



HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 7TH SEPTEMBER 2021

**SUBJECT: CAERPHILLY HOMES DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE
ASSESSMENT YEAR END REPORT 2020/21**

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present Scrutiny with the year-end Caerphilly Homes Directorate Performance Assessment (DPA) which is part of the Council's Performance Management Framework.
- 1.2 The DPA is the Directorate's self-assessment and forms part of the Council's overall self-assessment activity and provides information and analysis for the year ending 2020/21. Members are invited to discuss, challenge, and scrutinise the range of information in the DPA.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Council's revised Performance Framework was endorsed by Cabinet in February 2020 and this report introduces one of the key components of the Framework, the Directorate Performance Assessment (DPA). The DPA is a 'self-assessment' of Directorate's progress across a wide range of information types and meets our 'duty as a principal council to keep our performance under review'
- 2.2 DPA's are an opportunity to bring together a range of information and intelligence into one picture to answer the self-assessment questions of 'how well are we performing, how do we know? And what and how can we do better? Appendix 1 is the Caerphilly Homes' Directorate Performance Assessment Year End Report 2020/21.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members review the attached document (Appendix 1) and discuss, challenge, and scrutinise the information contained within.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Scrutiny Members are involved in the 'self-assessment' process by scrutinising the

information within the Directorate Performance Assessment. This also supports the principles within the new section (Part 6, Chapter 1) of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act which provides for a new performance and governance regime for principal councils.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 The Performance Framework has been developed to meet several strategic and operational needs as well as to meet the legislation and further the Council's desire to be a high performing learning organisation focused on meeting the needs of its residents. The framework was piloted in 2019 and endorsed by Cabinet February 2020 and now is reported as a regular part of scrutiny committees. This report introduces and shares the Social Services dashboards (the DPA) for the year end 2020/21.

5.2 The spirit of the DPA (appendix 1) is about providing learning, the DPA is less about performance and targets (though they have their place) rather it is designed to provide a wider picture of knowledge and learning, to identify cause and effect and to invite mature conversations that enhance learning which leads to improvement.

Due to the level and range of information contained within below is a summary of our conclusions as to the top 3 top achievements and 3 areas we identify as areas we wish to improve upon or where there is further learning to be explored.

5.3

- a) The Rents Service have developed a post Covid recovery plan, embracing new ways of working, focusing on prevention and early intervention, with a person-centred approach. They were also successful in setting up a new dedicated financial crisis line during the pandemic.
- b) The Valleys Task Force initiative proved successful in engaging the owners of long term empty homes; it is anticipated that the project, together with the new Empty Properties Team will impact positively on performance moving forward.
- c) A successful £1m bid from WG for revenue and capital projects related to the prevention of homelessness.

5.4

- a) Unavoidably missed the WHQS target, due to the pandemic. although on target to meet the new deadline of Dec 2021
- b) Adaptations were only able to be focused on essential, higher priority cases due to pandemic restrictions and staff redeployments. This impacted performance significantly.
- c) An increase in Homelessness presentations and placements in emergency temporary accommodation which were due to the pandemic and associated Welsh Government guidance.

5.5 Conclusion

The Covid pandemic has clearly had a significant impact on services this year with core services being considerably reduced and staff redeployed to support wider Corporate community initiatives. Performance has been impacted as a consequence but essential services have continued to be provided as well as assistance to our most vulnerable groups of clients. There have been some staffing issues due to the loss of key staff in some areas. Financially we continue to be in a good position and have been successful in accessing various grant funded opportunities from WG. Good

progress continues to be made in some of our key project areas including the WHQS programme and our new build strategy, whilst essential services in other areas including priority adaptations, homelessness, older persons housing, repairs and tenancy support have continued and been well received. Allocations have also continued to address housing need, in accordance with relevant WG guidance. Services deemed non-essential have been suspended for much of the year in line with WG guidance and/or at the request of our clients, thereby impacting on our performance e.g. processing of routine adaptations, private sector property inspections, grants and loans, internal WHQS works, with many staff redeployed for significant periods to support critical services across the Authority. However, performance in other areas has improved often due to changes to working methods e.g. support provided to assist tenants in sustaining their tenancies. We have also introduced the provision of financial advice and support to residents across the county borough in financial distress, in recognition of the impacts of the pandemic on our communities.

During the pandemic it has been apparent that we were not sufficiently equipped to deliver all our services remotely, although where staff have been equipped this has resulted in significant benefits for staff and customers. Generally, staff have responded extremely well and been committed to and supported in continuing to deliver Housing related services and/or been willing to be redeployed to support other areas of the authority. We need to ensure that we have the required equipment and systems in place for the future to support agile working and review systems and processes to ensure they are suitable for changes in working practices. The situation has also highlighted the importance of having our own in-house workforce that we can directly manage and utilise to best meet our and customers' needs.

The impact of Covid will be demonstrated in future performance reports as backlogs resulting from the consequences of lockdown are addressed and reinstated services are prioritised in line with capacity of the service and contractors.

Moving forward we need to ensure that the Service can continue to respond proactively and meet the housing and support needs of our clients, including those with complex needs, and ensure the start on site of the first of our new affordable housing developments.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 There are no assumptions thought to be required within this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 This report has no decision-making requests and an integrated impact assessment does not apply.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications within this report, however the DPA (Appendix 1) has a section on resources including relevant budget outturns as part of the overall self-assessment of the directorate.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no personnel implications within this report, although the DPA (appendix 1) has a section called 'resources' which provides data on a range of workforce aspects.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 Any consultation responses have been included with in this report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 The Local Government Measure (2009) and Local Government (Wales) Act 2020

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Lesley Allen, Principal Accountant - Housing
Jason Fellows, Housing Repair Operations Manager
Alan Edmunds, WHQS Implementation Manager
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer, Equalities, Welsh Language & Consultation

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Directorate Performance Assessment (end of year report 2020/21)