



CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP - 6TH DECEMBER 2012

SUBJECT: COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR THE HOUSING SERVICE

REPORT BY: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To set out a comprehensive communication strategy and establish a brand identity for the housing service.

2. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 2.1 The Offer Document sets out a plan for transforming council homes, lives and communities. It reaches beyond the bricks and mortar of properties and into the fabric of our communities. This communication strategy seeks to support the vision, concepts and ideas set out in that document

3. THE REPORT

- 3.1 The communication strategy aims to ensure the general public and professionals, partner organisations and all key stakeholders are informed and engaged in the process of the programme through a comprehensive communications action plan (attached appendix).
- 3.2 The brand for the service has been developed and introduced to support the pressing timetable around procurement and the other changes being introduced as part of the delivery of the improvement to the homes and communities in the county borough e.g. the intensive consultative programme for the review of services to Sheltered Homes.
- 3.3 The brand reflects the Caerphilly Homes Task Group's recommendation in its first meeting to change its title. Engagement activities will now take place with our staff and tenants who will work together to produce the Charter for Trust which is document containing the protocols for how each will work with one another and also how contractors will also be expected to abide with these protocols.
- 3.4 It is advocated that a joint tenants and workforce group is established that will meet quarterly to work together on items of common interest such as uniforms and the Charter for Trust.
- 3.5 The purpose of the communications strategy is to raise awareness of the programme of work, which will result in the council achieving on behalf of its tenants the Welsh Housing Quality Standard. The strategy will use all of the communication and engagement techniques available to reach external and internal audiences.
- 3.6 The strategy in its delivery will also ensure that all the equalities standards are met and the actions driven by the strategy embrace all of our standards for engagement.

4. STRATEGIC DRIVERS

- 4.1 We need to be clear what our reputation means to our audiences – to key stakeholders: - Tenants, Councillors, Staff and Trade Unions. Council (members & officers) need to unite behind a clear vision and story for the council. It will be important to engage with all members to ensure they clearly understand this work, particularly with the number of new members elected in May 2012 who will not have been part of the detailed discussions leading to, the Offer Document / Addendum.
- 4.2 Further to the ongoing work with tenants through the participation process and other engagement activities, it will be important to draw out their views on the council's performance. We must also make sure they play a significant role in developing the reputation of the housing work occurring in the county borough and have the ability to influence the culture of the service.
- 4.3 Trust is the goal of all our communications actions. We cannot gain the unique personal investment in this programme without all parties trusting one another. In building and maintaining trust then we must also manage expectations, which means treating people with respect and being honest with them. Time and energy will be spent through all of engagement processes to provide meaningful feedback, as this is also critical to building trust.

4.4 ACTION PLAN

The communications action plan has identified the following key areas of work: -

➤ Engagement

- Employee Engagement activities
- Tenant Engagement Activities
 - Working closely with Tenant Participation Officers
- Contractor engagement
 - Linked to the broader procurement marketing plan
- Wider government representatives engagement

➤ Brand and Information

- Development of the brand guidelines for use
- Caerphilly Homes Internet and Intranet content
 - Including FAQ, key contacts, programme information
- Appropriate information brochures for use with tenants
- Marketing materials for procurement process with suppliers

➤ Media Activity

- Flagship profile
 - Key Milestones
 - Key messages
- Community impact
- Tenant experience
- Positive progress
- Dealing with adverse media issues
- Development of bespoke social media stream

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Project Board will manage the resource requirements for delivering the communications, within the overall programme budget.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This report has no direct personnel implications.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 The report has been subject to office consultation.

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 communications strategy for the Housing Service.

11. STATUTORY POWER

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

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 Communications Strategy