

Tai Tarian Storyboard: **Our Business**

**March 2024**



**OUR  
BUSINESS**

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# Introduction

**Throughout the year we assess our performance and the difference we are making not only for our tenants but across our communities too.**

**Our Storyboards have 4 key themes:**

- Sustainable Homes
- Sustainable Communities
- Sustainable Planet and
- Our Business

All are aligned closely to our Corporate Plan. For each theme, local outcomes have been developed with key stakeholders including our staff and tenants.

We work with an independent group of tenants and associate members known as the Academy to review the outcomes of our work and provide feedback through several Storyboards.

**The local outcomes for all four themes, as decided by the group are:**

- We deliver value for money to make the best use of our resources
- We are accountable to our customers
- Customers have opportunities to make a choice

**We act on our customers' feedback and are committed to continuously improving our services:**

- We understand our customers and deliver services that meet their needs
- Our tenants and members are able to influence decision making and shape our services

The Academy felt these local outcomes should be a 'golden thread' throughout all Storyboards and should be visually prominent within each.

## Our Business:

**The storyboard titled 'Our Business' captures outcomes in the areas of governance and organisational development. This storyboard has two local outcomes, these are:**

- 1.** We are an employer of choice
- 2.** The whole organisation is effectively governed and is aligned to delivery of its vision





## **We are an employer of choice**

### **Introduction**

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**We continue to be an employer of choice, placing a strong emphasis on employee wellbeing, fostering an open and positive work environment, and actively investing in our staff development. Through our 'Let's Talk' and succession framework initiatives we understand the needs of our people and that of the business, ensuring comprehensive training and development opportunities are available.**

**Offering competitive and rewarding terms and conditions also helps create an environment where staff feel valued, leading to higher job satisfaction.**

### **Academy evaluation**

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**The Academy were pleased that our commitment to health and wellbeing has continued with several new initiatives introduced including a wellbeing week where local services were also promoted.**

**They were also happy that people still regard us as an employer of choice, that terms and conditions have been enhanced, that recruitment has been regular during the year, with lots of applications for these jobs.**



# Looking after our wellbeing

Employee health and wellbeing continues to be firmly embedded in our culture.

This has helped create a positive work environment where staff feel supported and valued.

## i-Act

We have been working with i-Act, the UK's leading provider of workplace mental health and wellbeing training since 2020.

All managers have been coached in how to look after the wellbeing of their staff and themselves with 360 colleagues also embarking on training. Our in house i-Act instructor continues to host sessions periodically.

## EAP

Our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) has been relaunched, a 24/7 confidential telephone service for employees to call when they need support.

It gives access to a GP service 24 hours a day, which is also made available to staff's family members.

It offers self-serve online advice supporting wellbeing, both mentally and physically, with a wide range of resources to access.

## Mates in Mind

Our sponsorship with Mates in Mind has continued, focused on looking after men in construction, who may be reluctant to share how they feel.

The BEAMATE texting service is regularly promoted to our trades.

## Wellbeing week

Our annual wellbeing week was held, launching a number of online tools and both face to face and virtual workshops on a range of topics including financial wellbeing, nutrition, employee benefits, mental health and health screenings.

## Building relationships

The Organisational Development team has worked hard to build relationships with colleagues working across our communities. They have talked about all things wellbeing, offering support, promoting services and signposting to other agencies.

## Training resources

Our training platform Skillbox has also been bolstered with new health and wellbeing training resources including courses, pre-recorded material, toolkits and information on a variety of wellbeing topics.

## Wellbeing community

A dedicated wellbeing communication channel on Viva Engage has also been created to encourage colleagues to talk about wellbeing campaigns and initiatives and share their experiences.

## Staff feedback:

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“After going along to the wellbeing workshop, I will now spend more time listening to people and take time out to relax and look after my own mental health.”

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# Health & Her – menopause awareness in the workplace

Our commitment to looking after our staff saw us being shortlisted for a Welsh Housing Award in the excellence in staff wellbeing category.

Working with Health & Her, a leading organisation specialising in menopause, we have provided support to staff, recognising that menopause affects all colleagues, either directly or indirectly.

## Why?



**1 in 4** women consider leaving the workplace because of menopause



**10%** of women have left their job because of issues related to menopause



**4.4 million** people in the working population are menopausal

Working in partnership with Health & Her we carried out a staff survey to determine what a future support programme could look like and encouraged everyone to download an app, which provides an abundance of information and advice on all things menopause.

