

## **The Vale of Glamorgan Council**

### **Cabinet Meeting: 19 November, 2018**

### **Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Building Services**

### **Housing Asset Management Strategy**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To introduce a new Housing Asset Management Strategy for public housing.

#### **Recommendations**

1. That Cabinet considers and endorses the new Housing Asset Management Strategy attached at Appendix A to the report as a draft document suitable for consultation.
2. That the Housing Asset Management Strategy is referred to the Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee for consideration.
3. That following the referral to the Homes and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee, comments are considered and incorporated into the draft document as appropriate and the revised draft document presented to Cabinet prior to tenant consultation.
4. That consultation on the draft document is undertaken with Housing tenants and tenant and residents groups.
5. That the Housing Asset Management Strategy is referred back to Cabinet for finalising upon receiving the views of the public consultation.

#### **Reasons for the Recommendations**

1. To ensure the Council has a cohesive strategy directing available resources for the Council's housing stock; ensuring appropriate investment decisions.
2. To provide an opportunity for Scrutiny to make any comments.
3. To develop the draft Strategy document prior to tenant consultation.
4. To provide service users to contribute and shape the strategy prior to adoption.
5. To agree the final document prior to adoption.

#### **Background**

2. With the introduction of the Welsh Housing Quality Standards, the Housing Investment Programme has been predominantly focused on investing in tenants'

homes and neighbourhoods directly contributing to achievement of the standard. Now the Council has achieved the standard, the draft Housing Asset Management Strategy seeks to set out the Council's ongoing vision for investment in the housing stock and developing new homes to meet the needs of current and future tenants of the Housing service.

3. This draft Housing Asset Management Strategy will enable the Housing service to direct investment resources to meet the future needs of tenants, by shaping the investment decisions to provide homes and neighbourhoods that residents are proud to call home.

### **Relevant Issues and Options**

4. The Draft Housing Asset Management Strategy sets out the links to other documents and policies which either influence the Housing Investment Programme or where the investment in Council housing can support wider local and national priorities and themes.
5. This draft Strategy then sets out the key areas for investment in the Council's Housing stock over the next 30 years and is supported by the annual HRA business plan.
6. The key areas of investment for the Council will be; the maintenance of the Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS), development of new Council Homes to meet increased housing demand in the social rented sector, and improvement of the existing housing stock to meet the challenges of zero carbon emissions by 2050 at the latest.
7. Following approval of the draft document, it is proposed tenants of the Council will be consulted on the Strategy to enable their views and priorities to be considered and built into the document where appropriate. For this consultation it is proposed two open consultation sessions will be hosted, tenant groups will be consulted and the document will be placed on the Council's web site for comments during the feedback session.
8. On completion of the tenant consultation process, the draft document will be developed to include tenants' needs and aspirations where appropriate. The completed strategy will then be represented to Cabinet for final approval.

### **Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)**

9. The Housing Asset Management Strategy will be supported by the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and will provide direction for the future investment needs of the Council's housing stock.

### **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

10. The Housing Asset Management Strategy identified carbon emissions from the existing and future housing stock as a key issue and seeks to improve the energy efficiency the Council's existing homes, with consideration being given towards renewable energy sources.

### **Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)**

11. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

## **Crime and Disorder Implications**

12. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from the report, however effective tenant engagement is a key element of the estate redevelopment which will enable crime and anti-social behaviour to be targeted on specific estates.

## **Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)**

13. Tenant Engagement will take into account the needs of tenants from a variety of backgrounds as well as people with protected characteristics.

## **Corporate/Service Objectives**

14. This Strategy is consistent with the overarching vision within the new Corporate Plan, namely 'Strong Communities with a Bright Future' as well as several of the Well Being Outcomes, including 'An inclusive and Safe Vale', ' An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale', 'An Active and Healthy Vale'.
15. It is also consistent with many of the core objectives (which support the Well Being outcomes), including: reducing poverty and social exclusion; decent homes and safe communities; promoting regeneration; sustainable development and protecting the environment; and active and healthy lifestyles.

## **Policy Framework and Budget**

16. This report is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet.

## **Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)**

17. This report will affect all council tenants and therefore no individual ward member consultation has been undertaken.

## **Relevant Scrutiny Committee**

18. Homes and Safe Communities.

## **Background Papers**

None.

## **Contact Officer**

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## **Officers Consulted**

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Caroline Michael - Operational Manager - Finance  
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## **Responsible Officer:**

Miles Punter - Director of Environment and Housing Services



# **The Vale of Glamorgan**

## **Housing Asset Management Strategy**

**2018 – 2023**

## Contents

### Table of Contents

1.0	Housing Asset Management Strategy Joint Message.....	4
2.0	Introduction .....	5
3	Context.....	6
4	Influencing Policy and Strategic Documents.....	10
4.1	Corporate Asset Management Plan.....	10
4.3	The Corporate Asset Management Plan (CAMP).....	10
4.6	Local Housing Strategy.....	10
4.10	Welfare Reform.....	11
4.13	The National Housing Strategy for Wales: Improving Lives and Communities: Homes in Wales 2010	12
4.17	The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) 2008.....	13
4.19	Ten Year Homelessness Plan for Wales 2009-19.....	13
4.21	Vibrant and Viable Places: New Regeneration Framework 2013	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
4.23	Local Housing Market Assessment 2010 .....	13
4.26	Rural Affordable Housing Need Report 2010 .....	14
4.30	Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment 2013.....	14
5	Key Partnerships .....	15
5.1	Local Partnerships.....	15
5.3	Regional.....	15
5.6	National.....	15
5.9	Developing Key Partnerships .....	16
6	Asset Baseline .....	16
6.4	Housing Stock – Age, Type and Condition .....	17
6.11	Land Assets, Infrastructure and Environmental Maintenance and Improvement .....	19
6.18	Commercial Properties .....	20
6.21	Garages .....	20
6.26	Leaseholders .....	21
6.28	Sheltered and Older Persons’ Housing .....	21
7	Tenant Engagement.....	23
7.5	HIP - Tenants Governance Structure.....	24

7.8	Tenants Quality & Design Forum .....	25
7.12	Tenant Working Group .....	25
7.14	Sheltered Housing Forum .....	26
8	Keystone Housing Asset Management System.....	26
9	Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) & Improving Homes .....	29
9.1	Maintaining the WHQS and Capital Programme .....	29
9.5	Maintaining the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS).....	29
9.20	Validation Surveys.....	33
9.25	Minimising & Recording “Acceptable Fails” .....	34
9.30	Environmental Improvements .....	35
10	Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty .....	37
11	Fire Safety .....	38
12	Target Hardening and Home Security.....	39
13	Helping People Live Independently .....	39
13.9	Average Timescales for delivery: .....	42
13.10	Tenant Satisfaction results to date (April 2017 to January 2018).....	42
14	Development programme.....	43
14.5	Funding .....	44
14.14	Land Availability .....	45
15	Maintaining the Asset .....	45
15.7	Responsive Repairs Service.....	46
15.13	Voids and Allocations.....	47

#### Version control and revision history

Author	Version	Date	Comments/changes made
AT	V1	May 15, 2018	First Draft
AT/RS	V1.2	Sept 2018	Revised Draft
AT	V1.3	Oct 2018	Revised Draft Post Consultation

## 1.0 Housing Asset Management Strategy Joint Message

### **Message from the Leader, Councillor John Thomas and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Building Services, Councillor Andrew Parker.**

Housing continues to provide an exciting political stage at the present with much happening. The quality of social housing provision continues to be high on the national agenda and there is a commitment by Welsh Government to build 20,000 new homes over this term of the assembly. In addition changes are being made to the delivery of adaptations to homes in both the public and private sectors with an emphasis on the customer. These changes come at a time of significant change within Local Government, as services and delivery mechanisms continue to face the challenge of austerity. In addition, the 'Under Occupancy Charge' continues to provide challenges to tenants and the service as the age definition for charges on extra bedrooms changes.

Housing and Building Services view the future as a period of opportunity and positive improvement and we start this journey in a good position to respond to the challenges ahead for the benefit of tenants and residents in the Vale of Glamorgan. The Welsh Housing Quality Standard was achieved at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 and after the completion of the first new build property in September 2017, the Council is set to continue its development programme and commence building on the next two sites with 39 units scheduled for completion over the next 18 months.

With the achievement of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard, this Council is set to enter the maintenance phase of the standard. With the completion of this major programme of investment the Council's Housing and Building Service will focus on the improvements to local neighbourhoods and identify regeneration opportunity to some of the estates within the Vale of Glamorgan.

As Cabinet Member for Housing and Building Services and Leader of the Council we will continue to support an approach which seeks to deliver the best services for tenants, leaseholders and the residents of the Vale of Glamorgan. We will continue to build on existing relationships and develop new ones which promote a collaborative approach to finding the best solution to the challenges which affect both existing and future tenants and residents of the Vale of Glamorgan.

**Councillor John Thomas – Leader of the Council**

**Councillor Andrew Parker – Cabinet Member for Housing and Building Services.**

## 2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 This Housing Asset Management Strategy (**HAMS**) is an overarching statement of objectives, goals, issues, processes and action priorities. The strategy will be applied to ensure effective management and maintenance of all homes and related land assets. The Strategy will aim to provide high quality, customer focused services demonstrating value for money. Asset Management Strategies often concentrate on stock condition and the development of investment programmes, however, this strategy also considers the maintenance of the existing stock as well as the development of new homes by the Council and the wider neighbourhood.
- 2.2 The strategy outlines how the Council will deliver an integrated investment programme with successful delivery contributing to a number of national, regional and local priorities as well as local needs and issues.
- 2.3 At a national level this will include such Welsh Government strategies including the Welsh Housing Quality Standards and the Welsh Governments commitment to provide a further 20,000 homes over the current administrative term. At a regional level this will include the City Deal initiative, whilst at a local level this Asset Strategy will support the objective set out in the Council's Corporate Wellbeing objectives. The strategy has been developed in conjunction with the Housing Business Plan, the Local Housing Strategy 2014 – 2019 and seeks to build on and complement other strategies operated by the service.
- 2.4 At the close of 2017/18, all Council homes had achieved the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS), with all properties having modern kitchens, bathrooms, safe wiring and efficient heating system. Properties had also received, new roofs, external wall repairs and improved insulation where necessary. There continues to be a number of acceptable fails where tenants have elected not to have some of these works and the Council are addressing these 'Acceptable Fails' at change of tenancy. This sees a reduced capital expenditure on key attributes associated with the standard, although there continues to be ongoing work programmes to address WHQS elements as they fail in particular years. Opportunity therefore arises to refocus the Council's Housing Investment Programme to improve neighbourhoods and the provision of new Council Homes.
- 2.5 With the major investment programme now having achieved the WHQS, the investment programme can now concentrate on wider aspects of the home including the wider neighbourhood and other assets such as garages. With opportunity to now refocus investment, other programmes of work are now being developed and delivered covering the following:
  - Fencing and boundary treatments
  - Garages and garage use
  - Environmental enhancements to assist in the management of anti-social behaviours
  - Further enhancements to fuel efficiency.
  - Fire upgrades
  - Communal area improvements.
- 2.6 This next phase of works will see more visible improvements to our communities and an Environmental Strategy and Action Plan sets out the way residents can contribute to the way these improvements will be delivered. Additional funding for garage and highway improvements will complement this strategy with external work programmes



making a major difference to the look of our communities and providing neighbourhoods which residents can be proud of.

- 2.7 Internal Fire Risk Improvements are also being delivered to flatted blocks reducing the residents' fear of fire in the light of the Grenfell Tower tragedy. These improvements are currently being delivered to control fire spread within flats and do not try to pre-empt any legislative changes which arise from the Grenfell enquiry.
- 2.8 This Housing Asset Management Strategy (HAMS) identifies the financial resources required to deliver further improvements to our housing stock and the communities in which our tenants live, as well as develop new homes for the social rented sector. Additionally, opportunity now exists to acquire property available on the open market to help meet the local housing need. The delivery of this investment programme is supported by a strong commitment from Members and staff which will see these improvements delivered. The Housing Improvement Programme is set to continue the improvement and modernisation of the Council's housing asset and the Council are working hard to ensure the works carried out will meet the needs of the residents and be of the highest standard.
- 2.9 The delivery of the supporting investment plans associated with this Housing Asset Management Strategy (HAMS) will also continue to see wider benefits to the lives of people across the Vale with an emphasis on local labour, the employment of local sub-contractors, apprenticeship opportunities and continued delivery of other added value through community benefits.
- 2.10 The key thrust of the strategy is to ensure our homes and communities are sustainable by considered targeting of resources. The strategy covers a five year period between 2018 and 2023 and informs decisions for long term priorities by identifying investment needs which will assist in the development of the overall business plan assumptions.

