaseholders are set out in legislation and the processes to be followed have a specific order and timescale. If any work is likely to result in a re-charge of £250 or more for an individual leaseholder the consultation process must be followed (if not, the amount charged is capped at £250 irrespective of the actual cost of the work). The consultation process can only be by-passed if an emergency repair is needed.

Leaseholders have the opportunity to nominate contractors for consideration for any work where their individual contribution would be estimated at more than £250 or the estimate for their block is more than £1,000. Details of these arrangements are outlined in the Notice of Intention to carry out works (with an example attached as Appendix 2 to the report). However, contractors have to meet the same requirements as those who would be appointed by the Council. Major works are tendered competitively and leaseholders are given information on the quotes returned, their estimated contribution and the appointed contractor in the Section 20 Notice sent out before works start (an example was attached as Appendix 3 to the report).

Members thanked the Officer for the report and discussion took place regarding best value in respect of tenders received for maintenance works. A Member queried Appendix 3 of the report (an example of a Section 20 Notice to leaseholders) in that the contract listed as an example had been awarded to the lowest tendering contractor, but had not been reflected in the tender figures listed. Officers confirmed that the contract in this instance had been awarded to the lowest tendering contractor in accordance with the listed tender figures (and not the party named in the example). Members also expressed a need for leaseholders to be afforded a choice in respect of the selected contractor and for contractors to be challenged in respect of chargeable amounts. Officers outlined the procurement process in respect of tender bids and explained that a detailed breakdown of costs associated with the tender were also made available to leaseholders.

A Member raised concerns regarding leaseholders being charged for repairs arising from damages caused by other parties and cited an example of where a leaseholder was charged for the repair to a damaged letterbox within their block. It was agreed that the Member would liaise separately with Officers regarding the details of this matter. Discussion took place regarding the remit of repair charges to leaseholders in the event of damage by other parties and Officers outlined details of the avenues available should these parties be identified.

Arising from the course of the debate, Members expressed the need for an exercise to be undertaken in respect of the charges passed from the Council to leaseholders, for good working practices and charges across partner organisations to be examined, and for contractor charges to be challenged to avoid the possibility of overcharging leaseholders. A Member indicated that they would wish to receive a further report addressing these points, and was asked to affirm this request later in the meeting upon consideration of Agenda Item 15 (To record any requests for an item to be included on the next available agenda).

Following consideration of the report, and in taking into account the comments received at the meeting, Members noted its contents.

11. ROWAN PLACE – PROGRESS REPORT AND SENSITIVE LETTINGS POLICY

Shaun Couzens (Chief Housing Officer), together with Fiona Wilkins (Public Sector Housing Manager) presented the report, which had been previously considered by the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 10th December 2015. The report provided an update on the progress made in relation to delivering a targeted regeneration programme in Rowan Place, Rhymney, and sought the views of Members on the adoption of a sensitive lettings policy and introductory tenancies specifically in relation to Rowan Place, prior to its presentation to Cabinet.

Members were advised that following the identification of severe damp and external defects to the fabric of the properties in Rowan Place, Council approved a £4.2m budget to undertake a comprehensive refurbishment of the 72 Council properties on this estate. This regeneration programme has commenced and has been supplemented by funding from the Welsh Government which will facilitate environmental enhancements within Rowan Place. To date, internal works have been completed to 16 bungalows and 14 flats and the majority of external works to the bungalow have been completed. External wall insulation has been completed in 5 blocks of flats, groundworks are ongoing in 3 blocks, and roof work has commenced to 6 houses.

Officers explained that in previous years, Rowan Place has been plagued by high levels of anti-social behaviour, crime and drug and alcohol abuse. Consequentially, it was proposed to introduce a Sensitive Lettings Policy (attached at Appendix 1 of the report) which will cover all 2-bedroom flats in Rowan Place. The Policy incorporates a strict set of criteria against which applicants will be assessed prior to the granting of a tenancy, and will include introductory tenancies for new allocations. This will facilitate a 12-month trial period before a secure tenancy is awarded and include a provision for the tenancy to be brought to an end during this time, should the tenant breach the tenancy requirements. It was noted that introductory tenancies would only apply to new tenants and that any current tenant of Caerphilly Homes who transfers into Rowan Place will continue on an existing tenancy.

During the course of the ensuing debate, it was queried as to whether the Council's existing Sensitive Lettings Policy or Common Allocation Policy could be adapted to incorporate the proposed criteria instead, and concerns were raised as to whether the proposed Policy could be viewed as discriminatory to those residents of Rowan Place residing in the eligible properties. Officers highlighted the need for a separate Policy in order to address specific reputational problems associated with Rowan Place and improve demand for housing in the area. Members were also advised that an Equalities Impact Assessment of the Policy had been undertaken (attached at Appendix 2 of the report).

A query was raised regarding the criteria timeframes listed within the draft Sensitive Lettings Policy (in that some made reference to the last 12 months and others to the last 2 years). Members also expressed the need for cases of historical chaotic behaviour to be considered

sensitively in that this could have arisen from underlying mental health issues. Officers confirmed that all listed criteria should refer to the last 2 years and that this amendment would be made to the draft Sensitive Lettings Policy prior to its presentation to Cabinet.

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

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the Sensitive Lettings Policy (including introductory tenancies for new tenants in Rowan Place) as set out in the Appendix to the report be adopted.

12. RE-PROFILING OF WHQS PROGRAMME AND HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2016-17

Phil Davy (Head of Programmes) presented the report, which had been previously considered by the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 10th December 2015. The report highlighted the changes to the Welsh Quality Housing Standard (WHQS) programme and set out the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme 2016-17, and sought the views of Members on the proposed adoption of these programmes, prior to its presentation to Cabinet.

Members were reminded of the major slippage to the WHQS programme during 2014/15 which necessitated a review of the investment strategy, and which was approved by Cabinet in February 2015, together with the Capital Programme for the 2015/16 financial year. The new programme was front-loaded in an attempt to catch up on the slippage but has led to resourcing issues (particularly in the Eastern Valleys) and has caused problems for the WHQS team due to the number of properties being worked on across the county borough.

It was explained that the number of the properties in the internal works programme reduces in the later years of the programme and a further re-profiling is advocated to have a more consistent number of properties each year. This is a benefit to some community areas that will be pulled forward, although others will slip back. Some of the changes are also to avoid gaps arising on the larger estates and enable continuity of phasing of works.

Officers explained that it would not be possible to catch up on the external works programme within 2015/16, with most of the current financial year planned programme expected to run into 2016/17. A number of sequence changes to external works take account of the change in approach in the Lower Rhymney Valley and will minimise (as far as practical) conflicts between internal and external works, with overlaps being managed as they arise. The HRA Capital Programme budget allocates the necessary resources based on the Savills cost plan to deliver the programme during 2016/17. Experience has shown that significant variances will arise once the properties are surveyed and contract packages are specified. A large contingency has therefore been included within the budget proposal. Appended to the report were details of community sequence changes in respect of internal and external works to Council homes, a re-profiled investment strategy and the HRA Capital Programme for 2016/17.

Discussion took place regarding the community sequence changes and Members referred to some communities where external works have been significantly postponed as a result of the re-profiling. Officers explained that a sensible approach needed to be undertaken in respect of these works and that by staggering these over a number of years, this would spread the investment needed, reduce pressure on available resources and ensure there is a manageable amount of work taking place at any one time.

In response to a Member's query, Officers confirmed that details of the re-profiling arrangements would be communicated to tenants via the Council's website, tenant

newsletters and Tenant Liaison Officers. Concerns were expressed regarding the significant re-profiling of external works in some communities (in that this delay could have an impact on tenants) and Officers explained that such delays were mainly restricted to external works only as they have a lesser impact to tenants than internal works. Discussion took place regarding tenant expectations in respect of the programme of works and Officers explained that although the initial programme of works had been published through to 2020, it had been made clear that this could be subject to change. Members were also advised that there had been little feedback received from tenants regarding changes to the programme of works to date.

Following consideration of the 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 re-profiling of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard Programme and the Capital Programme for 2016/17 that flows from the re-profiling be adopted;
- (ii) a further report be presented when sufficient information is available to update the Savills cost plan based on an analysis of actual costs being incurred for internal and external works.

13. WHQS COMPLIANCE POLICY

Phil Davy (Head of Programmes) presented the report, which had been previously considered by the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 10th December 2015. The report sought the views of Members on the draft WHQS (Welsh Housing Quality Standard) Compliance Policy, which is a Welsh Government requirement, prior to its presentation to Cabinet.

Members were advised that social housing landlords are required to put in place a Compliance Policy by 1st April 2016. The Compliance Policy is intended to provide the Welsh Government tenants and the Council with assurance that WHQS will be achieved and maintained and must set out the arrangements for independent verification. A copy of the draft policy was appended to the report.

It was noted that the Caerphilly Homes Task Group had expressed a need for the Environmental Programme to be more fully incorporated into the Policy, and as it is an integral part of the programme, at that meeting it was agreed that an additional paragraph be included in the Policy as follows:-

“There will be a separate environmental programme which will address Part 6 of the WHQS. The process will involve engagement and consultation with residents to identify community aspirations and to determine priorities for environmental improvements. An engagement plan has been agreed that will run from January 2016. Project implementation is likely to commence during 2016 and will be phased through to the end of the programme in 2020. Improvements may include landmarks/gateways, street furniture, traffic calming, street lighting, rationalising pedestrian routes, landscaping, safe play areas, car parking, defensible space and demarcation of boundaries”.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation from the Caerphilly Homes Task Group be referred to Cabinet for approval. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that subject to the inclusion of reference to the

Environmental Programme, the WHQS Compliance Policy be adopted.

14. DRAFT CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY 2016-2020

David Titley (Corporate Customer Services Manager), together with Liz Lucas (Head of Procurement) presented the report which provided details of the draft Customer Service Strategy 2016-2020. The report sought the views of Members on the draft Strategy prior to its presentation to Cabinet.

Members were advised that the Council's Customer Service Strategy has been in place since 2006 and has been partially updated on a number of occasions. However, the financial environment in which the Council operates has changed significantly in the last few years, as have the expectations of customers who are increasingly expecting services to be available on-line, and so there is a clear need to put a new Strategy in place.

Officers outlined the main strategic outcomes of the Strategy which are: to improve the consistency of customer service across the organisation; to meet customer expectations that services will be available online which will also reduce the cost of customer contact; and to develop in-person customer service so that it is more focused on delivering complex services or dealing with more vulnerable or disadvantaged customers. A copy of the draft Strategy was appended to the report.

Officers explained that once formally agreed, the Customer Service Strategy will be supported by a Delivery Plan that will be monitored by the Corporate IT Strategy Group (CITSG), of which the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services are members.

A copy of an email detailing the Trade Unions response to the proposed Strategy was tabled at the meeting. Members noted the key comments contained therein, including a need to involve and consult with all service areas and wider stakeholders identified within the Strategy to deliver the programme, and the need for a measured, pragmatic and holistic approach in delivery to ensure that department reconfigurations are not focused within one specific service area.

During the course of the ensuing debate, concerns were expressed regarding the personnel implications in respect of the proposals, particularly in relation to possible redundancies and a change in staffing hours. Further information was also sought on the financial savings that could be achieved as a result of the proposed Strategy. Officers explained that it was difficult to project savings at the present time but that the Strategy will support the aims of the Medium Term Financial Plan. However, there was an expectation that the need for customer-facing services could reduce in future years, leading to Customer Service opening hours being reduced in accordance with these principles. Members were advised that further reports on this matter would be brought to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee accordingly.

Members expressed the importance of maintaining customer-facing services together with a need to retain a customer service presence in local communities and Officers explained that the Strategy was not proposing to remove face to face services. Discussion also took place regarding departmental response times arising from initial customer services calls, together with customer engagement processes and the methodology used in monitoring customer feedback/satisfaction.

Queries were raised regarding the strategic direction and focus of the document, with Members expressing a need for customer-facing services to be maintained, including the retention of a customer service presence in local communities, and for it to be considered how the Strategy is fed back to customers. Officers confirmed that they would take into account the comments received at the meeting, and the Scrutiny Committee requested that their views

on this matter be reported to Cabinet.

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

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that subject to the incorporation of the views received at the meeting, the Customer Service Strategy as set out in the Appendix to the report be adopted.

15. REQUESTS FOR REPORTS TO BE INCLUDED ON THE NEXT AVAILABLE AGENDA

Councillor C.J. Cuss requested a further report in respect of Leaseholder Charges within the county borough. He explained that he would liaise with Councillor D. Rees on the specifics of the request and then forward details of the required information to Officers accordingly.

16. 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) Housing Revenue Account Budget Monitoring Report 2015/16 (Period 7);
- (2) Corporate Services and Miscellaneous 2015/16 Budget Monitoring Report (Period 7);
- (3) 2015/16 Capital Expenditure Monitoring Report (Period 7);
- (4) Whole-Authority Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2015/16;
- (5) Corporate Health and Safety Committee Minutes - 29th June 2015
- (6) Caerphilly Homes Task Group Minutes - 29th October 2015
- (7) Pensions/Compensation Committee Minutes - 9th December 2015;

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 1st March 2016, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 1ST MARCH 2016

SUBJECT: STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN AND OBJECTIVES 2016-2020

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Report is seeking the views of Members on an updated Strategic Equality Plan and Objectives 2016-2020 prior to its presentation to Cabinet and Council to seek approval for adoption as Council policy.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Council has had a Strategic Equality Plan in place since 2012, and must now update this for the next 4-year cycle.
- 2.2 In addition, the Council's current Welsh Language Scheme comes to an end and will be removed from the policy framework and replaced with actions related to the new Welsh Language Standards.
- 2.3 As the operational requirements of both Equalities and Welsh Language statutory duties have converged steadily over the years, the unified action plan has reduced duplication and streamlined their implementation.
- 2.4 This has also ensured that the Council has a good foundation in place to meet three of the Well-being goals of the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Equalities and Welsh Language issues are crosscutting themes and impact on every other council policy, function and process.
- 3.2 These include:
- Ensuring that all Customer facing functions are robust in line with Equalities and Welsh Language statutory duties
 - Ensuring that all Human Resources functions are robust in line with Equalities and Welsh Language statutory duties
 - Equality Impact Assessments on all council reports, policies and proposals to ensure fairness in service provision and delivery
 - Welsh language translation requirements of every service area
 - Workforce development provision of Equalities and Welsh Language courses to staff
 - Corporate complaints issues where any have aspects of alleged discrimination or Welsh language issues

- Physical accessibility issues for all Council owned property and buildings

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Since April 2012, the Council has had in place a four-year Strategic Equality Plan alongside a Welsh Language Scheme in order to comply with statutory duties. These have been supported by a single operational document, the Equalities and Welsh Language Strategic Objectives and Action Plan.
- 4.2 This operational document was created as the requirements of both statutory duties have many similar requirements in terms of implementation, so this unified action plan reduces duplication of actions and streamlines the implementation of both sets of duties.
- 4.3 All local authority Welsh Language Schemes come to a formal end in March 2016 due to the introduction of the new legislation and so as part of this policy update, it will be removed from the policy framework, so that actions within the Strategic Equality Plan, related to the new Welsh Language Standards, can replace it.
- 4.4 The Strategic Equality Plan has undergone relatively minor updates for the most part on existing text, compared with the previous version, in order to reflect changes or to provide additional information only. The Objectives and Action Plan have been developed to take achievements and progress into account and to bring the document in line with the Welsh Language Standards.
- 4.5 The main additions are sections on the Armed Forces Covenant and links to the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, as Equalities and Welsh Language issues, alongside Community Cohesion matters, form 3 of the 7 Well-being Goals within the Act.
- 4.6 The number of Strategic Equality Objectives has risen from 7 to 11, with the addition of the following:
- Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards
 - Supporting Age-friendly Communities
 - Supporting the Armed Forces Covenant
 - Working with Gypsy and Traveller Communities
- 4.7 The Strategic Equality Plan and the unified Objectives and Action Plan were the focus of consultation and engagement undertaken between December 2015 and January 2016 (see section 8).

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Given their nature, these documents demonstrate the Council's commitment to Equalities and Welsh Language work and by implementing the actions in the unified Plan under 11 Objectives, the Council will deliver many improvements to the lives of individuals and groups in Caerphilly county borough communities who are protected by current Equalities and Welsh Language legislation.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The updated policy and action plan cover many commitments and actions already being implemented and the financial implications of the Welsh Language Standards have been the focus of a number of Cabinet papers over the last 2 years. The Equalities and Welsh Language team will continue to coordinate training and statutory translation requirements corporately.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 In light of the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards and the wider requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty, any personnel implications will be dealt with as they arise by Human Resources and the Equalities and Welsh Language team, and reported on in the annual reports each summer. They are difficult to quantify at this time however any significant implications that may arise would be reported via the Corporate Management Team to Cabinet and relevant Scrutiny Committees.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 The draft Strategic Equality Plan was consulted on as normal as it only required a few minor updates, however the updated draft Objectives and Action Plan was circulated extensively both internally and externally for comment as this is the operational side of the plan. The list of consultees is shown as Appendix 1 at the end of this report.
- 8.2 17 responses were received by the consultation period closing date of 29th January 2016, and where possible, the comments and additional information received have been reflected in the amended draft policy being presented here. No negative responses were received.
- 8.3 The key amendments resulting from the consultation were:
- A greater alignment of the new Ageing Well in Caerphilly objective with existing national programmes
 - Inclusion of further references to criminal legislation around Hate Crime and other relevant legislation and regulations.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Prior to presentation of this Report to Cabinet and Council the Committee are asked for their views on the following recommendations to Cabinet:
- i. That Cabinet recommend the Strategic Equality Plan and the Objectives and Action Plan to Council for approval.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 The updated policy and unified action plan will ensure that the Council has a fit-for-purpose strategy in place to demonstrate compliance with the latest statutory Equalities and Welsh Language duties.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government (Wales) Measure 2010, Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Author - David A. Thomas, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language)
Ext 4353 thomada@caerffili.gov.uk
9th February 2016

- Appendix 1 - List of Consultees
- Appendix 2 - Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020
- Appendix 3 - Equalities and Welsh Language Objectives and Action Plan 2016-2020

APPENDIX 1 - CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

List of Consultees

Chris Burns, Interim Chief Executive,
Dave Street, Corporate Director (Social Services)
Nicole Scammell, Acting Director of Corporate Services and Section 151 Officer,
Colin Jones, Head of Performance and Property
Cllr James Pritchard, Elected Members Equalities Champion,
Gail Williams, Interim Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Shaun Watkins, HR Manager
David Roberts, Principal Accountant
Rob Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection
Kathryn Peters, Community Safety Manager
Anwen Rees, Equalities Training and Promotion Officer
John Elliott, Research Officer (Performance)
Jackie Dix, Policy and Research Manager
Mark Jennings, Housing Strategy Officer
Mandy Sprague, Development Officer for Older People
Simon Dixon, Disability Access Officer

Equalities and Welsh Language Officers/Teams of:

Blaenau Gwent CBC, Torfaen CBC, Monmouthshire CC, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC, Newport CBC, City and County of Cardiff, Swansea CBC, Merthyr Tydfil CBC, Bridgend CBC, Ceredigion CBC, Welsh Local Government Organisation.

Local, National and Regional Equalities and Welsh Language Organisations:

EHRC Wales, Stonewall Cymru, Umbrella Gwent, Age Cymru, Andrew Tuggey (High Sheriff of Gwent), Victim Support, Disability CanDo

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Strategic Equalities Plan 2016

FOREWORD

Caerphilly County Borough Council is committed to equality of opportunity for all within the county borough of Caerphilly. We want everyone to be treated equally and fairly and with respect in terms of education, employment and in all aspects of everyday life. This is our third Strategic Equality Plan, following a pilot version in 2011-2012 and 4 years of implementing a full plan from April 2012 to March 2016.

We remain committed to achieving equality within all aspects of our service delivery and in our employment practices, which is even more important during these challenging times and in such a difficult financial climate.

Respect for diversity is a key issue as our communities change and develop in the 21st century; respect for the old and the new and respect for every individual who lives or works here, who represents the county borough, or who visits here.

Council services must reflect these diverse needs and Caerphilly County Borough Council already has a strong background in delivering accessible services in a sensible, measured and cost-effective way. The cuts to council budgets being made at the time of publishing this plan have to take into account the impact on the most vulnerable in society through Equality Impact Assessments, that carry the full authority of this plan.

The plan will be monitored each year in order to review the impact of the progress we make and the annual reports will continue to be published. It will also be publicised and promoted widely both internally and externally in order to raise awareness of the work being done.

We hope that you agree that this updated Plan continues to develop the equality and diversity work we have undertaken to date and shows our ongoing commitment to ensuring respect and fairness for everyone in the county borough.

The Council's motto is "**Working together for the good of all**" and nowhere is this more appropriate than in terms of implementing the Strategic Equality Plan.

