



## CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 19TH FEBRUARY 2015

**SUBJECT: PAN GWENT DOMESTIC ABUSE PROJECT**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

---

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide members of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group (CHTG) with information about a proposed pan Gwent social landlord's domestic abuse project and the financial cost of the project.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 A group of social housing providers in Gwent have joined together to tackle the issue of domestic abuse. The group members are: Bron Afon Community Housing, Caerphilly County Borough Council, Charter Housing including Derwen, Melin Homes, Monmouthshire Housing, Newport City Homes and Tai Calon. Charter Housing is the lead organisation.
- 2.2 The pan Gwent group have agreed that in order to better tackle domestic abuse, a study needs to be undertaken to identify how social landlords can respond more effectively.
- 2.2 An 8 month project is proposed to undertake the necessary research and analysis and to develop a toolkit for use by social landlords. A project officer would be recruited to undertake the work as prescribed by the pan Gwent social landlord's domestic abuse group. Appendix 1 details the funding bid and the expected outputs and outcomes of the project.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 The overarching aims of Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) in relation to anti-social behaviour and crime reduction are detailed in Caerphilly Delivers – The Single Integrated Plan 2013 - 2017. They are as follows:

Prosperous Caerphilly

P2 – Improve standards of housing and communities, giving appropriate access to services across the county borough.

Safer Caerphilly

S1 – Reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour and reduce fear of becoming a victim of anti-social behaviour for residents.

S2 – Reduce crime and the fear of crime for the residents of the county borough.

S4 – Ensure people are supported to live in their own homes and communities in safety.

- 3.2 The Council's Local Housing Strategy "People, Property, and Places" has the following aims:  
Aim 6 - 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.  
Aim 11 – To promote sustainable and mixed communities that are located in safe and attractive environments.

- 3.3 The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and the Code of Guidance provided by Welsh Government to assist social landlords in their development of a policy and procedure, encouraged and emphasised a 3-strand strategy for dealing with nuisance and anti-social behaviour – prevention, support and enforcement. The CCBC Housing Division, Statement of Policy and Procedure for Anti-Social Behaviour produced and followed by the Tenancy Enforcement Section is consistent with the overarching corporate aims and reflects the 3 strand strategy, emphasises an incremental approach to investigating and dealing with ASB and reflects good practice in this field.
- 3.4 The Council's Strategic Equalities Plan has the following aim:  
Equality Objective 1 – Tackling Identity based hate crime: – To reduce the levels of real or perceived instances of identity based abuse, bullying, harassment and violence, hate crime and hate incidents in the county borough.

#### **4. THE REPORT**

- 4.1 As social landlords we have become more aware in recent years of the role we can play in combating domestic abuse and supporting our tenants who are affected by this issue.
- 4.2 Gwent is unique in that it is the only area within Wales where all social landlords participate in the daily Domestic Abuse Conference Call (DACC). This participation has made each social landlord aware of the levels of domestic abuse within their own areas and how much more could be done to assist tenants who are or could become victims of domestic abuse.
- 4.3 A funding bid was made to Welsh Government to part fund a project to identify how social landlords in Gwent could more effectively respond to the issue of domestic abuse and for the development of a toolkit to be used by social landlords for tackling and preventing domestic abuse. The toolkit would be used by social landlords within Gwent and hopefully be replicated across Wales by all social landlords. Appendix 1 details the funding bid and the expected outputs and outcomes of the project.
- 4.4 Unfortunately the funding bid was rejected by Welsh Government.
- 4.5 The pan Gwent social landlord's domestic abuse group is very keen for the project to go ahead. The 7 members of the project group have been asked to financially support the project. Each member is requested to provide a maximum of £3500. Charter Housing and Derwen come under the umbrella of SOLAS and will provide £4000 between them. This cost per landlord may reduce as it is proposed that a funding bid is also made to the Police and Crime Commissioners Office. This project would complement the PCC's commitment to supporting victims of crime.
- 4.6 It is proposed that CCBC utilise an under spend in the Strengthening the Anti-Social Behaviour Service budget for 2014-15 managed by the Tenancy Enforcement Manager. This budget was allocated to meet one of the promises made within the offer document to tenants issued as part of the Council's housing transfer proposal.
- 4.7 The pan Gwent group understands the need for social landlords to improve their working practices in relation to victims of domestic abuse and also to provide the same level and type of service across Gwent and ultimately Wales for victims of domestic abuse.
- 4.8 The project will also take into consideration the pending Gender-Based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Bill 2014 and the changes this is likely to implement across Wales.
- 4.9 From the viewpoint of a victim of domestic abuse a more effective and co-ordinated response from social landlord services across Gwent can only be a positive improvement.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 In addition to the issues covered in section 4 of this report, it should also be noted that Domestic Abuse and Equalities issues are very closely linked, as all domestic abuse to varying degrees contains for example, aspects of gender, age, disability, race or sexual orientation, even where this is not the primary reason for that abuse. Where these issues are a primary part of the abuse however, additional support is available in Wales.
- 5.2 The organisation called Victim Support has been tasked nationally to be a point of contact where hate crime or incidents occur, and some domestic abuse does cross into that area. Monitoring of victims helps identify the greatest areas of concern and any patterns or trends.
- 5.3 Victim Support works with police forces, community cohesion officers and local authorities to co-ordinate support.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 A one off cost of a maximum £3500 from the Strengthening the Anti-Social Behaviour Service budget for 2014-15.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications arising from the report. The Project Officer will be supervised by Charter Housing.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 Consultation has taken place with Officers listed as Consultees.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 The report be noted.

## **10. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 The purpose of the report is for information only.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

Housing Act 1996  
Anti-Social Behaviour Act 1996

Author: Rachel Thornett – Tenancy Enforcement Manager - Thornr1@caerphilly.gov.uk  
Consultees: Cllr. Gerald Jones, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing  
Shaun Couzens, Chief Housing Officer  
Graham North, Public Sector Housing Manager  
Kathryn Peters, Community Safety Manager  
Julie Reynolds, Area Housing Manager  
Deb Bishop, Area Housing Manager  
Mandy Betts, Tenant and Community Involvement Manager  
Sue Cousins, Principle Housing Officer (Housing Portfolio)  
Lesley Allen, Principal Accountant

Karen James, Neighbourhood Housing Manager  
Angela Hiscox, Neighbourhood Housing Manager  
John Rogers, Principal Solicitor  
Zoe Powles, Solicitor  
Rebecca Haycock, Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator  
Mark Jennings, Housing Strategy Officer  
Dave Thomas, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities & Welsh Language)

**Background Papers:**

Caerphilly Delivers – Single Integrated Plan 2013 – 2017  
Local Housing Strategy – People, Property and Places  
Statement of Policy and Procedure for Anti-Social Behaviour  
Code of Guidance for Local Authorities – Anti-Social Behaviour Policies and Procedures  
Strategic Equalities Action Plan  
Welsh Government White paper – Consultation on legislation to end violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (Wales)

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Bid to Welsh Government for Social Housing providers Domestic Abuse Project