



## CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 13TH MARCH 2014

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON THE TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR WORK STREAM**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group (CHTG) with an update on the progress of the Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour work stream over the past 12 months.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour work stream was established to consider ways of preventing and addressing anti-social behaviour (ASB) and to improve the quality of life and the environment for tenants and the wider community.
- 2.2 Each task identified during the stock transfer consultation process has been looked at separately.
- 2.3 The Your Home Your Choice document issued to tenants prior to the stock transfer ballot referred to a strengthened ASB service and pledged an extra budget of £50,000 per year to assist in meeting this aim. An update of how the service has and will be strengthened is provided in the main body of the report.

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The overarching aims of Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) in relation to anti-social behaviour and crime reduction are detailed in Caerphilly Delivers – The Single Integrated Plan 2013 - 2017. They are as follows:

Prosperous Caerphilly

P2 – Improve standards of housing and communities, giving appropriate access to services across the county borough.

Safer Caerphilly

S1 – Reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour and reduce fear of becoming a victim of anti-social behaviour for residents.

S4 – Ensure people are supported to live in their own homes and communities in safety.

- 3.2 The Council's Local Housing Strategy "People, Property, and Places" has the following aims:

Aim 6 - To provide good quality, well managed houses in communities where people want to live, and offer people housing choices, which meet their needs and aspirations.

Aim 11 – To promote sustainable and mixed communities that are located in safe and attractive environments.

3.3 The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and the Code of Guidance provided by Welsh Government to assist social landlords in their development of a policy and procedure, encouraged and emphasised a 3-strand strategy for dealing with nuisance and anti-social behaviour – prevention, support and enforcement. The CCBC Housing Division, Statement of Policy and Procedure for Anti-Social Behaviour produced and followed by the Tenancy Enforcement Section is consistent with the overarching corporate aims and reflects the 3 strand strategy, emphasises an incremental approach to investigating and dealing with ASB and reflects good practice in this field.

3.4 The Council's Strategic Equalities Plan has the following aim:

Equality Objective 1 – Tackling Identity based hate crime: – To reduce the levels of real or perceived instances of identity based abuse, bullying, harassment and violence, hate crime and hate incidents in the county borough.

#### **4. THE REPORT**

4.1 The following proposals/updates have been made in relation to the tasks identified under Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour work stream:

4.2 Introduction of Starter Tenancies

A starter tenancy is for new lettings to tenants (does not include transfers) and is granted for a probationary period of one year. If the tenancy is conducted satisfactorily the tenancy then converts to a secure tenancy. The council does not offer such tenancies at present. However, the Welsh Government has consulted on 'Homes for Wales – A White Paper for Better Lives and Communities 2012' in preparation for the Housing Bill 2013. One of the proposals is for a significant change to the existing law on tenancy types offered by both public and private sector landlords. It is suggested that the number and types of tenancies currently available causes confusion due to the complex legal issues surrounding the administration of tenancies and can prevent or discourage movement between the social housing and private housing sectors. Reducing the type and number of tenancies will allow flexibility and clarity for tenants. It has been recognised that this is a major change and will require consultation and a separate Housing Bill specifically relating to Tenancy Reform. Consultation has already taken place on the Housing White Paper – Renting Homes – a better way for Wales. To undertake work on the introduction of Starter Tenancies would be in conflict with the proposed tenancy reform planned by Welsh Government.

This task has been temporarily put on hold due to the pending tenancy reform of all tenancy types by Welsh Government.

4.3 Good Neighbour Scheme

It is proposed that a Good Neighbour reward scheme should be developed in consultation with tenants to encourage community spirit and enterprise. There would be a budget of £2000 per annum to support monthly awards to tenants, once the details of the scheme are developed.

