



## **POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 14TH JULY 2015**

**SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IO5 – INVESTMENT IN COUNCIL HOMES TO TRANSFORM LIVES AND COMMUNITIES – YEAR END**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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

- 1.1 To provide outturn information against Improvement Objective 5 – Investment in Council homes to transform lives and communities for the 2014/15 financial year.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Significant slippage has arisen with the WHQS Programme during 2014/15. This has necessitated a review of the investment strategy and the implementation of a number of measures to increase capacity and spread risk to ensure the target date of March 2020 can still be achieved.

### **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 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 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 Local Government Measure 2009 requires all Council authorities in Wales to set and publish a set of priorities called Improvement Objectives.
- 4.2 The Wales Audit Office (WAO) use Improvement Objectives and other data/information to evaluate the Council's likelihood of improvement and the level of actual improvement that is achieved for the citizens of Caerphilly.
- 4.3 Arising from the stock transfer ballot in 2012 when tenants voted to remain with the Council as their landlord a commitment was made to tenants and Welsh Ministers that the Council would bring all the housing stock to meet the WHQS by 2020. The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 includes a statutory requirement for social housing landlords to demonstrate full compliance with WHQS by 2020.

- 4.4 The half year report on the Improvement Objective drew attention to slippage that had arisen and the impact this was having on the planned programme. The slippage arises from delays in the commencement of the internal works contracts, the decision to re-tender the external works contracts in the Upper Rhymney Valley, the curtailment of the small lots programme in the Eastern Valley and the deployment of resources away from the external works in the Lower Rhymney Valley to Rowan Place in Rhymney.
- 4.5 The original target for 2014/15 had been to complete either internal or external works to 3,713 properties but in view of the setbacks this was revised to 1683 properties. Unfortunately the outturn has only achieved 702 properties (42% of the revised programme). On the positive side overall satisfaction remains high at 90% and service standards have achieved 93%, both above target (see dashboard at Appendix 1). The overall conclusion is that the Improvement Objective is only partially successful.
- 4.6 Due to the extent of the slippage there are very big challenges to complete the programme by 2020 due to the sheer volume of work that has to be undertaken over the remaining 5 years.
- 4.7 A revised investment strategy and capital programme for 2015/16 were approved by Cabinet in February 2015. Recognising the need to accelerate the programme and the pressure this places on the WHQS team a number of actions have been taken:-
- Strengthened senior management
  - Restructured teams around contract arrangements to provide greater clarity in respect of accountabilities
  - Recruitment of additional posts.
  - External works to 200 blocks of flats in the Lower Rhymney Valley will be managed by the Private Sector Housing Team.
  - Delivery of WHQS for sheltered housing schemes will be outsourced.
  - Part of HRA garage programme allocated to Building Consultancy.
- 4.8 The WHQS investment is a corporate priority and in view of the pressures on the programme to deliver by 2020 it will be retained as an Improvement Objective for 2015/16. A key focus will be on the number of weekly completions (internal or external works) across all contract arrangements.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required as the report is for information.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Capital Programme had a budget of £29m for 2014/15 but due to the major slippage that has occurred there is an underspend of £13.5m which will be carried forward to fund the programme.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The successful delivery of the WHQS Programme is entirely dependent on having the necessary staff resources aligned with the strategy. A combination of additional staff, agency and consultancy support is now being utilised to cope with the volume of work. In addition sub programmes have been created that will be managed by others on behalf of the WHQS Team.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 Comments received have been incorporated where appropriate.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 Members are invited to confirm agreement to the judgement that the Improvement Objective has only been partially successful for 2014/15.

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

- 10.1 To report progress in respect of the Improvement Objective relating to WHQS.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 Local Government Measure.

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Consultees:

Cllr D Poole	-	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member (Housing)
Cllr D Hardacre	-	Cabinet Member for Performance & Asset Management
C Burns	-	Interim Chief Executive
N Scammell	-	Acting Director of Corporate Services & S151 Officer
S Couzens	-	Chief Housing Officer
M Lloyd	-	Deputy Head of Programmes
Cllr Mrs D Price	-	Chair, Caerphilly Homes Task Group
C Davies	-	Vice Chair, Caerphilly Homes Task Group
I Raymond	-	Performance Management Officer
R Roberts	-	Performance Manager

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Improvement Objective (IO5) Dashboard – Full Year