Keith Reynolds
Leader
Caerphilly County Borough Council

Chris Burns
Interim Chief Executive
Caerphilly County Borough Council

**Mae'r cynllun hwn ar gael yn Gymraeg, ac mewn ieithoedd neu fformatau eraill ar gais.
This plan is available in Welsh, and in other languages or formats on request.**

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1) INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Plan has been developed to primarily demonstrate the Council's commitment to meeting the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, which came into force on 6 April 2011. It also however demonstrates links to other legislation and regulations covering the Welsh Language Standards and Human Rights issues, and therefore also supports 3 of the 7 aims under the Welsh Government's Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- 1.2 It explains to members of the public, elected members, staff and partner organisations how Caerphilly County Borough Council intends to deliver its Equalities commitments and continue to be an inclusive organisation that does not tolerate discrimination of any kind.
- 1.3 It builds on our previous Equalities work, covering a wide commitment to many Equalities and Welsh Language issues and the protection and promotion of human rights. This updated plan also covers issues linked to the Armed Forces Covenant for the first time.
- 1.4 Updating this Plan during 2015 involved the participation of local people, service areas within the Council, the wider public sector, Equalities organisations and professionals, and the voluntary sector. The new Objectives and Action Plan can be found in summary in Chapter 8, but sit in a separate document in full for ease of reference.
- 1.5 To help to improve the annual actions, we also welcome any ongoing, general comments on the content, quality and accessibility of this document and on the impact of those actions on the people we serve and the people we employ. You can therefore send your comments to us at any time, in any of the following ways:

By letter to:-
Equalities and Welsh Language Team,
Caerphilly County Borough Council,
Penallta House 1st Floor
Tredomen Park
Ystrad Mynach
CF82 7PG

By email to:- equalities@caerphilly.gov.uk

2) THE COUNCIL AND ITS EQUALITIES COMMITMENT

- 2.1 Caerphilly County Borough Council is the 5th largest local authority in Wales and is the largest employer in the area.
- 2.2 The Council delivers a wide range of services to its 178,000 residents including education, environmental services, highways, leisure facilities, planning, registration of births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships, libraries and social services.
- 2.3 The Council operates a cabinet style of local government, led by a Leader of Council who is supported by eight cabinet members. The Council has 33 electoral wards which are represented by 73 elected councillors. A corporate management team, consisting of the Chief Executive and the Corporate Directors, oversees the strategic management of the Council's business.
- 2.4 The administrative offices of the Council are located at a number of sites, its main headquarters is at Penallta House, Tredomen Park, Ystrad Mynach.
- 2.5 The Council is committed to identifying and eradicating any form of discrimination, whether direct or indirect, institutional or other, in employment, training and in the procurement and delivery of its services.
- 2.6 The Council's equalities statement makes its commitment clear:

This Council recognises that people have different needs, requirements and goals and we will work actively against all forms of discrimination by promoting good relations and mutual respect within and between our communities, residents, elected members, job applicants and workforce.

We will also work to create equal access for everyone to our services, irrespective of ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non-belief, use of Welsh language, BSL and other languages, nationality, responsibility for any dependents or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

2.7 This Plan therefore commits the Council to the following:

- To exercise its community leadership role in order to promote equality and good relations within and between all communities in the area so that all residents of, workers in and visitors to the area feel confident they are in an environment that is free of any prejudice and discrimination;
- To promote fair and equal bilingual access to services for all citizens on the basis of their need, in a manner that is sensitive to that individual need and in the language or format of their choice;
- To ensure that the consequences of all new and updated policies and initiatives on specific groups are considered during the Council's consultation and decision-making processes in order to ensure that all policies, processes, assumptions and practices that may lead to discrimination have been eliminated;
- To carry out comprehensive Equality Assessments on all corporate policies that form part of the Council's policy framework. (The policy framework list can be found on the Council's website at www.caerphilly.gov.uk/equalities or provided as hard copy on request);
- To ensure that for the Council to meet its legal duties, all service areas must develop and implement Equalities and Welsh Language Actions and targets in line with the agreed corporate objectives;
- To work in partnership with stakeholders and communities to ensure that all consultation exercises undertaken support the Council's equality objectives;
- To promote equality of opportunity and fair treatment in employment and training and to ensure equal pay for work of equal value;
- To have a workforce that reflects the diversity of its communities and to support staff members to be who they are in the workplace and provide them with working environment in which they can develop professionally;
- To help and support members of the public and staff who face harassment and to take appropriate action against perpetrators where possible;
- To publish a comprehensive annual report and supplementary information to allow the public, partner organisations and all stakeholders to be fully informed and updated on the Council's progress in terms of its Equalities Objectives and action plans.

3) DEFINITIONS OF DISCRIMINATION

3.1 This section contains definitions of the various types and degrees of discrimination that an individual or group might encounter; it is important to note however that not all protected characteristics have exactly the same level of protection and as some issues are covered by different legislation, they are not all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and so the protection may vary in other ways.

3.2 The grid below is intended as a quick reference guide to clarify what is covered by the Equality Act 2010 in terms of discrimination, harassment and victimisation. These are the indicators shown with a diamond (◊). Those indicated with a square (◻) would be covered in other ways under different legislation or regulations. Those marked with a circle (●) are not covered by existing legislation.

	DD	ID	MD	AD	H	V
Age	◊	◊	◊	◊	◊	◊
Disability	◊	◊	◊	◊	◊	◊
Gender Reassignment / Transgender	◊	◊	◊	◊	◊	◊
Gypsies and Travellers	◊	◊	◊	◊	◊	◊
Human Rights	◻	◻	◻	◻	◻	◻
Linguistic Skills	◻	◻	◻	◻	◻	◻
Marital Status	◊	◊	◊	●	●	◊
Nationality	◻	◻	◻	◻	◻	◻
Pregnancy and Maternity	◊	●	◊	●	●	◊
Race	◊	◊	◊	◊	◊	◊
Religion or Belief	◊	◊	◊	◊	◊	◊
Sex	◊	◊	◊	◊	◊	◊
Sexual Orientation	◊	◊	◊	◊	◊	◊
Welsh Language	◻	◻	◻	◻	◻	◻

Key -

DD - Direct Discrimination

ID - Indirect Discrimination

MD - Multiple Discrimination

AD - Associative Discrimination

H - Harassment

V - Victimisation

3.3 In 2001, the European Union explicitly banned many forms of social discrimination in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, with Article 21 of the charter prohibiting discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, disability, age or sexual orientation and also discrimination on the grounds of nationality.

- 3.4 The Equality Act 2010 brought together over 116 separate pieces of UK legislation in order to streamline UK law and this policy is intended to mirror that approach in the way that the Council tackles discrimination. In order to understand the scope of the policy however, in terms of the protected characteristics and wider Equalities and Human Rights issues, elected members, managers and all staff members need to be aware of what exactly constitutes discrimination, victimisation and harassment.

i) Direct Discrimination

- 3.5 Direct discrimination, whether deliberate or accidental, covers instances where for example a staff member is dismissed or disciplined, or a job applicant is not employed, or a member of the public requesting a particular Council service has been refused that service, because they are, or are perceived to be, from a particular specific group. **Direct discrimination is unlawful whether it is intentional or not.**

ii) Indirect Discrimination

- 3.6 Indirect discrimination means that an organisation must not have selection criteria, policies, employment rules or any other practices which have the effect of disadvantaging individuals of a specific group, which cannot be sufficiently justified. **Indirect discrimination is unlawful whether it is intentional or not.** In contrast to direct discrimination, indirect discrimination will not be unlawful if it can be sufficiently justified by the need to meet a proper business requirement which cannot be achieved by some other means.

iii) Multiple Discrimination

- 3.7 Multiple discrimination occurs when a person is subjected to discrimination on more than one characteristic and can be experienced in different ways. For example, it could occur in the workplace when someone experiences discrimination due to their ethnic origin and then on their sexual orientation, but each type of discrimination occurs on separate occasions. Or it can occur when the discrimination involves more than one characteristic and the grounds that they interact with each other in such a way that they are completely inseparable. This is often called 'intersectional discrimination'.
- 3.8 Women from certain ethnic minority backgrounds may be disadvantaged due their sex and their cultural background, for example being denied a vote in the UK by a husband or father.
- 3.9 Cultural norms and taboos within some communities might make it seemingly impossible to be out and accepted as an LGBT person (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgendered person) so an LGBT person of ethnic background may see themselves as a 'minority within a minority' and the thought of rejection by family and social group with the difficulties this would bring may lead a person to choose to live with secrecy and loneliness.

- 3.10 A disabled person who is LGBT, or from an ethnic minority background may find that social isolation and accessibility to services are even more difficult due their being in more than one protected characteristic.

iv) Associative Discrimination

- 3.11 Associative Discrimination is where someone has been subjected to less favourable treatment by reason of their association with a person against whom it would be unlawful to discriminate - a "one step removed" situation whereby a person who is not protected under Equality legislation is discriminated against if they are closely associated to a person who is protected under the legislation, for example an employee who is a carer for a disabled person.

v) Harassment

- 3.12 Harassment includes behaviour that is offensive, frightening or in any way distressing. It may be intentional bullying which is obvious or violent, but it can also be unintentional or be subtle and insidious. It may involve nicknames, teasing, name calling, office banter such as emails and text jokes or other behaviour which is not meant with malicious intent but which is nevertheless upsetting to the individual. Further, employees are now able to complain of harassment even if it is not directed at them, if they can demonstrate that it creates an offensive environment for them.
- 3.13 Organisations are responsible for the actions of their staff in addition to staff members being individually responsible for their own actions. If harassment takes place in the workplace the organisation may be liable and may be ordered to pay compensation unless it can be shown that it took reasonable steps to prevent harassment. Individuals responsible for harassment may also be ordered to pay compensation.
- 3.14 Employers investigating claims of harassment should consider all the circumstances before reaching a conclusion, including the perception of the complainant. Having gathered all the evidence employers should ask themselves "could what has taken place be reasonably considered to have caused offence?"

vi) Victimisation

- 3.15 Victimisation is when an individual is treated detrimentally because they have made a complaint about discrimination or harassment or have given evidence relating to a complaint about discrimination or harassment. They may be labelled as a troublemaker by managers and colleagues or be isolated by their colleagues at work. If this happens or if the organisation fails to take reasonable steps to prevent it from happening, they will be liable and may be ordered to pay compensation. The individuals who have been the cause of the victimisation may also be ordered to pay compensation.

vii) Vicarious Liability

- 3.16 This occurs when one person is liable for the actions of another person, even though the first person was not directly responsible or even present at the time of the incident. For example, an employer would be liable for the discriminatory acts of employees, where those employees were acting in the course of their employment outside their own workplace (at a training session or conference for example).
- 3.17 Employers can defend a complaint in such cases if they can prove that they took all reasonably practical steps to prevent such discrimination (although it is rare for this defence to succeed). Furthermore, even if the employer should succeed in this defence, claimants can still pursue their discrimination claim against the individual employee.

viii) Positive Action / Positive Discrimination

- 3.18 Though these sound as if they may be the same thing, there is an important difference between the two. Positive action means that for example, an employer targets certain publications with job advertisements *in addition* to the usual methods, in order to encourage people from under-represented groups to apply for posts. Positive discrimination would be where the employer did not use the usual methods and *only* targeted certain under-represented groups, thus excluding many others from applying.
- 3.19 Section 159 of the Equality Act 2010 came into force on 6th April 2011. This allows employers the opportunity to achieve a more diverse workforce by giving them the option, **when faced with candidates of equal merit**, to choose a candidate from an under-represented group.

ix) Hate Crime / Hate Incidents

- 3.20 There is a subtle but significant difference between a hate crime and a hate incident and the definition used by the Council in partnership with Gwent Police comes from the Association of Chief Police Officers.
- 3.21 A hate crime is 'a criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person's actual or perceived disability, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation and transgender' whereas a hate incident are those that are equally based on prejudice but are non-crime related.
- 3.22 Gwent Police record both hate crimes and hate incidents on their crime recording systems but there are also other methods of reporting hate crime and incidents within Caerphilly county borough. There are 3rd party reporting centres which are specifically aimed at providing easy access to groups that have historically not reported hate crime due to disability, language difficulties etc. as well as other reporting mechanisms such as through Safer Wales.

4) EQUALITIES IN PRACTICE WITHIN THE COUNCIL

i) Strategic Responsibility

- 4.1 The management and co-ordination of Equalities across the authority is the responsibility of the Equalities staff, currently within the Performance and Property Division. Annual reports and ad hoc information reports are presented to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.
- 4.2 These staff members act as a central point for Equalities issues on a day-to-day basis in terms of policy advice, complaints advice, consultation (internal and external), training provision and translation.

ii) Performance

- 4.3 The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2010 places a duty on local authorities to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions. The Measure notes seven areas under its definition of improvement and two of these are Service Availability and Fairness, linking clearly to the Equalities agenda.
- 4.4 The Council already plans and monitors Equalities work on a service area level using a dedicated section in the annual Service Delivery Plan template.

iii) Employment Data

- 4.5 The Council's iTRENT payroll system was brought online from June 2011 and reports on the full range of Equalities employment data and quarterly monitoring data is produced, so that trends or exceptions can be noted and actions recommended to resolve any issues.
- 4.6 Individual staff members learning and development data to individual records also. Future quarterly reports produced will then reflect this additional information.

iv) Consultation

- 4.7 All new and updated policies must proceed through the Council's internal approval process before being adopted and in the report template, Equalities issues must be considered in section 5 of all reports. The Equalities and Welsh Language team are also used as consultees during the policy's drafting stages to ensure that Equalities issues are properly considered.
- 4.8 In terms of consultations with the public or specific groups on Council actions and decisions, both the duty to actively involve people (from the Disability equality duty) and the requirement simply to consult (from the Race equality duty) are both already part of the Council's approach.

- 4.9 The Council's **Equalities Consultation and Monitoring Guidance** booklet contains a number of sections explaining to staff members and elected members how various specific groups can be consulted with, in order to make the consultation exercise more robust, but it also provides a few practical examples of how it can be done. The guidance booklet also contains model Equalities monitoring forms for inclusion with consultations and surveys in order that the results can be analysed fully in case there are any underlying trends in the results based on any protected characteristics. This document is firmly linked to the Council's **Public Engagement Strategy**.

v) Complaints

- 4.10 A complaint can be defined as a situation where a member of the public, or a group, is not satisfied with the standard of a service, or the action or lack of action by the Council or a member of staff.
- 4.11 All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the corporate Complaints policy, but with the added need for translation of all incoming and outgoing correspondence on the matter, in line with the **Welsh Language Standards Translation Guide** and any other relevant translation or format issue.
- 4.12 Complaints will be fully monitored by Equalities category and in which language or format they were initially made.
- 4.13 Complaints can be made in writing, by telephone or via email to the Council's dedicated email address **complaints@caerphilly.gov.uk**.
- 4.14 Further guidance can be found in the **Equalities and Welsh Language Complaints Guidance** document.

vi) Reporting and Publishing Information

- 4.15 All Equalities policies, annual reports and action plans are reported to the Executive Equalities Group in the first instance at the beginning of any consultation, but are then subject to a thorough scrutiny and approval process before being submitted to any relevant regulatory body and published.
- 4.16 This involves progressing through the Corporate Management Team, Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and in the case of new or updated policies, approval by full Council.
- 4.17 The Council currently maintains a comprehensive Equalities section on its internet site which is accessed at **www.caerphilly.gov.uk/equalities**.
- 4.18 For staff, there is an intranet site – the Equalities Portal - that offers help and guidance on specific issues ranging from details on training courses available to staff to translation services that are available, which contains information on how to arrange written, face-to-face or over-the-phone translations in Welsh and other spoken languages, how to arrange for Braille printing and how to book British Sign Language/English Interpreters.

vi) Personnel Policies

- 4.19 All personnel policies and recruitment practices are subject to Equalities Impact Assessments. In addition, many personnel policies are directly linked to Equalities issues and are updated regularly to reflect changes in both Equalities legislation and Employment regulations.
- 4.20 Pre-employment issues in terms of application forms and post employment issues in terms of references are covered along with recruitment and selection issues ranging from the suitability of interview venues to the full interview process itself in order to ensure fairness at every stage.
- 4.21 Job applicants are asked to complete the recruitment monitoring section of the application form but all information received via this section is used solely for monitoring purposes and for the compilation of performance indicators, survey returns, and monitoring of this Plan. Managers do not see this part of the form when short-listing or interviewing.
- 4.22 As part of the implementation of this policy, all members, managers and employees involved in recruitment and selection process will undertake appropriate recruitment and selection training to ensure procedures are followed properly and all Equalities issues are covered.

viii) Procurement

- 4.23 Where services to the public are not provided directly by the Council, but are provided by agencies or bodies contracted to the Council, those services are required to be delivered in accordance with the Council's commitment to the principles of Equalities and fully monitored by the Council as part of the overall contract monitoring process.
- 4.24 Full details of how this is done can be found in the Council's **Equality in Procurement Policy** and the **Equalities Pre-Tender Questionnaire**, which are available from procurement@caerphilly.gov.uk.
- 4.25 Further guidance can be found in the **Procurement and Commissioning Guidance 2016 - Equalities and Welsh Language** document.

ix) Licensing

- 4.26 The Council's **Licensing Policy** was updated during 2010 and now contains a section covering Equalities, which replaced the previous specific sections on Disability, Race and Human Rights. The Equalities section can be found at clauses 129-133 and a copy of the full policy can be obtained from the Council's Licensing section - licensing@caerphilly.gov.uk.

x) Partnerships, Grants and Sponsorship

- 4.27 The Council works in partnership on many levels with a wide range of public bodies, organisations from the voluntary sector and other agencies and its contribution to each will embody and proactively evidence the commitments, actions and principles of the CCBC Strategic Equality Plan :-
- (i) When the Council is the strategic and financial leader of a partnership, it will ensure that the public service provision is compliant with the principles of its Strategic Equality Plan.
 - (ii) When the Council joins a partnership in which another body is leading, the Council input to the partnership will comply with the principles of its Strategic Equality Plan and the Council will encourage all other parties to comply.
 - (iii) When the Council is a partner in a consortium, it will encourage the consortium to adopt a Strategic Equality Plan equal to its own. When acting publicly in the name of the consortium, the Council will act in accordance with the principles of the Strategic Equality Plan.
 - (iv) When the Council joins or forms a partnership, it will ask prospective partners about their Strategic Equality Plan or similar. Within any partnership, the Council will offer advice and support to the other partner organisations on such matters.
 - (v) The Council will inform organisations, voluntary bodies and individuals that receive financial sponsorship, grants or subscription fees from the Council of the need to provide equally accessible services to the public.

xi) Links to Other Strategies

- 4.28 In addition to its own policies, Caerphilly County Borough Council operates in partnership with other bodies to deliver actions under a number of joint policies and strategies, both locally and regionally, and undertakes to ensure that its contribution to each will be done in accordance with the principles of the Strategic Equality Plan.

5) EQUALITIES TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1 Fairness at work and good job performance go hand in hand. Tackling discrimination helps to attract, motivate and retain staff and enhances an organisation's reputation as an employer. Eliminating discrimination helps everyone to have an equal opportunity to work and to develop their skills.
- 5.2 Equalities training also helps staff with situations where they may have to engage with customers who have specific needs. In some cases, staff members may have no experience of dealing with such specific needs and it is in such instances that misunderstandings can happen.
- 5.3 The Equalities and Welsh Language team are responsible corporately for co-ordinating Equalities training provision and liaising with staff, tutors, training providers and examination bodies in order to provide a quality and cost-effective programme.
- 5.4 The courses offered to staff include, but are not limited to the following:
- Conversational Welsh classes (ranging from taster courses and 2 day courses to full 30 week qualifications, up to 'A' level);
 - Conversational British Sign Language courses (from taster courses and 10 week Introduction level up to the different NVQ level year courses);
 - Deaf Awareness;
 - General Equalities Awareness sessions;
 - Equality in Policy Development;
 - Gender Awareness;
 - Typetalk Awareness;
 - Age Awareness - The Future;
 - Involving Older People;
 - Maximising Income for the 50+;
 - Intergenerational Working;
 - Age Proofing Services;
 - Dyslexia Awareness;
 - LGBT Awareness;
 - Religious Awareness;
 - Understanding Sight Loss;
 - Disability Awareness;
 - Deafblind Awareness
 - Race Equality;
 - Basic Skills Awareness;
 - Bespoke courses, tailored to the needs of the service area or team.

- 5.5 The training courses are advertised to staff and elected members on the **Equalities and Welsh Language Portal** intranet site which is accessible to over half of the Council staff. A range of other distribution methods are used in order to reach the remainder of the staff to ensure that everyone is able to access training opportunities.
- 5.6 Training is provided in a flexible way, with a mix of provision that includes morning, afternoon and evening classes, together with 1 or 2 day courses, weekend, and intensive week-long courses where requested and agreed.
- 5.7 The Council works with many partner organisations and so the training programme is also open to these partners at a minimal cost and can be arranged either by an annual Service Level Agreement or on an ad hoc basis.
- 5.8 Each course participant completes a training agreement form outlining the terms and conditions that are required from them in return for the Council providing and paying for the courses. They and their manager/supervisor will have to sign the letter as an agreement and commitment to the training.
- 5.9 By signing the agreement, the individual and/or manager/supervisor will also be committing to repay the Council the training fee, in whole or in part, if he or she should withdraw from the class without a valid reason; the repayment details are included with the training agreement form.
- 5.10 People attending from partner organisations would also be required to complete a modified training agreement form.
- 5.11 The terms and conditions will be amended and updated as necessary in accordance with the Council's approved Organisational Development Policies and Procedures, which cover training areas such as time-in-lieu, paying back of course fees and study and examination leave.
- 5.12 A monitoring report on **Equalities Training** is prepared and published annually on the Council's website and is distributed to all relevant partners.
- 5.13 The report covers academic years as opposed to financial years and is published on the Council's website during September / October each year, once the report has been sent for information to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.
- 5.14 Both the report and the programme itself are clear demonstrations of the Council's commitment to raising awareness amongst its staff and partners of the range of Equalities issues in existence and the many forms of discrimination that can be encountered.

6) SPECIFIC EQUALITIES INFORMATION

This section contains information on each of the Equality issues covered by this Plan, however it is important to note that different issues are covered by different legislation and not all of the 14 sub-sections that follow are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

The table shown below is intended as a quick reference guide to this section.

