

COUNTY COUNCIL
22ND FEBRUARY, 2017

THE CARMARTHENSHIRE HOMES STANDARD PLUS (CHS+)
“Delivering What Matters”
Business Plan 2017-20

Purpose:

- To explain the vision and detail of the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus over the next three years, and what it means for tenants.
- To confirm the financial profile, based on current assumptions, for the delivery of the CHS+ over the next three years.
- To produce a business plan for the annual application to Welsh Government for Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) for 2017/18, equating to £6.1m

EXECUTIVE BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS:

- To confirm the vision of the CHS+ and the financial and delivery programme over the next three years.
- To confirm the submission of the plan to Welsh Government.

Reasons:

- To continue our CHS+ vision to deliver what really matters to tenants.
- To continue to support tenants by maintaining and further improving the CHS+, with an overall investment of £25m over the next three years.
- To continue to deliver our Affordable Homes Plan with a range of solutions, including council new build, with a further £30m investment over next three years.
- To make members' aware that the delivery of the Plan is dependent on a general rent increase of 2.5% for 2017/18.
- To enable submission to the WG to access £6.1m of MRA for 2017/18
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**Relevant Scrutiny Committee to be consulted: YES – Community Scrutiny –
20th January, 2017**

Scrutiny Committee Recommendations/Comments:

RESOLVED that the Carmarthenshire Homes Standards Plus (CHS+) Delivering What Matters Business Plan 2017-20 be endorsed for submission to the Executive Board subject to the Key Principle under the bullet point investing in homes to maintain standards being amended to read 'to support our future approach to managing the homes, land, garage areas and garden areas'.

The Executive Summary bullet point has been amended to include the above.

Executive Board Decision Required: Yes- 6th February, 2017
Council Decision Required: Yes- 22nd February, 2017

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:-

Cllr. Linda Evans (Housing Portfolio Holder)
Cllr Hazel Evans (Technical Services Portfolio Holder)
Cllr David Jenkins (Deputy Leader and Resources Portfolio Holder)

Directorate: Communities	Designations:	Tel Nos./ E Mail Addresses:
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
COUNTY COUNCIL
22ND FEBRUARY, 2017

SUBJECT:
THE CARMARTHENSHIRE HOMES STANDARD PLUS (CHS+)
“Delivering What Matters”
Business Plan 2017-20

What is the purpose of the plan?

- To explain the vision and detail of the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus over the next three years, and what it means for tenants.
- To confirm the financial profile, based on current assumptions, for the delivery of the CHS+ over the next three years.
- To produce a business plan for the annual application to Welsh Government for Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) for 2017/18, equating to £6.1m.

What is the context?

Since 2006, we have been working to deliver the published work programmes to our tenants' homes. We called this the CHS+ and achieved this to homes where tenants agreed to have the work done during 2015. We fully acknowledge, however, that this is not the end of the journey and want to do more. This plan sets out how we will do this, confirming the financial and delivery programme over the next three years.

Our commitment to CHS+ remains firmly on track, building on what has already been achieved and trying to be as ambitious as we can.

We continue to challenge and review the stock information we hold and how it is collated. This enables us to confirm the future expenditure needed to maintain the standard and what money will be available for our affordable homes delivery programme. Through careful programme management we are able to spend in excess of £55m over the next three years on these projects.

As part of the CHS+, which has been developed with tenants and partners, we continue to commit to three main themes:

- **Supporting tenants and residents** around things like welfare reform, getting services right and saving tenants money in the home. As part of this plan, we also want to ask tenants and partners what the CHS+ should look like in the future and what improvements can we make.
- **Investing in homes' to maintain standards** making sure we understand what we need to do to achieve this. This plan confirms work that will be undertaken to maintain the standard and what our key principles are to support our future approach to managing the homes, land, garage areas and garden areas.

- **Providing more homes** to increase the supply of affordable housing. This plan continues to set out our delivery programme to increase the number of homes using a variety of solutions, including council new build.

Finally we set out what the key assumptions are to make sure the plan remains viable and what we will spend the money on and how it is funded. As part of this we will continue to be pro-active in identifying funding opportunities that further support the delivery of the plan.

What will we deliver in this plan?

