

## Report to Caerphilly County Borough Council: November 2012 Developing a new Local Tenant Participation Strategy

### 1. Introduction

1.1 The tenant ballot on Caerphilly County Borough Council's proposal to transfer its homes to Castell Mynydd resulted in a 'no' vote. The vote followed the Council's consultation on a proposal for the homes to transfer to the new, not-for-profit, Community Housing Mutual, Castell Mynydd. In an Addendum to the offer document the Council has given a clear commitment to achieve the WHQS by 2019/20 and to maintain the standard thereafter. Building on the partnership working achieved during the ballot process, the council also unanimously agreed that tenants be consulted on future services and work. Tenants and officers see a major opportunity, arising from the investment in the stock, to work together not only to implement WHQS but also to raise the standard of housing services and communities across the board.

1.2 The National Tenant Participation Strategy was published in April 2007 with the aim of involving tenants in improving service. It required each social landlord to produce a Local Tenant Participation Strategy (LTPS) for review by the Welsh Assembly Government in October 2008. The timetable within the National Strategy placed an expectation on social landlords that they would fundamentally review their strategy and action plan three years later in 2011 and submit a revised LTPS for assessment by the Welsh Government. The deadline for submission for this second round was 31<sup>st</sup> October 2011. Caerphilly County Borough Council's LTPS should have been returned to Welsh Government then but the council was granted an exemption until after the transfer vote. The existing LTPS developed nearly four years ago is no longer fit for purpose and subsequent to the no vote and The Addendum Offer needs renewal rather than review. The Borough Council has therefore commissioned Central Consultancy and Training to consult with tenants and staff and develop a new Local Tenant Participation Strategy. The Welsh government requires the Local Tenant Participation Strategy to outline:

- How tenants' homes and local environment should be managed
- What services and service improvements are needed
- Identifying priorities and how landlords and tenants will work together to achieve these

- 1.3 The Development of a new LTPS for Caerphilly County Borough will take account of the aims of the Welsh Government's National Tenant Participation Strategy:-
- To improve the efficiency and quality of housing services
  - To place tenants at the heart of housing management in accord with Welsh Government's citizen centred approach
2. Methodology
- 2.1 This methodology has taken account of TPAS Cymru's published Local Tenant Participation Strategy Assessment Criteria. This includes the requirement for robust assessment of current tenant participation practice which:-
- Is based on tenants' views
  - Identifies strengths and weaknesses
  - Maps the range of tenant participation activities and level of influence
  - States the purpose of participation and outcomes to be achieved
- 2.2 The development of this LTPS is based on the outcome of observations of:
- Caerphilly Homes Task Group
  - Sheltered Housing Work Stream
  - Repairs and Improvement Work Stream/Procurement Group
  - TEG Project
- 2.3 Consultation with:
- Focus Group of Involved Tenants
  - Tenant and Residents' Groups
  - Tenant Information Exchange (TIE)
- 2.4 Interviews with:
- Key Tenants
  - Cabinet Member for Housing (Deputy Leader)
  - Deputy Chief Executive
  - Chief Housing Officer
  - Public Sector Housing Manager
  - Communication and Engagement Manager
  - Estate Management Officers
  - Tenant Participation Officers

- 2.5 In addition to the outcomes of the above this Local Tenant Participation Strategy will take account of:
- The National Tenant Participation Strategy
  - Best Practice identified in the TPAS Guide to Local Tenant Participation Strategy
  - The Regulatory Framework for Housing Associations registered in Wales

### 3. Summary of Existing Arrangements for Tenant Participation

- 3.1 There is a commitment to involving tenants from the top and is evident through interviews with Cabinet member for Housing and Deputy Chief Executive. A new Caerphilly Homes Task Group comprises 7 tenants and 7 members advises a cabinet sub group (made up of 3 of the same Councillors) who meet immediately following the Task Group to fast track decision making. Tenant members of the Task Group were appointed through advertisements
- 3.2 There were arrangements and structures in place prior to the transfer vote but these have necessarily changed and the current arrangements for tenant participation have largely been driven by the Addendum to the Offer Document and the no vote. Tenants see the newly established working groups as a means of holding the Council to account for the offer in the Addendum. Tenants have been involved in procurement of consultants for the sheltered housing review and a recently established procurement group will ensure their involvement in the WHQS procurement process. Specifications for WHQS have also involved tenants. However, there have been some difficulties over issues of the role and responsibilities of tenants at the sheltered housing work group. Although relationships between tenants and individual officers are good, there are varying degrees of trust between tenants and the Council arising from the history of the transfer vote.
- 3.3 Prior to the ballot there was a Tenants' Forum but this has been suspended pending the outcome of this LTPS. In order to ensure good information flow a Tenant Information Exchange has been set up by TP Officers. This has had a rocky start with some tenants seeing it as officer driven and an inadequate substitute for the Tenant Forum.

