Councillor Peter Farley
Chair of the Adults Select Committee
Monmouthshire County Council

21 September 2016

Councillor Phil Hobson
Deputy Leader
Monmouthshire County Council

Dear Phil,

At our meeting yesterday Adults Select Committee undertook a pre-decision scrutiny of the Discretionary Housing Payments Policy as part of our wider scrutiny of welfare reform. The Committee agreed to endorse the policy and to make the following recommendations to you and the Cabinet in your consideration of the policy in November:

- Cabinet are recommended to give serious consideration to agreeing an uplift to the monies it invests in the Discretionary Housing Payment fund, recognising the demonstrative impact the funding has had on vulnerable people and the risks and implications of not supporting people through further benefit reductions, particularly in terms of preventing homelessness and children being taken into the care of the Council.

- Given that much of this work is delivered in a household environment, Cabinet are recommended to recognise the need for an accessible corporate warning system to identify clients and households that may present a risk to lone workers. The Committee understands that Torfaen operates a similar model to protect its workforce.

- The Committee recommends that all the agencies working in the benefits arena such as the CAB, RSL's and the Council consider the potential for sharing best practice and explore opportunities to create efficiencies and economies in the provision of welfare advisory services.

- The Committee further recommends a joint meeting with the Planning Committee to consider the relationship between homelessness, housing benefits and the provision of affordable housing in Monmouthshire.

If you would like to discuss any of the issues I have raised, please feel free to contact me, otherwise I shall look forward to your reply and to welcoming you to Adults Select Committee in due course.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Peter Farley
Chair of the Adults Select Committee