

Health, Care and Housing Scrutiny Committee

Meeting Venue
**Council Chamber - County Hall,
Llandrindod Wells, Powys**

Meeting Date
Thursday, 8 November 2018

Meeting Time
10.00 am

For further information please contact
Wyn Richards
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County Hall
Llandrindod Wells
Powys
LD1 5LG

31.10.2018

The use of Welsh by participants is welcomed. If you wish to use Welsh please inform us by noon, two working days before the meeting

AGENDA

1.	APOLOGIES
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To receive apologies for absence.

2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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To receive declarations of interest from Members.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIPS
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To receive disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

(NB: Members are reminded that under Section 78 Members having been given a prohibited party whip cannot vote on a matter before the Committee.)

4.	MINUTES
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To authorise the Chair to sign the minutes of the last meetings held on 12 September, 26 September, 3 October and 15 October as correct records.

(Pages 3 - 32)

5.	WALES AUDIT OFFICE REPORT - WHQS
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To receive and consider the Wales Audit Office report – “The Service User Perspective – the Welsh Housing Quality Standard – Powys County Council” – published in September 2018.

(Pages 33 - 60)

6.	DAMP AND THERMAL COMFORT STRATEGIES
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To receive and consider the report of the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Housing and Public Protection, together with the Damp Strategy and the Thermal Comfort Strategy.

(Pages 61 - 122)

7.	WALES AUDIT OFFICE REPORT - SCRUTINY IN POWYS
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To receive and consider the Wales Audit Office Report – “Overview and Scrutiny – Fit for the Future? – Powys County Council” – published in September 2018.

(Pages 123 - 138)

8.	WORK PROGRAMME
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To consider the scrutiny work programme.

(Pages 139 - 144)

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HEALTH, CARE AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON WEDNESDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2018

PRESENT: County Councillor G I S Williams (Chair)
County Councillors J Charlton, A Jenner, P C Pritchard, G Pugh, K M Roberts-Jones, D Rowlands, E Vaughan, A Williams, J Williams and J M Williams

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors S C Davies, D E Davies, J Gibson-Watt, H Hulme, S Lewis, MC Mackenzie and G Morgan

County Councillors R Powell (Portfolio Holder for Children's Services) and S Hayes (Portfolio Holder for Adult Services)

Officers: A Bulman (Director of Social Services) and D Johnstone (Head of Children's Services)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3. DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIPS

No declarations of Party Whips were received.

4. MINUTES

The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on the 1st August 2018.

It was confirmed that the process regarding the two items considered at that meeting (Integrated Family Support Service and Integrated Youth Support and Emotional Wellbeing) was due to be taken to Cabinet where the Chair would have an opportunity to present the scrutiny observations and bring to the attention of Cabinet any areas of concern that remain.

5. CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT

Documents:

- Children's Services Performance Report July 2018

Discussion:

- Performance in % of assessments for children within statutory timescales has declined in June and July. There had been an increase in referrals during May which can take up to 42 days to compete. This increase led to capacity issues together with sickness in the assessment team in north Powys, and the failure to meet the timescales is showing in the June and July figures. August figures are expected to see an improvement but there may be an increase in demand when children go back to school and there may also be an increase after the next CIW Inspection

- 18 of the 30 overdue assessments were in the north and of these 17 were assessments were completed less than a week out of time. The service need to consider a staffing structure that allows for staff to be moved to support areas experiencing pressure
- There is a national problem recruiting and retaining staff which is particularly acute in Powys. Demand is being met by using agency staff but retaining staff is a constant challenge.
- At present the staffing structure is over establishment in response to the inspection. A new staffing structure will be implemented when the new Head of Service is in post and work is being undertaken to assess what the correct staffing complement should be
- With a high number of agency staff the workforce will be vulnerable to change as staff get better offers elsewhere. It is not just money which will keep staff in post. Social work staff appreciate working in a safe environment with supportive managers, have appropriate caseloads and get good supervision
- There is an authority wide concern that the county is suffering from a dramatic depopulation of the working age population. It is difficult for all sectors including agencies to recruit
- The recruitment package offered to social workers is the same offered to all staff across Powys. A relocation package is offered to staff who have to move to take up the post. The lease car scheme is cost neutral to the local authority. The package on offer is fairly standard across Welsh authorities
- Members outlined how they had undertaken visits to local teams and suggested closer working with colleges to encourage retention of local students
- A local Councillor drew to the attention of Members a local issue regarding how different departments work together
- The reporting of visits to Looked After Children needs to be amended to reflect that these visits are undertaken initially on a six weekly basis and after 12 months on a three monthly basis. This will record the number of visits to LAC undertaken against the number of visits that were due. It is also essential that the visits are timely, happen more frequently if required and are of good quality
- Consideration should be given to prevent the situation where reported information for one month changes subsequently to allow full confidence in the data presented
- The costs of placements has remained broadly static. A resources panel has been introduced and the service are moving to a central commissioning model to ensure the most appropriate and cost effective placements are commissioned
- Looked After Children will not be moved from appropriate placements but every effort will be made in the future to place children in the most appropriate placements as close to their home area as possible. Ultimately the decision is made on care grounds
- There are too many approaches to Children's Services resulting in a Strategy Discussion and approximately half of these have been found to be unnecessary. A review on decision-making regarding strategy discussion is being undertaken

- There are a number of residential homes in Powys but at present no children are placed in these homes. The potential to use these homes where appropriate for Looked After Children needs to be considered
- It was confirmed that Child Protection visits should take place every 10 days and if the child is not seen then the visit is rearranged. No children on the child protection register have not been seen in a month
- There are 22 children waiting adoption in Powys but there are delays in the process as there is a shortage of adoptive parents across Wales
- Some childcare cases can be particularly distressing for staff and supervision can be an opportunity to talk through issues although it was confirmed that there was no specific counselling support for staff working on children's cases over and above the offer to all Council employees.
- It was confirmed that transient families are treated in the same way as settled families in the county
- Sickness levels should be included in the performance report
- Calls were still being reported as unanswered in Powys People Direct

6.	ADULT SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT
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Documents:

- Adult Services Performance reports June and July 2018

Discussion:

- The Committee was pleased to note that there were five social work trainees within the service with another one to start training this year
- Discussions are ongoing with universities regarding training for Occupational Therapists and funds are available for one trainee OT post
- The Cabinet had previously considered the additional costs of providing a service in a rural area and officers were asked if further work was being undertaken in this regard. Costs are not always clear. Care workers have been brought in from across the border and accommodation costs are met for those staff.
- Powys People Direct (PPD) was continuing to receive inappropriate referrals and these figures were reflected within the performance report. The service is improving slowly but it is to be redesigned and launched early in the new year. Discussions with libraries and leisure centres are ongoing regarding improving accessibility to Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA). If IAA is to be provided within communities, PPD, or its successor, can deliver a more specialised service. IAA is a requirement of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act to support people to make their own decisions. Additional resource will be provided as will training for library and leisure services staff.
- PAVO and the Council provide the Info Engine service which has been very successful with more hits than any other local authority. Information Engine and Dewis had not been able to share information but the Authority have funded research and programming and now each programme includes all of the information of each site. Members noted the difficulties of parking at some locations and asked whether some sites could be reserved for those wishing to access IAA – the Head of Transformation agreed to discuss the matter with the Head of Leisure and Recreation.

- Dewis had been launched at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show. Info Engine was run and promoted by PAVO. Members suggested greater publicity for these services and asked whether they could be included within the Powys County Council website. This already happens with Children's Services and Adults Services are looking to do the same
- Sickness absence is recorded within the Adults Performance report but not in the Children's Services report – consistency of reporting across the service as a whole was needed
- There had been significant improvements since the CIW Inspection although it was acknowledged that further work was needed
- There remained concerns regarding the Active Officer (providing an assessment in Welsh where possible). This is a new statistic and the figures reported were not correct – discussions with Business Intelligence regarding this measure will show an improvement in the performance data for August. It was confirmed that the Active Offer only applies to the Welsh language. Records regarding the linguistic ability of staff have increased from 65% to 95%. Members were aware that there was a Welsh Language Champion and asked who that person was. It was confirmed that the Welsh Language Champion was Dylan Owen, Head of Transformation.
- Members asked whether assessments undertaken in Welsh were recorded in Welsh? Currently, assessments are recorded in English and translated if the client requires a copy. However, there are issues of translation. A national working group led by the Welsh Government is considering the issue of how bilingual records can be maintained.
- Where a client requires service in another language, including British Sign Language, the process of obtaining an interpreter has been improved
- Whilst the number of carers offered an assessment is high, the question of identification of carers remains an issue.
- Statistics show how the length of time between assessment to provision and although this is improving it hides individuals who are waiting a longer time for service. In August the average waiting time was 30 days, however, two clients had been waiting for more than 100 days as it is proving difficult to provide service in their particular areas. Officers monitor the anomalies which may be hidden by averaging statistics.
- There are no assessments outstanding for Social Workers but there are clients waiting for OT or sensory impairment assessments. Four clients are waiting for a social worker for younger disability assessment, but this is classed as a normal workload.
- Members were of the opinion that the service was in a more positive position than Children's Services. Trends were heading in the right direction.
- Some measures did not have targets against them and Members asked when these will be included. Targets will be included where appropriate although the Head of Transformation noted that targets could lead to perverse behaviours and he would hope that the service was looking to improve at all levels.
- It was noted that the service was forecasting an underspend at year end – Members sought clarity as to whether this was an underspend or savings. Officers informed the Committee that it was a mixture of the two. There had also been an increase in funding for the year which had not been required to be drawn down. However, there would be a standstill budget

- next year and pressures would still have to be met. The way in which the services works is changing but it is a slow process to change cultures.
- There was a long list of improvements and Members asked how these were prioritised – all actions were contained within the Improvement Plan. This was available on the intranet and could be brought to a future Committee for a more detailed discussion.
 - It was noted that the service categorised clients at age 75+ but the Health Authority work to a lower average age range and differentiate over 85s. When considering discharging clients from hospital to home, different processes were in place with different health authorities. The inconsistency of processes was acknowledged and there were challenging issues in some areas. One of the primary factors in when a client can be discharged from hospital is the availability of care.

County Councillor K Roberts-Jones left the meeting at 12.35

- There were some measures which did not include figures – this may be due to a measure being an annual one or that the figure was zero – if it is zero, then this should be recorded as such and not left blank.
- The Committee asked how quality assurance was measured – a QA Manager was appointed in April 2018. Audits are now being undertaken. The Improvement and Assurance Board had had similar concerns and a briefing had been prepared for them which would be useful for the Committee.
- Each service has a Finance Resource Model (FRM) and the Adults FRM had suggested that there would be significant pressures in the next financial year. The forecast has been altered and the FRM is under review. Savings will have to be made to meet pressures.
- A Winter Plan is required by the Welsh Government and has been prepared
- A survey of carers is undertaken by CREDU. Contract monitoring meetings take place with CREDU quarterly – their satisfaction rating is very high. Further information on this function can be provided to Members.

7.	ACCESS TO INFORMATION
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RESOLVED to exclude the public for the following item of business on the grounds that there would be disclosure to them of exempt information under category 3 of The Local Authorities (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007).

8.	IMPROVEMENT AND ASSURANCE BOARD
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Documents:

- Notes of the Improvement and Assurance Board, 27 June 2018

Discussion:

- Members expressed concern that the notes were now out of date
- Consideration should be given to an oral update to scrutiny meetings to ensure that the most up to date information was available

9.	WORK PROGRAMME
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Documents:

- Scrutiny Work Programme as at 4 September 2018

Discussion:

- It was noted that the Joint Chairs and Vice Chairs Steering Committee had agreed items for inclusion on the work programme at their meeting on 11 September 2018 – the work programme would be revised and uploaded to the intranet.

Outcome:

- The work programme was noted

10.	CORRESPONDENCE
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There were no items of correspondence.

**County Councillor GIS Williams
Chair**

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HEALTH, CARE AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON WEDNESDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2018

PRESENT: County Councillor G I S Williams (Chair)
County Councillors J Charlton, S C Davies, D E Davies, J Gibson-Watt, E Jones, P C Pritchard, K M Roberts-Jones, D Rowlands, E Vaughan, A Williams, J Williams, J M Williams, Mrs A Davies, Mrs M Evitts, Mrs S. Davies and R Powell

1.	APOLOGIES
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors H Hulme, A Jenner, M Mackenzie, C Mills, G Morgan and S Williams.

Parent Governor Representatives A Davies and S Davies and Church Representative M Evitts.

County Councillor R Powell (Portfolio Holder for Children's Services)

Officers B Kirwan (Children's Services Consultant), M Gedrim (Additional Learning Needs Manager), D Johnston (Interim Head of Children's Services), M Evans (Acting Director – Resources) and L Patterson (Scrutiny Officer)

2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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No declarations of interest were received.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIPS
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No declarations of Party Whips were received.

4.	MINUTES
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on the 1st August 2018 subject to the correction of the word 'sign' for 'sing' in section 4 of the document.

A local member stated that he considered a matter raised in the meeting held on the 14th September had been incorrectly reported in the press and that he would be raising the matter at Full Council.

5.	LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN FRAMEWORK
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Documents:

- Draft Powys County Council Children's Services Children Looked After Strategic Framework 2018-2013

Discussion:

- The framework pulls together all the work around Children Looked After for the period 2018-2013. Section 9 outlines that below the Framework are six themed strategies with detail to be specified regarding priorities and measures. It is suggested that this is referred to in the forward or introduction. The meeting expressed concern regarding the inclusion of

the following sentence in the introduction 'we are proud of our achievement over recent years however recognise there remain a number of key challenges and areas for improvement' and suggested that consideration should be given to re-wording this statement to more accurately capture the challenges that have occurred

- Children and young people were involved in developing the pledge to children looked after
- A definition of children looked after would be included
- The document is to be used by officers and members and a children and young people's version would be produced. The document would be checked to ensure it could be understood by its different target audiences
- Powys have a number of children placed in residential homes outside of Powys. There are a number of residential homes within Powys which do not have any children placed by Powys. Not all residential homes within Powys would be able to offer suitable placements for children with assessed needs but there is an opportunity to consider using these homes where a child's needs could be met. There has been no discussion to date regarding providing an in-house residential care service. It may be an option but is challenging and would not necessarily be able to meet the needs that are presented by children and young people. The needs of the children are first and foremost and it is important to ensure that commissioning is working so that the most appropriate and cost effective placements can be found
- The aim of keeping young people local to their community was explored. There are challenges with this in a large rural community and sometimes it is more appropriate for a child or young person to be placed across the border or into another county which would be closer to their home community than within county but at greater distance from home. Alternatively, it may be appropriate for a child or young person to be placed away from their local community and the decisions made will always be based on the assessment of care needed. The difficulty of placing children locally is demonstrated by the area maps which show for example 61 children looked after from North Central Powys with 20 placed in the area. The demographic information contained within the report is welcomed
- Concern was raised that staff turnover amongst social workers was leading to a lack of continuity and colleagues from education were finding this led to difficulties in attendance at meetings
- The cost of in-house foster care is approximately £400 per week, the cost of independent foster care is approximately £800 per week. Residential placements can cost between £3,900 to £5,000 depending on therapy and education requirements. The placement budget at present is a predicted £9.5million/year.
- There is no one reason why foster carers would choose to work for a local authority or a company but it is a combination of the support and training available together with rates of pay. Whilst the cost to Powys for independent foster care is twice that paid to in-house foster care the carers would not receive double rates and the figure paid for Independent Foster Carers to their company includes the cost of the support and training element.
- The Signs of Safety principles are written in language that is hard to understand. It was explained that signs of safety focuses on what the family can do and what safety nets are in place to manage risk. It was

confirmed that Signs of Safety would be implemented across the whole of Children's Services and all partners would know what model the authority was working to

- The intention to re-create a single Leaving Care team is welcomed and the necessity of working closely with colleagues within the organisation such as housing was acknowledged. Children looked after are encouraged to stay in foster care until they are ready to move on under the 'When I Am Ready' scheme but more work needs to be undertaken in respect of young people leaving residential placements
- Provision of respite care is important both for children looked after and children in need. This can help prevent placement breakdown and will be considered under the Sufficient supply of high quality care placements strategy. Some children who will actively try and break placements
- The age profile of children looked after generally shows the highest group are teenagers who come into care at the age of 12-13 and stay in long term foster care. There has been an increase in young children coming into care and this age group are mostly placed for adoption. At present there are 24 children on adoption placement orders
- Further work is required regarding children's participation and understanding the voice of the child but it was stressed that honesty was needed for children to understand what could and could not be achieved.