- 3.4 There are 17 Tenants' and Residents' Associations with varying degrees of involvement and participation. Apart from the Tenants' Associations the rest of the structure depends on about 25 active tenants and there are few defined linkages between groups. The Council provides a meeting room for use by tenants and residents
- 3.5 There are 3 Tenant Participation Officers in Housing Services facilitating all tenant participation activities, tenant participation is not mainstreamed.
- 3.6 The lack of a coherent framework and focus for tenant participation in the previous arrangements adds to difficulties for tenants in understanding their roles and responsibilities.
- 3.7 Officers and tenants recognise the need for culture change and that this new tenant participation strategy is an opportunity and could act as a catalyst for change.
- 3.8 The current culture of the department is one of command and control based on process and compliance checking rather than outcomes for the customer. This militates against any meaningful tenant participation which can take place where there is a culture that empowers staff as well as tenants.

#### 4. Consultation with Tenants and Residents

##### 4.1 Tenant and Resident Focus Group (Agenda Appendix 1)

A focus group of 20 involved tenants and residents was specially convened to:

- assess current tenant participation practice,
- identify strengths and weaknesses,
- map the range of tenant participation activities and levels of influence

4.1.2 The tenants who attended the focus group were either members of Tenants' and Residents' Associations, the work groups (Sheltered Housing Review and Repairs and Improvements) or the Caerphilly Homes Task Group. There was a high degree of overlap and some tenants were on all three.

- 4.1.3 There was general consensus that there needed to be a focus now on the purpose of tenant participation to improve services, and recognition that work groups were beginning to achieve this - but that tenant participation should apply across the whole housing service. Tenants on the work groups saw their role as holding the Council to account for the delivery of the promises made in the Addendum.
- 4.1.4 There were varying degrees of confidence (and some disagreements) that these promises would be kept. The history of the transfer process has clearly left some tenants feeling disgruntled and reluctant to trust the Council. However, there was a recognition that the establishment of Caerphilly Homes Task Group was a genuine attempt by the Council to involve tenants in decision making at the highest possible level.
- 4.1.5 There was regret that the Tenant Forum had been suspended and a view that the Tenant Information Exchange (TIE) was no real substitute. Some tenants felt that one of the reasons TIE was not working was because of bickering amongst tenants themselves! Others felt it was being driven by officers rather than tenants and that it needed more of a partnership approach.
- 4.1.6 The current structure for tenant participation (diagram 1 below) was seen to have evolved in an ad hoc way in response to the promises made in the Addendum, especially the need to meet WHQS and review sheltered housing. As a result it was seen to lack cohesion.
- 4.1.7 Tenants recognised that any new structure would need to focus on improving housing services and increase formal and informal opportunities for tenant engagement to achieve this.
- 4.1.8 The group also took part in a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis (Diagram 2). This demonstrated that tenants are beginning to appreciate the commitment of the Council to involving them. They identified the role of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group and the work streams, and tenants' role in monitoring the delivery of the Addendum promises as strengths. Interestingly, they saw that stock retention created an opportunity for the housing department to link with and utilise other Council resources e.g. to joining up tenant participation youth work with the wider council youth forum activities and community development.

- 4.1.9 The main theme of the identified weaknesses was around communication and information flow and they recognised the need for specialist advice on this. They saw a need to extend information flow to all Councillors to help increase their commitment and understanding of the implications of the Addendum promises.
- 4.1.10 The identified opportunities and threats will help to inform future strategic direction; for example, the suggestion of new informal interest groups such as a disability action group, anti-social behaviour group and extending the role of TIE through a tenant newsletter editorial board.
- 4.1.11 Apathy amongst tenants is always quoted as a barrier to participation but here tenants suggest that apathy applies to the Council as much as to other tenants and residents. When making reference to the Council tenants and residents were referring to the wider body of the Council rather than the staff they were working with. They acknowledged that staff were committed and worked hard on tenant participation.
- 4.1.12 The mapping of influence exercise undertaken by the group expressed through a Pyramid of Influence (diagram 3) shows that the control lies (as it has to) with the Council through the cabinet or cabinet subcommittee and that partnership in decision making exists through the Caerphilly Homes Task Group. Consultation and participation takes place through the work streams and information flow through TIE and Tenants and Residents Groups on the ground. This is a genuine attempt to meet the promises in the Addendum document to involve tenants in decision making and delivery of WHQS. However it does not allow for more informal engagement of tenants lower down the pyramid, which is the basis for increased participation and growth of involvement.
- 4.1.13 Focus Group members were also asked to complete a Questionnaire on tenant involvement (Appendix 2). This questionnaire adopted from a TPAS model covers the engagement methods currently used by social landlords. It identifies gaps and establishes a baseline of the level of current activities and if used on an annual basis can be used to track improvements. Results were inconclusive because not all tenants completed the form and not all questions were answered. However, it does identify gaps which can help to inform future engagement activities e.g. mystery shoppers, customer panel,

tenant conferences or events, fun days and fairs. The fact that there are discrepancies in the responses confirms that not all (even engaged) tenants are aware of the scope of TP activities. There is clearly an issue regarding information flow where the majority of tenants gave a low score to how well they are informed. All respondents gave a high score (3 and above) for their level of involvement with the Council reflecting the high level of commitment and engagement from tenants to the work streams and Caerphilly Homes. However, in responding to questions regarding the amount of influence tenants have the responses were fairly evenly split. The questionnaire results also indicate a low level of use of social media.

