

<b>ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL</b>	
<b>Report to:</b>	<b>The Executive</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>14<sup>th</sup> March 2016</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Application to Suspend the Right to Buy</b>
<b>Portfolio Holder(s):</b>	<b>Aled Morris Jones</b>
<b>Head of Service:</b>	<b>Shan Lloyd Williams</b>
<b>Report Author:</b> Tel: E-mail:	<b>Ned Michael – Housing Services Business Manager</b> <b>01248 752 289</b> <b>NedMichael@ynysmon.gov.uk</b>
<b>Local Members:</b>	

<b>A –Recommendation/s and reason/s</b>
<p>To approve submitting a voluntary application to the Welsh Government for suspending the right to buy for our tenants for a period of 5 years in accordance with the rights that we now have as a Council.</p> <p>R1 To approve the action plan for submitting a voluntary application to suspend the right to buy to the Welsh Government.</p> <p>A2 To delegate the authority to the Head of Housing Services and the Section 151 Officer to sign off the application to be sent to the Welsh Government by 25<sup>th</sup> March 2016.</p> <p>As a result of housing matters in Wales having been devolved to the Welsh Government, the Welsh Government is offering Local Authorities the opportunity to submit a voluntary application to suspend tenants' right to buy for a period of 5 years.</p> <p>Since these rights have become available, two Local Authorities have already submitted successful voluntary applications to the Welsh Government to implement this, namely Carmarthenshire and Swansea Councils.</p> <p>We are currently in the process of drawing up our voluntary application to the Welsh Government for suspending the right to buy for our tenants. The draft application will be distributed on 9<sup>th</sup> March to the members of the Executive Committee as an addendum to the agenda of the Executive Committee meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> March.</p> <p>Appendix A indicates the process and the timescale we will follow in drawing up our application and the aim is to submit our application by 25<sup>th</sup> March before the Purdah period</p>

begins.

We have received the Welsh Government's approval in relation to the process and the associated timetable we will follow in drawing up our application, the only comment made by them was that it is a very tight timescale and that it is good practice to have a consultation period lasting 12 weeks, whereas we have included an 8-week consultation period.

Before commencing the formal process of consultation with our tenants I attended a meeting of the MTV ("Môn Tenants Voice") to explain to them that we as a Council intended to submit such an application and to try explain to them the logic behind this, namely that we are eager to increase the supply of affordable housing on the island in light of the demand that exists for affordable housing.

An article was included in the newsletter which was distributed to tenants in December, stating our intention to submit the application to the Welsh Government.

Each individual tenant has now received a letter through the post together with a questionnaire, seeking their views on our proposal. Two fun days were also held on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> January and 23<sup>rd</sup> January in order to provide tenants with the opportunity to ask questions and obtain further information.

On the Council's website a questionnaire has been included under consultations, and press statements have been released to draw tenants' attention to the consultation.

As a key part of the consultation, we are obliged to contact Registered Social Landlords who operate on Anglesey to seek their views regarding the proposal, as any suspension would apply to their stock on the island.

The proposal was discussed at a meeting of the Anglesey Housing Partnership and they were supportive of our intention to submit the application.

Responses were requested from the RSL by 1<sup>st</sup> March.

We have submitted regular reports to the Housing Services Board with regard to our application.

The consultation period with tenants ended on 19<sup>th</sup> February and here is a summary of the responses received:-

540 tenants have responded.

76% agreed with the proposal to suspend the Right to Buy.

The three main reasons why tenants agreed with the proposal were as follows:-

78% did not agree with the Council selling Council houses.

72% thought it was a positive step in the process of increasing the number of affordable rented housing on Anglesey.

64% did not have plans to buy their home.

For information, during the past three years we have lost 17 units through the right to buy, 2 during 2012/13, 3 during 2013/14, 5 during 2014/15 together with 7 units this year.

Since the right to buy was introduced, around 3100 have been sold through the right to buy.

Since the timescale is very tight for drawing up the application, I would request the delegated right for the Head of Housing Services and the Section 151 Officer to sign off the application in order that it to be sent to the Welsh Government by 25<sup>th</sup> March.

