



**CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL**  
**RHONDDA CYNON TAF**  
**COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**COMMITTEE SUMMONS**

C.Hanagan  
Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication  
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council  
The Pavilions  
Cambrian Park  
Clydach Vale CF40 2XX

Meeting Contact: Tracy Watson - Senior Democratic & Scrutiny Officer (07747 485567)

**YOU ARE SUMMONED** to a virtual meeting of the **COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** to be held on **MONDAY, 30TH JANUARY, 2023** at **5.00 PM.**

Non Committee Members and Members of the public may request the facility to address the Committee at their meetings on the business listed although facilitation of this request is at the discretion of the Chair. It is kindly asked that such notification is made to Democratic Services by Thursday, 26 January 2023 on the contact details listed above, including stipulating whether the address will be in Welsh or English.

**AGENDA**

**Page  
No's**

**SCRUTINY RESEARCH**

A scrutiny research facility is available within the Council Business Unit to support Members' scrutiny responsibilities and their roles as Elected Members. Such research strengthens Scrutiny Committee work programmes to ensure outcome-based topics are identified. For any scrutiny research requirements please contact [scrutiny@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@rctcbc.gov.uk)

**1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

To receive disclosures of personal interest from Members in accordance with the Code of Conduct

Note:

1. Members are requested to identify the item number and subject matter that their interest relates to and signify the nature of the personal interest: and

2. Where Members withdraw from a meeting as a consequence of the disclosure of a prejudicial interest they must notify the Chairman when they leave.

## **2. MINUTES**

To approve as an accurate record the minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee held on the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

5 - 14

## **REPORTS OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATIONS**

### **3. CONSULTATION LINKS**

Information is provided in respect of relevant [consultations](#) for consideration by the Committee.

## **OFFICER'S REPORTS**

### **4. SUPPORT TO REFUGEES, UKRAINE NATIONALS AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN RCT**

For Committee members to receive a report on the Council's arrangements for support of refugees, Ukraine Nationals and asylum seekers in RCT.

15 - 28

### **5. RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME 2018**

For Committee members to receive a report on the Rhondda Cynon Taf Housing Allocation Scheme.

29 - 44

### **6. INFORMATION REPORTS**

The following report is provided for the information of Members:

[Vale, Valleys, and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative Review of Service and Annual Performance Report](#)

(For Members to acknowledge the information contained within this report but any queries relating to the item can be directed to [Scrutiny@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:Scrutiny@rctcbc.gov.uk))

### **7. CHAIR'S REVIEW AND CLOSE**

To reflect on the meeting and actions to be taken forward.

## **8. URGENT BUSINESS**

To consider any items, which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, is of the opinion should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

### **Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication**

#### **Circulation:-**

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee (County Borough Councillor J Bonetto and County Borough Councillor G E Williams respectively)

#### **County Borough Councillors:**

Councillor S Bradwick, Councillor R Davis, Councillor A J Ellis, Councillor D Evans, Councillor A Fox, Councillor H Gronow, Councillor N H Morgan, Councillor D Owen-Jones, Councillor D Parkin, Councillor A Roberts, Councillor G Stacey and Councillor T Williams

This page is intentionally left blank



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee meeting held on  
Monday, 28 November 2022 at 5.00 pm

**County Borough Councillors - Community Services Scrutiny Committee Members  
present in the Council Chamber:-**

Councillor J Bonetto (Chair)    Councillor R Davis  
Councillor N H Morgan

**County Borough Councillors - Community Services Scrutiny Committee Members  
present online:-**

Councillor G E Williams    Councillor S Bradwick  
Councillor A Fox    Councillor H Gronow  
Councillor D Owen-Jones    Councillor D Parkin  
Councillor A Roberts    Councillor T Williams

**County Borough Councillors in attendance**

Cllr G Caple, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care

**Officers in attendance**

Ms A Lloyd, Service Director, Children's Services  
Mr P Mee, Chief Executive  
Mr P Nicholls, Service Director, Legal Services  
Ms S Nowell, Head of Transformation  
Mrs C Tyler, Service Development Officer, Children's Services  
Mrs T Watson, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

**Invitees in attendance**

Mr A Rome, Director, Evolution Consulting  
Mr J Stanley, Principal, National Centre for Excellence in Residential Child Care

**18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies of absence were received from County Borough Councillors A J Ellis, D Evans, and G Stacey.

**19 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, the following declarations were made pertaining to the agenda:

Agenda Item 4 – Children's Services Residential Transformation Strategy

- County Borough Councillor D Parkin – Personal – 'I am a Foster Carer'.

Agenda Item 5 – Rhondda Cynon Taf Children’s Services Workforce Strategy 2021-2024

- County Borough Councillor R Davis – Personal – ‘I work for the Open University, that was mentioned in the report’.

**20 MINUTES**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2022 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

**21 CONSULTATION LINKS**

Members acknowledged the information provided through the consultation links in respect of open consultations, Welsh Government consultations and those matters being consulted upon by the local authority.

**22 CHILDREN'S SERVICES RESIDENTIAL TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY**

The Director of Children’s Services began by advising Members that this report was being brought for the purposes of pre-scrutiny, before providing Members with an overview of Section 4, including advising Members that in January Children’s Services had brought forward to cabinet an approved Looked After Prevention Strategy, which set out the range of services needed to make sure families were supported well. Section 5 set out the current situation and the table at 5.1, broke down the settings where the 640 looked after children, were living with Section 5.2, providing a summary of RCTs existing provisions. Section 6 set out how the strategy had been prepared and summarised some of the work that had involved partners both in terms of other organisations, and across, council as well. The evaluation of that work had led to a schedule of needs, and 3 subgroups would report to the steering group and coordinate the delivery work detailed in the action plan, found at the bottom of Appendix B. Section 7 provided a summary of the types of settings needed and Section 12, highlighted some of the sources of funding, although Members were advised a decision was still awaited from Welsh Government (WG), in terms of the £17.1 million that had been assessed, would be required to deliver over the next three years.

Members were asked to keep in mind, when scrutinising the report, the sufficiency duty, under the social services and wellbeing act, and the role of a corporate parent, to seek, for children in looked after services, the same outcomes that every good parent would want for their own children. The Director of Children’s Services concluded that the Council was clear that it had a sufficiency duty and would need to change, and change quite radically, to meet that, and what was being sought in the strategy and related action plan, was to commit to evidence based needs and developing those settings, keeping an eye on quality and outcomes of young people's wellbeing, at the very centre, whilst doing that work.

A Member asked what happened if some for-profit organisations, exited the sector, was the Council making any specific provisions to ensure that these children could still be taken care of.

The Director of Children’s Services explained that at present, there was considerable uncertainty. A Welsh Government consultation has taken place in

line with the intention to change legislation. From a provider perspective, there was currently a sense that there had been a lack of detailed information about the models of business that would enable them to make a clear decision, and a couple had already exited from the marketplace. As part of the strategy, there were 2 actions to co-ordinate. One to work with some of the known and trusted providers, to try and understand what their intentions were, around future operating in a not-for-profit model. The other step was to make sure that all providers of residential care who were looking after RCT children, had those important relationships with those staff members, to make sure that ideally there is no disruption to their arrangements, but at present it would be wrong to give the impression that there was sufficient clarity about next steps in this

A Member sought clarification of the process for developing a provision, providing an example of a HMO2 becoming a children's home, in his ward.

The Director of Children's Services informed Members that, a clear request is published on the RCT website from RCT Children's Services to any business or provider seeking to establish a new business, that provided accommodation, care, and support, for young people, to speak to the Council first, to ensure a suitable mixed economy was developed. Significant lengths had been gone to, to ensure that there was a clear enough understanding of what the needs were, so it concerned the Director of Children's Services when there were plans to develop a provision, that she was unfamiliar with.

A Member stated that the WG's drive to take profit out of the equation was very laudable but wondered whether this would drive unintended consequences and cut across the drive, to reduce the number of residencies outside of county. If this was the case, how would this risk be managed.

The Director of Children's Services explained that the legislative intention was wholeheartedly agreed with, and the journey towards that would commence with some element of re-balance, while managing the risk and developing services, some of which would be emergency accommodation. The Director of Children's Services hadn't seen a significant change in the numbers of new placements being made, out of county and where emergency accommodation needed to be developed, this had been in county. In terms of that out of county balance, the Director of Children's hoped Members could see that, in preparing the strategy, the intention to have the right services close to home, to travel towards no longer making out of county placements, however there was an exception. There were some unusual sets of circumstances where RCT would not be able to coordinate the level of care well, without having to tolerate high levels of voids, which was for the most complex needs, with those best delivered regionally, which was clearly highlighted as part of the regional partnership board work and work alongside CAMHs and education as well. Additionally, as local authorities developed their provision there would be opportunities for positive collaboration between neighbouring authorities, which would be important in terms of meeting young people's needs. So young people would still be close to home, but perhaps the setting that were really suitable would be available in Bridgend, or Merthyr Tydfil.