4.1.14 Finally the focus group considered the relevance of The Regulatory Framework for Registered Social Landlords in Wales. This currently only applies to RSLs in Wales. However, in the Housing White paper Better Lives and Communities the Welsh Government plans to extend this Framework through a voluntary agreement with Local Authorities. The Welsh Government is suggesting establishing:

A formal agreement with local authorities for the self-assessment and reporting of delivery outcomes that reflect the arrangements in place for tenants of housing associations (Housing White Paper)

4.1.15 The Focus Group was asked to consider, as a potential aim of a Tenant Participation Strategy, the Governance and Financial Management outcomes in the Regulatory Framework:

We place the people who want to use our services at the heart of our work - putting the citizen first

4.1.16 There was a general consensus that adopting the Regulatory Framework sooner rather than later as a driver to improve services would be a sensible way forward.

Diagram 1

Existing TP Structure

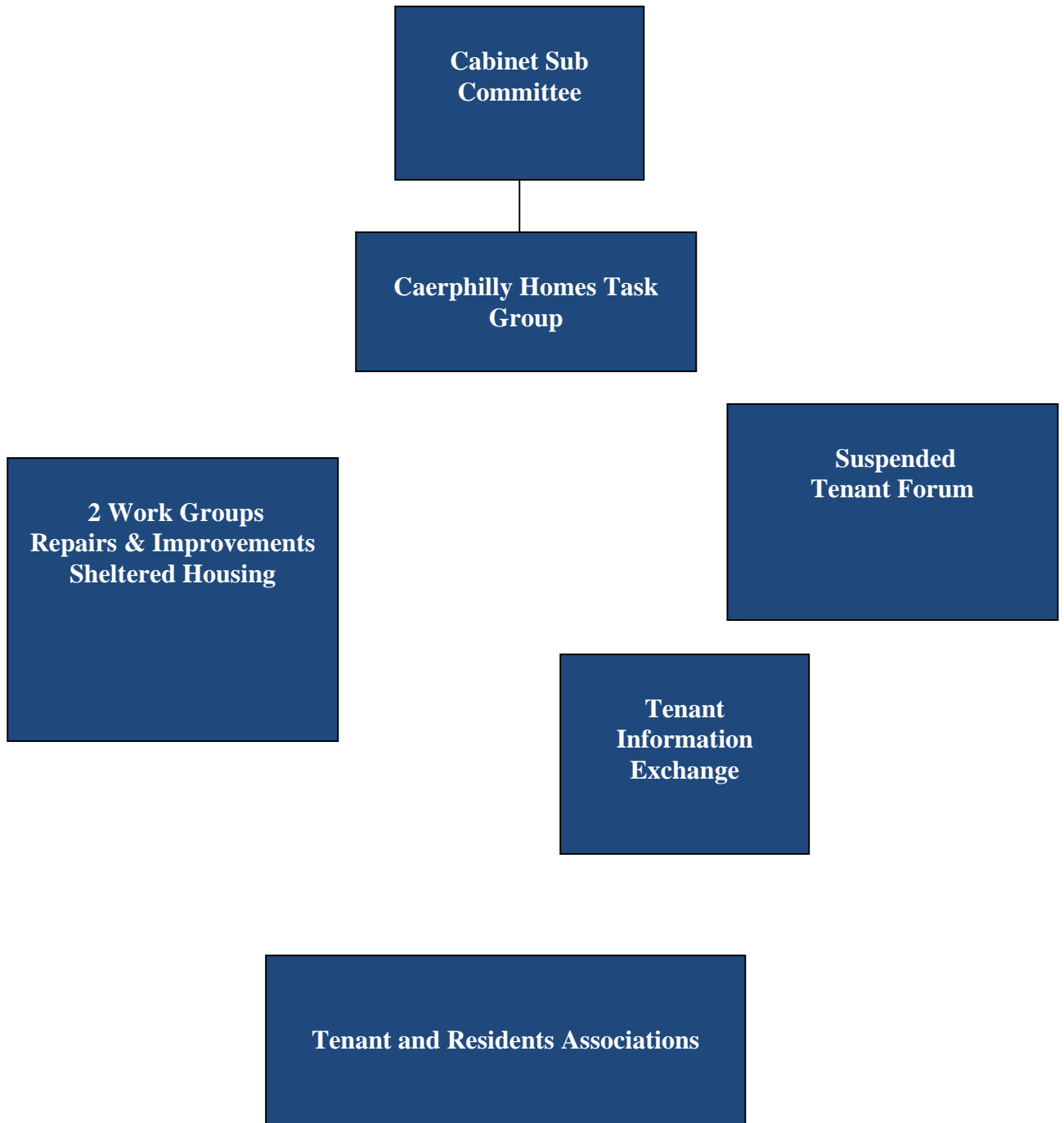




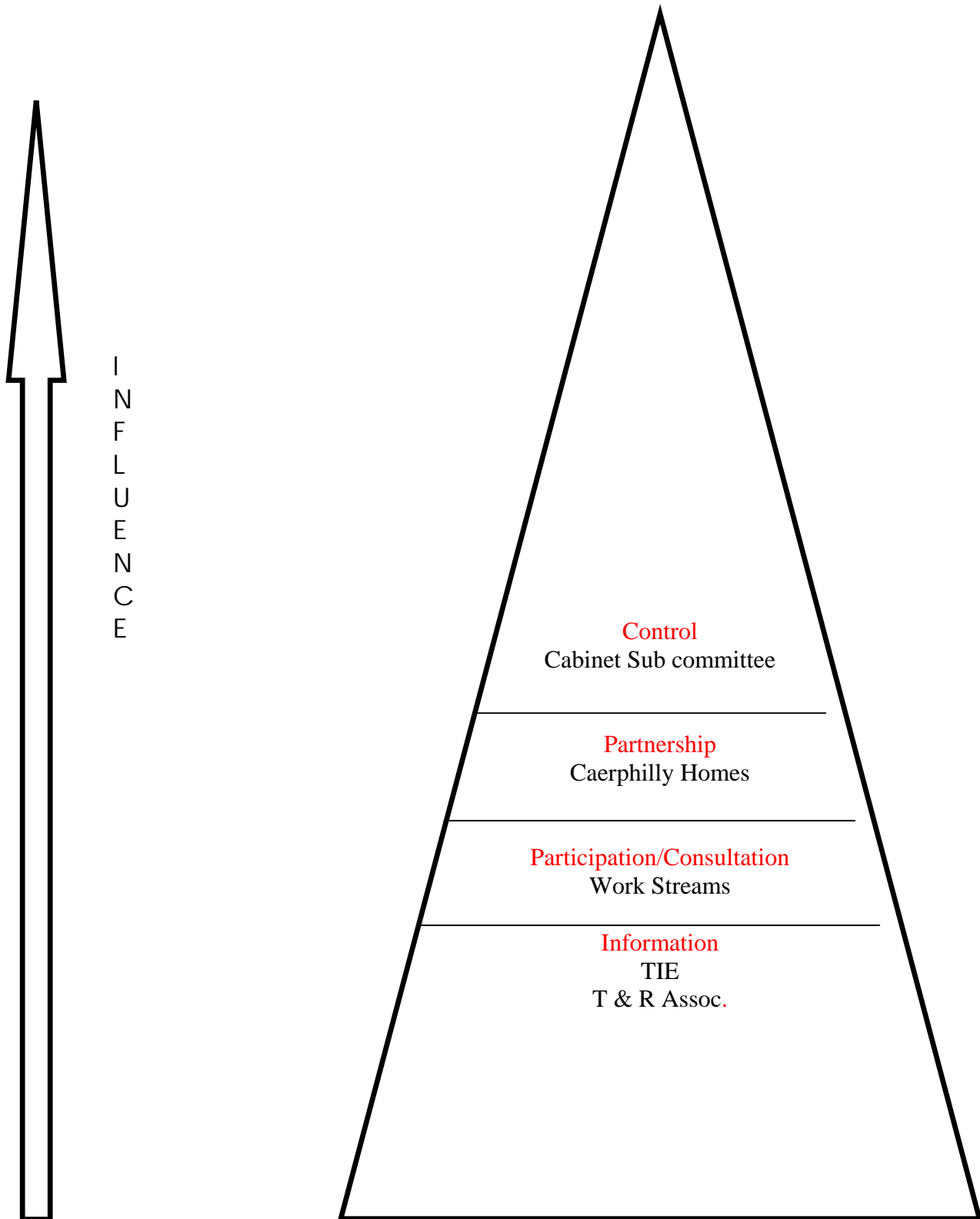
Diagram 2

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats  
Identified by Tenants and Residents at Focus Group

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Active Tenants Housing Task Group Repairs and Improvement Group Sheltered Housing Group Tenants monitoring delivery of Addendum</p>	<p>Lack of Communication - Tenants don't speak to each other Officers don't speak to each other Councillors don't understand – need education about Addendum Cllrs and Tenants don't understand what to expect of WHQS improvements/repairs Don't see Estate Managers often enough Confusion about what can and can't be disseminated to other tenants from working groups Not clear how to get information out to tenants "feels like talking to a brick wall" Staff and Council close ranks Not getting enough feedback on progress No real partnership; them and us Environmental services Feeling that things are put off and nothing is dealt with</p>
Opportunities/Gaps	Threats
<p>Communication resource Training for Councillors, Tenants and Staff Use Tenant Newsletter – editorial board New Groups e.g. disability action group Get more people interested</p>	<p>Lack of communication Can't disseminate information – issues of confidentiality Council acting as a block Apathy</p>



