CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 19TH MAY 2016

SUBJECT: TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2016 - 2019

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide the Caerphilly Homes Task Group (CHTG) with the draft Tenant Participation Strategy (2016 -19) and to seek views prior to the strategy being submitted to Cabinet for approval.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 The 2016-19 Strategy defines our Purpose (the reason for tenant participation) and responds to the challenges and opportunities of the world within which Caerphilly Homes operates. The Strategy has been developed in consultation with tenants & staff (through a number of workshop and feedback sessions).

2.2 This report outlines the Purpose of the new Strategy, its 4 Key Objectives, along with information on how it was developed. The strategy also refers to the development of an Action Plan to support the delivery of the strategic objectives over the next 3 years.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

3.1 The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, list 7 goals that provide a shared vision for public bodies to work towards. The goal that most closely links with the Tenant Participation Strategy is "*A Wales of cohesive communities - attractive, viable, safe and well connected communities*".

3.2 Tenant Involvement also links with the current Local Housing Strategy Aim 6:

   "providing good quality, well managed homes in communities where people want to live and offer people housing choices which meet their needs and aspirations"

3.3 The National Housing Strategy 2010 'Improving Lives and Communities' emphasises the need to:

   "Give tenants a clear voice in decisions that affect them" and that *"services should reflect the needs of those who use them, not the needs of the organisations who deliver them"*.

3.4 Corporately, the Tenant Participation Strategy will also link to the Council's Public Engagement Strategy, the Council's Strategic Equality Objectives 3 & 4, and also to the themes in "Caerphilly Delivers", the Local Service Board single integrated plan.

3.5   Also, Key Aim 1 of the Caerphilly Homes Communications Strategy 2015 - 2018 is "*to raise the awareness of stakeholders on the range of services we provide, how to access our services, our performance in providing these services and how they can influence our services".*

4.   THE REPORT

4.1   This Tenant Participation Strategy has been designed to support the delivery of the Local Housing Strategy by ensuring that robust and valid evidence is generated through tenant participation to support the delivery of good and improving housing services. To achieve this, the Tenant & Community Involvement Team undertook a programme of engagement with staff and tenants.

4.2   The existing Tenant Participation Strategy (2013-16) had served its purpose and required review and updating. To support the development of the new Strategy a number of staff participated in a Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Project "Working together to challenge tenant involvement". This project involved 5 workshop sessions over 5 months with other landlords on issues covering challenges to tenant involvement, cultural change and co-creation. Consultancy time with a CIH associate was also part of the project.

4.3   Joint staff and tenant workshop sessions (made up of 7 tenants and 7 staff) were undertaken in the Autumn 2015 to **Review the Purpose of tenant participation, provide an assessment on how we have done to date and understand the factors that affect us and what we do.** The workshops were held over 2 days and were independently facilitated by the CIH associate. Themes that emerged from the workshop were:
- Understand the needs of current and future tenants
- Need to involve a range of tenants/lack of diversity
- Feedback and evidence of service improvement/progress
- Two way communication/feedback
- Value for money
- Measure results

4.4   To understand the outputs of the joint staff and tenant workshop sessions, the Tenant & Community Involvement Team held its own workshop day also facilitated by the CIH associate. The information taken from these workshops as well as a review of lessons learnt from the delivery of the Tenant Participation Strategy (2013-16) has been used to inform the development of our 2016-19 Tenant Participation Strategy. We wanted to create a short, focused Strategy that would provide the vision and key objectives that would drive our tenant participation activities for the next 3 years and beyond.

4.5   The Strategy Purpose is *"To have tenant driven and continually improving services".* To support this purpose, 4 objectives underpin the Strategy. These are:

- Objective 1 - we will understand the needs of our current and future tenants
- Objective 2 - we will turn the feedback into information that will support improving services
- Objective 3 - we will deliver effective two-way communication between Caerphilly Homes and our tenants
- Objective 4 - we will review the effectiveness of the tenant participation service and update our approach based on evidence

4.6   The Strategy will be supported by an annual operational Action plan which will align with the Purpose and 4 Objectives. The activities/tasks within the Action plan will be based on SMART principles (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and with Timescales) ensuring that the 4 objectives can be met. It is important to continually review our progress against our strategic objectives to ensure that it continues to drive service improvement. See Appendix 1 for copy of Strategy.

5.   EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1   The National Housing Strategy 2010 demonstrates the need to ensure that all tenants are allowed a voice and have their individual needs taken into account, regardless of their individual circumstances and backgrounds.

5.2   The overriding principle of the 2016-19 Strategy is to generate representative evidence from the total population. To ensure this, the delivery of the Strategy must ensure equal access for all tenants under Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, the Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015 and the Council's own Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020.

5.3   The specific activities within the Action plan will have to be supported by individual impact assessments.

6.   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1   Any activities associated with the Strategy will be accommodated within the existing Tenant Participation budget.

7.   PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1   There are no direct personnel implications. The Strategy will be supported through the Tenant & Community Involvement Team (and if required other existing staff resources).

8.   CONSULTATIONS

8.1   The views of consultees listed have been incorporated within the report.

8.2   The Tenant & Staff workshop group and Tenant Information Exchange (TIE) have both received a presentation on the Purpose & four Objectives of the Strategy. Discussions were held at both consultation events and comments/suggestions put forward. Both groups fully supported the Strategy. Some minor alterations have been made to the wording of the Strategy based on the feedback.

9.   RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1   Members of the CHTG are asked to provide comments in relation to the proposed strategy prior to submission to Cabinet.

10.   REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1   To keep members of the CHTG updated and informed on tenant participation progress.

Author: Elizabeth Bayliss - Tenant Participation Officer
Consultees: Councillor David Poole - Cabinet Member for Housing
               Christina Harrhy - Corporate Director Communities and Education
               Nicole Scammell - Director of Corporate Finance
               Shaun Couzens - Chief Housing Officer
               Phil Davy - Head of Programmes (WHQS)
               Fiona Wilkins - Public Sector Housing Manager
               Mandy Betts - Tenant & Community Involvement Manager
               Gail Taylor - Tenant Participation Officer

Kelsey Watkins - Communications & Tenant Engagement Officer
David A Thomas - Senior Policy Officer (Equalities & Welsh Language)
Mark Jennings - Housing Strategy Officer

Appendix 1:   Tenant Participation Strategy (2013 -16)

Background Papers: Feedback session notes with joint staff & tenant workshop group and TIE