



CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP (WELSH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD)

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD
MYNACH (SIRHOWY ROOM) ON WEDNESDAY, 27TH JANUARY 2016 AT 5.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

C. Davies - Chair

Task Group Members:

Ms L. Ackerman, Ms J. Gale, S. Jones, Mrs B. Jones, C. Mann, M. McDermott, Mrs D. Moore, J. Moore and D.V. Poole

P. Davy (Head of Programmes), S. Couzens (Chief Housing Officer) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from E. Forehead, K. James and Miss A. Lewis.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

S. Jones, Mrs B. Jones, M. McDermott, Mrs D. Moore and J. Moore, as Council Tenants declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in all agenda items.

3. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CHAIR

The Task Group were asked to note that Gemma Atkins, Tenant Representative has resigned as a Member of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group due to outside commitments, the Task Group wished to express their gratitude for her contributions to the Group and wished her all the best for the future. It was agreed that a letter expressing the Task Group's gratitude would be passed on.

4. SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEMES – MANAGED SERVICE PROVIDER

The report advised the Caerphilly Homes Task Group (CHTG) of developments relating to the Invitation to Tender (ITT) for the Managed Service Provider for the Sheltered Housing Schemes. The report and special meeting have arisen as a result of concerns raised by tenant representatives and a perception that the Council is privatising the sheltered housing schemes.

A report was considered by CHTG in April 2015, and subsequently approved by Cabinet, which highlighted the additional measures necessary to cope with the volume of work, and specifically that the management and delivery of the WHQS works on the sheltered housing schemes, should be undertaken by a suitable consultancy, on behalf of the Council.

Since that time, the development of the ITT has taken on board various changing circumstances that have arisen, including decisions relating to the six sheltered housing schemes identified for possible remodelling, and considerations relating to statutory and reactive maintenance of the sheltered schemes. This has resulted in the ITT being structured into 2 separate lots, which provides the opportunity to explore whether further benefit can be derived in the way the property management function of the sheltered housing schemes are organised.

The Caerphilly Homes Task Group thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

The Task Group expressed their disappointment at the report, the lack of consultation with tenants prior to its consideration and concerns that the Council was departing from commitments made at the time of the ballot. The Cabinet Member for Housing reassured the Task Group that, whilst he can understand the concerns of the tenants, there would not be any support for the proposal from himself, had it been for privatisation of the service and highlighted that the report sought to provide additional support and capacity to the WHQS Team, in order to meet the demands of the Programme.

The Task Group discussed the consultation process and it was noted that there had not been any direct consultation with the tenants within the sheltered housing schemes relating to the report. The Task Group were assured that, following the tender process, tenants would be informed of the management arrangements and provided with a new timetable of works, relevant to their Sheltered Scheme.

A Task Group Member raised concerns around the additional costs associated with the employment of a Managed Service Provider, how the additional costs would be funded, and the quality of work they would deliver on the Programme. Officers advised that the cost of the Managed Service Provider would be met by the HRA. In addition, it was noted that the Managed Service Provider was to provide extra capacity for the WHQS Team, which would assist in the delivery of the whole Programme. A further procurement process would be required for the works and the Task Group were assured that WHQS Team would still remain the lead on the Programme.

The Task Group queried the staff recruitment process and it was noted that the WHQS Team had experienced a number of difficulties with recruitment, including trade operatives, Surveyors and Clerk of Works. This is affected by external factors and there had been an upturn in activity in the construction sector.

Discussions ensued around surveys conducted by Savill's and concerns were expressed over the inaccuracies and issues that have arisen during the Programme. Officers highlighted that Savill's Surveys were a sample of 15% of the stock and were to provide a baseline for the development of a business plan. In relation to WHQS the sample survey was focused on component renewal.

Finally, the Task Group sought assurance that, following the tender process, if there are limited or no contractors or unsatisfactory tenders, there are alternative mechanisms to maintain the Programme within deadline. Officers highlighted that contingency plans are being considered and assured the Task Group that further information would be provided as necessary.

The meeting closed at 6.21pm.

Approved as a correct record subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 18th February 2016.

CHAIR