Diagram 3  
Pyramid of Participation



## 4.2 Consultation with Tenants' and Residents' Associations

4.2.1 There are 17 recognised Tenants' and Residents' Associations across the Borough receiving varying amounts of funding, depending on the number of Council properties in their area. Meetings are facilitated by Participation Officers, by the local housing office and sometimes by external agencies. Associations vary in levels of activity. Penydre and Phillipstown for example have community facilities and access other funding streams to support their activities. Others have low levels of activity as an Association but are part of wider initiatives such as Community First Partnerships. Participation Officers oversee the establishment of new Associations and give assistance to established groups. They also scrutinise annual accounts and authorise payment of annual grants.

4.2.2 Letters were sent by TP Officers to all associations asking for permission for the consultant to attend one of their meetings. In the event due to timing and the varying degree of involvement visits were planned to 6 associations:-

- Croespenmaen Residents and Tenants Association
- Cwmcarn Association and Community Association
- Fochriw and Pentwyn Residents Association
- Penydre Tenants and Residents Association
- Phillipstown Residents and Community Association
- (Graig y Rhacca cancelled at the last minute because of illness)

4.2.3 All of the associations visited were focussed on improving their own communities and environment with little focus on working with the Local Authority to improve landlord services. It is not unusual for Tenants' and Resident's Associations to be working to improve their local area rather than improving landlord services, indeed the line between tenant participation and community development is a thin one and the WG expects landlords to work with tenants and residents at a local level to improve communities. This needs to be recognised in any Tenant Participation Strategy, for example the Housing Revenue account in some cases is supporting residents rather than tenants and the council needs to be clearer about where the responsibility for this support lies. In the case of two of the associations Cwmcarn and Croespenmaen there was very little involvement of tenants, although

the groups said they worked for everyone in their area including tenants.

4.2.4 There was a general feeling amongst the Tenants' and Residents' Associations that there was poor information flow and because of the widespread nature of the Borough it was impossible to hold meetings for tenants at a venue convenient for everyone. There was a recognition that there were IT and social media solutions to this, although not everyone (in particular the older tenants and residents) thought they would use them.

4.2.5 Phillipstown, Penydre and Fochriw Tenants' and Residents' Associations wanted the Council to consult and inform them prior to any WHQS works commencing on site. One group commented that had the tenants' association been involved in planned maintenance on the estate from the beginning some of the problems experienced in delivering the works could have been avoided. These associations recognised that the delivery of WHQS works on estates could create a real opportunity to increase the engagement of tenants at local level and to promote Tenants and Residents' Associations.

## 5. Observations at Caerphilly Homes Task Group and Work Streams

5.1 It was evident from observation at the meeting that there is a clear and demonstrable commitment to involving tenants in decision making from Caerphilly Homes Task Group. It comprises 7 tenants and 7 Councillors including the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Housing (Deputy Leader), the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and the Cabinet Member for Finance. Although the meeting was formal and chaired by the Leader of the Council, there was a relaxed atmosphere and tenants had no problems in contributing to the meeting and making their voices heard. However, the agenda was set by officers, as is inevitable in only the second meeting.

5.2 Initial work with tenants as part of the transfer process resulted in the identification of three priorities – repairs and improvements, sheltered housing review and scrutiny of service. Working groups for two of the priorities have been set up with a lead officer, lead tenant and support staff (participation officers) allocated. Working groups are meeting fortnightly but often meet informally, for example to visit properties undergoing improvement works. More recently an additional work stream Transforming Lives and Communities has been set up. The

Repairs and Improvements work stream has made good progress involving tenants in WHQS procurement and specifications. Good progress has also been made by the Sheltered Housing Review work stream. There was a high level of involvement of tenants in the procurement of consultants for the Sheltered Housing Review (two tenants were on the interview panel). Tenants are involved in the consultation process. However, there has been some discord in this group partly arising out of confusion of roles and responsibilities and frustration at the level of involvement.

- 5.3 On the other hand, tenants were very positive about the progress they had made during the TEG Focus on Delivery Project meeting. Tenants also expressed their increasing trust of the Council:

“Council want to work with us, we have never felt this before. Tenants are starting to trust the Council.” “The DLO have made a great start.” “We are involved in monitoring delivery through the Repairs and Improvement Group.”

## 6. Interviews

- 6.1 Political and senior management commitment to involving tenants was evident from interviews. Both the Deputy Chief Executive and the Cabinet Member for housing had a good understanding of the importance of involving tenants in improving services.

“It’s about working together and moving forward, building trust so that tenants realise we mean what we say when we say we want to do it jointly” (Cabinet Member for Housing, Deputy Leader)

- 6.2 Despite this commitment from the top to involving tenants, interviews with staff demonstrated that customer focus does not permeate the organisation and tenant participation is not mainstreamed. Mainstreaming means that tenants are involved in all areas of a landlord’s service and decision making and that tenant participation is not a separate activity for tenants and Tenant Participation Officers outside the main business of the department. Although tenants (and other staff) are increasingly involved in delivering WHQS, tenant participation is not central to the way that landlord services are delivered across the department.