A good neighbour is more than a neighbour who is not anti-social; a good neighbour comprises many different and positive characteristics. The task does link more closely with the Transforming Lives and Communities work stream where neighbourhood, community and tenancy engagement feature strongly. Once the scheme has been developed it could be promoted by all staff to encourage tenants to participate. This was identified in the Transforming Lives and Communities report to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on the 25 October 2012.

The Good Neighbour Scheme has been reallocated to the Transforming Lives and Communities work stream. Options are currently being considered.

#### 4.4 Community Safety Initiatives/Community Safety Fund

This scheme has a separate budget of £50,000 a year for 5 years. The task was added to the Transforming Lives and Communities Work stream. It will be used to tackle safety, security and anti social behaviour on council housing estates. The fund is managed by the Strategic Coordination Manager in consultation with the lead officer for the Tackling Anti Social Behaviour work stream. Decisions on the use of the fund will be made by Caerphilly Homes Task Group and Cabinet Sub Committee.

A report was submitted to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 23 January 2014, which approved the purchase of two redeployable 3G CCTV wireless cameras to help tackle nuisance and anti-social behaviour. The one-off cost is to be met via the Community Safety Fund, while on-going costs will be met via the Strengthening the Anti-Social Behaviour Service budget managed by the Tenancy Enforcement Manager.

#### 4.5 Partnership Working

Since the introduction of the Tenancy Enforcement Section in 2005 links have been developed with other agencies to work in partnership to reduce anti-social and criminal behaviour. Partnership working is regularly undertaken with the following agencies:

- Heddlu Gwent Police - Officers from the Tenancy Enforcement Section attend and participate in the following partnership meetings:
  - Domestic Abuse Conference Calls (DACC) – daily (up to 20 hours per week)
  - Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) – Where high risk domestic abuses cases are discussed and actions agreed - fortnightly
  - Local Policing Unit Tasking Meetings – where high volume callers/incidents/areas are discussed - monthly
  - CCBC Hate Crime Group – quarterly
  - Crime & Disorder Act 1998, Section 115 meetings relating to individuals being investigated by the Tenancy Enforcement Section
  - Attendance at Police drug raids on council properties
  - Police occasionally need to attend evictions
  - Joint home visits with Police and Community Support Officers for the investigation of crime and disorder
  - Pan Gwent Social Landlords Police & Crime Commissioner Meetings – quarterly
  - Housing Review Panel – Meeting with Police, and Housing Associations to discuss problematic tenants/prospective tenants - quarterly
- *Community Safety Partnership* – Officers from the Tenancy Enforcement Section attend and participate in the following partnership meetings:
  - Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC) Strike 3 Intervention Group - monthly
  - ABC signings involving Council tenants - monthly
  - Problem Solving Group – discussions about applications for Anti Social Behaviour Orders – 6 weekly
  - Caerphilly Domestic Abuse Forum - quarterly
- Children’s Services - Officers from the Tenancy Enforcement Section attend and participate in the following partnership meetings:
  - Children’s Services Core Group meetings
  - Child Protection Conference meetings
  - Ad hoc information sharing meetings about individuals being investigated

- *Youth Offending Teams* - Tenancy Enforcement Officers attend and participate in the Youth Inclusion Support Panel (YISP) monthly meetings
- *Adult Services/ Mental Health Services* – Officers from the Tenancy Enforcement Section make referrals via the ASDIT process and attend meetings as required, including POVA meetings.
- *Shelter Cymru Valley's Inclusion Project (VIP) and Lasting Solutions Family Intervention Project (FIP)* - Both of these projects provide wide-ranging support to tenants and residents of CCBC who are involved in anti-social behaviour (ASB). The VIP works with families with low to medium level needs and the FIP with families who have high-level complex needs. To qualify for a referral there must be a link to ASB. The Tenancy Enforcement Manager facilitates both projects on behalf of CCBC and has regular meetings with the project managers. There are currently 10 tenants and their families receiving support from VIP and 2 from FIP. The Tenancy Enforcement Section works with the VIP and FIP to resolve issues of ASB.