### 3 Context

- 3.1 The Vale of Glamorgan is Wales most southerly Unitary Authority which was established in 1996. It is located west of Cardiff between the M4 and Severn Estuary. The County's neighbouring authorities are Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council to the north, Cardiff Council to the west and Bridgend County Borough Council to the east. It covers 33,097 hectares, approximately 89% of which is designated as rural, and has four principal urban areas, namely: Barry; Cowbridge; Llantwit Major; and Penarth.

- 3.2 The Local Authority area has a population of 126,679 people (2011 Census) which is expected to rise to 133,727 by 2036. The age profile in the Vale is broadly in line with the



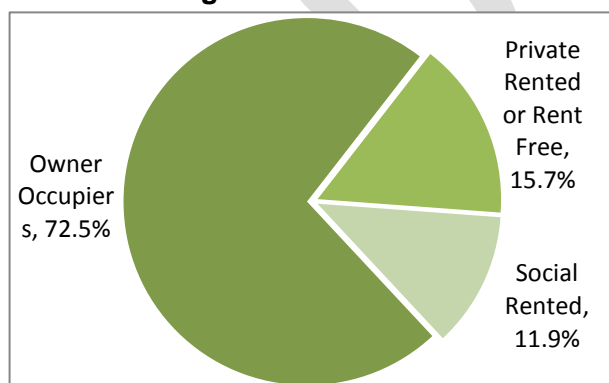
Welsh average: 18% of the population are aged 0-15, 63% are aged 16-64 and the 65+ group make up 19% of the population. The majority of the population are of working age. When compared to Wales as a whole the Census indicates that the Vale of Glamorgan:

- Contains a lower proportion of the population that are working age than is found nationally and regionally, 62.9% in the Vale of Glamorgan compared to 63.5% across Wales.
- Has a higher proportion of children than is found nationally, 18.9% in the Vale of Glamorgan compared to 18.2% across Wales.
- Has a population of people aged 65 and over that is representative of Wales as a whole.

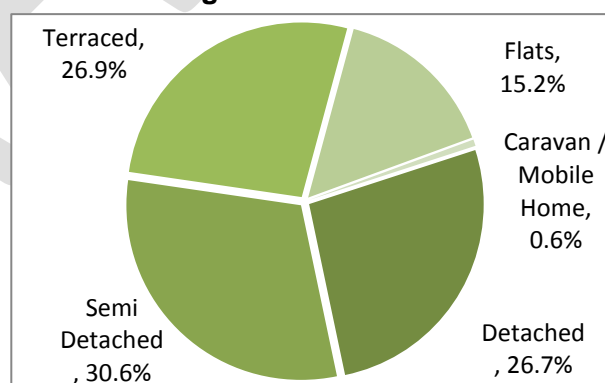
3.3 The Vale of Glamorgan has an estimated 53,505 dwellings. The majority of households, 72.5%, own their own home, 11.9% rent from a social landlord and 15.7% from a private landlord. The percentage of households who own their own home (with or without a mortgage) in the Vale is higher than the Welsh average, whilst the percentage of households living in the private rented and social rented sectors are lower than the Welsh average.

3.4 Most properties in the Vale of Glamorgan are houses, 84.2%, of which the majority are semi-detached properties. 15.2% of properties are flats, including maisonettes and those in both purpose built and converted blocks. There are also a small percentage, 0.6%, of residential caravans and mobile homes.

**Figure 1 – Tenure of Properties in the Vale of Glamorgan**



**Figure 2 – Property Types in the Vale of Glamorgan**



3.5 Following a comprehensive consultation exercise in 2011, tenants voted in a ballot for the Council to retain the housing stock. The Council recognised the importance of this decision and has secured a massive investment of £79.2 million to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by the end of 2017:-

3.6 The Vale of Glamorgan Council owns 3,867 social rented properties across the borough managed within the Housing Revenue Account and in addition land, leasehold rights, a number of commercial premises, garages and play areas. This adds up to a significant portfolio. We need to ensure that the maximum value possible is secured from those assets. Value is not just about the benefits tenants and residents receive, but also includes the long term value and return to the Council.

- 3.7 Over time the number of Houses included within the Council's stock has been reduced through the 'Right to Buy' scheme. At the start of 2018 the Welsh Government reversed this scheme and has introduced a one year window for exiting tenants to purchase their homes from the Council should they wish to do so. Therefore, after March 2019, the Council will no longer be exposed to the 'Right to Buy' scheme and subject to strategic disposal of properties; the housing stock will not see significant reductions.
- 3.8 During 2016 the UK population voted to leave the European Union, the details of this departure are still being debated and at present the impact on the Welsh economy is uncertain. Council's in Wales receive a number of grants from the European Union to support Welsh investment and the future of this investment will need factoring into the business plan as the detail emerges. The European Structural Fund supports people into work and training, youth employment, research and innovation, business (SMEs) competitiveness, renewable energy and energy efficiency, and connectivity and urban development. Previously the Vale of Glamorgan Council has benefited from such funding to support energy efficiency projects within the Housing Stock and withdrawal of such funding will require the Council to be more innovative in its business plan if alternative funding is not made available.
- 3.9 Austerity measures may be with us for many years to come and further spending cuts in the public sector are probably inevitable. This could have a profound impact on public services in Wales, including the housing sector, with cuts to capital funding for new homes and revenue budgets for housing related support.
- 3.10 Alongside these financial constraints, the housing sector faces significant challenges posed by the UK government's introduction of the Welfare Reform Act
- 3.11 In April 2015, the Welsh Government introduced amendments to the Housing revenue Account Subsidy system and all Councils with retained housing stock were required to buy out of the HRA subsidy system. This brought about a number of new opportunities, not least of which was the Council's ability build new Council Homes for the first time in over 20 years. This is to support the Welsh Governments house building agenda, and also to maximise social housing provision through delivering sites which would otherwise prove uneconomical to RSL partners.
- 3.12 The HRA subsidy changes also enabled HRAs to be self-financing without receipt of or payment to the Welsh Government of subsidy. This buy out required individual Council's to take on extra debt to buy the national housing debt. However, this does enable greater flexibilities and freedoms and allows all the income from tenant's rents to be retained to pay for the management, maintenance and improvement of the stock as well as supporting repayment of outstanding debt and any new agreed borrowing to finance regeneration and new build.
- 3.13 This change to the HRA system, results in a Welsh Government imposed cap on the amount of debt that the Vale of Glamorgan Council can hold for HRA purposes. There will be a difference or gap between the cap and HRA borrowing currently held. This gap is known as the "Headroom" and it represents a source of funding which can be used to both improve the current properties and build new homes over the life of the 30 year HRA Business Plan. Currently, the Welsh Government is seeking to remove the borrowing cap in line with England's strategy.
- 3.14 Future investment in the stock must be based on financial and economic criteria as well as housing needs factors. These investment decisions need to maximise both opportunity and resources to meet standards and agreed tenant's needs. This means a proactive, rather than reactive approach to investment planning. Investment

must be based on analysis of condition, the future value added to the Housing asset and the long term sustainability. The asset's contribution in terms of its income/cost and its contribution to meeting long term housing need and sustainability are essential considerations in developing the Housing Asset Management Strategy and financial investment plan.

- 3.15 Investment decisions will consider the nature of improvement and its impact on quality of life against the cost to deliver the work. Planned repairs and component replacement programmes will be undertaken where homes are sustainable in the medium to long term.

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## **4 Influencing Policy and Strategic Documents**

### **4.1 Corporate Asset Management Plan**

4.2 The Property Strategy 2018-2023 is a draft document which sets out how we intend to achieve our aims and the priority objectives generally. The strategy provides a high level overview of how we manage the council's property assets and more importantly the mechanism for delivering the corporate and financial objectives:

### **4.3 The Corporate Asset Management Plan (CAMP).**

4.4 As shown, the management of our property assets via the CAMP has a cross cutting remit, highlighting that property assets are an integral part of service delivery and financial budgets. The CAMP will analyse how we aim to align our assets with the corporate objectives and the continuing resource constraints.

4.5 The way we manage our property has a direct impact on the services we provide, and it is the role of Property through the CAMP to ensure that we achieve the optimum use of our assets whilst supporting service delivery across the council. It is not just about saving money, its ensuring we achieve the maximum efficiency from our assets.

### **4.6 Local Housing Strategy**

4.7 Local authorities have a legal duty to develop a Local Housing Strategy under section 87 of the Local Government Act 2003. The primary purpose of a Local Housing Strategy is to articulate a locally agreed direction for addressing the housing requirements, problems and opportunities of an area, taking into account national policies and priorities. The Local Housing Strategy should demonstrate evidence-based decision making; explaining how the aims and objectives are derived from local evidence bases.

4.8 Local authorities lead on the strategic housing function and the planning and delivery of housing services, as commissioners and often as direct providers. The local authority is required to plan for improved housing and housing services across all tenures, with a wide range of partners to ensure that within the defined area there is a sustainable owner occupied sector, a well-managed private rented sector and good quality social housing that is managed efficiently and effectively.

4.9 As well as the strategic housing responsibility, the local authority has additional statutory obligations which cover a number of housing functions, these include:

- Assessing housing stock condition, particularly in the private sector.
- Improving housing standards and identifying and tackling serious hazards.
- Dealing with overcrowding and deprivation.
- Addressing homelessness and the causes, such as domestic violence.
- Developing housing options, providing housing information and advice.

- Administering Housing Benefit.

#### 4.10 Welfare Reform

4.11 In 2010 the UK Government published its Programme for Government which included an intention to simplify the welfare system and make sure that work pays. Changes to the welfare system began in April 2011 when Tax Credit entitlements were amended, a number of Incapacity Benefits were transferred to Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and the Housing Benefit (HB) entitlement for private tenants was changed to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA). The Welfare Reform Act received royal assent on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2012 and introduced a range of additional changes, those most relevant to housing organisations and tenants are:

- **The Household Benefit Cap** limits the amount of benefits a household can receive to £26,000 per year.
- **Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy**, commonly referred to as the bedroom tax, reduces the amount of benefits that tenants in social housing receive if they deemed to have a spare bedroom.
- **Universal Credit** combines six main out-of-work and low income benefits into a single monthly payment.
- **Removal of Direct Housing Payments** means that tenants will receive all of their benefits directly, without the option to have the Housing Benefit element paid directly to their landlord.
- **Discretionary Housing Payment** can provide financial assistance to tenants when the local authority decides the household need additional help with their housing costs.

4.12 Changes to the welfare system have and will continue to have an impact on tenants, landlords and local authorities, summarised in the table below:

Table 1 – Impact of Welfare Reform Changes on Tenants, Landlords and the Council

Impact on Tenants	Impact on Social Landlords	Impact on the Council
<p>The introduction of the household benefit cap will result in many households seeing a reduction in their income.</p> <p>Households may need support to maximise their income, reduce their outgoings and budget effectively.</p> <p>Households affected by the bedroom tax will have their HB reduced.</p> <p>Tenants who choose to remain in their home may struggle financially.</p> <p>Moving to a smaller home may be difficult or impossible due to the shortage of smaller homes.</p> <p>Under Universal Credit households will receive one single monthly payment which may be more difficult to manage.</p> <p>Direct rent payments to landlords, which gave many tenants reassurance, will be removed.</p> <p>Universal Credit will be administered online by the DWP, reducing the availability of face to face advice and assistance.</p>	<p>In Universal Credit pilot areas landlords have seen significant increases in rent arrears.</p> <p>Landlords received around 50% of their rental income from direct payments, providing a guaranteed element of income to fund essential services. Direct payments will be removed, putting income at risk.</p> <p>Maintaining core business (collecting rent, arrears) will be increasingly important.</p> <p>Providing additional services to support tenants will increase landlord costs.</p> <p>Landlords are likely to see an increase in demand for smaller properties from new and existing tenants in order to downsize.</p> <p>Conversely it may also make some properties hard to let, increasing void times and loss of rent.</p> <p>Landlords may need to consider the use of their stock, reconfiguration and changing allocations policies.</p>	<p>It is increasingly difficult to find suitably sized accommodation for households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness who receive Housing Benefit due to a lack of smaller properties being available.</p> <p>There is a lack of shared accommodation for young people in need of accommodation who are reliant on the single room rent rate of Housing Benefit.</p> <p>The lack of suitably sized accommodation is causing a backlog of people unable to move on from temporary accommodation, including the hostel and women's refuge.</p> <p>There is increased demand from people in need of specialist advice; finance, debt, benefits and legal advice.</p> <p>Households are going to need additional support to access and use computers to complete online benefit claims. The Council will need to consider facilitating access to secure IT services.</p>

#### 4.13 The National Housing Strategy for Wales: Improving Lives and Communities: Homes in Wales 2010

4.14 The national Housing Strategy for Wales sets out the substantial challenges in meeting Wales' housing needs, the priorities, and the action that will be taken. The challenges Wales faces are substantial;



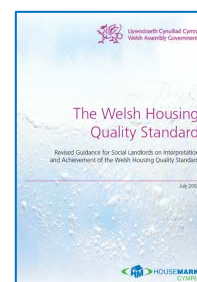
- The demand for housing continues to outstrip supply.
- The credit crunch has increased the demand for affordable housing.
- The ageing population has implications for the design of houses and the support available.
- The age and quality of current social housing stock means that improvements are required.
- There is increased demand on housing and housing-related support services, including those that deal with homelessness.

