



CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 20TH SEPTEMBER 2018

SUBJECT: WELLBEING OBJECTIVE 5 : INVESTMENT IN COUNCIL HOMES TO TRANSFORM LIVES AND COMMUNITIES - END OF YEAR REPORT (2017/18)

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - SOCIAL SERVICES & HOUSING

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide members of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group (CHTG) with an update on performance made throughout 2017/18 against Wellbeing Objective, 5 prior to the report being presented to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 The purpose of the objective is to utilise the substantial investment made by the Council in its tenants' homes, as part of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) programme, to help transform homes, lives and communities.

2.2 This report summaries progress made against the objective during 2017/18. For the reasons outlined in this report, achievement against the Wellbeing Objective has been deemed as **partially successful**.

2.3 Further detail on progress made during 2017/18 is provided in Appendix 1.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

3.1 ***The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*** contains 7 well-being goals. When making decisions the act requires public bodies in Wales, including local authorities, to take into account the impact they could have on people living their lives in the future.

3.2 ***Improving Lives and Communities: Homes in Wales (Welsh Government, 2010)*** which sets out the national context on meeting housing need, homelessness, and housing-related support services.

3.3 ***The Caerphilly We Want (CCBC, 2018-2023) - Well-Being Plan: Positive Places - Enabling our communities to be resilient and sustainable.***

3.4 ***Corporate Plan (CCBC, 2018-2023): Well-being Objective 3: "Address the availability, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve people's well-being."***

3.5 ***Anti-Poverty Strategy (CCBC)***, which sets out a range of priorities to tackle poverty in the borough.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Welsh Government is committed to ensuring that all social housing is brought up to the WHQS. The Council is required to ensure that the housing stock meets the WHQS by the end of December 2020.
- 4.2 The WHQS guidance document requires all social landlords to ensure that it's properties are:-
- in a good state of repair
 - adequately heated and insulated
 - safe and secure
 - contain up to date kitchens and bathrooms
 - well managed
 - located in attractive and safe environments
 - suit the specific needs of the household.

Whilst each of the above items could contribute directly towards improving the health, safety and wellbeing of the household, there are other aspects of the programme that also contribute towards this objective

- 4.3 Council made a conscious decision to ensure that the money invested in bringing all tenants' homes up to the WHQS would be used to support development of small and medium enterprises and create training and employment opportunities to help people back into work. Since the start of the WHQS programme the Council has invested over £150m and is projecting to invest over £220m by the end of the programme. This investment has resulted in the creation of 43 permanent jobs, 58 apprentices and 44 work placement opportunities, as well as supporting and providing expansion opportunities to local businesses.
- 4.4 The Council has adopted a 'phased block of works' approach to the delivery of the WHQS programme. This has entailed internal and external works being undertaken separately, which has meant that 'whole home compliance' was not anticipated to be significant until the latter part of the programme but is now beginning to be realised. Although some slippage has been experienced with the external works element, the achievement of the standard is on target to be delivered by the 2020 deadline.
- 4.5 The works undertaken to deliver this objective have helped to improve lives and communities by improving standards and conditions of our housing stock, which in itself will improve the safety, health and wellbeing of our tenants. At the end of March 2018, 73% of properties were compliant in relation to internal work and 46% for external work. Overall compliance was 35%. These figures changed from those reported previously following the completion of a validation exercise.
- 4.6 A range of energy efficiency improvements have been carried out as part of the WHQS programme including upgraded loft insulation, energy efficient heating and the installation of double glazed windows. The majority of non-traditional houses have also benefitted from external wall insulation. This work contributes to health and wellbeing improvements and towards addressing fuel poverty.
- 4.7 Part 6 of the WHQS requires all homes to be located in attractive and safe environments and the Council plans to invest circa £10.6m on a range of environmental improvements. This aspect of the programme is being approached in two distinct phases: phase 1- identifying minor repair and improvement works and phase 2 - carrying out an extensive community engagement exercise to identify further improvements. Works typically include improvements to communal steps, paths, fencing, walls, lighting, parking, but also can provide play areas/equipment, as well as supporting local community projects, and assisting to address problems relating to anti-social behaviour.

- 4.8 Part 7 of the WHQS requires that the accommodation provided should, as far as possible, suit the needs of the household, e.g. specific disabilities. To fulfil this requirement the Council has delivered a range of adaptations to tenants' homes, where a need has been assessed, to help promote independent living. This has included the installation of handrails, access ramps, disabled kitchens, walk in showers and 25 automatic door installations at our sheltered housing schemes. The Council has also worked with the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) regarding provisions to assist those tenants with a visual impairment. At the end of March 2018 1,713 adaptations had been provided through the WHQS programme in addition to approximately 4,916 adaptations provided to tenants by the Adaptations Team within Private Sector Housing.
- 4.9 The Council has proactively monitored tenant satisfaction levels since the start of the WHQS programme. Our data shows that tenants are generally happy with internal works (86%) and to a lesser extent for external works (70%).
- 4.10 The delivery of the WHQS programme remains challenging but is clearly making a significant contribution towards the successful achievement of this Wellbeing Objective. The programme continues to be financially viable, with the possibility of some additional borrowing being required towards the end of the programme. New arrangements introduced during 2017/18 means that the Council is well placed to deliver the WHQS programme in full by the 2020 deadline, with the substantial investment made helping to transform lives and communities.
- 4.11 In 2017, the Wales Audit Office completed a review of the Council's WHQS programme and made a series of recommendations, which have been addressed by the Council and contributed towards the programme delivery.

5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 5.1 The summary of performance outlined in Section 4 and the detailed information provided in Appendix 1 demonstrates the positive contribution made by the Council, through the delivery of the WHQS programme, towards 6 of the 7 wellbeing goals:
- A prosperous Wales
 - A resilient Wales
 - A healthier Wales
 - A more equal Wales
 - A Wales of cohesive communities
 - A globally responsible Wales

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An equality impact assessment is not required as the report is for information purposes only.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no financial implications to this report, although, there may have been in respect of the individual actions undertaken to achieve the key priorities outlined in section 4.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no personnel implications to this report, although, there may have been in respect of the individual actions undertaken to achieve the key priorities outlined in section 4.

9. CONSULTATIONS

9.1 The result of all consultations has been incorporated into this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 CHTG are asked to provide their views on the recommendations set out below, prior to the report being presented to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

10.2 Members are asked to consider the content of this report and, where appropriate, question and challenge the performance presented.

10.3 Members are asked to determine if they agree that achievement against the Wellbeing Objective is deemed as “partially successful”.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 Performance management scrutiny affords members the opportunity to challenge, inform and shape the future performance of the housing service.

12. STATUTORY POWER

12.1 Local Government Measure 2009.

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Sue Cousins, Principal Housing Officer
Lesley Allen, Principal Accountant (Caerphilly Homes)
Rhys Lewis, Systems & Performance Manager
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Appendices:

Appendix 1: End of Year Report - Wellbeing Objective 5: Investment in Council Homes to Transform Lives and Communities (2017/18)