



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19TH JANUARY 2016

**SUBJECT: ROWAN PLACE – PROGRESS REPORT AND SENSITIVE LETTINGS
POLICY**

**REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND SECTION 151
OFFICER**

- 1.1 The report was considered by the Caerphilly Homes Task Group (CHTG) on the 10th December 2015 and provided an update on the progress made in relation to delivering a targeted regeneration programme in Rowan Place, Rhymney. It also sought the views of the Task Group on the adoption of a sensitive lettings policy and introductory tenancies, (specifically in relation to the Rowan Place flats) prior to its consideration at Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and thereafter, Cabinet.
- 1.2 Following the identification of severe damp and external defects to the fabric of the properties in Rowan Place, the Council approved a budget totalling £4.2m to undertake a comprehensive refurbishment of the 72 Council owned properties. The programme underway in Rowan Place has been enhanced by a further £720,000 from the Welsh Government as part of its Vibrant and Viable Places programme which will facilitate enhancements to the environment within Rowan Place.
- 1.3 In previous years, Rowan Place has been plagued by high levels of anti social behaviour, crime and drug and alcohol abuse. As a consequence, and for the benefit of existing tenants, the Council proposes to introduce introductory tenancies for new allocations within Rowan Place. Introductory tenancies would give all new tenants a 12 month trial period before they would be eligible to be awarded a secure tenancy and the tenancy could be brought to an end, during the introductory period, if the tenant fails to adhere to the requirements. This will ensure that anyone behaving inappropriately can be removed from the tenancy quickly.
- 1.4 A Sensitive Lettings Policy, which can be applied in addition to the Introductory tenancies to only a limited number of properties (existing tenants will not be affected), would cover all 2 bedroom flats in Rowan Place, Rhymney. Caerphilly Homes Allocations Scheme allows for the allocation of families with 1 or 2 children and childless couples. Due to the size of the second bedroom only families with 1 child, or families with access will be considered and to reduce excessive child density in the area, childless couples may take precedence over families with one child.
- 1.5 A strict set of criteria has been devised and any applicant that meets one of the criteria would not be offered a tenancy on one of the 2 bedroom flats in Rowan Place, for a period of at least 2 years. In addition, prospective tenants will be required to satisfy an income/expenditure assessment of their affordability of the tenancy and where two or more applicants have equal priority, preference would be giving to applicants who are in employment or training.

- 1.6 The Task Group highlighted the current issue with voids within the area and whether the implementation of the Sensitive Lettings Policy would compound the issue. It was noted that the policy aims to improve the area and peoples perspective. It is unclear, until the Policy is in place, whether the number of voids would increase, however a review would be conducted 12 months following completion to determine its effectiveness.
- 1.7 Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the Caerphilly Homes Task Group recommended that the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee support the Sensitive Lettings Policy, including introductory tenancies for new tenants in Rowan Place, and recommend its adoption at Cabinet. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officers report the Caerphilly Homes Task Group recommend to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet, the adoption of the sensitive lettings policy, including introductory tenancies for new tenants in Rowan Place, as set out in the Appendix to the report.

- 1.8 Members are invited to consider the report and the above recommendation.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 Caerphilly Homes Task Group Report – 10th December 2015