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Welsh Housing Quality Standard follow-up report – **Caerphilly County Borough Council**

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This document is also available in Welsh.

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Summary report

Summary

Why the Welsh Housing Quality Standard is important

- 1 In 2001, the Welsh Government set out their long-term vision for housing in Wales entitled Better Homes for People in Wales. The Welsh Government then introduced the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) in 2002, with revised guidance issued in 2008 to implement this vision. The Welsh Government developed the WHQS to provide a common target standard for all housing in Wales and is primarily used to assess the social housing provided by councils (consistent with the term used in the rest of the report) and housing associations (social landlords). The Welsh Government expected all social landlords in Wales to adopt the standard and devise realistic programmes for bringing all their homes up to it as soon as possible, but by the end of 2020 at the latest, and to maintain standards into the future.
- 2 As at March 2018, Caerphilly County Borough Council (the Council) owned 10,801 properties. In August 2018, the Council reported that 3,501 properties met the standard to 'full compliance' having had certain improvement works undertaken, with a further 794 properties meeting the standard as 'acceptable fails' as defined by the Welsh Government in its guidance on compliance. 6,506 were not fully compliant as at 31 March 2018¹.

What we looked at

- 3 Between May and October 2018, we carried out a review of the Council's progress in addressing the three statutory recommendations in our Welsh Housing Quality Standard report issued to the Council in June 2017.
- 4 Our 2017 statutory recommendations were:

¹ Welsh Government Statistical Release. Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS), as at 31 March 2018. 'This annual release presents information from the annual data collection measuring the progress made by social landlords in achieving the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) for their stock. The release covers compliance with the standard as at 31 March 2018 and information on compliance with the WHQS by individual component type. Full compliance refers to dwellings where the WHQS standard is achieved for all individual elements, but there can be situations where achieving the standard for an individual element is not possible. Such situations may include the cost or timing of the work, residents choosing not to have the work done or where there are physical constraints to the work. In these instances, the social landlords may record one or more elements as acceptable fails. Where a dwelling contains one or more acceptable fails, but all other elements are compliant, the dwelling is deemed to be compliant subject to acceptable fails.'

Exhibit 1: recommendations on action to achieve the WHQS by 2020

Statutory Recommendations	
The Council should take urgent action to achieve WHQS by 2020. It should:	
R1	<p>By September 2017, develop a comprehensive, overarching, financial and operational programme setting out how the Council will achieve WHQS by 2020. This programme should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• establish the full scope of investment needed in the Council's housing stock based on accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date stock condition information;• set out how the Council, by March 2018, will:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– review its procurement arrangements to ensure value for money;– provide clear and transparent information to members and tenants about the current position of the programme and a commitment to stakeholders with accurate projected completion dates; and– secure the resources needed to deliver the programme by 2020.• contain clear and measurable milestones and relevant performance measures for delivering the programme up to 2020; and• set out the programme management, governance and accountability responsibilities and arrangements so that urgent remedial action can be taken if further slippage occurs and those tasked with delivering the programme can be held to account at appropriate decision-making levels.
R2	<p>Assure itself that it is meeting its statutory landlord responsibilities by ensuring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• all properties have a valid gas safety certificate in place, or are having the Council's non-compliance arrangements applied to them fully; and• arrangements for undertaking asbestos surveys and recording the results of these surveys are robust.
R3	<p>Ensure it has sufficient project management capacity to deliver the Council's WHQS programme effectively by 2020.</p>

How we approached the review

- 5 We undertook the follow up review work in two phases. During the first stage we reviewed the Council's WHQS progress reports to Cabinet, Policy and Resources scrutiny committee and Caerphilly Homes task group since 1 November 2017. In this first stage of the review we established the Council's own assessment of progress. The output from Phase One was fed back to senior Council officers and the relevant Cabinet Member in July 2018. The Phase One review informed the planning and delivery of Phase Two.
- 6 During the second phase, we interviewed officers, contractor representatives and members and visited some properties undergoing WHQS works. We sought to

verify the Council's progress on delivering the WHQS programme and the effect of that progress on the Council's achievement of the WHQS by the end of 2020.