4.15 The Welsh Government aims to provide more housing of the right type and offer more choice; improve homes and communities, including the energy efficiency of new and existing homes and improve housing-related services and support particularly for vulnerable people and minority groups. The Vale of Glamorgan local housing strategy will broadly follow the objectives and ethos set out in the Welsh Governments housing strategy; ensuring that the actions and objectives identified locally contribute to meeting national targets.

4.16 In addition to the national housing strategy there are a number of relevant Welsh Government strategies and documents which have informed the development of the local housing strategy, these include:

#### 4.17 **The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) 2008**

4.18 The WHQS provides a common target standard for the physical condition of all social housing in Wales, this builds on the vision that all households in Wales shall have the opportunity to live in good quality dwellings. To achieve this, the housing owned by social landlords must be maintained and improved to the WHQS now and in the future.

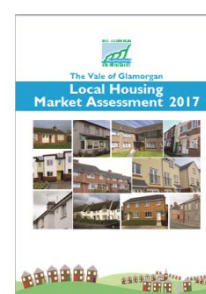


#### 4.19 **Ten Year Homelessness Plan for Wales 2009-19**

4.20 This plan is intended to drive forward a focus on the prevention and the reduction of homelessness to a minimum by 2019. Prevention will be improved through early intervention, as well as universal access to services.

#### 4.21 **Local Housing Market Assessment 2010**

4.22 Local Housing Market Assessments (LHMAs) enable local authorities to develop an understanding of the nature and level of housing demand and need in their local housing markets. LHMAs are a crucial part of the evidence base for preparing the Local Development Plans and Local Housing Strategy; they inform housing





development and land use policies, as well as informing specific policies such as social housing allocations, private sector renewal options and access to low cost home ownership units.

4.23 The LHMA 2017 provides an update to the original LHMA published in 2008 to reflect the impact of the economic downturn and identify the appropriate policy responses. The key outcome of the LHMA is the identified need for 915 additional units of affordable housing per year, which was calculated in accordance with Welsh Government guidance.

#### 4.24 **Rural Affordable Housing Need Report 2010**

4.25 The LHMA 2017 considered housing using four sub-areas, but it was acknowledged that the assessment provided insufficient data to examine the housing market at an individual community level. This is particularly relevant given the number of small villages and communities located in the rural Vale. In response the Council commissioned a Rural Affordable Housing Need (RAHN) Report.

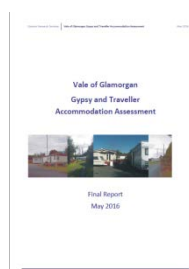
4.26 The RAHN Report provides localised housing needs information for the 25 communities in the rural Vale, which for the purposes of the report are considered to be outside of Barry and Penarth. The RAHN Report identified that the rural Vale has higher housing costs and as such affordability issues which related specifically to rural areas. A key outcome of the assessment was the identified need for 250 additional units of affordable housing per year to meet demand.

4.27 A key action identified in the Local Housing Strategy action plan is to provide an updated LHMA to reflect the changes to the housing market and the impact on housing need in the Vale of Glamorgan.

#### 4.28 **Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment 2016**

4.29 The main objective of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment is to assess the need for authorised site provision within the Vale of Glamorgan.

4.30 The key outcome of the assessment is the identified need for 18 permanent pitches to be provided in the Vale. There is also evidence of a gap in provision for a transit site in the South East Wales region, which could be provided regionally.



## 5 Key Partnerships

### 5.1 Local Partnerships

5.2 The key local housing forum is the Overarching Housing Forum (OHF); the OHF is chaired by the local authority and attended by a wide range of partners, including RSLs, Health, the National Landlord Association, Welsh Government and Council officers from housing, planning, environmental health, regeneration and social services. This forum monitors the progress of the Local Housing Strategy and the related action plan. The OHF is informed by a number of other local forums which concentrate on specific areas of housing, including empty homes, Homes4U, strategic housing, homelessness and Supporting People. In turn the OHF reports to the Local Service Board.

### 5.3 Regional

5.4 The Vale of Glamorgan works regionally across South East Wales and more locally with Bridgend and Cardiff Councils. Partnerships include those which promote information sharing, fostering closer collaboration across a range of housing activities and provide a platform for the development of cross boundary initiatives.

5.5 The Vale and Cardiff Councils have a joint empty homes forum which shares information, good practice and also monitors the use of the regional Houses to Homes Loan Scheme. The Supporting People Regional Collaborative Committee oversees the delivery of the Supporting People Programme and is required by the Welsh Government. The Vale of Glamorgan are also members of a joint Health and Housing Forum with Cardiff Council which works with the Local Health Board to improve the links between services and better outcomes for service users.

### 5.6 National

5.7 The Welsh Government manage the national Supporting People Advisory Board which oversees each of the regional SP Regional Collaborative Committees and they also coordinate the national Gypsy and Traveller Network which promotes partnership working and information sharing between local authorities and organisations involved in the provision of sites and services for gypsies and travellers.



5.8 The Welsh Local Government Association supports Housing Leadership Cymru which brings together local authority housing leads to promote innovation and partnership working. There are also national housing partnerships which address specific areas of housing, including strategic housing functions, homelessness, rural housing and private sector housing enforcement.

## 5.9 Developing Key Partnerships

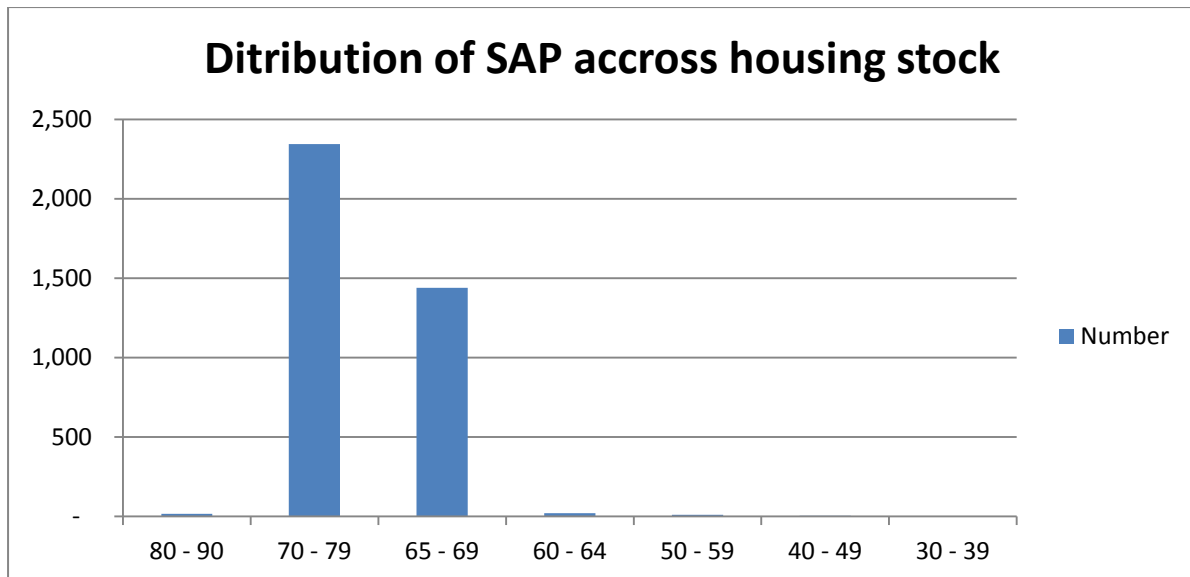
5.10 There are a number of key strategies and action plans relevant to achieving the aims of the Local Housing Strategy, for example the Empty Homes and Homelessness Strategies. There is a need to ensure there are robust partnerships in place which are able to monitor the progress of these action plans and report progress to the Overarching Housing Forum.

5.11 The local partnership structure and governance arrangements for monitoring the Local Housing Strategy need to be reviewed. There are also a number of gaps within the existing local partnerships, for example around the development of the private rented sector and gypsy traveller provision which need to be addressed as part of the review.

## 6 Asset Baseline

6.1 The Vale of Glamorgan achieved the Welsh Governments' Welsh Housing Quality Standard in March 2018. This significant achievement is the result of a five year programme of major investment, which has seen 3,412 kitchens, 3,161 Bathrooms, 3,619 rewires and partial rewires, 976 New Heating systems and 1,376 new roofs installed into tenant's homes to improve the living standards of all Council Homes and to ensure they meet society's expectations. Additionally, the Council's Housing stock now returns an average of 70.9 based on 2012 SAP calculations.

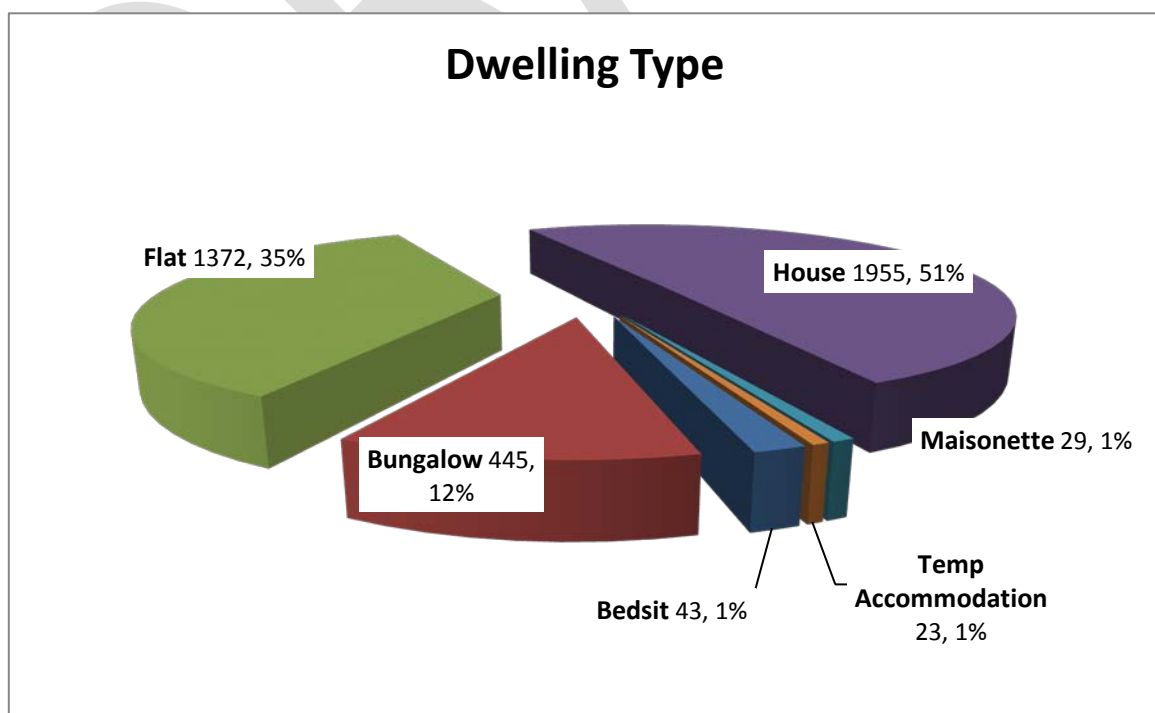
6.2 The following chart illustrates the impact the Council has achieved through its investment in thermal improvements to the building fabric along with the energy efficient heating installed. This demonstrates almost 99% of the stock achieves a SAP rating over 65 with 61% achieving above 70. Therefore the Council's Housing stock performs well in terms of energy efficiency, with only 1% falling below the current WHQS requirements.