Line managers took part in a 90-minute virtual training session about the potential effects of menopause on those going through it, and how to support their employees through the journey.

Menopause awareness training was also provided to all to give colleagues a better understanding of what menopause is and its impact, with an emphasis on supporting our colleagues.

**Organisational Development and Learning Manager Kelly Mordecai said:**



“Despite menopause affecting 100% of people either directly or indirectly there remains a lack of understanding around the complexity of the condition and the impacts of menopause across the board. We are proud that we are breaking down barriers and taboos around menopause.

“Official figures from the British Menopause Society show 42% of women experiencing menopausal symptoms said they were worse than they expected, and data from the Local Government Association shows 59% of women aged between 45 and 55 said their symptoms were having a negative impact on their work life.

“That’s why we’ve been looking into the best way we can support our colleagues at all stages of menopause, with Health & Her providing the right mix of medical and holistic support for us all.”





# A renewed focus on equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I)

**Committed to embracing individual differences and identities in the workplace and our communities, we have recently appointed an ED&I Partner.**

We are an inclusive employer and landlord, but this renewed focus on ED&I will help us understand our people and what protected characteristics they may have, adapting and tailoring our approaches to suit them.

We also celebrate diversity within our communities, ensuring staff have the right training, building an inclusive leadership culture.



## The ED&I plan



### **Training**

A new training programme for all staff will be designed and rollout will begin in 2024.



### **Equality Impact Assessments**

Relaunch our equality impact assessment process including training for all managers. All policies, procedures and processes will undergo equality impact assessments in 2024. Something our tenants will play a part in.



### **Knowing our people**

Biggest challenge for us around equality is monitoring data for colleagues and tenants so that we understand our people. This is a priority for 2024.



### **Inclusion calendar**

An ED&I calendar of events will continue to raise the ED&I profile and increase engagement. Involvement in our communities will be key.

## Academy question

**Q:** How would we capture this data?

**A:** We can't have a one size fits all approach. Lots of tenants would be happy to complete a survey online but it's important that we look at other ways to speak to people. We want to build on relationships we already have and look to chat to people face to face too. A nice mix would be our approach to capture as much information as possible.



## Something for the future

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The QED Award (Quality in Equality and Diversity), developed by Welsh housing charity, Tai Pawb, provides a comprehensive framework for improving the equality and diversity impact of an organisation.

Awarded by an independent panel, it reports on strategic areas such as governance, leadership and culture as well as customer-facing service provision, including access and tenant involvement.



## Let's Talk

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We launched Let's Talk in April 2023 to replace our Making a Difference Dialogue (MADD).

A flexible and informal way to capture conversations and set goals for staff.

**99%** of goal setting conversations have taken place with employees to date.

The next phase is career development conversations, capturing the aspirations of employees. This looks at where our talent is within the organisation, asking who our future leaders are and planning those career pathways.

The tool has been developed and is available on all work devices, meaning regular conversations can take place and be recorded wherever suits.





## **“Our Talent” succession framework**

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**A new succession framework has been designed to capture and support our talent within the organisation, supporting workforce planning, employee development and growth.**

Once we determine the career aspirations and performance levels of employees, we will develop a process to nurture and support them to be the best they can be, encouraging development within, based on organisational needs.

## **Career pathways and training programmes**

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With succession planning there will be career and learning pathways to support an employee's journey.

Training programmes will also be developed to provide valuable learning experiences for our talent.

## **Apprenticeships**

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**We are looking to develop our apprenticeship programme to provide a wider experience for our learners.**

This will include working within wider teams, contractors and suppliers to gain valuable knowledge and skill outside their initial subject area. Current apprentices are working on our County Flats development with our contractors Hale, a great opportunity for them to experience the development side of construction.





## Our Futures' Event

**Last year we held our first careers fayre at Tŷ Gwyn.**

It involved a series of workshops to support interview and CV writing skills, as well as employees sharing their career and development journeys, inspiring colleagues to think about their next career move at the organisation.

Teams also set up shop to chat with colleagues about their area of the business, what skills are needed in their department and what potential opportunities may arise in the future.

An inspiring day to encourage people to learn new skills, understand the diverse nature of the business and to help raise awareness of the support available to staff to realise their potential.



## Training compliance

**We are committed to ensuring staff have the training they need to carry out their jobs effectively.**

After a difficult few years where face to face training was paused, it was great to catch up and proactively plan a whole year ahead for all mandatory and role specific training activity in 2023.

