



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

23rd SEPTEMBER 2021

TRIVALLIS HOUSING ADAPTATION IMPACT REPORT AND AN UPDATE ON WIDER PARTNERSHIP WORKING BETWEEN RCT AND TRIVALLIS TO PROVIDE ADAPTED HOMES FOR SOME OF OUR MOST VULNERABLE RESIDENTS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR ROBERT BEVAN)

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide:

- Members with an update on the innovative methods used by Trivallis in order to spend their 2020/2021 Adaptations Budget as a result of the Covid 19 Pandemic.
- Members with an update on the wider partnership working that has taken place between RCT and Trivallis in order to provide adapted homes for some of our most vulnerable residents across RCT.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note that Trivallis have utilised the housing adaptations budget for 2020/2021, following approval from the council, in a more flexible and innovative way that has delivered much needed adapted properties for our communities.
- 2.2 Recognise the wider partnership work that has taken place between RCT and Trivallis in order to provide adapted homes for some of our most vulnerable residents across RCT.

- 2.3 Agree for Trivallis to continue to operate this model of delivery, subject to officer approval, for the housing adaptations budget for 2021/2022, in order to deliver adapted properties for our communities in response to the Pandemic.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The 2021/2022 housing adaptations budget for homes within Trivallis's housing stock is £1.4m. However, due to ongoing Covid-19 issues, Trivallis had limited time and access to people's homes and as such were unable to deliver their adaptations service as planned. This resulted in Trivallis being unable to spend the full allocated budget by the end of the financial year.
- 3.2 In order for Trivallis to fully spend the adaptations budget, the RSL had approval from RCT to use the remaining funding (£561,668) in a more flexible way ensuring maximum impact for the community.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 As part of the local authority stock transfer in December 2007, an agreement was put in place with RCT Homes (now Trivallis) to work in partnership with the local authority to undertake works of adaptions to their housing stock to help meet the changing needs of tenants' access and mobility requirements. To support this, it was agreed that the assessment work would be prioritised and driven by the Occupational Therapists within the Local Authorities Adult Services department. These teams would use their understanding of the client's physical capabilities and needs to design adaptations to the properties. An annual sum of **one million pounds plus yearly inflation** would be utilised to support the implementation of this adaptions programme
- 4.2 The system has operated well over the last 13 years with the local authority carrying out assessments, prioritising clients' needs and referring to Trivallis to carry out these works.
- 4.3 However, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a reduction of assessments by the Councils Community Occupational Therapists. The lockdown also prevented all non-emergency work in vulnerable people's homes, who were self-isolating, from progressing.
- 4.4 As a result, it was forecasted that Trivallis would have a **42%** underspend in the adaptation budget for the financial year 2020/2021.

- 4.5 To address this significant underspend, Trivallis approached the Council for approval to use the forecasted underspend in a more flexible and innovative way which would still support the delivery of much needed adapted properties for our communities.

5.0 APPROVED PROPOSAL

- 5.1 Trivallis had currently spent £27,331 of the adaptations budget, with a planned spend of £838,381 by the end of the financial year. This resulted in a projected underspend of **£561,668**.
- 5.2 Trivallis proposed to spend the remaining budget in the following ways:
- **Tender for additional contractors to complete additional shower rooms** - Two additional contractors would complete 42 shower rooms at a cost £189,000.
 - **Adapting current voids** - This approach would increase ground floor adapted properties available to support increasing need. The focus would be on high demand areas and aligned to need. Considerations would be made to improving access to sheltered schemes by providing or improving identified ramped areas and automatic door entry to outside spaces for tenants with poor mobility.
 - **To explore options to introduce fully adapted new homes across the stock** - this work would be led by demand and customer need. While this could have a considerable budget spend it would provide new adapted properties within the housing stock for particularly vulnerable people whose needs are not being met through current provision. This investment would also remain within the housing stock for future allocations.
- 5.3 The above proposals were approved by the council in September 2020 based on the rationale that the 2020/2021 budget would be fully spent, whilst creating an opportunity to test out new approaches to meeting the needs of our communities.

6.0 EVALUATION OF APPROACH: PROJECTS DELIVERED **Adapted shower rooms**

- 6.1 Shower room conversions are an area of high need and a large number Occupational Therapist referrals are made requesting this work. In addition to those already in the programme for the remainder of the year, Trivallis were able to complete on time, on target and on

budget **forty-two** additional bathrooms to fully adapted shower room conversions.

- 6.2 These works have had a positive impact on vulnerable tenants who have reported an improvement in not only their safety whilst bathing but also a positive impact on their mental health as they no longer need to worry about personal hygiene.

Improve Access to Sheltered Accommodation

- 6.3 In order to meet the needs of sheltered tenants and to promote ease of access, level access paths and ramps were installed at Garth Wen Bungalows. Automated doors were also installed across **ten** sheltered complexes.
- 6.4 This is highly effective in solving accessibility issues, as those with disabilities are able to enter the building with ease and without complication.
- 6.5 The original estimate for the additional shower rooms cost circa. £189,000, however the actual spend was £207,786.00. The additional spend is attributed to the specific needs of tenants and extra associated works to facilitate the adaptations. The additional costs were met by Trivallis.

