

## CABINET – 2ND JULY 2014

**SUBJECT: ROWAN PLACE, RHYMNEY**

**REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND SECTION 151 OFFICER**

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- 1.1 Having previously been considered by the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on the 22nd May 2014, The attached report was presented to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on the 3rd June 2014, in relation to the repairs and improvement works at Rowan Place, Rhymney.
- 1.2 Surveys of the properties at Rowan Place had identified severe damp and extensive defects to the external fabric of the buildings, and significant additional works would be required to bring the stock up to WHQS standard. The Task Group considered the recommendations contained in the Officers report and fully endorsed recommendations 9.1.1, 9.1.3, 9.1.4, 9.1.5, 9.1.6 and 9.1.7. However, they were unable to reach agreement on a preferred course of action regarding recommendation 9.1.2 on whether to pursue limited selective demolition, and sought the determination of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee in this regard.
- 1.3 The Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee discussed the report's recommendations in detail and a number of concerns were raised regarding limited selective demolition. Members queried the number of vacant properties currently in Rowan Place and Officers clarified the reasons and duration of the voids. Members commented on welfare and antisocial behaviour issues and the impact that demolition would have on the area. Discussion also took place in relation to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard and appropriate consultation processes should a demolition programme be pursued.
- 1.4 Having fully considered the report and the deliberations of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee unanimously endorsed the following recommendations to Cabinet: -
  1. A revised approach to Rowan Place by bringing forward the external works to be undertaken in parallel with the internal works in view of the extent of the damp problems. The works to be reprogrammed to commence during 2014/15;
  2. To accept the estimated additional costs of £3.615m to be funded within the Business Plan flexibilities;
  3. Properties suffering severe damp where damage is extensive to undergo a full internal refurbishment and tenants offered the opportunity to relocate to a newly refurbished property (voids) in Rowan Place. The extent of internal refurbishment to other properties to be determined by their condition at the time of the works;
  4. That the WHQS Project Board be given delegated authority to determine the most appropriate contractual arrangements between the in-house team and contractors to expedite the works to meeting the new timeline;

5. Other previous commitments to establish a multi-agency task group to tackle the social problems and to create a show flat and welfare facilities are reaffirmed;
  6. The tenants are kept informed about the programming of the repairs and improvement works.
- 1.5 With regard to the recommendation on whether to pursue selective demolition (as listed in 1.6.1 of the report to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, Members of that Committee unanimously agreed the REMOVAL of this recommendation: -
1. Whether to pursue limited selective demolition to reduce the overall number of 2 bedroom flats given the large concentration in Rowan Place. However, if this option is followed, consultation with residents in Rowan Place should take place at the earliest possible opportunity, including discussion on the after use of the cleared site.
- 1.6 Members are invited to consider the report and the series of recommendations from the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee as detailed in paragraphs 1.4 and 1.5.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 Report to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 3rd June 2014 – Agenda Item 7(4)