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Legislation</u>
• Age	Equality Act 2010
• Disability	Equality Act 2010
• Gender Reassignment / Transgender	Equality Act 2010
• Gypsies and Travellers	Equality Act 2010
• Human Rights	Human Rights Act 1998
• Linguistic Skills	Equality Act 2010 / Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 / European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages 1992
• Marital Status	Equality Act 2010
• Nationality	Immigration, Asylum & Nationality Act 2006
• Pregnancy and Maternity	Equality Act 2010
• Race	Equality Act 2010
• Religion or Belief	Equality Act 2010
• Sex	Equality Act 2010
• Sexual Orientation	Equality Act 2010
• Welsh Language	Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

i) AGE

The Equality Act 2010 brought Age issues broadly into line with the other protected characteristics initially, with additional provisions coming into force from April 2012. The Act places a legal duty on public bodies to consider the needs of people of all ages when designing and delivering services and in the provision of goods and facilities. This will ensure that public bodies consider the needs of children, teenagers and younger and older adults.

Age issues impact directly on service planning not only in terms of those receiving the service, but in terms of those delivering it also. For example, the official retirement age is set to increase to 67 (and possibly 70) years of age yet in Caerphilly county borough 44% of the 50-64 age group (those who might traditionally be considering retirement) have limiting long term illness - this could potentially have an effect on the Council's workforce if more people work longer yet are more likely to be ill.

ii) DISABILITY

The Equality Act 2010 protects the rights of people with a disability to ensure that they have the same rights as a person without a disability. The Act applies in many situations, from employment to transport, from property to education. The Act also means that education providers (including schools, colleges and universities) must not discriminate against someone with a disability, and must support people with disabilities within education. It also means that education providers must give appropriate help and support to students and potential students with disabilities.

Being disabled can often be seen as very negative as it focuses on what someone 'can't do' rather than on what they 'can do'. Some people feel it is a label that defines who they are: a 'disabled person' rather than a person who happens to have a disability and so they may feel reluctant to consider themselves as having a disability.

In addition, some people may not feel that their particular circumstances constitute a disability or that they are disabled by it. Many Deaf people who use BSL do not regard themselves as disabled for example, but rather as users of a minority language.

Rather than including a list of conditions and disabilities that are covered, the Equality Act 2010 looks at the impact of a condition to determine whether it is a disability for any particular individual. A person is considered to have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Substantial means not trivial or minor, and long-term normally means for at least 12 months. Day-to-day activities include things like getting around your home or workplace without any great difficulty, being able to remember and concentrate on your work, and to get on with being a member of the family, a friend, a colleague or a commuter just like anyone else.

Discriminating against a person who has, or is perceived to have, a physical or mental impairment of some kind is illegal, but could happen at any stage of a person's contact with the Council even inadvertently. This could be as a service user, job interviewee, current employee, elected member or visitor from a partner organisation and so the Council must ensure that access to its buildings and services, both physical and communications-wise is as broad as possible.

The Council has a **DDA Access Strategy** that covers these issues in greater detail but it is important to remember that where reasonable adjustments have to be made to a service, this does not necessarily mean a huge or costly change and can sometimes be much easier than expected. Contact the Equalities staff or the DDA Access Officer for advice.

iii) **GENDER REASSIGNMENT / TRANSGENDER**

Gender reassignment is a personal, social, and sometimes medical, process by which a person's gender presentation (the way they appear to others by changing physiological or other attributes of sex) is changed. Anyone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change his or her gender is protected from discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.

An individual does not need to be undergoing medical supervision to be protected. So, for example, a female employee who decides to live as a man without undergoing any medical procedures would be covered. The Council will have to ensure that there are policies in place which are designed to prevent gender reassignment discrimination in all aspects of recruitment and selection, determining pay, training and development, selection for promotion, discipline and grievances, countering bullying and harassment, taking time off work and customer care.

It is discrimination to treat transsexual people less favourably for being absent from work because they propose to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment than they would be treated if they were absent because of illness or personal injury, or if they were absent for some other reason.

iv) **GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS**

There are four main Gypsy and Traveller groups in existence, namely Romany Gypsies, traditional Irish Travellers, Eastern European Roma and New Travellers (collectively referred to as Gypsies and Travellers). The first three groupings are accepted as ethnic minorities for the purposes of race relations legislation. These groups have different economic, social, cultural and lifestyle characteristics.

Caerphilly county borough currently has no permanent traveller site located within its boundaries and therefore only experiences unauthorised

encampments, which can cause disruption and conflict locally, can be expensive and time-consuming to clear, and requires a range of solutions, including swift and effective enforcement.

The Council has a policy in place for working with such encampments; the policy is the responsibility of the Directorate of the Environment, but there are other issues affecting the Gypsy and Traveller groups who pass through the county borough.

The Council actively supports the process of inclusion that enables all children and young people to have their needs and aspirations met within their local communities. This means the Council will aim to ensure that Gypsy and Traveller children and young people are given access to equal educational opportunities.

The Directorate of Social Services has a duty under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area who are in need - this also covers children from Gypsy and Traveller groups.

Under the Housing Act 2004 local authorities have a duty to provide appropriate accommodation for Gypsy and Travellers. This duty means that authorities must assess the accommodation needs of Gypsy and Travellers and include a strategy to meet those needs within their wider housing strategies. A Gypsy and Traveller Housing Needs Assessment was undertaken by the Council in 2015-2016.

Under Section 175(2) of the Housing Act 1996, a Gypsy or Traveller is homeless if "their accommodation consists of a moveable structure and there is nowhere that they can legally place it to reside in it". If needed, assistance will be given to complete housing application forms, for both the Council and Registered Social Landlords, to access permanent accommodation.

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 also influences this policy. The Act has placed an increasing emphasis on liveability, giving more powers to, and placing a strategic responsibility on, local authorities to keep areas clean, green and safe.

v) HUMAN RIGHTS

The Human Rights Act 1998 details how the UK complies with and implements the rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights. All public authorities have a positive obligation to ensure that respect for human rights is at the core of their work as the Act makes it unlawful for a public authority to act in a way that is incompatible with a Convention Right.

Human Rights are a complex and broad issue, however the most important aspects of the legislation are summarised in the table overleaf.

Main Articles	
Article 2	Right to life
Article 3	Prohibition of torture
Article 4	Prohibition of slavery and forced labour
Article 5	Right to liberty and security (subject to a UK derogation relating to the situation in Northern Ireland)
Article 6	Right to a fair trial
Article 7	No punishment without law
Article 8	Right to respect for private and family life
Article 9	Freedom of thought, conscience and religion
Article 10	Freedom of expression
Article 11	Freedom of assembly and association
Article 12	Right to marry
Article 14	Prohibition of discrimination
Article 16	Restrictions on political activity of aliens
Article 17	Prohibition of abuse of rights
Article 18	Limitation on use of restrictions on rights
The First Protocol	
Article 1	Protection of property
Article 2	Right to education
Article 3	Right to free elections
The Thirteenth Protocol	
Article 1	Abolition of the death penalty

The most direct, obvious link between Human Rights legislation and the commitments of the Council in its Strategic Equality Plan comes in Article 14:-

- **Article 14: Prohibition of discrimination**

The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.

In the application of the Convention rights, you have the right not to be treated differently because of your race, religion, sex, political views or any other status, unless this can be justified objectively. Everyone must have equal access to Convention rights, whatever their status.

The Articles within the Human Rights legislation can be divided into categories depending on whether they have been accepted totally and without reservation, or if they are restricted or qualified in some specific way. These are referred to as absolute, limited or qualified rights.

Absolute rights

These are rights of the European Convention on Human Rights that have been adopted fully. These rights are not limited and they cannot be infringed no matter how necessary it might seem to do so. The absolute rights are Articles 2, 3, 4 and 7.

Limited rights

Certain rights of the European Convention on Human Rights are limited in the UK for specific reasons. There is a right to liberty for instance, however this is not absolute as it must be limited by the powers of the police to arrest someone. The limited rights are Articles 5, 6 and 12.

Qualified rights

These are rights that could be infringed upon if there is a specific legitimate aim - in interests of national security, public safety etc. The infringement must be properly regulated by the law and must be necessary in a democratic society. This latter concept means the interference with the right must be a proportionate response to the legitimate aim. If the aim can be achieved by a less intrusive method then that method must be used instead. The qualified rights are Articles 8, 9, 10, 11, 14 and Protocol 1 Article 1

vi) LINGUISTIC SKILLS

The UK Government ratified the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages on the 27th March 2001, covering mainland Britain and Northern Ireland and as part of this, adopted a number of the paragraphs and sub-paragraphs in Part III of the Charter, in terms of Welsh, Scottish Gaelic, Irish, Scots and Ulster Scots. In March 2003 the Cornish language was added to the list and in April 2003, the remit of the Charter was extended to the Isle of Man to include Manx Gaelic.

Article 15 of the Charter requires detailed reports to be submitted from each country on a three-year cycle, to an appointed Committee of Experts, on progress against the adopted paragraphs and sub-paragraphs. The Committee's recommendations include matters in terms of the legal framework, policy and procedural matters.

The Council monitors the linguistic skills of its staff as this is not only a possible indication of the languages used in the community but could also be of great benefit in terms of customer care. The figures collated by Personnel are published in the Annual report and as a fact sheet of its own on the Council's Equalities website at www.caerphilly.gov.uk/equalities.

Since 2004, the Council has adopted a bilingual Equalities statement for use on publications that demonstrated its commitment to legislation covering Welsh Language, Race and Disability issues. It can be adapted to suit the type of publication but in general it follows one format for bilingual documents and a slightly different one for separate English and Welsh documents:-

Bilingual -

Mae'r cyhoeddiad hwn ar gael mewn ieithoedd a fformatau eraill ar gais.
This publication is available in other languages and formats on request.

Separate English and Welsh documents - English version

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.

Separate English and Welsh documents - Welsh version

Mae'r cyhoeddiad hwn ar gael yn Saesneg, ac mewn ieithoedd a fformatau eraill ar gais.

This publication is available in English, and in other languages and formats on request.

Welsh Language matters are outlined separately, later in this section, but what follows is information regarding British Sign Language and Other Languages.

The [Translation Services](#) intranet site contains information for staff on how to arrange written, face-to-face or over-the-phone translations in Welsh and other spoken languages, how to arrange for Braille printing and how to book British Sign Language/English Interpreters.

British Sign Language

On the 18th March 2003, British Sign Language was recognised as an official minority language in the UK by the UK Government.

The Disability Discrimination (Amendment) Act 2005 placed an obligation on the Council to provide services in the medium of BSL and so the Council began working towards providing, for example, public information in the format of DVDs in BSL or DVDs with in-vision signers and subtitles.

It cannot be assumed that Deaf customers can communicate in English, so that unlike for Welsh speakers, **BSL may be a Deaf person's only language.** Through the education system, Deaf BSL users may not have learnt to speak or lip-read English as a useful medium of communication.

Research has shown that many adult Deaf BSL users can read and write at the equivalent age of an 8½ year old and therefore may be in a similar position to those ethnic minority customers who cannot speak English.

Research has also shown that lip reading is only 33% accurate, which means if lip reading arrangements are the only adjustment made in service provision, then potentially nearly 70% of the information can be lost. Lip reading can be useful, however for very basic situations and there are tactics and strategies that can be implemented to make lip reading more effective, but **lip reading should not be relied upon as the sole means of communication.**

The British Deaf Association developed a BSL Charter for local authorities, which contains 5 pledges -

- **Charter Pledge 1**
Improve access for Deaf people to local services and information
- **Charter Pledge 2**
Promote learning and high quality teaching of British Sign Language
- **Charter Pledge 3**
Give all Deaf children and young people the option of a bilingual education (BSL/English)
- **Charter Pledge 4**
Ensure key staff working with Deaf people meet minimum standards of BSL skills
- **Charter Pledge 5**
Consult with the local Deaf community on a regular basis

Other Spoken Languages

The Council is part of the Caerphilly Community Cohesion Forum, in order to help determine the needs of people living and working locally who speak other languages. The 2011 Census included a question relating to language ability and therefore data will become available on community languages that may be spoken within the county borough.

The duty regarding other languages arose originally from the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and means that anyone can request information or a service in any other spoken language.

The needs of anyone who speaks other languages are similar to the needs of Welsh speakers, but with the additional issue that in such cases, many people from ethnic minorities cannot speak English at all, or certainly not to a level where they can speak, read and write English well enough to complete, for example, an Electoral Registration form.

With more people moving to the area to live and work from for example, the enlarged European Union, the ability of the Council to provide greater language choice, both in terms of service delivery and in terms of economic development, will continue to grow in importance.

A survey of the county borough in 2008, done via Newline and in conjunction with Communications and Customer First, provided some information about the different languages used in the county borough and the 2011 Census will provide a greater level of information.

vii) MARITAL STATUS

Marriage is defined as a "union between a man and a woman". Same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as "civil partnerships". Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters. "Marital status" may also be referred to as "marital condition" or simply "condition". In the Marriage Act 1949 part of the definition of "marriage" is that for it to be legal it must be for "one man" and "one woman". A "civil partnership" is a legal union between two people of the same sex which is registered under the Civil Partnership Act 2004.

Marriage and civil partnership are one of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and it is unlawful for employers and others to discriminate against employees who fall into one or other of the categories.

Employers must treat civil partners in the same way as married people in a wide range of matters, including employment and vocational training. Any benefits given to married employees must also be offered to civil partners, including flexible working, statutory paternity pay, paternity and adoption leave, health insurance and survivor pensions.

viii) NATIONALITY

Nationality issues and ethnicity issues are often regarded as the same thing but in terms of legislation and practice there are distinct differences. It is important when undertaking consultation and monitoring for example, that the two are kept as separate matters.

In simple terms, ethnicity cannot be changed but nationality can be, if for instance a person becomes a citizen of another country.

ix) PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY

A woman is protected against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled, except under certain aspects of Health & Safety Legislation. During this period, pregnancy and maternity discrimination is not treated as sex discrimination. Please refer to the Council's Personnel Policies for specific information on pregnancy and maternity entitlements.

x) RACE

Racism is the belief that the genetic factors which constitute race are a primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race. Racism's effects are called race discrimination. Racism usually covers all forms of race-based prejudice, violence, dislike, discrimination, oppression and is a belief or ideology that all members of each racial group possess characteristics or abilities specific to that race, especially to distinguish it as being either superior or inferior to another racial group.

The United Nations uses the definition of racial discrimination laid out in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination adopted in 1966, which is: "...any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.(Part 1 of Article 1 of the U.N. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination)".

This definition does not make any distinction between discrimination based on ethnicity and race and similarly, in British law the phrase racial group means "any group of people who are defined by reference to their race, colour, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origin".

Institutional racism (sometimes called structural or systemic racism) is the existence of institutional policies and practices occurring specifically within for example, government bodies, the public sector, the voluntary sector, private business corporations, and universities (public and private). The term institutional racism was coined by Stokely Carmichael of the Black Panther Party, who, in the late 1960s, defined institutional racism as "the collective failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their color, culture, or ethnic origin".

Institutional racism is the differential access to the goods, services, and opportunities of society. When that differential access becomes integral to institutions, it becomes common practice, making it difficult to rectify. Eventually, this racism dominates the underlying ethos of the organisation and is reinforced by the actions of conformists and newcomers.

Another difficulty in reducing institutional racism is that there is no single perpetrator that can be identified - when racism is built into the institution, it appears as the collective action of the entire workforce or executive board, or Cabinet for example.

Forms of institutional racism can be varied and can be for example race-based barriers to gainful employment and professional advancement, toleration by managers of differential practices when working with customers from different ethnic groups, racial profiling by the police in terms of community safety, by housing officers when allocating housing, the use of stereotyped racial caricatures in marketing and the under- and mis-representation of certain racial groups in the media.

Caerphilly County Borough has a population 178,806 according to the 2011 Census figures. The ethnicity mix of the county borough shows there to be 98.4 white population (from 99.1% in 2001) compared to the national figure for Wales, which is 95.6%.

The proportion of people who are Asian or Asian British in Caerphilly county borough is 0.5% compared to 1.8% in Wales as a whole. The proportion of black or black British people in Caerphilly county borough is 0.1% compared to 0.6% in Wales as a whole. The proportion of people with a mixed ethnicity is 0.6% compared to 1.0% in Wales and the proportion of Chinese people is 0.3%, compared to 0.5% in Wales.

Caerphilly county borough therefore has an overall minority ethnic population of 1.6% compared to 4.4% in Wales and 12.9% in the U.K. This equates to approximately 2,861 people from the BME (Black & Minority Ethnic) community, and this figure does not include BME people who travel into the county borough to work. This is compared with 1,713 people recorded in the Census in 2001.

The low figure does not mean however that the Council should relax its attitude towards racist incidents and graffiti for example and the Council has been and remains fully committed to promoting good relations and understanding between people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

In very limited circumstances, there are some jobs which can require that the job-holder is of a particular racial group. This is known as an 'occupational requirement'. One example is where the job-holder provides personal welfare services to a limited number of people and those services can most effectively be provided by a person of a particular racial group because of cultural needs and sensitivities.

xi) RELIGION OR BELIEF

Caerphilly County Borough Council as an organisation does not require or promote religious belief in general or any religious belief in particular. It is however committed to protecting and promoting the rights of everyone in its communities, people with or without formal religious affiliation, of all faiths and none, and provide for the principle of respecting other people's freedom to express their beliefs and convictions.

This must be a balanced approach however; any expression of belief has to take into account the rights and reasonable sensitivities of others and what is appropriate will depend on the circumstances.

Healthy debate is perfectly acceptable, however any attempt to bully or coerce others to comply with a particular philosophical belief system or religion is not, nor conversely is any attempt to bully or coerce others to reject any philosophical belief system or religion.

xii) SEX (GENDER)

Sex discrimination can be direct - treating somebody less favourably on the grounds of their sex - or indirect - applying an apparently general rule which in practice disadvantages one sex and which cannot be justified. It includes the way you recruit, train, promote and dismiss people. Women and men are also entitled to equal pay and conditions for work of equal value.

Preventing discrimination on the basis of sex (often referred to as gender) improves the chances of an organisation recruiting the best person for the job and getting the best performance from all those who are employed there. All terms and conditions of employment are covered including any practice that involves applying a 'provision, criterion or practice' which, although it applies to men and women equally, puts one gender at a disadvantage and which the employer cannot show is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Such an example could be a requirement to work full time, or changing fixed working hours, which may appear to benefit the organisation but could have a consequence of significantly disadvantaging working mothers, thus having a disproportionate effect on women more than men.

Equal pay and equal access to recruitment and promotion opportunities are other obvious areas where such discrimination could occur and the Council has undertaken many years of work in order to ensure that any ongoing equal pay issues are resolved and that all recruitment and selection practices, personal development and training issues etc. are developed and implemented in a manner that does not disadvantage anyone, whatever their sex.

xiii) SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Under the Equality Act 2010 it is illegal for public bodies to discriminate against a person due to them being LGB, that is lesbian (female attracted to other females), gay (male attracted to other males) or bisexual (male or female attracted to both sexes). This covers all areas of recruitment and selection, promotion and training and the provision of goods and services.

Negative attitudes towards LGB people or groups have for many years led to a large number of people hiding their sexuality from family, friends and colleagues. In the workplace, homophobia can lead to underperforming staff, in the community it can lead to social isolation and to homophobic bullying in schools.

Homophobia is also compounded by the fact that it can occur due to the perpetrator's perception of the victim's sexuality or the victim's association with a person who is LGB, and so can therefore be a serious problem for the wider community.

xiv) WELSH LANGUAGE

Welsh language issues are not covered by the Equality Act but rather have a set of Standards under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, detailed in the regulations approved by Welsh Government in March 2015 as the Welsh Language Standards. (No.1) Regulations 2015.

Many of the Standards however are very similar to actions required by implementing a **Strategic Equality Plan**, so for example when undertaking Equality Impact Assessments or when policy consultation is being done, Welsh language issues are considered part of the Equalities agenda and are dealt with alongside the protected characteristics and other equality strands.

Internal working practices continue to evolve to ensure that the principle of language equality is respected in every aspect of service provision. In many areas of work, the Council is seen as developing good or best practice.

Since 2012, the **Strategic Equality Plan** and the **Welsh Language Scheme** have had a unified set of Objectives and Action Plan in order to take forward both agendas and further reduce duplication of effort. The **Welsh Language Scheme** will no longer exist after March 2016, however the requirement to implement actions remains, and sits perfectly within this integrated approach.

The Council continues to work closely with partner organisations such as the Welsh Language Board, the WLGA, Menter Iaith Caerffili (the local Language Initiative), Coleg Gwent and Grŵp Deddf (a South East Wales regional network) to ensure that targets are met, and more importantly, the needs of its Welsh speaking population are met.

Welsh Medium Education is covered by a separate **Welsh in Education Strategic Plan** that is published, outlining developments in that area.

Welsh Language developments will be made corporately in line with the aims of the Measure, which :-

- confirmed the official status of the Welsh language;
- created a new system of placing duties on bodies to provide services through the medium of Welsh;
- created a Welsh Language Commissioner with strong enforcement powers to protect the rights of Welsh speakers to access services through the medium of Welsh;
- established a Welsh Language Tribunal;
- gives individuals and bodies the right to appeal decisions made in relation to the provision of services through the medium of Welsh;
- created a Welsh Language Partnership Council to advise Government on its strategy in relation to the Welsh language;
- allowed for an official investigation by the Welsh Language Commissioner of instances where there is an attempt to interfere with the freedom of Welsh speakers to use the language with one another.

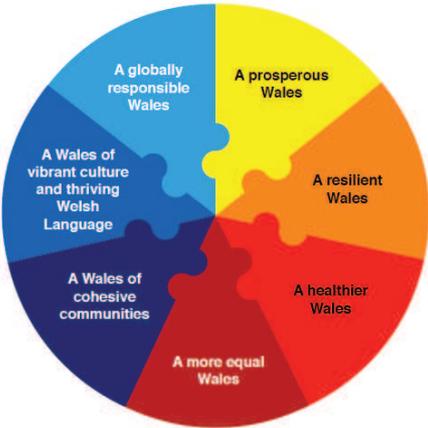
It is for these reasons that Welsh Language has been integrated into the **Equality and Welsh Language Objectives and Action Plan**, and has been given a corporate equality objective of its own.

7) THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

- 7.1 The Caerphilly Armed Forces Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its Armed Forces community at the local level. It is intended to complement the national Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces.
- 7.2 The purpose of the Community Covenant is to encourage support for the Armed Forces community working and residing in the County Borough of Caerphilly and to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by members of this Armed Forces community, particularly those who have given the most. This includes in-Service and ex-Service personnel, their families and widow(er)s throughout the County Borough of Caerphilly.
- 7.3 For Caerphilly Local Service Board and partner organisations, the Community Covenant presents an opportunity to bring their knowledge, experience and expertise to bear on the provision of help and advice to members of the Armed Forces community. It also presents an opportunity to build upon existing good work on other initiatives such as the Welfare Pathway.
- 7.4 For the Armed Forces community, the Community Covenant encourages the integration of Service life into civilian life and encourages members of the Armed Forces community to help their local community.
- 7.5 Though not a protected characteristic group in their own right, Armed Forces personnel (both current and former) and their families, can fall under the duties of the Equality Act in a number of ways. Physical disability due to injury, or emotional or mental health issues due to post-traumatic stress can affect armed forces personnel; there could also be links to domestic abuse within families for example.
- 7.6 When providing services and treating our residents fairly and equally according to their needs, these Armed Forces issues clearly do intersect with the more mainstream Equalities issues and this is why the Covenant has been included in this policy to ensure that the Armed Forces context is taken into account at the proper stages.

8) OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLAN

- 8.1 These can be found in a separate document, the **Equalities and Welsh Language Objectives and Action Plan**. It covers what overall Objectives the Council will prioritise as part of implementing its **Strategic Equality Plan** and complying with the **Welsh Language Standards**. The objectives and actions are integrated across both duties so that their common aims are implemented together, thus removing duplication.
- 8.2 In developing the Equalities Objectives and the Action Plan, the Council has demonstrated compliance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 and the requirements of complying with the agreed Welsh Language Standards under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.
- 8.3 The plan covers Corporate actions dealing with processes common to the range of Equalities issues listed in Section 6, but also includes specific actions and outcome-based targets in order to demonstrate that the Council gives equal consideration and importance to each of the Equalities issues individually.
- 8.4 The plan therefore also supports 3 of the 7 aims under the Welsh Government’s Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – namely a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, a Wales of Cohesive Communities and a more equal Wales.



- 8.5 Individual Directorates, service areas and divisions are responsible for ensuring that their own service delivery plans include relevant Equalities and Welsh Language actions, however advice and guidance can be sought from the Equalities and Welsh Language team.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

April 2016

THE COUNCIL'S EQUALITIES STATEMENT

This Council recognises that people have different needs, requirements and goals and we will work actively against all forms of discrimination by promoting good relations and mutual respect within and between our communities, residents, elected members, job applicants and workforce.

We will also work to create equal access for everyone to our services, irrespective of ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non-belief, use of Welsh language, BSL or other languages, nationality, responsibility for any dependents or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

NAME OF NEW OR REVISED PROPOSAL*	
DIRECTORATE	
SERVICE AREA	
CONTACT OFFICER	
DATE FOR NEXT REVIEW OR REVISION	

***Throughout this Equalities Impact Assessment Form, 'proposal' is used to refer to what is being assessed, and therefore includes policies, strategies, functions, procedures, practices, initiatives, projects and savings proposals.**

INTRODUCTION

The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is to ensure that Equalities issues have been consciously considered throughout the decision making processes of the work undertaken by every service area in the Council and work done at a corporate level.

The form should be used if you have identified a need for a full EIA following the screening process covered in the Equalities Implications in Committee Reports Guidance document (available on the Equalities and Welsh Language Portal on the intranet).

The EIA should highlight any areas of risk and maximise the benefits of proposals in terms of Equalities. It therefore helps to ensure that the Council has considered everyone who might be affected by the proposal.

It also helps the Council to meet its legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and supports the wider aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. There is also a requirement under Human Rights legislation for Local Authorities to consider Human Rights in developing proposals.

The Council's work across Equalities, Welsh Language and Human Rights is covered in more detail through the Strategic Equalities Objectives and Action Plan 2012.

This approach strengthens work to promote Equalities by helping to identify and address any potential discriminatory effects before introducing something new or changing working practices, and reduces the risk of potential legal challenges.

When carrying out an EIA you should consider both the positive and negative consequences of your proposals. If a project is designed for a specific group e.g. disabled people, you also need to think about what potential effects it could have on other areas e.g. young people with a disability, BME people with a disability.

There are a number of supporting guidance documents available on the Equalities and Welsh Language Portal (the Committee report guidance mentioned above, the Consultation and Monitoring guidance) and the Council's Equalities and Welsh Language team can offer support as the EIA is being developed - the contact email is equalities@caerphilly.gov.uk.

PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSAL

1	What is the proposal intended to achieve? <i>(Please give a brief description of the purpose of the new or updated proposal by way of introduction.)</i>
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2	Who are the service users affected by the proposal? <i>(Who will be affected by the delivery of this proposal? e.g. staff members, the public generally, or specific sections of the public i.e. youth groups, carers, road users, people using country parks, people on benefits etc.)</i>
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IMPACT ON THE PUBLIC AND STAFF

3	<p>Does the proposal ensure that everyone has an equal access to all the services available or proposed, or benefits equally from the proposed changes, or does not lose out in greater or more severe ways due to the proposals?</p> <p><i>(What has been done to examine whether or not these groups have equal access to the service, or whether they need to receive the service in a different way from other people?)</i></p>
	<p><u>Actions required</u></p>

4	<p>What are the consequences of the above for specific groups?</p> <p><i>(Has the service delivery been examined to assess if there is any indirect affect on any groups? Could the consequences of the policy or savings proposal differ dependent upon people’s disability, race, gender, sexuality, age, language, religion/belief?)</i></p>
	<p><u>Actions required</u></p>

INFORMATION COLLECTION

5	<p>Is full information and analysis of users of the service available? <i>(Is this service effectively engaging with all its potential users or is there higher or lower participation of uptake by one or more groups? If so, what has been done to address any difference in take up of the service? Does any savings proposals include an analysis of those affected?)</i></p>
	<p><u>Actions required</u></p>

CONSULTATION

6	<p>What consultation has taken place? <i>(What steps have been taken to ensure that people from various groups have been consulted during the development of this proposal? Have the Council's Equalities staff been consulted? Have you referred to the Equalities Consultation and Monitoring Guidance?)</i></p>
	<p><u>Actions required</u></p>

MONITORING AND REVIEW

7	<p>How will the proposal be monitored? <i>(What monitoring process has been set up to assess the extent that the service is being used by all sections of the community, or that the savings proposals are achieving the intended outcomes with no adverse impact? Are comments or complaints systems set up to record issues by Equalities category to be able analyse responses from particular groups?)</i></p>
	<p><u>Actions required</u></p>

8	<p>How will the above be evaluated? <i>(What methods will be used to ensure that the needs of all sections of the community are being met?)</i></p>
	<p><u>Actions required</u></p>

9	<p>Have any support / guidance / training requirements been identified? <i>(Has the EIA or consultation process shown a need for awareness raising amongst staff, or identified the need for Equality training of some sort?)</i></p>
	<p><u>Actions required</u></p>

10	<p>Where you have identified mitigating factors in previous answers that lessen the impact on any particular group in the community, or have identified any elsewhere, please summarise them here.</p>
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11	<p>What wider use will you make of this Equality Impact Assessment? <i>(What use will you make of this document i.e. as a consultation response, appendix to approval reports, publicity etc. in addition to the mandatory action shown below?)</i></p>
	<p><u>Actions required</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EIA, when completed, to be returned to equalities@caerphilly.gov.uk for publishing on the Council's website.

Completed By:	
Date:	
Position:	
Name of Head of Service:	

Equalities and Welsh Language Objectives and Action Plan 2016 - 2020

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

CCBC EQUALITIES AND WELSH LANGUAGE OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLAN

Introduction

As part of meeting its ongoing duties under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, Caerphilly County Borough Council must update and implement a set of Equalities Objectives by 1st April 2016, and also update its action plan that sets out how these objectives will be met.

This document sets out those Equalities Objectives and related actions that Caerphilly County Borough Council has chosen, following extensive consultation and engagement with the public and other stakeholders.

In addition, not only does the Council have to ensure that it has an updated **Strategic Equality Plan (SEP)** in place by the above deadline date, together with the objectives and actions, it also has to implement actions under the new **Welsh Language Standards (WLS)** by the same date. These are statutory duties around Welsh Language issues under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, the regulations of which were agreed in March 2015. For Caerphilly County Borough Council this means that they come into force from 31st March 2016.

The Council has also decided to include actions around the **Armed Forces Covenant (AFC)** under this scheme as so much of the work runs in parallel and are related.

The Council will continue with this single set of integrated objectives and actions in order to implement both policies and also meet the requirements under 3 of the 7 aims under the Welsh Government's Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The objectives and actions are therefore integrated so that the common aims are actioned together, thus removing any duplication, and cost-effectively streamlining future project developments.

Consultation

The updated objectives underwent extensive consultation and discussions with various internal and external stakeholders between December 2015 and January 2016. The draft document was subsequently submitted to the Corporate Management Team, Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and full Council early in 2016.

The Council is committed to an ongoing process of consultation and engagement with stakeholders throughout the 4-year lifetime of this document and any changes needed can be done following the review and evidence gathering undertaken for the Annual Report.

This final version of the updated **SEP** and Objectives and Action Plan document are available on the Council's website at www.caerphilly.gov.uk/equalities or as a hard copy on request.

The Equalities Objectives

The approach that has been used to develop the objectives and actions has taken into account the requirements of the statutory duties in Wales (both Equalities and Welsh Language), the numerous requests for specific objectives that have come from various voluntary organisations, and the comments received during the consultation period.

It has also linked in with existing partnership working so as to take advantage of work already ongoing in the county borough and not create additional work where good practice is already being achieved. This has resulted in 11 “umbrella” themes under which the Council can show its commitment to as wide a range of issues as possible.

The objectives are listed below, the first 9 can be classed as outward-facing and involve a great deal of partnership working, whilst the final 2 are more inwardly focused and show how the council’s own internal practices continue to develop.

Equality Objective 1	-	Tackling Identity-Based Violence and Abuse
Equality Objective 2	-	Addressing the Gender Pay Gap
Equality Objective 3	-	Improving Physical Access
Equality Objective 4	-	Improving Communication Access
Equality Objective 5	-	Inclusive Engagement and Participation
Equality Objective 6	-	Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards
Equality Objective 7	-	Supporting Age-friendly Communities
Equality Objective 8	-	Supporting the Armed Forces Covenant
Equality Objective 9	-	Working with Gypsy and Traveller Communities
Equality Objective 10	-	Diversity in the Workplace
Equality Objective 11	-	Corporate Compliance

Each objective comes with a related set of actions, many of these are not exclusive to this document but come from partner documents, for example much of the work around Objective 1 is not done only by Caerphilly County Borough Council but through partnership working that includes the Council, Gwent Police, Victim Support Wales and others.

This is why each objective shows not only the internal service areas that can contribute towards it, but also lists links to other plans and stakeholders to demonstrate the wider ownership of this work.

Individual Directorates, service areas and divisions within the Council are responsible for ensuring that their own service delivery plans cover the Equalities issues, however advice and guidance can be sought from the Equalities and Welsh Language team by emailing equalities@caerphilly.gov.uk.

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 1 - TACKLING IDENTITY-BASED VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Objective	To reduce the levels of real or perceived instances of identity-based abuse, bullying, harassment and violence, hate crime and hate incidents in the county borough.
Outcome	Individuals, families and groups in the communities of Caerphilly county borough feel safe living their own lives at home, at work and in the community at large.
Protected Characteristics / Other Equalities Issues covered	Ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non-belief, Welsh language, BSL and other languages, nationality, responsibility for any dependants, pregnancy and maternity. Human Rights.
Links to other Legislation, Strategies and Plans	Caerphilly Delivers - the Local Service Board Single Integrated Plan, Community Cohesion Action Plan, School Anti-bullying policies, 50+ Positive Action Plan, Corporate Complaints Policy, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001, the Criminal Justice Act 2003, the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.
Links to CCBC Service Areas	Legal, ICT and Customer Services, Human Resources, Adult Services, Childrens Services, Public Protection, Education and Lifelong Learning.
Evidence Base	Current hate crime and hate incident figures relating to race, disability and homophobia etc, domestic violence data, school bullying incidents, council complaints with an Equality aspect, all to be used as baseline.
Success Measure / Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in reporting of incidents • Increase in satisfaction levels of how issues were handled • Reduction in levels of hate crime and hate incidents • Reduction in levels of domestic abuse and violence • Reduction in levels of fear of crime • Reduction in levels of reported bullying in schools
Stakeholders	The public, CCBC Equalities Team, CCBC elected members and staff members, Community Cohesion Forum, Safer CCB, Gwent Police, Hate Crime and Hate Incident reporting centres, Police and Crime Commissioner, Domestic Abuse Forum, Deafblind Cymru, Welsh Women's Aid, Stonewall Cymru, 50+ Positive Action, Caerphilly Youth Forum, Victim Support, Communities First, Community Partnerships, Caerphilly county borough schools and governing bodies.

	ACTION	OUTCOME	TIMETABLE
1.1	To work with the listed stakeholders to record and monitor instances of identity-based hate crime and hate incidents in the county borough.	The Council has access to regular, timely and accurate figures in order for it to be able to identify areas where specific issues need to be tackled.	Ongoing, but greater coordination and data-sharing is required across stakeholders
1.2	To work with schools to develop better understanding of links between Equalities issues and identity based school bullying, and improve recording and monitoring of incidents.	Reduction in the number of identity-based school bullying incidents.	Pilot term held in Spring 2011, full implementation from September 2012 and ongoing.
1.3	To work with all service areas within the Council to use different methods in order to (where relevant) raise awareness of, and tackle under-reporting of, hate crime and hate incidents.	Service areas embed awareness and reporting of hate crime and hate incidents into their day-to-day and/or project work.	Ongoing since March 2011.
1.4	To work with local and regional partners on existing domestic abuse and violence issues to identify and tackle incidents with an equalities aspect.	The victims of domestic abuse and violence who come under the protected characteristics and other Equalities issues are identified to allow for appropriate targeting of services and support.	Initial mapping and data gathering exercise undertaken during June/July 2012. Review required during 2016-2017.
1.5	To work with CCBC elected members, staff members and partner organisations to decrease the stigma associated with some aspects of the protected characteristics e.g. stereotyping and negative assumptions.	A decrease in any negative perceptions held by professionals and practitioners in relation to those who seek their support.	Ongoing through the training programme.

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 2 - ADDRESSING THE GENDER PAY GAP

Objective	To reduce the gender pay gap by addressing the causes through making changes to pay policies and practices that are found to be a contributory factor to any inequality in pay.
Outcome	To have in place fair, open and transparent pay, grading, remuneration and recruitment strategies and plans so that the reduction in the pay gap is achieved.
Protected Characteristics / Other Equalities Issues covered	Sex (gender), responsibility for any dependants, pregnancy and maternity.
Links to other Legislation, Strategies and Plans	Caerphilly Delivers - the Local Service Board Single Integrated Plan, CCBC Anti-Poverty Strategy, CCBC Recruitment and Selection Policies, Equal Status, Equality Act 2010 section 159.
Links to CCBC Service Areas	Human Resources, ICT and Customer Services, Legal, Public Protection
Evidence Base	Existing CCBC workforce profile, CCBC Ward profiles, national employment data
Success Measure / Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in the % gender pay gap for Caerphilly county borough over the 4-year period of the plan.
Stakeholders	CCBC HR staff, CCBC Equalities Team and other staff members, CCBC elected members, Trade Unions, Careers Wales, Caerphilly Business Forum, Chwarae Teg, local, regional and national Voluntary Sector Equality Organisations.

	ACTION	OUTCOME	TIMETABLE
2.1	Implement the findings of the job evaluation exercise.	Pay and grading structures in the council are open and transparent.	Job evaluation process completed in 2010. New and updated posts undergo the same process.
2.2	Make changes to pay policies and practices that are found to be a contributory factor to any identified inequality in pay.	Pay and grading structures and recruitment practices in the council treat all staff and applicants equally, regardless of gender.	Ongoing and further work as part of the review of the policy framework (see 11.4).
2.3	Raise awareness of job opportunities and business opportunities to non-traditional groups (i.e. not stereotyping jobs to gender).	Greater gender diversity across service areas.	Ongoing and needs targeted action.
2.4	Ensure that all HR policies are reviewed and updated regularly to include matters such as flexible, part-time or job-share options, shared parental leave etc.	Staff are able to access working patterns and job options that may have been otherwise denied them.	Ongoing on a rolling programme basis.

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 3 - IMPROVING PHYSICAL ACCESS

Objective	To improve physical accessibility in terms of living in, working in, learning in, travelling around and visiting the county borough.
Outcome	People from all sections of society are able to live in, work in, travel around and visit the various public buildings, historic monuments, town and retail centres, parks and countryside venues without any unfair or unreasonable restrictions on their movements.
Protected Characteristics / Other Equalities Issues covered	Ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non-belief, Welsh language, BSL and other languages, nationality, responsibility for any dependants, pregnancy and maternity.
Links to other Legislation, Strategies and Plans	Caerphilly Delivers - the Local Service Board Single Integrated Plan, DDA Access Strategy, Building Regulations (Part M) under the Building Act 1984, Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership Plan, CCBC Licensing Policy, SEWTA Regional Transport Plan, Corporate Complaints Policy.
Links to CCBC Service Areas	Public Protection, Housing, Legal, Performance and Property, ICT and Customer Services, Human Resources, Adult Services, Childrens Services, Regeneration and Planning, Engineering and Transport, Community and Leisure Services, Education and Lifelong Learning.
Evidence Base	Feedback / satisfaction surveys / complaints from the public, tourists etc. Targets/actions in CCBC service area action plans. Targets/action in plans under the remit of strategic partnerships on which the Council sits.
Success Measure / Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in numbers of visitors to the various locations according to age, disability etc. • Increased satisfaction levels in the accessibility of these locations in terms of transport. • Increased satisfaction levels in the accessibility of these locations once there. • No. of accessible buildings, road crossings, transport hubs etc. • Reduction in the number of complaints around inaccessibility of council owned venues and locations. • Increased consideration of age and disability related issues in planning communities such as in physical design (links to SEO 7 – Supporting Age-friendly Communities).
Stakeholders	The public, CCBC Regeneration staff, CCBC Equalities Team, DDA Access Officer, CCBC elected members and other staff members, SEWTA, Caerphilly Business Forum, Living Environment Partnership, Caerphilly CB Access Group, Caerphilly CB Disability Forum, Deafblind Cymru, local, regional and national Voluntary Sector Equality Organisations, 50+ Positive Action.

	ACTION	OUTCOME	TIMETABLE
3.1	To establish an accessibility baseline for all properties by completing access audits.	Baseline established.	Updates ongoing annually
3.2	Client Liaison Team to support council service areas with issues around physical access.	Service areas gain a greater understanding of physical access issues and mainstream these issues into their day-to-day work.	Ongoing since 2007.
3.3	To monitor satisfaction levels / number of complaints regarding physical accessibility issues.	Improved data on these issues for use by service areas in future project planning.	Updated Complaints system provides greater level of detail from 2012 onwards.
3.4	To survey all building stock in terms of accessibility issues, including schools.	An updated list of Council building stock is available, which details levels of DDA compliance and any issues that need resolving.	Annually, with quarterly reports presented to the Disability Access Group.
3.5	To survey polling stations in terms of physical accessibility issues.	Polling stations that need reasonable adjustments are identified in time for voting to take place.	Ad hoc, when elections of any kind are due.

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 4 - IMPROVING COMMUNICATION ACCESS

Objective	To improve the way council services and activities are made accessible to those who need them, in terms of language and format.
Outcome	People in the community, whether local residents, visitors, job applicants or partner organisations, can access council services, activities and information in English and Welsh, and also in other spoken languages or different formats (Braille, BSL, Easy Read, large print etc) as required.
Protected Characteristics / Other Equalities Issues covered	Race, disability, Welsh language, BSL and other languages, nationality, responsibility for any dependants.
Links to other Legislation, Strategies and Plans	Caerphilly Delivers - the Local Service Board Single Integrated Plan, DDA Access Strategy, IT Strategy, Corporate Complaints Policy, Equalities Consultation and Monitoring Guidance, More than just words - Strategic Framework for Welsh Language Services in Health, Social Services and Social Care.
Links to CCBC Service Areas	Corporate Finance, Housing, Human Resources, ICT and Customer Services, Legal, Performance & Property, WHQS Programme, Adult Services, Business Support, Children's Services, Engineering and Transport, Regeneration and Planning, Public Services, Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services, Education and Lifelong Learning.
Evidence Base	Census 2011 ward profiles, current translation data, surveys feedback and complaints data. Targets/actions in CCBC service area action plans.
Success Measure / Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of translation / interpretation / format requests • Number of interpreted meetings arranged • Increase in take up of services • Increased levels of customer satisfaction • Decrease in numbers of complaints on accessible format issues
Stakeholders	The public, CCBC Equalities Team, CCBC Communications, CCBC Information & Citizen Engagement, Menter Iaith Caerffili, the Urdd, Welsh Government Language Commissioner's Office, Bargoed Deaf Club, Caerphilly Deaf Club, Caerphilly CB Access Group, Caerphilly CB Disability Forum, Deafblind Cymru, 50+ Positive Action, Gwent Visual Impairment Service, Gwent Hearing Impairment Service, Caerphilly People First, local, regional and national Voluntary Sector Equality Organisations.