Outcomes:

- That scrutiny monitors the implementation of the framework by including the separate themes namely
 - Permanence
 - Closer to Home
 - Leaving Care
 - Early Help/Edge of Care
 - Sufficient supply of high quality care placements
 - Participation and voice
 within the work programme
- That the following amendments to the draft framework are considered:

Page	Change
General	Fill in gaps in document (eg. p15)
	Include a definition of children looked after
3 or 4	That below the framework a series of strategies with work plans, timeframes and monitoring arrangements will sit (cross ref p17)
4	Consider rewording: 'we are proud of our achievement over recent years however recognise there remain a number of key challenges and areas for improvement'
7	Remove jargon, reference who Eileen Munro is, ensure all wording fits on page (the bottom line is largely missing on the printed version)
9	Fig 1.1 is all Wales figures which masks the projected decline in population of this age group in Powys – can this be acknowledged? Fig 1.2 is confusing (eg the total for 2016 looks like 650,000) and a date needs to be assigned to the data in the bottom right section
13	The maximum distance a child is placed needs checking – it is

	understood a child is placed in London which is more than 117 miles. The figures for children placed more than 30 miles from home need checking as they do not match (71 and 85)
24	Check number of residential homes in Powys. Members on audit committee advised there were 34 residential homes in north Powys
24	Are there areas of non-compliance at Golwg Bannau/Camlas, The Malt House, The Potteries, Ty Bronllys or Ty Rhos Bach. If none record as such
27	The spider web doesn't show anything and the space could be used to show a governance structure

6. EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Documents

- Presentation on Education of Children looked after (CLA)(copy filed with signed minutes)

Discussion

- Categories of children looked after:
 - Powys CLA educated in county
 - Powys CLA educated out of county
 - Powys CLA with a statement placed out of county
 - COLA (Children of Other Local Authorities) educated in Powys Schools
- Number of CLA and COLA educated in Powys schools is approximately 125 but unequally distributed amongst clusters:
 - Llandrindod cluster 31 (with a CLA in every school in the cluster and the most CLA in the Llandrindod site of Ysgol Calon Cymru)
 - Special schools 16
 - Llanfyllin cluster 15
 - Welshpool cluster 11
 - All other cluster have less than 10
- A school has to be given 15 days' notice before a CLA is placed in that school
- Foster carers do not have parental rights. Parental rights are retained by the local authority
- Cross border moves are an issue as England and Wales work to different codes of practice. If a child is mid assessment when they move the assessment will have to be started again under the new code of where they are now living
- Delays in finding appropriate schools occur when Education, Health and Care plans are not up to date
- Different curriculums are followed in England and Wales and schools would find it hard to receive children from another country at GCSE level as not all subjects are offered and additionally different exam boards will offer a different curriculum
- Schools would know how to contact the named co-ordinator (at present Michael Gedrim). Recruitment for a new co-ordinator has commenced
- In England a system of Virtual Schools for CLA is in place. This co-ordinates the education of in county CLA and COLA. This model does not

- exist in Wales but Powys is looking to use a remodelled PRU service to have some input into the education of CLA.
- It will not be possible for the local authority, with only one officer, to be represented at all meetings relating to education of CLA and COLA
 - At present Social Services staff write the Personal Education Plan with input from education professionals. This is recorded on the Social Services database WCCIS which education staff cannot access
 - The Pupil Development Grant for CLA has been devolved to the regional improvement partnership for education ERW for 2018-19. At present ERW are waiting for Welsh Government for confirmation how this money can be spent. This money is assigned for schools to support school improvement and is different from the similar scheme in England where the Pupil Premium is used to support individual pupils. English Schools ask for the PDG LAC to be released for individual pupils and it is understood that ERW is considering holding some of the aggregate PDG LAC grant back for this purpose. This is considered unnecessary as English Schools would be in receipt of Pupil Premium for these pupils. COLA children would be eligible for PDG LAC and the school would not be asking for a Pupil Premium to be paid for these pupils. Consideration needs to be given regarding a fair distribution of PDG LAC to Powys schools given the unequal distribution of CLA across Powys schools and particular concentration found in Ysgol Calon Cymru
- Cllr P Pritchard left 12.25
- CLA education at Key Stage 5 (A level) is not reported on as there is no requirement for children to be in school at this stage

Outcomes

- **That the Chair of Learning, Skills and Economy Scrutiny Committee be asked to press for early release of the PDG LAC to the Local Authority and for prompt and fair distribution to schools with children looked after**
- **That the Chair of Health, Care and Housing Scrutiny Committee take a request to Joint Chairs for detailed consideration of the availability of support services to children looked after and children in need of care and support across the authority including but not limited to psychologists, education psychologists and speech therapists.**

7.	UPDATE ON PROGRESS POST INSPECTION AT BANNAU CAMLAS
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This item was deferred due to staff illness and would be rescheduled.

8.	CHAIR'S BRIEFING
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The Chair advised that Chairs and Vice-Chairs of scrutiny had met with Officers and Members from Anglesey who had undertaken their own improvement journey in part in relation to Children's Services. This had proved a valuable meeting and had given much to reflect on.

A meeting had been held hosted by Rebecca David-Knight and Ian Bottrill for Cabinet Members, Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs, the Management Team and Heads of Service to discuss scrutiny arrangements. The report was awaited.

The Scrutiny Officer undertook to email out details of Children's Services Teams which Members could visit as a follow up to visits undertaken earlier in the year by Members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Group.

The Head of Children's Service provided the following update on issues relating to Newtown Locality Team:

"The position in the Newtown team is improved with a more settled team, we have recently appointed 2 permanent NQSW staff into posts, albeit we have temporary / agency staff. However we are confident that children are better assessed and supported and are developing relationships with the children. The team has undertaken visits and assessments successfully, for August Children Looked After statutory visits were at 66% (39/59 completed on time) CP statutory visits were 75% (72/96 completed on time). Care and Wellbeing assessments were at 100% with S47 assessments completed on time at 66.67%. Staff receive regular supervision each month and according to their need. The current performance is in August 78% (7/9 supervisions completed)

Working arrangements with partner agencies are positive and we are continuing to build on this.

At the end of August we had 232 children looked after and we regularly audit and review each child in care needs to be there. We would like to have a greater choice of placements for these looked after children.

Regarding apprenticeships, we have held our qualifications panel and we have 3 places for social work training. The universities have set down some basic educational and training requirements which we can't avoid and few workers met this in this round of applications. We are supporting staff to gain these foundation requirements so as a greater number of staff are in a position to apply for these roles. We will also look to expand the number of places available."

Concern was raised that staff were expected to do extended periods of overtime. It was confirmed that this issue would be addressed through the workforce strategy and that at present the service were over establishment to ensure that overtime would not be required.

9.	WORK PROGRAMME
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Forthcoming dates for Health, Care and Housing Scrutiny Committee are:

- 3rd October 2018 – Homelessness Strategy and Housing Strategy
- 17th October 2018 – BUPA Care Homes and Social Care Performance Reports (September)
- 8th November – WHQS and WAO Housing Inspection
- 22nd November 2018 – Review of Daytime Activities
- 10th December 2018 – Crime and Disorder and Social Care Performance Reports (November)

County Councillor GIS Williams

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HEALTH, CARE AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON WEDNESDAY, 3 OCTOBER 2018

PRESENT: County Councillor G I S Williams (Chair)
County Councillors J Charlton, S C Davies, D E Davies, J Gibson-Watt, H Hulme, A Jenner, E Jones, P C Pritchard, D Rowlands, E Vaughan, A Williams, J Williams, J M Williams and S L Williams

Cabinet Portfolio Holders In Attendance: County Councillor J Evans

Officers: Wyn Richards (Scrutiny Manager and Head of Democratic Services), R Powell (Homelessness Prevention & Housing Options Lead), Dafydd Evans (Service Manager Housing Solutions), Simon Inkson (Head of Housing) and A Thompson (Service Manager - Tenancy Services)

1.	APOLOGIES
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Claire Mills and Gareth Morgan and from County Councillor Kath Roberts-Jones who was on other Council business.

County Councillor Sarah Williams presented her apologies for the meeting on 15th October. Councillor Williams also outlined the difficulties for Members who were employed in attending meetings as the days on which the committee was held were different each time.

2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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There were no declarations of interest from Members.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIPS
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There were no disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member had been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

4.	HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY
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The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Housing. The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 placed an emphasis on prevention as did the Social Services and Well-Being Act. The Council has a duty to provide free advice, an assessment and to take steps to avoid a person becoming homeless.

Section 50 of the Act required that the Council undertook a review of its homelessness service every 4 years and to publish a strategy. A recent Wales Audit Office (WAO) study of homelessness services across Wales indicated that the Councils deals with crisis and should place more of an emphasis on prevention.

The current review of homelessness started in 2017 with meetings with other services and partners. However, these were not successful and a consultant was engaged to undertake the review. A series of workshops had been undertaken

and the engagement had been far more successful. The review had identified a number of key findings as set out in paragraph 1.3 of the report.

The housing market in Powys is difficult in terms of providing sufficient affordable housing solutions. There is a need for partners to engage with the Council to provide support. In addition, the Council needs to work with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and others to ensure that the roll out of Universal Credit (UC) does not increase homelessness. The strategy sets out the steps to move to the new style of service which it is intended to be provided.

Question:

What is the timescale where the Council has to act if someone is in danger of becoming homeless?

Response:

Under previous provisions the Council could work with a person if there was a threat to that person becoming homeless within the next 28 days. This timescale has now been extended to 56 days under the 2014 Act. The Council then has to respond if there is a threat of homelessness. In Quarter 1 (2018/19) there were 114 presentations of people under threat of becoming homeless. The total figure for 2017-18 was around 400. There are higher numbers of people presenting as under threat of homelessness in the north (Welshpool and Newtown) than in the south of the county. It is a 70 / 30 split.

Question:

How many open premises are kept for families on a day to day basis? How are people moved on to other premises?

Response:

There are 58 units of temporary accommodation at present run by the Council and others. The Council is seeking to extend this number, but also trying to keep people for a shorter time in temporary accommodation. However there are times where a stay can be longer for individuals due to their previous circumstances.

Question:

How does the Council deal with rent arrears?

Response:

The Council has procedures for dealing with the non-payment of rent including the possession of properties. Generally, the Council wants to work with families to get them through rent arrears. 3 Tenancy Support Officers have been appointed by the Council. Powys also has Housing Management and Options Officers who undertake a dual role of managing properties as well as preventing homelessness and rent arrears. The 2014 Act removed the right to social housing tenancy i.e. local authority or social housing and there is a duty which allows the Council to use the private rented sector.

Question:

How many evictions have there been this year?

Response:

The response is to be provided by the Service. (The response provided by the Service following the meeting is:
2015/16 – 8;
2016/17 – 12;

Question:

People renting from the private sector who might be losing their homes due to the end of their tenancy are being told that they have to become homeless before the Council will deal with them. Universal Credit (UC) is already causing problems for people due to the move from one system to another leading to a loss of benefits. How is partnership working going to be managed?

Response:

Officers can work with individuals within 56 days of their being threatened with homelessness. However, officers will also give advice before the 56 day timescale to avoid people triggering statutory services. Since the 2014 Act came into force there has been a 36% increase in people presenting to the Council in Year 1. The duty on the Council means that officers have a greater involvement in individual cases. The new system is far more bureaucratic and demands more from Council officers.

The Council has always worked in partnership but the review has drawn out other partners that the Council would not have been involved with previously e.g. Dyfed Powys Police in identifying those individuals sleeping on the street. The Service has yet to consider how partnership working is to be managed, possibly a group needs to be established to consider this.

Question:

Internal partnerships – who are these and how will we move forward with external partners? Universal Credit (UC) – how will this be dealt with as it will probably increase workload? With the move to staff working in Job Centres, will this put people off approaching the service? People living in caravans and permanently on caravan sites – how do we deal with this?

Response:

The initial work undertaken in the review led to poor levels of engagement across the Council. The workshops which were subsequently undertaken was a far better approach. Therefore, it was the initial approach by Housing to the review that was the issue. There is a need to establish a group to manage partnerships as well as a problem sleeper group.

Caravans – the service are aware of people living in caravans. However, individuals do not approach the service so there's not much data available. If individuals are not living in suitable accommodation they should be encouraged to approach the service.

DWP and benefits – social housing tenants will receive their rent payments as part of their benefits so hopefully there will not be a great increase in demand on the housing service. There is also an ability for the DWP to make assisted benefits payments direct to the Council which includes rent arrears. Housing Officers are currently shadowing officers in the DWP to understand about the process for claimants for UC. Assisted payments are only temporary arrangements as individuals are responsible for their own money. There is an expectation that rent arrears will go up initially but then reduce. A streamlined arrears process is being developed which emphasises the importance of personal contact with tenants in arrears at an early stage. Tenant Support Officers can also give advice on benefits to

individuals. UC is only accessible online and the housing service is looking at where drop in centres could be located as well as mobile working for staff to assist individuals. The difficulty for individuals is if they put in a claim they could be without money for 5 weeks as payments are made monthly. However rents are due weekly.

Question:

Will it be the local authority leading the group?

Response:

It will be the housing service who would take a lead on this.

Question:

UC may have an impact on tenants. Where are the 3 support workers based? The Council is working with DWP, will it also work with Citizens' Advice and independent advice bureaux in the county?

Response:

Shelter produced its report in March 2017. The housing service has made improvements since that time as issues were identified and steps taken to deal with them e.g. duty officers to take calls and making of offices more public facing. The changes also include individuals able to go to libraries to contact the housing service.

Due to the higher demand 1 officer is located in Welshpool, 1 in Newtown and 1 covering the Brecknockshire and Radnorshire areas. A small drop in centre is to be opened in Machynlleth. The service also works closely with the Council's Money and Advice Service.

Question:

Caravan sites – some people live in static caravans. However, they have to vacate these for a few months in a year and then they are housed by the Council. However there are instances where they have homes elsewhere in the country.

Response:

The Council's housing allocation scheme is being reviewed. This will include a review of caravan accommodation as well as local connection criteria. It is the intention for scrutiny to consider this.

Question:

What is the relationship with The Wallich (homelessness charity) and how is this managed?

Response:

The Wallich manages a property in Newtown. There are regular meetings with the organisation about residents and how they can be moved on to other accommodation. The Wallich is also a floating support provider.

Question:

What is the service doing about County Lines and Cuckooing? There is a good project in Wrexham which the Council should explore relating to vulnerable young people and accommodation.

Response:

The service is aware of these issues and is working with the police

Question:

In terms of local strategic context and the Dyfi Valley being a predominantly Welsh Language area, housing officers need a better understanding of these areas and Welsh Language speaking families not being able to access housing. Is the support officer to be based at Machynlleth Welsh speaking?

Response:

No.

Question:

Page 27 – Section 60 duty – access to free advice – Shelter identified that individuals had to spend money by using their mobile phones to contact the service.

