



## CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 3RD JULY 2014

**SUBJECT: LOCAL TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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

- 1.1 This is an information report to update members of the Task Group on the general progress made in implementing the Local Tenant Participation Strategy (LTPS), but also responds to the request for information about the training provided to tenants and the expenditure of the participation budget in 2013/2014.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The current LTPS was approved by Members in May 2013. This report covers progress made against the four main objectives and more detailed information on training provision and budget expenditure

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 Tenant involvement most closely links with the current Local Housing Strategy aim of
- 3.2 *“providing good quality, well managed homes in communities where people want to live and offer people housing choices which meets their needs and aspirations”* Local Housing Strategy.
- 3.3 The National Housing Strategy ‘Improving Lives and Communities’ emphasises the need to
- 3.4 *“Give tenants a clear voice in decisions that affect them”* and that
- 3.5 *“Services should reflect the needs of those who use them, not the needs of the organisations that deliver them”*
- 3.6 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”.

### **4. THE REPORT**

- 4.1 The purpose of tenant participation is to improve services to tenants and communities. The Strategy proposes that this can be achieved through four key objectives outlined below with progress to date.

## 4.2 To develop tenant review

During the past year, the main mechanism to review housing services has been through the strategic level of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group. The Housing Improvement Partnership proposal, which would be at an operational level, was considered by the Task Group in March 2014 and will be the subject of a further report to Task Group in September 2014.

There has also been a continuation of the Repairs and Improvements Group and Older Persons Housing Group, and the development of the Caerphilly Service Improvement Monitors (CSIMS). There has been a core group of seven active members of the CSIMS, all of whom are also members of the Repairs and Improvement Working Group. As the development has been from this Group, the monitoring focus has been on the WHQS improvement programme. The CSIMS worked with staff to develop a survey based on the standards in the Charter for Trust. Tenants have carried out face to face surveys in three areas to date, Panside, Rhymney and Senghenydd and provided reports back to relevant officers. Feedback has generally been very positive and if any issues have been identified, these have been followed up and there is also a structure now in place for CSIMS to receive feedback from the WHQS Area Managers on how any reported issues have been dealt with.

## 4.3 Increase tenant engagement through the new structure

- 4.3.1 A new group of 10 tenants is about to start CSIMS training so that we can increase the pool of monitors available, look at other methods of monitoring and extend into other service areas.
- 4.3.2 Three new Tenant and Resident Associations have established during the year (Nelson, Trevelyan Court, Lansbury Park and Lower Panside).
- 4.3.3 The Estate Walkabout project has started in Lansbury Park with input from 20 local tenants on the first round of walkabouts.
- 4.3.4 An armchair reviewers group (35 tenants) has been established to comment on housing publications; to date they have undertaken 3 reviews. They have also undertaken a survey based around the housing pages of the website and will also be asked to participate in some work on the redesign of the corporate website.
- 4.3.5 A Learning Festival event was held in Caerphilly in conjunction with Communities First and Adult Education with workshops covering money advice, using your iPad, art and craft, welsh, planting and photography.
- 4.3.6 The tenant expenses policy has been published with all information in one booklet.
- 4.3.7 The training policy information has been published with all information in one booklet.
- 4.3.8 All involved tenants completed one to one meetings with Participation Officers to discuss their training requirements. This exercise is to be repeated annually. Training and conference /seminar opportunities were provided as follows:-

### 4.3.9 Training

Equality and Diversity 24 attendees  
Charing Skills 6 attendees  
CIH training for Task Group Member 5 attendees  
IT Training for Task Group Members 4 attendees (x 2 sessions)  
CSIMS Training (5 days) 8 attendees  
CAB Training on financial capability 5 attendees  
First Aid Training 7 attendees  
CAB Training Financial Impact of Welfare Reform 2 attendees

#### 4.3.10 **Conference/Seminar Opportunities**

Annual Welsh Tenants Conference (2 days) 3 attendees  
Annual TPAS Cymru Conference (2 days) 1 attendee  
TPAS Environmental Initiatives Seminar 2 attendees  
WLGA Seminar on Self Assessment 1 attendee  
CAN Do Disability Forum 2 attendees  
TPAS Disability Forum (x 2) 2 attendees  
TPAS Social Media Course 2 attendees  
TPAS Tenant Network Event (x 3) 2 attendees  
CIH TAI Conference 3 attendees  
Regeneration Event 8 attendees

4.3.11 In addition specific training/information was given to tenants serving on procurement groups.

#### 4.4 **Improve Information Flow to the Wider Tenant Body**

4.4.1 The Tenant Information Exchange has continued but is in the process of being reviewed

4.4.2 The three Home Exchange events were organised specifically to increase information on mutual exchanges but tenants also accessed information from Tenancy Support staff, Estate Management staff and Housing Allocations staff.