	ACTION	OUTCOME	TIMETABLE
4.1	To ensure that Welsh Language issues are an integral part of all e-Government projects.	Internal systems are upgraded to be able to record language choice of users, bilingual front-end interfaces are created etc.	Software and systems review in 2016. Social Media ongoing and improving.
4.2	To ensure a fully bilingual website is maintained and pages updated in both languages on a rolling programme basis.	A fully bilingual website.	April 2016 then monitored and reported annually. Social Media ongoing.
4.3	To create a series of BSL signed web pages in a new section of the website.	A BSL signed section of pages is available on the website for the Deaf community.	Not achieved under the previous SEP, updated business plan required in 2016-2017 to progress.
4.4	To develop an updated set of minimum standards for Council publications.	Council publications comply with the different requirements of the updated Equalities and Welsh Language legislation, as outlined on the Design and Print Guidance Document.	Guidance to be updated and re-circulated by April 2016.
4.5	Update of Editorial Policy.	Change of document to be a Welsh Language Standards Translation Policy to give greater awareness of bilingual requirements amongst new and existing staff.	Guidance to be updated and re-circulated by April 2016.

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 5 - INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Objective	To increase the levels of satisfaction that communities have with council services by encouraging more citizens to become involved in the development of those services.
Outcome	People from every part of the county borough and from every community feel that they are a part of the decision-making process.
Protected Characteristics / Other Equalities Issues covered	Ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non-belief, Welsh language, BSL and other languages, nationality, responsibility for any dependants.
Links to other Legislation, Strategies and Plans	Caerphilly Delivers - the Local Service Board Single Integrated Plan, Public Engagement Strategy, Accessible Voting Guidance, Corporate Complaints Policy, Equalities Consultation and Monitoring Guidance, Human Rights Act 1998.
Links to CCBC Service Areas	ICT and Customer Services, Legal, Regeneration and Planning, all service areas undertaking any form of engagement and consultation.
Evidence Base	Targets/actions in CCBC service area action plans. Targets/action in plans under the remit of strategic partnerships on which the Council sits.
Success Measure / Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of attendance at council engagement events. • Increased levels of survey feedback • Increased complaints with increase in satisfactory outcomes • Increased county borough turnout at elections
Stakeholders	The public, Viewpoint Panel, CCBC Equalities Team, CCBC Communications, CCBC Electoral Services, Menter Iaith Caerffili, Bargoed Deaf Club, Caerphilly Deaf Club, Caerphilly Access Group, Deafblind Cymru, 50+ Positive Action, Communities First, Community Partnerships, other local, regional and national Voluntary Sector Organisations.

	ACTION	OUTCOME	TIMETABLE
5.1	Continue to implement the Public Engagement Strategy and update related guidance to ensure that public engagement/consultation exercises properly take into account equality issues and include all groups in the community to obtain a broad range of opinion.	All public engagement/consultation exercises reflect the requirements of the Equalities duties.	Ongoing use of Public Engagement Strategy and related guidance.
5.2	To identify appropriate methods of promoting Council services to different and specific groups in the community and to ensure that the new Public Engagement Strategy reflects appropriate methods of communication.	Use of all forms of media, language and format that are appropriate for engaging with all sections of the community.	Ongoing and being developed as new methods emerge.
5.3	To identify service needs of specific groups and identify the barriers to accessing services and the actions required to remove those barriers.	Ensuring robust methods of data collection and analysis for all public engagement exercises including surveys, complaints and other available means, to identify specific actions necessary to ensure that individual service needs are considered and met.	Ongoing, with improved analysis since the original SEP in 2012.
5.4	To undertake a minimum of 4 Welsh Language projects in partnership with the Menter Iaith.	Projects undertaken by Menter Iaith that would not be able to be achieved by the Council alone, in order to achieve the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards.	Annually, as per agreed SLA contract. New SLA to be drafted in 2016.

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 6 - COMPLIANCE WITH THE WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS

Objective	To comply with all agreed Welsh Language Standards in order to ensure that the Welsh-speaking public are able to access the services to which they are entitled and to ensure that all council services comply with the statutory requirements.
Outcome	People living in Caerphilly county borough, council staff and visitors to the area, whether fluent Welsh speakers or learners have their rights to use the Welsh Language supported by Council service areas and not prevented in any way.
Protected Characteristics / Other Equalities Issues covered	Welsh Language.
Links to other Legislation, Strategies and Plans	The Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015. The implementation of the Welsh Language Standards affects every council policy and service delivery plan. Corporate Complaints Policy. More than just words - Strategic Framework for Welsh Language Services in Health, Social Services and Social Care.
Links to CCBC Service Areas	All.
Evidence Base	Annual reports to date, service area service delivery plans from 2016 onwards, complaints data.
Success Measure / Performance Indicators	Compliance with statutory duties, evidence gathered for the annual report e.g. levels of complaints and all relevant service provision data.
Stakeholders	CCBC Service areas, Welsh Language Commissioner, Menter Iaith Caerffili, Urdd, Mudiad Meithrin, Cymdeithas yr Iaith, Welsh Government, Coleg Gwent, CCBC Welsh medium schools.

	ACTION	OUTCOME	TIMETABLE
6.1	To ensure compliance with the Welsh Language Standards overarching principle regarding procurement or commissioning of third party activities to be delivered on its behalf.	All contracts and commissions issued by the Council for activities carried out by, or provided by, a third party will ensure that those third parties comply with the same standards as the Council would have to in providing those services itself.	Already current practice. Contract and Commissioning wording and guidance to be updated by 31 st March 2016 for all new documentation. Monitoring systems will need updating.
6.2	To ensure compliance with the agreed Welsh Language Service Delivery Standards.	Compliance can be evidenced through practice, information in the Annual Report and complaints data.	Much is existing practice. Compliance is required within either 6 or 12 months - see the Compliance Notice for full details.
6.3	To ensure compliance with the agreed Welsh Language Policy Making Standards.	Compliance can be evidenced through practice, information in the Annual Report and complaints data.	Much is existing practice. Compliance is required within either 6 or 12 months - see the Compliance Notice for full details.
6.4	To ensure compliance with the agreed Welsh Language Operational Standards.	Compliance can be evidenced through practice, information in the Annual Report and complaints data.	Much is existing practice. Compliance is required within either 6 or 12 months - see the Compliance Notice for full details.
6.5	To ensure compliance with the agreed Welsh Language Promotional Standards.	Compliance can be evidenced through practice, information in the Annual Report and complaints data.	Much is existing practice. Compliance is required within either 6 or 12 months - see the Compliance Notice for full details.
6.6	To ensure compliance with the agreed Welsh Language Record Keeping Standards.	Compliance can be evidenced through practice, information in the Annual Report and complaints data.	Much is existing practice. Compliance is required within either 6 or 12 months - see the Compliance Notice for full details.
6.7	To ensure compliance with the agreed Welsh Language Supplementary Standards.	Compliance can be evidenced through practice, information in the Annual Report and complaints data.	Much is existing practice. Compliance is required within either 6 or 12 months - see the Compliance Notice for full details.
6.8	Increase awareness and understanding of the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards by providing training to Council staff. (see 10.2)	Training provision offered and staff have a better understanding of their responsibilities under the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards.	An awareness course has already been added to the list of courses in the Equalities Training Delivery package.

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 7 - SUPPORTING AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

Objective	To ensure that the communities of Caerphilly county borough are set up in such a way that older people can live safely, as independently as possible, enjoy good health and stay actively involved regardless of their individual circumstances and characteristics.
Outcome	Older people feel respected, valued and an active part of the community.
Protected Characteristics / Other Equalities Issues covered	All, but specifically age, disability and Human Rights.
Links to other Legislation, Strategies and Plans	Caerphilly Delivers - the Local Service Board Single Integrated Plan, Public Engagement Strategy, CCBC Anti-Poverty Strategy, 50+ Citizen Engagement Project, Corporate Complaints Policy, Human Rights Act 1998, Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, Ageing Well in Wales and its five themes, Older People's Commissioner for Wales document "Protection of older people in Wales: A guide to the law", Dublin Declaration on Age-Friendly Cities and Communities, Public Health Wales' Transforming Health Improvement Programme, More than just words - Strategic Framework for Welsh Language Services in Health, Social Services and Social Care.
Links to CCBC Service Areas	Social Services Adult Services, Public Protection, ICT and Customer Services.
Evidence Base	Census 2011 data, data relating to poverty and age, take-up of age or disability related benefits, engagement project results based on age, customer satisfaction survey results based on age, complaints data.
Success Measure / Performance Indicators	Increased consideration of age and disability related issues in planning communities such as in physical design (links to SEO 3 – Physical Access). Increase in number of older people taking part in activities/events and becoming involved in projects. Increased take-up of available services and benefits.
Stakeholders	Older people in Caerphilly county borough, Carers, Elected Member Champion, Social Services, 50+ Positive Action, Older Persons Commissioner for Wales, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Public Health Wales.

	ACTION	OUTCOME	TIMETABLE
7.1	Supporting the “Age-Friendly Communities” theme by encouraging and enabling older people to engage with their surroundings and continue to engage socially within those communities, thereby maintaining their health, independence and wellbeing.	Local people have decided their priorities to better support people as they age. This can include physical design, promoting better access and mobility, promoting people’s social engagement and developing support and relationships between the generations.	Current practice and ongoing, with greater awareness raising of the issues being undertaken from 2016 onwards.
7.2	Supporting the “Falls Prevention” theme by helping older people to maintain their health and wellbeing, live longer in their own homes and remain active in their communities.	A reduction in falls amongst older people, reduction in the demand for support services, greater independence of older people in their communities.	Current practice and ongoing, with greater awareness raising of the issues being undertaken from 2016 onwards.
7.3	Supporting the “Dementia Supportive Communities” theme by helping Caerphilly county borough communities gain a greater level of public awareness and understanding of dementia.	People who receive an early diagnosis of dementia and their families/carers are given access to appropriate information, support and care, are able to live well with dementia.	Current practice and ongoing, with greater awareness raising of the issues being undertaken from 2016 onwards.
7.4	Supporting the “Opportunities for Learning and Employment” theme by tackling age discrimination and recognising the value and worth of older people in Caerphilly county borough.	Older people can access provision in terms of learning and skill development opportunities in order to improve or maintain their employment prospects.	Current practice and ongoing, with greater awareness raising of the issues being undertaken from 2016 onwards.
7.5	Supporting the “Loneliness and Isolation” theme by recognising loneliness and isolation as public health issues that cross all boundaries and groups in Caerphilly county borough.	Reduced numbers of older people who feel lonely and isolated, which can result in damaging effects to their mental health.	Current practice and ongoing, with greater awareness raising of the issues being undertaken from 2016 onwards.

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 8 - SUPPORTING THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

Objective	To encourage support for the Armed Forces community living and working in Caerphilly County Borough and to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by those members of the Armed Forces community, particularly those who have given the most.
Outcome	The Armed Forces community, which includes in-Service and ex-Service personnel, their families and widow(er)s, are respected, valued and do not receive any lesser service than other members of the community in the county borough.
Protected Characteristics / Other Equalities Issues covered	The Armed Forces community is not a group classed as a protected characteristic, however ex-Service personnel may have suffered physical, emotional or mental trauma in action, which can have knock-on effects on their families. In this way, there are clear links to disability, age and gender issues that are covered by Equalities legislation.
Links to other Legislation, Strategies and Plans	The Armed Forces Covenant, Caerphilly Delivers - the Local Service Board Single Integrated Plan, CCBC Anti-Poverty Strategy, Corporate Complaints Policy.
Links to CCBC Service Areas	Education, Social Services, Housing, ICT and Customer Services.
Evidence Base	Regular contact with Armed Forces, Council support and participation in Armed Forces Events, website updated with relevant information, Council service areas recognise and monitor the needs of the Armed Forces community.
Success Measure / Performance Indicators	Number of events supported / attended, timeliness of website information, increase in data held by service areas of engagement and monitoring of Armed Forces Community service users.
Stakeholders	The Armed Forces community, the elected member Armed Forces Champion, Public Service Board / CCBC Armed Forces Lead Officer, the Royal British Legion, veterans or family groups (e.g. Gwent Veterans Association, SSAFA), reservists, cadet corps, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Gwent Police, Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner, GAVO, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Caerphilly Business Forum.

	ACTION	OUTCOME	TIMETABLE
8.1	Identify and support an elected member Armed Forces Champion.	Elected member Armed Forces Champion named and noted as CCBC point of contact.	Ongoing, the elected member Armed Forces Champion has been in place since 2013 after the Covenant was signed.
8.2	Identify and support a Public Service Board contact and CCBC Armed Forces Lead Officer.	Public Service Board contact and CCBC Armed Forces Lead Officer named and noted as CCBC points of contact.	Ongoing, the Public Service Board contact and CCBC Armed Forces Lead Officer have been in place since 2013 after the Covenant was signed.
8.3	Maintain the CCBC website pages dedicated to the Caerphilly Armed Forces Community Covenant scheme.	Dedicated web pages updated with timely and relevant information and support.	Ongoing.
8.4	Add "Armed Forces Community" as an option on monitoring forms etc.	Relevant service areas have this option on forms to ensure that members of the Armed Forces Community are identified at the appropriate stage.	Under discussion.
8.5	Provide awareness training as part of the overall Equalities Training Delivery (see 10.2) where there is a crossover aspect between Armed Forces issues and Equalities.	Training provision offered to staff who come into contact with this community will have a better understanding of their client base.	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness has already been added to the list of courses in the Equalities Training Delivery package. Others can be added as necessary.

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 9 - WORKING WITH GYPSY AND TRAVELLER COMMUNITIES

Objective	To provide a corporate overview and framework regarding the Gypsy and Traveller community (whether they are permanent or transient) in order to improve community cohesion by promoting good relations between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled communities of the county borough.
Outcome	Residents in settled communities and those from the Gypsy and Traveller communities have an increased understanding and awareness of each other's culture, rights and lifestyle.
Protected Characteristics / Other Equalities Issues covered	Race (specifically Gypsy and Travellers), Human Rights.
Links to other Legislation, Strategies and Plans	Gypsy and Traveller Housing Needs Assessment, Unauthorised Encampments Policy, Corporate Complaints Policy, Welsh Government's Travelling to a Better Future document, Human Rights Act 1998.
Links to CCBC Service Areas	Education and Lifelong Learning, Social Services, Housing, Public Protection, Corporate Complaints, ICT and Customer Services.
Evidence Base	Census 2011, Gypsy and Traveller Housing Needs Assessment, Data on unauthorised encampments, data on Gypsy and Traveller population in schools.
Success Measure / Performance Indicators	The Council's Housing needs assessment is approved by Welsh Government. Transient sites are dealt with sensitively and in accordance with Council procedures.
Stakeholders	Education, Social Services, Housing, Public Services, Welsh Government, Gypsy and Traveller communities.

	ACTION	OUTCOME	TIMETABLE
9.1	Increase awareness and understanding of Gypsy and Traveller needs, culture and lifestyle by providing training to Council staff. (see 10.2)	Gypsy and Traveller Awareness is part of the Training provision offered and staff who come into contact with this community have a better understanding of their client base.	Ongoing since 2012.
9.2	Work to reduce and eliminate harassment and discrimination towards Gypsy and Traveller communities.	Decrease in incidents, especially around transient sites, which are the majority of the types of contact in Caerphilly county borough.	Ongoing since 2012.
9.3	Improve knowledge and understanding of hate crime and incidents and encourage Gypsy and Traveller communities to report them.	Increase in reported incidents from this community.	Ongoing since 2011 but more focused work required from 2016 onwards.
9.4	Continue to manage unauthorised encampments in the county borough under the current Unauthorised Encampments policy and procedures.	Unauthorised encampments are dealt with fairly and quickly and any welfare issues are addressed.	Current practice and ongoing.

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 10 - DIVERSITY IN THE WORKFORCE

Objective	To have a workforce that reflects and respects the diversity of the communities within Caerphilly County Borough.
Outcome	Individuals from all parts of the community feel that CCBC is a fair and tolerant employer.
Protected Characteristics / Other Equalities Issues covered	Ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non-belief, Welsh language, BSL and other languages, nationality, responsibility for any dependants, pregnancy and maternity.
Links to other Legislation, Strategies and Plans	CCBC Recruitment and Selection Policies, Equal Status, Equality Act 2010 section 159, The Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015, Human Rights Act 1998, Corporate Complaints Policy.
Links to CCBC Service Areas	Equalities and Welsh Language Team, Human Resources, all service areas.
Evidence Base	Existing CCBC workforce profile, Census 2011 data on ward basis, county borough basis and national basis (thus covering travel to work areas).
Success Measure / Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCBC employee profile data demonstrates diverse workforce across service areas and salary grades as workforce profiles will match as closely as possible with the County Borough population profiles. • Workforce profiles used to produce an annual comparison for the SEP Annual Report. • Annual Training Report published with types of courses offered and numbers of staff trained being recorded and analysed.
Stakeholders	CCBC HR staff, CCBC Equalities Team, CCBC elected members and other staff members, Careers Wales, Caerphilly Business Forum, Chwarae Teg, Stonewall Cymru, local, regional and national Voluntary Sector Equality Organisations, Caerphilly Youth Forum, CCBC secondary schools, Welsh Language Commissioner, Equalities and Human Rights Commission.

	ACTION	OUTCOME	TIMETABLE
10.1	To ensure consistent, accurate and robust collation and recording of employee information in terms of Equality data utilising the capacity of the iTRENT payroll database with ongoing data cleansing.	Production of anonymised Equalities and Welsh Language staffing reports based on ongoing data collection and cleansing exercises for publication and use in the Annual Equalities reports.	Annual information reports and a relevant section in the annual Equalities Report and Welsh Language Report.
10.2	To offer staff, elected members and partner organisations a comprehensive Equalities training programme and continue to increase course provision and course take-up.	Council staff, elected members and staff from partner organisations are appropriately trained in Equalities issues and a quarterly list of Equalities courses produced and circulated.	Current practice since 2009.
10.3	To monitor the number and percentage of elected members and staff who have received training in Equalities and Welsh language.	Annual Report prepared at the conclusion of each academic year and after consultation with officers and training partners, and submission to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, published on the website during the Autumn.	Current practice since 2009 - report published online Autumn each year and available as hard copy on request.
10.4	To offer staff the opportunity to form their own workplace support networks for specific groups - initial meeting organised centrally with future meetings being the responsibility of the group.	Groups or networks are set up for those wishing to have them, both for mutual support and in order to provide suggestions and comments as a voice in CCBC policy and decision making.	Ongoing, but little progress made since 2012.
10.5	To issue supplementary guidance corporately or to service areas on specific areas of work.	Minimum of 3 sets of guidance to be produced per year.	Current practice since 2009.
10.6	To undertake a corporate exercise with HR and Service Managers to identify posts where Welsh skills would be essential. Also other language skills e.g. BSL where relevant.	A number of agreed posts in every Service Area have a linguistic element as a basic part of the job description.	Corporate exercise in 2016.

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 11 - CORPORATE COMPLIANCE

Objective	To ensure that the Council complies with its statutory duties under current Equalities and Welsh Language legislation.
Outcome	The Council demonstrates compliance with its duties, and receives positive feedback from the relevant monitoring bodies on its annual reports, progress against the objectives and actions and develops a name for itself as an exemplar organisation.
Protected Characteristics / Other Equalities Issues covered	Ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non-belief, Welsh language, BSL and other languages, nationality, responsibility for any dependants, pregnancy and maternity.
Links to other Legislation, Strategies and Plans	Direct links to all CCBC policies in the Council's policy framework and 3rd party contracts, influential links with all partnership plans. Corporate Improvement Framework, Corporate Complaints Policy.
Links to CCBC Service Areas	All.
Evidence Base	Committee reports contain Equalities-related information. Evidence of EIAs published. Information analysed and report on in the Annual Monitoring and Improvement Reports.
Success Measure / Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual reports published on time, after due internal consideration and scrutiny. • Number of EIAs completed and published per year. • Audit of Service Improvement Plans demonstrates service areas are mainstreaming Equalities and Welsh Language issues. • Number of complaints that contain an Equalities or Welsh Language element. • Levels of 3rd party contract compliance.
Stakeholders	CMT, Cabinet, Legal, Performance, Procurement, Heads of Service, Welsh Language Commissioner, Equalities and Human Rights Commission, Wales Audit Office.

	ACTION	OUTCOME	TIMETABLE
11.1	To ensure that arrangements are in place to strategically monitor the progress of the Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) and Welsh Language Standards (WLS) and to produce annual monitoring and improvement reports on the progress achieved and any areas of concern, and overall compliance with statutory duties.	Annual reports submitted for approval to Corporate Management Team, Policy and Resources Scrutiny and Cabinet internally and then submitted to the relevant bodies. Ad hoc information reports to be produced where relevant or where specifically requested.	Ongoing since 2008. All related annual reports are published bilingually on the website and are available in other languages and formats on request.
11.2	To adopt and implement a standing directive that reports presenting new or updated policies and initiatives carry an assessment of the likely impact of the SEP and WLS.	Reports demonstrate clear links to the Equalities and Welsh Language agenda.	September 2009 and ongoing. Updated report template in place from January 2012.
11.3	To produce a corporate list of policies, strategies and plans and update the list regularly.	Updated list produced and made available quarterly.	To be undertaken in 2016-2017.
11.4	Each service to ensure that it has Equalities and Welsh Language information in its Service Delivery Plan.	Services will mainstream Equalities and Welsh Language issues in their own action plans.	Annually.
11.5	Undertake annual Equalities and Welsh Language audit of all Service Delivery Plans to establish progress each service has made.	Report produced showing good practice and areas for improvement for following year.	Annually.
11.6	Each service area to undertake Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) on all policies.	EIAs undertaken and published on CCBC website.	Annually.
11.7	To monitor the number and type of complaints received that contain an Equalities aspect and whether they are dealt with in accordance with corporate standards and provide appropriate training if required.	Complaints reporting will remain part of the annual Equalities report and published in relation to the Welsh Language Standards.	Updated Complaints system provides greater level of detail - links to corporate system since 2014/2015.
11.8	To ensure that Council contract specifications include an Equalities and Welsh Language pre-tender questionnaire and include the Equality in Procurement Policy as standard information.	All contractors are aware of their Equalities and Welsh Language responsibilities when discharging functions on behalf of the Council.	Updated pre-tender contract questionnaire and Equality in Procurement Policy in place by April 2016.



