



CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP - 5TH SEPTEMBER 2013

SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMME – ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT PLAN

REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To secure approval for the resources required to deliver an engagement and involvement plan to underpin the WHQS environmental programme and to deliver strategic projects identified by communities, for communities as part of the programme.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Following the ballot in February 2012, the Council agreed that it would deliver the promises made in its Offer document to tenants and deliver WHQS by 2019/2020. It also gave a commitment to delivering numerous additional benefits which were also outlined in the Offer Document, which would add value to the WHQS programme and help deliver the Council's ambition of using the £210 million WHQS investment as a catalyst to Transform Homes, Lives and Communities.
- 2.2 Part of the commitment is to deliver a £10.6m environmental programme.
- 2.3 The creation of a strategic environmental programme targeting the communities and neighbourhoods in which the Council's 11,000 properties are located provides an opportunity to transform the physical fabric of our areas, address social and economic challenges and ultimately create more sustainable communities throughout the county borough.
- 2.4 The CHTG has already agreed that the programme will seek to support strategic environmental projects that are coterminous with Communities First priorities namely; developing prosperous communities; learning communities and healthier communities.
- 2.5 Furthermore, the programme will only support projects that can demonstrate evidence of community support, engagement and involvement.
- 2.6 The Council has made a commitment to the Welsh Government that the programme be underpinned by an extensive community engagement and involvement plan which will identify the most appropriate ways to engage communities and individuals in determining strategic environmental improvements linked to WHQS that will benefit their community.

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 The Council is committed to ensuring that the WHQS investment transforms not only homes

but also lives and communities.

3.3 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; Children and Young People’s Plan; WG’s Tackling Poverty Action Plan 2012-2016 and Building Resilient Communities.

3.4 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 An Engagement and Involvement Plan designed to underpin the WHQS environmental programme is being developed jointly between colleagues in Community Regeneration, Countryside, Groundwork Caerphilly and Housing. The Plan will detail the engagement and involvement methodology that will be used in each of the three housing areas 1) to raise awareness amongst the community of Caerphilly Homes, WHQS and the Environmental Programme and 2) to facilitate meaningful engagement and involvement amongst tenants and residents in determining strategic projects that will benefit communities and could be funded via the programme.

4.2 The first phase of the Plan will be delivered during Spring 2014 and is likely to include community based roadshows in each of the three housing areas, taking place at different locations at various times (community centres, marquee’s, libraries etc) coupled with activities designed to engage local interest and involvement (toy library, cooking demonstrations, tea dances, work clubs, learning through play activities, health awareness etc).

4.3 The second phase is likely to include community based events designed to determine project ideas. It is likely that these events will be held in Summer 2014 in community based venues including community centres, libraries and possibly void properties. Communities will be encouraged to become involved in Planning for Real type exercises in order to develop proposals for each of the housing areas based on their thoughts and ideas. All sections of the community will be able to participate in the process. Project ideas from the three housing areas will be collated and options presented to communities within each of the three housing areas. Residents will be asked to identify and take ownership of the project / projects that they believe will have the greatest impact on transforming lives and communities.

4.4 The third phase of the programme will focus on the delivery of the projects identified during phase 2 and is scheduled to commence late 2014.

4.5 The delivery of specific projects is likely to be a combination of contractual arrangements, direct works and volunteering.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 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.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no dedicated resources to coordinate and facilitate the delivery of the engagement and involvement plan or to develop the capacity amongst the community to determine which

type of projects would benefit their area and subsequently to support the community to deliver projects.

- 6.2 The following core resources (Caerphilly Homes Environmental Team) are required to deliver a meaningful engagement and delivery programme:

	2013/14*	2014/15	2015/16	
Caerphilly Homes Environmental Officer (Grade 7) X 3	24,084.00	97,296.00	98,268.00	
Total	24,084.00	97,296.00	98,268.00	219,648.00
*2013/14 – 3 month costs only				