Response:

The service accepted that there was no Freephone number. Once contact had been made the Council will ring the individual back. The Portfolio Holder reported that the Council is looking to phase out its telephone numbers where there is a cost and to provide more Freephone numbers.

Question:

What are the numbers of individuals made homeless from the private rented sector?

Response:

The 2014 Act allows the Council to place individuals in the private rented sector. The Council is looking at whether to establish a social lettings agency where the Council would manage properties for landlords. This could lead to higher standards. Two Social Lettings Officers have been appointed to look at this covering north and south Powys. The Council is doing more work with the private sector but accept that this can lead to more people presenting. It will take time to develop this type of service as it would mean that landlords would have to pay the Council to manage these properties in the long run.

Question:

Redesign of low demand older persons' accommodation and develop more single persons' accommodation. This might not work if younger people move into areas with more elderly persons.

Response:

Some older persons' accommodation is undesignated and these will be let sensitively. Young people's accommodation is challenging for the Council. Building patterns are focussed on family houses, but the pattern in Powys is showing the need for smaller houses and more single accommodation. The Council is therefore looking at the provision of single person accommodation.

Question:

Food banks and partnerships. Food banks can provide good intelligence to the Council about people in need and food banks should be included in partnership arrangements. Under UC, money goes into one household bank account. How do we deal with this in terms of women's and men's refugees where people have been subject to domestic abuse?

Response:

The rules for UC are set nationally. A case can be made to the DWP but unlikely to be successful. If a person turns up at a refuge hopefully the managing partner will assist them with their benefits so that they can receive their benefits rather than their abusive partner. Refugees are supported tenancies so support providers will work with individuals.

Question:

In the statistics the numbers threatened with homelessness has gone down but the number of cases has gone up – why is this?

Response:

The 2014 Act gives the Council various duties. Section 66 (prevention of homelessness), Section 73 (new assessment), Section 75 (final duty). Individuals can go out of the system and come back in at various points in the higher sections. There is a need to drill down into the figures so that they can be understood. Also the statistics from the former procedures and the new act are not directly comparable.

Question:

Are there specific trends in Powys?

Response:

Relationship breakdowns and the loss of private rented accommodation are the two main reasons for homelessness. However prevention work is working and there are fewer individuals that the Council is having to provide a full homelessness duty for.

Question:

If a person cannot pay their rent, can a claim be made to the DWP for a short period to pay rent to the landlord directly?

Response:

In the private rented sector, if a landlord goes to court for possession the court must grant it. In addition, a private tenancy is only safe for 6 months. The housing market in Powys does show a significant difference between house prices and rents in the county.

Question:

Where will the Support Officer be placed in Welshpool

Response:

The officer will be located at the housing service office.

Question:

UC will cause an explosion in the number of evictions. People are vulnerable and managed payments are only for the short term.

Response:

Staff have been well trained in dealing with managed payments. Work is being undertaken with DWP to ensure that managed payments are paid for as long as possible but they are hampered by the rules within which they

have to work.

Question:

Some people just cannot get a bank account which is needed for UC. Where do they go?

Response:

The Housing Service is working with credit unions and building societies to try and resolve these issues. It will also mean that officers will need more intense working with individuals.

Question:

Voids are not being put back on the market quickly enough due to problems with HOWPS

Response:

Work is being undertaken with HOWPS to get voids sorted out more quickly.

Question:

Drugs problems on estates and evictions from Council properties for selling drugs. Is the department going to work within regulations and the law in future?

Response:

The Service always works within regulations and the law.

Question:

UC pays individuals monthly. Why does the Council not change from weekly rents to monthly rents?

Response:

Charging of weekly rents is part of the tenancy agreement at present. The council charges for 48 out of 52 weeks with 4 "rent free" weeks. However, the rent levied is for 52 weeks but it is paid over 48 weeks rather than 52. The Housing Service is considering ending the practice of providing "rent free" weeks. It is an interesting idea to charge monthly in advance and the service will consider this. Individuals do have the option currently to pay weekly or monthly. Some individuals still get paid weekly. It will be considered for inclusion in the rent charges report in February 2019.

Question:

The needs to use computer systems for UC is causing difficulties for individuals who have difficulty reading and writing let alone having any IT skills. What is being done with bad landlords especially where there are problems in accommodation such as damp, poor heating. Food banks are good points of contact for housing officers. There is a block of flats in Ystradgynlais with a number of empty units due to the "bedroom tax".

Response:

Poor landlords – the private sector team work to convince landlords to improve the properties otherwise court action can be taken. Fuel poverty – the Council did use the NEST and ECOFLEX schemes but is now moving to the ECO2 system to assist with fuel poverty. A consultation will be undertaken with the community regarding the best use for the block of flats in Ystradgynlais. Currently they are 2 bedroom flats and it may be better to have single person accommodation.

Question:

People with learning difficulties or literacy problems cannot use IT systems. Individuals can be contacted by the service within 4 days – is this the maximum, especially if individuals are desperate for support? Does the Service work with just Powys Teaching Local Health Board or other Health Boards as well?

Response:

Learning difficulties / literacy problems – individuals could be placed on managed payments which are renewed. The 5 officers mentioned earlier are funded from a mixture of the Housing Revenue Account and from the General Account with specific funding having come from Welsh Government. A contract for a new IT system has been signed which should be in place by April 2019. It is the intention to improve the information available to the public on the Council's website. In relation to the 4 days this came from the Shelter report. A 4 day response would be for general advice and not emergencies.

Question:

With the school modernisation programme is the Housing Service considering the land where these redundant buildings are located for housing.

Response:

The service is looking at such land for possible projects.

Question:

Can more detailed timescales be included in the action plan rather than short term / long term outcomes.

Response:

Yes.

Scrutiny Observations to the Cabinet:

- Managing Partnership Working – the Service needs to consider the process for how partnership working will be managed;
- Housing staff working in Job Centres – concern expressed by the Committee in case this deters some people from approaching the service for assistance;
- Consideration should have been given to the need for the Tenant Support Officer covering Machynlleth to be Welsh Speaking;
- Numbers living long term in caravans and static caravans – need for better data on numbers affected;
- Revisions to housing allocations policy welcomed. There is a need to review / inclusion in the revised policy the issue of individuals living in caravans and static caravans who because they have to vacate those caravans and static caravans during the year are being housed by the Council, especially as there is anecdotal evidence that many own properties elsewhere in the country. In addition, this will mean a need to review the local connections criteria;
- The fact that the means to access information and application forms for Universal Credit is only online is of concern. The Council needs to consider how it can assist people to access this information particularly those who are vulnerable, have learning difficulties or literacy problems;

- A Member identified a project in Wrexham regarding vulnerable young people and accommodation which may be of interest to the Cabinet Member and Housing Service;
- Access to Free Advice is a duty under the 2014 Housing Act – the Committee is supportive of the Council considering more freephone access to Council services;
- Food banks – these should be included under the Housing Service's partnership arrangements as it could be a valuable source of intelligence for the service;
- Individuals accommodated in Refuges – concern by the Committee that enough support was provided to individuals to ensure that they could access their benefits rather than them being paid to an abusive partner;
- Homelessness Statistics – need for a greater breakdown of the statistics to show at which stage individuals were receiving a service as the current statistics are unclear (e.g. numbers threatened with homelessness decreasing but numbers of cases increasing as individuals coming back into the system at various points)
- Committee supportive of work being undertaken by Service with credit unions and building societies, where individuals cannot get access to a bank account which is required for Universal Credit payments;
- Voids – the Committee supported the need for pressure on HOWPS to improve its performance to bring voids back on the market more quickly;
- With Universal Credit payments being made monthly, the Council should consider changing from a weekly to a monthly rent collection process;
- Committee supportive of the use of redundant school property for housing projects;

5.	LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE STRATEGY
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The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Housing. The strategy was due to be considered by the Cabinet in November but now more likely to be January / February 2019. The strategy is about improving the quality of the Council's estates, the lives of the residents on those estates and help tenants maintain their tenancies. The Council is working to achieve WHQS by the end of 2018. Part of that is about improving the fabric of homes. The strategy is about improving the fabric of estates, what customers think about the estates and how to improve services and support for tenants and residents.

There are 3 themes:

- Understanding – how the Council engages with tenants, managing areas and services offered;
- Place – new approach to grounds maintenance (working with the Highways Service) and delivery of improvements on estates. There is also a need to consider a play strategy and play areas, and improving and rationalising garage provision;
- People – encouraging people to make the best of their area, rewarding tenants for taking part in activities.

Question:
Garages – parking is a major issue on some estates. Action was to be undertaken on an estate in Knighton – is there an update?
Response:

The Head of Service agreed to review where the service was with garage clearances and will provide a Garage Improvement / Clearance Programme in early November.

Question:

Garages in Machynlleth – some in a poor state. There needs to be a decision to remove poor ones and repair others. Could some areas be turned into hard standing areas instead to take cars off estate roads rather than a need for parking restrictions.

Response:

There are parking problems throughout the county. There is a need for estate events to consider these issues as there were few or no cars when estates were developed from the 1940's to the 1980's. The cost of improvements to estates will come from rent income not from private individuals. The Head of Service agreed to publish a garage action plan once estate events had been undertaken.

Question:

Are garages sold with houses? There are a variety of arrangements in place – in some places the Council rents out garages, in other places they have leasehold tenancies. Parking is an issue and how is this to be funded? Has the service discussed improvement with local regeneration groups who could assist with improvements? There are also some poorly maintained private homes on estates which reflect badly on the remainder of the community.

Response:

Garages not sold with properties. The service would be happy to work with regeneration groups.

Question:

Parking and garages – do not agree with removing green spaces as putting in more tarmac can lead to more flooding. Energy efficiency in homes is not covered in the document.

Response:

The Wales Audit Office had inspected the service during the summer looking at WHQS. There were 3 recommendations around hard to heat homes. The service is therefore developing a separate strategy which is why it is not included in this document.

Question:

There is a need to engage with vulnerable individuals / people with disabilities who may not otherwise engage at main estate events. There are issues around tenant relationships – how does the Council resolve these issues? Understanding of relationships is important as some tenants will not engage. The title of the report is very engaging. The Sub-letting of garages by tenants is leading to complaints.

Response:

One of the key themes of the strategy is to get people to come together, this is why the Council is considering a rewards scheme. There are different types of schemes in place throughout the country. Loneliness is also an issue on estates and the question is how do you encourage a community spirit. This could also assist the service work collaboratively with other services.

Question:

Garages – does the Council sell them? Why is there a service charge imposed for services such as grass cutting?

Response:

The 2014 Housing Act meant that local housing authorities had to introduce service charges. Housing will look at bespoke options for each community in terms of garages.

Question:

Will the estate action events reach other estates?

Response:

Yes the intention is to hold events on all of the estates.

Question:

Parking is an issue on a particular estate in Ystradgynlais as well as the encroachment of ground – what happens in relation to this as there are licences for people to use this land.

Response:

Officers will speak directly to the Member about this specific issue.

Question:

Like the document and name. The rewards scheme is a good idea. Play areas are vital for children and getting them active and engaging with other children. Hopefully facilities will be enhanced rather than removed. There is also a need for the service to work with Town and Community Councils on such provision.

Response:

The issue for the housing service is how do you invest in play areas – is it appropriate for the tenants to provide these facilities where 50% or more of the houses have been sold or should there be provision on some of the smaller estates. Proposals will be brought forward in a draft strategy. With regards to the rewards scheme, the gardening scheme has ended but now nominations will be sought for tenants' contributions to their area.

Question:

Is there anything the Council can do with regard to private landlords and the state of their properties?

Response:

The council has no general powers but can act where private landlords break the law.

Question:

With regard to tarmacadam on parking areas, there are other solutions which could alleviate potential flooding issues. There are examples in Powys where garages have been demolished and car parking spaces provided which have been successful (Welshpool). Is there a legal requirement for the numbers of population in an area before a children's play area is required?

Response:

The Head of Service agreed to research whether there is a requirement.

Question:

The paving and roads on estates – who is responsible for this? as there is an estate in Knighton where a number of disabled people live and the road is broken in places. Why do we not place solar panels on our houses where there is electric heating?

Response:

Roads and pavements - It varies. With regard to solar panels it is not straightforward. It can depend on the orientation of the house and also whether there is capacity in the local grid network to take the additional power generated. However, with new battery technology this is less of an issue. The service will consider this as part of the new strategy. It could also be a planning issue as to whether solar panels would be allowed.

Question:

Could the Council work with wind farm developers to gain benefits such as installation of solar panels on Council properties?

Response:

The community benefits from wind farm development tend to go to communities rather than the County Council but there is a Community Benefits Scheme. However whether to engage in this scheme is a matter for individual developers.

Question:

Will the development on Newtown Bowling Green have some form of renewable energy?

Response:

Work is being undertaken with the company to provide a high energy efficiency rating for these properties. The new properties at Sarn will be passive houses.

A Member commented that the new schools in Ystradgynlais were not using the renewable heating elements installed as part of the build as it was cheaper to use gas.

Scrutiny Observations to Cabinet:

- Committee supportive of the name of the strategy and the draft strategy;
- Garages – need for an urgent policy on Council owned garages together with local determination of options following estate events. The implementation plan following local reviews to be circulated to Members for information;
- Consideration should be given to the removal of garages where appropriate and replacement with car parking provision to resolve car parking issues which are common on Council estates;
- Estate events - Need for specific engagement with those who are more vulnerable or have disabilities as they may not otherwise engage in those estate events;
- Committee supportive of rewards schemes;
- Committee supportive of the provision of play areas. The Head of Service agreed to research whether there is a minimum number of residents required before a play area can be considered in an area, in response to a question;
- Play areas – there is a need for closer working with Town and Community Councils in the provision of such play areas;

- Estate Improvements – consideration should be given to working with local regeneration groups who may be able to assist the Council;
- Committee look forward to a separate strategy for fuel efficiency in Council properties and ask that consideration be given to the use of Section 106 funding or money achieved under community benefits from wind farm developments being used to fund energy efficiency schemes such as solar panels (where appropriate) on council properties;
- Concern expressed at a comment by an Ystradgynlais Member that the new / refurbished schools in Ystradgynlais were not utilising the renewable energy heating systems installed as they were too expensive to operate;

6.	WORK PROGRAMME
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The Scrutiny Work Programme was noted.

County Councillor GIS Williams, Chair

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Public Document Pack

Health, Care and Housing Scrutiny Committee Monday, 15 October 2018

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HEALTH, CARE AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON MONDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2018

PRESENT

County Councillors J Charlton (Chair), S C Davies, D E Davies, J Gibson-Watt, H Hulme, A Jenner, E Jones, G Morgan, K M Roberts-Jones, D Rowlands, E Vaughan, A Williams, J Williams and J M Williams
County Councillor S M Hayes (Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care)

In attendance Count Councillor S Hayes (Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care) (from 10.30am), V Hanley (Interim Professional Lead Commercial Services) J Jones (Strategic Commissioning Manager – Age Well), E Patterson (Scrutiny Officer)

1.	APOLOGIES
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors G Williams and S Williams.

2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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The following declarations of interest were received:

County Councillor G Morgan – a personal interest (owning a small number of shares in BUPA)

County Councillor H Hulme – a personal and prejudicial interest (her mother attends Maes y Wennol Day Centre)

3.	DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIPS
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No declarations of Party Whips were received.

4.	MINUTES
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on the 4th July 2018 as a correct record.

The Scrutiny Officer confirmed that all the outcomes mentioned in the minutes had either already taken place or were in the work programme to take place.

5.	EXEMPT ITEMS
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RESOLVED to exclude the public for the following item of business on the grounds that there would be disclosure to them of exempt information under category 3 of The Local Authorities (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007).

6.	RE-COMMISSIONING THE MANAGEMENT OF POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL'S CARE HOMES
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The Interim Professional Lead gave an introduction to the process for the re-commissioning of Powys Residential Care Homes. The process is confidential insofar as commercially sensitive information has to remain confidential but the updates that the Portfolio Holder shared with Members regarding the process was for public information.