A Member asked if the local authority had any young people living in bed and breakfast accommodation, and if so, were they moved as soon as possible. The Member also highlighted, that the report indicated that other local authorities used some of RCT's accommodation and asked how much of an impact this had on the local authority.

The Director of Children's Services advised there were no RCT under 18-year-olds in bed and breakfast accommodation. What was referenced in the strategy, was that there was a great need for suitable accommodation for care leavers> The council has seen an increase in the number of 18 plus young people, particularly those who were maybe not engaged with the services available, in emergency accommodation and some of those young people were at risk of homelessness. From time-to-time bed and breakfast was used for 18 plus, when there was no alternative and what was sought through the strategy, was to also make sure there was suitable accommodation for 18 plus young people. Accommodation across the field was a very significant challenge and the Service would continue to make sure that accommodation and support services were developed for 16 plus young people and care leavers, who were older than 18 as well. The breakdown of the number of care inspectorate Wales registered settings, in RCT was around, 50 beds, and this is sufficient in terms of quantity alone. However, only RCT is using a small portion of those. That aspect of the report and the strategy was referring to independently provided provisions, so those are not RCT owned or RCT provided provisions. This reflects the shortfalls of the market provision that obviously those providers of residential care were committed to making sure that they were providing services and they were receiving young people from outside RCT, and those providers would all have to make a decision by the 2027 date, about their future as a not-for-profit business or not. In terms of RCT placement out of county, the vast majority of those young people, were in the South Wales region. A lot of them were quite close to home, with two in English settings and 5 in West Wales, and presently 1 young person in North Wales, who was in a specialist provision that wasn't available in South Wales.

A Member explained that in his ward there was going to be a complex for 4 flats, for over 18's in an area of deprivation and asked if this was the right place, for new build accommodation.

The Director of Children's Services explained the people being talked about were people from the community who needed to live in their communities. Included in the work, were proposals around location assessment involving, working together with elected Members. What concerned the Director of Children's Services the most, was the delay, with care leavers at risk of homelessness immensely. The Director of Children's Services understood that Council process would apply to this and was very keen that all supported care experienced young people and supported them to have a suitable location in their home communities, where they could live and thrive.

A Member asked, if people were placed out of County, did the Service try its best to keep them reasonable placed, providing an example of a person in the North of Scotland, placed there by another Council.

The Director of Children's Services explained that part of the looked after prevention strategy, was about making sure that that re-unification of families, was developed, and developing settings where the Service could continue to work with family members. It was a really important part of young people's heritage and their connection to their communities. The Director of Children's Services summarised that being close to home was so important to young people's wellbeing and identity, and certainly the distance described by the Member, although the circumstances were not known, would be difficult to endorse. The only exception would be that there was secure accommodation



available in Scotland, and the last time secure accommodation was needed, there were 2 places available in the UK, for 72 young people who needed it.

The Group Director, Community and Children's Services added that Members had got to the heart of the discussion, very quickly and the challenge of meeting the placement sufficiency duty, was significant at the best of times. The challenges that had been described, were even more so, in the context of WG's policy around eliminating profit, and the risk with that inadvertently reducing capacity in the sector and creating further pressure; so, there is a sense of urgency and pace required to this work. The consequences are significant and the reason the strategy was before Members was the need to increase the capacity, and do so closer to home, fairly rapidly, so children and young people were likely to have better outcomes, as well as receiving better support in the communities that they came from. Whilst taking onboard Members concerns about the right provision in the right place there is a pressing need to find facilities and locations in RCT that meet the needs of our vulnerable children and young people.

Members agreed that a further update to the Committee should be forthcoming within the next 6-12 to include more about the range of providers and their positions, and the implications for young people.

Following consideration by the Committee it was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Service Director for Children's Services to bring the Residential Transformation Strategy to Cabinet for approval following the Council's pre-scrutiny process whilst providing recommendations to Cabinet.

## **23 RHONDDA CYNON TAF CHILDREN'S SERVICES WORKFORCE STRATEGY 2021-24**

The Organisational Change and Transformation Officer advised Members that the purpose of the report was to provide information regarding RCT Children's Services Workforce Strategy 2021-2024. The Strategy set out the Council's response to the significant recruitment and retention challenges, being faced by the service, which were further exasperated by shortages in the labour market of qualified and experienced social work practitioners. Children's Services has a clear vision for its work force, that it is motivated, engaged and valued and that staff have the capacity, skills competence, and confidence to meet the needs of children and families. The strategy aims were outlined in more detail, in the report. Members were advised that a workforce plan had been developed which had focused on the seven themes highlighted in the Healthier Wales: Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care in Wales 2020-2030 and the areas highlighted included engaged, motivated and healthy workforce, and the steps taken to date, included the implementation of an annual survey and results from the April 2022 survey, attached in Appendix A. The consultation had highlighted the need to ensure good communication and children's services communication cycle had been created, attached in Appendix B, which included quarterly service update infographics.

The Organisational Change and Transformation Officer concluded that the Services aimed to establish a seamless workforce model and were in the process of advertising for a lead manager for social work practise, as this would be a key role in the production, implementation, and evaluation of the model of practise within RCT children's services. There was a strong commitment within RCT children's services and across the wider council, through the workforce

strategy steering group, to achieve the aim of the workforce with sufficient numbers with the right values, knowledge and skills and everyone was continuing to work towards this in what is a very challenging workforce climate.

A Member sought clarification around the recruitment for the post of lead manager.

The Organisational Change and Transformation Officer explained that two people were shortlisted and interviewed but were not appointable at that point in time.

A Member sought clarification why 8 social workers had left, during the 6-month period between April 2020 and September 2020, as indicated on page 68 of the papers.

The Organisational Change and Transformation Officer noted that the exit interview process was now established, which was capturing exit data. A number of the reasons highlighted in the exit data included workload, work/life balance, as well as other reasons e.g., people wanting to work closer to home, so there was varied range of reasons.

A Member, acknowledging the exit interviews, asked if the data provided details if people were actually leaving the sector or were going to other local authorities, for example.

The Organisational Change and Transformation Officer advised that, although she didn't have that data with her, they did capture where people leaving the service were going to, with a number going to other local authorities, and some leaving the sector, as it was important to know where people were going, and why.

Following consideration by the Committee it was **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the information contained within the report.

## **24 SOCIAL SERVICES - HOSPITAL DISCHARGE PRESSURES**

The Interim Service Director: care and support delivery, transformation and integration began by advising Member that the report had been prepared to provide an update on the pressures across the Health and Social Care system and the impact on hospital discharges and the actions that were being taken. Members were then taken through the background, at section 4, to the report, including being advised that there was a clear interdependency between Adult Social Care in RCT and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, in supporting people who had been in hospital to return safely to their usual place of residence or to the next stage of their care. In addition, people were supported to remain at home, rather than be admitted to hospital as a result of changes to the support people required. Members then received an overview, in respect of section 5, delayed transfers of care, and noted that a copy of the "Pathways of Care Delays" reporting system, was attached at Appendix 1.

The Interim Service Director: care and support delivery, transformation then provided Members with an overview of section 6, and a summary of the regional actions explaining that in July 2021, WG had launched its Six Goals for Urgent and Emergency Care Programme, which set out its expectations for health, social care, independent and third sector partners for the delivery of the right

care, in the right place, first time. A copy of the Six Goals Policy handbook was attached at Appendix 2, before providing highlighting to Members with regards to the Discharge to Recover then Assess (D2RA) and Welsh Government Initiative: 1000 beds / additional community capacity.

A Member raised a number of concerns at the front door of the hospital, and asked where the step-down beds, were coming from.

The Interim Service Director: care and support delivery, transformation and integration, agreed, that there were difficulties at the front door of the hospital, and demand had increased there. D2RA may help to identify people early on, e.g., for adaptations needed at home, allowing time to put those arrangements in place, but people would have to have completed their rehabilitation before they could be assessed effectively, for a long-term DFG. whilst it was recognised this could make things difficult for the individual initially, having to accept temporary aids and equipment to meet their needs it would be inappropriate to assess for substantial changes to a property until the persons full potential was established and this would not always be on discharge from hospital.

Sometimes in those situations, a step-down bed could be offered in a care home, but not always what an individual would choose. The Interim Service Director: care and support delivery, transformation, and integration, continued that there was no definitive start date for step-down beds in Parc Newydd or Ysbyty George Thomas, however there were 2 Community hospitals in RCT, where people could be stepped down (YCC and YCR), where they needed complex care planning. In addition, there were a number of care homes across the borough, which could support flow through from hospital depending on capacity which is currently limited.

