

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr McGarry

23 January 2019

Sara-Jane Byrne
Ron Price
Wales Audit Office
24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ



VIA EMAIL

Dear Sara-Jane and Ron,

**COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 9 JANUARY 2019
– WAO REVIEW – WALES HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD INCLUDING
TENANTS' VIEWS.**

As Chair of the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee, I wish to thank you both for attending Committee and providing Members with an opportunity to consider your report in relation to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard review including tenants' views. Members of the Committee have requested that I feed back the following comments and observations to you.

The Committee echoes your praise of the Council in achieving the WHQS in 2012 and maintaining the standard since this date. We commend the commitment by the Cabinet Member and officers in presenting to Members further planned improvements going forward. As a Committee, we will continue to monitor these improvements, including raising staff awareness of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, and the proposed review into communication with tenants from BME background and disabled tenants.

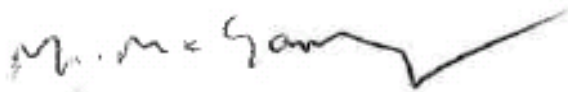
We will also monitor commitments to continue to reduce the number of acceptable fails; issues in relation to tenants being able to heat their homes efficiently; and reducing reports of damp in homes.

Members of the Committee wanted me to convey their observations in relation to consultation with tenants: Members accepted that, whilst 5% of tenants surveyed gave you an indication of opinion, they would encourage that a larger sample (along with other surveys supplied by the local authority) be taken.

In addition, whilst Members acknowledged issues in relation to gaining opinion from BME/Disabled tenants, and the avenues you explored to try and do this, Members stated that they felt that current routes were not working and that further work was required to address this. Whilst the Council has committed to undertake a review to address this, further work should also be undertaken by any organisations commissioned to undertake this work on your behalf, especially as, whilst very small in number, indications were that these tenants were feeling excluded from the process and would be less likely to engage.

Thank you again to you both for attending. I hope you find the Committee's comments useful. I do not require a response to this letter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary McGarry', with a stylized flourish at the end.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR MARY M^cGARRY

Chairperson - Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee

Cc: Councillor Lynda Thorne (Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities)
Sarah McGill (Corporate Director, People and Communities)
Jane Thomas (Assistant Director, Housing & Communities)
Colin Blackmore (Operational Manager, Building Improvement & Safety)
Cabinet Support Office