6.4 Before the ballot the Tenant Participation Officers had been in the housing strategy section of the department and are now in Housing Services. They rightly see their role as being a conduit for tenant views enabling tenant participation to take place across the department. As participation grows it will not be possible for them to attend and facilitate every tenant engagement activity. Every front line contact with tenants is an opportunity to promote participation e.g. the new Tenant Liaison Officers can promote tenant participation and tenant and resident associations when they are engaging with tenants about WHQS.

6.5 It is evident from interviews with Senior Managers that they recognise that they have been fire fighting and that there is a need for change. Indeed interviews and observations throughout confirm that there is a command and control culture which is process and compliance driven with limited focus on service improvements (except for WHQS). For example the computer system would appear to be set up to check compliance rather than monitor outcomes. This militates against delivering customer focussed services. In the past this kind of culture may have been appropriate to ensure policies and procedures were properly implemented and would have been a response to the push for good Performance Indicators by the then Welsh Assembly Government. However, the Welsh Government's requirements across services are now more about citizen centred services and outcome focus and these should form the basis of strategic planning. It is difficult to envisage any sustainable tenant participation without some cultural change.

## 7. Final Consultation with TIE (power point presentation at appendix 3)

7.1 Before finalising the conclusions and the implications for strategic planning a final consultation exercise took place at Tenant and Information Exchange meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2012. This consultation included a summary of issues and suggested strategic responses:

Diagram 4

Issue	Strategic Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Command and Control Process based culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture Change</li> <li>• Customer focussed outcome based culture</li> <li>• Mainstream TP</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Except for Repairs and Improvements and Older</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish new Housing Improvement Partnership using self</li> </ul>

Persons Work Group a limited focus on service improvement and scrutiny of service	assessment against the Regulatory Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20-25 active and committed tenants and residents but limited engagement with wider body of tenants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend engagement through more informal methods</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor Information flow to wider body of tenants and residents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop TIE to include an Editorial Board and responsibility for information flow to wider body of tenants and residents</li> </ul>

7.2 At the TIE meeting Tenants and Residents agreed the suggested outcomes, overarching aim and key objectives for the strategy. Although there was general agreement amongst tenants and residents at TIE to the proposed new structure there was some disappointment expressed by a few tenants that that there was not enough emphasis on involving residents and developing communities. Tenant participation and community development are elements of one continuum and community development is taking place at the tenant and resident association level. The new informal groups will also offer opportunities for wider community involvement. Indeed, there are opportunities arising from the retention of the stock for the Housing Department to engage in community development and in particular with Communities First. This should be encouraged perhaps through a wider community involvement and development strategy with connections between the strategies. At the moment though, the focus of this participation strategy should be about improving the landlord service (which will of course have an outcome for communities).

7.3 One other concern arising from some tenants at TIE was that the old tenant forum had not been resurrected in the new structure so there is no overarching tenant body. The functions of the tenant forum have been divided amongst the informal and formal working groups where tenants should be more meaningfully involved in informing decision making and developing services. Modern tenant participation is about extending participation through formal and informal engagement at all levels and using social media and websites rather than an overarching group of involved tenants. Structures need to be fluid and flexible to take account of tenants' needs and aspirations. Regular



monitoring and evaluation can test the structure and change it if the need arises.

- 8 The Local Tenant Participation Strategy
- 8.1 The key themes emerging through the tenant consultation, interviews and observations have informed the strategy and the structure. The Outcome or result of this Local Tenant Participation Strategy are in line with the National Tenant Participation Strategy to improve services to tenants and communities measured through increased tenant satisfaction.
- 8.2 Beneath the outcome the Aim of the Strategy is to deliver efficient, effective landlord services through working honestly and openly with service users - putting them at the heart of delivering the service. During the focus groups and interviews with tenants some tenants expressed a mistrust of the Council. (This applied to the Council as a body not the individual members of staff and did appear to improve from the beginning to the end of this project work). Explicitly including the statement working honestly and openly with service users in the aim should help to ameliorate this perception.
- 8.3 Below the outcome and aim are four key objectives these are the strategic means by which the aims and outcomes are achieved. In order for successful implementation an operational plan will need to be developed by officers which should include tasks/targets, timescales (best defined as short medium and long term) and officers responsible. The monitoring and evaluation of this strategy and operational plan should include tenants.
- 8.4 The main theme emerging from the consultation is that the commitment from the top to working in partnership with tenants expressed through the addendum document and being implemented through the Caerphilly Homes Task Group does not yet permeate the whole department. The Tenant Participation Officers and other Officers working with tenants on WHQS and the Older Persons working groups are working hard to enable tenants to participate. However, tenant participation is not mainstreamed throughout the department so that opportunities for engaging tenants by front line staff are being missed. Mainstreaming means that tenants are involved in all areas of the landlord service and that tenant participation is not a separate activity for tenants and Tenant Participation Officers outside of the main business of the department. Mainstreaming requires a fundamental change to the way the department conduct its business.