In relation to D2RA, a Member asked what work had been done in terms of qualitative monitoring of the processes and understanding the reality.

The Interim Service Director: care and support delivery, transformation and integration, explained that the hospital discharge process, for an individual was a significant transition and the pressure was on the Service, to respond and make sure assessments, were of a good quality. D2RA would increase the occasions where individuals would be assessed, in their own homes, where it could be seen, holistically, their abilities, and was a better opportunity. It was recognised there were some risks to D2RA, but there were some controls, as well. There was a feedback loop, in that in-house providers and independent providers, had an ability to contact the duty team, if they felt the individual was no longer safe to be at home, so that the package of care could be enhanced, It is noted that individuals return to hospital after being discharged, and this had increased, but this didn't always mean they shouldn't have been discharged, as often the people concerned are frail, elderly or disabled, and their health was variable. Members were informed that CTM, were developing a frailty service, for older people, managed at the front door of the hospital, where they would be picked up, and considered by specialist professionals.

Whilst the Member was reassured, she wanted reassurance that the Service was tracking how well it was doing, as judged by service users and carers, particularly around communication.

The Interim Service Director: care and support delivery, transformation and integration, explained that one of the reasons for referring new home care

packages, to the in-house service, was so it could be monitored, to ensure the care being commissioned, was the right amount of care. Once satisfied that care was right-sized, it could be transferred to the independent sector. For those people who previously had a homecare, care package, who were going back to that provider, that provider would know that person/carer, and if there was any change, they would have a mechanism to come back to discuss that with the Service. Members were advised, that as both were regulatory services, they were required to survey their service users in terms of service, and were also regulated by the CiW, and similarly the care homes. With external providers, there were contract monitoring arrangements in place.

A Member noted, what wasn't in the report, was any reference to ensuring that medication was in place, when people were being discharged. The Member also raised concern about residents with learning difficulties and the times when they received their calls.

The Interim Service Director: care and support delivery, transformation and integration, explained that regarding the medication, this was ordered by the health staff on the wards, and the Electronic Whiteboard, should initiate the order in good time. The Service did manage medication, for some people, if they had a social care package, but this was managed through hospital staff. In relation to times of calls with home care, this was a very difficult area, as there was a limited number of home care workers available, at any one time and at certain times (such as first thing in the morning and in the evening demand for care would be at its height. If someone had a specific time e.g., associated with a priority need e.g., a mealtime for a diabetic, they should let the Service know, or if providers thought people were really struggling with that time, they would prioritise,

A Member agreed that assessments should take place at home, but sought clarification, around language barriers, for people leaving hospital.

The Interim Service Director: care and support delivery, transformation and integration, explained regarding communications for assessment, that there were Welsh speaking social workers, who could assess in Welsh. In addition, there was access to interpretation services for people who were deaf or deaf/blind, and whilst it was very rare to need interpreters for, for other languages this would be facilitated by the Service through existing arrangements.

A Member acknowledged that there was a shortage of carers and asked if this had a knock-on affect on getting people home.

The Interim Service Director: care and support delivery, transformation and integration confirmed that there was a shortage across domiciliary care and the care home sector, which prior to Covid, RCT had managed well with a buoyant care home and domiciliary care market, with the only area of concern dementia nursing, due to difficulty, in recruiting. Since the pandemic, there had been a decline in the workforce, which was a Wales wide and UK issue, with people having left the care sector. this is a priority, and for Social Care Wales, at an All-Wales level as well as for the council and its partners. Alongside Covid, Social Care Wales were embarking on a process to register, both the home care and care home social care workers, which may have deterred some, as this was an added burden on the individual to ensure they maintained their portfolio and training. Whilst this is a positive move to increase the quality of care for some in

this sector the option to choose an alternative job at similar pay without these requirements may be perceived as an easier option

The Member also asked what the local authority was doing in terms of the carer's workforce.

The Interim Service Director: care and support delivery, transformation and integration confirmed that the local authority made sure providers paid their staff, the living wage, with WG having paid bonuses to Care staff over the past 2 years to support their commitment. The Council also works with providers closely, to make sure that the training and development was available to their workforce. There is a strong procurement and commissioning team, and approach, with hands on support, to providers to help them manage their services effectively and support the wellbeing needs of their staff, the provision of PPE, etc. The priority was to meet with providers on a regular basis and consider the issues they were facing, with their business.

In conclusion, Members recognised that they had only scratched the surface and needed to go further in-depth with this topic, as it was a very complex issue.

Following consideration by the Committee it was **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the information contained within the report and receive a further update, on specific matters, to be agreed by the Committee.

## **25 INFORMATION REPORTS**

Members were advised of the report that was reported for information and were reminded if they had any queries in relation to this report, they should contact the Scrutiny mailbox.

## **26 CHAIR'S REVIEW AND CLOSE**

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting, which had been an eye opener, in lots of ways. Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee (Crime & Disorder) would take place on Thursday 8 December, at 5pm, and the next meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee, would take place on Monday 30 January 2023, at 5pm.

## **27 URGENT BUSINESS**

None

**This meeting closed at 6.58 pm**

**Cllr J Bonetto**

This page is intentionally left blank

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 22/23**

**COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY**  
**COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, PUBLIC**  
**HEALTH, PROTECTION & COMMUNITY**  
**SERVICES**

**Agenda Item No. 4**

**TITLE**

**SUPPORT TO REFUGEES,  
UKRAINE NATIONALS AND  
ASYLUM SEEKERS IN RCT**

**Author: Cheryl Emery, Head of Community Safety and Community Housing**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 This report provides an opportunity for members to scrutinise the support being provided by the Council to refugees, Ukraine nationals and asylum seekers in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) and outlines the considerable work undertaken by the Council and our partner organisations, to respond positively and as effectively as possible across all the resettlement schemes.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Scrutiny Committee:

2.1 Note the increasing numbers of refugees, Ukrainian nationals and asylum seekers being resettled in RCT and consider the emerging housing, support and financial demands this presents.

2.2 Scrutinise the significant actions being taken to support and welcome people re-settling in RCT by the Council, our partners and stakeholders and consider if any matters require further consideration.

**3. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The Council continues to operate sustainably across all UK resettlement schemes. The Council has robust systems in place to support those moving to RCT, and these have evolved in recent years as our experience and understanding of resettlement has grown.
- 3.2 The excellent local partnership work taking place between the Council, third sector organisations, CTM University Health Board and the very strong links with Further and Higher Education establishments within the Authority, ensures the coordinated approach to resettlement work in RCT has received widespread recognition. Participation in long standing and new UK resettlement schemes allows us to build on this partnership approach and contribute to the Welsh Government's (WG) stated ambition for Wales as a Nation of Sanctuary.
- 3.3 The Council's voluntary participation in many resettlement programmes enables the local authority and our communities to share in the global responsibility to provide a safe and legal route to the UK for some of the most vulnerable displaced people, wherever humanitarian need is greatest.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

##### **REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMMES IN RCT**

- 4.1 The Council is committed to providing support to refugee families assessed by the United Nations as particularly vulnerable and therefore eligible for formal resettlement.
- 4.2 Resettlement is organised through different government funded schemes and overseen by the Home Office. In addition to support from the Council, families have allocated support workers from the Welsh Refugee Council (WRC) who help them to re-adjust, orientate, and understand UK systems and services alongside providing practical support with day-to-day living and working towards independence by the end of the support period. The Council currently works with the Home Office to resettle displaced people, refugees and asylum seekers in RCT through the following schemes:

##### **UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS)**

- 4.3 The Home Office has established the UKRS to identify the most vulnerable refugees, who have been assessed for resettlement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). These vulnerable refugees are nominated for resettlement in the UK mainly from the Middle East (notably Syria) and North Africa, but also from refugee camps in other areas.



4.4 This scheme replaces schemes in which the Council has actively participated since 2015, namely the:

- **Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS)** (2016 to 2021), which resettled 20,000 people in the UK. ***In RCT, we have resettled 11 families (50 individuals) since our participation in the programme.*** 3 of those families (10 individuals) have since moved to live in other parts of the UK.
- **Resettlement of Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS)** (2017 to 2021), which resettled 3,000 people in the UK. ***2 families (5 individuals) were resettled in RCT*** and 1 family (2 individuals) has since returned to Turkey.

4.5 At this time, RCT has a total of 9 families (43 individuals) from across both the VPRS and VCRS programmes that continue to reside in the Borough who are settled and state they are happy.

