



CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 25TH OCTOBER 2012

SUBJECT: TRANSFORMING LIVES AND COMMUNITIES

REPORT BY: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To outline the scope of the new Lives and Communities work stream.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 In February 2012 Caerphilly County Borough Council received a vote of confidence from its tenants who voted almost 2 to 1 for the Council to retain the housing stock. This was based on the promises made by the Council in the addendum document that was issued as a supplementary to the Offer Document. In summary, this offered to achieve the WHQS by 2019-20 and fulfil all the service improvements that were outlined in the Offer Document.
- 2.2 Since the outcome of the ballot, the Council has voiced its wider ambition for the WHQS investment programme - in that the investment into transforming Council homes must act as a catalyst to also transform lives and communities throughout Caerphilly county borough.
- 2.3 In order to achieve the transformation ambition, the investment forthcoming as a result of WHQS must add value to existing programmes and initiatives. There are direct relationships between principal WG programmes such as Communities First, Supporting People, Families First, and the WHQS investment programme.
- 2.4 Without the wider investment in people and communities in addition to the new housing investment there is a risk that whilst people will have new kitchens and bathrooms, their life chances, opportunities and aspirations will remain the same, if not worse over time.
- 2.5 It is therefore proposed that an additional work stream be developed to include both internal and external representatives to coordinate the delivery of social and economic activities designed principally to engage those people living within communities throughout Caerphilly where WHQS improvements are delivered and ensure greater coordination and added value between principal WG programmes led by CCBC and The Caerphilly Passport Programme.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) is intended to ensure that all local authority and housing association homes are improved and maintained to achieve specified standards.
- 3.2 Relevant policy documents include 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.

- 3.3 The Council's Local Housing Strategy "People, Property, and 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."

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Research suggests that there is a strong geographic correlation between areas of concentrated deprivation and areas of social housing and although deprivation is evident throughout the borough the most deprived areas, according to the WIMD 2011, also have the highest concentrations of social housing. In Caerphilly, these areas also correlate to the list of eligible areas that feature within the new phase of the Communities First programme and it is no coincidence that in these areas over half of the working age social tenant households are workless and the following negative features have manifested:
- Low educational attainment
 - Skills deficits, unemployment and inactivity
 - Low self esteem, expectations and well being
 - Greater offending and criminal behaviour
 - Poor physical and mental health
- 4.2 The limitations of physical and social mobility in Caerphilly's communities (particularly in the north of the county borough) have also created cycles of intergenerational deprivation and poverty, which are compounded by the fact that those with skills and choice often leave these communities therefore creating a 'vicious cycle of deprivation'.
- 4.3 Evidence from the evaluation of The Decent Homes programme in England has suggested that whilst the programme has successfully contributed to the physical transformation of homes, it hasn't helped the people living in those homes or created new economic outcomes. The same social problems have continued to exist.
- 4.4 The delivery of the WHQS programme within Caerphilly should be a catalyst to change the lives of people living within our social housing estates and the communities within them.
- 4.5 It is therefore proposed that a specific work stream entitled 'Transforming Lives and Communities' be established to focus effort on transforming peoples' lives and communities from a social and economic perspective as this would appear to be the most appropriate way to facilitate new opportunities for local people and ensure the sustainability and vitality of local communities.
- 4.6 The work stream will focus on ensuring greater alignment and coordination between WG programmes such as Communities First, Families First and Supporting People and key strategic CCBC initiatives such as The Caerphilly Passport Programme in order to maximise the social and economic impact of the WHQS investment programme.
- 4.7 It will build upon and add value to the priorities identified in the new Communities First programme (creating prosperous communities, healthier communities and learning communities) as this will ensure that the strategic and operational links between WHQS and key WG programmes (especially Communities First) are established and are effective - with each programme adding value to the others and vice versa. It will also ensure a greater degree of programme bending thereby ensuring that increased resources are ploughed into those areas in most need.
- 4.8 A Lives and Communities working group will be established to drive delivery and coordination within the Lives and Communities work stream. Input will be needed from Communities First, Families First, Supporting People, Groundwork Caerphilly, GAVO, the CAB, JCP, ABHB, CCBC Housing, Procurement, Social Services, Planning and Economic Development, Education and most importantly, tenants.

- 4.9 The work stream will be led by the Strategic Coordination Manager, who will report monthly to the WHQS Project Board and quarterly to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group.
- 4.10 The 'Transforming Lives and Communities' work stream will initially focus on the following tasks:
- Local employment and training
 - Administration of the Local Employment Fund
 - Third sector development
 - Community engagement
 - Environmental improvements
 - Administration of the Environmental Fund
 - Sustainable neighbourhood working
 - Customer Profiling
 - Estate transformation
 - Ensuring alignment and coordination between relevant programmes and building relationships with key partners
 - Match funding
- 4.11 Whilst the work of the Lives and Communities working group will focus predominantly on addressing the social and economic issues that prevail within communities, a separate sub group will also be established to explore and evaluate the opportunities that may exist within some housing estates for physical improvements. The sub group will report its findings and recommendations into the Lives and Communities working group.
- 4.12 Potential contributors to the work stream will be invited to the 'Transforming Lives and Communities Learning Exchange', which will be held on 29th November and attended by Huw Lewis AM, the Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report has no direct financial implications.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The report has no direct personnel implications.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 Comments from the Project Board have been incorporated within the report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The report is for information.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To advise the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on the 'Lives and Communities' work stream to deliver the wider ambition of transforming not only Council homes, but also lives and communities.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Housing Acts and Local Government Acts. This is a Cabinet Sub Committee function.

Author: Jane Roberts-Waite, Strategic Coordination Manager

(Telephone: 01443 864340 / roberj2@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Consultees: Councillor Gerald Jones, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing.

Nigel Barnett, Deputy Chief Executive.

Shaun Couzens, Chief Housing Officer.

Nicole Scammell, Head of Corporate Finance.

Gareth Hardacre, Head of Management & People Development.