



## CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 3RD JULY 2013

**SUBJECT: SHELTERED HOUSING REVIEW - PROGRESS REPORT**

**REPORT BY: ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This report provides an update to Members of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on progress following the presentation of the independent Consultant's report on 4th April 2013 in respect of the sheltered housing review.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 On 17th February 2012, the stock transfer ballot resulted in a majority vote from the tenants in favour of their homes remaining with the Council.
- 2.2 As part of the offer within its Stock Transfer proposals, the Council promised to provide extra funding for a review of the sheltered housing service and the development of improved services for sheltered housing tenants and other older tenants, following full consultation within twelve months of the ballot, i.e. 17th February 2013. The review was completed within this timescale.
- 2.3 This report provided an update on progress to date following the presentation of the Independent Consultant's report on 4th April 2013 and the Officers reports on Utilities Charges in Sheltered Housing and the Stock Appraisal Report.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 This report identifies the need to promote the good health and wellbeing of older people living in the county borough by helping people to live as actively and independently as possible.
- 3.2 The review of the sheltered housing service should contribute to the aims of the following strategic documents:
- The Local Housing Strategy 'People, Property and Places' aims 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.
  - Health, Social Care and Well Being Strategy
  - Community Safety Strategy
  - Corporate Improvement Plan
  - Community Plan
  - Older Persons Strategy
  - Strategic Equality Plan – Objectives 3, 4, and 5

In addition, there are a number of other relevant strategies and published papers that will influence the direction of this review. These include the following:

- Welsh Housing Strategy ‘ Improving Lives and Communities – Homes in Wales’ (April 2010) – This strategy includes the following requirements:
  - Improve the quality and standard of all existing houses and rented accommodation, including energy efficiency;
  - Giving tenants a clear voice in decisions which affect them;
  - Ensuring services reflect the needs of those who use them not the needs of organisations who deliver them.
- Supporting People Programme Grant (SPPG) Guidance (Wales) – July 2012
- Supporting People Caerphilly – Planning for the Future (2013 – 2015)
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation – Older People’s Housing: Choice, Quality of Life and Under - Occupation

## 4. THE REPORT

### 4.1 Consultation Process – Improvements to Older Persons Services

- 4.1.1 Following a presentation of the independent Consultant’s Sheltered Housing Review report, members of the Older Persons Working Group were re-assured that the proposals included improvements for other older tenants as well as sheltered housing tenants.
- 4.1.2 However, members of the Working Group felt that it was important to undertake consultation meetings with other older persons to ensure that they had the opportunity to engage with the group and identify some of the service improvements that would be beneficial to them.
- 4.1.3 To meet this requirement, seven consultation meetings were set up throughout the borough and invitations were sent out to 2086 tenants living in designated older persons housing. Transport was also offered to encourage tenants to attend.
- 4.1.4 The table below provides information on the venues and number of attendees together with the total number of presentations sent out to tenants who were unable to attend any of the sessions.

Date	Venue	Number of Tenants attending
23/04/13	White Rose Centre Information and Resource Centre, New Tredegar	13
25/04/13	Penyrheol Community Centre, Caerphilly	6
25/04/13	Bedwas and Trethomas Community Centre	7
07/05/13	Cefn Fforest Community Centre, Cefn Fforest	4
07/05/13	Crosskeys College, Crosskeys	8
08/05/13	Neuadd St Cattwg Centre, Gelligaer	0
08/05/13	Bargoed Community Centre, Gilfach	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>39</b>

In addition, copies of the presentation were sent out to 28 tenants who requested this information because they were unable to attend any of the meetings. Overall, the attendance was disappointing but tenants were at least given an opportunity to attend and express their views

- 4.1.5 In summary, tenants attending the meetings were supportive of proposals to introduce new services, e.g. gardening, decorating, and handyperson schemes.

- 4.1.6 They were also supportive of the proposals to upgrade the community alarm service in older persons group schemes, introduction of a floating support service and establishment of an Activities Co-ordinators post to develop a range of activities in sheltered housing schemes and in resource centres that could be accessed by the wider community.
- 4.1.7 There was limited interest in the development of a cleaning service for communal hallways /stairwells in blocks of flats but it should be noted that in most of the information sessions, the majority of tenants were living in bungalows or flats with individual entrances where a cleaning service for communal areas would not apply.
- 4.1.8 The majority of tenants attending were more interested in raising repair issues and seeking information on the WHQS works programme. However any specific issues raised were addressed at the meetings or passed to other officers to provide an individual response.

