



CABINET – 30TH MARCH 2016

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY FUNDS – ADDENDUM

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

1. THE REPORT

- 1.1 The original report was considered by the Caerphilly Homes Task Group (CHTG) on 18th February 2016 and outlined the proposal to absorb the WHQS Community Improvement Fund and Community Safety Fund into the Environmental Programme budget. The majority of the CHTG supported the recommendation to merge the funds. The report was presented to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 1st March 2016 together with the view of the CHTG. Although the recommendation for the merger of the funds was moved and seconded when the Committee voted there was a majority who did not support the recommendation.
- 1.2 During the debate at Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee questions had been asked about the extent to which the funds had been promoted. The Community Improvement Fund has operated as a grant scheme and was available to constituted community organisations to submit applications for support up to a maximum of £5,000 for projects that would demonstrate community benefit to the tenants of the Councils homes. The availability of the grant scheme has been promoted on a regular basis in the tenant newsletters. Articles were featured in two issues of Newline. Press releases were issued during 2013, 2014 and 2015. There has been a dedicated web page and publicity material has been distributed to promote the fund to community groups and partner agencies. The availability of the fund has been promoted at various events attended by Caerphilly Homes and through the corporate social media pages.
- 1.3 The Community Safety Fund has not operated as a grant scheme. This has been reliant on working across the Council organisation and with partner agencies to identify existing initiatives where there could be added value from a WHQS financial contribution.
- 1.4 The funds have operated over the last 3 financial years and given the low take up it is felt that a different approach is now warranted. It remains the officers' view that the amalgamation of the separate budgets within the WHQS Environmental Programme will enable a greater impact to be achieved. This will enable a more strategic and cohesive approach to be undertaken by having one programme focussed on the environmental improvement of the Council's housing estates. This will also enable staff time to be better focussed on the main environmental programme rather than promoting and administering small separate budgets.
- 1.5 The original report states that this change of approach would not preclude projects that might have been considered under the two separate funds. There will be the opportunity for project proposals to come forward through the consultation process with residents on specific housing estates as the environmental programme is developed and taken forward.
- 1.6 The two funds were established with a five year commitment. If the recommendation is agreed the main environmental budget would be increased by £200,000.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Notwithstanding that the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee did not support the recommendation officers remain of the opinion that a more effective impact could be achieved by amalgamating the remaining financial commitment of the two separate funds (Community Improvement Fund and Community Safety Fund) within the main WHQS Environmental Programme budget.

3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To utilise available funding in a more strategic manner that will support the delivery of Part 6 WHQS of attractive and safe environments.

Author: P G Davy, Head of Programmes
Email: davypg@caerphilly.gov.uk, Tel: 01443 8664208

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Covering Report from Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet on 30th March 2016
- Appendix 2 Covering Report from Caerphilly Homes Task Group to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 1st March 2016
- Appendix 3 Report to Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 18th February 2016 – Agenda Item 5