4.6 Rhondda Cynon Taf's first family arrival for the newly established UKRS is expected in January 2023.

#### **Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)**

4.7 The Council is also participating fully in the National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) overseen by the Director of Children Services in RCT in partnership with Bridgend County Borough Council and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. While still waiting on the final distribution of the number of UASC to be accommodated across Cwm Taf Morgannwg, to date, two properties (offering 8 units of private rented accommodation) have been secured in the RCT with ***5 unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people accommodated to date*** and receiving support from Children's Services.

#### **Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP)**

4.8 In preparation for the withdrawal of UK troops in Afghanistan, the Home Office established the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP). ARAP offers the opportunity for resettlement to locally employed staff and their families who worked for the UK government in Afghanistan. While Afghan families are awaiting resettlement in the UK with a local authority, the Home Office provides them with hotel accommodation. The resettlement of Afghan families operates in the same way as the resettlement of families from Syria and other areas of the world facing humanitarian crises. The Council has been an active participant in the ARAP scheme since 2016 following a Cabinet decision.

- 4.9 ***To date RCT has resettled 6 Afghan families, (29 individuals)***, and with the help of our commissioned specialist support provider, the WRC, these families have been supported to integrate into the community and all children have been enrolled in local schools.
- 4.10 While continuing to actively support the ARAP scheme, the provision of additional properties for the Afghan (ARAP) scheme is proving a challenge due to the limited availability of suitable, sustainable accommodation for these households.

### **UK ASYLUM DISPERSAL SCHEME**

- 4.11 On the [17th June 2021](#) Cabinet agreed that the Council would become an asylum dispersal area, working with the Home Office, Wales Strategic Migration Partnership (WSMP) and Clear Spring's Ready Homes to support and accommodate 5 families with a review of the operation of the scheme in RCT after an initial period of 12 months.
- 4.12 During April 2022 however, the Home Office announced a new 'Full Dispersal' approach for the UK. This requires all local authorities in England and Wales to become asylum dispersal areas due to continual high numbers of arrivals into the UK applying for asylum protection. At that time, over 10,000 individuals were in temporary accommodation (including hotels and migrant camps) in England, mainly in the Kent area, placing overwhelming pressure on local council services.
- 4.13 The WSMP is leading the development of regional plan arrangements on behalf of the 22 local authorities in Wales. Based on the 2011 Census Data, there is a requirement for Wales to offer over 2300 bedspaces, secured by Clear Spring's Ready Homes on behalf of UK Government, in order to house approximately 2344 people seeking asylum. The WSMP has developed a Dispersal Plan for Wales, following engagement with all 22 LAs and this must be agreed by the Home Office.
- 4.14 The key strategic principles of the intended approach across Wales are: strategic intent as a Nation of Sanctuary; immediate integration; access to advice and services; taking a trauma informed approach; partnership working; sustainable funding; effective coordination; voluntary and community sector support; and equity and fairness.
- 4.15 Beyond these strategic principles, there are also agreed key operating principles, which include:
- Consultation with LAs on selected properties to share local insight;
  - Effective data sharing and contract compliance from providers;
  - Procurement of properties in an area limited by criteria i.e. dispersal limits per LA area, move on ceilings (ensure all areas achieve 75%

of their allocation before increasing numbers in any one area), procurement to not cause escalation in local market rents;

- Properties procured directly from private landlords taking into account specific local needs and safeguarding;
- Any proposed use of contingency accommodation/large scale sites will be shared by the Home Office with councils, WSMP and Welsh Government in advance.

4.16 In terms of the expectation for each local authority, it will be based on population-based apportionment with two models being considered for Wales:

- **Model 1- 22 LA model based on population share.**
- **Model 2- 19 LA model** (with any population split taking into account Cardiff, Swansea, and Newport's existing active involvement meaning these areas are either already, or close to, fulfilling their proportional rates based on existing long-term participation).

4.17 The table below outlines proposed share for the Rhondda Cynon Taf area, based on both apportionment models:

Local Authority	Rhondda Cynon Taf
Census 2011 population	234,410
A Max number (200:1 ratio)	1,172
S 75% of 200:1	879
C Allocation by Dec 23 Model 1	179
a Allocation by Dec 23 Model 2	236

ABased on the above allocations **by the end of December 2023, it is proposed that between 179 to 236 asylum seekers will be located to Rhondda Cynon Taf**, subject to the availability of appropriate accommodation, and input from the local authority on gathered local intelligence.

4.18 As this Council had already engaged proactively with the Home Office following the previous Cabinet decision, the first meeting on the proposed new dispersal model occurred with Council representatives on 25 July 2022, and a fortnightly engagement meeting is now established between officers and Clear Spring's Ready Homes.

4.19 New private rented properties proposed by Clear spring's Ready Homes to house individuals on the Asylum Dispersal scheme are always considered and reviewed by the Community Safety Partnership, Police, Health, Education and Housing to ensure that they are appropriate although the Home Office sets out limited reasons to object to potential properties being used. Part of this work involves a

consideration of local policing issues, availability and capacity of health care and the provision of local school places.

**To date 1 family has been placed in an RCT property**, and also 4 single males have been placed in a property. The asylum-seeking family are supported by Clear Spring's Ready Homes whilst their asylum claim is determined by the Home Office. They have been provided with housing and wrap around support to meet their essential needs. Both Clear Spring's Ready Homes along with Migrant Help provide the support and there have been no issues to-date reported to the Council.

There has been a total of 29 potential properties in the RCT area identified by Clear springs Ready Homes, 9 of which Clear Spring's Ready Homes have determined they are no longer pursuing.

### **THE UKRAINE RESPONSE**

- 4.20 The UK Government's Homes for Ukraine Response was launched on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 2022 to support thousands of people displaced by the war. These arrangements support three UK visa entry routes for Ukrainian nationals fleeing the conflict in Ukraine

**The Family Visa:** extended family members already living in the UK can apply for a 3-year visa for family members. The Ukraine Family Scheme is an extension of the existing family visa process which has been amended to extend the definition of 'close' and 'extended' family member and to remove the income test and the requirement for payment to apply. Families are expected to live together, and Ukrainian nationals will have immediate access to benefits and public services, and the right to work and study. Local authorities have not been allocated a formal role in this scheme, are not in receipt of information on the number of refugees arriving in their area under this scheme and are not being funded to support refugees arriving through this route.

**The UK Government Homes for Ukraine Scheme:** individual hosts offer space in their home or accommodation they have available to unrelated arrivals within the scheme.

**The Welsh Government Super-Sponsor:** where visas are applied for on the basis on national sponsorship with accommodation and support provided by Welsh Government.

All visas permit those Ukrainians who arrive under any of these arrangements to live and work in the UK for up to 3 years and access benefits, healthcare, employment.

## **The Council's Ukraine Response**

### **The Family Visa Entry Route**

- 4.21 Capture of this information is entirely dependent of individual residents seeking service support. Although UK Government does not provide any financial support for Council to help those arriving under this visa route, the Council has put in place an equitable support package for those who become known to services including: a Wellbeing Assessment; £200 emergency support payment and 6 months free Leisure for Life Membership for both the Ukrainian nationals and their family.

***Currently in RCT, 11 Ukrainian individuals who entered the UK via a Family Visa have requested support/further assistance.***

### **The UK Government's Homes for Ukraine Scheme**

- 4.22 In response to meeting the needs of Ukraine nationals arriving under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, in early March 2022, a new multi-disciplinary Humanitarian Response Group (HuG) was set up by the Council. This Team comprised Senior Officers from Community Development Team, Adult and Children Services, Education, the Customer Contact Centre. This Senior Council Officer Team implemented Council process to receive Welsh Government Data and referral pathways into the Council.
- 4.23 The Homes for Ukrainian Scheme allows private individuals (hosts) to sponsor named Ukrainians. Each sponsor household is entitled to a UK Government £350 'thank you' payment per month (up to a maximum of 12) administered by local authority. Host properties are subject to a property check by Council Officer against UK Government standards and hosts are required to undergo a DBS check as part of safeguarding procedures. Upon arrival in the County Borough, and within 3 working days if children have arrived with adults, the Humanitarian Response Team will arrange a visit to each Ukrainian at the property of the host to conduct a holistic Wellbeing Assessment. This ensures initial support is made available to both the arrivals and hosts as well as providing ongoing referrals to statutory and other support services as required including the resettlement team. The completion of the Wellbeing Assessment ensures that host 'thank you' payments and guest emergency support payments of £200 are processed efficiently.
- 4.24 On completion of the Wellbeing Assessment arrivals are referred for support from the Councils newly established Resettlement Team with

the staffing structure consisting of a manager and 3 temporary Resettlement Officers. The Resettlement Team provides advice, support, and integration support for up to 12 months, which includes welfare benefits, health, employment, housing advice, safeguarding, mediation and community links.