## 4.2 Sheltered Housing Review

- 4.2.1 Following the Independent Consultant's presentation on 4th April, the Housing Cabinet Sub-Committee it was agreed that:
- (i) The report would be published on the Council's website
  - (ii) All Members would be provided with a copy on request
  - (iii) The Council would arrange a further round of meetings at all sheltered housing schemes to share the findings of the review and consider how proposals contained within the report could be progressed
  - (iv) The feedback from the consultation meetings would then be incorporated within the Officers final report to Caerphilly Homes Task Group and to the Housing Cabinet Sub-Committee.
- 4.2.2 The Older Persons Consultation Meetings were completed on 8th May and the second round of sheltered housing consultation meetings commenced on Tuesday 28th May 2013. These meetings will continue at each sheltered housing scheme until 11th July 2013. Invitation letters were sent out to tenants inviting them to attend and notices have been placed in each scheme to remind tenants of the dates of the meetings in their individual schemes.
- 4.2.3 Local Ward Members and members of the Task Group have also been invited to attend to observe the consultation process.
- 4.2.4 To date, 10 consultation meetings have already taken place. A copy of the presentation is attached for information. Tenants attending these meetings have been generally happy with the proposals recommended in the independent consultant's report. They are all in favour of the reconfiguration of the sheltered housing service in cluster groups with support being provided on the basis of assessed needs. However, this is conditional on the Council guaranteeing the presence of a warden at every scheme five days a week even if their presence is limited to 2/3 hours a day.
- 4.2.5 Tenants are also in agreement to a support service being based on their individual assessed needs. Again this is conditional on the Council guaranteeing that these support visits will always be undertaken regardless of staffing levels.
- ## 4.3 Utilities Charges in Sheltered Housing Schemes
- 4.3.1 Reports on gas, electricity and water rates was submitted to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 4th April 2013. The contents of the reports were fully endorsed and the Cabinet Sub-Committee subsequently approved the recommendations.
- 4.3.2 The reports detail proposals for a future charging policy in all sheltered housing schemes in order to address any anomalies and ensure equitable arrangements across the borough.

4.3.3 The changes agreed are due to be implemented in September 2013 and a formal notice of a variation to the terms and conditions of tenancy will be served on all tenants affected by the change in July 2013. This is to ensure that the Council complies with the statutory 28-day notice period.

4.3.4 During the sheltered housing consultation process, the proposed changes to utilities payments will be discussed with tenants prior to the formal notice being served. This will provide an opportunity for discussion around any concerns tenants may have regarding increased costs. It will also be an opportunity to advise tenants of the help line service that will be provided by the Rent Section Tenancy Support Officers immediately prior to the implementation of these changes and the grants and discounts that may also be available to offset the charges.

#### **4.4 Floating Support Service**

4.4.1 The Supporting People Team has confirmed funding for the appointment of 4 Floating Support Officers. Their role will be to undertake assessments and provide support to older persons living in designated older persons housing and in general needs housing in the county borough.

4.4.2 The Floating Support Officers post has now been through the job evaluation process and the business case for these new posts has been approved. Two of these posts are due to be advertised shortly.

4.4.3 Depending on the outcome of the final report on the sheltered housing review, the Floating Support Officers will be available to carry out the support assessments for all sheltered housing tenants across the borough as a priority before providing this service to other older persons.

#### **4.5 Activities Co-ordinator**

4.5.1 The Supporting People Team has confirmed funding for this new post and a job description is being drawn up for evaluation. The role of the Activities Co-ordinator is to:

- Work with the scheme wardens and tenants to help them organise events in their schemes
- Encourage the wider use of communal facilities for the older and vulnerable community as a whole
- Develop good working relationships with other agencies to promote health and well being services
- Establish befriending services
- Apply for grant aid to fund additional social activities for tenants

4.5.2 With the proposed reconfiguration of the sheltered housing service, it is important to ensure that social interaction in all schemes is maintained and enhanced where possible. The Activities Co-ordinator will also be expected to work closely with the Floating Support Service to identify tenants in the wider community who could join in activities in the schemes and avoid social isolation.

### **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no equalities implications identified in this progress report that are not currently being addressed.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Tenant Participation Special Projects budget fully funds all the sheltered housing consultation meetings and Supporting People will fund the new Floating Support Officers posts for a 3 year fixed term initially.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 This progress report has no direct personnel implications.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 The Older Persons Project Group has been fully involved in the older persons consultation meetings and are currently supporting officers in the sheltered housing consultation meetings. They will also be fully consulted on the contents of the final report prior to the report being submitted to Caerphilly Homes Task Group in September 2013.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 Following completion of the second round of consultation meetings, a final report will be submitted to Caerphilly Homes Task Group in September 2013.

## **10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 To inform the Caerphilly Homes Task Group of progress to date on the sheltered housing review.

## **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 Sheltered Housing Presentation – Consultation Meetings  
Appendix 2 Consultation Meetings - Tenants Handouts