



CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 3RD JULY 2014

SUBJECT: HANDY PERSON SCHEME

REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information and seek support for the introduction of a Handy Person Pilot Scheme, which will provide chargeable maintenance/DIY services to qualifying tenants.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Handy Person Scheme is being introduced as a result of Caerphilly Homes making a commitment in its Offer Document to tenants to provide additional services to older people if the housing service remained with the council. This commitment was also made as part of the Sheltered Housing service review, which was to be undertaken within 12 months of the transfer.
- 2.2 The proposal is to introduce such a scheme on a pilot basis initially by utilising the in-house workforce, in order to gauge the level of demand for such a service. The service will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to establish the volume and type of work being requested and to ensure that a satisfactory service is actually being delivered.
- 2.3 The service will aim to provide support to qualifying tenants to carry out maintenance and DIY works which are not covered within the tenancy agreement and therefore are not the Council's direct responsibility to undertake. It is accepted however that many of our tenants may not be physically able to carry out such works themselves and therefore this service will assist them to continue to live safely and independently within their own home

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 **National Housing Strategy:** The Welsh Assembly Government's National Housing Strategy 'Better Homes for People in Wales' (2001) has key themes of quality and choice. The WAG vision for housing "*wants everyone in Wales to have the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing*".
- 3.2 **The Single Integrated Plan 2013-2017** has a priority to: "Improve standards of housing and communities giving appropriate access to services across the county borough".
- 3.3 **Local Housing Strategy:** Property Theme: "*Providing the opportunity for everyone to live in affordable, sustainable, good quality housing, regardless of tenure.*"
And links specifically to Strategic Aim 6: Housing Management, "*To provide good quality, well-managed homes in communities where people want to live, and offer people housing choices which meet their needs and aspirations.*"

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The council as Landlord has an obligation to keep its housing stock in good repair. Although the council is responsible for maintaining the structure of the home and undertaking repairs, there are odd jobs and some repairs that are the tenants maintenance responsibility that some tenants are unable to undertake themselves.
- 4.2 The scheme is available to council tenants aged 60 and over or are registered disabled and require extra assistance with tasks in their home to help them to continue living in their home safely and independently.
- 4.3 The Handy Person Scheme will be able to undertake odd jobs and may include one or more of the following:
- Trimming of internal doors (Following fitting of carpets)
 - Fixing down and trimming of floor coverings
 - Fitting curtain tracks or poles
 - Curtain hanging
 - Window cleaning
 - Fixing shelving
 - Replacing light bulbs e.g. fluorescent tubes
 - Hanging pictures & mirrors
 - Fitting door locks & bolts to sheds
 - Fitting bathroom accessories
 - Assembling flat pack furniture.
 - Clearing blockages
- 4.4 The handy person scheme will not apply to any works that would form part of the council's normal maintenance service.
- 4.5 There is a fixed price of £20 per hour which must be paid before the works starts. This charge will be reviewed annually. VAT will be applicable.
- 4.6 With the exception of nails screws and mastic which are free, all other materials will need to be purchased by the tenant and ready for the handy person when they call. On completion of the work all rubbish and material packaging will be removed and disposed of within the cost.
- 4.7 Tenants will be offered an appointment and the service will be available during Housing Repair Operations normal working hours. No emergency or out of hours appointments will be available.
- 4.8 The Handy person will be appropriately trained and employed directly by the Council, therefore using this service is also a way of avoiding getting work done by using bogus callers or tenants becoming the victim of a trading scam.
- 4.9 Decorating and gardening are excluded but these services are being investigated and may be available by an external organisation.

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 charge of £20.00 per hour is considered to be reasonable and very competitive, but will be subject to review.

6.2 As this is a new service there is no indication of what the level of demand will be. Therefore this will be monitored.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Trained operatives with Housing Repairs Services will be allocated to undertake this provision.

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 Consultation has taken place with relevant officers, Cabinet Member for Housing, the Repairs and Improvement Working Group and the Older Persons Working Group. All views and opinions have been included in the report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The views of the Task Group are invited prior to a decision being taken under officer delegated powers to introduce a pilot handyman service.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To ensure Caerphilly Homes delivers on its promise made during the housing transfer proposal to investigate additional paid for services.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Act 2000.

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