- 7 As part of a separate project, we surveyed a sample of 500 tenants about their experiences of the Council's WHQS programme during April and May 2018. A report on this Service User Perspective project will be issued separately.

Overall findings

- 8 Overall, we found that: **The Council has responded positively to our June 2017 Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) report and statutory recommendations by making significant improvements and as a result we now conclude that it is likely to meet the WHQS by December 2020.** We came to this conclusion because:

- the Council has made significant progress in identifying the investment and resources it needs to complete its WHQS programme by the end of 2020;
- the Council has taken steps to determine the value for money of its procurement arrangements;
- there have been improvements to its WHQS performance reports, however there is still inconsistent and inaccurate reporting of performance;
- the Council now has measurable performance targets to effectively monitor the remainder of its WHQS programme;
- the Council has strengthened its arrangements to meet its statutory landlord responsibilities; and
- the Council has invested additional resources to enhance its WHQS programme management but still lacks a current Local Housing strategy and does not always produce comprehensive Equality Impact Assessments for key housing policy documents.

Proposals for improvement

- 9 The table below sets out the proposals for improvement that we have identified following this review.

Exhibit 2: proposals for improvement

Proposals for improvement	
P1	The Council should ensure that members and tenants receive accurate WHQS performance information regularly about its progress towards achieving its 2020 programme deadline.
P2	The Council should agree a Local Housing Strategy to set out its long-term vision for the future priorities for homes in Caerphilly.
P3	The Council should ensure that Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken consistently.

Detailed report

The Council has responded positively to our June 2017 Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) report and statutory recommendations by making significant improvements and as a result we now conclude that it is likely to meet the WHQS by December 2020

- 9 The Council has responded positively to our June 2017 WHQS report which concluded 'the majority of tenants' homes remain below the Welsh Housing Quality Standard due to long-standing inefficient and ineffective programme management and the Council is unlikely to achieve the Standard by 2020'.
- 10 **Appendix 1** contains the Council's action plan to address the three statutory recommendations made in our 2017 WHQS report. Following our presentation on the 2017 WHQS report to Cabinet on 1 November 2017, the Council set up a Cross Party working group of members of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee to consider the Council's progress in addressing our statutory recommendations. This Cross Party working group reported their satisfaction that progress was being made to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 27 February 2018.
- 11 The Council is making a number of positive changes to the planning, management, delivery and monitoring of the WHQS programme. In particular, we note that the Council:
 - a. is undertaking a full stock condition survey of all Council owned properties;
 - b. is improving WHQS project management and capacity;
 - c. has a comprehensive financial and operational programme outlining how it will achieve WHQS by the end of 2020;
 - d. has a Caerphilly Homes Asset Management Strategy which is focused on maintaining WHQS after 2020;
 - e. has a comprehensive 30-year Housing Investment Business Plan;
 - f. has made significant improvements in its arrangements to meet its statutory landlord responsibilities;
 - g. has a more comprehensive asbestos management policy;
 - h. has sought to improve its reporting of performance of its WHQS programme; and
 - i. has increased the number of WHQS fully compliant properties from 5.7% in 2016-17 to 39.76% in 2017-18.

- 12 During this review, we also note that there are other aspects of the WHQS programme and wider Council housing programme that require improvement. In particular:
- a. there remains inconsistent and inaccurate reporting of WHQS performance to members and the public despite the Council introducing a performance data validation process and WHQS strategic scorecard;
 - b. the continued lack of a Local Housing Strategy; and
 - c. a limited Equalities Impact Assessment for the Caerphilly Homes Asset Management Strategy.
- 13 The remainder of this report provides the context and detail of how the Council is addressing our statutory recommendations.