**100%** compliance with mandatory training

**2769** Total Training Days

**£160,000** Total Training Spend

**6 days** Total Average Training Days (Per Employee)

**£50,000** Welsh Government funding

(April 2023 to December 2023)

This funding has supported employees to receive valuable training in areas such as environmental training, IT training and further and higher education courses such as CIH level 3 & 4, HND construction and ILM leadership qualifications.



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government





# Leadership programme

The 5-3-5 leadership programme aims to develop our people into effective leaders, It's not just about training but giving participants the skills and knowledge to support their people to deliver success.

Like all behaviours, leadership runs through our values which falls under three categories:-



## Be bold:

The idea is that to be effective, leaders can never live only in today. They need to be forward thinking about how processes, and technology need to improve, or how people can be empowered differently.

This allows leaders to describe the future to their teams in ways that motivates them.



## Be fair:

The basics of making sure everyone knows what is expected and how things should be done. Creating a sense of order and clarity.

This enables people to get on with things, so their natural motivation is captured and enjoyed.



## Be kind:

This addresses the point that people work better for a leader who cares about them by showing empathy and practical ways of caring.

Having a holistic awareness of different elements of wellbeing is increasingly important in the modern workplace.

## Line manager training

We have seven training cohorts that include all of our leaders who have embarked on the Leadership 5:3:5 journey. A detailed training programme is scheduled for the year.

We aim to develop a coaching style of leadership. An initial introduction to coaching for success is part of the leadership development programme. We are looking at options for professional coaching company to facilitate this much bigger project for us over the coming years.

## Senior leadership training

The senior leadership team have monthly practical leadership workshops to explore various leadership topics and themes to support a "One Team" ethos.



# Continuing to grow our workforce – recruitment

We have improved the candidate experience by changing our recruitment processes, reducing the time it takes from application to hire.

A new recruitment candidate pack is being designed to help promote our job opportunities. It will have a professional feel that shows we are a great place to work and help attract talent.



## Academy question

**Q:** How is equality built into the recruitment process?

**A:** Equality data on applicants is asked for as part of our recruitment process.

We have a positive approach to diversity which allows us to select the best person for the job based on merit alone. This is free from bias on the grounds of factors such as age, disability, gender or race that are not relevant to the person's ability to do the job.





## Gender pay gap

We are asked to report on our gender pay gap annually, it is a legal requirement.

The mean gender pay gap in hourly pay is the difference between the average of men and women's pay. The % highlights that more women are in higher paid (more senior) roles, which is against the national trend.

**2023 - 4.30%**  
**2022 - 1.27%**

## Better T&C's

In the last year staff have benefited from enhanced terms and conditions.

- ✓ An uplift of 2 days Christmas leave for employees who joined after April 2016.
- ✓ Holidays harmonised to match pre 2016 employees.
- ✓ 2 weeks paid paternity leave.
- ✓ All employees to receive the 'Real Living Wage' including apprentices and Copper Foundation employees.

## Employee voice



All staff engagement survey to take place early 2024

Employee Voice is a series of different platforms for staff to have their ideas and voices heard so they can influence change and help shape the future of the organisation.

It also allows leaders to relay key messages to employees and gather feedback.

It is important for employees to see that their suggestions are playing an integral role in business decision making so that they feel engaged.

Engaged employees will:

- Feel valued, trusted and happy
- Be more motivated and demonstrate a feeling of attachment to the business
- Be more dedicated to their work which will improve performance





## Great Place to Work Group

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### What is it:

**The Great Place to Work Group is a diverse body of employees representing their colleagues from all different areas of the business.**

- They review organisation updates, developments, or any significant change programmes, getting views from their peers and giving feedback to senior managers.
- The group will also be able to raise any concerns from an employee perspective.
- It is a two-way forum for employees and managers to have open communication.

## Part of decisions

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In the last year the group have been involved in key decisions around our values, the updating of Tŷ Gwyn, plans for an all-staff event and the ways in which senior leaders communicate with staff.

Their voices are heard, and they make a valuable contribution to the business.

## Friends and family scheme

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Our friends and family recruitment scheme has helped the business on a short-term basis when project work or administrative support has been needed. It has offered development opportunities for those looking to get back into work or looking to enhance their CV during a break in study.

So far, the scheme has been really successful offering the opportunity for participants to develop their skills across the housing sector while it also positively reinforces us as an employer of choice when they are ready for permanent work.

### Academy question

**Q:** Is there scope for fixed term contracts to become permanent, especially if someone is performing well?

**A:** This depends on circumstances, someone could be covering sickness absence or maternity leave so the fixed term role is likely to be just that.

