



CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 19TH MAY 2016

SUBJECT: WHQS LOCAL EMPLOYMENT FUND – SUPPORTING LIFT

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report is seeking the views of CHTG prior to a decision being made on the allocation of the 2016/17 Local Employment Fund budget to support the delivery of the Welsh Government funded LIFT programme delivered within the County Borough via Communities First.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 As part of the Council's commitment to tenants outlined in the Offer Document the Council allocated £50,000 per annum to a suite of funds designed to engage and support the local community in the helping to transform homes, lives and communities.
- 2.2 The Local Employment Fund was created to support projects that aim to support unemployed / inactive tenants into work. £50,000 is allocated annually by the Council to the Fund.
- 2.3 In previous years the Fund has supported the partial refurbishment of Hafod Deg, Rhymney as a community 'Hub', the employment of a Passport Support Officer to support young people participating in the Council's Passport Programme and receiving placements via the Council's WHQS programme and the delivery of a pre Passport scheme delivered by White Rose Resource Centre for young people in New Tredegar.
- 2.4 During 2015/16, Cabinet approved the transfer of the entire allocation of £50,000 to support the delivery of the Welsh Government's LIFT programme on the basis that the LIFT programme is designed specifically to support workless households – many of which, will reside within the Council's housing areas.
- 2.5 The programme is specifically aimed at supporting people living within workless households in the Upper Rhymney Valley and Caerphilly Basin.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

3.1 The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) is intended to ensure that all local authority and housing association homes are improved and maintained to achieve specified standards.

3.2 The WHQS Programme is coterminous with the Caerphilly Single Plan priority of creating 'Prosperous Communities' (P2).

3.3 The Council is committed to ensuring that the WHQS investment transforms not only homes but also lives and communities.

3.4 The Council's Local Housing Strategy "People, Property, and Places" has the following aim:

"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."

3.5 The proposal is coterminous with the Welsh Government's Tackling Poverty Action Plan and the Council's Poverty Strategy.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 St James 3 (comprising a large part of Lansbury Park) is the most deprived area in Wales in the recently published 2014 WIMD (previously ranking as the second most deprived area in WIMD 2011) and forms part of the Caerphilly Basin Cluster.

4.2 St James 3 is the most deprived Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) in the Education domain. It falls within the ten most deprived LSOAs for the Income, Employment Health and Education domains, which have a combined weight of 75% in the overall index. It also falls within the 10% most deprived LSOAs for the Community Safety domain. The LSOA has changed little in overall rank since WIMD 2011, but its relative deprivation has increased substantially in the Housing and Access to Services domains, and Education domain moving from 24 in WIMD 2011 to 1 in WIMD 2014 (see page 11 WIMD 2014).

4.3 The Van Community Partnership Audit (2009) showed there were concerns in the area with what people termed as a 'benefit culture' and a general level of apathy associated with looking for work. There were also concerns about a perceived lack of employment opportunities in the area. The Van Community Audit also found lack of awareness of local training opportunities and a need for childcare.

4.4 The WIMD 2014 calculates that St James 3 is 3rd (out of 1909) most deprived LSOA in Wales in relation to Employment despite being adjacent to some of the borough's key employment sites.

4.5 The URV has the highest concentration of poverty in the County Borough. As such both the Council and the Local Service Board have identified it as a priority area for investment and intervention.

4.6 Twyn Carno 1 is the 2nd most deprived area within Caerphilly according to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2014 and lies within the top 10% of the most deprived LSOA's in Wales in relation to Income, Employment, Health, Education and Community Safety. It ranks as 6 within the overall index of multiple deprivation. There

are a high proportion of households within the URV where none of the adults aged 16-64 are in employment.

- 4.7 The Welsh Government has introduced the LIFT programme as part of its commitment to tackling poverty in Wales' most deprived areas. The programme aims to target 5000 households across Wales through the provision of bespoke support and mentoring. Every adult (16-64) within an eligible household (where all working age adults are unemployed) will be provided with individual support to move towards obtaining employment through participating in training, overcoming barriers and undertaking work experience opportunities.
- 4.8 Since 1st April last year 156 adults of working age who reside within the Caerphilly Basin and the Upper Rhymney Valley have been identified and engaged in the programme. Of these 60% have confirmed they are Council tenants.
- 4.9 As a result 97 Council tenants have benefited from the delivery of the LIFT project during the last year.
- 4.10 Opportunities provided through the LIFT Programme for tenants include: -
- a) Training courses linked specifically to a participant's employability.
 - b) Work experience or placements to enhance the participant's employability.
 - c) Actual employment and volunteering which leads to a recognised qualification appropriate for work.
- 4.11 Placement and employment opportunities for LIFT participants have also been created as a result of including community benefit requirements into the internal works contracts supporting the delivery of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard. Meetings with contractors regarding their community benefit commitments are scheduled monthly and include representatives from LIFT, the new ESF funded Communities4Work programme and Communities First to ensure that local unemployed people are in the best position possible to access opportunities that may be created.
- 4.12 It is proposed to utilise the WHQS Local Employment Fund to add value to the LIFT programme through enhancing the delivery budget available to support participants in the Upper Rhymney Valley and Caerphilly Basin. The allocation of £50,000 from the 2016/17 Local Employment Fund will also enhance the support that workless households are able to access through the programme and the resources available to coordinate the programme in each area.
- 4.13 The Community Regeneration Manager will provide a report to the WHQS Project Board and the CHTG on the outcomes delivered during 2016/17 as a result of the WHQS investment.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no equalities implications arising from the report. The report is for consultation.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council has previously allocated £50,000 to the Local Employment Fund to support and add value to programmes and projects that support people currently unemployed towards opportunities designed to increase their employability.
- 6.2 The LIFT budget for 2016/17 is £150,000.
- 6.3 The Local Employment Fund budget for 2016/17 has not yet been allocated.
- 6.4 If the funds are not allocated to support the delivery of LIFT it is likely that they will remain unspent as there are few opportunities to support smaller projects due to the fact that the majority of employment support programmes are now delivered strategically and prescribed by Welsh Government or the Department for Work and Pensions.
- 6.5 With this in mind, it is proposed to allocate the entire 2016/17 budget to add value and support the delivery of the LIFT programme throughout the Caerphilly Basin and Upper Rhymney Valley Clusters.
- 6.6 The decision is delegated to the Head of Programmes.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications arising from the report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 Comments received on the draft report have been incorporated.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The report is seeking the views of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group prior to the decision being made under officer delegated powers.

10. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To deliver and enhance the impact of the LIFT programme and the WHQS transforming lives and communities agenda, through adding value and pooling resources.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Housing Acts and Local Government Acts 2000.

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