The Council has made significant progress in identifying the investment and resources it needs to complete its WHQS programme by the end of 2020

- 14 The Council has made substantial progress in developing a comprehensive financial and operational programme outlining how the Council will achieve WHQS by the end of 2020.
- 15 Since our 2017 review, the Council has embarked on surveying all Council properties that do not meet the WHQS standard. The Council now has a more accurate understanding of the individual requirements of each Council property which is improving the planning and delivery of its WHQS work. The Council intends to complete these surveys by December 2018.
- 16 Since our 2017 review the Council has established average costs of each internal and external elements required to achieve WHQS. The Council can now more accurately forecast future programme expenditure to inform its business plan.
- 17 As a result of the surveying non-WHQS compliant properties, the Council is now predicting an increase in the overall projected costs to deliver WHQS by the end of 2020 from £220 million to £250 million. The Council will need Housing Revenue Account (HRA) contributions and an element of 'borrowing' to fund the difference, however, the amount needed is within the Council's agreed borrowing threshold set up at the start of the WHQS programme.
- 18 The Council's IT asset management system – called Keystone – records all the data related to each individual social housing property and includes the costs associated when updating each property to WHQS. Keystone is critical to monitoring compliance with each of the components used to assess progress in achieving WHQS.
- 19 The Council's HRA Business Plan, Caerphilly Homes Asset Management Strategy and other associated detailed documents we reviewed demonstrate that the Council has a detailed costed plan to achieve WHQS by 2020. The Council's in-

house workforce, or Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) as it is also known, as well as private contractors are delivering the WHQS programme.

- 20 Following the introduction of the Council's Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) in 2017, the Council's ability to engage local specialist contractors in a timely manner to complete WHQS works on properties has improved. At the time of this review, about 80 contractors were available through the DPS.
- 21 At the time of our fieldwork for our previous review in March and April 2017, the Council did not have a contractor in place to undertake the external works to tenants' homes in the Lower Rhymney Valley. Through the DPS and the Council's DLO, all areas of the county now have WHQS work planned.
- 22 The Council spent £42 million on WHQS programme delivery in 2017-18. This represents the highest annual amount since WHQS programme delivery started and reflects the significant increase in fully compliant homes in 2017-18.

The Council has taken steps to determine the value for money of its procurement arrangements

- 23 Since June 2017, the Council commissioned an independent review of its single source supplier² arrangements for its WHQS programme and undertook an exercise to compare costs of its DLO workforce to those of external contractors.
- 24 The independent review of the single source supplier looked at 72 products, purchased by the Council for its WHQS programme that have the highest annual expenditure. The review concluded that the arrangement provides value for money for the Council for the products used, although some rates could be improved. The review gave two recommendations:
 - ensure that the Council pays the most competitive prices for plasterboard; and
 - ensure a consistent classification of products that would assist any future pricing reviews.
- 25 Cabinet received a report in November 2017 which included the findings of the Council's comparison of the costs undertaken by private contractors and the Council's DLO team. The Council reported that its DLO are 20% more expensive than the private contractors due to a number of factors including superannuation, living wage, leave, sickness, overheads linked to support service costs. In its report, the Council set out factors that it had used to consider the value for money that it was achieving through its arrangements. These factors included greater tenant satisfaction reported from those receiving works from the DLO, comparative performance of the in-house and external contractors, reduced number of complaints.

² In 2012, the Council entered into a single source supply arrangement for all materials in relation to Council-house maintenance and the WHQS programme.

There have been improvements to its WHQS performance reports, however there is still inconsistent and inaccurate reporting of performance

- 26 The Council has taken action to ensure that key WHQS performance information and key dates are on Keystone in a more timely manner.
- 27 In early 2018, the Council reviewed the process of performance reporting and the inputting of performance data onto Keystone. This review highlighted delays and occasional incorrect recording of performance. As a result, the Council introduced revised weekly responsibilities and timescales to record WHQS performance into Keystone. All WHQS project managers interviewed by us for this review are aware of the revised responsibilities and timescales for the recording of performance.
- 28 The accuracy of the Council's performance recording and reporting is now subject to a more rigorous validation process. Following our Phase One feedback to the Council, the Chief Housing Officer requested the Council's Internal Audit service to review the WHQS data validation processes. This took place during August to October 2018.
- 29 The report concludes that:

'The control procedures which were in place were:

In need of improvement – based on the results of the audit work undertaken it is considered that the control framework that was in place was in need of improvement. In May 2018 however, new procedures were introduced which are well documented and set out the processes for relevant staff to follow. These address the control issues going forward, but procedures now need to be developed to address historical issues identified by the audit. In addition, staff resources, in the form of a dedicated team of Officers supported by the Housing Technical Manager and Housing Group Accountant, have been made available to evolve and introduce new validation processes to address the main subject of this audit.