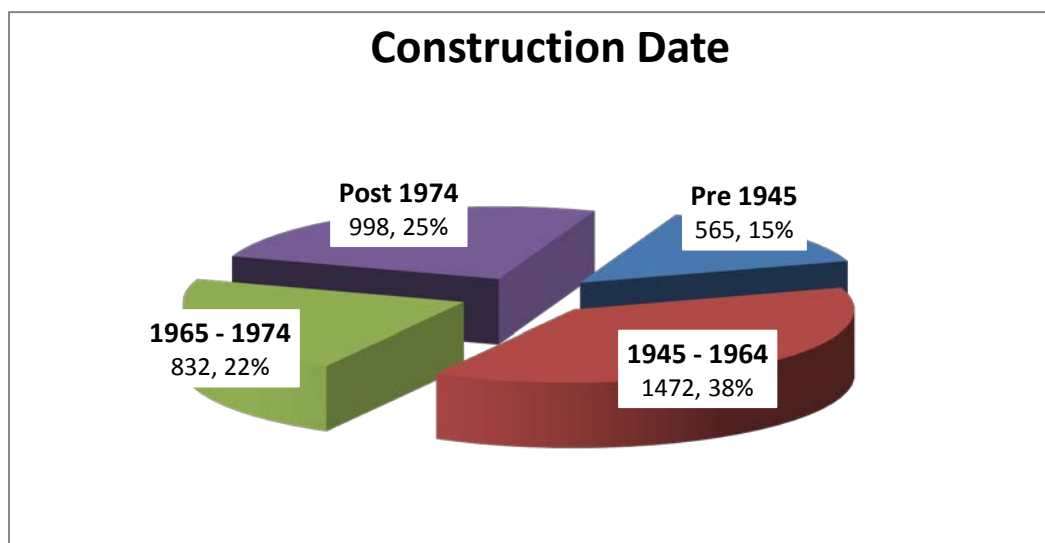
6.3 As part of the WHQS Delivery programme a policy document has been adopted by the Council for application of the WHQS. This document sets out the Council’s approach to acceptable fails and provides clarification on elements of the WHQS to ensure they are applied fairly to all homes.

#### 6.4 Housing Stock – Age, Type and Condition

6.5 The Council’s housing stock is primarily low rise two and three bedroom houses, flats and bungalows as illustrated below.



- 6.6 Figure 2 provides a breakdown of properties by construction date. Over half of the Council's homes were built before 1964.



- 6.7 The stock is located on 43 estates and conurbations across the Vale of Glamorgan. Estates vary in popularity and sustainability. Works needs to be undertaken on demand analysis of the stock to identify the number and percentage of properties in low demand.
- 6.8 Low demand properties are located in pockets of outdated design or over provision such as bedsit sheltered schemes, flats above shops and congregations of block flats/maisonettes.
- 6.9 During the 1980s and 1990s the right to buy removed nearly half of the original housing stock. However, the RTB legislation has now been removed and the Council is unlikely to see further significant reduction in stock numbers.
- 6.10 Changes to welfare with welfare benefit reform have changed demand for Council housing. There is a need to better match the offer provided by our homes to the demand for them. Therefore, work is required in undertaking an assessment of the demand for housing stock and considering the best options to meet this demand. This process and the need to match demand/ supply will be kept under consistent review.

#### Bedsit Type

	Bedsit Type	Grand Total
<b>Ground Floor Flat</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>OAP - Not Sheltered Flat</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>OAP Bungalow</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

<b>Sheltered</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>66</b>

### 6.11 Land Assets, Infrastructure and Environmental Maintenance and Improvement

- 6.12 The land within the curtilage of an individual Council property is included within any valuation of the property and when tenanted, is the responsibility of the tenant to maintain.
- 6.13 Environmental Improvements will be undertaken as part of an ongoing programme to improve neighbourhoods. An Environment and Neighbourhood Strategy was approved by Cabinet in February 2017 and assists in identifying capital improvements required to individual neighbourhoods. The physical appearance of estates was also identified as a priority in the strategy and a 'photobook' has been developed which is a set of agreed environmental standards used to grade the quality of estates and drive improvements. Regular estate walkabouts are also an important part of improving standards and a more formal programme of walkabouts is now in place so tenants have the opportunity to take part or engage with their Neighbourhood Manager when they are on site. Capital investment identified through this community engagement process helps ensure investment is targeted to the appropriate areas and is targeted to meet the needs of the local community.
- 6.14 Funding has been allocated to improve and renew front and rear fencing through a planned repairs programme and this is delivered by identification of priority areas. The Environmental and Neighbourhood strategy plays a key part in ensuring resources are directed to the priority areas.
- 6.15 Communal areas to blocks of flats and sheltered schemes are a mixture of shared tenant responsibility or included on the Council maintenance contract. There have been a number of environmental and security improvements that have enhanced the appearance of such schemes. The Environmental and Neighbourhood Strategy will consider future environmental programmes along with other capital programme priorities.
- 6.16 As part of the aspiration to develop new homes there is the potential to sell/develop properties and land to generate income to the HRA for additional investment. Further work is needed to identify areas for potential development/disposal to enable the Housing service to continue to provide affordable housing through the most appropriate partnership whilst ensuring housing demand is satisfied.
- 6.17 As well as land the Housing portfolio includes infrastructure such as roads, pavements and drainage. A significant amount of investment has been made to improve the condition of the footpaths, forecourts and roads within Housings control. An ongoing programme of surveying the highway infrastructure ensures the

infrastructure is in good condition and residents are safe when using these areas. Each area is marked with a RAG Status and addressed in accordance with each priority.

## 6.18 Commercial Properties

6.19 Non-operational assets such as land and shop premises are managed by Property Services Estates Service and do not form part of the Housing Revenue Account. The commercial units are sited within a mixture of block types. A number have flats or maisonettes above that are either let on a normal Council residential tenancy, are let with the unit or are leaseholders having gone through the right to buy process. They vary in age and design according to the age of the estate.

6.20 The Estates Services manages the external maintenance of the shops whilst the Housing and Building Service is responsible for the external maintenance of the residential blocks. The management of non-operational assets is covered within the Corporate Asset management Strategy.

## 6.21 Garages

6.22 The Council managed approximately 938 Council garages located on estates of which two thirds are tenanted. A review of the garage sites owned by the Council was undertaken during 2016/17 and a number were identified as no longer viable. Subsequently, 15 sites were identified for demolition with consideration being given to other non-viable sites for development into housing either supporting the Council's own development programme or to be sold on the open market for private development.

6.23 In consideration of each site for demolition consideration is given to the costs of replacement, demand for garages in the area and other local provision.

6.24 Where garages have been identified as no longer viable to the HRA, they will be demolished in the first instance to ensure the risk to public is reduced and the opportunity for anti-social behaviour is minimised. The future use of each demolished site will then be considered to meet the local community demands. The use of each site will be considered following the hierarchy below:

- a) Provision of new Social Housing, this may be supported through the Council's own development programme or through partnering organisations.
- b) Parking to support local needs, this will be open access parking with no reserve on spaces. However, in areas with parking issues it may be possible to consider allocated parking spaces which residents may rent. Such parking areas in former garage site will be provided to reduce parking problems on adjacent streets to reduce traffic congestion and assist emergency service in navigating these roads.
- c) Where sites are suitable for property development but uneconomical for social housing, consideration will be given to selling these spaces on the open market for private development.

- d) Where there is a demonstrable demand from the local residents for garages in the area, consideration will be given to renting individual spaces for residents to install and maintain their own garage.
- e) Where local resident demand is not evident, consideration may be given to transferring the former garage area to a local community board/committee, which would be responsible for all repairs maintenance and management of the site.
- f) Where there is no demand for any of the options above consideration will be given to disposal of the former garage site to residents interested in extending the garden area, or provision of a local community allotment or garden space. This option will be supported through work with the Community Investment Officers.

6.25 The investment needs of these garages will change over time and any future investment will require an option appraisal to ensure a sustainable approach. Individual sites will be considered where demand or local circumstances change.

## 6.26 Leaseholders

6.27 The Council owns the freehold on approximately 300 flats purchased under the Right to Buy. Under the terms of the residential leases held the council is responsible for the provision of communal services and to keep the external structure of the leasehold properties in repair. The costs of repair works of this nature are recoverable from the leaseholders and are recharged through the annual service charge. Where repair works to properties are extensive the council consults leaseholders in accordance with Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and the Service Charges (Consultation Requirements) (Wales) Regulations 2004/684.

## 6.28 Sheltered and Older Persons' Housing

6.29 The vision of VGC is to provide diverse and affordable housing and care provision that meets the needs of older people and other vulnerable adult residents, so that the borough is a good place to live and grow older.

6.30 The ageing population and increased demand for social care across all age groups may result in unsustainable pressure on the Council's budget. Existing models of care, support and housing are not entirely fit for purpose and will not provide sufficient capacity and efficiencies in the longer term.

6.31 Specific local modelling of current and future housing and care needs will inform what provision will be needed and where, over the short, medium and longer term. This will develop intelligence to shape and respond to market changes and stimulate the involvement of a range of partners to meet the challenges ahead through innovative models of housing and care.

6.32 There are five main sheltered housing schemes managed by the Council which include:



- Gwennog Court
- Crawshay Court,
- Longmeadow Court,
- Redlands House
- Fair Oaks

6.33 Capital funding through the Intermediate Care Fund has seen four specialist units be developed; two at Redlands House and two at Longmeadow Court. These specialist units have been designed to provide step-up/step-down accommodation where residents are in need of accommodation because their own home is unsuitable. The accommodation provides short-term respite for citizens who would otherwise need hospitalisation because their own home could not accommodate the temporary needs. At Redlands House two units were converted from the existing living arrangements, where at Longmeadow Court a bespoke extension was built onto the existing accommodation.

6.34 In total the council has 327 units of sheltered accommodation. These units represent 8.3% of the total managed housing stock.

	Sheltered Bungalow		Sheltered Flat		Sheltered Bedsit	Grand Total
	1 Bed	2 Bed	1 Bed	2 Bed		
CRAWSHAY COURT		5	23			28
CRAWSHAY DRIVE		4				4
CWM PARC			20			20
FAIROAKS	10	8	32	16		66
GWENOG COURT			31			31
LONGMEADOW COURT			26			26
PETERSWELL ROAD			16			16
PLAS ESYLLT		18				18
PROCTOR CLOSE	17	1				18
REDLANDS AVENUE	9	4	42			55
REDLANDS HOUSE			25		7	32
VALE COURT	8	1				9
YOULDON HOUSE				6		6
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>329</b>

6.35 Whilst all of these schemes are distinctly different, they share the characteristic of being supported sheltered and grouped accommodation on Council estates. The type of scheme varies, from sheltered schemes that are generally blocks of flats, to grouped schemes, which are a group of bungalows and / or flats.

6.36 Considerable investment has been provided for sheltered accommodation to update and improve the communal areas and facilities offered. Crawshay Court, Redlands House, Youlden House and Longmeadow Court have been modernised to provide improved facilities for residents including entertainment rooms, computer facilities and on site treatment rooms. This has had a positive impact on residency,

particularly in schemes which proved previously unpopular. All sheltered accommodation has received upgrades to communal areas to ensure they meet appropriate fire safety requirements, this has included renewal of fire doors to communal corridors, renewal of fire doors to flat entrances with some new fire doors within the flat to enable safe egress from the flat should fire event occur. Additionally, fire detection systems have been upgraded to meet current standards and ensure residents safety within the building. As part of this work internal communal areas have been decorated following the works. Each block has been Risk assessed for fire and a programme of fire stopping has also supported the work on fire doors and alarm upgrades.

6.37 The Council will consider the provision of housing solutions in the borough to address the changing needs/growth in the numbers of older people through its development programme by:

- Linking new housing developments to care/support solutions for adults with care needs.
- Understanding the future housing needs/models required for older people and adults with care needs.
- Including lifetime homes standard for older people within developments and assessing the potential for a number of extra care housing schemes for adults with care needs.

#### **Action**

Consider the provision of housing solutions in the borough to address the changing needs/growth in the numbers of older people through its development programme by:

- Linking new housing developments to care/support solutions for adults with care needs.
- Understanding the future housing needs/models required for older people and adults with care needs.
- Including lifetime homes standard for older people within developments and assessing the potential for a number of extra care housing schemes for adults with care needs.