Adapting Current Voids

- 6.6 Traditionally, Trivallis has looked to let homes without proactively considering major adaptations in suitable properties. Where properties have become void, they are generally not fully adapted, and those that have partial adaptations, including walk in showers and stair lifts, do not fully meet the needs of residents.
- 6.7 A focus group was set up to scope potential voids and the demand for accessible housing in the area. The group considered each property to ensure it met the criteria set out in the Lifetime Homes Standard and consulted with the Councils Homefinder Team to identify the demand for adapted properties. It was established that there was a high demand in both Rhydyfelin and Llanharan areas and as a result, these areas offered the highest benefit to residents.
- 6.8 Three properties were selected from this assessment:
1. 75 Park View, Llanharan.
 2. 76 Park View, Llanharan.
 3. 120 Morien Crescent, Rhydyfelin.

- 6.9 Consideration was given to identifying applications via the Councils Allocations Scheme and ensuring the fully adapted specification met the requirements of those most in need.
- 6.10 On completion, Trivallis partnered with Councils Homefinder Team, who promoted the project and were able to advertise the high-quality solution. The adverts highlighted the extensive range of adaptations that this specialist project delivered, including a scooter store and being fully wheelchair accessible throughout. Demand for these homes was at unprecedented levels and resulted in excess of 200 bids for the adapted properties.
- 6.11 This approach, which was a new innovative option, has been well received and found to be beneficial in the applicant's decision making. The three successful applicants have now occupied their new homes. An example of the feedback received by Trivallis is below: -

"I had numerous falls in my previous home, and I feel much safer in my new home."

"I am excited about having a height adjustable kitchen and the improvement has enhanced my independence."

Fully Adapted New Homes

- 6.12 The adaptation budget enabled the Elm Road, Llanharry Scheme to be brought forward providing capital funding alongside ICF. The Elm Road, Llanharry site was identified as an ideal location for Supported Housing. The new development is to be utilised for individuals with high level autism.
- 6.13 Currently, there are a number of individuals who are placed in high cost out of county placements which they no longer need, this proposal is to develop a small closer-to-home scheme for individuals with complex needs.
- 6.14 This will enable those who were previously council residents to return to the area and be closer to family and their original community. At the time of concept, there were 17 individuals in specialist placements in out of county establishments whose needs could potentially be met in alternative ways and this project will support this. Some of these individuals are jointly funded with Health who are supportive of this project.
- 6.15 The Elm Road, Llanharry development will provide modern purpose-built housing options for individuals with complex autism who require higher levels of care and support. The development of a fully adapted

and accessible scheme will enable Social Services to meet the needs of individuals and provide greater choice and independence.

The property will be comprised of:

- 5 en-suite bedrooms.
- 1 self-contained flat (attached to the building).
- 2 communal areas.
- communal kitchen.
- A 'safe-space' that a resident can utilise should they need to be isolated.
- Staff office/accommodation.

6.16 The scheme is a high priority for the council and the works are estimated to be completed within the 2021/2022 financial year.

Proposal

6.17 The projects delivered, outcomes achieved and feedback from some of our most vulnerable residents in RCT has been very positive evidencing the success of the way in which Trivallis have utilised the adaptations budget in order to meet the needs of our communities.

6.18 This successful outcome has led to the proposal for Trivallis to continue to operate this model of delivery in 2021/2022, subject to officer approval, in order to deliver adapted properties for our communities in response to the Pandemic.

7.0 ADAPTED HOMES: SCHEMES DELIVERED IN PARTNERSHIP

7.1 The Council's Housing Strategy Department continues to work closely with Trivallis to provide adapted affordable accommodation. There are 7 schemes being developed through the Social Housing Grant (SHG) and a further 2 schemes that have progressed to stage 2 for Integrated Care Funding (ICF), these schemes collectively provide 18 adapted units across RCT.

7.2 **Ilan Avenue** is a development of 2 x two bedroom bungalows in the high demand area of Rhydyfelin. This is an innovative development using Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) which will provide much needed high quality, fully adapted, bariatric housing. The scheme is being funded through SHG (£411,489), Council contribution through Commuted Sums (£40,000) and private finance by Trivallis (£148,000). The estimated completion date for this scheme is November 2021.

7.3 **Library Court** is a conversion of existing unused commercial space into 2 specially adapted, bariatric units in the high demand area of Rhydyfelin. The scheme is being funded through SHG (£135,494) and

private finance by Trivallis (£99,193). The estimated completion date for the scheme is August 2021.

