



CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 19TH FEBRUARY 2015

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY SAFETY FUND – TARGET HARDENING AND SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise members of proposals to utilise £20,000 of the Council's WHQS Community Safety budget to enhance the target hardening provision available to support victims of anti social behaviour and domestic violence.
- 1.2 Funding decisions relating to the Community Safety Fund will be made under delegated powers by the Head of Programmes. The report is seeking the views of Caerphilly Homes Task Group prior to the decision being made.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 As part of the Council's commitment to tenants outlined in the Offer Document the Council allocated £50,000 per annum to a suite of funds designed to engage and support the local community in helping to transform homes, lives and communities. The funds created include, the Local Employment Fund, a Community Improvement Fund and an Anti Social Behaviour Fund.
- 2.2 The Community Safety Fund was created to support projects that aim to address community safety issues and help create a safer community environment. In previous years the Fund has been used to purchase two 4G mobile CCTV cameras which are currently being used in Rowan Place to prevent crime and anti social behaviour.
- 2.3 During 2014/15 a number of discussions that have taken place with representatives from the Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership, Gwent Police, Llamau, Communities First, Flying Start and Tenancy Enforcement regarding how the Fund could be best utilised. The discussions were assisted by the findings highlighted in the Safer Caerphilly Strategic Assessment published in April 2014 which suggested that whilst the overall crime rate in Caerphilly had reduced, the incidence of some types of crime had increased, notably violent crime, criminal damage and theft. Anti social behaviour had increased in a number of areas including Penyrheol, Risca and St James.
- 2.4 It is proposed to utilise £20,000 of the Council's WHQS Community Safety Fund 2014/15 to add value to existing work underway by the members of the Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership to help address the key community safety concerns highlighted in the Safer Caerphilly Strategic Assessment Document 2014/15.

- 2.5 The proposal will add value to the existing interventions currently undertaken by the Safer Caerphilly Partnership, Gwent Police, Llamau and the Council's Housing division in partnership with neighbouring local authorities to tackle anti social behaviour and reduce domestic violence.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) is intended to ensure that all local authority and housing association homes are improved and maintained to achieve specified standards.
- 3.2 The WHQS Programme is coterminous with the Caerphilly Single Plan priority of creating 'Prosperous Communities' (P2).
- 3.3 The Council is committed to ensuring that the WHQS investment transforms not only homes but also lives and communities.
- 3.4 The Council's Local Housing Strategy "People, Property, and Places" has the following aim:
"To provide good quality, well managed houses in communities where people want to live, and offer people housing choices which meet their needs and aspirations."

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The Safer Caerphilly Strategic Assessment document notes that the three wards of Blackwood, Bedwas and Penyrheol exhibit high levels of violent crime and anti social behaviour and that in the future, the incidence of these crimes across the county borough is likely to increase.
- 4.2 Whilst there are a number of interventions already in place and delivered by members of the Safer Caerphilly Partnership gaps in provision have been highlighted.
- 4.3 It is therefore proposed to allocate £20,000 of the 2014/15 year budget to the Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership to undertake the following:
- Purchase of target hardening equipment for use by victims of anti social behaviour including additional door locks, security lights, window alarms and CCTV etc.
 - Purchase of target hardening equipment for use by victims of domestic abuse including; home alarms, personal alarms and mobile phones. The mobile phones are loaned to the victim when they have been taken by the Police to give evidence. This allows the victim to contact their support worker and family members. The phones also include an emergency button for use in the home if they require immediate help from the police.
 - The creation of Sanctuary Rooms in homes where the tenant is considered at severe risk of domestic abuse. Specialist equipment can be purchased to reinforce a dedicated room within the home which a victim and / or their children can enter if they are at immediate risk. For example, reinforced doors on certain rooms within the home which the victim and their children can enter and lock if they are in immediate danger and allow them the time to contact the police in safety.
- 4.4 Victims of anti social behaviour will be identified by the Victim's Manager who is based with the Safer Caerphilly Partnership and whose role is to directly support victims of ASB.
- 4.5 Funding from the Community Safety Fund would be awarded to the Safer Caerphilly Partnership who have a partnership arrangement in place with Care and Repair Caerphilly to manage the distribution, fitting and maintenance of the stock.

- 4.6 The Tenancy Enforcement Section of the Housing division are a member of the Safer Caerphilly Partnership and would have a direct input into decisions to provide target hardening equipment. There is no duplication between the support provided via this proposal and the provision of target hardening equipment offered via the Tenancy Enforcement service.
- 4.7 The Community Safety Officer will provide a six monthly report to the WHQS Project Board and the CHTG on the target hardening items that have been purchased, their usage and their impact in helping victims of domestic violence and anti social behaviour in reducing the incidence of both. The report will highlight the number of tenants who have benefited from this service.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Target hardening equipment and sanctuary rooms will be provided to victims based on an assessment of need undertaken by the Safer Caerphilly Partnership and relevant sub groups.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 £50,000 remains within the 2014/15 Community Safety Budget. It is unlikely that the full £50,000 will be committed by 31 March 2015.
- 6.2 The proposed £20,000 allocation to the Safer Caerphilly Partnership will pay for the capital costs associated with the purchase and fitting of target hardening equipment and the creation of sanctuary rooms.
- 6.3 The Safer Caerphilly Partnership have a partnership arrangement in place with Care and Repair to supply and fit appropriate equipment.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 Comments received from appropriate officers have been incorporated into the report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That members are invited to comment on the proposal outlined in the report in respect of the Community Safety Fund prior to a decision by the Head of Programmes under delegated powers.

10. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To help deliver the Council's WHQS ambition to transform homes, lives and communities.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Housing Act and Local Government Acts 2000.

Author: Jane Roberts-Waite, Strategic Coordination Manager
Email: roberj2@caerphilly.gov.uk - Tel: 01443 864340

Consultees: Councillor Gerald Jones, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing
Phil Davy, Head of Programmes
Shaun Couzens, Chief Housing Officer
Rachel Thornett, Tenancy Enforcement Manager
Natalie Kenny, Community Safety Officer
Kathryn Peters, Community Safety Manager
Nicole Scammell, Interim Director of Corporate Services
Lesley Allen, Group Accountant