

HOUSING TASK GROUP (WHQS) – 12TH SEPTEMBER 2012

SUBJECT: TERMS OF REFERENCE

REPORT BY: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To advise on the terms of reference for the Housing Task Group.

2. LINKS TO STRATEGY

2.1 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.

2.2 Relevant policy documents are the National Housing Strategy “Sustainable Homes” WAG; the Council’s Community Strategy; Corporate Improvement Plan; Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Plan; Regeneration Strategy; and Children and Young People’s Plan.

2.3 The Council’s Local Housing Strategy “People, Property, Places” has the following aim:

“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. THE REPORT

3.1 The Council has agreed to establish an all party Housing Task Group consisting of seven Members and seven tenants. The recruitment of the tenant representatives was open to all tenants with three tenant representatives from the Eastern Valleys, two from the Lower Rhymney Valley, and two from the Upper Rhymney Valley. A series of open meetings were arranged in the respective three housing areas followed by a tenants election. The Task Group will report and make recommendations to a Cabinet Sub Committee. The Cabinet Sub- Committee has the delegated authority to make all decisions within the remit of the Housing Task Group, other than matters that require a full Council decision.

3.2 The Housing Task Group is a key part of the governance structure and fulfils a commitment made by the Council following the ballot to fully involve tenants in decision-making processes. The Task Group focus will be on the WHQS programme and the public housing service. It is the ambition of the Council to see that the investment in the WHQS becomes a catalyst leading to wider regeneration benefits. This will involve working with other parts of the Council’s organisation and external partners to address the social and economic issues alongside the physical improvements to homes. The challenge for the Housing Task Group is to lead a transformational programme for the Council’s housing estates.

3.3 A copy of the terms of reference are in Appendix 1 to the report.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The report is for information purposes, so the Council's EqIA process does not need to be applied.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The tenant representatives will be able to claim the same expenses as Councillors on the Task Group.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no personnel implications.

7. CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 The Council's Head of Legal Services has been consulted on the terms of reference and confirmed they are compatible with the Council's constitution. Comments received from other consultees have been incorporated within the report.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 This report is to be noted and the terms of reference accepted by the Housing Task Group.

9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 This is the inaugural meeting and the Housing Task Group needs to be advised of the terms of reference agreed by the Council. The Housing Task Group must act within the terms of reference.

10. STATUTORY POWER

- 10.1 Local Government Acts

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Consultees: Councillor Gerald Jones, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing.
Nigel Barnett, Deputy Chief Executive
Shaun Couzens, Chief Housing Officer.
Nicole Scammell, Head of Corporate Finance.
Dan Perkins, Head of Legal Services.
Gareth Hardacre, Head of People Management & Development.

Appendices:
Appendix 1 Housing Task Group Terms of Reference