



CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 10TH DECEMBER 2015

SUBJECT: WHQS COMPLIANCE POLICY

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consult CHTG on the draft WHQS Compliance Policy which is a Welsh Government requirement. The report is seeking the views of the CHTG prior to its presentation to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Social housing landlords are required to put in place a Compliance Policy by 1st April 2016 and review it annually. The Compliance Policy is intended to provide the Welsh Government, tenants and the Council with assurance that WHQS will be achieved and maintained and must set out the arrangements for independent verification. A copy of the draft policy is attached in the Appendix to the report.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Welsh Housing Quality Standard is intended to ensure that all local authority and housing association homes are improved and maintained to achieve specified standards.
- 3.2 The Single Integrated Plan 2013-2017 has a priority to “improve standards of housing and communities, giving appropriate access to services across the County Borough”.
- 3.3 The Council’s Local Housing Strategy “People, Property, and Places” has the following aims:
 “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.”
- 3.4 The Caerphilly Homes Task Group is a formal mechanism to engage with tenant representatives and ensure their views are reflected in decisions relating to public sector housing.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 An earlier report to the CHTG in May 2015 set out the background and Welsh Government requirements.
- 4.2 The main elements of the policy are:-

- Interpretation of WHQS
- Interpretation and recording of acceptable fails
- Data collection and storage
- WHQS progress and reporting
- Independent verification
- Annual financial investment in the stock
- Community Benefits.

4.3 The Internal Audit service will be used to verify the systems used to collect, store and ensure the accuracy of information used to demonstrate progress in implementing the WHQS programme. Provision will be made in the Internal Audit Plan on an annual basis to test aspects of the systems and ensure the validity of the information used to demonstrate compliance with WHQS.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 An EqlA screening has been completed in accordance with the Council's Equalities Consultation and Monitoring Guidance and no potential for unlawful discrimination and for lower level or minor negative impact have been identified, therefore a full EqlA has not been carried out.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The implementation of the Compliance Policy has major financial commitments which are addressed through the HRA business plan.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are significant staff resources to implement the WHQS Programme to achieve and maintain compliance. Staff resources are kept under review and have been strengthened where appropriate.

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 No comments have been received.

9. RECOMMENDATION

9.1 The Caerphilly Homes Task Group recommend to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet the adoption of the WHQS Compliance Policy.

10. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To meet a requirement from Welsh Government to prepare and adopt a WHQS Compliance Policy by 1st April 2016.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

Author: P G Davy, Head of Programmes
Email: davypg@caerphilly.gov.uk, Tel: 01443 8664208

Consultees: Cllr D V Poole - Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Housing
C Burns - Interim Chief Executive
C Harry - Corporate Director Communities
N Scammell - Acting Director of Corporate Services and S151 Officer
S Couzens - Chief Housing Officer
G Williams - Interim Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer
R Harris - Internal Audit Manager

Appendix1: Draft WHQS Compliance Policy