In this case we would encourage any good employee to look elsewhere within the business, so they can stay with us.



## **The whole organisation is effectively governed and aligned to its vision**

### **Introduction**

**Our organisations success is woven through effective governance, financial strength and a strong alignment with our vision to make a difference.**

**Transparency and accountability are key principles of good governance. Our Board of Non Executive Directors set the strategic direction of the organisation and supports the Executive team to deliver the strategy.**

**Good governance is important in all areas of our business and the Board and it's committees play a critical role in overseeing our business, making sure the interests of our tenants are at the centre of our work.**

**Routine audits are a key element of our governance system, these audits make sure that we are a financially sound organisation, that we are managing our risks well and the controls we have in place to reduce risk are working for us.**

### **Academy evaluation**

**The Academy were pleased with how the business is being governed, viewing the Board and the way in which committees have been established as a robust way to ensure transparency, accountability and sound decision making.**

**They felt confident that the business is financially strong with good management of risk.**



## Our Board

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**“Good Governance is fundamental to the success of all organisations.”**

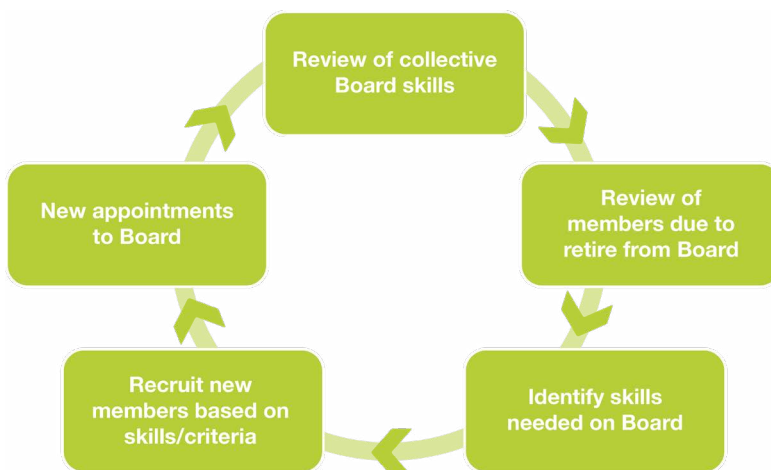
CHC Cymru, code of governance

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Our Board are a diverse, entrepreneurial group of people who provide strategic leadership and control while overseeing the organisation's performance.

They have responsibility for decisions about the organisation's finances, standards and policies, ensuring the highest levels of assurance from the Executive/Management Team.

### Succession process:



## The right people

Having the right skills and experience on the Board is essential, so we have a robust process in place to find the right people.

Role profiles are in place for each Non-Executive Director. All have key responsibilities and standards of performance to abide by, with everyone expected to:

- Oversee and set the long-term strategic direction including monitoring risk.
- Collectively set and uphold the mission, vision, values, strategic objectives for the organisation.
- Contribute to establishing a framework for approving policies and plans to achieve those objectives.
- Ensure major risks to which the organisation is exposed are reviewed regularly and an effective risk management framework is maintained.
- Collectively approve appropriate levels of remuneration for the Chief Executive and Executive Team.





## The right people cont.

A detailed induction is in place for all new members of the Board and there is an annual review of individual performance, something which is also carried out independently every three years.

A skills matrix assessment ensures the effectiveness of the Board. It scores members on:

- Leadership
- Strategy
- Organisational development
- Financial viability experience

Doing so helps to understand where it may have skills gaps and feeds into a development programme.

Non-Executive Directors also have a personalised training plan, which includes mandatory training on:

- Risk management
- Health and safety
- Equality and diversity
- Data protection

## Acting with integrity



The Board follow a code of conduct that reflects the organisation's values



Non-Executive Directors disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interests



Board ensures policies reflect that the organisation works responsibly and ethically



One Non-Executive Director cannot unduly influence decisions of the Board



All gifts and hospitality are reported and recorded



Board ensures the organisation follows all applicable laws



They ensure that company reports and statements are accurate and timely

## Governance framework

This sets out the decision-making process for Board.

It outlines the decisions the Board must retain for itself and sets out the areas that committees will scrutinise on behalf of the Board, or where they will have decision making powers, delegated to them.

We have 5 sub committees, and a subsidiary that report to Board.