## **7 Tenant Engagement**

7.1 Consultation exercises with tenants have clearly shown the delivery of the Housing Improvement Programme is not just about “bricks and mortar”/upgrading the housing stock, although this is a major part of the programme, but also about improving the services provided to tenants and leaseholders, (taking account of customer aspirations and modernising services to meet changing needs).

7.2 The Council is committed to consulting its tenants and seeking their views so that the stock is well managed, located in safe and attractive environments and meets their specific needs. It is encouraging that more and more tenants and leaseholders are taking a positive interest in working with the Council in order to both maximise the stock improvement opportunities and influence service delivery.

7.3 The Housing Management has appointed Two Community Investment and Involvement Officers who will be providing an important resource to in taking forward the objectives in the a new Community Investment Strategy, developed with our tenants and wider stakeholders. This Strategy sets out our approach to community investment highlighting the need in order to add value to our local communities. The process of identifying the most appropriate improvements in each area will be carried out in partnership with residents and stakeholders. By doing this, we can improve the quality of life for residents and create vibrant, sustainable places where people want to live. The priorities will include:



7.4 In addition to the Community Investment Strategy, a revised Tenant Engagement Strategy has recently been endorsed by the Council's Cabinet. This is designed to build on the improvements put in place by the previous Strategy by using a flexible menu of involvement in order to engage a broader range of tenants from different backgrounds and demographic groups. This approach has been designed to appeal to a greater number of tenants and be more representative of the broader tenant population. Specifically, there are five key objectives in the Strategy which include:



### 7.5 Housing Investment Programme - Tenants Governance Structure

7.6 All of the formal groups discussed below report to the Tenant Working Group, which monitors and coordinates the actions of the various satellite groups. The satellite

groups are attended by various officers who support and address issues raised by the groups. This enables issues affecting tenants and residents to be addressed by the relevant officer, who is also then monitored by the individual groups on progress.

7.7 In addition, four tenants are co-opted onto the Homes and Safer Communities Scrutiny Committee who meet on a monthly basis with Vale Councillors and Officers in the formal scrutiny meetings. The Co-opted tenants sitting on this group have similar opportunity to members on questioning performance and speaking on reports.

## 7.8 Tenants Quality & Design Forum

7.9 The tenants Quality & Design Forum (QDF) was established to oversee the Housing Improvement Programme and to work in partnership with the Council. The forum has a membership of six tenants who continue to be voted on by the working group members. To date, the QDF has been involved in the following:-

- The development of a Residents Access Protocol, which provides a minimum standard to be followed, this protocol covers areas such as Communication, customer care, equality and diversity, behaviour, protection and respect for the home. This protocol applies to all contractors working on repair, maintenance, improvement and refurbishment programmes commissioned by the Council when working on tenant's homes. The QDF scrutinised framework contractors against this protocol as part of the PQQ analysis.
- Review and score quality submissions from contractors.
- Interview contractors during the tender process in association with Council staff.
- Interviewed Tenant Liaison Officers as part of the recruitment process.
- Consideration of specification issues for the Housing Improvement Programme.
- Monitoring of the Gas servicing key performance indicators
- Monitoring electrical servicing and installation contracts.
- Assisted with the development of the Tenant Star Survey.

7.10 In addition to this, a significant role for the QDF during the Housing Improvement Programme is to review the performance of all contractors on an ongoing basis (particularly the monitoring key performance indicators).

7.11 The main QDF responsibilities during the continued progress of the works include ensuring all improvement work is carried out to an acceptable standard (quality of workmanship) and all contractors work within the Contractors Code of Conduct. QDF members are also consulted on specification issues as and when they arise prior to making any proposed changes.

## 7.12 Tenant Working Group

7.13 Along with the QDF, a Tenant's Housing Working Group was established as the main tenant working group, which all Tenant and Resident Associations and forums feed in to :-

- Main tenant consultation group;
- Chair of the working group must be a tenant and the group includes a Vice Chair and Secretary;
- Group meets approximately eight times per year;
- Working Group approves project funding for other tenant groups.

#### **7.14 Sheltered Housing Forum**

7.15 The Sheltered Housing Forum meetings are held 6 times a year. There are 5 Sheltered Schemes in the Vale of Glamorgan i.e. Llantwit Major, Cowbridge, Barry, Dinas Powys and Penarth. Each scheme is visited at least once a year giving local residents an opportunity to attend at least 1 meeting a year. Transport is also provided for those residents who wish to attend meetings in other schemes, outside of their area.

7.16 Officers of the Council are invited to attend Sheltered Housing Forum meetings where issues of concern are discussed with residents e.g. scooter storage, disabled toilets, potholes, pathways, the TeleV call system, street lighting and replacement furniture in lounge areas to name but a few.

7.17 Consultation has taken place with residents living in Redlands House and Longmeadow Court, Cowbridge, where major internal work has been carried out. The Council have been were also successful in securing receiving ICF grant funding support to build 2 Step-Up properties during 2017 at a Sheltered Housing Scheme in Longmeadow Court. Meetings have been held with the residents to ensure they are clear on development to their block.

7.18 An Annual Sheltered Housing event is organised for residents to thank them for their continued support and assistance in their Forum meetings. In 2016 a luncheon with entertainment proved very successful with residents attending from all sheltered housing schemes.

## **8 Keystone Housing Asset Management System**

8.1 The Asset Database, 'Keystone', is the key planning tool for the management and investment planning of the Council's housing stock. The Keystone system is likely to be unsupported within the next five years and a suitable alternative system will need to be identified to replace the existing asset database system and maintain the stock information held. A considerable amount of information was collated and uploaded into this stock database during the major WHQS investment programme. This information included actual attribute renewal dates as well as kitchen and bathroom layout drawings, asbestos surveys, periodic inspections, gas certificates etc. To ensure the data held on Keystone remains as accurate as possible stock condition surveys are essential. To ensure this is achieved, Housing and Building Services will be undertaking a rolling programme of stock condition surveys, this ongoing forward

programme will include 20% of the Council's housing stock being surveyed on an ongoing 5 year programme.

- 8.2 To facilitate this data collection the service can either appoint external contractors or directly deliver this work. When considering external contractors for this service there is no opportunity to change the scope of the survey without the risk of procurement challenge and/or increased cost. It is therefore proposed to deliver this service in-house, which would require a resource able to deliver surveys which are bespoke to the current needs of the service. In house delivery also improves the communication process between the surveying and project design functions, which helps project design. These stock surveyors will also be trained to produce Energy Performance Certificate's (EPC's) for management and monitoring of fuel efficiency.

**Action**

Maintain and improve Asset Management information

- Revise Building Services structure to include stock condition surveyors
- Investigate and procure energy efficiency software options and train Stock condition surveyors in the production of EPC's.

- 8.3 Delivery of the major investment programme for WHQS has provided a wealth of data on each individual property owned and managed by Housing and Building Services. The data held in this asset database is now more accurate than at any time in this systems history. As work has been completed at each property, it has been possible to collect the following list of each attribute:
- Landlord Gas Safety Record (CP12)
  - Electric Periodic inspection reports
  - Asbestos Survey
  - Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)
  - Photographic records of the property and components
  - Kitchen and bathroom layouts
- 8.4 Stock Condition survey of voids entered in to housing asset management database to provide better knowledge of our assets to properly manage them.
- 8.5 The Keystone system was implemented in June 2011 to provide better knowledge of the housing stock and more effective housing asset management. The system currently provides:-
- Business /Investment planning.
  - WHQS returns.
  - Electronic Health and Safety File
  - Accessible Home Register.
  - Energy information
- 8.6 The system is instrumental in the council managing its homes effectively. Great strides have been made over the last year in improving data entry so improvement work is captured on the system and the Housing Business Plan is now a robust document based on information produced from the system.

- 8.7 The system has further functionality that the Council is keen to capture and Housing and Building services will be committed to further improvements in smarter working in the future.
- 8.8 The stock condition data on the system is updated when planned works such as new bathrooms or kitchens are installed and the necessary Health and Safety File associated with the work is installed on the system at the same time. The current method of managing our contractors/ updating the system does not use mobile/ smart working and will form part of the investigation of the planned works module.

**Action**

Investigate the benefits of purchasing the planned maintenance module

- 8.9 Further investigation will be made of the practicality of implementing:-
- Contractor planned management module –which manages planned repair contractors
  - What if” scenario planning – financial modelling of potential improvement programmes

## 9 Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) & Improving Homes

### 9.1 Maintaining the WHQS and Capital Programme

9.2 On the 31st March 2018, the Council achieved WHQS for all its dwellings. The Council has now entered the maintenance phase of the WHQS programme.

9.3 The business plan incorporates the most recent investment requirements as identified by our Housing Asset Management System (Keystone) which includes historic stock condition survey data from Savills and our own survey team in their Stock Condition Survey (SCS). Prior to delivery all works will be validated to ensure they are required as identified from the Keystone reports and will be scoped to ensure they capture all necessary elements. Where the validation survey identifies the works can be delayed, this will be considered to enable smoothing of the investment programme and ensure money is effectively targeted to meet the maintenance needs of the housing stock.

9.4 Preliminary costs are included in the projected investment calculations and professional fees of 8% have been added. Further capital costs have been included for Preliminary works including items required to deliver any particular contract, such as management costs, security, site set up costs, insurances, quality control, and temporary works if applicable.

### 9.5 Maintaining the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)

9.6 At 31st March 2018, the Council attained the WHQS to all its housing stock and from this date has entered the maintenance phase of this standard. With many of the attributes contained within the standard having time limitations on them, it is recognised the Council's investment programme will have to continue to invest in WHQS works to ensure the standard is maintained. The following chart provides a summary of the number of kitchens, bathroom and boilers etc. which have been delivered over the 5/6 year period leading to the completion of the WHQS refurbishment programme:-

Element	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Total
Kitchens	315	1,474	1,152	343	69	59	3,412
Bathrooms	266	1,387	1,023	306	93	86	3,161
Heating/ Boilers	268	207	292	115	52	42	976
Rewiring	317	1,616	1,181	352	76	77	3,619
Roofs	151	18	12	377	307	511	1,376
External Wall Ins'.	0	0	14	190	198	153	555
Pointing, Painting & Rendering	0	1	14	336	433	496	1280



9.7 The Council has closely monitored and apportioned/recorded the costs for undertaking the works to ensure that the actual costs incurred are within budget and that a robust contingency sum is in place to deliver the Housing Improvement Programme. The following chart provides the main component budget costs and anticipated lifetimes as extracted from the original stock condition report:-

Component	Budget (£)	Component Lifespan (years)
Kitchens	4,162	15
Bathrooms	2,585	25
Heating Boilers	3,210	12
Heating (Distribution)	Included Above	30
Rewiring	2,480	25
Roof Covering (synthetic slate)	10,800	35

9.8 There are a number of major external schemes ongoing during 2017/18 or programmed to be completed during the next financial year, these include:-

- The Internal communal areas are scheduled for improvement work and decorations to the stairwells. The scheme commenced June 2017 and is programmed to be completed April 2019.
- Hawksley Bungalows, Barry (prefabricated properties) – the Council has 17 Hawksley bungalows which need to be replaced in a brick finish to match other bungalows in the area and give the properties a solid appearance. The Council has completed 14 properties to date and the remaining 3 properties will be completed by December 2018.
- Buttrills Estate Environmental Refurbishment Project A major refurbishment of the Buttrills Estate has commenced including new roof covering, replacement of cavity wall ties, new windows and doors to Awbrey House and installation of External Wall Insulation to 128 properties including flats, houses and bungalows. The project is being run over 4 phases including Phase 1(New roof covering) Phase 2(External Wall Insulation) Phase 3 (Internal communal upgrades) and Phase 4 External communal upgrades). The project commenced July 2017 and is programmed for completion December 2018.
- Gibbonsdown External Refurbishment Project – A major refurbishment project is being procured to undertake roofing works, cavity wall tie replacement and the installation of External Wall insulation. The project commenced in August 2018 and is programmed to complete by January 2019.
- Garage Compounds – Work has commenced on a programme of works to undertake demolition and improvement of a number of garage compounds where the existing garages have come to the end of their economic life and will continue to be delivered through 2018/19.
- WHQS Compliance Programme – Data collection and evaluation of existing housing stock data has begun with the aim of developing a programme of works to fully support the continued requirement to meet the WHQS standards. This will involve the commencement of a number of major refurbishment projects covering all aspects of stock upgrade and maintenance.

