



## **CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10TH SEPTEMBER 2015**

**SUBJECT: FAMILY INTERVENTION PROJECT & VALLEYS INCLUSION PROJECT**

**REPORT BY: CHIEF HOUSING OFFICER**

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

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide information on the Solas, Lasting Solutions Family Intervention Project (FIP) and the Shelter Cymru Valleys Inclusion Project (VIP). The report is provided at the request of a Member as agreed by Scrutiny Committee.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and the Code of Guidance provided by Welsh Government to assist social landlords in their development of policy and procedures relating to anti-social behaviour, encouraged and emphasised a 3-strand strategy for dealing with nuisance and anti-social behaviour – prevention, support and enforcement. The CCBC Housing Division, Statement of Policy and Procedure for Anti-Social Behaviour produced and followed by the Tenancy Enforcement Section is consistent with the overarching corporate aims and reflects the 3 strand strategy, emphasising an incremental approach to investigating and dealing with ASB and reflects good practice in this field. A copy of the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, Procedure and Summary is available on the intranet on Directorate, Housing, Quicklinks and is also available on the Internet on [www.caerphilly.gov.uk](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk) The FIP and VIP projects helped to fulfil the requirement of support as part of the 3-strand strategy for dealing with nuisance and anti-social behaviour.

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

- 3.1 The overarching aims of Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) in relation to anti-social behaviour and crime reduction are detailed in Caerphilly Delivers – The Single Integrated Plan 2013 - 2017. They are as follows:

#### Safer Caerphilly

S1 – Reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour and reduce fear of becoming a victim of anti-social behaviour for residents.

S2 – Reduce crime and fear of crime for the residents of the county borough.

S4 – Ensure people are supported to live in their own homes and communities in safety.

#### Prosperous Caerphilly

P2 – Improve standards of housing and communities, giving appropriate access to services across the county borough.

- 3.2 The Council's Local Housing Strategy "People, Property, and Places" has the following aims:  
Aim 6 - 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.  
Aim 11 – To promote sustainable and mixed communities that are located in safe and attractive environments.
- 3.3 The Council's Strategic Equalities Plan has the following aim:  
Equality Objective 1 – Tackling Identity based hate crime: – To reduce the levels of real or perceived instances of identity based abuse, bullying, harassment and violence, hate crime and hate incidents in the county borough.

#### **4. THE REPORT**

- 4.1 The Lasting Solutions Family Intervention Project was in operation within the CCBC area from November 2010 until March 2015. The financial cost of the project was £25,000 per annum which granted Caerphilly County Borough Council 2 'slots' of support each year.
- 4.2 The FIP was a rehabilitation scheme for the most challenging families who were at risk of losing their home as a result of anti-social behaviour. The criteria for a referral to the FIP were as follows:
- The family are at risk of eviction due to anti-social behaviour;
  - One or more individuals within the family are currently subject to enforcement actions for anti-social behaviour;
  - The family are excluded from mainstream housing, with a previous history of homelessness due to anti-social behaviour;
  - Any child or young person within the household is at risk of being taken into care because of anti-social behaviour.

One or more of the above criteria had to be met. A single person would not meet the 'family' criteria for a referral to FIP.

- 4.3 The FIP used a combination of assertive support and enforcement techniques. The aim was to work with the most challenging families and any agencies already working with them, to deliver sustained and agreed change. Services were delivered by a key worker using the following principles:
- Whole family approach – emphasis placed on all the family members and not just those causing anti-social behaviour;
  - Use an assertive and persistent working style to ensure families engage with them and other involved agencies;
  - Ensure right agency involved at right time for the family to secure maximum impact;
  - Twin track approach of enforcement and support – linking enforcement and support to provide families with the motivation and opportunities to change;
  - Behaviour contract – agreed between the family and key worker – sets out changes expected and support provided to facilitate change.

There was no time limit on how long a key worker could work with a family. The project continued to work with a family until either the family reformed their behaviour or the family failed to engage with the project. An exit strategy was put in place for the withdrawal of the key worker.