The Resettlement Team are currently supporting all families and individuals that have arrived in RCT under any of the UK refugee and resettlement schemes. This includes **84 hosts across the borough who have welcomed Ukrainian guests** into their homes. Support is also being made available to **146 guests in host placements**. This equates to a total of 103 adults and 43 children. To date, the team have assisted 27 households to move out of their host placement and secure alternative accommodation. It is pleasing to note 19 Ukrainian guests residing with hosts have been supported to secure employment.

- 4.25 Longer term planning and ongoing support after the provision of accommodation by sponsors comes to an end is currently unclear, particularly for housing. Hosts are entitled to receive 'thank you' payments for up to 12 months and were required to commit to a minimum of 6 months of hosting. As covered throughout this report, Ukrainian guests are entitled to statutory support, including homelessness provision, which creates a significant risk for the council if move on cannot be secured for Ukraine nationals before hosting arrangements end, due to the already high demand for temporary accommodation in respect of single homeless people.

The Resettlement Team also work closely with host arrangements to help prevent breakdown of relationship and avoid the risk of homelessness. To date the Council has only received one homelessness presentation due a Ukrainian guest experiencing domestic abuse who was later placed in refuge and accommodated in another borough.

### **Welsh Government Super Sponsor Scheme and Welcome Centres**

- 4.26 In addition, and in response to the Ukrainian crisis, the Council has worked with partners to establish Welcome Centre provision in RCT, offering immediate, initial accommodation to Ukrainian Nationals arriving under the WG Super Sponsor Scheme. Welcome Centres are intended as short-term accommodation pending move on being secured to more sustainable, independent accommodation. Welcome Centres are established according to detailed WG specifications in terms of support on site, education and play provision, meals and access to immediate and on-going health and trauma support. Funding is provided by WG to cover the costs of operating Welcome Centres.

## **Welcome Centre A**

- 4.27 Discussions with WG commenced early May 2022 to establish and open a Welcome Centre within RCTCBC. With a location confirmed, immediate work was undertaken by the Council to make the location suitable for the needs of those fleeing Ukraine and to offer a secure and safe environment for guests. This Welcome Centre is for families only and was the first Welcome Centre in Wales to accommodate pets.
- 4.28 Senior Officers worked closely with a Hotelier to take responsibility for the accommodation and security of the site, as well as working with a local catering company to provide the expected fully catered meal provision.
- 4.29 To comply with guidance from Welsh Government and to offer an effective response, a Multi-Agency Team was established to provide the wrap around support families may require. This included Council Teams (Community Development, Adult and Children Services, Employment Support, Youth Engagement and Participation, Play Teams, Staying Well @ Work) and with external partners- Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board, Citizens Advice, Health, DWP, British Red Cross, Coleg yr Cymoedd, University of South Wales, South Wales Police, Mental Health Services, Save the Children and Barod.
- 4.30 Ukrainian families are provided with a full Wellbeing Assessment on arrival which captures the journey to the UK and RCT and seeks to identify any areas of specialist need such as disabilities or trauma responses. The Humanitarian Response Team have all received training in relation to Trauma Informed practice provided by CTM Health colleagues. With daily ongoing support provided to access GP appointments, secure employment, and engage in ESOL and other Education both on and off site. A programme of ESOL sessions have been run on site and off site at the University of South Wales, along with Council Play Teams delivering opportunities to the children.

Guests are provided with support to access the full range of support available to all residents of RCT, this includes access to the Council's Employment Support Service. All members of the family receive their £200 emergency support payment on arrival and access to free Leisure for Life Membership for 6 months.

- 4.31 On 4<sup>th</sup> August 2022, the Minister for Social Justice, Jane Hutt (MS) and the Minister for Constitution, Mick Antoniw (MS) attended the Welcome Centre to welcome the families to RCT. The families

were provided the opportunity to speak with both Ministers about their personal experiences and highlight any further support needs.

- 4.32 The Centre has welcomed a **total of 14 families** between 29<sup>th</sup> June and 13<sup>th</sup> January 2023 (50 individuals). 3 families have since returned to Europe, 1 family has returned to Ukraine and 1 family successfully moving into private rented accommodation having secured local employment and become financially independent. At present, there are 9 families at the Centre, comprising 14 adults and 15 children.

All families have been provided with ongoing wrap around support and family plans to help facilitate move on arrangements and all school aged children have secured education, of which 3 are in a college placement. Councils play a key role in supporting the integration of Ukrainian families into their local communities with employment support offered to all working age adults and 15 Adults assisted (to date) to secure local employment. 6 Of which have now moved out of the Welcome Centre

The Centre will continue to operate until 31.3.23 with any remaining guests supported by the Council and WG to find alternative accommodation by that date.

### **Welcome Centre B**

- 4.33 Discussions with Welsh Government and a third party commenced late early June 2022 to add an additional single occupancy Welcome Centre in RCT.

The Humanitarian Response Team are responsible for the wrap around support and assessment of wellbeing at this site and continue to follow the same process and partnership working approaches established for Welcome Centre A. Accommodation and catering are the responsibility of the hosting party.

- 4.34 **56 single adults have arrived on site** between 11<sup>th</sup> July to 13<sup>th</sup> January 2023 with 4 individuals deciding to leave the Welcome Centre before an assessment of wellbeing could be completed. Currently there are 40 individuals residing at Welcome Centre B with 18 adults securing employment to-date. The Centre will continue to operate until 30.6.23 and again, guests at the Centre will need to be supported by the Council and WG to find alternative accommodation prior to closure of the Centre.

### **Challenges to Secure Sustainable Housing for Ukrainian Nationals**

- 4.35 Despite all Ukrainian guests being provided with support and plans to help facilitate move on, there are significant challenges in finding



suitable move on accommodation. This is due to the current housing crisis and the limited availability of properties in both the social and private sector. Most Ukrainians are eligible to receive Universal Credit or are in low income employment, which makes many of the available properties in the private rented sector unaffordable in the absence of additional financial help to meet significant rent shortfalls.

- 4.36 Welcome Centre B is due to close on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023. Most Ukrainian guests placed in the Centre are single people in need of 1 bedroom accommodation which is largely unaffordable for them and with limited availability of suitable housing stock in all parts of RCT.
- 4.37 Welcome Centre A is also earmarked for closure in March 2023 with many families settled in the local area and all children attending schools. The challenge will be to secure affordable and suitable accommodation for their needs in the local area.
- 4.38 Many host arrangements are at the point of breakdown with hosts advising they are not able to accommodate Ukrainian guests for an extended period beyond the initial 6 months they agreed to. UK Government thank you payments for hosts also end after a maximum of 12 months post arrival.
- 4.39 Some Ukrainian guests have indicated that they do not wish to remain in RCT and wish to seek housing in larger cities such as Cardiff and Swansea which are at saturation point in respect of available, affordable housing.
- 4.40 Funding arrangements for the Resettlement Team are also uncertain with all roles currently funded using the tariff payments and grants received by the Council as part of the WG and UK Government funding support for Councils and currently there is no commitment at this time of any longer- term funding arrangements.
- 4.41 In order to increase the general supply of social housing, during 22/23 the WG has made available additional capital funding for housing associations to return long term empty properties into use as transitional housing. While these properties are not specifically for Ukraine nationals, the additional supply of housing will help ease pressure on the local housing register. Both RHA and Trivallis Housing Associations have made successful bids for funding totalling £995,262 that will deliver 16 houses for occupation in RCT by 31.3.2023.
- 4.42 Two four-bedroom properties are being handed over by Welsh Government in the Hirwaun area as part of a Lease arrangement for use as move on accommodation for Ukrainian Guests placed at Dare Valley. We are currently in discussion with Cynon Taf Community Housing Group in respect of ongoing management arrangements.

## **5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

- 5.1 This report is provided for information only and seeks to update Scrutiny Committee on the Council's ongoing and proactive participation in a wide range of UK Programmes to support displaced Ukrainians, refugees and asylum seekers of all ages who have to leave their homes as a result of conflicts or persecution. The Council seeks to ensure the specific needs of individuals arriving via the resettlement programmes are met by applying the guidance issued by WG and UK Government in the operation of all schemes.

## **6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no Welsh Language implications arising from the content of this report.

## **7 CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

- 7.1 There are no consultation implications arising from this report however involvement of key partners and engagement with refugees and displaced persons are ongoing and established processes.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 All of the UK resettlement schemes identified in this report are funded through varying Home Office grants available to the Council. All are time limited funding arrangements and are bespoke to the scheme under which an individual arrives in the UK and include:

- For the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP), the tariff funding tapers over three years after arrival, with the initial tariff set at £10,500 and with associated tapering amount for education support depending on a child's age.
- The United Kingdom Resettlement Scheme funding package available will mirror that currently paid under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme and previously reported to Cabinet.
- For Asylum Dispersal, UK Government provide £3500 for any new accommodation spaces occupied in any given year. This is a one-off payment upon first occupation of a bed space.