The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care joined the meeting at 10.30am having left the meeting of the Regional Partnership Board to join this meeting.

The Portfolio Holder explained the recent history around residential care. The current Care Homes operators BUPA have given notice that they wish to cease operating in Powys from 31st May 2019. Powys County Council own 12 Care Homes which are operated by BUPA together with an additional facility Glan Irfon which is also owned by Powys County Council but delivered with a shared Section 33. It is intended that the re-commissioning of these facilities will be undertaken in parallel but with separate lots.

An OJEU Notice has been issued inviting organisations to express interest by means of submitting a prequalification questionnaire. This will ascertain the level of interest and will allow the Council (and PTHB) to evaluate their capability, registrations, track record and their financial standing and capacity to proceed with the next stage of tendering beyond 31st October 2018.

The outcome of this stage will inform what next steps need to be taken regarding the re-commissioning process.

The Commissioning team are working closely with BUPA to ensure that any tender documentation includes as much information as possible as early as possible for interested parties to prepare a bid.

Scrutiny Members expressed concern that the timescale is tight. It was acknowledged that this was the case but much work had been undertaken to date and the timetable is being adhered to. It was intended to publish tender documentation with a final return date of February/March 2019 which will allow for a transition period leading up to the end of the BUPA contract in May 2019.

It is intended to seek a partner to run the homes in the first instance in the medium term which will provide an opportunity for the service to examine what are the longer term needs for independent living, nursing care, residential care and respite care across the county. This medium term partner may wish to be part of longer term arrangements.

It was confirmed that an Impact Assessment had been completed and that contingency plans are being worked upon to mitigate risk.

It was confirmed that expert legal advice had been engaged to support this process.

It was confirmed that a Communications Plan was in place which would provide information regarding the re-commissioning process moving forward. Staff were receiving communication from BUPA. The Portfolio Holder was sending regular briefings to Members on the process.

It was confirmed that an inventory would be prepared to be used at the point of transfer.

Cllr J Williams left the meeting 10.55am

It was confirmed that the Welsh Language Standards that Powys are required to meet also apply to third party providers and this has formed part of the current specification.

Going forward from April 2019 there is a requirement for residential care to be commissioned jointly by local authorities and health boards. Some joint commissioning is already taking place (for example Glan Irfon) and this will continue to increase. The governance of this currently takes place at the Regional Partnership Board (at a more strategic level) and Joint Partnership Board (at a more item by item level). The RPB is where the Integrated Care Fund monies are administered and has a series of Programme Boards.

The proposed tender appeared to be for a short period this was intentional to allow for changes to the provision to meet the changing needs of society to be explored. It would be hoped that the successful provider would work with the commissioning bodies on the longer term proposals.

The timescale was acknowledged to be tight but much work had already been undertaken. BUPA had been communicating with staff and this would continue throughout the process.

The service is working on contingency plans should an alternative provider not be in a position to take over the contract on 1st June 2019.

It was confirmed that the contract includes the requirement to meet the Welsh Language Standards that apply to Powys County Council and to their third party contractors.

A condition survey has been commissioned so up to date information is available all of which will need to be taken into account when assessing the tender prices.

Observations

- **That the joint governance arrangements between Powys Teaching Health Board and Powys County Council are examined with the possibility of inviting a representative of the Powys Teaching Health Board to discuss joint governance arrangements**
- **Concern has been expressed regarding the tight timescale that this process is under. The Portfolio Holder is urged to ensure that the process does not slip and that the tender documents are prepared for publication at the earliest stage so that a final decision can be**

made as soon as possible which will give the new provider the most time to plan for a seamless transition

- **Assurance was received that**
 - **an inventory of assets was being requested from BUPA**
 - **expert legal advice had been engaged**
 - **a communications plan had been drafted (copy requested)**
 - **a contingency plan was being prepared in response to the potential risk that it would be necessary to bring the service in-house (update requested)**

7.	WORK PROGRAMME
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8th November 2018 – WAO Housing Inspection

10th December 2018 – Review of Daytime Activities
Update on Bannau/Camlas
Social Care Performance Reports

County Councillor J Charlton



WALES AUDIT OFFICE
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

Archwilydd Cyffredinol Cymru
Auditor General for Wales

The Service User Perspective – the Welsh Housing Quality Standard – **Powys County Council**

Audit year: 2017-18

Date issued: September 2018

Document reference: 762A2018-19

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info.officer@audit.wales.

We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is also available in Welsh.

The team who delivered the work comprised Richard Hayward, Charlotte Owen, Gwilym Bury and Jeremy Evans directed by Huw Rees.

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Detailed report

The Council is making progress towards achieving the Welsh Housing Quality Standard for many components and most Council tenants are satisfied with the quality of the service and their homes, but it needs to accelerate its approach to ensuring tenants' homes are warm

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Summary report

Summary

- 1 In housing, as in many local government service areas, users have no choice of service provider or, where alternative providers exist, their choice is limited by cost or other reasons. In this situation, their ability to influence services to meet their needs relies on users having a 'voice' in service design.
- 2 It is especially important that service users can feed in their views, experiences and hopes as the Council decides which services to reduce, increase or change in the current environment where finances are under pressure. Taking account of the users' voice means redesigned services are more likely to meet people's needs and be better value for money.
- 3 The Welsh Government stresses the importance of developing a partnership with citizens. Involvement is one of the five ways of working and it requires local authorities to adopt to meet the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFG Act). And in its Local Government White Paper (January 2017) the Welsh Government states:

'We want to develop a more equal partnership with citizens. The role of public services should be to support people to live independent lives and to seek to de-escalate demand, intervening only when necessary and only for as long as required. In doing so, the focus inevitably shifts to prevention and a public service that is able to put more effort into helping people to avoid crisis, rather than one which is focused on supporting people in crisis. This is about creating prudent public services for the future.'¹
- 4 In 2017-18, the Wales Audit Office completed work to understand the 'service user perspective' at every Council within Wales. We followed a broadly similar approach at each council, although we agreed the specific focus and approach to the work with each one individually. In Powys County Council (the Council), we reviewed the housing service. In particular tenants' engagement with, and degree of choice experienced in, delivering the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) and their view on the quality of the service they receive from the Council.
- 5 In 2001, the Welsh Government set out its long-term vision for housing in Wales entitled **Better Homes for People in Wales**. The WHQS is the Welsh Government standard of housing quality. The WHQS was first introduced in 2002 and aims to ensure that all dwellings are of good quality and suitable for the needs of existing and future residents. The Welsh Government set a target for all social landlords to improve their housing stock to meet the WHQS as soon as possible, but in any event by 2020.
- 6 The Council decided against transferring its housing stock and it is confident it will achieve WHQS compliance by 2020. Consequently, the Council retains its housing

¹ Welsh Government, **White Paper Reforming Local Government: Resilient and Renewed**, January 2017.

stock and role as landlord. It is one of 11 councils in Wales to do so. The Council is one of six remaining councils still having stock which is not fully compliant as at March 2017 with only five councils reporting² 100% compliance.

- 7 The Council owns 5,326 properties of which it reported that 3,242 properties met the standard to 'full compliance' and 456 did not as at 31 March 2017. The Council reported that a further 1,628 properties met the standard where they were judged to be 'acceptable fails' as defined by the Welsh Government in its guidance on compliance³.
- 8 Although we could not talk to everyone, engaging with a sample of service users⁴ helped us better understand their perspective. In addition, we held a focus group with the Powys Tenant Scrutiny Panel (the TSP), a further focus group with local tenants and residents, and visited a few of the Council's housing estates. This information, as well as data on performance and service standards, informed our discussions with the Council. This helped us understand the Council's rationale for their approach to WHQS, and how the Council approaches and responds to the needs and expectations of service users.
- 9 Overall, we found that **the Council is making progress towards achieving the Welsh Housing Quality Standard for many components and most Council tenants are satisfied with the quality of the service and their homes, but it needs to accelerate its approach to ensuring tenants' homes are warm.**
- 10 We came to this conclusion because:
 - the Council is making progress towards achieving the Welsh Housing Quality Standard for many components by 2020, but it needs to accelerate its approach to ensuring tenants' homes are warm;
 - tenant engagement has worked well in the past but now needs to be built upon and strengthened to gather more views; and
 - most Council tenants are very satisfied with the quality of the service and their homes.

² Welsh Government, **Welsh Housing Quality Standard Welsh Government Annual Report**, October 2016

³ Full compliance refers to dwellings where the WHQS standard is achieved for all individual elements, but there can be situations where achieving the standard for an individual element is not possible. Such situations may include the cost or timing of the work, residents choosing not to have the work done or where there are physical constraints to the work. In these instances, the social landlords may record one or more elements as acceptable fails. Where a dwelling contains one or more acceptable fails but all other elements are compliant, the dwelling is deemed by the Welsh Government to be compliant subject to acceptable fails.

⁴ We spoke to a sample of 321 tenants and leaseholders. We conducted a phone survey, Appendix 1 shows details.

Proposals for improvement

Exhibit 1: proposals for improvement

Proposals for improvement	
P1	The Council should urgently strengthen the future delivery of the WHQS by accelerating its development of a comprehensive strategy and action plan to address the issues facing tenants who are living in cold homes.
P2	The Council should continue to work with tenants to strengthen its approach to assisting people experiencing problems with condensation and damp.
P3	The Council should strengthen its approach to engagement and explore more innovative ways to reach the many people who are hard to reach due to the geographical challenges of living in Powys.

Detailed report

The Council is making progress towards achieving the Welsh Housing Quality Standard for many components and most Council tenants are satisfied with the quality of the service and their homes, but it needs to accelerate its approach to ensuring tenants' homes are warm

The Council is making progress towards achieving the WHQS for many components by 2020, but it needs to accelerate its approach to ensuring tenants' homes are warm

- 11 The Council engaged widely with stakeholders on its housing modernisation programme for WHQS and estate improvements. For example, the Council produces an 'Investing in Your Homes' newsletter for tenants which is very clear, well presented and informative. It clearly shows what has happened in the previous six months and an update on the schedule of works over the coming six months along with other relevant updates, such as on gas boiler servicing. Tenants are encouraged to complete the WHQS questionnaire, following works being carried out, by being entered a prize draw for £100.
- 12 Individual tenants were given a significant voice in how the WHQS work was undertaken in their homes. They had a considerable number of choices, for example, kitchen tiles (colours and shapes), worktop, unit doors, flooring and taps and whether new front doors are solid or glass. Tenants from the TPS are members of the 'Investing in Your Home Sub Group'. This group of tenants attends progress meetings with specific contract monitoring officers and reviews progress on WHQS work and tenant satisfaction results. Tenant feedback on some of the early WHQS contracts highlighted problems with how the work was carried out and delays completing works. The Council worked with the 'Investing in Your Home Sub Group' to review its implementation, with more Tenant Liaison officers working on day-to-day contact with tenants as the work was carried out.
- 13 The Council recognises its system for recording which homes meet the WHQS standard for warmth is inaccurate and incomplete. The Council believed that in July 2018 it had 2,326 homes (43%) which did not yet meet the WHQS standard for warmth (SAP 65⁵ or above rating). The number reported to the Welsh Government in March 2017 was 2,084. Our survey of tenants showed that 23% of the tenants

⁵ SAP 65. 2015. WHQS states the Welsh Government vision that 'all households in Wales.... shall have the opportunity to live in good quality homes that are adequately heated, fuel efficient and well insulated.' The target energy rating to comply with the WHQS is a Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating of 65.

we spoke to find it difficult to heat their homes to a comfortable level in winter. The Council has invested additional resources in the last few years to gather accurate assessments of SAP ratings in all its homes. However, this work is still incomplete, and we were told by officers that some of the existing SAP data is inaccurate on such matters as the thickness of loft insulation and whether double glazing is fitted.

- 14 Powys has the highest percentage of Council homes not on a mains gas supply in Wales and the previous Council WHQS policy was to view all homes located 'off gas' as an acceptable fail. In recent years, the Council has begun to change its approach. It is now investing in a range of new approaches to help overcome the problem of cold homes in 'off gas' areas. These include already installing in a number of homes solar panels, oil central heating, external wall insulation, and air source heat pumps. The Council is planning to formalise this new approach and develop a strategy and associated action plan to address the issues facing tenants who are living in cold homes.
- 15 Our survey of tenants showed that 77% of the tenants we spoke to felt they had no problems with damp and condensation, but 23% were concerned. We have conducted a similar survey in the last 12 months at all 11 councils that retained their housing stock, and this issue is a problem across Wales. Damp and condensation issues are a complex problem, and without conducting a full house survey we cannot say why tenants in Powys reported this issue. We did not undertake the survey on all the estates in Powys and most of the officers we spoke to felt that on a few estates there are some issues of damp. These affected homes are at more exposed locations with more rainfall and frequent high winds, leading to greater water penetration. Furthermore, the Council recognises that on one estate design issues are a significant cause of damp and condensation and future capital works will try to address this issue. The Council officers we spoke to show a positive and sophisticated understanding to addressing the issues of damp and condensation. The Council is adopting a holistic approach while investing additional resources of £0.5 million in future years to address the issue.
- 16 A high percentage of the work is undertaken by contractors based in Wales (£19.2 million so far with contractors based in Wales). The tenants we surveyed are generally pleased (83%) with the work that is carried out. The Council is committed to community benefits from WHQS both in terms of local employment and opportunities for apprentices and additional works for the community carried out by contractors. For example, new external fire doors at a scout hut in Brecon and a bricklaying course held at high school by one of the local contractors.
- 17 The Council recognises that contractor performance is variable especially where sub-contracting by large national companies occurred. The Council has also experienced other challenges with some of its private contractors becoming over committed to other work.

Tenant engagement has worked well in the past but now needs to be built upon and strengthened to gather more views

- 18 Through their daily interactions with tenants, staff receive regular feedback and opinions from tenants. This provides a useful and informal conduit of information between tenants and the service, and ensures that officers have a good understanding of tenant needs. A dedicated team (Tenant Liaison Officers) work to support tenants on all aspects of the WHQS programme. Housing staff also attend local estate events to promote the housing service and speak to members of the public. 'Tenants Talk Together' meetings on estates are jointly run by officers and tenants to obtain feedback on local issues. Ad hoc estate events do take place, but due to pressures on staff estate inspections do not occur on a regular basis in all areas and there is no coordinated planned and publicised programme of estate walkabouts. The Council no longer runs an annual garden competition for its tenants, which many other landlords still use as an informal, inexpensive, and fun way to organise systematic visits to many housing estates. The Garden competition has in part been replaced by a bi-monthly 'Star Tenant' award scheme, open to tenants, councillors and staff to nominate tenants who make a significant contribution to the life of their community.
- 19 The Council has long-standing established mechanisms for formal consultation, and officers and members meet regularly with tenants through four local tenant associations and the TSP group of about 14 tenants. The TSP membership is largely drawn from the local groups and provides a formal method to consult and gain feedback from tenants. There is a newsletter delivered twice a year to all tenants' homes which provides feedback and information. The TSP members help produce this newsletter. The housing service also surveys all tenants every few years to gain feedback on performance, and TSP members helped design the survey questions in the most recent survey. In addition, there is the Housing Services Group 100 (current membership is seventy-two). This is a group of volunteer tenants who are consulted by email, telephone or postal survey on a chosen area of the housing service, such as day to day repairs.
- 20 However, the Council recognises that tenant involvement requires new approaches, which it is developing, to ensure everyone continues to have a voice. The Council's local tenant engagement strategy is currently being reviewed. The number of active tenants and recognised tenant groups is relatively small (6). Although we only spoke to a few of the tenants who participated in the groups, some of them felt that in the past they have been largely ignored by the housing service. However, they thought that tenant support had improved in the last few years. One local tenant and resident association (TRA) we spoke to felt they are still isolated, and receive little help from the Council. Engaging with communities about new affordable housing, using existing events and networks, such as school fairs and agricultural events, shows the Council is beginning to develop new approaches to gathering the views of citizens.

