



## CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 2ND APRIL 2015

**SUBJECT: IMPACT OF CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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

- 1.1 To meet a request for a report on the effectiveness and impact of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The report provides background to the establishment of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group and outlines activity undertaken.

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

- 3.1 The Welsh Housing Quality Standard is intended to ensure that all local authority and housing association homes are improved and maintained to achieve specified standards.
- 3.2 The Single Integrated Plan 2013-2017 has a priority to “improve standards of housing and communities, giving appropriate access to services across the County Borough”.
- 3.3 The Council’s Local Housing Strategy “People, Property, and Places” has the following aims:  
“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.”
- 3.4 The Caerphilly Homes Task Group is a formal mechanism to engage with tenant representatives and ensure their views are reflected in decisions relating to public sector housing.

### **4. THE REPORT**

- 4.1 Following the outcome of the ballot in February 2012 the Council considered the mechanisms required to oversee the management and delivery of the WHQS Programme and the housing service improvements that had been promised in the Offer Document/Addendum. In particular there was a commitment to engage more effectively with tenants in future decision making. To give effect to this the Council, at the meeting held on 29th February 2012, agreed to establish an all party Housing Task Group with tenant representatives, reporting to a Cabinet Sub Committee.
- 4.2 The Task Group, subsequently named the Caerphilly Homes Task Group (CHTG) was established with seven Councillors and seven tenants and met for the first time on 12th September 2012. At the first meeting consideration was given to the terms of reference. The

purpose of the CHTG is to focus on the WHQS Programme and the public sector housing service and the overall objective is to be involved in the transformation of the Council's housing estates. Within the terms of the Council's Constitution it was recognised that the CHTG could not be a decision making body and originally recommendations were made to a Cabinet Sub Committee.

- 4.3 The intention was to establish a governance structure solely focused on public sector housing, to lift the profile of the social housing function as a responsibility within the Council following the ballot, and to fulfil a commitment to fully involve tenant representatives so they contributed to the decision making processes but within the limitations imposed by the Constitution.
- 4.4 A review of the terms of reference of the CHTG was undertaken in April 2014 following the Wales Audit Office Annual Governance Report. This clarified the role of the Policy and Resources Committee as having the formal public sector housing scrutiny function. As a consequence of the practice of pre decision scrutiny prior to executive decision the Cabinet Sub Committee was disbanded with reports requiring a decision being referred to full Cabinet after consideration by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee. The consultative role of the CHTG was reaffirmed and a further important change was introduced for tenant representatives from the CHTG to have the option to attend the Policy and Resources Committee to speak on any public sector housing report subject to no individual tenant having a conflict of interest.
- 4.5 Since the CHTG was formed in September 2012 it has met on 20 separate occasions. Consideration has been given to 69 information reports. The CHTG has debated 39 reports with recommendations where Cabinet decisions have been required and has been able to offer opinions and amendments to the recommendations. This has included some major issues such as the investment strategy for the WHQS Programme, the Sheltered Housing Service Review, the Tenant Participation Strategy, the Charter for Trust, the Repairs Policy, Rowan Place, and the HRA Garages. In addition there have been a number of presentations made at the CHTG.
- 4.6 From an officer point of view the CHTG has been a focus for public sector housing discussion and has been a primary means to obtain a tenant perspective on a wide range of matters. There has been much constructive debate and generally consensus. There has only been one occasion where opinions were divided when the possibility of partial demolition of properties at Rowan place was presented as an option. The CHTG is an important part of tenant engagement and fulfils a commitment made by the Council to ensure there is the opportunity for tenant representation on public housing matters.
- 4.7 There is no formal process for monitoring the impact of the Task Group itself. It is for the members of the Task Group themselves to determine whether they consider the CHTG is effective in the role.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 An EqIA has not been undertaken as the report is for information.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising from the report.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

8.1 Comments received have been incorporated within the report.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 The report is for information.

## **10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 The report was requested by the Task Group.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 Local Government Act 2000.

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