Compliance with the controls are considered to be:

In need of improvement – based on the results of the audit work undertaken it is considered that the control framework that was in place was in need of improvement. In May 2018 however, new procedures were introduced which are well documented and set out the processes for relevant staff to follow. These address the control issues going forward, but procedures now need to be developed to address historical issues identified by the audit. In addition, staff resources, in the form of a dedicated team of Officers supported by the Housing Technical Manager and Housing Group Accountant, have been made available to evolve and introduce new validation processes to address the main subject of this audit.

Due to the levels of Conclusions above the Chief Housing Officer will be invited to the next audit committee.'

- 30 The Council's 2018 annual performance submission to the Welsh Government states that 39.76% of its properties are fully compliant with WHQS as of 31 March 2018. However, this is not the figure it has used in any of its end of year performance reports to members since its annual performance submission to the Welsh Government. This provides members with an inaccurate picture of the Council's performance.
- 31 The Council reported its 2017-18 WHQS performance in three end of year performance reports during September and October 2018:
- a. Well-being Objective 5;
 - b. Caerphilly Homes end of year performance report; and
 - c. the Council's Annual Performance Report.
- 32 We found discrepancies in different aspects of the 2017-18 WHQS performance in these reports and there was no clear rationale as to why the Council reported different performance information in the different reports. In particular, we note that the overall WHQS compliance rate in these reports was lower than the performance reported to the Welsh Government in August 2018. Therefore, WHQS performance for 2017-18 was under reported to members and the public after it made the submission to Welsh Government.
- 33 To improve WHQS performance reporting, a WHQS strategic scorecard accompanies performance reports to elected members. The scorecard shows:
- a. levels of compliance for internal and external works;
 - b. weekly targets and actual key performance for the completion of internal and external works. A Red, Amber, Green (RAG) system highlights whether weekly targets are achieved or not;
 - c. tenant satisfaction levels;
 - d. targets for each quarter up to March 2020;
 - e. projected and actual programme expenditure until March 2020; and
 - f. the number of WHQS fully compliant properties.
- 34 We found that the programme targets are not clear and the number of compliant properties in the end of year 2017-18 scorecard is different to the number reported to the Welsh Government. Additionally, the scorecard has inaccurately recorded the previous year's performance.
- 35 The WHQS strategic scorecard shows future quarterly targets for internal and external works and overall compliance. However, the design of the scorecard means it is difficult to read the actual targets and would benefit from presenting this information more clearly.
- 36 In our previous report issued in June 2017, we noted that the Council's WHQS performance reports focused more on completion of internal and external works and not full compliance. The Council now clearly reports the number of properties

that are fully compliant, but due to inconsistent and inaccurate performance information reported to members, officers, tenants and leaseholders, effective challenge and oversight of WHQS progress is hampered.

The Council now has measurable performance targets to effectively monitor the remainder of its WHQS programme

- 37 In 2015, the Council commenced WHQS work on its properties. The annual rate of properties fully compliant for 2015-16 and 2016-17 was low at 2.5% and 5.7% respectively. The number of fully compliant properties increased significantly to 39.76% for 2017-18. As at the end of September 2018, the Council reported to the Audit Committee on 16 October that its overall compliance rate was 51%.
- 38 The Council has weekly completion targets for both internal and external works. The Council's WHQS team monitor the weekly delivery of both internal and external works and this monitoring is showing that internal works are delivering to target but the external works are slightly behind schedule.
- 39 All officers and members we interviewed are clear that March 2020 is its deadline to fully deliver its WHQS programme although the Welsh Government's deadline is December 2020. However, the WHQS strategic scorecard (as at 28 September 2018) gives the projected deadline for full internal works compliance as 1 May 2020 and 20 May 2020 for full external works compliance. Setting a deadline that is earlier than the Welsh Government deadline is prudent and allows for potential slippage to complete external WHQS works due to any severe weather in the winters of 2018 and 2019.