- Audit and Risk Committee
- Asset Management Committee
- Operations Committee
- Remuneration and Nominations Committee
- Schedule One Committee
- Tirnod Board





## Tirnod – our subsidiary

**In 2020 we created a new trading subsidiary company, Tirnod, with ambitious aims to embark on a wide range of sustainable projects to enhance housing provision in Wales.**

Tirnod supported Sevenoaks Modular, a Neath-based business specialising in timber frame/modular manufacturing to increase its production of modular housing.

The partnership has increased the production of new offsite manufactured homes including fully modular construction units, delivered to site, lifted into position via a crane and erected quickly.

**Tirnod and SevenOaks joint outcomes include:**

- New homes
- Testing new technologies (wool and mycelium insulation)
- Job opportunities and apprenticeships
- Upskilling locally

## Internal Audit

Audits provide independent assurance that our risk management, governance and internal processes are operating effectively. There is an annual audit strategy in place, which is scrutinised by Audit and Risk Committee.

**23 audits in 2022/23**

**- 96% received substantial assurance**

**25 audits completed or planned for 2023/24**

**20 audits planned for 2024/25**





# Welsh Government - regulatory judgment

**Each year the Welsh Government publish a regulatory judgement for each housing association in Wales.**

The purpose of the assessment is to ensure the organisation is well governed, with good levels of tenant involvement.

It also assesses if risks facing the business are well managed, that there are robust processes in place to assess performance and that measures are being taken to continually improve the services offered to customers.



**Standard**  
the highest possible rating.

The assessment also looks at our financial performance to ensure that we are financially sound and are delivering value for money in all areas of the business.

Our regulatory judgement is published on our website and is shown above.

## The standards we are required to meet are:

**RS1** The organisation has effective strategic leadership and governance arrangements which enables it to achieve its purpose and obligations

**RS2** Robust risk management and assurance arrangements are in place

**RS3** High quality services are delivered to tenants

**RS4** Tenants are empowered and supported to influence the design and delivery of services

**RS5** Rents and service charges are affordable for current and future tenants

**RS6** The organisation has a strategic approach to value for money which informs all its plans and activities

**RS7** Financial planning and management is robust and effective

**RS8** Assets and liabilities are well managed

**RS9** The organisation provides high quality accommodation



# Our Business Plan

**Our Business Plan provides our financial forecast over the next 30 years.**

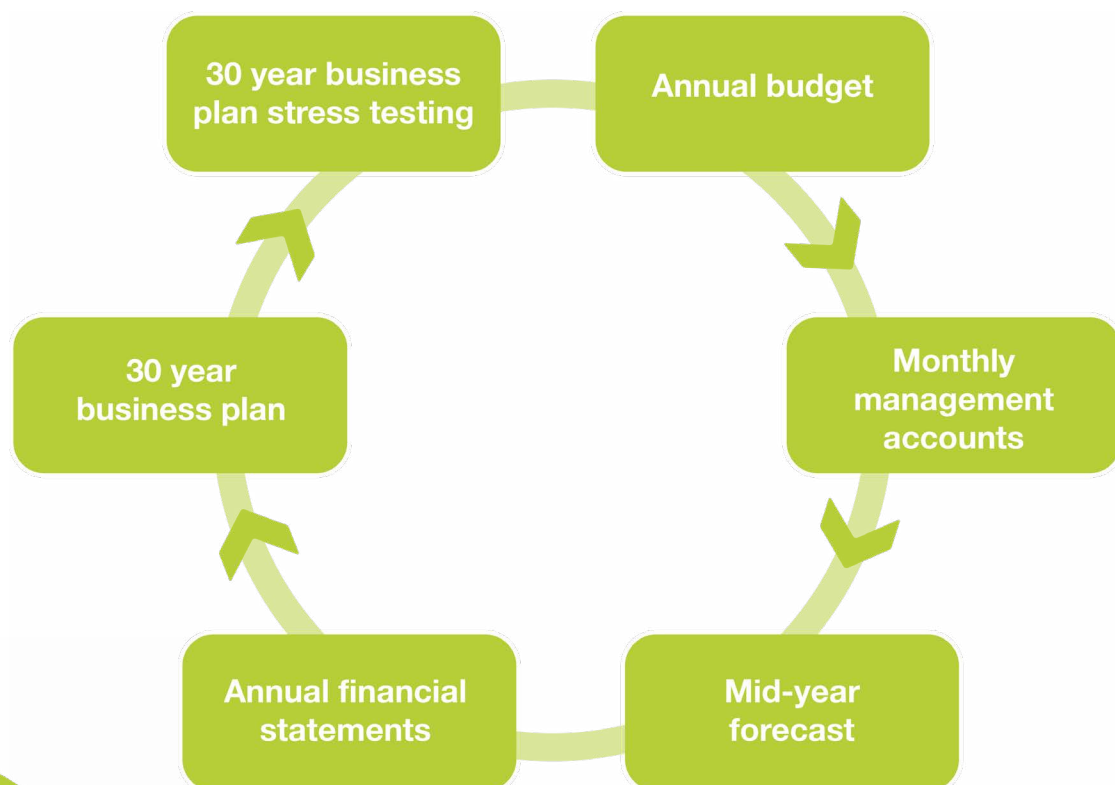
It's an important planning tool to ensure we meet our service delivery needs and that we are financially viable. It helps us understand the business, improves decision making, tests against possible risks to our plan and forms part of our Welsh Government Regulatory Assessment.