- 7.4 **Glyntaff Close** is a development consisting of 7 bungalows, again in the high demand area of Rhydyfelin. The development is being funded with SHG (£1,163,505) and private finance by Trivallis (£634,773) and has an estimated completion date of August 2023.
- 7.5 **YGG Tonyrefail** is a general needs development with a mixture of 18 different property types and includes 1 x two bedroom bungalows. The scheme is being funded through SHG (£1,905,000) and private finance (£1,516,000) and is estimated for completion in August 2023.
- 7.6 Housing Strategy had been working closely with other Council service areas to identify a suitable housing option to meet the complex needs of a family requiring a 4 bedroom, fully adapted wheelchair bungalow. Due to the complexities of the family's physical needs and the shortage of suitable adapted properties in the area, the housing options available were extremely limited. Housing Strategy worked with Trivallis who identified a property on the open market that could be converted to meet the needs of the family. The scheme is being funded through SHG (£285,000), Council contribution through Commuted Sums (£45,183) and private finance (£73,208). The scheme is due for completion in November 2021.
- 7.7 **Penygraig Junior School** is a general needs development with a mixture of 27 different property types, which include a two bedroom bungalow and a three bedroom adapted house. The scheme has received SHG (£2,572,624) and private finance by Trivallis (£1,478,265) and is due for completion in August 2022.
- 7.8 Housing Strategy approached Trivallis asking them to consider purchasing an ex Council property as part of a mortgage rescue, homelessness case. The occupier of the property fell into arrears due to a marital breakdown and as a result was unable to continue paying the mortgage. The occupier has a disabled child and the property had received extensive adaptations via the Disabled Facilities Grant (£53,014). Due to the extensive needs of the child and the adaptations already in place, it was advised that it would be difficult to find an alternative suitable property within the current social housing stock. The Council and Trivallis worked closely together to identify a resolution with the result of Trivallis purchasing the property. This has not only assisted the family but has also added an additional adapted unit to the social housing stock. This scheme was funded through SHG (£45,177) and private finance by Trivallis (£33,714).
- 7.9 Housing Strategy has worked closely with Trivallis to develop two bids to be submitted to the Integrated Care Fund (ICF). Both bids propose

to deliver 2 fully adapted, bariatric bungalows to allow for the proactive planning of temporary accommodation. The properties can be utilised by any presenting need and will enable more timely hospital discharge. The properties are being proposed to help meet a need to **reduce delayed transfer of care (DToC)** for people who are unable to return to their existing homes as they are no longer suitable. The properties will provide temporary housing for people who either require an alternative, permanent home or whilst they are waiting for adaptations to be carried out to their existing property. The total costs of the schemes are £739,682 of which £179,682 is being requested from ICF. One of the schemes forms part of a wider general needs development which has already received SHG (£821,732) and private finance by Trivallis (£724,505). This scheme will also require SHG (£180,000). The second scheme is a smaller development on land already owned by Trivallis and will require SHG (£180,000). The estimated completion date for both properties is August 2022.

- 7.10 Over the past year whilst the pandemic has brought a number of challenges to the delivery of schemes, it is pleasing to see that the schemes due to be delivered for 2020/2021, continue to progress well and remain on programme.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 8.1 There is no requirement for an Equality Impact Assessment including the socio-economic duty with this report.

9. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There is no requirement for a Welsh Language Impact Assessment with this report.

10. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 10.1 There is no requirement for a consultation exercise with this report.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 11.1 Of the £561,000 adaptations budget, £521,695 has been spent by the end of the 31st March 2021 as a result of this new way of working, with the remaining £39,305 committed to be spent on the Elm Road Scheme within the 2021/2022 financial year.

12. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 12.1 Under section 23.7 of the Housing Stock Transfer Agreement, it states that 'if in any future year the £1.4m is deemed to be in excess of the figure required, then the figure for that year may be reduced in consultation with the council', hence why approval from the council was required in order for the adaptations budget to be used in an innovative way.
- 12.2 Discussions have also taken place with Legal Services and Finance to consider the legal implications and legislation and it is considered that the arrangements and terms and conditions of this funding can be administered under the council's lawful powers.

13. **LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.**

- 13.1 The adaptations budget will contribute to the delivery of all three of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities of economy, people and place. The Scheme will also assist the Council to contribute to three of the seven wellbeing goals that 'The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015' puts in place as follows:
 1. A healthier Wales
 2. A prosperous Wales
 3. A Wales of cohesive communities

14. **CONCLUSION**

- 14.1 The report demonstrates how Trivallis have utilised the 2020/21 adaptations budget underspend, built up due to Covid-19 restrictions, in a more flexible and innovative way, whilst testing out new approaches to meeting the needs of our communities.
- 14.2 The projects delivered, outcomes achieved and feedback from some of our most vulnerable residents in RCT has been very positive evidencing the success of the way in which Trivallis have utilised the adaptations budget and the continued partnership working between the Council and Trivallis in order to meet the needs of our communities.
- 14.3 This successful outcome has led to the recommendation that SLT agree for Trivallis to continue to operate this model of delivery in 2021/2022, in order to deliver adapted properties for our communities in response to the Pandemic

Appendix 1: Sheltered access - Garth Wen

Before



After



Appendix 2 - Shower room conversions



Appendix 3, Morien Crescent - Before



Morien Crescent - After



Appendix 4 - Ilan Bungalows

Before



After



Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Public Services Delivery, Communities & Prosperity

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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ROBERT BEVAN)**

Item:

Background Papers

None

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