4.4.3 An additional round of consultation visits to all 38 sheltered housing schemes was undertaken last year with a further public meeting held for tenants of four schemes where the decision was taken to take them out of the sheltered housing service. In order to provide a further update 'Meet & Greet' sessions have taken place at all schemes during May and June.

4.4.4 General communication with tenants has been undertaken by the Communications and Tenant Engagement Officer with two newsletters during the year and the establishment of the Caerphilly Homes Facebook page.

4.4.5 Community events have also been held in Panside and Rhymney, in partnership with Communities First. These events were aligned specifically with delivery of the WHQS programme, but also provided opportunities for more informal engagement with tenants. Future planned events include Blackwood Beach Party and The Big Cheese, as well as the continuation of estate based community events.

4.4.6 In addition, tenants have been very active on their own independent Facebook and Twitter accounts and have kindly publicised relevant information and events.

#### 4.7 **Mainstreaming of Tenant Participation**

While staff are directly engaged with tenants, this has been largely as part of day to day business, through more informal opportunities such as the Home Exchange events or through participation in one of the Officer/Tenant working groups. A more structured approach will be needed to impact across the housing division and will be the subject of a more detailed report to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group in the coming year.

### 5. **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None. The report is for information only.

### 6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are two budget allocations for participation activities, a general budget for direct participation support and the additional resource of £150,000 identified in the Offer document to support increased and improved participation arrangements. This additional allocation is itemised in the table below.

<b>Budget Item</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>
Projects	100,000	14,673
Contribution to Salary Costs	26,000	26,000
Transfer to General Budget- Training	10,000	6,322
Transfer to General Budget- Transport	14,000	12,855
<b>TOTALS</b>	150,000	59,850

- 6.2 Within the Projects budget approximately £30,000 had been earmarked for mainstreaming initiatives and £15,000 for development of the HIP neither of which has progressed sufficiently to incur the anticipated expenditure. Going forward to 2014/15 additional projects which will need budget from this allocation are the CHTG elections, leaseholder information sessions, re-printing of the leaseholder handbook, three local area based events, mainstreaming and if agreed, the HIP project. Major projects under consideration which will require funding include a general tenant satisfaction survey and tenant profiling exercise to link in with the requirements of self-assessment. In addition, there is the possibility of progressing a time-banking initiative with Communities First and provision of more activity based training activities to encourage wider participation.
- 6.3 In the general participation budget there was actual expenditure of £37, 871 on direct participation costs against an estimate of £65,200. Expenditure included, £6,322 for tenant training, £12, 855 for tenant transport and £6,477 grant funding to Associations, £1,589 room hire for meetings and £3,124 for meals and refreshments. A breakdown of this budget is attached as Appendix 1.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications arising from this report.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 The Tenant Information Exchange should receive an update on tenant participation in June 2014 but after the deadline for this report. Any comments will be reported back verbally.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 Members are asked to note the information provided.

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

- 10.1 To comply with WG requirements to have a Local Tenant Participation Strategy

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 Local Government and Housing Acts.

Author: Mandy Betts, Tenant and Community Involvement Manager  
 Consultees: Councillor Gerald Jones, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing  
 Nicole Scammell, Acting Director of Corporate Finance  
 Shaun Couzens, Chief Housing Officer  
 Phil Davy, Head of Programmes

Graham North, Public Sector Housing Manager  
Lesley Allen, Group Accountant  
Elizabeth Bayliss, Tenant Participation Officer  
Gail Taylor, Tenant Participation Officer  
Kelsey Watkins, Communications and Tenant Engagement Officer

Appendices:

Appendix 1 General Participation Budget 2013/14