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 1ST MARCH 2016

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY FUNDS

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

- 1.1 The report was considered by the Caerphilly Homes Task Group (CHTG) on 18th February 2016 and outlined a proposal to absorb the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) Community Improvement Fund and Community Safety Fund into the Environmental Programme budget. The report sought the views of the CHTG prior to its presentation to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and thereafter Cabinet.
- 1.2 Members were advised that following the stock transfer ballot in February 2012, the Council agreed that it would deliver the promises made in its Offer Document to tenants and deliver the WHQS by 2019/2020. It also gave a commitment to delivering numerous additional benefits which were also outlined in the Offer Document, which would add value to the WHQS programme and help deliver the Council's ambition of using the £200 million WHQS investment as a catalyst to Transform Homes, Lives and Communities. These additional benefits included the creation of a Community Improvement Fund and Community Safety Fund. The Council also created a Local Employment Fund, which has been relatively successful and will be subject shortly to a separate report. £50,000 is allocated to each fund annually.
- 1.3 Officers explained that each year, despite a number of promotional approaches by staff, there is a significant underspend in the funds allocated to the Community Improvement Fund and Community Safety Fund. Whilst many of the projects have been worthy recipients, the Community Improvement Fund and Community Safety Fund have not met their original expectations, in that they were designed to increase community cohesion and address local priorities. It was therefore advocated that these Funds be incorporated into the Environmental Programme budget.
- 1.4 Discussion took place regarding future applications to the fund and it was noted that, if any projects emerge that would previously have been candidates for the two funds they will, if appropriate, be incorporated within proposals for specific estates and be subject to the consultation arrangements that will inform the decision making as to which project proposals can be supported. A Task Group Member raised concerns around the allocation of funding and projects in the larger estates across the borough and sought reassurance that, when work on the Environmental Programme begins, consideration should be given to all estates.
- 1.5 Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By a show of hands (and in noting there was one abstention) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report The Caerphilly Homes Task Group recommend to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet that the separate Community Improvement Fund and Community Safety Fund are terminated and the allocation apportionments absorbed within the Environmental Programme budget.

1.6 Members are asked to consider the recommendation.

Author: C. Evans, Committee Services Officer, Ext. 4210

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Report to Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 18th February 2016 - Agenda Item 5



CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 18TH FEBRUARY 2016

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY FUNDS

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To outline a proposal to absorb the WHQS Community Improvement Fund and Community Safety Fund into the Environmental Programme budget. The report is seeking the views of CHTG prior to its presentation to Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Following the ballot in February 2012, the Council agreed that it would deliver the promises made in its Offer Document to tenants and deliver WHQS by 2019/2020. It also gave a commitment to delivering numerous additional benefits which were also outlined in the Offer Document, which would add value to the WHQS programme and help deliver the Council's ambition of using the £200 million WHQS investment as a catalyst to Transform Homes, Lives and Communities.
- 2.2 These additional benefits included the creation of a Community Improvement Fund and Community Safety Fund. The Council also created a Local Employment Fund.
- 2.3 The Local Employment Fund has been relatively successful and will be subject shortly to a separate report.
- 2.4 £50,000 is allocated to each fund annually.
- 2.5 The Community Improvement Fund and Community Safety Fund have not met the original expectations and it is advocated these are now incorporated as part of the Environmental Programme budget.

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 specified standards.
- 3.2 The Council is committed to ensuring that the WHQS investment transforms not only homes but also lives and communities.
- 3.3 The 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 delivery of the WHQS environmental programme is coterminous with the aims of the Council's Single Integrated Plan 2013-2017 which aims to 'improve standards of housing and communities, giving appropriate access to services across the county borough' and the recently approved, Caerphilly Poverty Strategy 2015.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 The Community Improvement Fund was designed specifically to foster community development and cohesion by enabling community groups to bid for funding to support local initiatives and projects that would help improve the immediate environment.

4.2 The Community Safety Fund was created to support community safety initiatives and interventions that would directly and indirectly benefit Council tenants including creating safer communities, tackling anti social behaviour, reducing crime and the fear of crime, supporting victims of anti social behaviour and domestic violence.

4.3 Potential applicants to the Community Improvement Fund apply for funding via a two stage process that complies with the Council's standing orders and requires evidence of community support, synergy with Communities First outcomes and an indication of the benefits that will be delivered. Applications to the Community Safety Fund have been via internal departments. Proposals under both funds are subject to consultation with the CHTG and decisions are then made by the Head of Service under delegated powers.

4.4 Since 2013/14 a total of only £18,604 has been approved from the Community Improvement Fund to support the following organisations (although not all monies have been claimed):

- Rhymney Allotments Society
- Oaklands Hall Allotments Association
- Pen Y Dre Tenants and Residents Association
- Tarragon Educational Gardens

4.5 Further applications have been approved for Britannia Community House, Graig Y Rhacca Resource Centre and Neuadd St Catwg and not claimed.

4.6 Since 2013/14, a total of £43,350 has been approved from the Community Safety Fund out of a potential £150,000.

4.7 Each year there is a significant underspend in the funds allocated to the Community Improvement Fund and Community Safety Fund.

4.8 Meetings have been held with relevant individuals and partnerships to promote the availability of funds and marketing literature produced and circulated. The funds have also been promoted via social media and support made available to those organisations seeking assistance to complete the required paperwork.

4.9 Despite these efforts, the number and diversity of organisations requesting funding has been minimal. The Community Improvement Fund has, in the main, been accessed predominantly by Allotment Associations located throughout the borough to increase access to facilities for members and interested parties within local communities.

4.10 The Community Safety Fund has supported the purchase and installation of CCTV cameras in areas of the borough exhibiting high levels of anti social behaviour and to support the work of the Community Safety Partnership in relation to target hardening measures to help protect victims of domestic violence and anti social behaviour.

4.11 Whilst many of the projects supported have been worthy the Community Improvement Fund and Community Safety Fund have not delivered the original expectations. They were both designed to increase community cohesion and address local priorities.

4.12 It is therefore proposed that both the Community Improvement Fund and the Community Safety Fund are absorbed into the Environmental Programme budget. It should be noted that they were top sliced from this budget originally.

4.13 The WHQS Environmental Programme is currently under development. If any projects emerge that would previously have been candidates for the two funds they will, if appropriate, be incorporated within proposals for specific estates and be subject to the consultation arrangements that will inform the decision making as to which project proposals can be supported.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no equalities implications arising directly as a result of this report however, it maybe necessary to complete an Equalities Impact Assessment depending on the nature of individual project proposals.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 If the recommendation is agreed there will be no further separate allocation from the Community Improvement Fund or Community Safety Fund from the 2016/17 financial year onwards.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

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

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 Comments received have been incorporated in the report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The Caerphilly Homes Task Group recommend to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet that the separate Community Improvement Fund and Community Safety Fund are terminated and the allocation apportionments absorbed within the Environmental Programme budget.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To recognise that the funds are not meeting the purpose for which they were established.

11. STATUTORY POWER

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

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Consultees: Cllr. David Poole, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing
Cllr. Barbara Jones, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Christina HARRY, Corporate Director Communities
Shaun Couzens, Chief Housing Officer
Gail Williams, Interim Head of Legal Services
Nicole Scammel, Interim Director of Corporate Services and S151 Officer
Phil Davy, Head of Programmes
Marcus Lloyd, Deputy Head of Programmes

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POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 1ST MARCH 2016

**SUBJECT: COUNCIL TAX DISCRETIONARY REDUCTION POLICY -
SECTION 13A (1) (C)**

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

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the Scrutiny Committee with details of a draft Council Tax Discretionary Reduction Policy concerning Section 13A (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (introduced by Section 76 of the Local Government Act 2003 and substituted by Section 10 of the Local Government Finance Act 2012) which allows a Council to reduce a person's Council Tax liability to nil, if it sees fit to do so, prior to its presentation to Cabinet for approval.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report provides details of a draft policy setting out the circumstances and information that will be taken into consideration when making a decision to award a reduction under Section 13A (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Council tax provides significant resources which assist the Council in achieving a balanced financial plan. A council tax discretionary reduction policy will support the Council's anti-poverty strategy.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Section 13A (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended gives discretion to billing authorities to reduce a liable person's council tax 'to such extent as it thinks fit', even to nil, whether on an individual basis or by prescribing one or more categories. This discretion is in addition to various statutory reductions, discounts, disregards and exemptions that are already within existing legislation.
- 4.2 This discretionary power was originally envisaged to be used in extreme cases affecting a limited number of council tax payers, for example, a crisis or event that has made the property uninhabitable such as a fire or flood. However, from 1st April 2013 the way in which support is provided to council tax payers on low income changed with the introduction of council tax reduction schemes throughout the UK. This change has resulted in many more applications of this type being received by councils in England.

- 4.3 Following the abolition of Council Tax Benefit on 31st March 2013, Members will be aware that the Welsh Government contributed a further £22m of funding on top of the £222m provided by the UK Government in order to maintain Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) entitlement at 100%. In England, no such provision was made and so many councils decided to reduce the maximum entitlement under their CTRS from 100% to a lesser amount which resulted in low income working age council tax payers having to pay a proportion of their council tax liability.
- 4.4 With the Welsh Government planning to review funding arrangements for the CTRS from 2017/18 onwards, any reductions in funding are likely to result in low income working age council tax payers in Wales having to start paying a proportion of their council tax liability. To date this Council has only received a handful of applications which have been duly considered by the Head of Corporate Finance under delegated powers.
- 4.5 This policy aims to provide a more transparent and equitable way of determining applications received for discretionary council tax reduction under Section 13A (1) (c).
- 4.6 Members are therefore asked to consider and comment upon the draft policy attached as Appendix A of this report.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The financial burden of awarding reductions under Section 13A (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended must be borne wholly by the Council as a loss of council tax revenue.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no potential equalities implications of this report and its recommendations on groups or individuals who fall under the categories identified in Section 6 of the Council's Strategic Equality Plan, therefore a full Equalities Impact Assessment has not been carried out.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

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

8. CONSULTATIONS

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

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 It is recommended that Members consider and comment upon the draft Council Tax Discretionary Reduction Policy - Section 13A (1) (c) as at Appendix A, prior to its presentation to Cabinet for approval.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To ensure the views of the Scrutiny Committee are considered prior to the draft policy being presented to Cabinet on 16th March 2016.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government Finance Act 1992 (introduced by Section 76 of the Local Government Act 2003 and substituted by Section 10 of the Local Government Finance Act 2012) and regulations made under the Act.

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Appendices:
Appendix A Council Tax Discretionary Reduction Policy - Section 13A (1) (c)

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Council Tax Discretionary Reduction Policy

Section 13A (1) (c)

1. Background

- 1.1. Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 allows Councils to reduce the amount of council tax payable. It can be used for individual cases or the Council can determine classes of cases in which liability is to be reduced. Caerphilly County Borough Council has not specified any class of cases but will consider claims on an individual basis. The purpose of this discretionary reduction is to provide temporary assistance to council tax payers to help reduce their council tax liability. There are financial implications in awarding any reductions other than those currently available under the statutory legislation, and the financial burden of Section 13A reductions is borne wholly by the Council as a loss of council tax revenue.

2. Legislative Powers

- 2.1. Section 13A (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (introduced by Section 76 of the Local Government Act 2003 and substituted by Section 10 of the Local Government Finance Act 2012), provides the Council with the discretion to reduce liability for council tax in relation to individual cases or class(es) of cases that it may determine and where statutory discounts and exemptions do not apply.

A summary of Section 13A (1) (c) is set out below:

- Where a person is liable to pay council tax in respect of any chargeable dwelling, the Council for the area in which the dwelling is situated may reduce the amount to such extent as it thinks appropriate.
- The power under subsection (1) includes the power to reduce an amount to nil.
- The power under subsection (1) may be exercised in relation to particular cases or by determining a class of case in which liability is to be reduced to an extent provided by the determination.

3. Applying for Section 13A Discretionary Reduction

- 3.1. Who can apply?

Those persons liable to pay council tax to Caerphilly County Borough Council who can apply are:-

- Owner Occupiers
- Tenants
- Residents
- Persons acting on behalf of a liable person e.g. disabled, or elderly persons, i.e. an appointee, solicitor or someone with power of attorney.

3.2. The Council will treat all applications on their individual merits, however some or all of the following criteria must be met for each case:

- The taxpayer must satisfy the Council that all reasonable steps have been taken to resolve the situation prior to application;
- The amount outstanding must not be the result of deliberate non-payment or failure to make payments as required through neglect;
- All other appropriate council tax discounts/reductions have already been awarded;
- The taxpayer does not have access to other assets that could be used to pay council tax;
- The situation and reason for the application must be outside of the applicant's control, for example, environmental factors like flooding;
- Unless it is clear that the applicant will not qualify, the applicant has applied for council tax reduction support (the Welsh Government's national council tax reduction scheme exists to ensure that those on low incomes receive financial assistance with their council tax);
- There must be evidence of financial hardship or personal circumstances that justifies a discretionary reduction in council tax liability. To evidence financial hardship an Income/Expenditure form must be completed. **See appendix A.**

3.3. Requests for a discretionary reduction to lower council tax liability will be required in writing from the council tax payer, or a recognised third party appointed to act on their behalf, and titled 'Section 13A Application'. There is no formal application form.

3.4. The application should relate to the current council tax year, unless the applicant has received a bill following a delayed council tax valuation for a previous year(s) or a late determination as to liability to the council tax.

3.5. The Council reserves the right to request any additional evidence in support of the discretionary reduction application, and will act consistently and reasonably in doing so. Where the applicant is unable to, or does not supply the required evidence, the Council will still consider the application and will take into account any other evidence available.

4. Decision Making

4.1. The Council Tax and NNDR Manager will consider all Section 13A applications and make a recommendation to the Head of Corporate Finance whose decision will be made under delegated powers.

4.2. Any successful application for a discretionary reduction will be granted for a temporary period only. The reduction will cease at the end of this period and a further application will be required for consideration of any ongoing assistance.

- 4.3. Discretionary reductions will generally be made from the date that the Council received the application form, but the Council may backdate reductions under this policy, if it is considered reasonable to do so.

5. Notification of Decision

- 5.1. The Council will notify an applicant in writing within 21 days of receiving sufficient information to make a decision or, if this is not possible, within a reasonable period afterwards.

6. Review of Decision

- 6.1. Under the Local Government Finance Act 1992, there is no right of appeal against the Council's use of discretionary powers. However, the Council will accept a taxpayer's written request for a review of its decision if it is made within 28 days of the original decision. The Director of Corporate Services & Section 151 Officer will carry out the review and consider whether the customer has provided any additional information against the required criteria that will justify a change in its decision. Following this, if the taxpayer is still aggrieved at the Council's decision, it may only be challenged by way of judicial review where the High Court may be asked to consider whether the Council has acted within its powers.

7. Fraudulent Claims and Overpayments

- 7.1. The Council reserves the right to recover any overpayment of a discretionary reduction where the reduction was made as a result of misrepresentation or failure to disclose a material fact, fraudulently (or otherwise), or due to an administrative error by the Council (where it is reasonable to assume that the taxpayer would have been aware).

The Council is committed to tackling fraud and abuse of public funds in all forms. Where there is suspicion that a fraud may have occurred, the matter will be investigated and this may lead to criminal proceedings being initiated. The Council will consider prosecuting any applicant who makes a false statement or provides fraudulent evidence in support of an application.

8. Equalities Statement

- 8.1. The Council is committed to equality and fairness. Equality is about ensuring people are treated fairly and given fair chances. It is also about ensuring that people receive fair outcomes in the standard of service they receive from the Council.

We will work to create equal access for everyone to our services, irrespective of ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non-belief, use of Welsh, BSL or any other language, nationality, responsibility for any dependents or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.



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COUNCIL TAX

DETAILS OF INCOME & OUTGOINGS

Name and Address	Date of Issue:	
	Date to be Returned by:	
	A/c Number:	
	Tel Number:	
	N I Number:	

EMPLOYED (give weekly amounts)		UNEMPLOYED OR ON BENEFIT (give weekly amounts)	
Date commenced employment:		Date first claimed benefit:	
Employer: Address:		Income Support:	£
		Pension Credit:	£
		Job Seeker's Allowance:	£
Tel Number:		Incapacity Benefit or ESA:	£
Payroll No:		Tax Credits:	£
Net Income:	£	Other Benefits:	£
Tax Credits:	£		
TOTAL INCOME:	£	TOTAL INCOME:	£

Savings	
Savings/bank accounts	
Total Savings held	£

OTHER RELEVANT DETAILS	
Partner's full name:	
Partner's income (weekly):	£
Partner's employment details (if applicable) :	
Number of dependent children:	
Ages of children:	

Please ensure you include all of your outgoings below:

Expenses	Amount £	Frequency i.e. weekly, monthly or 4 weekly	Expenses	Amount £ A Amount £	Frequency i.e. weekly, monthly or 4 weekly
Rent/Rent arrears/Mortgage			Loans/HP		
Council Tax/Council Tax Arrears			Fines/Court Orders		
Electricity			Television (Rental)		
Gas			TV Licence		
Water rates			Car (Fuel, Tax, insurance)		
Food/Housekeeping			Travel Expenses		
Childcare (Dinner money)			Clothing		
Insurances (home, personal)			Maintenance paid		
Telephone (home)			Other		
Telephone (mobile)					
Credit Card/Store Card			Total Expenditure		

If any of the expenses given above are unusually high, please give details:

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Declaration

I **declare** that the information given on this form is correct.

Signed:

Dated:

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POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 1ST MARCH 2016

SUBJECT: TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND CAPITAL FINANCING PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS QUARTER 3 MONITORING REPORT (1ST APRIL 2015 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2015)

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

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 1st April 2015 to 31st December 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 12th 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 25th February 2015.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Treasury Management Strategy 2015/16 as agreed by Council on 25th 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 31st 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 21st Century Schools. Since the approval of the Treasury Management Strategy, the Authority will not be borrowing for Bargoed Odeon 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 17th 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 2nd 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 31st December 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 economic activity. 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, China and other geo-political events, weighing on risk appetite, while inflation expectations remain subdued. Uncertainty surrounding the timing of UK monetary policy tightening still remains. Falling oil prices and the Chinese stock market led turmoil, are likely to prompt short term volatility in gilt yields as investors sought safe-haven investments.

During the period covered by this report, PWLB loans to the value of £5.0m were repaid on maturity. Such loans had an average interest rate of 4.61%. £30k of the WRU Loan was also repaid. Total debt outstanding as at 31st December 2015 was £288.9m and comprised of £248.7m 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 increase 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 three, none of which were exercised by the lender. As at 31st December a further £10m LOBO loan has an option that will be reviewed by the lender during the remainder of 2015/16 financial year. This represents 3.5% 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 £27.6m 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 investments as at 31st December 2015 was £122.7m and is made up of a spread of periods up to 2.5 years. The average rate for these deposits was 0.62%, 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 instruments 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 31st December 2015 comprised of the following types of investments:

Counterparty	Investment Product	Sector	£m
Banks	Call Accounts	Financial	5.0
Banks	Certificate of Deposits	Financial	15.0
Banks & building societies	Fixed-term cash deposits	Financial	20.6
Banks & building societies	Covered bonds	Financial	13.4
Corporates	Bonds	Transport Infrastructure/ Banks	16.1
Debt Management Office	Fixed-term cash deposits	UK Government	4.5
Local Authorities	Fixed-term cash deposits	Public sector	20.9
Supranational Institutions	Bonds	Sovereign/ Financial	10.1
UK Government	Treasury Bills	UK Government	17.1
Total Investments as at 31st December 2015			122.7

4.1.5 Economic Outlook

The UK economy had a solid 2015 with overall growth estimated to be around 2.5%. The labour market was also strong. Data released in December for the period to October 2015, showed employment the highest at 73.9% and unemployment at 5.2% the lowest it had been since 2006. As a result, wage growth was generally strong over the year. Consumer price inflation was very low over the second half of 2015. Stronger wage growth and low inflation allowed real earnings to grow at the fastest rate in eight years.

With respect to the Bank Rate, the general consensus was that the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee would look to raise interest rates in early 2016. However a number of factors have pushed back the expectation of a rate rise to quarter 3 or quarter 4 of 2016, with further potential increases in 2017. The delay in interest rate rise is due to low inflation, (having dipped below zero earlier in 2015); the collapse in oil prices and the slowdown in the Chinese economy.

In the US, the Federal Reserve raised interest rates in December 2015 for the first time in nine years due to continuing tightening of the labour market, the solid improvement in economic household spending and business fixed investment and a strong housing sector. The consensus is that there will be four interest rate rises in the US throughout 2016. During 2015, the US dollar appreciated by 8%, leading to lower import prices driving down inflation. Uncertainty may creep back into the US economy leading up to the 2016 presidential elections until a new president is elected.

In the Eurozone, the ECB extended their asset purchase programme by 6 months to March 2017. Overall, the Eurozone economic activity was stronger over 2015 and there was an improvement in the unemployment rate. Eurozone CPI inflation fell below zero during 2015.

The slowdown in the Chinese economy became the largest threat to the region and to the prospects for global growth as a whole. The effect of the Chinese authorities' intervention in their currency and equity markets led to further market volatility as a consequence. As the global economy entered 2016, there was a high uncertainty about growth, the outcome of the US presidential election and the consequences of the EU vote whether the UK is to remain in the EU, the timing of which could well likely be summer 2016.

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.

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. The Authority was holding two VW Financial Services corporate bonds with a total nominal value of £3.7m, with a maturity date of May 2016. The authority disposed of its holdings in November 2015 (by way of selling the bonds in the secondary capital markets) and received the nominal investment in full.