- 21 There are various fun days and other events where staff informally engage with tenants about planned future changes. An example of these are the estate action days. Following the estate action days officers develop estate action plans in response to the feedback and survey forms completed by residents. In 2018-19 the Council has a budget of approximately £2 million for estate improvements to, in part, take forward the ideas generated from the estate action days.

Most Council tenants are very satisfied with the quality of the service and their homes

- 22 Our survey of tenants showed that people are very satisfied with the quality of the housing service:
- eighty-three per cent of the tenants we spoke to are satisfied with the housing services they receive;
 - sixty-three per cent of the tenants we spoke to feel the Council listens to their views on their home;
 - eighty-three per cent of the tenants we spoke to are satisfied with the improvement works the council has carried out on their homes;
 - seventy-three per cent of the tenants we spoke to are satisfied with the environment outside their home;
 - ninety per cent of the tenants we spoke to were happy with the quality of their kitchens, and eighty per cent were happy with their new bathrooms; and
 - ninety per cent of the tenants we spoke to thought that their neighbourhood is a good place to live.
- 23 The Council recognises it could do more to increase the range of ways tenants and potential tenants can get access to Housing services. For example, by using the internet. It also recognises that the Housing service section of the Council website is poorly designed and difficult to use. We found that the website contains some useful information, but pages are difficult to locate. Few of the forms and documents can be completed online. The Council is working to improve this, for example, the 'Getting Involved' application form can now be completed on line rather than having to be downloaded and posted back to the Council. The use of social media in Powys is limited. Although there is a tenant Facebook page, the poor Broadband access we observed in some areas of the county makes its greater use a challenge.
- 24 The telephone service for tenants to contact the Council is well publicised, and the tenants we spoke to felt it worked well. Seventy per cent of the people we spoke to in the survey felt they could quickly and easily contact the housing service at times that were convenient for them.

- 25 The Council Housing Strategy, 2016-2020, has a set of measures which link to clear outcomes, such as, tackling fuel poverty. The performance measures have set targets, and the performance information and targets are subject to regular scrutiny by senior officers and by members at scrutiny committees. The Council relies predominantly on key performance indicators and satisfaction surveys to evaluate the service's work against the strategy.

Appendix 1

Infographic summarising the key findings from the completed surveys

Exhibit 2: housing service infographic



Most tenants are happy with the condition of their homes
and the WHQS improvements the Council has made:



Some tenants find their homes are not warm enough in winter
and some told us they had problems with damp:



Read the full report on Powys County Council's housing service on our website: www.audit.wales

We spoke to 321 tenants and leaseholders. This represents around 6% of all Council managed households.

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WALES AUDIT OFFICE
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

Archwilydd Cyffredinol Cymru
Auditor General for Wales

Safbwynt Defnyddwyr Gwasanaethau – Safon Ansawdd Tai Cymru – **Cyngor Sir Powys**

Blwyddyn archwilio: 2017-18

Dyddiad cyhoeddi: Medi 2018

Cyfeirnod y ddogfen: 762A2018-19

Paratowyd y gwaith hwn yn rhan o waith a berfformiwyd yn unol â swyddogaethau statudol. Nid yw'r Archwilydd Cyffredinol na staff Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru yn derbyn unrhyw gyfrifoldeb o ran unrhyw aelod, cyfarwyddwr, swyddog neu gyflogai arall yn eu rhinwedd unigol, neu unrhyw drydydd parti.

Os gwneir cais am wybodaeth y gallai'r ddogfen hon fod yn berthnasol iddi, tynnir sylw at y Cod Ymarfer a gyhoeddwyd o dan adran 45 o Ddeddf Rhyddid Gwybodaeth 2000.

Mae Cod adran 45 yn nodi'r arfer a ddisgwylir gan awdurdodau cyhoeddus wrth ymdrin â cheisiadau, gan gynnwys ymgynghori â thrydydd partion perthnasol. Mewn cysylltiad â'r ddogfen hon, mae Archwilydd Cyffredinol Cymru a Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru yn drydydd partion perthnasol. Dylid anfon unrhyw ymholiadau ynglŷn â datgelu neu aildddefnyddio'r ddogfen hon i Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru yn info.officer@audit.wales.

We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

This document is also available in English. Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Saesneg.

Roedd y tîm a gyflawnodd y gwaith yn cynnwys Richard Hayward, Charlotte Owen, Gwilym Bury a Jeremy Evans dan gyfarwyddyd Huw Rees.

Cynnwys

Mae'r Cyngor yn gwneud cynnydd tuag at gyflawni Safon Ansawdd Tai Cymru ar gyfer llawer o elfennau ac mae'r rhan fwyaf o denantiaid y Cyngor yn fodlon ar ansawdd y gwasanaeth a'u cartrefi, ond mae angen cyflymu ei ddull o sicrhau bod cartrefi tenantiaid yn gynnes

Adroddiad cryno

Crynodeb	4
Cynigion ar gyfer gwella	6

Adroddiad manwl

Mae'r Cyngor yn gwneud cynnydd tuag at gyflawni Safon Ansawdd Tai Cymru ar gyfer llawer o elfennau ac mae'r rhan fwyaf o denantiaid y Cyngor yn fodlon ar ansawdd y gwasanaeth a'u cartrefi, ond mae angen cyflymu ei ddull o sicrhau bod cartrefi tenantiaid yn gynnes	7
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Mae'r Cyngor yn gwneud cynnydd tuag at gyflawni Safon Ansawdd Tai Cymru ar gyfer llawer o elfennau erbyn 2020, ond mae angen cyflymu ei ddull o sicrhau bod cartrefi tenantiaid yn gynnes	7
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Mae ymgysylltu â thenantiaid wedi gweithio'n dda yn y gorffennol ond mae angen ei ddatblygu a'i gryfhau i gasglu mwy o safbwyntiau	9
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Mae'r rhan fwyaf o denantiaid y Cyngor yn fodlon iawn ar ansawdd y gwasanaeth a'u cartrefi	10
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Atodiadau

Atodiad 1 – ffeithlun yn crynhoi canfyddiadau allweddol yr arolygon a gynhaliwyd	12
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Adroddiad cryno

Crynodeb

- 1 Yn y maes gwasanaeth Tai, yn yr un modd â llawer o feysydd gwasanaeth llywodraeth leol, nid oes gan ddefnyddwyr unrhyw ddewis o ddarparwyr gwasanaethau, neu, os oes darparwyr eraill i'w cael, mae eu dewis wedi'i gyfyngu gan gost neu resymau eraill. Yn y sefyllfa hon, mae gallu defnyddwyr gwasanaethau i ddylanwadu ar y gwasanaethau i ddiwallu eu hanghenion yn dibynnu ar gael 'llais' wrth gynllunio'r gwasanaeth.
- 2 Mae'n arbennig o bwysig i ddefnyddwyr gwasanaethau allu cyfrannu safbwyntiau, profiadau a gobeithion wrth i'r Cyngor benderfynu ar ba wasanaethau i'w lleihau, cynyddu neu newid yn yr amgylchedd sydd ohoni pan fo cyllid dan bwysau. Trwy ystyried llais defnyddwyr, mae gwasanaethau diwygiedig yn fwy tebygol o ddiwallu anghenion pobl a darparu gwerth gwell am arian.
- 3 Mae Llywodraeth Cymru yn tynnu sylw at bwysigrwydd datblygu partneriaeth â dinasyddion. Ymgysylltu yw un o'r pum ffordd o weithio y mae angen i awdurdodau lleol eu mabwysiadu i fodloni Deddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol (Cymru) 2015. Ac yn ei Phapur Gwyn Diwygio Llywodraeth Leol (Ionawr 2017) mae Llywodraeth Cymru yn datgan:

'Rydym am ddatblygu perthynas fwy cyfartal gyda dinasyddion. Rôl gwasanaethau cyhoeddus ddylai fod i helpu pobl i fyw bywydau annibynnol a cheisio lleihau'r galw, gan ymyrryd dim ond lle mae hynny'n angenrheidiol a dim ond cyhyd ag sydd angen. O wneud hynny mae'r ffocws yn symud yn anorfod at atal, ac at wasanaeth cyhoeddus sy'n gallu gwneud mwy i helpu pobl i osgoi argyfwng, yn hytrach na chanolbwyntio ar helpu pobl mewn argyfwng. Creu gwasanaethau cyhoeddus darbodus i'r dyfodol yw'r nod.'¹
- 4 Yn 2017-18, gwnaeth Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru waith i ddeall 'safbwynt defnyddwyr gwasanaethau' ym mhob cyngor yng Nghymru. Gwnaethom ni ddilyn dull lled debyg ym mhob cyngor, er y gwnaethom ni gytuno ar bwyslais a dull arbennig o wneud y gwaith ym mhob un yn unigol. Yng Nghyngor Sir Powys (y Cyngor), gwnaethom ni adolygu'r gwasanaeth tai. Yn benodol, ymgysylltiad tenantiaid â chyflawni Safon Ansawdd Tai Cymru (SATC) a faint o ddewis sydd ganddynt yn rhan o hyn, a'u barn ar ansawdd y gwasanaeth y maen nhw'n ei gael gan y Cyngor.
- 5 Yn 2001, nododd Llywodraeth Cymru ei gweledigaeth hirdymor ar gyfer tai yng Nghymru o'r enw **Cartrefi Gwell i Bobl Cymru**. SATC yw safon Llywodraeth Cymru o ansawdd tai. Cyflwynwyd SATC gyntaf yn 2002 a'i nod yw sicrhau bod pob annedd o ansawdd da ac yn addas i anghenion trigolion presennol a thrigolion y dyfodol. Pennodd Llywodraeth Cymru darged i'r holl landlordiaid cymdeithasol wella'u stoc dai i gyflawni'r SATC cyn gynted â phosibl ond yn sicr erbyn 2020.

¹ Llywodraeth Cymru, **Papur Gwyn Diwygio Llywodraeth Leol: Cadernid ac Adnewyddiad**, Ionawr 2017.

6. Penderfynodd y Cyngor yn erbyn trosglwyddo'i stoc dai ac mae'n hyderus y bydd yn cyflawni cydymffurfiaeth â SATC erbyn 2020. O ganlyniad i hyn, mae'r Cyngor yn cadw ei stoc dai a'i rôl yn landlord. Mae'n un o 11 o gynghorau yng Nghymru i wneud hynny. Mae'r Cyngor yn un o chwe chynghor â stoc dai nad yw'n cydymffurfio'n llwyr ym mis Mawrth 2017. Pum cynghor yn unig sy'n adrodd cydymffurfiaeth o 100%².
7. Mae'r Cyngor yn berchen ar 5,326 o eiddo ac roedd 3,242 o'r rhain yn 'cydymffurfio'n llwyr' â'r safon a 456 heb fod yn cydymffurfio'n llwyr ar 31 Mawrth 2017. Adroddodd y Cyngor fod 1,628 o eiddo arall yn cyrraedd y safon yn 'fethiannau derbyniol' yn unol â diffiniad Llywodraeth Cymru yn ei chanllawiau cydymffurfio³.
8. Er nad oeddem yn gallu siarad â phawb, trwy ymgysylltu â sampl o ddefnyddwyr gwasanaethau cawsom well dealltwriaeth o'u safbwyntiau.⁴ Hefyd, gwnaethom ni gynnal grŵp ffocws â Phanel Craffu Tenantiaid Powys (y TSP), grŵp ffocws arall â thenantiaid a phreswylwyr lleol, ac ymweld â rhai o ystadau tai y Cyngor. Llywiwyd ein trafodaeth â'r Cyngor gan yr wybodaeth hon, ynghyd â data ynghylch perfformiad a safonau gwasanaeth. Bu hyn yn gymorth i ni ddeall sail resymegol y Cyngor dros ei ddull gweithredu o ran SATC, a sut y mae'r Cyngor yn diwallu ac yn ymateb i anghenion a disgwyliadau defnyddwyr gwasanaethau.
9. Ar y cyfan, daethom i'r casgliad bod **y Cyngor yn gwneud cynnydd tuag at gyflawni Safon Ansawdd Tai Cymru ar gyfer llawer o elfennau ac mae'r rhan fwyaf o denantiaid y Cyngor yn fodlon ar ansawdd y gwasanaeth a'u cartrefi, ond mae angen cyflymu ei ddull o sicrhau bod cartrefi tenantiaid yn gynnes.**
10. Daethom i'r casgliad hwn oherwydd:
- bod y Cyngor yn gwneud cynnydd tuag at gyflawni Safon Ansawdd Tai Cymru ar gyfer llawer o elfennau erbyn 2020, ond mae angen cyflymu ei ddull o sicrhau bod cartrefi tenantiaid yn gynnes;
 - mae ymgysylltu â thenantiaid wedi gweithio'n dda yn y gorffennol ond mae angen ei ddatblygu a'i gryfhau i gasglu mwy o safbwyntiau; ac
 - mae'r rhan fwyaf o denantiaid y Cyngor yn fodlon iawn ar ansawdd y gwasanaeth a'u cartrefi.

² Llywodraeth Cymru, **Adroddiad Blynyddol Llywodraeth Cymru ar Safon Ansawdd Tai Cymru**, Hydref 2016

³ Mae cydymffurfio'n llwyr yn cyfeirio at anheddau lle cyflawnir SATC ym mhob elfen unigol, ond fe all fod sefyllfaoedd lle nad yw'n bosibl cyflawni'r safon ym mhob elfen unigol. Gall sefyllfaoedd o'r fath gynnwys cost neu amseriad y gwaith, trigolion yn dewis peidio â threfnu bod gwaith yn cael ei wneud neu pan fo cyfyngiadau ffisegol ar y gwaith. Yn y sefyllfaoedd hyn, caiff y landlordiaid cymdeithasol gofnodi un neu fwy o elfennau yn fethiant derbyniol. Pan fo annedd yn cynnwys un neu fwy o fethiannau derbyniol ond â phob elfen arall yn cydymffurfio, mae Llywodraeth Cymru yn pennu bod yr annedd yn cydymffurfio'n amodol ar fethiannau derbyniol.

⁴ Gwnaethom ni siarad â sampl o 321 o denantiaid a lesddeiliaid. Gwnaethom ni gynnal arolwg dros y ffôn, gweler y manylion yn Atodiad 1.

Cynigion ar gyfer gwella

Arddangosyn 1: cynigion ar gyfer gwella

Cynigion ar gyfer gwella	
C1	Dylai'r Cyngor gryfhau fel mater o frys gyflawniad SATC yn y dyfodol trwy gyflymu ei broses o ddatblygu strategaeth a chynllun gweithredu cynhwysfawr i fynd i'r afael â'r materion sy'n wynebu tenantiaid sy'n byw mewn cartrefi oer.
C2	Dylai'r Cyngor barhau i weithio gyda thenantiaid i gryfhau ei ddull o gynorthwyo pobl sy'n cael problemau anweddiad a lleithder.
C3	Dylai'r Cyngor gryfhau ei ddull o ymgysylltu ac archwilio ffyrdd mwy arloesol o gyrraedd y bobl niferus sy'n anodd eu cyrraedd o ganlyniad i heriau daearyddol byw ym Mhowys.