The Council has strengthened its arrangements to meet its statutory landlord responsibilities

- 40 At the time of our fieldwork for our previous review in March and April 2017, there were over 400 council properties which did not have a valid CP12 gas safety certificate. As at 28 April 2017, just over 98% of the council's properties had a valid CP12 gas safety certificate meaning that 221 properties did not.
- 41 During our fieldwork for this review, we found that the Council has made significant improvements in its arrangements to meet its statutory landlord responsibilities. The Council has made revisions to its gas safety procedures which are now fully compliant with UK Health and Safety Executive guidance for landlords. Where tenants do not provide access to their homes to allow the Council to undertake gas servicing, there is staged approach for the Council to gain access.
- 42 If the Council cannot gain access through these steps, the Council's policy states that the Council can take legal proceedings to gain access. Since the introduction of the new policy on commencing legal proceedings the Council has obtained access to 50 properties where it has been determined that there has been a

breach of their tenancy agreement, by the issuing of formal Notices of Seeking Possession (NOSP).

- 43 In the Council's regulatory proposal for improvement progress report for its Audit committee on 24 July 2018, it reported that 99.3% of its properties now have the gas servicing certificate. Those properties where a certificate had expired and access was not agreed were subject to ongoing legal proceedings.
- 44 The Council's asbestos procedures comply with Health and Safety Executive guidance and no property has WHQS or other repairs work undertaken without a full survey being available prior to the commencement of work. To address our statutory recommendation, the Council appointed an asbestos technical officer to coordinate the completion of all asbestos surveys and ensure the recording of asbestos surveys onto Keystone. The officer ensures that the findings of the surveys are available to operational staff. The Council now has clear arrangements and a dedicated member of staff and anticipates that all properties will have asbestos information recorded on Keystone by January 2019.

The Council has invested additional resources to enhance its WHQS programme management but still lacks a current Local Housing strategy and does not always produce comprehensive Equality Impact Assessments for key Housing policy documents

- 45 The Council is improving project management capacity in delivering and managing the WHQS programme. A new role of housing technical manager has been created and appointed to increase project manager capacity. This officer oversees the WHQS programme, the housing repairs team as well as the work of the surveyors and Gas Servicing team.
- 46 The Council has also appointed an additional foreman, assistant project manager and surveyor to increase its capacity to manage and deliver its WHQS.
- 47 The Council is alert to the prospect that properties currently fully compliant as an 'acceptable fail' due to residents' choice³, may become available for WHQS internal and or external works in the future. The Housing Repairs team is creating a new sub-team to complete works in those homes if they become available and the DLO or external contractor are not working in the area where the property has become available for works.

³ Source: Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS), as at 31 March 2018. Welsh Government press release dated 4 October 2018.

There can be situations where achieving the standard for an individual element is not possible. Such situations may include the cost or timing of the work, residents choosing not to have the work done or where there are physical constraints to the work. In these instances, the landlords may record one or more element as acceptable fails.

