



## **POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 1ST MARCH 2016**

**SUBJECT: REVIEW OF COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY FUNDS**

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

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- 1.1 The report was considered by the Caerphilly Homes Task Group (CHTG) on 18th February 2016 and outlined a proposal to absorb the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) Community Improvement Fund and Community Safety Fund into the Environmental Programme budget. The report sought the views of the CHTG prior to its presentation to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and thereafter Cabinet.
- 1.2 Members were advised that following the stock transfer ballot in February 2012, the Council agreed that it would deliver the promises made in its Offer Document to tenants and deliver the WHQS by 2019/2020. It also gave a commitment to delivering numerous additional benefits which were also outlined in the Offer Document, which would add value to the WHQS programme and help deliver the Council's ambition of using the £200 million WHQS investment as a catalyst to Transform Homes, Lives and Communities. These additional benefits included the creation of a Community Improvement Fund and Community Safety Fund. The Council also created a Local Employment Fund, which has been relatively successful and will be subject shortly to a separate report. £50,000 is allocated to each fund annually.
- 1.3 Officers explained that each year, despite a number of promotional approaches by staff, there is a significant underspend in the funds allocated to the Community Improvement Fund and Community Safety Fund. Whilst many of the projects have been worthy recipients, the Community Improvement Fund and Community Safety Fund have not met their original expectations, in that they were designed to increase community cohesion and address local priorities. It was therefore advocated that these Funds be incorporated into the Environmental Programme budget.
- 1.4 Discussion took place regarding future applications to the fund and it was noted that, if any projects emerge that would previously have been candidates for the two funds they will, if appropriate, be incorporated within proposals for specific estates and be subject to the consultation arrangements that will inform the decision making as to which project proposals can be supported. A Task Group Member raised concerns around the allocation of funding and projects in the larger estates across the borough and sought reassurance that, when work on the Environmental Programme begins, consideration should be given to all estates.
- 1.5 Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By a show of hands (and in noting there was one abstention) this was agreed by the majority present.

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 that the separate Community Improvement Fund and Community Safety Fund are terminated and the allocation apportionments absorbed within the Environmental Programme budget.

1.6 Members are asked to consider the recommendation.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 Report to Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 18th February 2016 - Agenda Item 5