



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 2ND OCTOBER 2018

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

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

- 1.1 The attached report, which was presented to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 20th September 2018, sought the views of Members on performance made throughout 2017/18 against Wellbeing Objective 5 and whether achievement against the Wellbeing Objective be deemed as "partially successful". It was noted that following consideration by the Task Group, the report would be presented to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee as an item for discussion.
- 1.2 Officers highlighted the achievements made towards meeting the Objective through the Council's investment in the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) programme, most notably the creation of jobs, apprenticeships and training opportunities, the progress made towards the realisation of 'whole home compliance', energy efficiency improvements, physical environmental improvements and the increased provision of accommodation adapted to meet tenants with specific housing needs.
- 1.3 Members were advised that the Council has proactively monitored tenant satisfaction levels since the start of the WHQS programme with data showing that tenants are generally happy with internal works (86%) and to a lesser extent for external works (70%). It was noted that the WHQS programme remains challenging, however 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 and therefore the report recommends that achievement against the Wellbeing Objective be deemed "partially successful".
- 1.4 Discussion took place regarding low tenant satisfaction levels in relation to external works. Members expressed concerns that the level of external works carried out had been inconsistent across the county borough with some properties receiving full external improvements, partial or none at all. Questions were raised as to whether the level of detail provided by the tenant surveys was indicative of these concerns and the exact nature of tenant dissatisfaction with external works. Officers agreed that satisfaction levels were lower than anticipated and that further analysis of the data produced by the tenant surveys needed to be carried out and issues with external works identified and considered. In relation to external works a Member questioned the rate of improvements to gardens and paths. Officers clarified that these were secondary external works and many of our properties were unable to meet the standard for gardens due to the topography of the borough. Officers also advised that paths may be repaired if economically viable to do so, rather than being completely renewed.
- 1.5 Further discussion took place regarding improvements that could be made to the tenant survey process. It was suggested that not all tenants were receiving the surveys. Officers

clarified that surveys were issued only to those tenants that had works carried out and consideration is being given to conducting telephone surveys as a means of increasing feedback with contact being made in a more timely and accurate manner.

- 1.6 Officers responded to a point of clarification in regards to the use of agency staff to fill newly created jobs within WHQS and not short-term contracts. It was explained that although agency staff was used, financially the difference between the use of agency staff compared to short-term contracts was minimal and this provides more flexibility as demand on resources is likely to change as the programme proceeds
- 1.7 Following consideration of the report, the Caerphilly Homes Task Group unanimously recommended to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee that achievement against Wellbeing Objective 5 - Investment in Council Homes to Transform Lives and Communities - End of Year Report (2017/18) be judged as “partially successful” for 2017/18.
- 1.8 The Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the report and the above recommendation.

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Appendices:

Appendix Report to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 20th September 2018 – Agenda Item 4