- 48 Although the Council's procedures for encouraging residents to allow access to their homes for WHQS work are in line with the Welsh Government guidance the Council does not have a robust system in place to periodically check if residents change their minds. For example, the Council could after 2019 contact residents at least once a year to offer previously refused WHQS works.
- 49 Our previous 2017 report highlighted that the Council did not have an up-to-date local housing strategy. This remains the case.
- 50 During our fieldwork for this review, both officers and members expressed their own views as to how housing should evolve and what the Council's future responsibilities are in providing social housing. Therefore, by not having a strategy there is the potential to create a fragmented and inconsistent vision for the service. The absence of a Local Housing Strategy also may prevent the Council from fully demonstrating how it is addressing the five ways of working to meet the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- 51 The Council is considering and planning for the continuation of Caerphilly Homes maintenance and investment beyond 2020. In September and October 2018, the Caerphilly Homes Task Group, Policy and Resources scrutiny committee and Cabinet considered a draft Caerphilly Homes asset management strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to understand and commit to maintaining the quality of all Council housing properties post-2020.
- 52 The Housing Asset Management Strategy did not include a comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment. The Council did not consider it necessary for a full Equality Impact Assessment, but during our review the explanation as to why was not clear. At the time of our fieldwork, there has been few Equality Impact Assessments in relation to Housing service change proposals were available to the public or members to consider. The Council will need to assure itself that the absence of an Equality Impact Assessment for key strategic decisions, does not put it at risk of not complying with the 2010 Equality Act. The Council should also assure itself that it fully demonstrates how it is addressing the five ways of working which Councils are required to adopt to meet the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFG Act).

Appendix 1

This is the Council's action plan to address the Wales Audit Office's three statutory recommendations made in our 2017 WHQS report:

WALES AUDIT OFFICE WHQS REVIEW – ACTION PLAN – AUGUST 2017

Recommendations	Actions	Owner	Progress / Due Date
Recommendation 1 Develop a comprehensive, overarching, financial and operational programme setting out how the Council will achieve WHQS by 2020.	1. Ensure that the Keystone Asset Database provides up to date survey information.	MRL	Sept 2017/ Completed
	2. Review projected programme costs by replacing Savill's estimates with more accurate actual costs based on recently completed contract information.	LA	Sept 2017/ Completed
	3. Amend existing programme in order to reflect communities where work has been completed, is currently ongoing or is planned. Programme to also incorporate a breakdown of the communities to clarify which streets are included.	MRL	Sept 2017/ Completed
	4. Ensure adequate resources to enable surveys to be completed at the earliest opportunity in order to better inform future investment requirements and budget forecasting.	MRL	Ongoing

Recommendations	Actions	Owner	Progress / Due Date
<p>Recommendation 1a</p> <p>Review procurement arrangements to ensure value for money.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure adequate procurement arrangements are in place to cover all aspects of the programme. 2. Undertake an independent benchmarking exercise in relation to the single source supply arrangement to assess value for money. 3. Undertake an exercise to compare costs of the in-house workforce to those of external contractors, whilst also considering quality and performance to determine value for money. 4. Introduce a flexible Dynamic Purchasing System for the external works in the lower Rhymney valley, whilst also providing options to deliver contracts for internal and external works throughout the borough. 5. Contracts for internal works are in place until 2020 and were procured in open competition. External work packages are tendered individually from existing frameworks and more recently the D.P.S. Tenders are evaluated on receipt and if deemed to be uncompetitive, the work is re-tendered in an attempt to improve value for money. 	<p>MRL</p> <p>KRW</p> <p>MRL</p> <p>MRL</p> <p>MRL</p>	<p>April 2017/ Completed</p> <p>March 2018/ Completed</p> <p>March 2018/ Completed</p> <p>April 2017/ Completed</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Recommendations	Actions	Owner	Progress / Due Date
<p>Recommendation 1b</p> <p>Provide clear and transparent information to members and tenants about the current position of the programme and a commitment to stakeholders with accurate projected completion dates.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review existing programme information being provided to members and tenants and amend this to ensure it is accurate, easily understood and timely. 2. Review the way performance information is presented to all stakeholders to ensure that this provides a good overview on the progress of the overall programme is easily understood and timely. <p>Performance information is regularly being updated and amended to improve the way data is presented.</p>	<p>MRL</p> <p>SC/MRL</p>	<p>March 2018/ Completed</p> <p>December 2017/ Ongoing</p>
<p>Recommendation 1c</p> <p>Secure the resources needed to deliver the programme by 2020.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Business case approved for the appointment of additional staff and operatives to support the in-house team in view of the additional work they will be undertaking to deliver WHQS works to our sheltered housing schemes. 2. Business case approved for the appointment of Surveyors/Clerks of Works to support the delivery of the external works programme following the implementation of the DPS. 3. Use of agency workers ongoing to supplement directly employed staff as workforce will need to reduce post 2020. 4. Introduction of DPS has provided an additional pool of contractors to deliver all aspects of the programme and to act as a contingency in case any issues are encountered with existing contracts. 	<p>MRL</p> <p>MRL</p> <p>MRL</p> <p>MRL</p>	<p>April 2017/ Completed</p> <p>April 2017/ Completed</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>April 2017/ Completed</p>