A change from its present command and control culture to one focussed on the needs of tenants and which empowers all officers in the department to take responsibility for involving tenants in design, monitoring and decisions affecting the service. This requires behavioural change from staff and a management culture that – from top to bottom - reinforces desired behaviours and challenges out of date practices.

8.5 It is therefore recommended that the first key objective and the corner stone of the strategy is to develop and implement a customer focus culture change programme based on outcome for tenants and enabling mainstreaming of tenant participation This will need a commitment from the Caerphilly Homes Task Group to:

- developing a programme of culture change based on putting the customer at the heart of service delivery
- considering resource implications of using properly experienced and skilled consultants to assist with the process of culture change through staff training and development and building management and leadership capacity
- mainstreaming tenant participation

8.6 Apart from the two work groups existing tenant participation practices and structures lack a focus on service improvement. Tenants need to be more involved in scrutiny of the performance of the whole department in delivering efficient and effective services if the overall aim of the strategy is to be met. The second key objective therefore is to develop tenant scrutiny to improve services. This means

- Establishing a new Housing Services Improvement Partnership to scrutinise performance and inform plans and priorities for service delivery preferably against the outcomes in the Regulatory Framework for Housing Association in Wales (which it is anticipated will apply to all social landlords)
- Training and development of staff and tenants in the scrutiny function
- Developing a structured information system to capture performance information from a new customer panel, surveys, mystery shopping, tenant inspectors, focus groups etc

8.7 Tenant involvement in service delivery is currently dependant on 20 to 25 active and committed tenants. Existing Tenant and Residents' Associations are involved to varying degrees and are mostly concerned with issues in their communities or on their estates. Both staff and tenants recognise the need to increase engagement and extend

tenant participation but most of their time and energies have been, devoted to the transfer, the subsequent no vote and the Addendum document. It is opportune now to agree that the third key objective should be to develop increased tenant and resident engagement through a new structure (diagram 5). Currently the structure is very formal with engagement taking place through formal work groups and TIE. Experience elsewhere demonstrates that informal methods and interest groups can increase participation for example:

- The use of social events such as tenants' fairs, chip and chatter or pasta and participation can widen participation. This can work both at the partnership and community level. So, for example informal focus groups can be built around a social event or tenants' and residents' associations could bid for a grant for social events to increase involvement on estates.
- Facilitating new less formal interest groups in response to needs and aspirations of tenants and the Addendum promises – Disability Action Group, Anti-Social Behaviour Group
- Using the wider resources of the Council to encourage involvement of hard to reach groups e.g. young people, black and ethnic minorities
- Building on the delivery of WHQS to involve and promote tenant participation on estate e.g. through the new Tenant Liaison Officer posts
- An annual tenant conference or tenants' fair
- Reviewing the role of tenants and residents associations and their relationship with community development

