



CABINET – 18TH JANUARY 2017

SUBJECT: PRIVATELY OWNED PROPERTIES AT LANSBURY PARK

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This Report seeks Cabinet approval to deploy funds from the Private Sector Housing Capital Programme to assist private owners at Lansbury Park to partake in the scheme of External Wall Insulation planned for council properties during 2016/17 and 2017/18.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The council is currently undertaking a scheme of external wall insulation (EWI) to the council owned properties at Lansbury Park as part of the overall WHQS programme. The scheme for 2016/17 is being undertaken by way of a partnership arrangement with EON Energy but is currently only planned to tackle properties within council ownership. There are around 700 properties at Lansbury Park of which 526 are in council ownership. The remainder are in private ownership, either owner occupied or privately rented.
- 2.2 Officers, having studied the area, feel that a far more successful outcome, in terms of the physical regeneration of Lansbury Park, would be achieved if private owners also took part in the EWI scheme. Realistically, however, to encourage meaningful participation by private owners would inevitably warrant the offer of financial assistance in the form of grant aid.
- 2.3 This report looks at the potential to offer support to private owners at Lansbury Park in the form of 75% grant aid. The report also outlines a potential funding source to facilitate such an offer.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 This report links to the Single Integrated Plan 2013-2017 priority to *“improve standards of housing and communities giving appropriate access to services across the county borough”*.
- 3.2 This report links to the Local Housing Strategy aim of *“providing good quality, well managed homes in communities where people want to live and offer people housing choices which meet their needs and aspirations”*.
- 3.3 This report reflects Key Priority 1 of the Caerphilly CBC Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy – *“Regeneration of Declining Communities”*.
- 3.4 This report would link most closely to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2016:
- *A prosperous Wales*
 - *A resilient Wales*

- *A healthier Wales*
- *A more equal Wales*
- *A Wales of cohesive communities*

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 As part of the overall WHQS programme the council is currently undertaking a scheme of external wall insulation (EWI) to the council owned properties at Lansbury Park. The scheme for 2016/17 is being undertaken by way of a partnership arrangement with EON Energy but is currently only planned to tackle properties within council ownership. There are around 700 properties at Lansbury Park of which 526 are in council ownership. The remainder are in private ownership, either owner occupied or privately rented.
- 4.2 Earlier in the year Officers submitted a bid against the Welsh Government Warm Homes scheme in an effort to secure funding to tackle the area on a street by street basis irrespective of tenure. The scheme was only available for small scale projects (up to 100 houses) but despite the bid guidelines suggesting that submissions should focus on deprived areas, support fuel poverty/ low income households and wherever possible achieve economies of scale, all of which are relevant to Lansbury Park, the bid was unsuccessful. We are now in a position, therefore, where Eon has commenced Phase 1 of the EWI programme for the council stock but no privately owned properties are planned for inclusion.
- 4.3 The design of the houses at Lansbury Park is such that to undertake EWI works to the council houses in isolation will, from a practical perspective, be immensely problematic particularly when attempting to provide satisfactory finishes between the council properties and adjoining privately owned properties. Private householders may not allow the contractors to access their properties to undertake works to adjoining properties and/or may reject the proposals due to impacts on their property. Party Wall Act agreements between the Authority and the private owners will, therefore, prove necessary in many cases. If the private householder is also having work undertaken coordination and access agreements will be far easier to negotiate.
- 4.4 Also, and importantly, to undertake the scheme of EWI to the council owned properties alone will do little or nothing to raise the aesthetic appearance of Lansbury Park as a whole and will provide little assistance in the Authority's strive to gain community confidence. In the circumstances, therefore, it would make sense to consider providing pump priming assistance to private owners at Lansbury Park in an effort to stimulate wider scheme participation and hopefully achieve a far more worthwhile finished product.
- 4.5 A "tenure blind" proposal such as this has been undertaken successfully on numerous occasions in recent years by way of Housing Action Area initiatives, Priority Neighbourhood schemes and Renewal Area activity. Whilst funding for such schemes has, in the main, been forthcoming from Welsh Government grant aid we have on 2 occasions utilised Private Sector Housing Capital funding within Priority Neighbourhoods for similar work programmes undertaken at Wyllie and Graig y Rhacca. As long as a funding source can be identified, therefore, a similar approach could be implemented at Lansbury Park.
- 4.6 There is the potential to identify funding to assist owners at Lansbury Park during 2016/17 from a projected underspend within the Private Sector Housing Capital programme which has arisen as a result of a Clearance Area scheme failing to come to fruition together with long term staff sickness having seriously affected the Home Repair grant programme.
- 4.7 The council houses earmarked for EWI during 2016/17 are in blocks within Courts that have some 76 privately owned houses located within the same blocks. It is estimated that the EWI works will cost around £5,000 per property and on the basis of 75% grant aid and full participation from homeowners, funding in the region of £285,000 would be needed to support the scheme. This level of funding can be identified from potential 2016/17 Private Sector Housing underspends although full owner participation is extremely unlikely and supporting those owners with 75% grant aid should, therefore, require a smaller investment

and so be achievable during 2016/17.