- 8.2 The Homes for Ukraine response has many complex financial arrangements, each depending on the arrival route agreed by UK and WG. Payments are time limited with most UK Government funded components due to end by March 2023. Claims are made

retrospectively based on numbers of Ukraine nationals in the County. Each individual attracts a payment tariff of £10,500 with additional payments for education support dependant of the age of the child. UK Government also reimburses the Council for the £350 monthly thank you payment to hosts and the emergency support payments to arrivals which are administered on their behalf.

8.3 The operating costs of the accommodation providers for the Welcome Centres and funding for the specialist wrap around support mobilised by the Council are met by WG.

8.4 The combined impacts of the various resettlement schemes and spontaneous arrivals creates significant ongoing financial pressure on local services including housing, education and health particularly in the context of previous Covid-related demand, emerging cost of living issues and high numbers of households placed in temporary accommodation in the borough.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

9.1 The Council has full regard to any legal implications and legislation in respect of the Council's response to meeting the needs of refugees and asylum seekers and follows Government policy and guidance in respect of resettlement arrangements.

## **10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.**

10.1 The positive progress the Council continues to make across all UK Resettlement Programmes contributes to the Council's Corporate three main priorities as follow:

Ensuring People are independent, healthy and successful: Community integration is a key objective in our work with refugees, to help them overcome and or manage their health needs to become healthy and independent and to lead successful lives in RCT. All Displaced People, Refugees and Asylum Seekers have access to support services both from the Council and other partners that meet their needs. Much emphasis is placed on providing services which help them learn English and in helping them improve their skills and accessing employment. All children within families are supported to access education and college provision.

Creating places: where proud to live work and play: Tackling isolation is also a key element of our Resettlement work helping build up well-being, personal confidence and self- esteem helping individuals to integrate and engage in activities their local communities. We also work closely with other Council departments i.e., Communities for Work

to assist individuals to access volunteering, training, and employment opportunities.

Enabling prosperity: creating the opportunity for people and businesses: to be innovative; be entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper: In recognition many of the refugees we work with are professionals and have fled high paid jobs. Many are encouraged to take up their old roles where possible and to learn new life skills which can help provide access to new employment opportunities as well as enable them to prosper and seek their own personal goals.

- 10.2 The Sustainable Development Principle and the 5 ways of working have been fully considered in our participation in the Resettlement Programmes which are heavily focused on meeting the long-term needs of refugees and asylum seekers through the provision of affordable housing, access to education and employment and provision of ongoing support.
- 10.3 In consideration of the seven wellbeing goals, the objective is to improve the quality of life for people being supported by Resettlement Programmes in RCT through the provision of many interventions. These include highlighting clients who will need long term support to help them sustain their home as well as integrate into their local communities and help them to work to their strengths and support them to achieve their aspirations.

## **12. CONCLUSIONS**

- 12.1 To date, over 320 refugees, asylum seekers and Ukraine nationals have been supported into accommodation in RCT with new arrivals weekly under the various schemes. As a result of the UK Asylum Dispersal Scheme, these numbers are expected to increase significantly in the next 12 months. Many of these arrivals have already been supported to secure employment, education, health services and sustainable housing through the multi-disciplinary work of a wide range of Council Departments and the support of external partners including the local health board.
- 12.2 The Council has a long-established commitment to supporting those unable to remain in their home country and make a positive contribution to ensuring Wales is a Nation of Sanctuary
- 12.3 Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note the challenges and scrutinise the actions being taken in response to delivery of the resettlement programmes in Rhondda Cynon Taf by Council staff and its many partner organisations.

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022-23**

**COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR - PUBLIC  
HEALTH, PROTECTION & COMMUNITY  
SERVICES**

**Agenda Item No. 5**

**TITLE**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY  
BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING  
ALLOCATION SCHEME 2018**

**Author): Cheryl Emery: Head of Community Safety and Community Housing**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 This report provides the Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Housing Allocation Scheme and gives the Committee an opportunity to understand how the policy works, and to what extent the policy helps the Council and its partners to meet the housing needs of people in Rhondda Cynon Taf
- 1.2 The report also provides the Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the arrangements the Council has with local registered social landlords for the allocation and letting of social housing in the Borough, as well as highlighting the impact of pressures on the operation of the policy and current challenges and how these are being addressed.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 Consider the current high demand for social housing and service pressures for the Common Housing Register
- 2.2 Scrutinise the actions being taken in respect of the proposed review of the RCTCBC Housing Allocation Scheme and timeline for completion

of the review by the Council and RSL partners and whether any further matters require consideration

### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To provide Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to scrutinise the operation of the current RCTCBC Housing Allocation Scheme and provide an overview of emerging issues and challenges that will be considered during a forthcoming review which will inform recommended revisions to the Allocation Scheme.

### **4. BACKGROUND**

#### **Common Housing Register**

- 4.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) currently operates a Common Housing Register (CHR) known as “Homefinder RCT”. The Common Housing Register lists people who want to apply for a social housing property in RCT.
- 4.2 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council does not own any properties available through the CHR. The properties available belong to housing associations, who are partner organisations of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.
- 4.3 The CHR is operated in partnership with 7 Registered Social Housing landlords i.e., Aelwyd, Cynon Taf Community Housing Group, Habinteg, Hafod Housing Association, Rhondda Housing Association, Triavllis and Newydd Housing Association.
- 4.4 As from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2023, 5 additional landlords will join the register i.e. Cardiff Community, Pobl, Linc, Valleys to Coast and United Welsh Housing Association.
- 4.5 Wales and West Housing Association left the Common Housing Register (CHR) in September 2022, following the transfer of their housing stock in RCT to Rhondda Housing Association.
- 4.6 A Choice Based Lettings system is used, for the processing of all housing applications. This was initially introduced in October 2012 and is managed by the Council’s Homefinder Team, which is jointly funded by all partners including the Council. This provides an easy-to-access central point, which supports greater accessibility to services, meets social needs by helping to ensure a better quality of life, improves fair access and choice, protecting and keeping safe vulnerable people and specifically addressing the diversity agenda, by tailoring services to the needs of vulnerable and hard to reach groups.

- 4.7 Advantages of the Common Housing Register include:
- A simple process – only one application form.
  - Better understanding of housing need in the area.
  - A wider choice for applicants.
  - Landlords can access a larger pool of applicants.
  - Creates a single point of reference.
  - Helps reduce voids.
  - Reduce operating costs for partners.
  - Delivering dynamic application forms for greater customer access and less work for staff.
  - Provide transparency to all stakeholders.
- 4.8 The Choice Based Letting system allows applicants on the Common Housing Register to view vacant properties that are available each week and submit bids for properties that they wish to be considered for.
- 4.9 In terms of governance arrangements, the operation of the CHR is overseen by the Steering Group which is chaired by the Council's Head of Community Safety and Community Housing and attended at Director level by all RSL partners who have oversight of the register at a strategic level including performance management.
- 4.10 An Operational Group chaired by the Homefinder Team Manager also meet on a monthly with RSL Managers to discuss operational issues.
- 4.11 There also sub-groups which include the Eligibility Panel and Move On Panel to consider operational arrangements in line with legislative requirements in respect of eligibility to the register and consider move on from the Council's commissioned supported accommodation projects.

## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME 2018**

### **The Legal Framework**

- 4.12 Legislation requires each local housing authority to make all allocations and nominations in accordance with a Housing Allocation Scheme. The Council is required to publish its Scheme and provide a summary free of charge to anyone who requests a copy.
- 4.13 Although the Council transferred its housing stock to RCT Homes (now Trivallis) in 2007, it still retains its statutory housing duties to have a Housing Allocation Scheme and to discharge its homelessness duties.

- 4.14 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's Housing Allocation Scheme sets out the criteria used by the Council and its partners to allocate social housing accommodation. The aim of the Housing Allocation Scheme is to allocate homes in Rhondda Cynon Taf by:
- Treating people fairly and giving them choice.
  - Meeting the housing needs, wishes and aspirations of applicants.
  - Making the best use of the social housing stock.
  - Maintaining sustainable and safe communities.
  - Providing a route into permanent housing.
- 4.15 There are also residency and local connection tests that must be satisfied, and applicants are assessed in terms of their financial circumstances and ability to meet their own housing
- 4.16 The Scheme sets out how applicants can apply for social housing in Rhondda Cynon Taf and how eligible applicants are assessed using a banding system to reflect housing as set out below:
- Band A- Urgent housing need.
  - Band B- High housing need.
  - Band C- Low housing need.
  - Band D- No housing need.
- 4.17 It is the Council's responsibility to accept applications for housing and assess applications to determine eligibility and priority for Homefinder RCT.
- 4.18 Upon receipt of the application, a member of staff will contact the applicant in order to verify their application and discuss their areas of choice.
- 4.19 Annual reviews are required to ensure that applications are up to date and correct details are held.

