



## CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 16TH APRIL 2014

**SUBJECT: TRANSFORMING HOMES, LIVES AND COMMUNITIES – LOCAL EMPLOYMENT FUND**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report seeks approval to commit expenditure from the 2013/14 budget attributed to the Local Employment Fund to support the extension of the dedicated WHQS Passport Officer post for a further 12 months from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014.

### 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 £200 million WHQS investment as a catalyst to Transform Homes, Lives and Communities.
- 2.2 These additional benefits include the creation of a Local Employment Fund that has been designed specifically to support the development of employment projects that aim to support people to move from unemployment / inactivity into sustainable employment. It will fund projects that directly contribute towards the Council's aim of Transforming Homes, Lives and Communities and to one or more of the following Communities First priorities; developing prosperous communities, learning communities and healthier communities.

### 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 The WHQS programme is coterminous with Caerphilly's Single Plan priority to create 'Prosperous Communities' (P2).
- 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 As part of the Council's commitment to tenants outlined in the Offer Document there was an allocation of £50,000 per annum for 5 years to establish the Local Employment Fund.
- 4.2 The Local Employment Fund was created as a means to encourage the development of projects designed to support unemployed / inactive tenants into work.
- 4.3 During the development of the Council's flagship Passport programme an in principle indication was given by the Project Board to support the second year of a dedicated WHQS Passport Support Officer post within the central Passport team. The first year of the post was funded from DWP Flexible Support Fund.
- 4.4 The Project Board acknowledged the need to ensure that a dedicated resource was available to support contractors to fulfil their targeted recruitment and training requirements which would be built into WHQS contracts.
- 4.5 Throughout 2013/14 the postholder has been supporting the WHQS Team to recruit apprentices and supporting the supply partner, Robert Price to move towards fulfilling their targeted recruitment and training commitments.
- 4.6 The employment of a dedicated WHQS Passport Officer post has ensured that opportunities created as a result of WHQS are accessible to young people within our most disadvantaged communities. Young people are supported and mentored by the WHQS Passport Officer to ensure that they are well prepared to take advantage of opportunities within the Council and also within partner organisations.
- 4.7 Approval is sought to finance the second year of the WHQS Passport Support Officer post and in doing so enable the Council to further achieve its ambition of transforming homes, lives and communities in addition to creating more prosperous communities as prioritised in the Caerphilly Single Integrated Plan.

#### **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 The annual budget attributed to the Local Employment Fund is £50,000 per annum for 5 years.
- 6.2 For 2013/14 £20,000 has already been committed from the Local Employment Fund by the CHTG and Cabinet Sub Committee to finance the delivery of two community employment projects.
- 6.3 It is proposed that the £30,000 underspend within the Local Employment Fund is carried forward into 2014/15 in order to enable the commitment to fund a dedicated WHQS Passport Officer to be realised and to allow for sufficient monies to remain within the Local Employment Fund (£50,000) to meet the anticipated demand for funds during 2014/15.
- 6.4 Salary and mileage costs for the WHQS Passport Officer amount to £26,020 (including on costs). Additional costs incurred i.e. training costs will fall within the £30,000 budget carried forward.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Without it the employment of a dedicated WHQS Passport Officer will not be possible to actively support contractors to meet their community benefit / targeted recruitment and training requirements which are embedded as core requirements into the WHQS supply partner and internal and external works contract structure.
- 7.2 It would also result in fewer Passport participants from Caerphilly's most disadvantaged communities being able to access sustainable employment and work placements created as a result of the WHQS programme which in turn would undermine the funding rationale agreed with WG for the Passport Programme.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 All comments received as a result of the consultation have been incorporated into the report.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 The Cabinet Sub Committee give approval to finance the second year of the WHQS Passport Officer post as a one off commitment for 2014/15.

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

- 10.1 To help deliver the Council's ambition of not only transforming homes but also lives and communities as a result of the WHQS investment.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 Local Government Act 2000. This is a Cabinet Sub Committee function.

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