Joint working with the above-mentioned agencies and other support agencies is routine for the Tenancy Enforcement Section in their effort to prevent and reduce anti-social behaviour. The aim is to continue to enhance and improve existing relationships and where possible to form new ones.

#### 4.6 Strengthening the Anti-Social Behaviour Service

This task was allocated an additional budget of £50,000 per annum to strengthen the current service provided by the Tenancy Enforcement Section.

Progress is outlined below:

- 4.6.1 The Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Bill - this proposes new tools for dealing with crime, nuisance and ASB and is currently working its way through the Houses of Parliament. The situation is complicated due to the fact that some of the current tools are derived from Housing legislation. Housing is a devolved power for Welsh Government. The final Bill is due to be passed and implemented some time later this year. What form the final Bill will take is open to much speculation. Recent amendments made to the Bill by the House of Lords have caused serious concern for social landlords as it has significant implications on the use of Injunctions to offer a quick and effective resolution to the problems caused by ASB. There is a further complication for social landlords in Wales as Welsh Government have advised that they will ratify the necessary new legislation as soon as they are able, to insure the old legislation (implemented under the Housing devolved power) is repealed and the new legislation implemented. This may take weeks or several months after the legislation is fully implemented in England and could lead to confusion and uncertainty for the housing sector in Wales.
- 4.6.2 Housing White Paper – Renting Homes – a better way for Wales - The Welsh Government has undertaken extensive consultation on the Housing White Paper and the summary of responses was published in December 2013. The majority of landlords (public and private) in Wales are in favour of the proposed tenancy changes to the legal framework for renting a home. Welsh Government has indicated that a draft bill is to be published in 2015 with an implementation time line of 2016.
- 4.6.3 Additional Tenancy Enforcement Officer – An additional officer was appointed in August 2013. The additional work created by participating in DACC and MARAC has been spread amongst the 4 Tenancy Enforcement Officers and the manager, with administrative support provided by the Clerical Officers. This additional resource enables the TES to fulfil the Council's commitment to help to reduce the number of domestic violence incidents without detriment to their embedded nuisance, anti-social behaviour and enforcement work.

- 4.6.4 Purchase of additional domestic CCTV systems - The Tenancy Enforcement Section are in the process of purchasing 2 additional domestic CCTV systems to add to the 2 systems they already have. Each system includes two CCTV day/night cameras, a hard drive/memory card recorder and monitor. There is a waiting list for the installation of these systems. Having 4 sets available will strengthen the service currently provided. They are used predominantly in cases of harassment, which is the commonest type of referral the section receives. The cost of purchasing two additional sets is estimated to be about £1,200.
- 4.6.5 Purchase of MATRON 225 noise monitor – The Tenancy Enforcement Section are purchasing a second MATRON 225 noise monitor to assist in dealing with complaints of noise nuisance, the second most frequent type of referral. There is a waiting list for the installation of this equipment. TES will now investigate all noise nuisance complaints when first reported. A second MATRON with a 5 year servicing and calibrating agreement will cost £9963.00. Intervention at an early stage will increase the use of the MATRON and will be more effective in resolving noise nuisance complaints.
- 4.6.6 Target hardening – The Tenancy Enforcement Section have purchased a variety of items that together become target-hardening packs that provide reassurance and support for individuals and families experiencing criminal, anti-social behaviour or are the victims of domestic abuse. The packs can be distributed to tenants and residents whose complaints are being investigated by TES. Each pack would contain appropriate item/s suitable for providing reassurance, which may include door and window alarms, doorstops, doorstop alarms, personal alarms, electronic timers and PIR alarms. It is hoped that by distributing these items tenants are less likely to want to move and will feel safe and reassured by the actions being taken by the council.

