

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 4TH OCTOBER 2018

SUBJECT:

HOME CHECKER VISITS TO HOMES

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide Community Scrutiny Committee with:

- An update on the Home Checker visits to Council tenants' homes; and
- What the visits have told us and potential next steps.

To consider and comment on the following issues:

- To note and provide comment on the information contained within this report on the Home Checker visits; and
- To confirm if any further work or information is required.

Reasons:

For the committee's Information and discussion.

To be referred to the Executive Board / Council for decision: NO

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:-

Cllr Linda Evans (Housing Portfolio Holder)

Directorate

Communities

Name of Head of Service:

Jonathan Morgan

Report Author:

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Designations:

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HOME CHECKER VISITS TO HOMES

What is the context?

The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) is the Welsh Government's (WG) standard for social housing quality. The WHQS was first introduced in 2002, and aimed to ensure that all homes are of good quality and suitable for the needs of existing and future residents. WG set a target for all social landlords to improve their housing stock to meet the WHQS as soon as possible, but in any event by 2020. Carmarthenshire's tenants developed their own standard, called the CHS+, and this was successfully delivered in 2015, well in advance of the WG timescales. We produce an annual business plan that confirms how we intend to maintain and improve the CHS+ in the future.

Carmarthenshire invested over £250m to continue to improve and modernise tenant's homes and this is having a positive impact on tenants' health and well-being¹. To ensure, however, that this standard is maintained and we continue to support tenants, officers were asked to prioritise a programme of visits that allowed us to assess whether or not homes were falling into disrepair through neglect. This was considered a priority by members to ensure tenants are complying with their part of the tenancy agreement and not causing deliberate damage to the property.

What is the approach?

Our approach involved carrying out:

- A basic check to all homes on an annual basis through existing visits; and
- A more in-depth visit to tenants homes where issues had been highlighted in terms of condition, tenancy and/or welfare issues. These homes were identified through the basic home check visits to homes, or were the result of known tenancy issues e.g. rent arrears, large number of repair calls etc.

The report highlights the initial results of this work, feedback from tenants themselves on what they think of the service, and potential next steps.

Members are requested:

- To note and provide comment on the information contained within this report on the Home Checker visits; and
- To confirm whether any further work or information is required.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

Yes- detailed report of the Home Checker visits.

¹ Carmarthenshire's Health Impact Study 2018.

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: Jonathan Morgan Acting Head of Homes & Safer Communities

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

2. Legal

Under the terms of our tenancy agreement, tenants are responsible to make sure that:

- there is no wilful damage to their home;
- repairs are reported promptly;
- the property is clean and tidy; and
- the garden and internal decorations are maintained.

Tenants are also obliged to give access to us to carry out inspections, services and repairs to the property. We, as the landlord, have responsibility to ensure that the property is fit to live in and that there are no Health and Safety issues by complying with statutory obligations e.g. gas servicing.

5. Risk Management Issues

Failure to look after and maintain our housing stock will mean that we are not compliant with our own policy or the terms of the Welsh Government Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) grant. This could result in the withdrawal of the grant.

6. Physical Assets

It is good practice to carry out periodic inspections of tenanted homes to ensure that the asset does not fall into disrepair, or that disrepair claims aren't lodged against the Authority.

CONSULTATIONS

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

Signed: Jonathan Morgan Acting Head of Homes & Safer Communities

1. Local Member(s)

Not applicable

2. Community / Town Council

Not applicable

3. Relevant Partners

Not applicable

4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations

Not applicable

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

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

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
THE CARMARTHENSHIRE HOMES STANDARD PLUS (CHS+) BUSINESS PLAN 2018-21		http://democracy.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=155&MId=1425&Ver=4