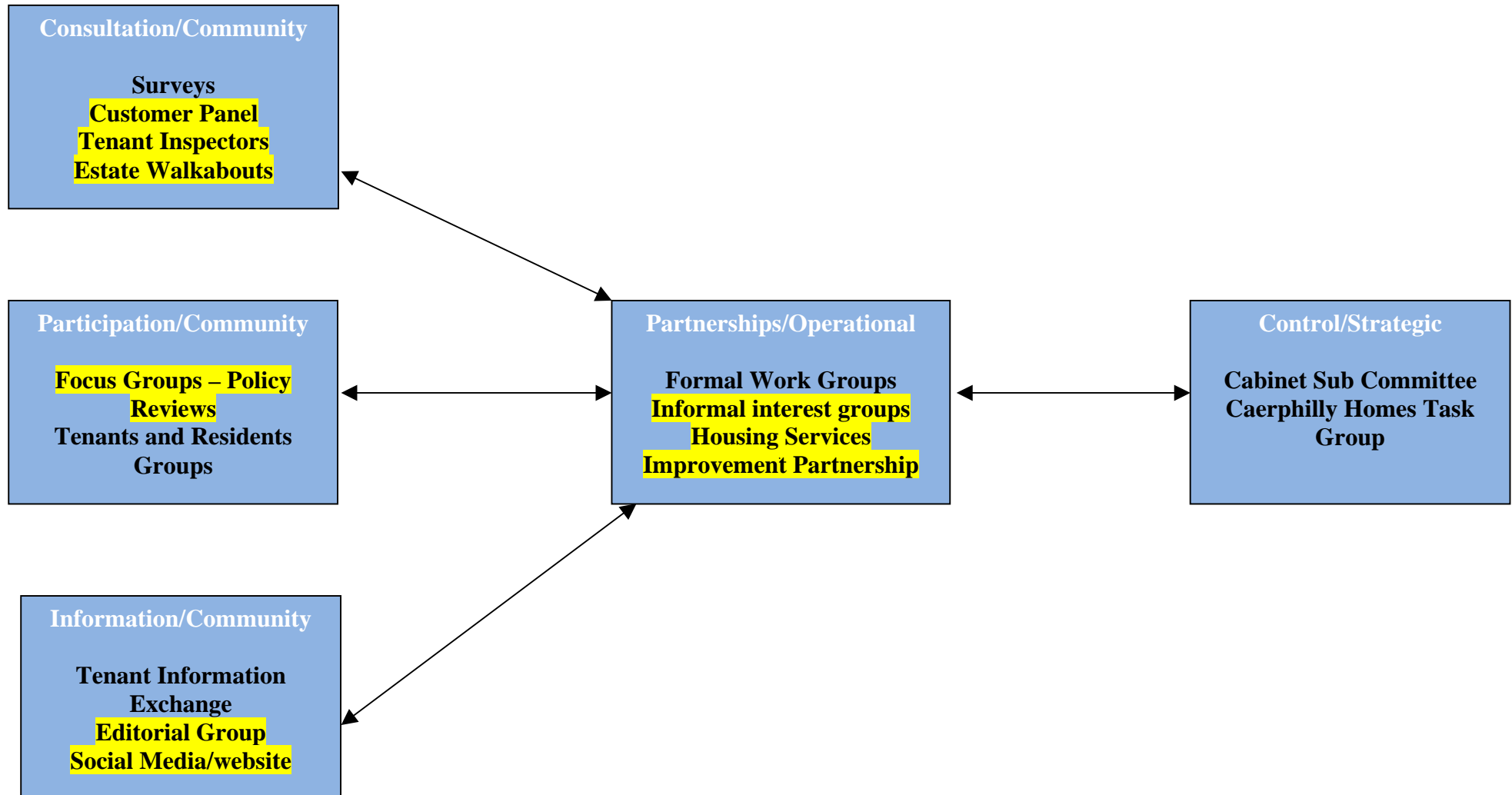
8.8 Information is exchanged through TIE and the work groups and engaged tenants are in receipt of a great deal of information. However, communication and information flow to the wider body of tenants is less successful. The last key objective therefore is to Improve information flow to the wider tenant body. This could mean for example

- developing the role of TIE to include responsibility for information flow to the wider body of tenants through an editorial group for the newsletter and the use of technology and social media.
- Developing the role of the 7 tenants on Caerphilly homes to promote communication between Caerphilly homes and the work groups and from the work groups back up to Caerphilly Homes

9. Proposed New Structure (Diagram 5)

- 9.1. In order to achieve the outcome, aims and key objectives of the strategy a new structure is proposed. The existing structure has at the top, strategic and control level the Cabinet Sub Group informed by the Caerphilly Homes Task Group which meets immediately beforehand. This is a unique and clever solution to sharing power with tenants at this level and creates a real and genuine opportunity for tenant involvement in designing and shaping the whole of the service.
- 9.2 Partnership at the operational level currently takes place through the existing work groups. Extending this through less formal interest groups will enable the involvement of service users experiencing particular services e.g. disability action group and anti-social behaviour group.
- 9.3 The existing lack of focus on service improvement (except for the two work groups) can be improved by a new Housing Service Improvement Partnership which would involve tenants and staff working together on self assessment and service improvement planning. The Housing Services Improvement Partnership should be able to draw on performance information from surveys, a new customer panel, mystery shoppers/tenant inspectors etc. which will need to be established at the community level.
- 9.4 Ad hoc focus groups and tenants' and residents' at the community level can be used to review elements of the service and extend participation.
- 9.5. Finally, it is proposed that the Terms of Reference for the Tenant Information Exchange be extended to include responsible for information flow not only between the groups but also to the wider body of tenants. Establishing an editorial sub group and a social media sub group of the Tenant Information Exchange would help TIE achieve this.

Diagram 5 - Proposed TP Structure  
(New groups highlighted in yellow)



## 10 Resources

- 10.1 Allocating resources in any detailed way is beyond the scope of this piece of work however, the overall resource allocated in the Addendum document is £150,000 per year. The changes recommended by this strategy do not require any additional staffing but rather that the existing staff work differently. There will be additional marginal costs of setting up and supporting new groups but it should be possible to keep this within that budget.
- 10.2 The change management process would need separate consideration of resource allocation depending on the route the Council chooses for its implementation.

## 11 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation should be the responsibility of Caerphilly Homes Task Group. The delay in returning the strategy to WG has meant that the timescale for review is no longer in line with the WG requirement for a strategy review every three years. It is therefore suggested that this Local Tenant Participation Strategy be reviewed in the summer 2014 to return to WG October 2014.

## 12 Recommendation

That Officers recommend to Caerphilly Homes Task Group that they agree:

- The outcome, aim and key objectives for the Local Tenant Participation Strategy
- The proposed new structure

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