Adroddiad manwl

Mae'r Cyngor yn gwneud cynnydd tuag at gyflawni Safon Ansawdd Tai Cymru ar gyfer llawer o elfennau ac mae'r rhan fwyaf o denantiaid y Cyngor yn fodlon ar ansawdd y gwasanaeth a'u cartrefi, ond mae angen cyflymu ei ddull o sicrhau bod cartrefi tenantiaid yn gynnes

Mae'r Cyngor yn gwneud cynnydd tuag at gyflawni SATC ar gyfer llawer o elfennau erbyn 2020, ond mae angen cyflymu ei ddull o sicrhau bod cartrefi tenantiaid yn gynnes

- 11 Ymgysylltodd y Cyngor yn eang â rhanddeiliaid ar ei rhaglen moderneiddio tai ar gyfer SATC a gwelliannau i ystadau. Er enghraifft, mae'r Cyngor yn cyhoeddi cylchlythyr 'Buddsoddi yn Eich Cartrefi' i denantiaid sy'n eglur iawn, wedi'i gyflwyno'n dda ac yn llawn gwybodaeth. Mae'n dangos yn glir yr hyn sydd wedi digwydd yn ystod y chwe mis blaenorol ac yn rhoi diweddariad ar yr amserlen waith yn ystod y chwe mis nesaf ynghyd â diweddariadau perthnasol eraill, fel gwasanaethu boeleri nwy. Anogir tenantiaid i lenwi holiadur SATC, ar ôl i waith gael ei wneud, trwy eu cynnwys mewn raffl i ennill £100.
- 12 Rhoddwyd llais sylweddol i denantiaid unigol o ran sut i wneud gwaith SATC yn eu cartrefi. Rhoddwyd llawer o ddewis iddynt, er enghraifft teils cegin (lليwiau a siapiau), wynebau cegin, drysau unedau, lloriau a thapiau a drysau blaen newydd solet neu wydr. Mae tenantiaid o'r TSP yn aelodau o'r 'Is-grŵp Buddsoddi yn eich Cartref'. Mae'r grŵp hwn o denantiaid yn mynd i gyfarfodydd cynnydd â swyddogion monitro contractau penodol ac yn adolygu cynnydd ar waith SATC a chanlyniadau boddhad tenantiaid. Amlygodd adborth gan denantiaid ar rai o gontractau cynnar SATC broblemau o ran sut y gwnaed y gwaith ac oedi wrth gwblhau'r gwaith. Gweithiodd y Cyngor gyda'r 'Is-grŵp Buddsoddi yn eich Cartref' i adolygu ei weithrediad, a chafwyd mwy o swyddogion Cyswllt Tenantiaid yn gweithio i gysylltu â thenantiaid o ddydd i ddydd wrth i'r gwaith gael ei wneud.
- 13 Mae'r Cyngor yn cydnabod bod ei system ar gyfer cofnodi pa gartrefi sy'n bodloni SATC o ran cynhesrwydd yn anghywir ac yn anghyflawn. Mae'r Cyngor yn credu bod ganddo 2,326 o gartrefi ym mis Gorffennaf 2018 (43%) yn methu â chyrhaedd y SATC o ran cynhesrwydd (sgôr o SAP 65⁵ neu uwch). Y nifer a adroddwyd i Lywodraeth Cymru ym mis Mawrth 2017 oedd 2,084. Dangosodd ein harolwg o

⁵ SAP 65. 2015. Mae'r SATC yn datgan gweledigaeth Llywodraeth Cymru 'y dylai pob aelwyd... gael y cyfle i fyw mewn cartrefi o ansawdd da sydd wedi eu gwresogi'n ddigonol, yn effeithlon o ran tanwydd ac wedi eu hinswleiddio yn dda.' Y targed o ran sgôr ynni i gydymffurfio â SATC yw sgôr Gweithdrefn Asesu Safonol (SAP) o 65.

denantiaid fod 23% o'r tenantiaid y gwnaethom ni siarad â nhw yn ei chael yn anodd cynhesu eu cartrefi i lefel gyfforddus yn ystod y gaeaf. Mae'r Cyngor wedi buddsoddi mewn adnoddau ychwanegol yn ystod y blynyddoedd diwethaf i gasglu asesiadau cywir o sgorau SAP yn ei holl gartrefi. Fodd bynnag, nid yw'r gwaith hwn wedi'i gwblhau o hyd, a dywedodd swyddogion wrthym fod rhai o'r data SAP yn anghywir o ran materion fel trwch inswleiddio mewn lloffttydd ac a oes ffenestri gwydr dwbl wedi'u gosod.

- 14 Mae gan Bowys y ganran uchaf yng Nghymru o gartrefi Cyngor nad ydynt wedi'u cysylltu â'r prif gyflenwad nwy, a pholisi SATC blaenorol y Cyngor oedd ystyried bod pob cartref nad oedd wedi'i gysylltu â'r prif gyflenwad nwy yn fethiant derbyniol. Yn ystod y blynyddoedd diwethaf, mae'r Cyngor wedi dechrau newid ei ymagwedd. Erbyn hyn mae'n ymchwilio i amrywiaeth o ddulliau newydd er mwyn helpu i oresgyn y broblem o gartrefi oer mewn ardaloedd lle nad oes prif gyflenwad nwy. Mae'r rhain yn cynnwys gosod paneli solar, gwres canolog olew, inswleiddio waliau allanol, a phympiau gwres ffynhonnell aer mewn nifer o gartrefi eisoes. Mae'r Cyngor yn bwriadu ffurfioli'r dull newydd hwn a datblygu strategaeth a chynllun gweithredu cysylltiedig i fynd i'r afael â materion sy'n wynebu tenantiaid sy'n byw mewn cartrefi oer.
- 15 Dangosodd ein harolwg tenantiaid fod 77% o'r tenantiaid y gwnaethom ni siarad â nhw o'r farn nad oedd ganddyn nhw unrhyw broblemau lleithder ac anweddiad, ond roedd 23% yn pryderu. Rydym ni wedi cynnal arolwg tebyg yn ystod y 12 mis diwethaf yn yr 11 o gynghorau a gadwodd eu stoc dai, ac mae'r broblem hon yn gyffredin ledled Cymru. Mae materion lleithder ac anweddiad yn gymhleth, a heb gynnal arolwg llawn o'r tai ni allwn ddweud pam y mae tenantiaid ym Mhowys yn nodi'r broblem hon. Ni wnaethom gynnal yr arolwg ar bob un o'r ystadau ym Mhowys, ond roedd y rhan fwyaf o'r swyddogion y gwnaethom ni siarad â nhw o'r farn bod problemau lleithder ar rai o'r ystadau. Roedd yr effaith i'w gweld yn arbennig ar gartrefi mewn lleoliadau mwy agored lle mae mwy o lawiad a gwyntoedd cryfion yn amlach, sy'n arwain at fwy o ddŵr yn dod trwy waliau a thoeon. Hefyd, mae'r Cyngor yn cydnabod ar un ystâd fod materion dylunio yn un o'r rhesymau arwyddocaol dros leithder ac anweddiad ac y bydd gwaith cyfalaf yn y dyfodol yn ceisio ymdrin â hyn. Mae swyddogion y Cyngor y gwnaethom ni siarad â nhw yn dangos dealltwriaeth gadarnhaol a soffistigedig wrth ymdrin â materion lleithder ac anweddiad. Mae'r Cyngor yn defnyddio dull cyfannol ac yn buddsoddi gwerth £0.5 miliwn o adnoddau ychwanegol yn ystod y blynyddoedd nesaf i ymdrin â'r mater.
- 16 Mae canran uchel o'r gwaith yn cael ei wneud gan gontractwyr sydd wedi'u lleoli yng Nghymru (£19.2 miliwn hyd yn hyn â chontractwyr yng Nghymru). Mae'r tenantiaid a oedd yn rhan o'r arolwg yn fodlon ar y gwaith a wneir ar y cyfan (83%). Mae'r Cyngor wedi ymrwymo i fuddion cymunedol SATC o ran cyflogaeth leol a chyfleoedd i brentisiaid a sicrhau bod contractwyr yn gwneud gwaith ychwanegol yn y gymuned. Er enghraifft, roedd un o'r contractwyr lleol wedi rhoi drysau tân allanol newydd ar y cwt sgowntiaid yn Aberhonddu a chwrs gosod brics mewn ysgol uwchradd.

- 17 Mae'r Cyngor yn cydnabod bod perfformiad contractwyr yn amrywio, yn arbennig pan fo cwmnïau cenedlaethol mawr yn is-gontractio. Mae'r Cyngor hefyd wedi cael heriau eraill wrth i rai o'i gontractwyr preifat ymrwymo'n ormodol i waith arall.

Mae ymgysylltu â thenantiaid wedi gweithio'n dda yn y gorffennol ond mae angen ei ddatblygu a'i gryfhau i gasglu mwy o safbwyntiau

- 18 Trwy eu rhyngweithio dyddiol â thenantiaid, mae staff yn cael clywed barn tenantiaid ac yn cael adborth ganddynt yn rheolaidd. Mae hyn yn darparu cyfrwng gwybodaeth defnyddiol ac anffurfiol rhwng tenantiaid a'r gwasanaeth ac yn sicrhau bod gan swyddogion ddealltwriaeth dda o anghenion tenantiaid. Mae tîm pwrpasol (Swyddogion Cyswllt Tenantiaid) yn gweithio i gefnogi tenantiaid ar bob agwedd ar raglen SATC. Mae staff tai hefyd yn bresennol mewn digwyddiadau ystadau lleol er mwyn hyrwyddo'r gwasanaeth tai a siarad ag aelodau'r cyhoedd. Mae swyddogion a thenantiaid yn cynnal ar y cyd gyfarfodydd 'Tenantiaid Yn Siarad Gyda'i Gilydd' ar ystadau i gael adborth ar faterion lleol. Mae digwyddiadau neilltuol yn cael eu cynnal ar ystadau, ond oherwydd pwysau ar staff ni chynhelir arolygon o ystadau yn rheolaidd ym mhob ardal, ac nid oes rhaglen gydgyssylltiedig, gyhoeddedig wedi'i chynllunio o deithiau troed o gwmpas ystadau. Nid yw'r Cyngor yn cynnal cystadleuaeth gerddi flynyddol i'w denantiaid mwyach, ac mae llawer o landlordiaid eraill yn dal i wneud hyn fel ffordd anffurfiol, rhad a hwyliog o drefnu ymweliadau systematig â llawer o ystadau tai. Mae'r gystadleuaeth Gerddi wedi'i disodli'n rhannol gan gynllun gwobrwyo 'Tenant Gorau' a gynhelir pob dau fis, lle caiff tenantiaid, cynghorwyr a staff enwebu tenantiaid sy'n cyfrannu'n sylweddol at fywyd eu cymuned.
- 19 Mae gan y Cyngor ddulliau hirsefydledig o ymgynghori'n ffurfiol, ac mae swyddogion ac aelodau yn cwrdd yn rheolaidd â thenantiaid trwy bedair cymdeithas tenantiaid leol a'r grŵp TSP sy'n cynnwys rhyw 14 o denantiaid. Daw aelodau'r grŵp TSP yn bennaf o grwpiau lleol, ac mae'n cynnig dull ffurfiol o ymgynghori a chael adborth gan denantiaid. Dosberthir cylchlythyr sy'n darparu adborth a gwybodaeth i gartrefi'r holl denantiaid ddwywaith y flwyddyn. Mae aelodau'r TSP yn helpu i lunio'r cylchlythyr hwn. Mae'r gwasanaeth tai hefyd yn cynnal arolwg o'r holl denantiaid bob ychydig o flynyddoedd i gael adborth ar berfformiad, a helpodd aelodau'r TSP i lunio cwestiynau'r arolwg yn yr arolwg diweddaraf. Hefyd, ceir Grŵp 100 y Gwasanaethau Tai (yr aelodaeth bresennol yw saith deg dau). Grŵp gwirfoddol o denantiaid yw hwn ac ymgynghorir â nhw drwy arolwg ar e-bost, dros y ffôn neu drwy'r post ar faes penodol o'r gwasanaeth tai, fel gwaith atgyweirio o ddydd i ddydd.
- 20 Fodd bynnag, mae'r Cyngor yn cydnabod bod angen dulliau newydd o ymgysylltu â thenantiaid, ac mae wrthi'n datblygu'r rhain, i sicrhau bod pawb yn parhau i fod â llais. Mae strategaeth y Cyngor i ymgysylltu â thenantiaid lleol yn cael ei hadolygu ar hyn o bryd. Mae nifer y tenantiaid gweithredol a grwpiau tenantiaid

cydnabyddedig yn gymharol fach (6). Er mai dim ond â rhai o'r tenantiaid a gymerodd ran yn y grwpiau y gwnaethom ni siarad â nhw, roedd rhai o'r farn bod y gwasanaeth tai wedi'u hanwybyddu i raddau helaeth yn y gorffennol. Fodd bynnag, roedden nhw'n dweud bod y cymorth i denantiaid wedi gwella yn ystod y blynyddoedd diwethaf. Dywedodd aelodau un gymdeithas tenantiaid a thrigolion leol y gwnaethom ni siarad â hi eu bod yn dal i deimlo'n ynysig, ac nad ydynt yn cael fawr ddim cymorth gan y Cyngor. Mae ymgysylltu â chymunedau ynghylch tai fforddiadwy, defnyddio digwyddiadau a rhwydweithiau presennol, fel ffeiriau ysgol a digwyddiadau amaethyddol, yn dangos bod y Cyngor yn dechrau datblygu dulliau newydd o gasglu safbwyntiau dinasyddion.

- 21 Cynhelir amryw ddiwrnodau llawn hwyl a digwyddiadau eraill lle mae staff yn ymgysylltu'n anffurfiol â thenantiaid ynghylch newidiadau a gynllunnir ar gyfer y dyfodol. Enghraifft o hyn yw'r diwrnodau gweithredu ystadau. Yn dilyn diwrnodau gweithredu ystadau mae swyddogion yn datblygu cynlluniau gweithredu ar gyfer ystadau mewn ymateb i'r ffurflenni adborth ac arolwg a lenwir gan drigolion. Yn 2018-19, mae gan y Cyngor gyllideb o ryw £2 miliwn ar gyfer gwelliannau i ystadau er mwyn, yn rhannol, datblygu syniadau a ddaw o ddiwrnodau gweithredu ystadau.

Mae'r rhan fwyaf o denantiaid y Cyngor yn fodlon iawn ar ansawdd y gwasanaeth a'u cartrefi

- 22 Dangosodd ein harolwg â thenantiaid fod pobl yn fodlon iawn ag ansawdd y gwasanaeth tai:
- mae wyth deg tri y cant o'r tenantiaid y gwnaethom ni siarad â nhw yn fodlon ar y gwasanaeth tai y maent yn ei dderbyn;
 - mae chwe deg tri y cant o'r tenantiaid y gwnaethom ni siarad â nhw o'r farn bod y Cyngor yn gwrando ar eu barn ar eu cartref;
 - mae wyth deg tri y cant o'r tenantiaid y gwnaethom ni siarad â nhw yn fodlon ar y gwaith gwella y mae'r Cyngor wedi'i wneud ar eu cartrefi;
 - mae saith deg tri y cant o'r tenantiaid y gwnaethom ni siarad â nhw yn fodlon ar yr amgylchedd y tu allan i'w cartref;
 - roedd naw deg y cant o'r tenantiaid y gwnaethom ni siarad â nhw yn hapus ag ansawdd eu ceginau, ac roedd wyth deg y cant yn hapus â'u hystafelloedd ymolchi newydd; ac
 - roedd naw deg y cant o'r tenantiaid y gwnaethom ni siarad â nhw o'r farn bod eu cymdogaeth yn lle da i fyw.
- 23 Mae'r Cyngor yn cydnabod y gallai wneud mwy i gynyddu'r amrywiaeth o ffyrdd y mae tenantiaid a darpar denantiaid yn cael gafael ar wasanaethau Tai. Er enghraifft drwy ddefnyddio'r rhyngwyd. Mae hefyd yn cydnabod bod adran y gwasanaeth Tai ar wefan y Cyngor wedi'i llunio'n wael a'i bod yn anodd ei defnyddio. Cawsom fod y wefan yn cynnwys rhywfaint o wybodaeth ddefnyddiol, ond ei bod yn anodd dod o hyd i dudalennau. Prin yw'r ffurflenni a'r dogfennau y

gellir eu llenwi ar-lein. Mae'r Cyngor yn gweithio i wella hyn, er enghraifft, mae'r ffurflen gais 'Cymryd Rhan' ar gael i'w llenwi ar-lein erbyn hyn yn hytrach na gorfod ei lawrlwytho a'i phostio yn ôl i'r Cyngor. Mae'r defnydd o gyfryngau cymdeithasol ym Mhowys yn gyfyngedig. Er bod yna dudalen Facebook i denantiaid, mae'r mynediad Band Eang gwael a welsom mewn rhai o ardaloedd y sir yn ei gwneud yn heriol i'w defnyddio'n fwy.

