

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO HOLDER DELEGATED DECISION

by

COUNTY COUNCILLOR JONATHAN WILKINSON

(PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING AND COUNTRYSIDE SERVICES)

December 2017

REPORT AUTHOR: Simon Inkson – Head of Housing

**SUBJECT: Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) Compliance
Policy review**

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Summary

1.1 This report seeks approval for a reviewed WHQS Compliance Policy for Council Housing.

1.2 The report is supported by the following appendices:

- A The reviewed policy, including tracked changes
- B Impact Assessment (IA)

2. Proposal

2.1. The proposed changes will make the policy clearer and figures are up to date. Noticeable changes are:

- Achieving WHQS for all stock is expected by the end of 2018 instead of April 2018. This is caused by the fact that setting up new framework agreements took longer than anticipated.
- Giving tenants in off gas areas the option between air source heat pumps (ASHP) and oil heating, when they are due for replacement. Previously the Council would automatically install ASHPs.
- The verification and validation of data process has been changed. 2016/17 will be a transitional year, allowing to incorporate all WHQS related data in the QL database. By the end of the financial year all processes will have been reviewed and a decision will be taken how to progress in the future.
- Community benefits will need to be delivered by all contractors, not only those responsible for primary elements.

3. Options Considered / Available

3.1. No other options are considered.

4. Preferred Choice and Reasons

- 4.1. The preferred choice is to approve the policy to ensure consistency across the County.
- 4.2. The second choice is not to approve the policy. This would mean that the current policy remains in force. We would not comply with the Welsh Governments condition to review.

5. Impact Assessment

- 5.1 Is an impact assessment required? Yes
- 5.2 If yes is it attached? Yes

6. Corporate Improvement Plan

- 6.1 This policy supports the following priorities:
- “Suitable housing for everyone in Powys is ensured”
 - “Ensure that older person’s accommodation is fit for purpose”
 - “Implement the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan, including a capital investment of £32 million to achieve the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) by 2018. The standard will ensure that dwellings are of good quality and suitable for the needs of existing and future residents.”
 - “Significant economic benefit as the investment in council housing to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard is achieved”
- 6.2 There are no risks for the Council identified.

7. Local Member(s)

- 7.1 This policy applies to all Council Housing accommodation in Powys.

8. Other Front Line Services

Does the recommendation impact on other services run by the Council or on behalf of the Council? No

9. Communications

Have Communications seen a copy of this report? No

10. Support Services (Legal, Finance, Corporate Property, HR, ICT, Business Services)

- 10.1 Legal: the Professional Lead-Legal agrees with the draft and confirms that the legal services will support and assist when and where required

10.2 Finance: The Capital and Financial Planning Accountant notes the introduction of the WHQS Compliance Policy and the amended date.

10.3 Corporate Property (if appropriate)

10.4 HR (if appropriate)

10.5 ICT (if appropriate)

11. Scrutiny

Has this report been scrutinised? No

12. Statutory Officers

12.1 The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: "I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report".

12.2 The Strategic Director Resources (S151 Officer) notes the comments made by finance.

13. Members' Interests

The Monitoring Officer is not aware of any specific interests that may arise in relation to this report. If the Portfolio Holder has an interest he/she should declare it, complete the relevant notification form and refer the matter to the cabinet for decision.

14. Future Status of the Report

N/A

Recommendation:	Reason for Recommendation:
To approve the reviewed Council Housing WHQS Compliance Policy.	The reviewed policy ensures a consistent approach to tenancy fraud and is more consistent with legislation.

Relevant Policy (ies):			
Within Policy:	Y	Within Budget:	Y

Relevant Local Member(s):	All
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Person(s) To Implement Decision:	Phil Dark
Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:	Within one month after approval

Contact Officer:	Henk Jan Kuipers
Tel:	079171 72854
Email:	henk.jan.kuipers@powys.gov.uk

Background Papers used to prepare Report:

- Welsh Government letter dated 20 March 2015; The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) - Verification in achieving and maintaining the Standard: next steps.
- Welsh Housing Quality Standard: Verification of progress in achieving the Standard; Welsh Government Social Research; Number: 49/2014; 13 May 2014.
- The Welsh Housing Quality Standard Revised Guidance for Social Landlords on Interpretation and Achievement of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard; Welsh Government and HouseMark Cymru; July 2008.