- 4.4 The cost of the FIP and number of referrals made were as follows:

Time period	Cost	Referrals made
Nov 2010 - March 2011	£10, 417 (funded wholly by Housing)	3
2011 - 2012	£25,000 (funded wholly by Housing)	2
2012 - 2013	£25,000 (funded wholly by Housing)	2
2013 - 2014	£25,000 (£6,250 contributed by Youth Crime Prevention Fund & remainder funded by Housing)	2
2014 - 2015	£25,000 (£6,250 contributed by Youth Crime Prevention Fund & remainder funded by Housing)	0
<b>Total</b>	£110,417	9 Average cost per referral £12,268

No referrals were made during 2014 – 2015 as FIP were still working with 2 families referred during 2013 – 2014. The time period a referral was open varied from 4 months to 2 years. The average time period a referral was open was 11 months.

- 4.5 The Housing element of the funding was paid out of the Preventing Homelessness budget as managed by the Principal Housing Officer (Housing Portfolio). New statutory requirements on Local Authorities to develop new homeless strategies by 2018 (as required by the Housing (Wales) Act 2014) place much greater emphasis and focus on the prevention of homelessness.

Within CCBC, homeless prevention work has been evolving over a period of time. Support Officers have been working within the Housing Advice Centre for the past 12 months focusing on providing crisis support to households where there is a threat of homelessness. This has been in preparation for the new statutory requirements. The advancement of the prevention work has been funded out of the Preventing Homelessness budget which has also received transitional funding from Welsh Government and this will result in the appointment of additional homeless prevention support officers. Also, it had been agreed to part fund the Shelter Cymru Valleys Inclusion Project out of the same budget. Taking all this into consideration it was confirmed that the £25,000 cost of the FIP which predominantly fell on Housing was no longer cost effective in light of the other prevention services being introduced.

Consideration was given to reducing the FIP service to one 'slot' costing £12,500 (minus any reduced grant fund from Community Safety) but it was decided that it would be more advantageous to focus this money on the Preventing Homelessness support services from which more residents of CCBC would benefit and a better output for cost would be obtained. Thus the decision was made not to continue to fund the FIP. FIP ceased to operate within CCBC from April 2015. For the 2 families that were still receiving support at this time, the FIP continued to provide support for a short period until the cases were closed.

Funding contributions had previously been sought from other service areas of CCBC so that costs did not fall solely on Housing, but unfortunately no contributions had been forthcoming, apart from the contribution from Community Safety via the Youth Crime Prevention Fund.

There have been 2 formal evaluations of the FIP in October 2011 and July 2013. The 2013 evaluation found that the FIP project covering CCBC, Monmouthshire CBC and Newport CC had achieved a number of positive outcomes for families as follows:

- 12 of the 16 families were less or no longer involved in crime/ anti-social behaviour;
- 12 of the 16 families had better routines and were better able to cope with issues;
- 11 of the 16 families were doing better in school and 10 were attending school more;

- 7 of the 16 families were accessing employment, education or training and 4 had the intention to access employment, education or training.

It is unfortunate that this project has ceased to operate within CCBC but funding pressures, in addition to the small numbers that benefitted from the project meant that difficult decisions had to be made, and it has been determined that there is an alternative provision that can and does provide a very similar service which is considered to be more cost effective.

4.6 The Shelter Cymru Valleys Inclusion Project has been operating almost continually within CCBC since July 2005. It was initially a pilot project wholly funded by Welsh Government operating within Caerphilly and Rhondda Cynon Taff. The aims of the pilot project which have transferred into the existing project are as follows:

- To prevent eviction and exclusion and provide a route back into settled housing for people already excluded;
- Reduce anti-social behaviour by providing constructive support to people facing eviction, or those excluded from social housing because of previous anti-social behaviour;
- Improve the participation and inclusion of households within local communities;
- Reduce the impact on housing management;
- Demonstrate a commitment to multi-agency working as this is key to maintaining the safety of vulnerable people;
- Deliver a professional, safe, secure, responsive, non-judgemental and liberal support service.

The VIP will work with any vulnerable household – this includes single people, adult only households and households with children living in any accommodation type and tenure within CCBC. They can support an average of 14 – 16 households at any one time.

4.7 From April 2008 the funding for the VIP was secured from the Big Lottery Fund and Welsh Government. From 2012 it received funding from the Big Lottery Fund, BBC's Children in Need and part funding from Supporting People. In 2014 the project was unsuccessful in obtaining further funding from the Big Lottery Fund or BBC Children in Need and was at risk of having to cease operation when the funding expired in December 2014. Other avenues of funding were sought and an agreement has been made with Supporting People to fund the VIP at a cost of £85,000 from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015 until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 with part funding also being provided by Housing out of the Preventing Homelessness budget at a cost of £15,000. During this period the VIP will need to attempt to secure funding from other sources to reduce the overall cost to each organisation. Funding for 2016 onwards from Supporting People and/or Housing is yet to be agreed, although both are very keen for this project to continue within CCBC.