#### **The Reasonable Preference Categories**

- 4.20 The latest Welsh Government Allocation of Accommodation Code of Guidance, published in June 2012 requires local authorities to give reasonable preference to certain categories in the Scheme, and the Council must give priority for housing to certain applicants.

These are:

- People who are homeless (within the meaning of Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014).
- People who are owed any duty by a local housing authority under Section 66, 73 or 75 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.



- People who are owed a duty by a local authority under Section 190(2), 193 (2) or 195 (2) of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 or who are occupying accommodation secured by any local authority under Section 192(3).
  - People living in poor or overcrowded housing.
  - People who need to move for medical or welfare reasons.
  - People who need to move to an area of Rhondda Cynon Taf for a particular reason e.g. to look after a family member.
- 4.21 The banding system set out in paragraph 4.6 is designed so that each band includes applicants who have a similar level of housing need and distinguishes between the different needs of applicants.
- 4.22 As well as giving priority to the groups mentioned above, the Scheme also gives priority to other groups of people as doing so helps the Council to meet its local strategic housing priorities effectively. This includes the following:
- Applicants who by moving will release an adapted property.
  - Applicants whose child is likely to be accommodated by the local Authority if rehousing is not made.
  - Applicants who have been recommended to foster or adopt children and whose current accommodation is not big enough.
  - Households including children who are forced to live apart owing to a lack of suitable accommodation.
  - Existing tenants with no housing need who wish to move.

### **Homelessness Prevention**

- 4.23 The RCTCBC Allocation Scheme has played a key role in helping RCTCBC prevent homelessness over the past few years by maintaining the Housing Register priority for households who have been accepted as homeless by the Council and assisting with homelessness prevention outcomes.

### **Discretionary Allocations and Local Lettings Plans**

- 4.24 As referenced above, the aim of the Housing Allocation Scheme is to ensure that overall priority for allocations is given to applicants in the relevant categories described above and to those that have waited the longest to be housed. However, some flexibility is sometimes required to meet urgent housing need, create sustainable communities, and provide for the efficient use of the social housing stock. There are often circumstances where the only way these issues can be resolved is to give discretion to make the most appropriate allocation under the circumstances. This can be done on an individual case basis and the Homefinder RCT Steering Group is responsible for approving allocations

in such cases or through the Council approving the adoption of Local Letting Plans by an RSL.

- 4.25 The plans are reviewed on an annual basis to determine whether they are all still required. All local lettings Plans are evidence based with an aim to achieving community sustainability and ensure that they fit with and inform strategic priorities.
- 4.26 The Housing Allocation Scheme describes who is eligible to apply for housing and sets out the priority that is given to different applicants and who is offered a social housing tenancy in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The Scheme ensures that those in greatest housing need (those who fall into a defined reasonable preference category) are given overall priority for available social housing.

### **Type of Accommodation**

- 4.27 Applicants can usually apply for any type or size of accommodation that is suitable to their needs. However, some types of properties may only be designated to certain client groups, for example sheltered or older persons' accommodation will usually only be offered to people over 55 or 60, depending on the landlord of the sheltered scheme.

### **Allocation of Properties**

- 4.28 When a property becomes void, properties are advertised by the relevant housing association on the Homefinder RCT website and applicants can bid for properties in their areas of choice and according to the type of property and size that they require
- 4.29 It is the responsibility of the Housing Associations to allocate their vacant housing in accordance with the Housing Allocation Scheme and associated Operating Manual and Service Level Agreement.
- 4.30 The allocation of advertised properties will be based on the priority of bids received, which means that Band A applicants are given highest priority and B and D the lowest priority.
- 4.31 Within each band applicants will be prioritised according to their waiting time, with those with the longest waiting time given highest priority. If there are multiple bids for a property from one band, the applicant with the longest waiting time in that band will usually be successful.

### **Housing Demand**

- 4.32 We are in the middle of a housing crisis with significant pressure on the

Common Housing Register due to many factors including changes in the nature of the demand for housing which is reflection of the cost of living crisis, unaffordability in the private rented sector and people's changing circumstances.

- 4.33 We have experienced a 6% increase in homelessness applications in RCT this financial year from households with children who have been served with “no fault” Section 21 Eviction Notices prior to the implementation of the Renting Homes Wales Act in December 2022. This is in addition to an increase in applications from single people and homeless people applying to the Housing Register
- 4.34 More and more people are finding themselves locked out of homeownership and those who can no longer afford the high rents in the private rented sector are seeking social housing.
- 4.35 As highlighted in the below table, the number of Common Housing Register applications increased year on year since 2015 with **7,423** applications received as at the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

Application added date Month	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Grand Total	3023	6064	5121	5778	5696	6132	6309	6524	6759	7125	<b>7423</b>

- 4.36 These applications can be further analysed by housing need priority band and the number of bedrooms required by the applicant (e.g. 1B= 1 bedroom) and the table below shows the breakdown of applicants (households) on the Common Housing Register by Band and Size as 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

	1B	2B	3B	4B	5B	6B	Total
Band A	106	20	25	7	0	0	158
Band B	111	92	58	27	16	3	307
Band C	866	595	337	111	9	1	1919
Band D	1048	846	349	21	1	0	2265

- 4.37 As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 there were **4,491** applicants registered and waiting for housing on Homefinder RCT.
- 4.38 In respect of band and property size the highest demand for housing is single person accommodation with **1,048** applicants registered across all bands seeking 1 bedroom accommodation. It must also be noted that the highest number of applicants seeking housing are registered in Band D i.e., **2,265** have no housing need.

## Lettings

- 4.39 Comparing the number of households on the Housing Register with the number of social lettings arising each year demonstrates very clearly that demand greatly outstrips supply.
- 4.40 In consideration of the high demand for social housing there were **1067** allocations of social housing in 2022(31/12/22). This is an 17.6% decrease in the number of properties allocated on the previous financial year.
- 4.41 Despite the high demand for single person accommodation there have only been **480** 1x bedroom general needs units advertised for letting on Homefinder RCT (as at 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2022). Some units would also have been restricted by age and local letting criteria which again highlights an undersupply of the right type of housing in the right location available in the borough to meet demand.

### Lettings Data as 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>1 Bed</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>565</b>	<b>480</b>
<b>2 Bed</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>365</b>
<b>3 Bed</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>4 Bed</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>5 Bed</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>6 Bed</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Bedsit</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1358</b>	<b>1298</b>	<b>1058</b>	<b>1296</b>	<b>1067</b>

### Allocation Scheme Review – Adapting to new Challenges

- 4.42 As confirmed by above data, demand for social housing in Rhondda Cynon Taf remains high and is a scarce resource. It is important that the housing allocations policy provides a genuine route to access housing for households most in need in these challenging times.
- 4.43 The criteria to determine access to the housing register and priority banding are important in the current housing market and financial crisis. The Housing Allocation Scheme therefore needs to be reviewed in the context of current service pressures including people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and those placed in temporary accommodation who have limited move on housing options. Given the delicate balance between competing housing needs it is

important that any changes or adjustments to the Housing Allocation Scheme are measured and well thought through.

- 4.44 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Housing Allocation Scheme was last reviewed significantly in 2018 with minor amendments made in 2016 and 2017 in relation to the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. The Welsh Government Code of Guidance advises Local Authorities to review their Housing Allocation Schemes every two years to ensure compliance with the law and good practice. As such, it is timely to undertake a more comprehensive review of the Scheme.
- 4.45 The other key reason to undertake the review is the context of local housing need, new partnership arrangements and new legislative changes which include the Welsh Government's "Every One in Policy" for homeless people and the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 which have been implemented since the scheme was last reviewed.
- 4.46 Therefore, a review of the Allocation Scheme commenced in the summer of 2022 and aims to be completed and presented to Cabinet in 2024. A number of Task and Finish Groups have been established as part of the review and include representation from Council departments, RSL partners, third sector and CHR applicants.
- 4.47 In consideration of the current service pressures the below areas have been identified for investigation as part of the allocation scheme review:

**a) Review of Band A**

To review the categories within Band A to consider a higher preference for households having to live with family and friends and those who are sofa surfing to help alleviate the high number of homelessness applications made as a consequence of the breakdown of relationship with family and friends which have accounted for 37% of placements in temporary accommodation to date in 202/23. The increase in homelessness applications due to the increasing number of households served with a valid S21 notice by their landlord may also be a consideration for Band A to help reduce the pressure on the Council's Housing Solutions Team and high demand for temporary accommodation for both single people and households with children

Any recommendations to change this category will be carefully considered to fully understand the impact of any changes made to the banding priorities and to consider any unintended consequences as consequence of any changes made.

