

Improvement Objectives

APPENDIX 1

IO5 - WHQS Investment will transform Council homes and act as a catalyst to also transform lives and communities throughout the county borough.

Outcomes:

Everyone in Wales should have the opportunity to live in a good quality home within a safe and secure community. To help achieve this, the physical standard and condition of existing housing must be maintained and improved to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS). The WHQS is a minimum standard for homes. The core elements are that homes are:

- In a good state of repair
- Safe and secure
- Adequately heated
- Fuel efficient and well insulated
- Contain up-to-date kitchens and bathrooms
- Well managed (for rented housing)
- Located in attractive and safe environments
- As far as possible suit the specific requirements of the household, for example, catering for specific disabilities.

We aim to ensure all council homes meet WHQS, which will improve the quality of life for people who live in those homes. We will develop long-term arrangements, which will help sustain local jobs, offer skills development and training opportunities and deliver wider community benefits.

By 2020, we want our communities to know:

- We delivered the best quality home improvements scheme to our tenants as promised in the Offer Document
- We did it with them and not to them
- Their homes created real jobs in our communities
- We delivered the whole project on time and in budget

These ambitions can only be achieved with the entire council and tenants and other key stakeholders working together and we are confident that with their support, this programme will transform council homes, the lives of our citizens and our communities."

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2014-15 Six Month Progress Summary

At the mid-year point the original planned programme for this objective is facing major slippage. Early indications are that full delivery of the objective is unlikely to be completely successful at the end of the year.

What have we done well over the last 6 months?

The momentum has been maintained by the in house team on the internal works programme. The standard of workmanship is very good and tenant satisfaction with the completed works remain high. The in house team has commenced external works in the Lower Rhymney Valley. This has raised some issues in respect of the extent of the works required to be compliant with WHQS.

The in house team will be the main contractor for the major refurbishment work at Rowan Place, Rhymney. Welsh Government has approved grant funding of £1m (WP) towards Hafod Deg and environmental works at Rowan Place. The WHQS budget for Rowan Place is £4.2m. This is now a major project in its own right. Work commenced on 15th October and will be phased over 2 years.

What areas do we need to improve on? And how are we going to do it?

The original planned programme for 2014/15 is facing major slippage. Around 3000 properties were scheduled for either internal or external repairs and improvements this financial year. At the half year only 224 have had works completed (7.5%). The capital programme has a budget of £29m but expenditure 6 months into the year is £2.3m excluding fees that should be charged to capital (pro rata should be £14m). The main reasons for the slippage are the delays in the commencement of the internal works contracts; the decision to retender the external works contracts in the Upper Rhymney Valley; the curtailment of the small lots programme in the Eastern Valleys to a more manageable number of contracts; and surveying issues that have slowed the external works in the Lower Rhymney Valley.

An assessment of the current position indicates that a more realistic out turn estimate for completions by March 2014 is 1300 properties, less than half that originally planned.

The slippage will need to be incorporated into the future years. In reality this will require an acceleration of the programme to ensure the WHQS is still achieved by the fixed deadline of March 2020. This has a number of ramifications but in particular the staff resources to manage the volume of work against the timescale.

The WHQS Project Board is mindful of the growing pressures on the programme. Action has been taken to strengthen the senior management. There will be a reconfiguration of the project teams with greater clarity in respect of accountabilities. Additional staff resources in all critical areas are under review but will be dependant on the ability of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to absorb the additional cost.

The capital programme for 2014/15 will have to be revised downwards to more accurately reflect the changed circumstances. The forward investment plan between 2015/16 and 2019/20 is subject to review and this may result in some changes to the community sequence. The review will need to build in the slippage from the current year and limit any overlaps between internal and external works as this was a key principle of the original plan agreed with tenants.

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Actions

Title	Comment	RAG	Overall Status	% Complete
Achieve high levels of tenant satisfaction with the work undertaken to their homes	Due to the limited number of completed contracts satisfaction data is not yet available for 2014/15. For 2013/14 the overall satisfaction rate was 92%.		Not Started	0
Adhere to the standards set out in the Charter for Trust. This applies to both the in house workforce and contractors	Due to the limited number of completed contracts data in respect of compliance with the Charter for Trust standards is not yet available for 2014/15. For 2013/14 the overall compliance figure was 92%.		Not Started	0
Carry out adaptations to meet specific needs of individual households	The adaptations are a response to circumstances that arise when tenants are visited at the survey stage. To date 31 properties have had adaptations incorporated where this has been identified as a requirement for the tenants. This action will be ongoing as the need arises.		Complete	100
Delivery of the 2014/15 capital investment programme in respect of internal and external repairs and improvements	Internal works have been completed on 167 properties. External works have been completed on 57 properties. In respect of the overall 2014/15 programme this represents 7.5%.		In Progress	7.50
Promote the Community Improvement Fund to benefit projects within the communities across the county borough	Four new applications under the Community Improvement Fund have been received. Two of these applications will be the subject of consultation with Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 30th October 2014.		In Progress	0
Pursue external funding opportunities to support energy improvement measures (under the Energy Companies Obligation [ECO], Arbed or similar Government initiatives).	Welsh Government has provisionally approved the Arbed bid for Phillipstown. Full approval is dependant on the scheme managers (Melin Homes) surveying the properties. The scheme is expected to cover around 317 properties which includes 92 Council properties. The funding estimated at £2.7m will meet the cost of external wall insulation and replacement of inefficient boilers.		Not Started	0

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How much did we do and how well did we do it?

Title	Actual	Target	Intervention	RAG	Result 12 Months Ago	Comment
Charter for Trust Standards - The Charter for Trust developed in consultation with tenants and staff sets out the standards that tenants can expect when work is being undertaken in their homes, which will be assessed by specific questions on the customer satisfaction survey		90.00	85.00		85.00	This measure is reported annually.
Number of homes brought to WHQS as recorded on annual return to Welsh Government (The number of houses that have achieved WHQS standard in the year)		80.00	65.00		108	This measure is reported annually.
Number of homes compliant with WHQS in respect of their external elements		1531.00	1400.00		23.00	The published target for 2014/15 was 2381 properties. One contract relating to non traditional properties was delayed and there was a need to retender. As a result, this will cause slippage in the programme and will have an impact on the original target. We have therefore set a new target of 1531 for 2014/15, which is still much higher than the 2013/14 target of 38 properties. To date we have completed external works on 57 properties.
Number of homes compliant with WHQS in respect of their internal elements		1332.00	1200.00		657	Internal works have been completed on 167 properties to date.

Is anyone better off?

Title	Actual	Target	Intervention	RAG	Result 12 Months Ago	Comment
% of tenants whose homes have been improved internally through the WHQS programme are satisfied with the completed works (The percentage of tenants who's house meets the WHQS standard that are satisfied)		80.00	72.00		92.00	This measure is reported annually. In 2013/14 the overall satisfaction rate was 92%.
Number of organisations making successful applications to the Community Improvement Fund (Number of local residents who use the Community Improvement Fund which will make environmental improvements to their external surroundings)		10.00	7.00		3.00	Four new applications under the Community Improvement Fund have been received. Two of these applications will be the subject of consultation with Caerphilly Home Task Group on 30th October 2014.