- 4.8 Phase 2 of the EWI scheme is planned for 2017/18 and funding support will be sought by way of bids against ECO and/or Arbed initiatives (although Welsh Government have yet to make a firm commitment as to whether another Arbed scheme will be delivered). However, even if the bids are unsuccessful the EWI scheme will still proceed within the council stock as part of the overall WHQS programme. If the bids are unsuccessful, funding provision will, therefore, need to be made for those private homeowners whose properties fall within those blocks of houses scheduled for EWI in 2017/18 (Phase 2).
- 4.9 90 privately owned houses fall within the Phase 2 programme together with one stand alone block of 6 privately owned houses. Using the same cost estimates as outlined in para 4.7 above, full private participation would require budget provision of £360,000. Again, however, full homeowner participation is not anticipated and so a smaller investment would prove likely.
- 4.10 The CCBC Capital Programme for 2017/18 will not be presented to Members for approval until February 2017. However, provisional estimates once again indicate a potential allocation of £2.2m for Private Sector Housing. There is also the potential for an under-spend from 2016/17 being available to carry forward for use in 2017/18. Should members endorse the £2.2m budget for 2017/18 and also agree that any underspend from the 2016/17 Private Sector Housing budget should be carried forward for use at Lansbury Park, then support for those private owners wishing to participate in Phase 2 would also be affordable with little or no disruption to the 2017/18 Private Sector Housing capital programme.
- 4.11 Should members support the proposals then individual householders would make application for assistance in the same manner as for the existing Renewal Area grant process. Grants would, however, be awarded on the basis of a 25% contribution from home owners without applying a means test or the post-grant ownership conditions. The contractual arrangements would be the same as for all other Private Sector Housing grants with the homeowner contracting directly with the EWI provider in respect of building services and with the Council as Agent.
- 4.12 Members should also be aware that at the time of writing this report, representations have been made to Welsh Government outlining the obvious merits of cross tenure participation and asking that serious consideration be given to additional government funding being made available to assist with our overall ambitions for Lansbury Park. Should such funding become available it would be utilised before calling upon any available Private Sector Housing capital resources.

5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 5.1 This proposal contributes to the Well-being Goals as set out in Links to Strategy above. The proposal is also consistent with the five ways of working set out in the sustainable development principle, as defined in the Act. The proposal is integrated in that it contributes to a number of the Well-being goals and supports the objectives of other stakeholders within the community. Implementation of the scheme exemplifies collaboration across organisational boundaries, working together for the good of our communities in pursuit of shared objectives.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Officers are satisfied that funding for this initiative can be made from within the existing

Private Sector Housing Budget allocation.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no personnel implications arising from this report.

9. CONSULTATIONS

9.1 The report reflects any views of consultees.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 It is recommended that if Welsh Government funding is not made available as outlined in paragraph 4.12 above :

1. That financial support for those homeowners at Lansbury Park who wish to partake of the CCBC planned External Wall Insulation scheme be offered in the manner outlined at paragraph 4.11 above.
2. That for 2016/17 funding for the initiative should be made available from existing Private Sector Housing Capital budgets.
3. That for 2017/18 funding should be made available from any 2016/17 Private Sector Housing budget underspends with any additional funding which may prove necessary being deployed from the 2017/18 Private Sector Housing Capital budget.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 To facilitate the adoption of a holistic, tenure blind, strategic approach to the physical regeneration of Lansbury Park.

12. STATUTORY POWER

12.1 N/A

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Consultees: Christina Harray, Corporate Director of Communities
Cllr Dave Poole, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing
Shaun Couzens, Chief Housing Officer
Jane Roberts Waite – Strategic Co-ordination Manager
Marcus Lloyd - WHQS and Infrastructure Strategy Manager
Fiona Wilkins - Public Sector Housing Manager
Claire Davies – Principal Housing Officer (Strategy and Standards)
Karl Rivers – District Environmental Health Officer
Paul Smythe – Housing Repair Operations Manager
Steve Martin – Energy Officer
Stephen Harris - Interim Head of Corporate Finance
Nadeem Akhtar – Group Accountant
Lesley Allen, Group Accountant
Gail Williams – Interim Head of Legal Services
Todd Rawson - Solicitor