We review this annually and the process involves people from across the business establishing what our priorities are, what resources we need, while making assumptions on things like cost of materials and inflation.



**Our credit rating is the strongest in the Welsh housing sector and one of the highest in the UK.**

## Our Business Plan process:





# Plan for the next 10 years

## 1. Invest £90m to build approximately 60-80 new homes per year.

We want these to be energy efficient, in the right place and of high quality.

## 2. Invest £134m in improving existing homes.

We will upgrade roofs, kitchens, bathrooms and replace windows to encourage functionality.

We will also make homes more energy efficient with external wall insulation, heating systems and introducing new technology where appropriate.

## 3. Investing £150m in maintaining existing homes.

This includes our responsive repairs, gas and electric compliance obligations and work to our empty (void) homes.

### Budgeting process:

- This provides a system of planning, co-ordination and control for the organisation to ensure services are delivered and value for money is obtained
- Reported to Board for scrutiny and approval
- Reviewed at the half year point (mid-year forecast)

### Financial reporting process:

- Management accounts are prepared monthly and reviewed by the executive management team
- They are reported to Board to review and approve prior to being submitted to Welsh Government quarterly
- There is an annual independent audit of our financial statements by our external auditor
- Audit findings and audit opinion are reported to Board





# Understanding risk

**Risks are the things that can stand in our way, so we need to ask ourselves what is the likelihood of it happening and how can we manage it?**

Risk is reported regularly to Board for scrutiny, with assurances needed around mitigation.



## Definition:

“The possibility that an event or action will affect an organisation’s ability to achieve its business objectives and execute its strategies”

Business objectives include those which are set out in our Corporate Plan but will also include some other fundamental objectives, such as compliance with the law and continuing the existence of the organisation.

Our corporate risk register is used to record the risks to the business, together with the action taken to reduce the likelihood of risks materialising. Every Non-Executive Director, manager and employee has some responsibility for risk identification and risk management.



Our Board and Committees routinely monitor the significant risks facing the organisation, including emerging risks that may not already be included, together with how risks are being managed, providing assurance to the Board that risk is being managed and any gaps are being addressed.



## Covenant compliance

(a promise that our money isn’t at risk)

**We have the tightest covenants in the housing sector due to the way in which the business was formed following a stock transfer and because this happened just after a financial crisis.**

## Academy question

**Q: Is the pending closure of Tata Steel a risk to the business?**

**A:** There is huge uncertainty in the area at the moment and what we don’t know yet is how many tenants will be impacted by the closure. The impact locally will be far greater than the 3,000 directly employed staff, with many organisations and small businesses within the supply chain being impacted.

We are engaging with Welsh Government, the Local Authority and our local MP to see what opportunities can be created. We know there is a shortage of construction and trade operatives in the area so there may be opportunities for us to work with this skilled workforce and support them and this will be something we will keep a close eye on over the coming months.



# Value for money

**Value for Money is about getting the most from our money and ensuring that customers rent payments go further.**

Every £1 spent by the organisation fulfills our Corporate Plan objectives, securing optimal value for our operations and deriving the highest benefit from our investments.

**Our Value for Money model aligns with the 4 E's of Value for Money:**

- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Economy and
- Equity



Along with our objectives, operational costs and investments, with equity (fairness) at the centre of the model, to ensure we do not disadvantage any individuals or communities in our pursuit of value for money.



**For every £1 we spend, £1.99 is reinvested in the local area.**

## Action



Academy would like a follow up session with finance exploring how we source funding streams and grants from government.

They would also like to look at indicators on global accounts to see how we compare against the rest of the housing sector.