- 24 Mae'r gwasanaeth ffôn i denantiaid gysylltu â'r Cyngor wedi'i hyrwyddo'n dda, ac mae'r tenantiaid y gwnaethom ni siarad â nhw o'r farn ei fod yn gweithio'n dda. Roedd saith deg y cant o'r bobl y gwnaethom ni siarad â nhw yn yr arolwg o'r farn y gallen nhw gysylltu â'r gwasanaeth tai ar adegau a oedd yn gyfleus iddyn nhw.
- 25 Mae Strategaeth Dai y Cyngor, 2016-2020, yn cynnwys cyfres o fesurau sy'n cysylltu â chanlyniadau eglur, fel trechu tlodi. Mae mesurau perfformiad yn cynnwys targedau penodol, ac mae'r wybodaeth a'r targedau perfformiad yn destun craffu rheolaidd gan uwch swyddogion ac aelodau'r pwyllgorau craffu. Mae'r Cyngor yn dibynnu'n bennaf ar ddangosyddion perfformiad allweddol ac arolygon boddhad i werthuso gwaith y gwasanaeth o'i gymharu â'r strategaeth.

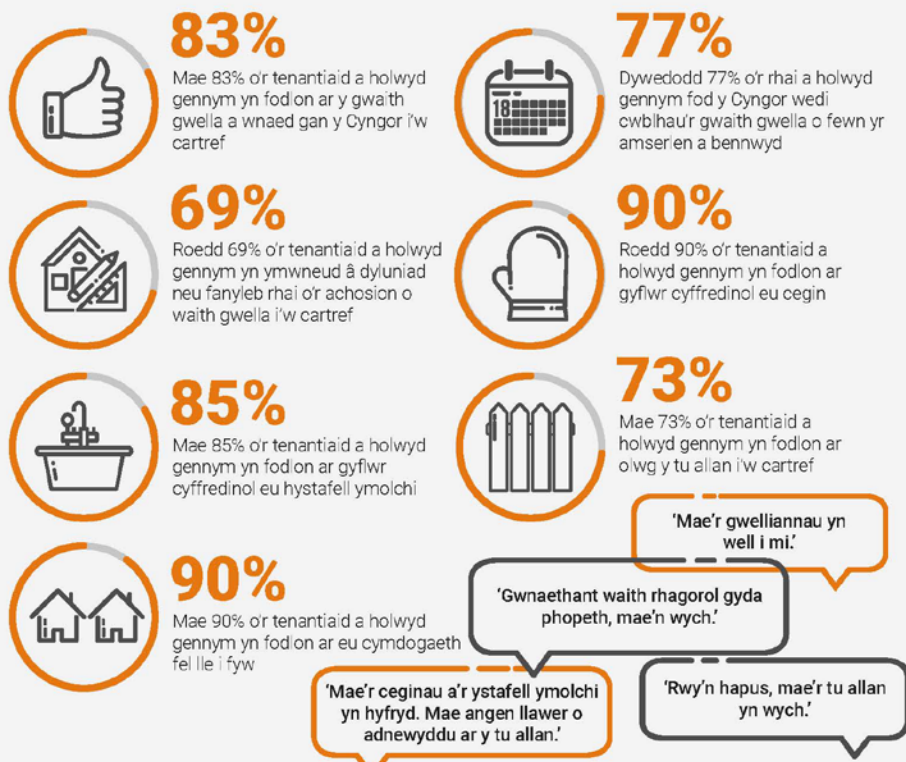
Atodiad 1

Ffeithlun yn crynhoi canfyddiadau allweddol yr arolygon a gyflawnwyd

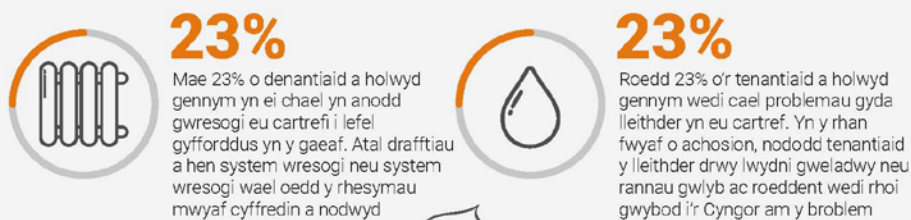
Arddangosyn 2: ffeithlun o'r gwasanaeth tai



Mae'r rhan fwyaf o denantiaid yn fodlon ar gyflwr eu cartrefi a'r gwelliannau SATC a wnaed gan y Cyngor:



Mae'r rhai tenantiaid o'r farn nad yw eu cartrefi'n ddigon cynnes yn ystod y gaeaf a dywedodd rhai wrthym bod ganddynt broblemau gyda lleithder:



Darllenwch yr adroddiad llawn ar wasanaeth tai Cyngor Powys ar ein gwefan: www.archwilio.cymru

Gwnaethom siarad â 321 o denantiaid a phrydleswyr. Mae hyn yn cynrychioli tua 6% o holl aelwydydd a reolir gan y Cyngor.

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CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

HEALTH, CARE AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
8th November 2018

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor James Evans
Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Housing and
Public Protection

SUBJECT: Damp and Thermal Comfort Strategies for Powys

REPORT FOR: Discussion and Information

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out a proposal to improve the strategic and operational approach to dealing with damp in, and improving further the thermal comfort of, Powys County Council's HRA housing stock. The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider these approaches, which have an increased focus on tenants' health and alleviating fuel poverty.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 These measures are proposed as part of a vision to develop a 'WHQS Plus' programme, and address WHQS 'acceptable fails'. They are proposed ahead of a more comprehensive asset management strategy to be produced later next year.
- 2.2 The WHQS Compliance Policy sets out the approach to achieving WHQS compliance, and the council will complete its targeted programme of component replacement works by December 2018. The WHQS system allows landlords to declare that a property has 'acceptable fails', where a tenant refuses the work or where a solution is technically difficult, or too expensive to achieve. Powys has a large number of acceptable fails for energy efficiency, given that the county has high numbers of properties in off gas areas, or on mains or bottled Liquid Petroleum Gas systems.
- 2.3 It has been found during the WHQS programmes, and following requests from tenant groups and members to solve isolated long term damp or heating issues, it has become clear measures are required beyond replacing the building components.
- 2.4 Furthermore, a telephone survey conducted by Welsh Audit Office, as part of their study into the council's achievement of the WHQS in the spring of 2018, revealed that while 77% of tenants felt they had no problems with damp or condensation, 23% were concerned. Similarly, 23% of residents found it difficult to heat their homes to a comfortable

level in the winter. Whilst these results are typical for a local authority with an ageing housing stock, there is a need to establish why these concerns remain, and to address them. These strategies aim to provide a framework to do that, to work in partnership with Heart of Wales Property Services and health services, so that individual cases are referred to the council for investigation.

- 2.5 The damp strategy focuses on ensuring there is detailed investigation to establish the type of damp, and its true cause i.e. could it be contributed by unseen as well as visible building faults. This will address concerns expressed by tenant groups that there is too much reliance on the cause being condensation caused by tenant lifestyles.
- 2.6 Rising fuel prices are causing difficulties for some tenants, even where modern heating systems are fitted. Historic building faults, such poorly installed or deterioration of heating systems and insulation schemes also contribute to problems within the housing stock. The measures contained in the Thermal Comfort Strategy relate to the management of requests, consideration of tenants' health and vulnerabilities, as well technical solutions.
- 2.6 The thermal comfort and damp strategies focus on considering the residents age, health and lifestyle profile, and tailoring solutions to meet their needs. The proposals also:
- **Consider people.** Older persons, or other ages with health problems, are more likely to operate heating for longer periods, and at higher temperatures. A property that may meet the WHQS standard, can still be expensive to heat in those circumstances. Children are more susceptible to the effects of damp and mould. To discharge corporate parenting and duty of care responsibilities we need to ensure the building and its services are not contributing to this. The strategies provide a means to support residents at greatest risk, to ensure appropriate solutions can be found.
 - **Consider the building as a whole.** For damp issues this is looking at the building construction, and its heating and ventilation together, rather than in isolation. For thermal comfort, looking at the buildings insulation, heating system, and again ventilation.
 - **Consider and respond to trends.** At present, the numbers of known persistent damp issues, or complaints about thermal comfort and running costs are small. These are resolved in isolation. However, trends are developing in certain streets of increased problems, indicating more widespread investigations and programmes of work will be required.
- 2.7 These strategies will be consulted with the Response Repairs Sub Group, and Investing in Homes Sub Group in November, and the Tenant

Scrutiny Panel in December. Following this engagement full proposals will be presented to the Cabinet in the New Year.

2.8 Delivery of these strategies will be over seen by the HRA project board.

3. Finance

- 3.1 In anticipation of the measures outlined in the strategies, £200k per annum has been set aside for additional measures such as Photovoltaic or Solar Panels to roofs. A further £500k per year is put aside for Damp alleviation works. These sums are included in the HRA Business Plan, accepted by the Welsh Government. Tackling and pro-actively preventing damp will reduce the likelihood of residents withholding rent. Easing residents fuel bills will increase their ability to pay their rent.
- 3.2 Proposals for investment will be reviewed arising from investigations that have taken place, and feedback from residents. These will be presented as part of the annual budget setting process for the Council, reported to Cabinet later in 2018.

4 Views of the Scrutiny Committee

- 4.1 The views of the Heath, Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Committee are sought on the proposed Damp and Thermal Comfort Strategies.

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Appendix 1 – Damp Strategy

Appendix 2 – Thermal Comfort Strategy

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Strategy to address damp issues in Powys owned housing stock

Powys County Council
Housing Services

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Executive summary

Damp is a real, or sometimes perceived problem for residents. Some express fears that breathing in air from damp rooms or mould growth can cause, or aggravate, breathing conditions such as asthma.

Damp is a generic term widely used, but reflects consequence, assumption or perception, rather than being the true description of the event, or the cause itself.

Landlords have a statutory and common law responsibility to their tenants to provide a safe, warm and damp free homes. The Welsh Housing Quality Standard, and Housing Health and Safety Rating System, set out requirements as detailed in part 2.

Powys stock condition survey recorded that 2.5% of its properties suffered with damp. The recent survey of 300 residents conducted by the Welsh Audit Office, found that 23% of residents reported concerns about damp.

In the last 5 years 30% of residents have reported issues with damp or mould. While the numbers of cases are declining, some persistent problems are being experienced. Recent detailed investigations and case reviews have established that greater attention is needed to diagnosis and remedy.

The investigations have found that there are underlying issues with some of Powys' housing stock that do need to be addressed, and resident lifestyle is not always the main cause.

Powys are pro-actively responding to a Welsh Government led initiative regarding design and installation faults with cavity wall and external insulation. This is aimed at ensuring local authorities are not repeating mistakes of the past, and understand their risks arising from this.

It is proposed to build on the findings from the review and associated pilot work carried out over the last year. A structured approach to dealing with damp issues will be put in place in collaboration with our maintenance partner Heart of Wales Property Service. This will ensure robust process and controls from the first contact, through to advanced approaches to dealing with persistent problems.

Step 1 – ensure as much information is collected about reports of damp problem at first point of call, and pre inspection, so the type and cause is identified.

Step 2 – provide information to residents to assist them managing natural condensation that will naturally occur in their homes.

Step 3 – Adopt a consistent step by step checklist approach within HOWPS and PCC, to ensure all matters a landlord may be responsible for are investigated and rectified.

Step 4 – Adopt a whole house approach, considering heating and ventilation upgrades in difficult to resolve cases, or where it is considered residents medical needs or vulnerabilities are a factor.

Step 5 – where no building, ventilation or heating faults are apparent, provide further information to residents to assist them managing condensation.

DRAFT

1. Introduction

The word damp is applied as a common description, and can relate to visible effects, mould growth, smells, or even perception. Damp can be caused by condensation of water vapour generated within a home, or water ingress due to faults with, or decay of, the construction a property. Mould growth is often associated with reports of damp, along with complaints this is causing poor health. Section 2 explores the types of damp.

For the purpose of this strategy the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) Operating Guidance is referred to in terms of risk. Section 1 of the guidance relates to physiological requirements, including damp, extreme cold and extreme heat. The guide sets out that spores of many moulds and fungi can have health effects. These are explored later in this document.

Powys Context

Powys County Council's Housing Service manage approximately 5,400 properties, spread across Powys. In 2012 & 2015 Powys County Council's Housing Service commissioned Savills to carry out stock condition surveys to all its stock. The Councils Welsh Housing Quality Standards programme was determined from these surveys. The surveys identified that around 140 or 2.5% of properties suffered with damp, though the surveys did not detail the type or location of that damp.

In 2017, a process was adopted to appoint BBACIT, the consultancy arm of the British Board of Agreement, to inspect and report on properties with persistent damp issues. These surveys were partly invasive in nature, aimed at identifying the true causes of damp. e.g. using scoping cameras to inspect inside wall cavities through small holes drilled in the structure. While this process has assisted in many cases, it has been necessary in some for carry out further invasive investigation to establish true cause, e.g. exposing the structure of walls or floors.

Internal process were also amended in 2017 to ensure that any investigations carried out internally were fully invasive, and establish for certainty the construction details and actual cause of damp. The new process has included a whole house review approach too, which ensures that the heating and ventilation is checked to see if it meets modern, rather than previous standards.

A National problem

In recent years problems have become apparent across Wales with failures of cavity wall insulation and external wall insulation. The failures with cavity wall insulation include installing in properties not suitable to insulate, or using the wrong type of insulation, given the exposure rating of the property. Poor workmanship also occurred with areas missed during installation, and pre-existing building faults were not rectified. Some local authorities are facing substantial costs to remove cavity wall insulation from properties that were not suitable to insulate, or had the wrong material fitted for the exposure rating. This prompted a Welsh Government led initiative in 2017 to ensure local authorities do not repeat past mistakes, and understand their risks with matter.

2. Background

2.1 Damp

We are all exposed to damp in our homes, since activities such as cooking, bathing, showering, washing clothes, and even breathing create water vapour. This water vapour needs assistance to escape, or it will increase humidity within the property and condense on colder surfaces. While designed to prevent water entering the inside of a building, the external envelope comprising the roof, walls, windows and doors can develop faults, or decay over time. A single fault, or combination of issues, can cause water to penetrate the external envelope.

2.2 Where is damp found?

Damp can occur anywhere in a home, though is typically found in on walls and ceilings in kitchen and bathrooms, the perimeter of ceilings/top of walls in bedrooms. Damp can occur around the edges of, and on the surface of windows, and occasionally it can appear as a patch in the middle of a wall. It can also be found on the lower part of walls in the ground floor rooms, or within the floors.

Its appearance can show as a wet patch, mould growth, or with a visible signs such as salts coming out of the wall. In severe cases plaster decay or blowing can occur. Condensation can also occur in roof spaces if they are not properly vented or insulated, causing sweating on the underside of roof felt.