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 31st March 2016. The actual CFR as at 31st 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. The reduction in the debt management costs is due to future borrowing rates being revised down, a reduced MRP charge based on the opening 2015/16 CFR being lower than estimated and the HRA being recharged for its fair share of debt costs following the exit from the Subsidy system.

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.

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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S. Harris - Interim Head of Corporate Finance
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 - Period 9 Report (Quarters 1 ,2 & 3)
Treasury Management Prudential Indicators – Prudence

	Budget 2015-16	Estimated 2015-16
	£k	£k
Authorised limit for external debt -		
Borrowing	375,328	365,517
Other long term liabilities	37,869	37,869
Total	413,197	403,386
Operational boundary for external debt -		
Borrowing	300,262	292,413
Other long term liabilities	37,869	37,869
Total	338,132	330,283
Capital Financing Requirement	356,324	342,655
Upper limits for interest rate exposure		
Principal outstanding on borrowing	300,262	292,413
Principal outstanding on investments	65,000	120,000
Net principal outstanding	235,262	172,413
Fixed rate limit – 100%	235,262	172,413
Variable rate limit – 30%	70,579	51,724
Upper limit for total invested for over 364 days	40,000	40,000

Maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Estimated 2015/16	Estimated 2015/16
Under 12 months	35%	0%	-	0%
Over 12 months and within 24 months	40%	0%	3,576	3%
Over 2 years and within 5 years	50%	0%	9,282	3%
Over 5 years and within 10 years	75%	0%	14,171	4%
Over 10 years	100%	0%	265,384	90%
			292,413	100%

Gross Debt and Net Debt	Budget 2015/16	Estimated 2015/16
	£k	£k
Outstanding Borrowing	300,262	292,413
Other long term liabilities	37,869	37,869
Gross Debt	338,132	330,283
Less investments	65,000	120,000
Net Debt	273,132	210,283

Gross and The CFR	Budget 2015/16	Estimated 2015-16
	£k	£k
Gross Debt	338,132	330,283
CFR	356,324	342,655
CFR Breached?	No	No

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Appendix 2 Treasury Management Prudential Indicators - Period 9 Report (Quarters 1 ,2 & 3)
Capital Finance Prudential Indicators – Affordability

Ratio of Financing costs to net revenue stream	Budget 2015/16	Estimated 2015/16
General Fund	£k	£k
Principal repayments	8,437	7,821
Interest costs	9,418	8,418
Debt Management costs	60	44
Rescheduling discount	-226	-226
Investment income	-163	-426
Interest applied to internal balances	847	768
Total General Fund	18,374	16,400
Net revenue stream	324,413	324,413
Total as percentage of net revenue stream	5.66%	5.06%
Housing Revenue Account	£k	£k
Principal repayments	914	852
Interest costs	2,082	5,687
Rescheduling discount	-58	-58
Debt Management costs	15	23
Total HRA	2,953	6,504
Net revenue stream	41,000	41,000
Total as percentage of net revenue stream	7.20%	15.86%

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

This is a notional calculation

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

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**Appendix 3 Treasury Management Prudential Indicators - Period 9 Report (Quarters 1 ,2 & 3)
Capital Expenditure and Funding**

	Budget 2015/16	Estimated 2015-16
Expenditure	£k	£k
Council Fund	14,861	12,861
Housing Revenue Account	36,290	36,290
Total	51,151	49,151
Funding		
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	
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
Total	53,122	51,122
Surplus c/f	1,971	1,971

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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, 1st September, 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	Judith Paget, Chief Executive, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
Marc Budden	Superintendent, Gwent Police (representing Chief Constable Jeff Farrar)
Jon Goldsworthy	Group Manager Blaenau Gwent/Caerphilly, Natural Resources Wales

In attendance:-

Mark Jennings	Housing Strategy Officer
Howard Rees	Programme Manager, CCBC
Alison Palmer	Community Planning Coordinator (Notes)

Apologies:-

Jeff Farrar	Chief Constable, Gwent Police
Ian Johnston	Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner
Martin Featherstone	Chief Executive, Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations
Shelley Bosson	Chief Executive, Office of the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner
James Owen	Deputy Director, Expert Services & People Division, Welsh Government

Point	Matter	Action
1.	<p>Welcome: Cllr KR welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked JP for hosting the meeting in YYF for the first time.</p> <p>He noted that in preparation for the change to Public Service Board Jon Goldsworthy was attending for the first time representing the Chief Executive of Natural Resources Wales, Superintendent Marc Budden was attending for the first time representing the Chief Constable, and Mark Jennings, Housing Strategy Officer, CCBC to deliver the Prosperous Caerphilly presentation.</p>	
2.	<p>Previous Notes and Matters Arising: The notes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.</p> <p>Page 4: CB gave an update on the Cardiff Capital Region/City Deal initiative. He explained that the submission from the ten local authorities had now been made to the</p>	

Point	Matter	Action
	<p>Cabinet Office for consideration following some weeks of intensive work. The outcome was not expected before November. It was too early to say what the project would entail in full but there were hopes it would be geared towards economic growth and worklessness, including the economic impact of health. Larger infrastructure projects could include the electrification of the valley lines or possible light railway proposals which could include improvements to stations in the area, increasing trains and possible direct access on the Ebbw line to Newport. It was hoped to include the Caerphilly LDP plan for the Maesycwmmmer by-pass and infrastructure investment in the Upper Rhymney Valley to support businesses on the Capital Valley business park. Cllr KR had signed off the outline proposals along with the other nine local authority leaders and KPMG consultants had been appointed to do the modelling work on the proposal. Jane Hutt AM had met with the 10 leaders and it was noted that the project would require WG backing.</p>	
<p>3.</p> <p>a.</p>	<p><u>Update on ‘Caerphilly Delivers’ - the LSB Single Integrated Plan:</u></p> <p><u>Presentation on progress on the Prosperous Caerphilly Outcome:</u></p> <p>CB introduced the presentation in the absence of Pauline Elliott (Lead Officer for the Prosperous Caerphilly Outcome theme) by noting the drop in Jobseekers Allowance claimants in the county borough, following the national trend, to 3,700 down from 5,500 two years ago. However, that was overshadowed by the 11,500 people claiming Incapacity Benefit. He hoped the City Deal if successful would mirror the opportunities created in Glasgow to address the issues of those who were economically inactive.</p> <p>Mark Jennings (Housing Strategy Officer, CCBC) then gave the Prosperous Caerphilly Outcome presentation focussing on Priority 2 – “Improve standards of housing and communities giving appropriate access to services across the County Borough”. He highlighted the work being undertaken in the rents section to work proactively with tenants to mitigate the impact of welfare reform. This was a change in the way of working with an emphasis on support and advice, including partnership work with JCP and CAB, and he reported that there had been no evictions to date by the authority as a result of welfare reforms. He noted the ARBED 2 schemes in the borough in Fochriw which had provided overcladding to 200 homes to improve insulation and address issues of fuel poverty and the and ARBED 3 programme in Phillipstown to do the same.</p> <p>Looking at the supply of low cost/affordable homes he reported on the work with housing associations to provide smaller 1 and 2 bed homes to try to address the mismatch between supply and demand for smaller accommodation. MJ also highlighted the work of the homelessness team in focussing work, with a small pot of additional money, on supporting five families to prevent homelessness.</p> <p>He reported on the successful return to use of 42 long term empty properties and the work of the private sector team to provide grants to improve private sector rental properties for tenants.</p> <p>MJ then outlined the changes contained in the Housing Act 2014 that had seen local authorities have to increase the number of people assessed for homelessness and the pressure to provide more housing requiring closer working with housing associations to increase provision. There was also work being undertaken by the private sector team as a result of the legislation affecting the private rental sector which required all private landlords to be licensed to ensure minimum standards of conditions and management processes are met. It was agreed that MJ working with colleagues would need to revise the housing actions in the SIP.</p> <p>CB also noted the work being undertaken to open a new managed facility in Nelson to reduce/eradicate the need for bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless people</p>	

Point	Matter	Action
	<p>and the work to identify issues of rough sleepers in Blackwood.</p> <p>JP noting Priority 3 asked for clarification of the areas covered by the LIFT programme which HR agreed to investigate, all noting the success of the now finished Caerphilly Passport programme and CB hoped that a successful bid for the City Deal might see a revival of the Passport programme in future.</p> <p>Cllr KR thanked MJ for his presentation.</p>	<p>HR <i>(Actioned 2/9/15)</i></p>
	<p><u>Other Outcome Highlight/Exception Reports:</u> 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.</p> <p>Safer Caerphilly: The Safer report had been previously circulated. MB commented on the significant reduction in anti-social behaviour noting the 4 Strike incremental process for dealing with young people was working well allowing issues to be dealt with earlier. He noted the work with the local authority and partners on Public Spaces Protection Orders, particularly at bus stations.</p> <p>KR thanked MB for the update noting that the Positive Futures programme was making an impact providing diversionary activities for young people, particularly in Caerphilly town. He noted the recent tournament at the Sporting Centre of Excellence at Ystrad Mynach. CB noted that it was encouraging that crime and disorder was not as high on the agenda, although car parking problems in valley towns remained an issue for the police and the authority as well as for local businesses.</p> <p>Learning Caerphilly: HR noted that the circulated report had outlined some innovative and unique work between the main anti-poverty programmes in the county borough working collaboratively which had now been taken up by WG nationally. Caerphilly was now one of seven pilot areas developing the collaborative approach which will be evaluated by WG. It was noted the report makes a request to amend some of the points in the action plan.</p> <p>CB reported on the GCSE and A Level results published recently which were disappointing, A Levels remaining static and Caerphilly county borough being placed 20th in Wales for GCSE A-C attainment. He noted the creation of the Gwent-wide EAS and the transfer of school improvement staff to the Gwent-wide body. Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen and Monmouthshire had all been in special measures previously and expressed concern that there might not be the same local emphasis in future. He reported that Keri Cole (Chief Education Officer, CCBC) and Christina Harrhy (Corporate Director - Communities, CCBC) would be meeting with the EAS. He noted that this was just one indicator but a critical one for young people entering the labour market. He expressed concern that some school result predictions were way off, particularly from Ysgol Cwm Rhymni, the fastest growing comprehensive in the borough. JP offered ABUHB support to investigate the difference in predicted and actual results as they had already done some work with Torfaen to provide family support and to look at the emotional wellbeing of young people and families to encourage young people to engage with education.</p> <p>The LSB agreed the action points and amendments to the action plan.</p> <p>Healthier Caerphilly: HR reminded members of the request at the previous meeting to renew the action plan and to absorb the delivery into the work of the Wellbeing Network. He noted they had</p>	<p>KC</p> <p>KC</p>

Point	Matter	Action
	<p>struggled in the early stages to get the appropriate data from within the complexities of the health service and other partners to populate the scorecard. There would be a meeting this week to resolve this issue.</p> <p>The report identified the great deal of work going on, highlighting the work around smoking cessation and the primary mental health team and its stress programme. Mental health and wellbeing was still one of the biggest issues in deprived areas. It was noted that the Living Well, Living Longer programme was due to start in the Upper Rhymney Valley soon. JP was pleased to see the extension of the Living Well, Living Longer programme into the URV noting that over 1000 people in Blaenau-Gwent had been encouraged to take up preventative screening through the programme. JP noted the progression of the draft Gwent Childhood Obesity Strategy through ABUHB processes which would come out for consultation and noted it would be good to get sign-up to it from the five authorities in Gwent. JP explained the role of the NCNs (Neighbourhood Care Networks) across Gwent in being the main delivery mechanism for primary care with partners in communities.</p> <p>CB gave an update on the work being undertaken in Lansbury Park noting that it was part of the catchment area for St Martin’s Comprehensive School and referring to the attainment and family issues previously discussed. He noted that the next focus for the Board would be health and it was agreed that it could provide an opportunity for joint work with ABUHB and the NCN partners.</p> <p>In answer to a question JP noted that ABUHB did not encourage the use of E cigarettes as an alternative to other nicotine replacements in smoking cessation as the long term effects were yet unknown. She acknowledged the WG initiative to look into it but the use was discouraged locally.</p> <p>Greener Caerphilly: HR noted the Greener report contained a lot of positive stories for the past quarter. The Greener Caerphilly Outcome theme had been presented at the last but one meeting and the annual report mentioned then had now been published which detailed the work undertaken within the priorities. JG noted that until recently he had been the NRW representative on the Delivery Group and acknowledged the long association with the county borough as CCW. The report noted, as with Health, the difficulty in accessing the right statistical data/information. The report highlighted activities undertaken such as fly-tipping issues and the Big Spring Clean promoted again this year and the importance of education for the long term and getting children and young people involved through green flag and eco-schools work. It also noted the links with other themes and the overlap with the health agenda in particular where both delivery groups were working to strengthen the links. JG highlighted the issues around funding with WG taking some funding previously distributed by NRW back in-house and the Nature Fund money which had been used by Local Authorities and the third sector coming to an end. He noted that the RDP funding would become increasingly important to fulfil environmental project agenda. HR noted the collaborative approach being taken in Caerphilly to bring together small pots of funding by partners to use it more effectively on environmental projects.</p> <p>CB reported on preparatory work being undertaken by consultants on behalf of WG on renewable energy funding. He had asked PC to look at the work being done e.g. Oakdale wind turbines in order to develop a plan to present on potential invest to save energy projects. He noted the importance of ideas from partner organisations being fed into the process and agreed to report back on progress at a future meeting.</p>	
	<p><u>Voluntary Sector and GAVO Update:</u> Apologies for the meeting due to annual leave had been received from MF. The circulated report was noted. HR asked for any comments or questions on the content to be forwarded to him and he would pass them on.</p>	

Point	Matter	Action
4.	<p><u>LSB Anti Poverty Priority:</u></p> <p>a. Update Report:</p> <p>The update report from Rob Hartshorn had been previously circulated. HR noted RH had presented the draft Anti-Poverty Strategy previously, which had now been approved by CCBC and presented to partners/stakeholders at the June Standing Conference. The newly formed Anti-Poverty Board had had its first meeting and was working on the programme of actions. CB noted that the strategy could not be delivered by the authority alone and they would be looking at ways to strengthen partners' involvement in delivery. Members noted the range of services being provided through Hafod Deg for the URV area, which still remained one of the most deprived in Wales. The presentation to the ABUHB Public Health and Partnership Committee challenging them on how they could support delivery had been well received.</p> <p>JP congratulated Rob Hartshorn on the energy and effort he had put into the development of the strategy and the anti-poverty programme and confirmed ABUHB support for Anti-Poverty Board work. CB acknowledged it was a practical and down to earth strategy. The LSB agreed that thanks to RH for the anti-poverty work be recorded.</p> <p>b. Lansbury Park:</p> <p>CB, noting previous discussion, reported on the establishment of the Lansbury Park Board which included local people and local elected members as well as other partners to oversee work. It had looked at the employment related work being undertaken by the Communities First team and the WHQS work on overcladding the housing to improve energy efficiency was noted. He also reported on the plan to demolish the old community centre to improve the environment and hoped that there would be opportunities to improve employment on the estate as a result, including through social enterprise. There was a focus on education in the area and the Board had challenged the Families First and CF programmes in the area to see if they were working with the right families, noting the work with the school to add family liaison support. He noted that the next Board meeting would focus on health, which was one of the statistics that was reflected in the WIMD.</p>	
5.	<p><u>Welsh Government LSB Bulletin and “Effective Services for Vulnerable Groups updates:</u></p> <p>HR had previously circulated the updates and highlighted the article in the LSB bulletin regarding the Blaenau-Gwent performance framework, reminding LSB members that Caerphilly LSB had been using a Ffynnon based performance management framework since the development of the SIP, which aimed to keep the reporting process simple and straightforward. MB reported on the Anti-Slavery paper and the successful partnership working helping to identify and support what is a difficult group of vulnerable people to find. HR noted the focus on Childhood Obesity and WG/ESVG recruitment of a researcher. It was suggested that there may be future opportunities for LSB pilots to work on childhood obesity and it was agreed that any further reports be brought back to the LSB.</p> <p>CB commented that one of the issues for the future would be the affordability of public services noting that a growing proportion of the budget was being spent on a smaller number of people e.g. social services. Research showed that a relatively small number of people were big consumers of all services e.g. Police, health, social services. JP highlighted the Gwent Missing Children project and the Team around the Family approach as examples of focussed work on a small number of people by a number of agencies and it was agreed that the LSB should consider looking at other groups which they were all individually spend time and resources on to identify better joint working. It was agreed to consider it at a future meeting.</p>	

Point	Matter	Action
6.	<p><u>The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, 2015:</u> HR reported that the draft guidance was expected to be published for a 12 week consultation process shortly. The final version was expected prior to 1st April 2016 but concern was expressed that there appeared to be little collaborative work between the WG teams working on the Social Services and Wellbeing Act guidance and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act guidance and whilst similar the guidance was not complimentary making it difficult to implement. The recent G7 CEO's meeting looked at the Need/Well-being assessments required under both Acts, and whilst it was early days there was the potential for both to be resource intensive. The handover from Peter Davies to a new Future Generations Commissioner prior to the Act coming into force was noted.</p> <p>HR highlighted the Conference on the 26th November in Cardiff for LSB/PSB partners to bring them together with support staff to emphasis from WG's perspective what the expectations of WG are. The event would include workshops.</p> <p>In response to a question from JG it was agreed that the current LSB would be forming the basis of the new PSB. He reflected that it was useful to attend LSB meetings in advance of the transition in April 2016. HR noted that the PCC had already been included in the membership and asked members to consider if they wished to extend an early invitation to other PSB members. It was agreed that the LSB extend an invitation to both the Probation Service and Fire and Rescue Service.</p>	<p>HR <i>(Invites sent 20/10/15)</i></p>
7.	<p><u>Standing Conference 12th June 2015:</u> HR noted that the Standing Conference report had been prepared and circulated with the LSB papers for information. AP noted that it contained a summary of the workshop comments and the full text would be sent to workshop leaders and RH for any further action. Cllr KR thanked AP for the preparation of the report.</p> <p>The theme for the next standing conference was discussed HR noting that the last three conferences had had an anti-poverty theme. It was agreed that the opportunity should be taken to look at another area of work that would draw in other partners. CB noted that it was important to ensure there was a benefit to organising the event as well as the networking opportunity. It was agreed that the current half day was about right. JP agreed that it needed to focus on collective priorities and there was also a need to look forward to see what might be coming up. A number of suggestions were made including childhood obesity; educational attainment and how we might collectively support vulnerable families.</p> <p>CB suggested that with the forthcoming legislation (Social Services and Wellbeing/Future Generations Acts) and the move to Public Service Boards the opportunity should be taken to consider future challenges. He suggested that depending on timing, an invitation be made to the new Future Generations Commissioner to speak. Cllr KR also suggested that it would be useful to hear the Welsh Government view of the PSB role and provide an opportunity to feedback to them on the legislation. It was agreed that the next conference should take place at the end of this year/early 2016 dependent on the appointment of the FG Commissioner and members were welcome to feed-in any ideas or thoughts on suggested themes.</p>	<p>All</p>
8.	<p><u>Information Items:</u> Items circulated for information were noted. HR highlighted through the LSB Forward Work programme that the Older People's Commissioner for Wales would be attending the December meeting and suggested the agenda be focussed on the Healthier theme outcome of supporting people in their own homes, the Ageing Well work and the work of Mandy Sprague and the 50+ Forum on the Older Person's Strategy.</p>	

Point	Matter	Action
9.	<p><u>Any Other Business:</u> JG noted that Torfaen LSB had a presentation on the work of NRW and it was agreed that it would be useful to arrange that for a future meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that the Ministerial paper on the future of local government in Wales was due out soon including the proposal expected for a Gwent-wide authority.</p> <p>There was no further business. Cllr KR closed the meeting with thanks to JP for hosting the meeting and thanks to those who had attended.</p>	
10.	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting:</u> At 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday 1st December 2015 in the Sirhowy Room, CCBC Offices, Ty Penallta.</p>	

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CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN,
ON MONDAY, 16TH NOVEMBER 2015 AT 10.00 AM**

PRESENT:

Councillor D. Havard – Chair
Councillor M. Adams – Vice Chair

Councillors:

D.T. Hardacre, A.G. Higgs, S. Kent.

Together with:

D. Jones (Service Manager, Health, Safety and Welfare), E. Townsend (Health and Safety Manager), R. Phillips (Asbestos Team Manager), T. Phillips (Health and Safety Manager), P. James (Health and Safety Manager), M. Williams (Head of Community & Leisure Services), A. Dredge (Committee Services Officer).

Trade Union Representatives:

Simon Brassinne (UNITE), T. Hearne (GMB).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor P.J. Bevan and G.J. Hughes, L. Donovan (Acting Head of HR & Organisational Development), Brian May (T&G), Juan A. Garcia (UNISON), D.A. Williams (UNITE).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the beginning or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES – 29TH JUNE 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee held on 29th June 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CHAIR - PARIS TERRORIST ATTACKS

The Chair referred to the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, France, on the evening of Friday 13th November 2015, which resulted in the deaths of 130 people and left hundreds more wounded. All present stood for a moment of silence as a mark of respect for the victims of

this tragic event.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

5. INSURANCE CLAIMS – PRESENTATION, SUE RUDDOCK, RISK AND INSURANCE MANAGER

Sue Ruddock (Risk and Insurance Manager) provided Members with the Authority's Claims Analysis for 2014-15.

Members noted that 356 claims had been received in total relating to motor vehicle, employers' liability and public liability cases. The total cost of claims amounted to £923,714.47 and the average per claim was £2594.70.

Comparison figures were provided in relation to cases taken to court and it was noted that the Authority's success rate at trial is 83%.

