

WALES AUDIT OFFICE - WELSH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD REVIEW
INCLUDING TENANTS' VIEWS

Reason for the Report

1. To provide an opportunity for the Committee to consider a report of the Wales Audit Office (WAO) published in October 2018, *Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) Review including Tenants' Views – Cardiff Council*.
2. Attached to this report at **Appendix A** is the WAO published report – “**Wales Housing Quality Standard Review including Tenants' Views – Cardiff Council**”.

Background

3. As a part of its statutory function, each year the WAO undertakes a number of inspections in delivering its work programme. The WHQS review was undertaken during 2017/18.

Issues

4. The review concludes that “***The Council met the Welsh Housing Quality Standard in 2012, and its arrangements to maintain compliance with the WHQS are effective and making a positive difference to residents' lives***”. A summary of findings is set out in paragraphs 1-9 in the WAO report.

5. The WAO concluded this because:

- The Council's approach to the WHQS is well-integrated into its strategic housing function (**paragraphs 10-17 of WAO Report**)
- The Council has comprehensive information on the condition of the whole of the housing stock to direct investment priorities (**paragraphs 18-26 of WAO Report**)
- The Council has a financed and deliverable programme for the repair and improvement of the housing stock including addressing acceptable fails (**paragraphs 27-38 of WAO Report**)
- The Council has effective arrangements to monitor and scrutinise its progress to maintain the WHQS and has learnt from its progress to date (**paragraphs 39-44 of WAO Report**)
- The Council has a strong customer care focus to the way it interacts with its tenants (**paragraphs 45-55 of WAO Report**)
- The Council's integrated approach to the WHQS is making a positive difference to the lives of its housing tenants (**paragraphs 56-70 of WAO Report**)

6. The report also contains (at **Appendix 1** to the WAO report) an infographic summarising the key findings from the telephone survey. This survey took place between the 23rd April and 1st May 2018 and contained a sample of 626 residents (around 5% of all Council tenants).

Way Forward

7. At this meeting, the following witnesses will be in attendance:
 - (i) Sara-Jane Byrne and Ron Price from the WAO, who will give a presentation to Members on the report; followed by a statement and presentation by:
 - (ii) Councillor Lynda Thorne, Cabinet Member for Communities & Housing;
 - (iii) Sarah McGill, Corporate Director for People and Communities;
 - (iv) Jane Thomas, Assistant Director, Housing & Communities; and
 - (v) Colin Blackmore, Operational Manager, Building Improvement & Safety

8. Following the presentations and Q&A session, Members will be able to decide if they wish to feed any comments, observations or recommendations to the appropriate Cabinet Member for their consideration.

Legal Implications

9. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to the Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decision taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirements imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (he) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

10. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

- i. consider the information set out in **Appendix A** to this report;
- ii. consider the information provided in the presentation to this meeting;
- iii. decide whether it wishes to relay any comments or observations to the Cabinet Members for Housing and Communities; and decide the way forward with regard to any further scrutiny of this issue.

Davina Fiore

Director of Governance & Legal Services

3 January 2019