Since 2008 Housing have referred 54 households to the VIP for support. Other organisations have also referred cases to the VIP including Hafod Housing, Shelter Cymru Caseworkers and Social Services. The total number of referrals over this period is unknown. There have been periods of time, due to the insecurities created by funding applications, that the project has not been fully staffed and has been unable to accept referrals. This has occurred towards the end of a funding cycle and the commencement of new funding. Staff would move on due to the uncertainty of the project continuing.

4.8 The VIP provides support in the following ways:

- Undertake a detailed and extensive assessment with all family members of their support needs, goals and aspirations for improvement;
- Create a support plan divided into 10 sections covering topics such as money, health, training, employment and education;
- Support plan agreed with client, signed by client and reviewed every 3 months to monitor progress;
- Provide practical support for households to assist with day to day issues;

- Mediate with other support services on behalf of client.

This project provides a support mechanism for households in CCBC that isn't available elsewhere. It helps them to get to the root cause of their difficulties as a household, rather than focusing on an individual. By getting to the root of a problem/s they help the family to take the necessary steps to address the underlying issues and prevent problems arising in the future.

A full evaluation (2010/11) and 2 interim evaluations (2008-2010 & 2013) have been carried out since 2008. The full and interim evaluations cover all households referred to the VIP and not just those from CCBC. They have found clear evidence that the VIP has prevented homelessness and reduced anti-social behaviour. It has also had a significant impact on service users' personal lives by improving confidence, self-esteem, relationships with families and the ability to manage daily issues. The 2013 Interim Evaluation studied cases from Jan 2009 – July 2013 received from CCBC and Rhonda Cynon Taff. 69 referrals had been received and 49 cases closed. Only the closed files were used for the evaluation. The study found

- In 74% of the evaluation cases anti-social behaviour had ceased;
- In 15 % of evaluation cases anti-social behaviour had reduced;
- 78% were no longer at risk of homelessness.

4.9 This project will continue to operate in CCBC until 31st March 2016. The securing of funding will determine if the project is available after this date.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no equalities implications – report is for information only.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The cost of the Shelter Cymru Valleys Inclusion Project is currently paid for by Supporting People and the Prevention of Homelessness fund. It is hoped in the future that the cost be shared more widely across service areas and social housing providers who benefit from the service.

6.2 The withdrawal of funding for the Family Intervention Project for the reasons covered in this report has also contributed to the 20% service target from Housing to contribute towards the medium term financial plan. Failure to make such a decision would therefore have resulted in the same level of reduction having to be identified elsewhere in the service area. It is considered that this saving will have a minimum impact on service users as support can be provided by directly employed staff or the Valleys Inclusion Project.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no personnel implications for the Council, however with the added prevention work being undertaken by officers in Housing, together with the ongoing support from the Valleys Inclusion Project, there should be no detriment in service provision.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

8.1 Consultation has taken place with persons listed as Consultees.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 The report is noted.

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

10.1 The report is for information only.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

Housing Act 1996

Housing (Wales) Act 2014

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Rob Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection  
Fiona Wilkins, Public Sector Housing Manager  
Malcolm Topping, Supporting People Manager  
Suzanne Cousins, Principal Housing Officer (Housing Portfolio)  
Kath Peters, Community Safety Manager

### Background papers:

- Caerphilly Delivers – Single Integrated Plan 2013 - 2017
- Local Housing Strategy - People, Property and Places
- Statement of Policies and Procedures for Anti-Social Behaviour
- Code of Guidance for Local Authorities – Anti-social Behaviour Policies and Procedures
- Strategic Equalities Plan
- Shelter Cymru Valleys Inclusion Project, Interim Evaluation (November 2008 – October 2010) 2010
- Shelter Cymru Valleys Inclusion Project, Final Evaluation October 2010 – December 2011
- Shelter Cymru Valleys Inclusion Project, Interim Evaluation October 2013
- Solas-Cymru Lasting Solutions – Outcome Evaluation July 2011
- Solas-Cymru Lasting Solutions – Outcome Evaluation October 2013