



## CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 5TH SEPTEMBER 2013

**SUBJECT: WHQS PROGRAMME CHANGES**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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

1.1 To outline programme changes in light of progress with the 2013/14 capital programme.

### **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 The Council's Local Housing Strategy "People, Property, Places" has the following aim:-

"To provide good quality, well maintained 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 WHQS investment strategy was approved by the Caerphilly Homes Task Group / Cabinet Sub Committee in September 2012. This identified that the programme would be undertaken on the basis of a sequence of internal and external works on a community basis with concurrent activity in each of the three housing areas (Lower Rhymney Valley; Upper Rhymney Valley; Eastern Valleys). Based on the community sequence, internal or external works to individual properties will be identified by year and by contractor.

3.2 The programme for 2013/14 is now well underway. It is primarily focused on Rhymney, Pantside, Senghenydd and Pwllpant. Due to the procurement process for major new works contracts, the 2013/14 programme is mainly being undertaken by the in house team and the largest percentage of expenditure is on internal works.

3.3 Based on the data held in Keystone it was originally anticipated that there would be work that would involve the in house team to the end of the financial year. However following the survey stage it has become apparent that there is less improvement work required to the identified properties due to investment in previous years. All properties are still being surveyed to validate that previous works are to WHQS and minor elements are being attended to where required.

3.4 An assessment has been made and the overall picture is not dissimilar in all three housing areas. It is anticipated that the planned improvement works will be completed by December / January in the Upper Rhymney Valley, and the Lower Rhymney Valley, and in the East area probably by end of October. Therefore to maintain continuity of workflow it is proposed that a number of properties are brought forward from the 2014/15 programme and surveys undertaken in readiness for the works to be commenced to follow on from the completion of

the works originally planned for 2013/14.

- 3.5 The internal works programme for the in house team for 2014/15 has been examined and the following properties will be brought forward:-

**Upper Rhymney Valley**

72 properties at Ty Coch, Rhymney

**Lower Rhymney Valley**

42 properties at First Avenue, Trecenydd

**Eastern Valleys**

60 properties at Panside, Newbridge

**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.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The projected expenditure for the in house internal works in 2013/14 was £7.1m as part of the investment strategy approved in September 2012. However some work in Rhymney South was transferred to 2012/13 resulting in a revised projection for the works of £6m. Due to other capital works having to be undertaken outside the programme (mainly heating systems) the projected outturn for 2013/14 on the internal works is currently £6.9m.
- 5.2 The overall capital programme including fees for 2013/14 is set at £15.5m. Current analysis indicates a potential underspend of £730,000. This principally arises due to the re-profiling of internal work between years. Although there has been less internal work identified at survey stage when compared with the stock condition data in Keystone this is offset by the ad hoc internal work outside the programme that has to be charged to the capital account.
- 5.3 The projected expenditure against properties that will be brought forward is:

	£
Upper Rhymney Valley	524,100
Lower Rhymney Valley	299,000
Eastern Valleys	<u>493,550</u>
Total	1,316,650

- 5.4 At this time with the projected underspend and uncommitted contingency within the programme this additional projected cost can be met. However, until surveys have been completed for the additional properties it will not be possible to know the accuracy of the projected £1.3m extra expenditure that has been brought forward.
- 5.5 Due to the dynamic nature of the programme it has to be appreciated that there is a need for constant adjustment.
- 5.6 The attached appendix provides an analysis and projected outturn for the 2013/14 WHQS capital programme.

## **6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Bringing work forward from 2014/15 has implications for the WHQS team as resources need to be allocated for the surveying and tenant liaison. The latter part of the financial year 2013/14 is a critical time as the planning and programming is required for the works contracts (internal and external) that will commence in April 2014. Efficiency in the use of staff resources is a major challenge as the volume of work that has to be managed will more than double from 2014/15. The resource position will be kept under review by the Project Board.

## **7. CONSULTATIONS**

- 7.1 There have been no comments from consultees.

## **8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 The Task Group endorse the contingency arrangements to bring forward internal work earmarked for the in house team from 2014/15 to ensure continuity of work flow and recommend that the Cabinet Sub Committee approve the proposal.  
(Note: to meet required lead times it has been necessary to commit to the surveying of the additional properties).

## **9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 To maintain programme continuity in light of actual experience.

## **10. STATUTORY POWER**

- 10.1 Housing Acts 1985, 1996, and 2004. This is a Cabinet Sub Committee function.

Author: Phil Davy, Head of Programmes  
(Tel: 01443 864208, Email: davypg@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Consultees: Cllr. Gerald Jones, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing  
Cllr. Keith Reynolds, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Corporate Services  
Stuart Rosser, Chief Executive  
Gail Williams, Monitoring Officer  
Shaun Couzens, Chief Housing Officer  
Nicole Scammell, Acting Director of Corporate Services and S151 Officer  
Dan Perkins, Head of Legal Services  
Steve Greedy, WHQS Implementation Project Manager  
Alan Edmunds, WHQS Implementation Project Manager  
Colin Roden, WHQS Implementation Project Manager  
Lesley Allen, Principal Accountant

Appendices:  
Appendix 1 WHQS Capital Programme 2013/14