- Remodelling of Assets – A number of remodelling projects will be taking place to a select number of properties to bring up to required standards whilst taking the opportunity to incorporate local demand needs etc.
  - Airey properties – There will be 4 Aireys (type 1) properties that will be designed and refurbished to current standards. This will be delivered during 2018/19.
- 9.9 Funding has been identified in the plan for the next five years and work on garage sites and a garage strategy will be developed to complement the Environmental Strategy.
- 9.10 Some garages have come to the end of their economic life and the strategy and plan will identify a way forward for sites which in some cases will mean the sites will be cleared and the highway re-instated to provide a better solution for local communities.
- 9.11 The Housing Service also has responsibility for housing owned highways and footways and the Highways team have been commissioned to undertake condition surveys and “what if scenario plans/ report” to enable a sensible way forward to be determined.
- 9.12 In the past, planned repairs have not been systematically undertaken to these associated assets and five years of funding have been identified to determine and deliver a future programme.
- 9.13 Environmental and Estate Improvements have been secured in the plan at £8.4m over the next three years. The Housing Services two Community investment officers will deliver the Environmental Strategy and Action Plan working in consultation with local communities. The Environmental Improvement Programme scope has been increased with the additional funding for garages and highway improvements.
- 9.14 Fuel Poverty is a major problem for our customers and with key internal improvements installed energy improvement measures will be considered as part of the external Programme. External wall insulation will be installed where necessary and the Council is considering options for external funding to deliver further improvements.
- 9.15 Significant problems with many of our older homes present a major challenge to the Housing Improvement Team. The seaside location of many of our homes has resulted in concrete and render which has deteriorated/ failed leaving significant structural problems that will need to be remedied. Some housing has experienced cavity wall tie failure which will need to be repaired.
- 9.16 Damp is a problem for too many of our customers and we have identified on occasion that previous improvements, such as cavity fill insulation, has led to the moisture/ damp bridging of the cavity. In these cases the cavities have to be cleared to allow the cavity and walls to dry and to prevent further damage to the structure and tenants belongings.
- 9.17 Where these problems are encountered or where roofing / external wall fails the dwelling will be added to the work programme. A further area of work which historically has been under resourced is external painting which forms part of cyclical maintenance. Funding has been secured in the plan for external painting of our homes and painting of communal areas of blocks of flats. This will be phased in to complement existing programmes and to make use of existing scaffolding

access and undertaking decoration in block communal areas following improvement work.

9.18 The proposed investment programme is set out below:

DRAFT

## 9.19 HRA Business Plan, Major Repairs & Improvements

Vale of Glamorgan Council

HRA Business Plan

Major Repairs and Improvements Financing

(expressed in money terms)

Year	Expenditure					Financing			
	WHQS Imp & Maint £,000	Regen & Remodelling £,000	Acquired Properties £,000	New Build Development Costs £,000	Total Expenditure £,000	Borrowing £,000	MRA £,000	RCCO £,000	Total Financing £,000
2018/19	12,186	2,378	300	5,266	20,129	12,766	2,779	4,585	20,129
2019/20	7,408	2,657	306	5,316	15,687	7,756	2,779	5,152	15,687
2020/21	5,983	3,334	416	4,516	14,249	5,930	2,779	5,541	14,249
2021/22	5,950	1,151	531	4,166	11,798	2,862	2,779	6,157	11,798
2022/23	5,329	1,116	649	3,527	10,621	1,096	2,779	6,746	10,621
2023/24	5,978	1,014	773	3,598	11,362	1,182	2,779	7,400	11,362
2024/25	6,097	1,034	901	3,669	11,702	838	2,779	8,085	11,702
2025/26	6,219	1,675	1,034	5,890	14,818	3,240	2,779	8,798	14,818
2026/27	6,344	1,708	1,172	6,008	15,231	2,963	2,779	9,489	15,231
2027/28	6,471	1,742	1,195	6,128	15,536	2,519	2,779	10,238	15,536
2028/29	5,764	1,027	1,219	6,250	14,260	404	2,779	11,077	14,260
2029/30	5,879	1,047	1,243	6,375	14,545	0	2,779	11,766	14,545
2030/31	5,997	1,068	1,268	6,503	14,836	4,187	2,779	7,871	14,836
2031/32	6,117	1,090	1,294	6,633	15,133	0	2,779	12,354	15,133
2032/33	6,239	1,112	1,319	6,766	15,436	6,590	2,779	6,067	15,436
2033/34	9,308	1,017	1,346	6,901	18,572	0	2,779	15,793	18,572
2034/35	9,494	1,038	1,373	7,039	18,944	6,701	2,779	9,464	18,944
2035/36	9,684	1,059	1,400	7,180	19,323	0	2,779	16,544	19,323
2036/37	9,878	1,080	1,428	7,323	19,709	4,840	2,779	12,090	19,709
2037/38	10,075	1,101	1,457	7,470	20,103	0	2,779	17,324	20,103
2038/39	13,356	1,123	1,486	7,619	23,584	5,781	2,779	15,024	23,584
2039/40	13,623	1,146	1,516	7,772	24,056	0	2,779	21,277	24,056
2040/41	13,895	1,169	1,546	7,927	24,537	3,736	2,779	18,021	24,537
2041/42	14,173	1,192	1,577	8,086	25,028	0	2,779	22,249	25,028
2042/43	14,456	1,216	1,608	8,247	25,528	1,244	2,779	21,505	25,528
2043/44	9,447	1,240	1,641	8,412	20,741	0	2,779	17,962	20,741
2044/45	9,636	1,265	1,673	8,581	21,155	0	2,779	18,376	21,155
2045/46	9,829	1,290	1,707	8,752	21,579	0	2,779	18,800	21,579
2046/47	10,026	1,316	1,741	8,927	22,010	0	2,779	19,231	22,010
2047/48	10,226	1,343	1,776	9,106	22,450	0	2,779	19,671	22,450
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>265,067</b>	<b>40,749</b>	<b>36,895</b>	<b>199,953</b>	<b>542,663</b>	<b>74,637</b>	<b>83,370</b>	<b>384,656</b>	<b>542,663</b>

## 9.20 Validation Surveys

9.21 The Council has invested significant resources in establishing an asset management database populated with approximately 95% of the housing stock condition surveys and this knowledge of the housing stock has been used to shape the Housing Improvement Programme. and the future annual life time renewal programmes to ensure our stock remains WHQS compliant

9.22 The Keystone system was set up and implemented in June 2011 to provide a much better knowledge of the housing stock and more effective housing asset management. The system can provide:-

- Investment planning.
- WHQS returns.
- “What if” scenario planning.
- Asbestos register.
- Contractor & planned programme management.
- Energy management.
- Accessible Home Register.
- Servicing information.

9.23 The system is instrumental in the Council managing its homes effectively and great strides are continuing to be made over the last year in improving data entry so improvement work is captured on the system and the Business Plan is now produced using the system.

9.24 The following improvements have been made over recent years to improve the functionality of Keystone and ensure robust data is being produced by the system to assist in management of cyclical and investment programmes:

- Servicing information has been vastly improved with Gas, Electrical, Solid Fuel, Oil and Adaptations Equipment servicing being run through Keystone. Other compliance servicing data, such as Lift Servicing, is now also recorded and held within Keystone.
- Adaptations completed works are now recorded on Keystone allowing us to accurately monitor adapted stock.
- WHQS Compliance Reporting – further work has been undertaken to improve the accuracy and validity of data, allowing us to report directly from Keystone.
- Energy efficiency & SAP scores – all property energy records have been through a process of assessment and analysis to ensure correct data is held and energy assessments have been recalculated to show accurate SAP scores.
- Going forward, our aim is to ensure that everyone in Housing and Building Services uses Keystone to its maximum potential.
- The system has functionality the Council is keen to capture and Housing and Building Services are committed to further improvements in smarter working in the future e.g. introduction of the compliance dashboard & contractor access portal and the provision for officers to use tablets

#### 9.25 Minimising & Recording “Acceptable Fails”

9.26 The Council recognises the need to monitor compliance with WHQS and has produced a policy on the interpretation and application of the WHQS by the Council, which includes; how ‘Acceptable Fails’ will be addressed by the Council, the resources available for maintaining the WHQS standard, how the data is managed and recorded and the validation process to ensure the data is reliable and robust. Acceptable fails can be one or more of the following:-

- Cost of remedy.
- Timing of remedy.
- Residents’ choice.
- Physical constraint.

- 9.27 All “Acceptable Fails”, are recorded on the Council’s Keystone Asset Management System and are addressed, where practicable, at the void stage before new tenants commence their tenancy.
- 9.28 All programmed works will receive a validation survey to ensure the works are required as identified through the Keystone investment reports before any further work is undertaken. Should the attribute be found to have further remaining life, officers of the Council will discuss the option to continue with the project or to amend the stock database with a new life expiry date. This will enable the Council to control its Investment programme giving opportunity to react to new emerging investment need or premature failure of attributes in other areas.
- 9.29 On completion of the validation survey the work will be fully surveyed and scoped to ensure all works are included to maximise the investment opportunity. For example, this may mean chimneys are removed or replaced during replacement roofing works to reduce ongoing maintenance and enable maximum benefit to be obtained from the erection of a scaffold which will reduce the need to erect another scaffold later. This approach will accelerate some areas of investment but will provide expenditure efficiencies over the life of this plan.

### 9.30 Environmental Improvements

- 9.31 The Council wants its estates to be safe and attractive places where people are proud to live and have the following vision:-  
“All residents in the Vale of Glamorgan have access to good quality, suitable housing and are able to live happily and independently in vibrant, sustainable communities.”
- 9.32 Recognition of the need for additional resources has resulted in two Community investment Officers’ posts within the Housing Service and the preparation of an Environment & Neighbourhood Strategy and Action Plan.
- 9.33 This Strategy sets out our approach to foster cohesive, attractive and thriving neighbourhoods where people want to live. One size doesn’t fit all; every community is different, so our approach will reflect this via unique estate action plans.
- 9.34 The quality of the immediate environment has a big impact on quality of life and well-being for local residents. This includes the physical environment, cleanliness of our streets, green spaces and communal areas. For this reason the Council commits to investing in the local environment of our estates; under certain conditions this may include the redesign or reconfiguration of estates, improvements to communal areas or making better use of open spaces.
- 9.35 As well as the physical environment, the social infrastructure is very important- this is the sense of community, feeling safe and the ability to access services and amenities. The investment priorities in the Environmental & Neighbourhoods Strategy are closely aligned to the Community Investment Strategy to ensure the maximum benefits are achieved within available resources for our most challenging areas.
- 9.36 Research has shown the impact of the physical environment on residents’ quality of life. The Welsh Government’s Vibrant and Viable Places Strategy; highlights the benefits which are achieved by investing in people and places by creating well

connected, vibrant, viable and sustainable communities. This Strategy plays a pivotal role in the regeneration and improvement of areas to address individual issues within the local environment and neighbourhoods.

- 9.37 The Council's Corporate Plan 2016-2020 identifies the high priority given to the environment in two of its key Well-being outcomes, namely: 'an inclusive and safe Vale' and secondly, 'an environmentally responsible and prosperous Vale'. There are also a number of key objectives which support the well-being outcomes, including: reducing poverty and social exclusion, providing decent homes and safe communities, promoting regeneration, economic growth and employment, promoting sustainable development and protecting our environment.
- 9.38 The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) sets out the minimum standards for social landlords in Wales regarding the environment. The guidance provides; "All dwellings should be located in an environment to which residents can relate and in which they can be proud to live"
- 9.39 As part of the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Strategy for improvement to social housing standards, the Council has set down its own vision based on WHQS:
- "Safe, clean and attractive places where individuals and communities have sustainable opportunities to improve their health, learning and skills, prosperity and well-being; and
  - Where there is a strong sense of community in which local groups and individuals have the capacity and incentive to make an effective contribution to the future sustainability of the area"
- 9.40 Landlords have adopted different approaches; some have regarded the environment as a priority and set aside large sums of money for investment, whilst others have focussed more on the internal improvements to tenant's homes giving less regard to the local environment.
- 9.41 This strategy recognises the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Cymru Guidance on "Interpretation of the WHQS Environmental Standard" as good practice when considering Environmental improvements.
- 9.42 The Housing Business Plan sets out the Council's significant commitment to funding improvements in the Environment.
- Over £8.4million is set aside for Environmental and Estate Improvement works over the next three years;
  - Revenue commitments have been made to fund two Community Investment and Involvement Officers;
  - Participatory budgets of £10,000 pa for smaller, resident led schemes in each of the 4 neighbourhood management areas (total of £40,000) plus an additional £20,000 allocated to the 2 Senior Neighbourhood Managers to fund additional improvement projects.
  - An allowance of £50,000 per annum of the plan to improve the safety of estates through community safety initiatives such as fencing, street lighting or landscaping. The fund will pay for individual projects up to £5,000 where resident

groups through tenant panels will bid annually for funding. Again, this will be progressed via the Environmental Improvement working group.