**b) Review of Band D**

50% of Common Housing Register applicants at any one time are placed in Band D and have no urgent housing need and take up a considerable part of the work by the Homefinder Team. We will explore how we work with applications who have no housing need to explore alternative solutions. For example, current RSL tenants who have no housing need can be directed to consider a mutual exchange option with help to take up this option.

**c) Adapted Housing**

Adapted properties are currently allocated on a best match basis which aims to ensure applicants with a lower level of need are considered quickly and reduces cost. However, there are few properties which become available via the register which can be offered with a high level of adaptations already undertaken which mean that applicants with a higher level of need may have to wait considerably longer to be matched to a suitable property. Therefore, the process needs to be reviewed to ensure transparency of approach and fairness for all applicants in need of an adapted property.

**d) Mutual Exchange**

Mutual exchanges can be an effective way of moving Contract Holders (tenants) between properties with a minimum cost to the landlord. We currently have 8 CHR partners who facilitate mutual exchanges within their stock. However, the vehicle for undertaking the mutual exchange is different in each organisation. Most use Homeswapper.co.uk and others receive direct requests. In consideration of the high demand for social housing in RCT, the review of the Mutual Exchange process will explore how we work consistently across all CHR partners to release the pressure on the register whilst seeking to achieve housing options for those in no or low housing need. As above recent data recorded 4863 applicants waiting for social housing with just over 50% of applicants registering as having no housing need in Band D.

**e) Management Transfers**

The review of Management Transfers will aim to allow Common Housing Register partners to have more flexibility in their housing management transfer arrangements. This process is currently restricted by the number of applicants that can be considered for a management transfer and requires approval of the Homefinder Manager which can be onerous and time consuming.

The new proposal being considered in partnership with each Housing Association will enable properties to be considered on a management transfer basis where no other housing solution is possible.

The core principle of the proposal is to

- Reduce the risk of harm to tenants in urgent, potentially life threatening, situations.
- To enable Housing Associations to manage tenant's situations to prevent evictions into homelessness i.e. reduce the number of homeless applications made attached to the loss of housing association accommodation, due to anti- social behaviour or a contract holder (tenant) having housing and support needs which cannot be met in their existing property.
- To enable Housing Associations to move tenants at risk quickly and safely without having to wait for Council approval.

**f) Extra Care**

With the significant demand for adapted housing applicants who are waiting longer for suitable social housing properties to become available to meet their needs, the review will explore how provide information for all types of housing options available for individuals seeking to live independently (with or without support need. We are working closely with the Council's Adult Social Care Department to improve the information available for our Extra Care provision on our Homefinder Website; to enable applicants who have a care and support needs to be aware of this housing option. This will not replace the current process of meeting the assessment and criteria for accessing Extra Care provision.

**g) Rent Arrears**

Currently an applicant who has a former tenant debt with a social or private landlord of above £744 is not eligible to access the CHR unless they lower or clear the debt. The current financial crisis and increasing high rents in the private rented sector are a major concern and can in some cases be a barrier to some of our most vulnerable applicants accessing the register. However, it must be noted that applicants who present as homeless and to whom the Council has a legal duty to assist may, where appropriate, be provided with financial assistance with former tenant debt to assist them in securing an offer of accommodation and or to prevent loss of existing accommodation. It is recognised since completion of the last Common Housing Register review the level of £744 can be less than 1 month's rent for some tenants. The review will explore current barriers which impact on the current rent arrear policy and how these are impacting on applicants applying to the CHR to offer up revised policy document

**Future Housing Supply and Wider Resource Planning**

**Developing high quality affordable housing particularly one bedroom accommodation**

- 4.48 The Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) identifies housing need across Rhondda Cynon Taf. This data along with the Housing Support Plan assessment of need data, is used to prepare a Prospectus that is provided to Welsh Government's Social Housing Grant team each year. The Prospectus informs Welsh Government and other housing partners where we will be investing our allocation of Social Housing Grant and how we have concluded where the investment is needed.
- 4.49 The LHMA will also feed data to Rhondda Cynon Taf's Local Development Plan. This will allow policies to be created that target affordable housing need to aid the Housing Support Programme Strategy. Based on the above data the development of one bedroom accommodation is a priority with an estimated 154 units of social housing planned for completion by 2023/24.

### **New Build Data**

<b>Property Size</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>
	<b>Delivered</b>	<b>Planned</b>
1 Bedroom	43	109
2 Bedroom	10	59
3 Bedroom	8	20
4 Bedroom		6
5 Bedroom		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>195</b>

Source: RCTCBC Housing Strategy Team

### **Social Letting Agency**

- 4.50 A Council run Social Letting Agency has been established in Rhondda Cynon Taf to improve access to longer term, affordable and good quality housing in the private rented sector. The agency is operated by the Council and offers a full management service for landlords who sign up to the terms of the contract with use. Despite attractive landlord financial incentives, there have been initial challenges in setting up the project particularly in attracting landlords who are happy to work with the scheme and to accept rent at the LHA rate minus 10%.
- 4.51 Grant funding from Welsh Government aims to enable the Council fund and secure a maximum of **161** new private rented accommodation properties by 31st March 2027. It is anticipated that the target of 8 properties in 2022/23 will be met due to the current landlord interest in the scheme, although further work will be needed to attract landlords from higher demand areas such as the Taff area.
- 4.52 The role the Social Letting Agency will play in rapid rehousing will be through the provision of an additional supply of housing and will be dependent on a landlord willingness to engage with the agency and



offer up suitable properties at LHA rates. The Council will further encourage take up of offers in the private rented sector through initiatives such as bond payments and by offering a tailored support package from a dedicated housing team.

## **5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

- 5.1 The Council's Housing Allocation Scheme has been designed to ensure fairness and consistency in allocating housing, through setting a fair and transparent framework for assessing housing need and the Allocation Scheme was subject to a full impact assessment before it was agreed by Cabinet in 2018.

## **6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no positive or negative impacts of the report on the Welsh Language.

## **7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

- 7.1 There are no consultation issues arising from the content of this report.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 8.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 9.1 The legislation referenced in the report relates to the Council's statutory obligations under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996, and Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

- 9.2 The Scheme takes into account the Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on "Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness 2016" Issued by the Welsh Government, the Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (Wales) Regulations 2014 and complies with the following:

- The 1996 Housing Act (as amended by the 2002 Homelessness Act)
  - The Equalities Act 2010.
  - The Human Rights Act 1998.
  - The Data Protection Act 1998.
  - The Welsh Language Act 1993.
  - The Rehabilitation and Offenders Act 1974.
  - The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

## 10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

10.1 The Housing Allocation Scheme make a positive contribution towards the Council's Corporate Plan Vision of '*a County Borough that has high aspirations, is confident and promotes opportunity for all*'; as it will deliver against the specific priorities of '*People - Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone and Place - Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work*'. It will also help the Council to meet three of the seven wellbeing goals that The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015' puts in place as follows:

- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales.
- A Wales of cohesive communities.

10.2 The Allocation Scheme and Common Housing Register are consistent with the sustainable approach promoted by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act through the five ways of working:

**Long-term** – the Housing Allocation Scheme assist residents of RCT to secure long term and sustainable housing.

**Prevention** – effective implementation of the Scheme prevents people from becoming homeless. Living in good quality housing that is suitable also helps to prevent ill health.

**Integration** – the Housing Allocation Scheme ensures that the approach to allocating housing in RCT is integrated with other council priorities e.g., helping people to live independently and safely.

**Collaboration** – the Housing Allocation Scheme promotes collaboration between the Council and all Housing Associations with housing stock in the County Borough through a common way of allocating all available social housing.

**Involvement** – The effective implementation of the Housing Allocation Scheme requires the involvement of the Council and its housing association partner and other third sector and statutory agencies.

10.3 The Sustainable Development Principle and the 5 ways of working have been fully considered in the development and operation of the RCTCBC Allocation Scheme which are heavily focused on meeting the long-term needs of applicant through the provision of affordable housing and wider housing related support provision.

10.4 In consideration of the seven wellbeing goals and the principle to improve the quality of life for people being assessed for housing and those housed through Homefinder RCT. These include highlighting clients who will need long term support to help them sustain their home as well as integrate into their local communities and help them to work to their strengths and support them to achieve their aspirations.

**11. CONCLUSION**

11.1 It is recommended that Scrutiny Committee note the challenges and actions being taken in response to the allocation of social housing in Rhondda Cynon Taf by the Council and RSL partners.

This page is intentionally left blank