It has also been arranged for front door security chains to be fitted as a pilot scheme until April 2014 to assess demand and cost. The door security chains are fitted to provide reassurance and safety for our vulnerable tenants. At the request of the Police during DACC and MARAC meetings we are also arranging for security chains to be fitted for victims of domestic abuse. At the end of the pilot period the cost and future cost will be assessed and if necessary a contribution from the Strengthening Service budget may be requested.

- 4.6.7 Membership of the Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group - Membership of the group provides access to the latest information on ASB/nuisance cases, networking, partnership working, legal updates, and representation for social landlords at a regional and national level. The representative for CCBC is the Tenancy Enforcement Manager. The cost for membership until 31.03.2014 is £226.66 (exc VAT) and annually £700.00 (exc VAT).
- 4.6.8 Cognitive Behaviour Therapy – It is intended to purchase a block of 10 Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) referrals. Each referral will be for 10 x 1 hour CBT sessions for the referred person. The cost of a referral is £550 plus VAT, but purchasing a block of 10 referrals will cost £5000 plus VAT. This will provide a saving of £500. There will not be any time limit on the use of the 10 referrals. Tenancy Enforcement have referred 3 tenants for this service over the past 6 months. The referrals for the service have been for both complainants and perpetrators and feedback has been very positive.
- 4.6.9 GPS tracking system for lone workers - A GPS tracking system for Tenancy Enforcement staff mobile telephones is being explored. The purpose of this will be to further improve the safety of the Tenancy Enforcement Officers, who are primarily lone workers. Tenancy Enforcement Officers visit tenants/residents in their own homes and can and are often faced with aggressive, intimidating and difficult situations by the very nature of the type of work they are in. In order to improve the safety of these officers a GPS tracking system for their mobile telephones is proposed. This will operate alongside and complement the existing Lone Worker and Employee Protection Register systems the council uses.

## 5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) is not needed because the issues covered are for information and updating purposes only, therefore the councils full EIA process does not need to be applied.

## 6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 A breakdown of the £50,000 budget (exc VAT) for strengthening the anti-social behaviour service for financial years 2013 - 2014 and 2014 - 2015 is as follows:

<b>ASB Budget</b>	<b>2013 - 2014 £50,000</b>	<b>ASB Budget</b>	<b>2014 - 2015 £50,000</b>
Tenancy Enforcement Officer	Est. £20,000 (part year) + mileage	Tenancy Enforcement Officer	£36,000 (full year) + mileage
Domestic CCTV	Est. £1,200	Domestic CCTV	Est. Nil
External CCTV	Est. £200	External CCTV	Est. £700 until 2017 then increases to £1800
MATRON 225 noise monitor	£9963.00 (incl. 5 yr warranty & calibration)	MATRON 225 noise monitor	Est. Nil
Target hardening items	£3396.9	Target hardening items	£2,500
Membership of SLCNG	£226.66	Membership of SLCNG	£700.00
10 x CBT referrals	Nil	10 x CBT Referrals	£5000
GPS Tracking system	Est. £200	GPS Tracking	Est. £200
<b>Total spend Estimate</b>	<b>£35,186.56</b>	<b>Total spend Estimate</b>	<b>£46,900.00</b>
<b>Total under spend estimate</b>	<b>£14,813.41</b>	<b>Total under spend estimate</b>	<b>£3100.00</b>

## 7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications arising from the report.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

8.1 Consultation has taken place with Officers listed as Consultees.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 The report be noted.

## **10. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 The purpose of the report is for information only.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

Housing Act 1996  
Anti-Social Behaviour Act 1996

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Karen James, Neighbourhood Housing Manager  
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### Background Papers:

Caerphilly Delivers – Single Integrated Plan 2013 – 2017  
Local Housing Strategy – People, Property and Places  
Statement of Policy and Procedure for Anti-Social Behaviour  
Code of Guidance for Local Authorities – Anti-Social Behaviour Policies and Procedures  
Strategic Equalities Action Plan  
CHTG Report – WHQS – Community Safety Fund – 23 January 2014