- Allocated funds to the sum of £20,000 per annum which are provided through the revenue account to tackle small scale projects that benefit the community. Each group can submit a bid of up to £2,000 (unless match funding can be achieved) in any one year. The bids are assessed and approved by the Tenants Panel and are small scale one off projects which bring value to the local environment.

9.43 It is the intention to continue with this funding for a number of years in order to build the capacity of local communities and increase empowerment to take the lead in their own areas.

**Action**

Work with local communities to build capacity and increase empowerment.

## 10 Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty

- 10.1 Energy efficiency and Fuel poverty are intrinsically linked and the Council is proactively seeking to achieve the best fuel efficiency achievable from its current housing stock to ensure tenants have manageable fuel bills and are not exposed to fuel poverty. With the current SAP rating averaging 71, further achievements of energy efficiency are achievable but more difficult and will require a change in thinking to adopt low carbon fuel systems which are affordable.
- 10.2 Both Wales and UK Governments are seeking to adopt a zero carbon footprint for housing over the next 30 years and this will bring about a number of challenges for the Council to achieve this aspiration. First the Housing Business plan needs sufficient resource to fund any investment in zero carbon technology. Secondly the construction sector needs to skill a workforce to understand the new technologies; too many historic developments have failed because of poor or inadequate expertise and understanding in the installation and performance. Finally, such technology needs to be understood by the occupant to ensure maximum benefit and this will result in a training programme for residents in some instances.
- 10.3 The Council will constantly review the energy efficiency of its housing stock to ensure it is at the best level of energy efficiency, the timing of any improvement will need careful consideration to ensure wise investment in the appropriate technology to deliver future carbon reductions. There are a range of solutions currently available which include solar thermal and solar PV. However, this is dependent upon orientation of the property to obtain maximum solar gain. Other solutions also currently exist including heat pumps.
- 10.4 All investment programme works and large scale repairs will consider the energy efficiency measures which may be included as part of the works. For example where it is necessary to replace a concrete floor, insulation will be integrated into the design. All refurbishment projects will be assessed for energy efficiency to ensure the best possible solution is provided whilst maintaining value for money. This is to consider



the rules of diminishing returns on the investment (e.g. doubling roof insulation does not necessarily halve the heat loss).

10.5 When improving energy efficiency within the housing stock the following priorities will be applied:

- a) Roof insulation
- b) Wall insulation (Cavity wall, External Wall insulation, Internal Wall Insulation)
- c) Windows and doors
- d) Air tightness
- e) Low Carbon Heating
- f) Communal Area LED lighting
- g) Low volume showers
- h) Low volume taps.
- i) Solar technology
- j) Floor insulation

10.6 With any investment in insulating a property, consideration must also be given to air supply into the home. Super insulating a property has a tendency to reduce the air changes within a building and a review of air supply must be undertaken when installing all new insulation measures. It may be necessary in some instance to consider a multi-room heat recovery air system (MHVR).

#### Action

Model energy improvement to map investment in reducing carbon footprint and working towards zero carbon homes by 2050.

## 11 Fire Safety

11.1 The Council has invested significantly in fire safety within its housing stock, smoke and heat detectors have been installed into each home to provide early detection of a fire event. This is supported by a Housing Fire Safety Strategy which sets out the Council's approach to managing fire safety.

11.2 As works have progressed on External Wall insulation the Council has taken an approach which exceeds the current fire safety requirements for the insulation material used. Whilst the fire risk of the Housing stock is minimised because of the low rise nature of the assets, an approach has been taken to introduce vertical and horizontal fire breaks which maintain the compartmentation of the building above and beyond that required.

11.3 The Council's only 6 storey block has also been installed with a sprinkler system to provide improved fire arrest in the event of a fire and consideration is being given to rolling this feature out to sheltered Housing schemes which also present a higher risk due to the nature of the residents in occupation.

- 11.4 The opportunity was also taken during the refurbishment of Awbrey House to introduce a Smoke Ventilation system to assist resident evacuation and aid the Fire and Rescue Service to enter the building and fight the fire.
- 11.5 The Housing and Building Services Team await the outcome of the Grenfell Fire enquiry and supporting legislation which may arise, before committing additional resources to further works which address fire safety.
- 11.6 In accordance with the Fire Safety Strategy, all communal accessed buildings have a relevant Fire Risk Assessment, which is reviewed at appropriate intervals and all necessary works identified from this assessment are programmed in for delivery through the investment programme.
- 11.7 The Council has installed fire doors to kitchens in flatted blocks to provide improved fire safety and a programme of communal area fire doors and flat entrance doors is being delivered. To provide confidence that the doors and door frames will act as designed during a fire event, the Council has insisted on a FIRAS certificate being provided for each door set.

## **12 Target Hardening and Home Security**

- 12.1 Home safety is a major part of tenants feeling safe and secure in their home. All windows and doors are installed with Insurance approved locks and wherever practical a secure by design door is installed at the time of replacement or upgrade.
- 12.2 A target hardening scheme is available to Council residents to improve the security of individual homes in response to a heightened propensity to specific attack.
- 12.3 External lights have been installed to properties which have been rewired through WHQS upgrades or more recently the rewiring programme.
- 12.4 Housing and Building services have also adopted a higher specification for fencing where boundaries adjoin the public highway or parking areas. This specification has been adopted to provide higher security fencing to vulnerable gardens and garden areas.

## **13 Helping People Live Independently**

- 13.1 Being able to access all the key facilities in our homes is something that we often take for granted, but for someone who cannot do this, the affect can be devastating. Housing adaptations are vital in enabling a person to remain independently and safely in their own home and can transform a person's quality of life. Some people may need something as simple and easy to provide as a handrail. Others could need something much larger or complex like a stair lift or wet room.

13.2 The Council has continued to transform its approach to assisting people to live independently having an established, dedicated Council Housing Adaptations Team which initially ran alongside the works carried out under the WHQS works programme.

13.3 This approach has delivered over 600 (62%) specialist/ sheltered or over 55 age designated homes with wet room or step in shower facilities which better meet the needs of customers. The aim is to proactively install these necessary facilities and minimise need for expensive adaptations.

13.4 Keystone is now utilised to record the delivery and servicing of all adaptations and now report on adapted housing stock figures. As of January 2018, our adapted stock is as follows:

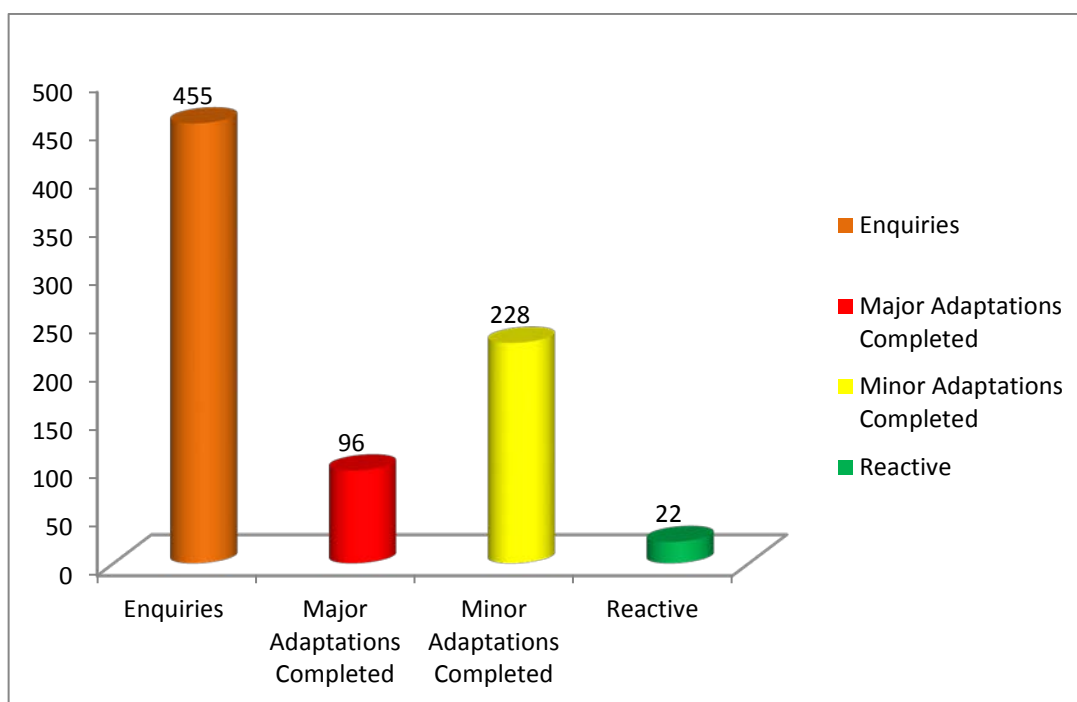
	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of Total Stock</b>
Partially Adapted	944	25%
Lifetime Homes	3	0.8%
Accessible Home (Fully Wheelchair accessible)	3	0.8%

13.5 The Council Housing Adaptations Team is now a standalone service further promoting independent living for our tenants and allowing them to stay in their own home whenever possible.

13.6 A stringent process led approach allows us to track our budget accurately throughout the financial year and forecast where spending may be high and allow us to plan in works knowing that we can meet all approved adaptations requests.

13.7 We liaise closely with both internal and external agencies, keeping the service completely tenant focused whilst managing realistic expectations and providing adaptations that meet both medical need and improve day to day life.

13.8 We aim to respond to all initial queries within 5 working days; the tenant is updated accordingly throughout the process and has resulted in us providing adaptations as detailed in the table/figures below.

**Adaptations Delivery to date (April 2017 to January 2018)****Breakdown of Adaptations Delivered (April 2017 to January 2018)**

Major Adaptations	Number Delivered
Wet Room	28
Stairlift	27
Ramp	10
Various major works	7
Hoisting	4
Bathroom Remodel	3
Pathway	3
Driveway	2
Fencing	2
Modified WC	1
Wash/Dry Toilet	1
Steps	1
Door Modification	1
Vehicle crossover	1
Provision of downstairs WC	1
Kitchen Modification	1
Room Conversion	1
Garden External Works	1
Pre-structural Survey	1
Grand Total	96

<b>Minor Adaptations</b>	<b>Number Delivered</b>
Grab Rails	58
Galvanised Rails	53
Small Concrete Works	13
Mopstick Handrails	11
Drop-down Rail	4
Shower Seat	4
VCAS pendant	4
Modular Ramp Kit	3
Bio-bidet	3
Lever Taps	3
Re-position Shower rider	2
Security Lights	2
Key safe	2
Dropped kerb	2
Self-Stopping Taps	2
Carpentry Works	4
Window Opener/Locks/Restrictors	2
Replacement WC	1
Minor Electrical Works	1
Floor to Ceiling Pole	1
Shower Rail Window Kit	1
Flexi Hose	1
Raise Sink Heights	1
Shower doors	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>228</b>

### 13.9 Average Timescales for delivery:

- Major Adaptations – 105 working days
- Minor Adaptations – 18 working days

### 13.10 Tenant Satisfaction results to date (April 2017 to January 2018)

13.11 Every tenant is contacted to review the service and delivery of their adaptation by completing a Tenant Satisfaction Survey. This approach has allowed us to gain accurate feedback from tenants, identifying where the service is performing well and where improvements can be made.

	<b>Average for Cleanliness</b>	<b>Average for Communication</b>	<b>Average for Process</b>	<b>Average for Quality</b>	<b>Average for Service</b>
Major Adaptations	9.85	9.40	9.51	9.75	9.79
Minor Adaptations	9.88	9.74	9.68	9.82	9.80
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>9.86</b>	<b>9.57</b>	<b>9.60</b>	<b>9.78</b>	<b>9.79</b>

13.12 In 2018/19 we will continue to face challenges in the delivery of disabled adaptations as a result of the introduction of “ENABLE – Support for Independent Living”, which is an enhanced system for delivering adaptations being introduced by the Welsh Government.

