



CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP (WHQS) - 21ST FEBRUARY 2013

SUBJECT: WHQS PROGRAMME - CHARTER FOR TRUST

REPORT BY: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Caerphilly Homes Task Group about the content and purpose of the Charter for Trust and seek adoption.

2. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 2.1 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.
- 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, 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."

3. THE REPORT

- 3.1 The retention of the housing stock is the catalyst for change and the opportunity to drive forward the modernisation of the housing service and integrated working. The Council has pledged to do different things and do things differently and to ensure that tenants are at the heart of the process.
- 3.2 The Council has worked closely with the tenants Repairs and Improvement Group to develop an investment plan to achieve the WHQS by 2019-20. During early discussion on the plan tenants raised a number of concerns about working practices when having work undertaken to their homes. The principle of establishing a set of protocols was agreed. There were a number of workshop sessions with the tenants to develop a draft "Charter for Trust". This draft was then discussed with the staff panel. The main point raised by staff was that the document should engender mutual trust and respect. In this respect it was felt important that as well as setting out how tenants should be treated, the document should also reflect the way tenants should deal with the work force. This point was readily agreed by the tenants and the document was revised.
- 3.3 Following extensive consultation the final version of the Charter for Trust is attached in the appendix. The document is in two parts. The protocols sets out the expected standards that will be observed by both the work force and tenants. The intention is that this should be produced as a pocket guide. The second part is more general information about working

arrangements that will be particularly pertinent to contractors. It will be noted that emphasis is placed on the role of the Tenant Liaison Officer (TLO). The TLO will be the main point of contact for tenants and leaseholders before, during, and after any works.

- 3.4 The Charter for Trust will be issued with all tender documentation and as appropriate incorporated as part of the terms and conditions of relevant contracts. The Charter for Trust will be applied equally to both contractors and the in house work force.
- 3.5 There is an expectation on the part of tenants that everyone working in tenant's homes will adhere to the Charter protocols, and that when necessary the Council will enforce contractual terms and conditions. In the extreme where circumstances justify contracts will be terminated. The purpose behind the Charter is to ensure that every tenant and leaseholder has a first class service from the Council.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 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 low level or minor negative impact have been identified, therefore a full EqlA has not been carried out. The Charter incorporates reference to the Council's equalities policies. The Council will investigate any allegation of discrimination and take appropriate action if the allegation is proven. This may include removing the person from the contract, referring the matter to the police, and / or terminating the contract.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report has no direct financial implications. The publication of a pocket guide for the protocols will be undertaken as part of the communications costs.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report has no direct personnel implications. However the Council's work force and contractors will be expected to abide by the protocols when working on tenants and leaseholders properties. The protocols are generally courteous practice and common sense but do set out the expected standards that should be observed when work is being undertaken.

7. CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 The Charter for Trust has been developed following consultations with tenants and staff and has been agreed by the Project Board.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The Task Group is requested to endorse the Charter for Trust and recommend adoption by the Cabinet Sub Committee.

9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 To confirm the working practices and protocols for undertaking the WHQS Programme.

10. STATUTORY POWER

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

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 Charter for Trust Working Arrangements

Appendix 2 Charter for Trust Working Protocols