



CABINET – 29TH APRIL 2015

SUBJECT: WHQS AND SHELTERED HOUSING COMPLEXES

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 1.1 The attached report was considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 14th April 2015, having previously been considered by the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 2nd April 2015. The report sought the views of Members on a proposed WHQS programme delivery change relating to the sheltered housing complexes, prior to its presentation to Cabinet.
- 1.2 Members were reminded that arising from a number of setbacks, the WHQS programme is under severe pressure to complete by 2020 and subsequently additional measures are under active investigation to expand the capacity to cope with the volume of work. The report therefore advocated an alternative approach to implement the WHQS programme in relation to the sheltered housing complexes.
- 1.3 The report proposed that the management and delivery of the WHQS works on the sheltered schemes be outsourced to a suitable multi-disciplinary consultancy, leaving just the client role in-house. Officers explained that the separate internal and external programmes of works were not considered to be the most appropriate course of action for sheltered housing complexes, and that packaging the sheltered schemes together into a separate programme of work and delivering this independently of the main programme could potentially minimise further slippage of the WHQS programme. This proposal also included an option to include the tenant liaison role in the outsourcing of the WHQS works on the sheltered schemes.
- 1.4 Members were also advised that the WHQS business plan included provision for the conversion of bedsits to flats at two schemes. Three other schemes have since been identified for possible remodelling, and there are concerns about the long-term sustainability of a fourth complex. Officers explained that the remodelling is not a WHQS requirement but that expenditure on WHQS works on the existing schemes could be abortive if it is the intention to remodel the schemes at a future date. The feasibility of conversion/remodelling has yet to be undertaken, and no capital funding has been identified. In addition, due to a borrowing cap on the Housing Revenue Account and increased tender/programme works costs, there are limitations in relation to the budget expenditure available for such works in the period to 2020. In view of these considerations, the report proposed that the six schemes affected be removed from the WHQS programme and addressed after 2020 (with the exception of essential health and safety/emergency works).
- 1.5 Representatives of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group were invited to summarise their deliberations arising from the meeting held on 2nd April 2015 in relation to the report recommendations. At that meeting, the Task Group considered the recommendations contained in the Officers report and by the majority present, endorsed part of recommendation 9.1 (the outsourcing of the sheltered schemes). However, the Task Group felt that outsourcing the tenant liaison role could affect quality assurance measures and therefore recommended that the option to outsource the role be withdrawn and that the tenant liaison role remain within the Authority.

- 1.6 Representatives of the Task Group also outlined their concerns regarding recommendation 9.2 of the report (remove 6 complexes from the WHQS Programme until a decision is made on the long-term future of these properties). Representatives acknowledged the pressures faced by the WHQS programme but raised concerns regarding the effect of the proposed delay on these tenants. Representatives cited a need for a special meeting of the Task Group to discuss this proposal, together with a need for further information (including costings for WHQS/remodelling works, details of previous works carried out at these schemes, occupancy levels and consultation with tenants). With these considerations in mind, and by the majority present, the Task Group had been unable to endorse recommendation 9.2 of the report.
- 1.7 Discussion of the report ensued and concerns were expressed by Members that there was insufficient detailed information within the report in respect of future options for the 6 complexes. Members requested a further report on the future options for the 6 complexes prior to making a decision. Members raised concern as to the wellbeing of tenants in the schemes where it was proposed that WHQS works be deferred.
- 1.8 In responding to these comments, Officers reminded Members of the need to deliver the WHQS programme within funding constraints and the importance of ensuring that monies were not unnecessarily spent on works in instances where they may need to be repeated if a remodelling programme were to take place. Members were advised of the importance of recommendation 9.1 of the report, as there was a pressing need to reduce future slippage of the programme. Officers reiterated that the remodelling works were not a WHQS requirement but that as there was an indication that some of the properties identified would need to be converted or remodelled in future years, it would be prudent to plan for such eventualities. Discussion also took place in regards to the original Savills stock survey of 2008.
- 1.9 Following consideration of the report, and in taking into account the views of Members and the Caerphilly Homes Task Group representatives, it was proposed that recommendation 9.1 of the report be endorsed (subject to an amendment to remove the option to outsource the tenant liaison role). It was moved and seconded that subject to this amendment, the following be referred to Cabinet for consideration. By a show of hands (and in noting there was 1 against), this was agreed by the majority present.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that subject to the removal of the option to outsource the tenant liaison role, the sheltered complexes be packaged into a separate programme and the management and delivery be outsourced to a suitable multi-disciplinary consultancy.

- 1.10 Having regard to the comments of Members and the Caerphilly Homes Task Group representatives, it was proposed that consideration of recommendation 9.2 be deferred pending further information from Officers relating to these affected schemes. This was moved and seconded, and by a show of hands, was unanimously agreed. Members were therefore unable to make a recommendation to Cabinet in support of recommendation 9.2 (the removal of 6 complexes from the WHQS Programme until a decision is made on the long-term future of these properties).

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that consideration of recommendation 9.2 (the removal of 6 complexes from the WHQS Programme until a decision is made on the long-term future of these properties) be deferred pending further information from Officers relating to these affected schemes.

- 1.11 Members are asked to consider the recommendations.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 Report to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 14th April 2015 – Agenda Item 10