Examples of claims were presented in respect of Parks, the Environment, Schools and Leisure Centres. Particular reference was made to the recent court case of Poole v CCBC, where the claimant (a Badminton player) slipped on water/slither of paper at a leisure centre within the Borough. Photographs showed dried paint and bits of paper on the courts the following day. The Judge believed the Authority's visual inspection was inadequate and the accident report form was poorly completed. The Authority lost the case and the claimant was awarded £6500 damages. Their claimants costs amounted to £44k and the Council's costs are likely to be in the region of £8k. The total cost of claim before costs assessment is £58,500.

It was noted that accident forms must be fully completed and signed by the injured party where possible. Photographs must be taken, even if they show nothing at all. Record keeping must be kept up to date in respect of training, cleaning and complaints etc. Complaints must be sent to the Risk and Insurance Section within 20 days of the reported incident so that evidence gathering can commence.

In terms of risk management Ms Ruddock confirmed the Authority has excellent processes and policies in place. Claims are low in comparison to other Authority's in Wales, which are reflected in the current insurance premiums.

Members queried the figures in relation to claims made against refuse vehicles and it was confirmed that claims have decreased since the introduction of 360 degree cameras being installed within the vehicles.

Councillor Adams requested that it be placed on record his thanks to Mark Williams (Head of Community & Leisure Services) and his staff for the hard work that his team undertake in their area of activity.

The Chair thanked Ms Ruddock for her informative presentation and for responding to queries raised.

6. STATUTORY MAINTENANCE – PRESENTATION, DONNA JONES, HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE SERVICE MANAGER.

Donna Jones, Service Manager, Health, Safety and Welfare, updated Members in relation to RAMIS (Risk Assessment Management Information System), which helps manage its statutory maintenance responsibilities for all of the workplace premises and provides a live

record of compliance across all Authority premises, which now includes schools. RAMIS collates all statutory maintenance inspections undertaken by contractors, records all cyclical tasks to be undertaken by CCBC staff and all Health and Safety inspections/audits of buildings. Building Managers receive emails reminding them of tasks due and overdue and reports are generated from the system on compliance.

A significant amount of work is undertaken to ensure the Authority is compliant, for example, electrical testing is undertaken every 5 years, gas safety certificates are required annually and legionella risk assessments are required every 2 years. Regular water quality testing, fire alarm testing and fire fixed alarm wiring testing is also undertaken. In addition fire risk assessments are undertaken annually on residential homes for old people/children, large corporate buildings and comprehensive schools and portable fire-fighting equipment is also tested on an annual basis. Air conditioning/sprinkler systems are tested annually, emergency lighting six monthly, lifts six monthly, fixed ventilation every 14 months and asbestos surveys are carried out every 3 years.

By means of a Powerpoint presentation, the Committee's attention was drawn to information relating to High Risk Inspections i.e. Electrical reactive tasks, Legionella reactive tasks and Gas Safety reactive tasks. Details were received of the sites inspected in relation to Corporate Services, Education premises and the Environment. Members were informed that improvements had been made across all three high risk disciplines.

It was noted that the presentation of figures is a snapshot of the information available and that Caerphilly is the only Local Authority in Wales that can confirm figures of compliance in this way.

The current position for the Authority is that further improvements must be made across all areas with the requirement for continued scrutiny from Senior Management

The Chair thanked Officers for the informative presentation and for responding to queries raised.

7. PROVISION OF AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS (AED) IN COUNCIL PREMISES

The report informed the Committee of the recent approval by the Corporate Management Team for the installation of Automated External Defibrillator (AED) in identified CCBC premises.

The Committee noted that the most common cause for a heart to stop (cardiac arrest) is a 'heart attack', if the heart attack results in cardiac arrest it is usually because it has interrupted the heart electric impulses. The definitive treatment for this condition is to deliver a controlled electric shock through the heart, this is called defibrillation.

Currently 30,000 people in the UK each year have a cardiac arrest out of hospital, and NHS data shows just 18.5% of them survive.

A recent IOSH survey of 1000 businesses found that more than half did not possess these life-saving devices, and two thirds of those were medium-sized to large companies.

To date AED's had only been corporately provided in Leisure Centres, however there are a number of AED's sited in Council premises, most have been donated by charities.

With the assistance of a resuscitating training dummy, Ms Jones gave a demonstration as to how it should be used and explained that it is a safe, reliable, computerised device that can analyse heart rhythms and enable a non-medically qualified rescuer to safely deliver the

lifesaving shock. It uses clear voice instructions and guides a person through each step of defibrillation, including CPR coaching.

It was noted that there is no legislation that explicitly requires an employer to provide defibrillators, however, under both the law of negligence and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Authority owe a duty of care to employees and others who might reasonably be affected by the control of our business or undertaking. There is currently no corporate policy on the provision of AED's in Council premises.

Members noted that following the tragic deaths of two Caerphilly pupils from undiagnosed heart conditions some secondary schools have already purchased or had an AED donated. It is not known if training has been provided and the required on-going re-refresher training being undertaken. Health and Safety will advise schools of the arrangements which should be in place to support the use of such devices.

Members queried the issue of training and were informed that initially training would be offered to nominated First Aid staff and refresher training will be provided every six months. It was noted that the intention is to train as many staff as possible.

Following consideration and discussion the Corporate Health and Safety Committee noted the report and supported the provision of AED's in all Corporate Buildings and Secondary schools.

8. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES – REVIEW UPDATE

The report provided the Committee with a formal update on the recent update to health and safety policies and Corporate Management arrangements (CMA's).

The Health and Safety division have numerous policies and CMA's in place to manage risks across the Authority. Part of the ongoing process of health and safety is the review of policies and CMA's, and as such, a formal review of each policy and CMA must take place every 3 years. The review allows policies and CMA's to be updated to reflect a change in working practices and to reflect any changes in health and safety legislation.

As part of the review process, the following policies and CMA's have been updated:

- First aid at work,
- Lone Working,
- Accident reporting and investigation,
- Control of substances hazardous to health,
- Risk Assessment,
- Display Screen equipment,
- Fire Safety,
- Manual Handling.

Members were informed of the policies and CMA's that have had working changes to reflect minor changes, updated review dates etc and confirmed the following policies that have additional duties added for heads of service, managers and employees:

- First aid policy and CMA,
- Lone working policy and CMA,
- Accident Reporting and Investigation Policy and CMA,
- Control of substances hazardous to health CMA.

Following consideration and discussion, the Committee noted the report.

9. INFORMATION ITEMS

The following reports were received and noted: -

1. Accident Statistics Report for April – September 2015.
2. Recent HSE Updates.

The meeting closed at 11.34 am.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd February 2016, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR

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CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP (WELSH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD)

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH
(SIRHOWY ROOM) ON THURSDAY, 10TH DECEMBER 2015 AT 5.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

C. Davies - Chair
E. Forehead - Vice Chair

Task Group Members:

Ms L. Ackerman, K. James, S. Jones, J. Moore and D.V. Poole

P. Davy (Head of Programmes), S. Couzens (Chief Housing Officer), J. Roberts-Waite (Strategic Co-ordination Manager), C. Evans (Committee Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs G. Atkins, Miss A. Lewis, C. Mann and M. McDermott.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr C. Davies, S. Jones and J. Moore as Council Tenants declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in all agenda items.

3. MINUTES – 29TH OCTOBER 2015

RESOLVED that, subject to it being noted that Miss A. Lewis, Mrs G. Green and Mr C. Jones were present at the meeting, the minutes of the meeting held on the 29th October 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. ROWAN PLACE – PROGRESS REPORT AND SENSITIVE LETTING POLICY

The report provided an update on the progress made in relation to delivering a targeted regeneration programme in Rowan Place, Rhymney; and sought the views of the Task Group on the adoption of a sensitive lettings policy and introductory tenancies, (specifically in relation to the Rowan Place flats) prior to its consideration at Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and thereafter, Cabinet.

Rowan Place, which comprises of 82 properties and is located within the Twyn Carno ward, is part of the Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) known as Twyn Carno 1.

For many years the area of Rowan Place in which the flats are located has been regarded locally as a 'no go zone' and largely been home to transient single people and families with particular challenges including drug and alcohol issues, criminal records and anti social behaviour issues.

Following the identification of severe damp and external defects to the fabric of the properties in Rowan Place, the Council approved a budget totalling £4.2m to undertake a comprehensive refurbishment of the 72 council owned properties. The programme underway in Rowan Place has been enhanced by a further £720,000 from the Welsh Government as part of its Vibrant and Viable Places programme which will facilitate enhancements to the environment within Rowan Place.

The Task Group noted that, in previous years, Rowan Place has been plagued by high levels of anti social behaviour, crime and drug and alcohol abuse. As a consequence and for the benefit of existing tenants, the Council proposes to introduce introductory tenancies for new allocations within Rowan Place. Introductory tenancies would give all new tenants a 12 month trial period before they would be eligible to be awarded a secure tenancy and the tenancy could be brought to an end, during the introductory period, if the tenant fails to adhere to the requirements. This will ensure that anyone behaving inappropriately can be removed from the tenancy quickly.

In addition, the Task Group were asked to note that the existing tenants will not be affected.

The sensitive lettings policy covers all 2 bedroom flats in Rowan Place, Rhymney. Caerphilly Homes Allocations Scheme allows for the allocation of families with 1 or 2 children and childless couples. Due to the size of the second bedroom only families with 1 child, or families with access will be considered and to reduce excessive child density in the area, childless couples may take precedence over families with one child.

A strict set of criteria has been devised and any applicant that meets one of the criteria would not be offered a tenancy of one of the 2 bedroom flats in Rowan Place, for a period of at least 2 years. The criteria includes an applicant having any involvement in anti-social behaviour in the last 2 years and an ability to sustain a tenancy for a minimum period of 12 months or has an unspent or criminal convictions, including convictions for drug dealing, criminal damage or arson.

In addition, prospective tenants will be required to satisfy an income/expenditure assessment of their affordability of the tenancy and where two or more applicants have equal priority, preference would be giving to applicants who are in employment or training.

The Task Group thanked the Officers for the report and, in noting the criteria, sought further information on eligibility of those applicants with Mental Health Issues. Officers confirmed that, provided there was sufficient support in place and the risks were assessed; consideration would be given to those applicants.

A Task Group Member queried the current issue with voids within the area and whether the implementation of the Sensitive Lettings Policy would compound the issue. Officers highlighted that that the policy is to be implemented in an attempt to improve the area and peoples perspective. It is unclear, until the Policy is in place, whether the number of voids would increase, however a review would be conducted 12 months following completion to determine its effectiveness.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report the Caerphilly Homes Task Group recommend to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet, the adoption of the sensitive lettings policy, including introductory tenancies for new tenants in Rowan Place, as set out in the Appendix to the report.

5. RE-PROFILING OF WHQS PROGRAMME AND HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2016/17

The report highlighted the changes to the WHQS Programme and set out the HRA Capital Programme budget for 2016/17. In addition, the report sought the views of the CHTG prior to its presentation to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

It was noted that major slippage during the 2014/15 financial year necessitated a review of the investment strategy. A revised strategy was approved by Cabinet in February 2015, together with the Capital Programme for the 2015/16 financial year. The new programme was front loaded in an attempt to catch up on the slippage. However, this has led to resourcing issues, particularly in the Eastern-Valleys and has caused problems for the WHQS team due to the number of properties being worked on across the County Borough.

The number of properties in the internal works programme reduces in the later years of the programme and a further re-profiling was advocated to have a more consistent number of properties each year. This has some benefit to those community areas that will be pulled forward, however others will slip back. Some of the changes are also to avoid gaps arising on the larger estates and enable continuity of phasing of works.

The Task Group noted that it would not be possible to catch up on the external works programme within 2015/16. Most of the current financial year planned programme is expected to run into 2016/17. There are a number of sequence changes to the external works to take account of the change in approach in the Lower Rhymney Valley and to minimise, as far as is practical, conflicts between the internal and external works. Where overlaps arise, these will need to be managed on the ground.

The HRA Capital Programme budget allocates the necessary resources based on the Savills cost plan to deliver the programme during 2016/17. It was noted that, as per experience, significant variances may arise once the properties have been surveyed and works specification prepared. A large contingency has therefore been included within the budget proposal.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed:-

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report:

- (i) The Caerphilly Homes Task Group recommend to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet the adoption of the reprofiling of the WHQS Programme and the Capital Programme for 2016/17 that flows from the reprofiling.
- (ii) A further report be presented when sufficient information is available to update the Savills cost plan based on an analysis of actual costs being incurred for internal and external works.

6. SMALL LOTS - REVIEW OF CONTRACT ARRANGEMENTS

The report proposed changes to the contract arrangements for external works in the Eastern Valleys and sought the views of the Task Group prior to consideration by Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

It was noted that the external works within the Eastern Valleys are being undertaken through a series of small lots contracts. Experience over the last 2 years has given rise to concerns that if continued reliance is placed on this method alone, there are significant risks that this part of the WHQS programme will not be delivered by 2020. A review of the contract arrangements has concluded that the external works on 2 large estates (Cefn Fforest and Ty Sign) should be undertaken by alternative means and there is an opportunity to link this with the procurement of new contract arrangements for external works in the Lower Rhymney Valley.

The Task Group thanked the Officer for the report and sought reassurance that sufficient contingency plans would be implemented to ensure consistency and the continuation of the programme, in the event that contractors withdraw from the tender process.

A Task Group Member sought further information on the satisfaction rates and feedback from tenants in respect of the small lots contracts. It was noted that there is currently no data available on the external works satisfaction as only one contract has been completed. Feedback from tenants has not raised any major concerns with the standard of work completed, but issues have been raised with the time taken to complete the works, which was impacted greatly due to weather conditions.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was agreed by the majority present:-

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report:

- (i) the Caerphilly Homes Task Group recommend to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet, a reduction in the amount of work to be procured via small lots over the remaining period of the programme in view of the risks of not completing this by 2020.
- (ii) the external works on the Ty Sign and Cefn Fforest estates be incorporated within the procurement of new contract arrangements for external works in the Lower Rhymney Valley.
- (iii) the adoption of 2 value bands be supported for small lots contract packages over the remainder of the programme period, subject to review in light of tender returns.
- (iv) the Project Board continue to endorse the award of any small lot contract with a final tendered sum that exceeds the upper limit of either value band range where appropriate.

7. WHQS COMPLIANCE POLICY

The report sought the views of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on the draft WHQS Compliance Policy, which is a Welsh Government requirement, prior to its consideration at Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

The Task Group noted that Social housing landlords are required to put in place a Compliance Policy by 1st April 2016, which would be subject to annual review. The Compliance Policy is intended to provide the Welsh Government, tenants and the Council with assurance that WHQS will be achieved and maintained and must set out the arrangements for independent verification.

The Task Group thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

A Task Group Member, in noting that there was only a brief mention of the Environmental Programme within the Policy, sought further information on this. Officers clarified that the Environmental Programme was an integral part of the programme and has to be delivered to achieve WHQS. It was agreed that officers would add some additional narrative on the Environmental Programme prior to the report being considered by Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

The Task Group considered all aspects of the Policy and discussion ensued around Party Walls. It was noted that a number of properties throughout the borough had undergone works to provide a fire retardant curtain, however there may still be properties where party walls are absent within the attic spaces. The Policy proposed that these would be identified as "acceptable fails" and would be addressed when it was necessary to re-roof the properties.

The Task Group were asked to note that, whilst progress is being made on the surveys, additional resources are required, in order to increase the number of surveys completed in advance of works commencing.

The Keystone system was discussed and a Task Group Member queried the errors within the system. Officers highlighted that there are errors within the system, both human and within the construction of dashboards, however there are a number of internal audit checks which have been built into the system in order to minimise the impact of errors on the data. IN addition, it was noted that the programme relies on Keystone and Capita (Housing Management Information System) sharing information and comparative data, this would always be subject to data entry within both systems being both timely and accurate.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed:-

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the report, The Caerphilly Homes Task Group recommend the adoption of the WHQS Compliance Policy to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

8. INFORMATION ITEMS

The Committee received and noted the following information item:-

- (1) Procurement Update Report.

9. TO RECEIVE ANY REQUESTS FOR AN ITEM TO BE INCLUDED ON THE NEXT AVAILABLE AGENDA.

A Task Group Member sought further information on recruitment within the WHQS Programme, with particular reference to staff turnover. Officers highlighted that this is an ongoing situation which is constantly changing. The lack of stability within the WHQS team is highlighted as a risk area which is kept under review by the WHQS Project Board.

The Vice Chair highlighted that the report provided at the last meeting, whilst it provided the relevant fire safety information for three storey flats, the original request was in relation to 3 storey Council houses. It was agreed that further discussion and clarification would be sought outside of the meeting.

The Chair and Vice Chair wished everyone a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and the meeting closed at 6.20 p.m.

Approved as a correct record subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 18th February 2016.

CHAIR



CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP (WELSH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD)

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD
MYNACH (SIRHOWY ROOM) ON WEDNESDAY, 27TH JANUARY 2016 AT 5.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

C. Davies - Chair

Task Group Members:

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

P. Davy (Head of Programmes), S. Couzens (Chief Housing Officer) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from E. Forehead, K. James and Miss A. Lewis.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

S. Jones, Mrs B. Jones, M. McDermott, Mrs D. Moore and J. Moore, as Council Tenants declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in all agenda items.

3. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CHAIR

The Task Group were asked to note that Gemma Atkins, Tenant Representative has resigned as a Member of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group due to outside commitments, the Task Group wished to express their gratitude for her contributions to the Group and wished her all the best for the future. It was agreed that a letter expressing the Task Group's gratitude would be passed on.

4. SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEMES – MANAGED SERVICE PROVIDER

The report advised the Caerphilly Homes Task Group (CHTG) of developments relating to the Invitation to Tender (ITT) for the Managed Service Provider for the Sheltered Housing Schemes. The report and special meeting have arisen as a result of concerns raised by tenant representatives and a perception that the Council is privatising the sheltered housing schemes.

A report was considered by CHTG in April 2015, and subsequently approved by Cabinet, which highlighted the additional measures necessary to cope with the volume of work, and specifically that the management and delivery of the WHQS works on the sheltered housing schemes, should be undertaken by a suitable consultancy, on behalf of the Council.

Since that time, the development of the ITT has taken on board various changing circumstances that have arisen, including decisions relating to the six sheltered housing schemes identified for possible remodelling, and considerations relating to statutory and reactive maintenance of the sheltered schemes. This has resulted in the ITT being structured into 2 separate lots, which provides the opportunity to explore whether further benefit can be derived in the way the property management function of the sheltered housing schemes are organised.

The Caerphilly Homes Task Group thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

The Task Group expressed their disappointment at the report, the lack of consultation with tenants prior to its consideration and concerns that the Council was departing from commitments made at the time of the ballot. The Cabinet Member for Housing reassured the Task Group that, whilst he can understand the concerns of the tenants, there would not be any support for the proposal from himself, had it been for privatisation of the service and highlighted that the report sought to provide additional support and capacity to the WHQS Team, in order to meet the demands of the Programme.

The Task Group discussed the consultation process and it was noted that there had not been any direct consultation with the tenants within the sheltered housing schemes relating to the report. The Task Group were assured that, following the tender process, tenants would be informed of the management arrangements and provided with a new timetable of works, relevant to their Sheltered Scheme.

A Task Group Member raised concerns around the additional costs associated with the employment of a Managed Service Provider, how the additional costs would be funded, and the quality of work they would deliver on the Programme. Officers advised that the cost of the Managed Service Provider would be met by the HRA. In addition, it was noted that the Managed Service Provider was to provide extra capacity for the WHQS Team, which would assist in the delivery of the whole Programme. A further procurement process would be required for the works and the Task Group were assured that WHQS Team would still remain the lead on the Programme.

The Task Group queried the staff recruitment process and it was noted that the WHQS Team had experienced a number of difficulties with recruitment, including trade operatives, Surveyors and Clerk of Works. This is affected by external factors and there had been an upturn in activity in the construction sector.

Discussions ensued around surveys conducted by Savill's and concerns were expressed over the inaccuracies and issues that have arisen during the Programme. Officers highlighted that Savill's Surveys were a sample of 15% of the stock and were to provide a baseline for the development of a business plan. In relation to WHQS the sample survey was focused on component renewal.

Finally, the Task Group sought assurance that, following the tender process, if there are limited or no contractors or unsatisfactory tenders, there are alternative mechanisms to maintain the Programme within deadline. Officers highlighted that contingency plans are being considered and assured the Task Group that further information would be provided as necessary.

The meeting closed at 6.21pm.

Approved as a correct record subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 18th February 2016.

CHAIR

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PENSIONS/COMPENSATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON MONDAY 25TH JANUARY 2016 AT 4PM

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs J. Gale - Chair

Councillors:

W. David, N. George, Ms J.G. Jones, C.P. Mann, Mrs M. E. Sargent

Together with:

L. Donovan (Acting Head of HR and Organisational Development), B. Hopkins (Assistant Director - Our Schools Our Future), T. Reardon (Employee Centre Service Manager), H. Morgan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D.W.R. Preece and R. Passmore.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the beginning or during the course of the meeting.

3. APPLICATIONS FOR EARLY RETIREMENT BY MUTUAL CONSENT ON GROUNDS OF BUSINESS EFFICIENCY

Members considered the public interest test certificate from the Proper Officer and concluded that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and it was:-

RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure to them of exempt information as identified in paragraphs 12 and 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Consideration was given to the report which sought approval for early retirement by mutual consent on the grounds of business efficiency giving access to non-actuarially reduced pension benefits under the Local Government Pension Scheme for one employee within Learning Education and Inclusion in the Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning on 31st January 2016.

Following detailed discussion on the application, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation within the report be approved. By show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained within the report and detailed at the meeting, the request for the early access to non-actuarially reduced pension benefits under the Local Government Pension Scheme, to support the Learning Education and Inclusion Service to achieve some of its required budgetary savings for 2016/17, be approved.

The meeting closed at 4.10pm