- 6.3 The Caerphilly Homes Environmental Officers will be appointed on a 2 year fixed term contract and funded through the WHQS Business Plan (HRA).
- 6.4 In addition to staff costs, an events budget will be required to support delivery in each housing area during 2014/15. It is proposed that £15,000 per annum is allocated to each housing area for use by the Caerphilly Homes Environmental Team to support the delivery of events as part of phase 1 and 2.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Caerphilly Homes Environmental Team will be seconded to work with the Community Regeneration team and each Caerphilly Homes Environmental Officer aligned to the relevant cluster area. Coordination of the programme on a day to day basis will be undertaken by the Community Regeneration Coordinator based within the Community Regeneration Team.
- 7.2 Overall responsibility and strategic direction will remain with the WHQS Delivery Team via the Strategic Co-ordination Manager but day to day management of the team will fall within the remit of the Community Regeneration Manager.
- 7.3 The marketing and advertising of events underpinning the WHQS environmental programme will be led by the WHQS Communications and Tenant Engagement Officer and delivered in partnership with the Caerphilly Homes Environmental Team, Community Regeneration, Corporate Communications Team, Housing staff and appropriate partners.
- 7.4 Opportunities to secure match funding will be explored and identified as the engagement and involvement plan is delivered and as specific projects are identified.
- 7.5 Additional staff input will also need to be forthcoming from the Housing Division including the Tenant Liaison Officers, Response Surveyors, Tenant Participation and the Estate Management teams in order to support the delivery of events and better inform the delivery of projects within communities. There are obvious benefits to these teams in particular becoming involved in the environmental programme and some already have a clear remit to work actively with tenants and Community Regeneration.
- 7.6 There are currently 6 Tenant Liaison Officers supported by a further two specialist TLO's (Occupational Therapist and an Energy Advisor). Of the six TLO's 2 are dedicated to working with tenants in each of the 3 housing areas. The TLO's as the face of the WHQS programme will actively promote and market the events that will be taking place simultaneously in each of the three areas throughout phase 1, 2 and 3. They will enquire whether tenants are interested in taking a more active role in the environmental programme and sign post tenants who may be interested to relevant events and community projects in their area. The Surveyors housed within the response maintenance team are also well placed to undertake this function.

- 7.7 It will also be necessary for the Tenant Participation Team to support Phase 1, 2 and 3. The primary responsibility of the Tenant Participation Team would be to work alongside the Caerphilly Homes Environmental Team and Community Regeneration staff in each housing area to support the organisation and delivery of events that will encourage tenants to participate and become more involved in the environmental programme, WHQS and the housing service generally. The involvement of the TPO team in the events that will be delivered during phases 1, 2 and 3 provides an new opportunity to engage with tenants and is in line with the rationale and recommendations contained within the new tenant participation strategy. It is envisaged that the TPO team would also be supported by the active tenants that are currently engaged in various aspects of the housing service.
- 7.8 The Area / Neighbourhood Management teams also have an explicit role to play in relation to supporting phases 1, 2 and 3 of the environmental programme. The role of the Estate Management Officers already includes a remit to work alongside Community Regeneration and participate in the implementation of new initiatives. Their responsibilities also include the need to 'identify areas in need of environmental works and manage and develop regeneration and environmental schemes including undertaking consultation with appropriate parties (tenants, residents and community groups)'. There is a significant level of expertise and knowledge that can be obtained as a result of the input from Estate Management Officers into phases 1, 2 and 3. Each phase also presents the opportunity for the EMO to engage with a greater number of tenants and residents in a meaningful and positive way thereby increasing their knowledge and understanding of the issues that are prevalent in the area for which they are responsible.
- 7.9 Staff from within the housing service would be expected to support and work alongside the WHQS Environmental Team to deliver events which encourage tenants and residents to become actively involved in determining, developing and delivering projects for their area. Support and added value will also be provided by the Parks, Public Services, Countryside and Planning divisions. This will encourage greater integration, coordination and collaboration between internal departments and partner agencies, tenants and residents which, in the future, will lead to a more cohesive service and form the foundation of a sustainable neighbourhood management model.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 Comments received following consultations during the course of preparing the report have been considered by the WHQS Project Board and where relevant reflected in the report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The Task Group recommend the Cabinet Sub Committee to approve:
- (1) The proposals for engagement with residents to develop the WHQS environmental programme.
 - (2) The resources allocated for the appointment of the Caerphilly Homes Environmental Officers.
 - (3) The integrated approach across the Council's organisation to support the engagement plan.

10. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To agree arrangements for development of the WHQS environmental programme

11. STATUTORY POWER

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

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