13.13 The enhanced system is underpinned by key principles to simplify and speed up the process for getting an adaptation, with an emphasis on the individual who needs help and their family. It has been designed to provide help for more people and who delivers the adaptation or who pays for it is secondary to ensuring people get the help when they need it.

13.14 Clarification is to be received from the Welsh Assembly Government regarding target timescales for delivery of adaptations. However, all providers are currently being monitored on their delivery and customer experiences. This will be used to evaluate the system and will inform any further developments.

#### **Action**

Monitor customer experience for those in receipt of adaptation works and undertake improvements to improve service.

## **14 Development programme**

14.1 The local housing needs market assessment calls for 576 homes per year to assist with the housing crisis in Wales. In addition, Welsh Government has set an ambitious target of providing 20,000 additional affordable homes by 2020.

14.2 Following the changes to the subsidy system during 2015, the Council is now in a position to commence a development programme to provide new Council housing. Whilst the development programme is modest, the Council are aiming invest £236m over the life of this plan to provide 1,146 homes. For the first five years of the plan the new homes will be built on land already owned by the Council, however, there is recognition the Council will need to acquire additional land to enable the development programme to deliver this number of properties.

14.3 During the first years of the development programme, the Council is developing property to provide homes for those on the accessible homes register who would otherwise find it difficult to secure suitable adapted accommodation. Additionally, the Council is concentrating on smaller sites where the RSL partners have shown little interest.

14.4 The first homes under this development programme were completed in September 2017. This first site has three bungalows, which are specifically adapted to meet the disabilities of the families identified for first occupation. A second site being developed provides 11 units of accommodation and with a range of general needs housing and specifically adapted bungalows. A second site of 28 units continues to adopt this philosophy and will also include an apartment blocks for elderly persons.

#### 14.5 Funding

14.6 Currently the HRA Business Plan identifies £3 million pounds per annum, rising to 3.5million until 2024, when it rises to 5million. To date, the schemes to be developed, have been developed without grant, and any deficits have been absorbed into the business plan.

14.7 In order for the Council to have a more commercial view on the viability of schemes, then the schemes need to be assessed on both an individual basis and also overall within the business plan so that the schemes are accurately presented to cabinet.

14.8 The present position provides some capital subsidy from Welsh Government during 2018. This is called Housing Finance Grant 2 (HFG2) and is an overall capital subsidy over 30 years. This has the effect basically of paying interest only on loans with the capital being paid back closer to the term of 30 years. This currently is the only avenue of funding available to local authorities, though it is hoped that there will be further funding available in due course. However, this will not be available in the interim so this further limits the Council's position.

14.9 Build costs typically have risen over the past few years and the average build rate per metre<sup>2</sup> is now around £1,600. There is further difficulty with the majority of contractors now seeking to develop larger schemes and there is a shortage of good quality small contractors with suitable resource to fund the smaller schemes. This has been illustrated through the Councils first few projects where interest was limited and some contractors failing the financial viability test.

14.10 Looking at typical build costs with fees, per unit, then currently, that investment will equate to around 20 to 25 units per year, which is relatively small. With the increase in HRA funding to £5 million, the number of units built is likely to be in the region of 35 to 40 per annum. However, the Council will need to devote some resource to land acquisition to continue its development programme and this will have to be taken from the financial resources available within the build programme. Welsh Government have indicated the Vale of Glamorgan's development proposals are the fourth largest within the group of stock retained authorities based on the number of units to be achieved over the life of the HRA business plan and are ranked third when based on a percentage of new-build against housing current stock.

14.11 Currently, the Council development programme is operating within the borrowing cap restrictions. However, Welsh Government are currently consulting on changes to the borrowing cap to assist Councils with aspiration to build to access the capital funding necessary to increase productivity. The Council's development team is resourced to meet current levels of productivity and should additional funding become available it increase staffing levels to embrace the challenge.

14.12 The Council's Private Sector Housing Team is responsible for managing the grant funding available to the Council. Currently the Social Housing Grant is available to Registered Social Landlords only, notwithstanding Welsh Governments support through HFG2. However, there are Section 106 monies which are available and such finances are being utilised to support the Council's Development programme through fair and equal distribution of this funding between RSL's and the Councils Development team.

14.13 Where development sites prove to be uneconomical as outright social housing, the Council will consider

#### 14.14 Land Availability

14.15 The availability of land owned by the Council's Housing Service is limited and there will be insufficient land to support the full 30 year development programme without further land acquisition. The Council will therefore have to consider the purchase of suitable development sites either through private purchase, acquisition of land surplus to Welsh Government, or internal asset transfer. Additionally, the Council is exploring the opportunity to work with private sector builders who are able to bring development sites to the Council for Social Housing.

14.16 Currently, the Development team have identified the following sites for future development:

- Brecon Court, Barry
- Hayes Road, Barry
- Maes y Ffynon, Bonvilston
- Holm View, Barry

## 15 Maintaining the Asset

15.1 Maintenance of the Council's Housing stock and other Assets are a key element of the asset maintenance service. The Council has its own in-house provider for responsive repairs, voids and major work. There are programmes of work which will be beyond the in-house team's ability and capacity which will be packaged for external contractors in accordance with the Council's financial regulations. Other elements of ongoing maintenance utilise other Council services for delivery including, highway and footpath repairs, grounds maintenance, arboriculture work and street lighting.

15.2 The Council has a dedicated compliance team to manage cyclical servicing programmes of the Housing stock including:

- Gas servicing,
- Lift Maintenance
- Legionella management
- Periodic electrical inspection (5 year cycle),
- Door entry systems
- Fire detection systems
- Lift maintenance, including stair lifts.



- 15.3 Responsive Maintenance is focused on reducing demand while preventing unplanned deterioration in properties and ensuring that residents remain satisfied with their homes.
- 15.4 Where responsive maintenance identifies larger works which require significant labour resource or planning, these works are passed to the Capital projects team to design, plan and procure the works. This process ensures best use is made of capital and revenue resources and prevents large numbers of the repairs workforce being unable to react to true responsive repair demand.
- 15.5 During 2017 consultants were engaged to review the value for money being offered through the in-house provider. This review found the costs associated with the service provision are comparable with the current market and do not present any indication the service is expensive. It also identifies an increase in productivity by the workforce. However, the report has identified high overhead charges associated with the Council's operation which will need to be addressed.
- 15.6 Housing and Building services are also members of two key benchmarking groups; APSE and Housemark. This benchmarking information is used to regularly check the services performance and cost information. Overall the in-house provider is performing well with many of the in-house provider's performance outputs being in the top or second quartiles. Although this information demonstrates good performance it is not the main driver and the Council endeavours to retain focus on good services, with the tenants at the heart of the service. Therefore, whilst benchmarking information is useful to demonstrate the Council's performance, it is tempered to ensure the services delivered are those which meet tenant's needs.
- 15.7 Responsive Repairs Service**
- 15.8 Last year the Council completed 13,315 repair jobs at an average cost of £95 per repair. The Council has witnessed a steady reduction in the number of repair requests and there has been a similar reduction in the cost of the repair. This is attributed to an improvement in the housing stock resulting from the WHQS major investment programme. It is now anticipated repair request will not drop further and will potentially increase as tenants now have a home of which they can be proud.
- 15.9 The responsive repair timescales awarded for completion of a repair have remained unchanged for at least ten years and current performance is demonstrating such timescales are significantly outdated. The repair timescales will therefore be revised to represent the improvements made in the service as follows:

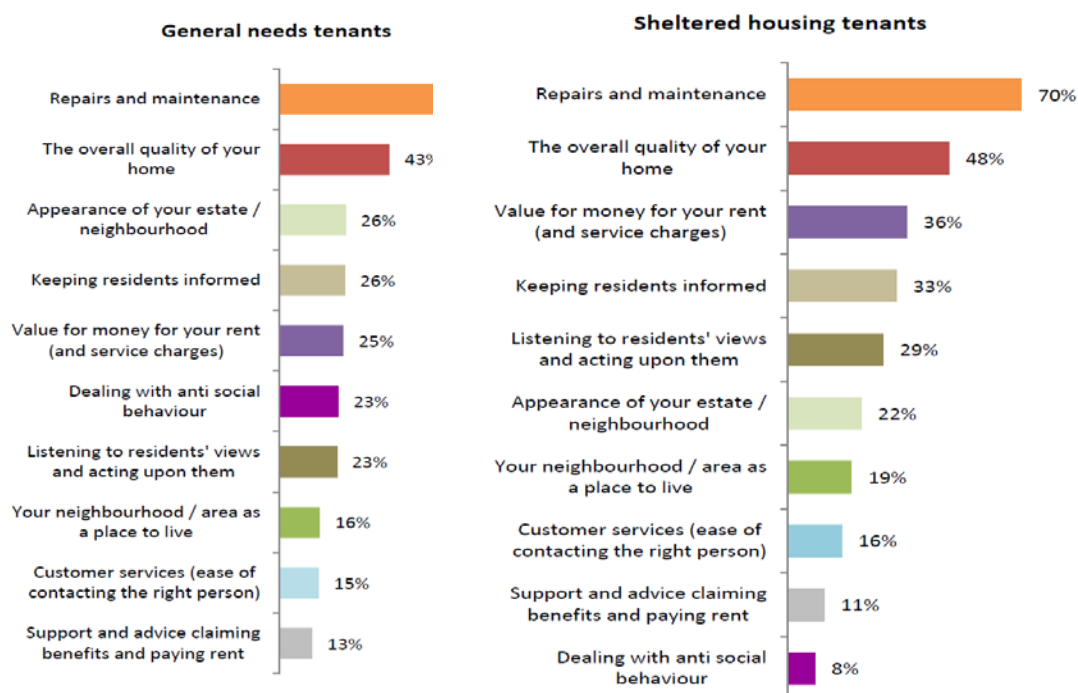
	<b>Emergency</b>	<b>Urgent</b>	<b>Routine</b>	<b>Planned</b>
Current values	Same day	5 Days	42 Days	
New Values	Same day	5 Days	21 Days	6 Months

#### **Action**

Revise responsive repair response times to improve service performance

- 15.10 Customer satisfaction surveys are routinely conducted following a repair and high levels of satisfaction are being reported, generally above 90%.

15.11 A STAR survey completed during 2016 illustrates the repairs service is the key priority for Council tenants within the Vale of Glamorgan. The chart below Taken from the survey results illustrates this.



15.12 Overall satisfaction with the repairs service was reported to be 76% through the STAR survey. Whilst this provides an area for improvement, the results demonstrate the main area for dissatisfaction is due to the time taken before the work commences. Therefore, the proposal to improve the repair timescales should have a positive impact on the overall repair satisfaction rates.

### 15.13 Voids and Allocations

15.14 The Void Service is provided through the in-house provider and sub-contractors are used where necessary to ensure the service maintains a high performing key-to-key time. Significant improvements have been made in recent years with average turnaround times improving from approximately 40 days during 2014/15 to 19 days during 2017/18. This has been achieved through improved performance management and better information flows between the relevant teams.

15.15 The average spend per void property is currently around £3,300. This figure includes additional decorating and cleaning standards which were introduced during 2016. Whilst this is above the benchmarked average, the additional costs are attributed to the higher standard of property being offered by the Vale of Glamorgan Council through the additional decoration.

15.16 Void expenditure has dropped over recent years as the quality of home has improved through the WHQS major investment programme.

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## Action Plan

<p><b>Action</b></p> <p>Consider the provision of housing solutions in the borough to address the changing needs/growth in the numbers of older people through its development programme by:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linking new housing developments to care/support solutions for adults with care needs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the future housing needs/models required for older people and adults with care needs. Including lifetime homes standard for older people within developments and assessing the potential for a number of extra care housing schemes for adults with care needs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Including lifetime homes standard for older people within developments and assessing the potential for a number of extra care housing schemes for adults with care needs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action</b></p> <p>Maintain and improve Asset Management information</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise Building Services structure to include stock condition surveyors</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate and procure energy efficiency software options and train Stock condition surveyors in the production of EPC's.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action</b></p> <p>Work with local communities to build capacity and increase empowerment.</p>
<p><b>Action</b></p> <p>Model energy improvement to map investment in reducing carbon footprint and working towards zero carbon homes by 2050.</p>
<p><b>Action</b></p> <p>Monitor customer experience for those in receipt of adaptation works and undertake to improve service.</p>

<b>Action</b>
Revise responsive repair response times to improve service performance.

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