

HOUSING TASK GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

PURPOSE

1. To agree the overall strategic direction and allocation of resources appertaining to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard, and the housing service.
2. To ensure the achievement of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard is consistent with and complimentary to the Council's Regeneration Strategy.
3. To act as a consultative group on all matters relating to the public housing service.
4. To monitor progress in achieving the Welsh Housing Quality Standard and the service improvement commitments made in the addendum document issued to tenants as part of the ballot process.
5. To keep under review Welsh Government housing policy changes, to respond as appropriate, and to address the implications for the housing service within the County Borough.
6. To ensure effective tenant engagement is embedded as part of the decision-making processes.
7. To oversee the annual service improvement plan, the implementation of service changes and performance management.
8. To receive regular reports on the WHQS programme work streams and make recommendations as appropriate to the Cabinet Sub-Committee.
9. To explore collaborative arrangements with other local authorities and/or RSLs.
10. To fulfil the public housing scrutiny role.

POWERS

The Housing Task Group has recommendatory powers only. The remit relates to all public housing and related matters. Housing functions and activities should be integrated with other programmes and initiatives to ensure a holistic approach. This is particularly relevant to the investment programme, which should be developed and managed in such a way to bring wider regeneration benefits to communities and support the creation of local job opportunities.

CONSTITUTION

The Housing Task Group will be recognised as part of the Council's formal structure and will have an ongoing role related to the delivery of WHQS and its maintenance thereafter.

The Task Group will have seven Councillors with cross party representation. Three places will be taken by the Cabinet Sub-Committee Members. The Cabinet Sub-Committee will make any formal decisions in accord with the Council's Constitution. The Cabinet Sub-

Committee will normally meet immediately following the Task Group. The relevant Cabinet Members will be the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing; the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources; and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development or their equivalents when the Council/Cabinet is reconstituted at any AGM. Four places will be allocated to be taken by back bench Members drawn from all parties in so far as practical to represent political balance.

The Task Group will have seven tenant representatives. Three tenants will represent the Eastern Valleys, two tenants will represent the Lower Rhymney Valley, and two tenants will represent the Upper Rhymney Valley. All tenants will be canvassed and given the opportunity to express an interest in becoming a representative. The appointment process should be through a tenant electoral college where tenants appoint their representatives. The Council will facilitate the process and provide the appointed tenant representatives with any training required to support their role.

The Tenants Representatives will be required to sign an undertaking to abide by the Members Code of Conduct.

The Task Group will appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair. The Chair and Vice-Chair should alternate between Councillors and tenants on an annual basis. In order that the Task Group can properly fulfil the scrutiny function and that the Cabinet Sub Committee can exercise its delegated authority the Cabinet Members on the Task Group will not act as either Chair or Vice-Chair.

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

It is anticipated that the Task Group will meet every six weeks to reflect the Council's cycle of meetings. However, there may be additional meetings at first as part of an induction process to bring the Task Group up to date with developments. Ad hoc meetings may be convened with the agreement of the Chair and Vice-Chair to deal with urgent matters.

Meetings will normally be held in Penallta House. However, alternative locations around the County Borough may be used from time to time.

SUPPORT MECHANISMS

The Task Group will be supported by the work of the officer Project Board led by the Deputy Chief Executive. Agendas will normally be agreed by the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Task Group, and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing. Any member of the Task Group can request a report on any relevant matter. The Deputy Chief Executive will determine when such reports may be able to be brought forward. Arrangements will be made to learn from best practice in other organisations, both local authorities and RSLs, either by visits or from visiting speakers.

Officers from the WHQS Delivery Team will attend the Housing Task Group to advise on specific matters as required. Other officers from the Housing Service or other Directorates will attend dependent on agenda items.

All communications either internally or externally on behalf of the Housing Task Group will be coordinated by the Council's Communications Officer seconded to the WHQS Delivery Team.

The Housing Task Group will be serviced by staff from Committee Services.

September 2012