**B – What other options did you consider and why did you reject them and/or opt for this option?**

Consideration was given to not submitting a voluntary application to suspend the right to buy, but we decided against this as we have commenced a programme of buying former Council houses in order to increase our housing stock.

**C – Why is this a decision for the Executive?**

This is a decision for the Executive as it approves our application to suspend the right to buy.

**D – Is this decision consistent with policy approved by the full Council?**

This decision is consistent with two of the Corporate Objectives that have already been approved by the full Council, namely:-

- i) Increasing our Housing Options and Reducing Poverty

**DD – Is this decision within the budget approved by the Council?**

This decision is consistent with objectives set out in the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

<b>E – Who did you consult?</b>		<b>What did they say?</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Chief Executive / Strategic Leadership Team (SLT)</b> (mandatory)	Supportive of the application.
<b>2</b>	<b>Finance / Section 151</b> (mandatory)	Supportive of the application.
<b>3</b>	<b>Legal / Monitoring Officer</b> (mandatory)	No observations.

5	Human Resources (HR)	N/A
6	Property	No observations
7	Information Communication Technology (ICT)	N/A
8	Scrutiny	
9	Local Members	A decision was made by the Executive in February 2015 to make an application to the Welsh Government.
10	Any external bodies / other/s	

<b>F – Risks and any mitigation (if relevant)</b>		
1	Economic	No observations.
2	Anti-poverty	
3	Crime and Disorder	
4	Environmental	
5	Equalities	
6	Outcome Agreements	
7	Other	

<b>FF - Appendices:</b>
The process and timetable for submitting the application.

<b>G - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):</b>

**Figure 1. Isle of Anglesey County Council Right to Buy – Suspension Application Process**

<b>Stage of Process</b>	<b>Details / Comments</b>	<b>Consultation Milestones</b>
<b>Stage 1</b> – Gain Members support for application to suspend Right to Buy	Gain approval to develop application and to approach Welsh Government.	09.02.2015
<b>Stage 2</b> – Report to Housing Services Board	Provide opportunity to inform process and raise issues.	02/12/2015
<b>Stage 3</b> – Initial Meeting with Welsh Government Officials	Receive clarification of the level of detail required within application.	TBC
<b>Stage 4</b> – Develop draft application to submit to Welsh Government	Develop Business Case, including Housing Market Assessment information / waiting list data / Private Rented Sector data etc.	TBC(Mid Jan)
<b>Stage 5</b> – Meeting with Welsh Government to discuss draft application	Receive feedback on initial draft, including clarification on level of information provided. This will also include proposed consultation plan with tenants.	TBC
<b>Stage 6</b> – Consultation Exercise with Tenants	Formal consultation with all Council tenants informed by early engagement with MOTV. This will include tenant engagement days, letters individually to all Council tenants and housing association consultation.	Between 08/01/2016 – 05/03/2016
<b>Stage 7</b> – Further Meeting with Welsh Government Officials	Receive clarification from Welsh Government on level of consultation undertaken with tenants.	w/c 08/02/16
<b>Stage 8</b> – Report to Exec Committee, Scrutiny Committee,	Present results of tenants consultation to Exec Committee, Scrutiny Committee and agree submission date of application.	14/03/2016
<b>Stage 9</b> – Submission of Application	This will be signed off by Cabinet prior to submission.	TBC
<b>Stage 10</b> – Confirmation from Welsh Government application passed to Minister for consideration	Welsh Government will confirm receipt of application and likely date for Ministerial decision.	TBC
<b>Stage 11</b> – Write to Council and Housing Association tenants submitting RTB / RTA applications after the date the Minister considering the Council's application	Standard letter will be developed to respond to all new applications received.	TBC
<b>Stage 12</b> – Application approved by Minister	The Council Leader / Chief Executive are directly informed by the Minister of the decision.	TBC
<b>Stage 13</b> – Write to all tenants to give them details of the suspension period.	Confirmation letter sent out to all tenants advising them of details of the outcome of the Consultation exercise and details of the suspension process.	w/c 07/03/16