Recommendations	Actions	Owner	Progress / Due Date
	<p>5. Use of other in-house teams, both within and outside Caerphilly Homes, has been implemented to provide further assistance and resources for the delivery of the programme, eg Housing Repair Operations, Network Contracting Services, Highways Operations Group, Grounds Maintenance.</p> <p>6. Additional financial resources being sourced to assist with the delivery of the programme and to provide additional improvements to the housing stock and communities, eg ECO, Arbed, V.V.P.</p>	<p>SC/MRL</p> <p>MRL/JRW</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Recommendations	Actions	Owner	Progress / Due Date
<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>Assure itself that the Council is meeting its statutory landlord responsibilities in relation to gas servicing.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Council's performance in relation to gas servicing averages 98% which results in approximately 200 properties not having a valid gas safety certificate, which has been identified as an issue with no access. A review of the no access procedure has been undertaken. 2. To improve compliance the gas servicing cycle will be changed to operate on a ten-month cycle rather than the existing 11 months. 3. To reduce issues with no access, a charge will be introduced for tenants who fail to provide access at the appointment time. 4. The timescales for issuing letters to tenants seeking access will be reduced and if required a Notice of Seeking Possession will be issued prior to the expiry of the gas certificate. 5. Failure to provide access during the NOSP period will result in arrangements being made to force entry, with the tenant being provided with advanced notice of such action. 	<p>SC</p> <p>PS</p> <p>PS</p> <p>Housing Managers</p> <p>Housing Managers/ PS</p>	<p>July 2017/ Completed</p> <p>Sept 2017/ Completed</p> <p>August 2017/ Completed</p> <p>August 2017/ Completed</p> <p>Sept 2017/ Completed</p>
<p>Recommendation 2a</p> <p>Ensure that arrangements for undertaking asbestos surveys and recording the results of these surveys, is robust.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the accuracy and timeliness of asbestos information being recorded within the Keystone Asset Database. 2. Ensure that all relevant staff have access to asbestos records to ensure these are checked prior to commissioning surveys. 	<p>PS</p> <p>PS</p>	<p>August 2017/ Completed</p> <p>December 2017/ Completed</p>

Recommendations	Actions	Owner	Progress / Due Date
	3. Submit a business case to appoint a Technical/Admin Officer to input surveys and cleanliness certificates into Keystone in a timely manner, and also act as a central point of contact.	PS	August 2017/ Completed
<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>Ensure the Council has sufficient project management capacity to deliver the WHQS programme by 2020.</p>	<p>1. Business case approved for the appointment of additional resources, allowing recruitment to take place as and when required.</p> <p>2. Project management of the sheltered housing programme being carried out by the in-house team following consultation with tenants.</p> <p>3. Project management of various aspects of the programme is being undertaken by other services to spread workload and maximise use of existing resources, eg work to leaseholder properties being managed by Private Sector Housing, WHQS work to voids and statutory maintenance being undertaken by Housing Repair Operations Team, environmental programme being progressed by utilising services of Grounds Maintenance, Highways Operations Group, Network Contracting Services.</p> <p>4. A restructure of Caerphilly Homes to be undertaken to further improve integration and better align key functions with the aim of improving capacity to support the programme.</p>	<p>MRL</p> <p>MRL</p> <p>SC/MRL</p> <p>SC</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

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Updated October 2018

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