The following provides a brief summary:

<p>Supporting Tenants and Residents</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support tenants and residents in managing the challenges and changes as a result of Welfare Reform. • Continue to challenge the way we deliver services, particularly our approach to sustaining tenancies, the way we deliver repairs to homes and the quality of the grass cutting service we provide. • Continue to support initiatives to save tenants' money in the home. • Work with tenants to see what improvements they would like to see to CHS+ in the future.
<p>Investing in tenants' homes</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know exactly what we need to do to maintain the CHS+ in the future and fill in any existing gaps. • Continue to deliver work programmes to replace things that need replacing, based on evidence and need. • Develop a specific investment plan on to focus on energy efficiency measures that offer the best value for money. • Continue to provide homes better suited to tenants needs through investing in things like sheltered housing and adaptations. • Only invest in homes, land and garages where there is a clear benefit to do so to meet our vision.

Providing more homes

We will:

- Continue to provide a range of solutions to deliver more affordable homes.
- Continue with, and further develop, our Council new build programme, bringing new sites forward when funding confirmed
- Look to establish a Local Housing Company to deliver even more affordable homes

What this current plan will not deliver?

We have received requests from some members to explore the feasibility of developing optional additional heating methods for homes e.g. coal/wood burner. We have carried out research and estimate that the cost of installation in a home will vary between £4,000 and £6,500 dependant on dwelling type and existing things like chimneys, size of openings etc. We would also need to cater for a coal bunker or storage shed. As well as these capital costs of installation there would also be an increase in servicing costs.

There are also other issues that have been highlighted:

- There would be a considerable annual cost to the tenant (about £580) to run the system, unless they were in receipt of concessionary coal or could source free wood.
- Due to the nature of these appliances they could potentially increase the risk of accidental fires and injuries.
- Installing such appliances in homes could reduce energy efficiency ratings which could have a potential knock on effect on the level of rent that could be charged.
- Discussions with the Tenant Involvement Group indicate that they would prefer us to spend money on more innovative measures to improve energy efficiency of homes, as opposed to a secondary heating source.

As a result of the above research, we will not be offering optional additional heating as part of this plan.

Recommendations:

- **To confirm the vision of the CHS+ and the financial and delivery programme over the next three years.**
- **To confirm the submission of the plan to Welsh Government.**

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

**YES – The Carmarthenshire Homes Standard *Plus*:
Delivering What Matters 2017-20**

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :

Signed: **Robin Staines**

Head of Housing & Public Protection

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
YES	YES	YES	NONE	YES	NONE	YES

1. Policy, Crime and Disorder and Equalities

The CHS+ will act as the framework for policy development across housing services delivery and will contribute to wider agendas.

2. Legal

The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 sets out our statutory duty to maintain the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (our version is the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard *PLUS*) in our existing stock.

3. Finance

Delivering the CHS+ will continue to present significant financial challenges and risks to the County Council.

We have spent over £230m to achieve the standard, with nearly £120m of this spend has been funded through a prudential borrowing programme.

Through careful management, the financial model remains viable to not only maintain the CHS+, but also deliver more affordable homes. A summary of costs to this over the next three years is included in the Plan.

A general rent increase of 2.5% for 2017/18 is also assumed in the plan.

4. Risk Management

The CHS+ programme is identified as moderate risk in the Council's Risk Management Plan. A risk management plan has been developed to mitigate and review all risks associated with the programme.

Failure to deliver a viable Business Plan to Welsh Government by the end of March 2017 will mean the MRA of £6.1m for 2017/18 being withdrawn.

5. Physical Assets

The CHS+ will involve the management, maintenance and improvement of the Council's housing stock. This will be carried out within the context of our asset management principles which are defined within the plan. Any decision to acquire, convert or dispose of homes and/or land will be considered in line with these principles.

This plan will also result in an increase in the Council housing stock through the new build and purchasing homes in the private sector initiatives.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: Robin Staines

Head of Housing & Public Protection

1.Scrutiny Committee

Community Scrutiny Committee was consulted on the 20th January, 2017.

2.Local Member(s)

n/a

3.Community / Town Council

n/a

4.Relevant Partners

n/a

5.Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations

Substantial engagement was carried out with tenants and other partners in the development of this Plan. This included stakeholder events, 1-2-1 interviews, visits and events in communities and attendance at various meetings.

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information

List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW

Title of document	File Ref No.	Location that the file is available for public inspection
The Carmarthenshire Homes Standard <i>PLUS</i> : “Delivering What Matters 2017-20”	Housing General Files	Council website- Democratic Services