



CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 5TH DECEMBER 2013

SUBJECT: 22-24 HEOL ANEURIN: CONVERSION TO FLATS OF FORMER SOCIAL SERVICES CHILDRENS HOME

REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Members of the Task Group of a proposal to convert the above semi-detached properties which were a former Social Services Children's Home to 4 x 1 bedroom flats.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The former Children's Home at 22-24 Heol Aneurin in Penyrheol recently became surplus to requirements.
- 2.2 A business case was submitted to Corporate Property for the Housing Service to acquire the premises and this proved to be successful.
- 2.3 The intention is to convert this block of semi-detached properties into 4 x 1 bedroom flats providing much needed smaller, more affordable homes, which will enable tenants to downsize.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 **Improving Lives and Communities: Homes in Wales (Welsh Government, 2010)** which sets out the national context on meeting housing need, homelessness and housing-related support services.
- 3.2 **Caerphilly Delivers (Single Integrated Plan, 2013)** refers to improving standards of housing and communities and giving appropriate access to services across the county borough.
- 3.3 **People, Property, Places: A Housing Strategy for Caerphilly County (2008-2013)** provides the contexts for the provision of housing and related services in the borough.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The former Social Services Children's Home became surplus to requirements when new purpose built accommodation was completed close by.
- 4.2 Expressions of interest were invited and the Housing Service immediately responded as the property presented an ideal opportunity to deliver smaller housing to help mitigate against the impact of the Welfare Reform Act.

- 4.3 A business case was approved and referred to the Council's Asset Management Group, where it was agreed that no capital sum for this acquisition of the properties was required.
- 4.4 Penyrheol comprises 166 (Lower) and 322 (Upper) properties, a total of 488, of which 8 are 1-bedroom flats non-sheltered. In a typical year just one of these flats becomes vacant and there are 243 applicants for this type of property on this housing list.
- 4.5 In Penyrheol there are 182 tenants on Housing Benefit who are under occupying their homes and are affected by the social housing size criteria (bedroom tax).
- 4.6 The premises 22-24 Heol Aneurin were once 2x3 bedroom houses, which were converted into a single building for use as a Children's Home. An application for Planning permission to convert into 4 x 1 bedroom flats has been submitted. Each flat will have its own separate entrance.
- 4.7 Subject to planning and Sub-Cabinet Committee approval, the conversion should be completed by July 2014.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment is not needed because the issues covered are for information purposes only, therefore the Council's full EIA process does not need to be applied.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The cost of the conversions can be met from within existing budgets.
- 6.2 Detailed estimates of the cost for the work will be prepared and the initial guide price is approximately £100,000, which includes the cost for the 4 units to fully meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard, environmental works, and the Planning and Building Regulations Fees.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no Personnel implications.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 Following consultation, proposals were submitted for consideration at these properties being advertised on the open market for sale and as a resultant capital receipt being obtained by CCBC. Whilst this is an option, private investors and Housing Associations may be interested in purchasing these properties for the same proposed use as being recommended within this report i.e. conversion to smaller units of accommodation.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Members are requested to support the conversion of the two properties into four one bedroom flats.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To bring the properties back into beneficial use and support the increased demand for smaller units of accommodation due to the Welfare Reform Act.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Housing Act 1984 and 1996.

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