



CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP (WELSH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD)

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH
(SIRHOWY ROOM)
ON WEDNESDAY 16TH APRIL 2014 AT 5:00PM**

PRESENT:

Ms. A. Lewis - Chair

TASK GROUP MEMBERS:

C. Davies, R.T. Davies, G. Henderson, K. James, G. Jones, Mrs S. Jones, Ms. A. Lewis, Mrs A. McConnell, J. Moore and K.V. Reynolds.

Officers: P. Davy (Head of Programmes) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ms. L. Ackerman, C.P. Mann, Ms. D. Price along with S. Couzens (Chief Housing Officer), G. North (Public Sector Housing Manager), J. Roberts-Waite (Strategic Coordination Manager).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Ms. A. Lewis, Mr C. Davies, Ms. G. Henderson, Mrs S. Jones, Mrs A. McConnell and Mr J. Moore as Council Tenants declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in all agenda items.

3. MINUTES

Subject to the following amendments to Page 5, paragraph 3 on the minutes to remove "and possible conflict of interest" and to Section 10 of the minutes that the presentation on Welfare Reform changes was given to Mr Steven Crabb and not by Mr Steven Crabb and that if Members wished arrangements could be made for the Task Group to receive the presentation made by Officers to Mr Crabb in partnership with CAB it was

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 13th March 2014 (minute nos. 1-12 or page nos. 1-10 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. TRANSFORMING HOMES, LIVES AND COMMUNITIES - LOCAL EMPLOYMENT FUND.

The report sought the endorsement of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group 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 1st April 2014.

Members noted that The Local Development Fund was created as a means to encourage the development of projects designed to support unemployment / inactive tenants into work. The employment of a dedicated WHQS Passport Officer has ensured that opportunities created as a result of WHQS are accessible to young people within the 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.

Members were asked to note the apologies of the report Author, who was unable to attend the meeting. Members were offered the opportunity to contact the Author with any further information they were unable to obtain at the meeting.

The Chair thanked the Officer for the report and a full discussion ensued, in which Members raised concerns that tenants receiving support through other Job Match organisations or schemes would be unable to access the WHQS Passport Scheme due to duplication of service and it was felt that in some cases this could be disadvantageous to tenants.

Members queried the work undertaken within the Scheme to date, requesting information on the number of full time sustainable employment opportunities, the training conducted and qualifications attained as a result and further details on the preparatory work conducted. The Officer confirmed that there have been a number of apprenticeships identified through the scheme, some of which have been offered long term employment. Members were assured that steady progression is being achieved.

A Member questioned how the process is being monitored to ensure that the services are meeting a need and targeted appropriately. Officers confirmed that the initiatives are targeted at the most disadvantaged areas within the county borough, the progress is monitored and measurable results for success would be demonstrable over time.

It was moved and seconded that the recommendation contained in the Officer's report be approved and the Cabinet Sub Committee (WHQS) be informed of the endorsement of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group and by a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Sub Committee (WHQS) be informed of the endorsement of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group for the finance of the second year of the WHQS Passport Officer post as a one off commitment for 2014/15.

5. REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE.

The report advised the Task Group of the governance considerations arising from the review and updating of the Council's Constitution, which necessitated a review of Task Group's Terms of Reference and sought Members views as part of the consultation process prior to the matter being reported to Full Council.

The Chair thanked the Officer for the report and a full discussion ensued.

Following discussions around the procedural amendments, in particular, representation at Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committees and location of meetings, it was agreed that the necessary amendments would be made to accurately reflect the Task Groups wishes within the Terms of Reference.

Members agreed that the revised terms of reference presents the Group with an opportunity to continue in the Scrutiny process whilst maintaining that tenants are at the heart of WHQS.

The Task Group raised concerns about the process of electing tenant representatives to the Task Group. It was agreed that the Head of Programmes would discuss the process with relevant officers and determine any changes.

The Caerphilly Homes Task Group considered and noted the report and revised terms of reference at appendix 1, which would be reported to Full Council.

6. WHQS TARGETED RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING 2013/14.

The Head of Programmes introduced the report, which outlined the number of targeted recruitment and training opportunities created during the first year of the WHQS Programme.

Members were advised that following the ballot in February 2012, the Council gave a commitment, as outlined in the Offer Document, to ensure that the capital investment of £200 million delivered social outcomes thereby contributing towards the transforming homes, lives and communities' ambition. The key outcomes expected to be delivered as a result of the investment during the lifetime of the programme related to new employment opportunities, work placements, JGW/ Passport placements and apprenticeships.

Members noted that opportunities were created as a result of a combination of direct recruitment, agency opportunities, work placements, Jobs Growth Wales (JGW) and Passport placements, apprenticeships and targeted recruitment and training clauses built into the Single Source Supply Partner contract.

The Chair thanked the officer for the report and a full discussion ensued.

Clarification was provided on the distinction between Living Wage and Minimum Wage and it was highlighted that, whilst Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) had adopted the Living Wage as an employer, it could only be encouraged that contractors adopt it.

Further information was sought on the 12 work placements within the report; their contract duration and details of the 'employment opportunities' detailed in the contracts.

The Officer apologised that he was unable to provide all the details to the Task Group, however added that details could be obtained from the Author if required. Members noted that the contracts for internal and external works would set out minimum requirements similar to the Robert Price contract, as detailed in 4.12 of the report.

The Task Group discussed the employment opportunities detailed within the report and a Member raised concerns that the contract requirements could be met by short-term employment and limit the opportunities for permanent jobs. The Officer highlighted that the approach differed from local authorities in that there are contractual commitments within the main contracts and job retention is an important consideration as well as new employment opportunities.

Having fully considered its content, the Task Group noted the report.

7. TO RECEIVE ANY REQUESTS FOR AN ITEM TO BE INCLUDED ON THE NEXT AVAILABLE AGENDA.

Requests for items to be included on the next available agenda were received as follows: -

- (1) An up-to-date report on the Tenant Participation Budget.
- (2) Report on the contract procurements for the WHQS Programme.

The meeting closed at 6:22pm

Approved as a correct record subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd May 2014.

CHAIRMAN