



CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP (WELSH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD)

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE SIRHOWY ROOM, PENALLTA HOUSE, ON
THURSDAY, 28TH MARCH 2019 AT 5.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Mr C. Davies - Vice-Chair

Task Group Members:

M. Davies, L. Harding, D. Moore, L. Phipps and R. Thompson, L.G. Whittle

Officers:

S. Couzens (Chief Housing Officer), F. Wilkins (Housing Services Manager) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor B. Jones, D. Price, A. Hussey and Tenant Representatives Y. Bryant, L. Pewtner, M. James and S. Jones.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Tenant Representatives C. Davies, D. Moore, and R. Thompson declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in all agenda items as they are Council Tenants.

3. MINUTES – 14TH FEBRUARY 2019

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on the 14th February 2019 be agreed as a correct record and by a show of hands was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14th February 2019 (minute no. 1-7) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. STAFF TRAINING RELEVANT TO VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS

The report, which was requested by a Member of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group (The Task Group), provided Members with an insight into the training being undertaken by Caerphilly Homes' staff that is relevant to improving their engagement with vulnerable tenants.

The report provided Members with detailed examples of formal training courses undertaken by a range of Caerphilly Homes' staff within the last five years that contributes to improving their engagement with service users, including those with particular vulnerabilities, when they are undertaking professional roles. It included examples of staff that have undertaken the various types of training. The Task Group were asked to note that the report does not include awareness raising and training provided through meetings, or professional qualifications such as NVQ's.

The Task Group thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

A Member sought further information on the training provided to Tenancy Enforcement Officers. Officers explained that there are a small number of Tenancy Enforcement Officers and as a result, all staff will receive training provided there is capacity and availability over time and the course is considered to be of sufficient value and quality.

Discussions took place around the Mental Health Training for relevant frontline staff. It was noted that the Housing Services Manager has been working with colleagues in Workforce Development Team to develop a 'tailor made' training course for Housing staff. The content and outcomes have been reviewed and as a result the course has been postponed in order to address and provide the most relevant training to staff. In addition, it was noted that the aim of this training is to provide staff with relevant skills and knowledge to provide support to tenants with Mental Health Issues, ensuring staff are safe at all times. The Task Group were reassured that additional training such as Lone Working, Personal Protection and Conflict Management are also provided to staff and an Employee Protection Register is also in place and regularly maintained in order to protect staff and make them aware of any potential risks prior to visits.

The Task Group discussed the organisation of the training and it was noted that there is not a dedicated training officer to arrange training, often it comes about as a result of conversations with Managers during PDR's or on recommendations from others.

Further information was sought around the training provided for Bereavement and Loss and its uptake. Officers explained that the training aims to provide staff with an understanding of the stages of bereavement, symptoms of grief and communication techniques to aid others. It was noted that this training is aimed to make staff aware should they find themselves in a situation, as opposed to staff making scheduled visits post bereavement.

The Caerphilly Homes Task Group noted the report.

5. PROCUREMENT UPDATE REPORT

The report provided the Caerphilly Homes Task Group (The Task Group) with an update on the procurement programme, which is currently in place to support the delivery of the Wales Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) programme.

The report detailed the number of Procurements undertaken since the start of the WHQS Programme in October 2012. This included details of all tendering processes undertaken to date and arrangements which are currently out to the market as part of new procurement opportunities. Additionally, the report also included a list of upcoming works which when complete will conclude the WHQS programme.

The Task Group were asked to note that at present the Authority has undertaken, completed and awarded over 400 procurements via Contracts, Frameworks, Mini Competitions and Small Lots for WHQS works. These were detailed in the appendices of the report; Appendix A of the report detailed the Completed Procurement Processes, Appendix B detailed the Current Procurement Processes and Appendix C detailed Upcoming Future Work.

The Task Group thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

A Member sought clarification on the WHQS Contracts Awarded (Appendix A of the report) and whether these had been completed. The Officer agreed to update the appendix to include this information and forward onto the Task Group.

Clarification was sought on the terminology “Scoping Stage”, as referred to in Appendix B of the report. Officers explained that this refers to the process in which we go to market and assess interest and scope of the work required and is at the early stages of the process.

Discussion took place around the Dynamic Purchasing System, which has successfully tendered a number of contracts and made the process more effective and efficient. Assurance was sought on whether the required contracts can be awarded and works achieved by the March 2020 deadline. Officers explained that, Appendix C outlines the upcoming future works and, based on historical performance, Officers are confident that all contracts and works will be completed within deadline.

A Task Group Member queried the process for determining customer satisfaction with the contractors. Officers explained that feedback is gathered post completion of works with the tenants, and regular meetings are undertaken with contractors and procurement in which any issues or concerns are raised and addressed.

The Task Group discussed Appendix B and sought clarification on the Contract Status “Legal Advice Being Sought”. Officers explained that this was in relation to Leasehold Contracts, in which there are legal requirements in which the Council must adhere to and possible challenges.

A Task Group Member raised concerns for the work of the contractors at the end of the WHQS Programme, and the quality of work provided as the scheme comes to an end. Officers assured Members that the Council only pay for completed projects and works completed will be inspected to ensure consistency in quality at completion.

The Caerphilly Homes Task Group noted the report.

6. TO RECEIVE ANY REQUESTS FOR AN ITEM TO BE INCLUDED ON THE NEXT AVAILABLE AGENDA

There were no requests for items made at the meeting.

The meeting closed at 17:41pm.

Approved as a correct record subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 16th May 2019.

CHAIR