2.3 What are the types damp?

Condensation

This is typically defined by running water across a surface, caused by water vapour which has “condensed” from warm, moist air on contact with a cold surface. Warm air is able to hold more moisture than cold air, and the amount of moisture in the air is usually expressed as Relative Humidity (RH). Air which contains its maximum moisture content is said to be saturated, at which point it has 100% RH.

Indoor relative humidity should be between 40% and 60%, except for short periods of fluctuation. This range is the optimum to limit the occurrence of condensation and mould growth.

It is important to note that in some circumstances natural condensation can occur when there may be no obvious causes, or a combination of less usual events occur. BRE Digest 297 (Reference), states

“Condensation is always the result of air becoming saturated when it meets a cold surface, but the conditions under which it may occur in dwellings vary considerably. Broadly speaking, condensation is dependent on three interacting factors: the environment within the building, the building structure and the natural climatic conditions outside the building.”

Interstitial Condensation

This can occur where the temperature at a point with the structure is cold enough to cause water vapour to condense within it. This can lead to progressive saturation of masonry or cavity wall insulation.

Cold Bridging

This tends to occur in isolated areas, where a structural feature, or partial omission of insulation, lowers the temperature of part of a surface. This means this area will be colder, and can trigger condensing of water vapour just at that point.

Leaks (Traumatic Damp)

This is obviously apparent where a pipe bursts or cracks. However, it can be more difficult to identify if there is a hidden cause gradually soaking the area affected. e.g. leaking underfloor pipes can give an impression of rising damp, as the structure will gradually absorb the water through capillary action.

Water penetration

This occurs where rainwater penetrates through the tiles on the roof, or the walls, windows or doors. This may be due to a fault with one of those components, or as a greater volume of water is affecting an area e.g. leaking gutter saturating the wall. It can also occur when ground levels outside are higher than the buildings dpc causing water to soak through the walls.

Flooding

Powys is fortunate that events of flooding from rivers is a very low risk. Some properties have been affected by overflowing storm water culverts, and this is carefully managed. However, some estates are built into hillsides, and extreme rain events can cause flooding around the house. Where this occurs any weakness in construction can lead to water penetration.

Rising Damp

This is damp visible at low level to ground floor walls, or where a concrete floor is damp. This is typically defined by a tidemark, or change in surface condition of the plaster. It is important to differentiate this from water penetration to raised ground levels.

- Rising damp is primarily caused by the capillary rise of ground water through the structure.
- However, it can over time be due to the salts that are left from the ground water that has evaporated, causing walls or floors to become porous i.e. hygroscopic. Here the walls can absorb humid air from within the property.

In cases of rising damp it is important to remove affected plaster and replace with a product that will combat the effect of hygroscopic damp.

Perception Damp

This typically relates to reports made by residents that it feels or smells damp.

It feels Damp - In cases where there is no visible damp, this can occur where the relative humidity in the property is naturally high, but the building structure is such that surfaces do not get cold enough for condensation to occur.

It smells damp - In cases with no visible damp, musty smells could be due to a lack of ventilation in the property.

In such cases it is important not to pre judge, and investigate if there is potential for hidden damp or fungal growth, or interstitial condensation within the structure.

Moulds and Fungal Growth

This is the effect of the cause of damp. Moulds can grow when the indoor relative humidity persistently exceeds 70%. Most cases of mould are slight to moderate, but more severe cases can lead to the visible release of spore dust. Fungal growth is less common, and more associated with leaks and water penetration event. Typically the types are wet or dry rot in timber, but plaster or cellar fungus can occur.

2.4 The importance of ventilation and heating

There should be continuous low-level of background ventilation, that allows 0.5 air changes per hour. For this reason the building regulations stipulate that windows shall be fitted with trickle ventilation, even for existing properties. In some cases tenants shut these vents complaining of cold drafts, however this will reduce required air changes.

Extract ventilation in kitchens and bathrooms is also important to remove steam from cooking, bathing and showering, and this is required by Part 3 e) of the WHQS standard.

A property should be heated to maintain a temperature between 18 and 21 degrees, and radiators should be utilised in all rooms to avoid a cold spot in the house for water to condense. Clearly there can be a conflict with affordability for some tenants, particularly for those with key meters, which may lead to some rooms being unheated. A supportive and constructive approach to education needs to be taken if it is found that condensation is only occurring in unheated rooms, especially if fuel poverty is a factor. In these cases residents should be sign posted to Citizens Advice to receive free energy advice.

2.5 Wellbeing Implications

Risks from mould and fungi

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) Operating Guidance sets out the potential for Harm, and identifies that those under 14 are the most vulnerable age group. An extract of the HHSRS Operating Guidance is shown at Appendix 1. The guide explains that that spores of many moulds and fungi (including timber attacking fungi) can be allergenic, and that risks of health effects are greater to those vulnerable to infection, or with predisposition to sensitisation. It reports health symptoms such as

- rhinitis, conjunctivitis, eczema, cough and wheeze,

- asthma in sensitised persons where there is repeated exposure
- the severity of the asthma can intensifies with increasing humidity, house dust mite and mould levels.

The guide also explains that spores from certain types of mould can be toxic and carcinogenic.

The HHSRS guidance also points to research that shows low levels of background ventilation, without visible mould or dampness, can result in high indoor humidity levels and greatly increased house dust mite populations.

Mitigating Risks

Reducing occurrences of reported damp need the right balance of building fault remedy heating, ventilation and this will vary based on the construction and the design. Some properties, or residents' medical needs, may benefit from enhanced ventilation to overcome situations where technical characteristics cannot be improved.

2.6 Regulatory Requirements

The Welsh Housing Quality Standard

The WHQS standard has an overriding requirement that a dwelling must be structurally stable, free from damp and from disrepair. The key building components must be in good condition. The walls must be in good condition as must the roof structure and coverings. External windows, doors and chimneys must also be in good condition.

The standard treats damp as a primary requirement i.e. one that affects safety of residents. It defines the requirements by reference to hazards rated as category 1 under the HHSRS. In An assessment of hazard of risk with damp and mould growth will involve reviewing the extent and severity of the dampness and any mould growth in all rooms within the dwelling. It is the cumulative contribution of those deficiencies to the hazard of damp and mould growth which should be assessed. For this reason a property with a minor damp issue in one room, e.g. cold bridging that may cause seasonal slight mould growth, does not in strict application fail the WHQS standard.

2.7 Legal and Insurance implications

It is an important part of forward strategy that the cause of the issue is identified and categorized, and care is needed not to make assumptions, particularly that tenant lifestyle is to blame. There has been a recent increase in formal disrepair cases taken out against the authority, which can involve large sums in rent based compensation. Compensation claims for damage to contents from mould and health effects are also received.

Care is therefore needed with record keeping to make sure it is accurate, and statements are not made that could be perceived as an acceptance of liability. In disrepair cases, an innocent historic reference to damp, could be used as a reference point for when the damp started, in an attempt to increase rent refund compensation. In insurance claim cases, poor record keeping will be treated as a weakness by the insurance company, resulting in difficulty defending claims and admission of liability by default.

2.8 Current PCC Policy and Standards

Powys are committed to dealing with all damp events in tenants homes, however minor. The WHQS Compliance Policy sets out a wider definition of the standard the Council aim to achieve. This is shown at Appendix 3. The Quality of Accommodation Service Standard, otherwise referred to as the letting standard, also sets out that properties should be free from damp or mould. For that reason Powys will endeavor to investigate and remedy all cases of damp and assist residents manage natural condensation. However, there may be situations where condensation issues need to be monitored and managed, or interim solutions adopted pending planned programme works.

The Repairs and Maintenance Service Standard does not distinguish damp events from other response repairs, except for identifying that severe leaks must be dealt with as an emergency. An Appendix to the Standard will be prepared in consultation with the Response Repairs Working Group.

3. Damp and Powys' housing stock

3.1 Stock Survey Data

The stock surveys carried out 2012 and 2015 identified 140 properties with damp, although the type and location of damp was not recorded. The focus of the Councils WHQS programme at that time was component replacements, rather than targeting damp properties.

A review of the Savills raw data shows the estates with the highest occurrences of damp were

- Garth Owen, Newtown
- Fairview, Temple Street, Llandrindod Wells
- Woodlands Avenue, Brecon
- Wyeside, Hay on Wye

Around 100 of these properties, e.g. Wyeside Gardens, will have received WHQS work that would help to mitigate damp, such as new insulated roofs, or/and external wall insulation. A further 17 of these properties have received attention for damp or mould through response repairs orders. In addition Fairview has been completely refurbished.

3.2 Findings from BBA and Pilot Investigations

Some of Powys earlier built properties were not constructed with damp proof courses (dpc) in the walls, and damp proof membranes in the floor (dpm). Inter war and some earlier post war properties have painted bitumen based dpcs or dpms. However, the DPC position can be closer to the ground than current requirements, at 75mm rather than 150mm. Over time ground levels may have been raised by residents, or by the council to create ramps for level access into properties. This can causes the dpc to be bridged allowing water to penetrate across the wall, and makes properties unsuitable for cavity wall insulation.

3.3 Findings from Service Manager Review

Following concerns expressed by the Chair of the Response Repairs Sub Group, the Service Manager – Asset Management conducted a review of several cases initially indicated by Housing Surveyors as condensation, or requiring a paint over or tanking (membrane) treatment. The review established that

- Where the initial diagnosis was the cause was tenant lifestyle, this was too presumptive, as issues with the building were found.
- There were inherent building defects that needed to be rectified, and an approach to seal these in was not appropriate.
- Building ventilation and heating systems required greater consideration

As a result damp awareness training has been undertaken for all PCC and HOWPS surveyors via Housing Quality Network, and direction has been issued to ensure that all building defects and ventilation issues are resolved, and the modernity of the heating system

is considered. Further training is being arranged to assist detailed methods of invasive surveys.

3.4 Powys response to the national problem

Powys do not appear to have the scale of the cavity insulation problem some local authorities face, though some cases of damp have been linked to faults with the cavity insulation. Where this has occurred, it has been removed, and replaced, or the property has had external wall insulation added. Due to a trend of concerns with the workmanship of one installer, a sample survey of their work was undertaken by BBACIT, and the results are shown below

- 3 properties were satisfactory
- 2 properties had some workmanship issues, but these were not causing damp, and these will be monitored
- 1 had no faults with the insulation, but the buildings pointing had decayed, and this needed remedy
- 1 property had faults with the cavity insulation that needed attention
- 1 property was not suitable to have cavity insulation

3.5 Evolving Trends

A study of repairs history since the commencement of the WHQS programme in 2012 shows that there have been orders raised for damp or mould at 1602 properties. This is 30% of the stock. This has some consistency with the results of the Welsh Audit Office telephone survey, where 23% of residents expressed concerns about damp.

It is interesting to note that the numbers of reports of damp and mould are decreasing year on year. The table below shows this, which validates the impact of the WHQS programme, and the revised approach to dealing with damp since 2017. There is also a significant reduction in the number of repeat orders to address damp at a property within a given year. This indicates more robust diagnosis and solutions are starting to be applied.

Year	Reports of damp or mould	Numbers of repeat orders per property per year
2012	363	81
2013	404	81
2014	527	140
2015	345	48
2016	359	40
2017	186	30
2018	133	6

In the last two years a trend is emerging of damp due to building defects at,

- Garth Owen, Newtown
- Yniswen, Penycae
- lyshrhos, Caerbont

It is becoming apparent that these older properties either lack, or are beginning to see failure of original methods of damp proofing.

There are also issues with upside down houses in Treowen, Newtown. These properties are built into the hillside, such they are two storey at the front, and single story at the rear. In ground floor rooms, there have been failures with the original wall membrane (tanking system), causing groundwater to penetrate through the walls. Condensation and perception damp is also a wide concern.

These trends indicate that a more proactive approach is needed for these streets and estates. It is proposed that

- 1) These properties are prioritised for stock condition survey in 2019, to assess the prevalence of damp
- 2) Pre-emptive invasive investigations and works are carried out when the properties become void
- 3) The need for a wider planned programme of preventative work is reviewed on completion of the stock surveys

A register will be established so further trends can be recorded, and progress tracked.

4. The Way Ahead

It is proposed to build on findings of the BBA's surveys and pilot work carried out over the last year, and put in place a structured approach to dealing with damp issues, from the first contact and actions by HOWPS, to advanced approaches to dealing with persistent problems.

4.1 Approach to dealing with reports of damp

Receipt of tenants call reporting damp

As stated earlier, a reference that may appear to accept the situation as damp by a call centre operative, can be used as evidence of an admission of liability by the claimants solicitor. For that reason, it is proposed that any reports of damp to a PCC First Contact Officers or HOWPS 'call centre operative, are handled and recorded in a controlled way. A script will be developed to follow, to attempt to establish as much information about the problem, and categorise it under one of the damp type headings. If not possible to do that, the matter must be recorded as 'tenant reports damp, investigation required'. The investigation then needs to categorise the damp headings. This means that if there is a condensation issue or false perception, due to tenant's activities or opinion, it will always be recorded as such from that point in time.

Investigation methodology

Training has been carried out by the Housing Quality Network for Powys and HOWPS Surveyors, to ensure there is a consistent approach to investigation and diagnosis. This will include a checklist approach that will record findings, and allow a step by step approach to eradicating damp in the property. Sometimes a step by step approach to remedial work is required, as resolving one issue may negate the need for further measures. A controlled process will be agreed with HOWPS to ensure that records will be available to robustly defend disrepair or personal injury claims.

The proposed process for investigation

- 1) Where call centre staff can establish a likely cause such as water penetration, or a leak, an HOWPS operative will attend and rectify.
- 2) Other reports of damp should receive a pre inspection by a HOWPS surveyor or supervisor, and initial diagnosis using appropriate equipment. A photographic record will be taken of the findings and any readings taken.
- 3) Where the pre inspection identifies a clear defect(s) this will be dealt with as a repair by Howps, the checklist will be completed and sent to the Council, with confirmation of work carried out.
- 4) All surveys should ensure the attributes and their condition at the time of the visit are recorded, that ventilation measures exist and are being used by the resident
- 5) Information should also be collected about the heating system at the property, its use at time of visit, and pattern of use.
- 6) Where the pre inspection identifies further investigation is needed, the outcome form the pre inspection, checklist and photos will be sent to the councils housing surveyor,

who will arrange/carry out a more detailed survey, and review of ventilation and heating at the property.

- 7) The Councils Housing Surveyor will recommend the work required too, and obtain approval from, the Client Side Team Leader.
- 8) Where a resident disputes the councils findings consideration will be given to commissioning an independent review.

4.2 Prioritising Surveys

Where further trends develop of damp occurrences becoming common in a street, or on an estate, surrounding properties will be prioritised for the first batch of post WHQS programme Stock Condition Surveys to be carried out in 2019.

4.3 Remedies and Operational delivery

Water penetration

HOWPS will rectify issues permanently where possible, but in some cases may carry out interim repairs, and refer the matter to Powys for WHQS works. These works will be carried out as part of Powys WHQS programme

Damp proofing

Greater emphasis will be put on installing retrofit damp courses, and replacing concrete floors with no in built membranes. To align with the Radon Strategy, Radon proof membranes will be used in these cases. If expenditure is very high consideration may need to be given to the economy of carrying out the works, and whether this offers value for money, given the age or use the property can be put to.

Ventilation

Currently properties may have a mixture of manual, time run on, continuous running or humidistatic fans. We will move toward upgrading all fans to humidistatic or continuous running units at void. Some manufactures offer free property assessments, so we will utilise these to ensure the most appropriate type are used.

Some properties have positive air pressure ventilation systems and greater use will be made of these in difficult to resolve cases. These systems are fitted in the roof void, and residents can complain about the cold air that comes though the inlets for these. Therefore, we will install a version with a heat recovery option going forward, and upgrade existing installations where it is considered residents circumstances warrant a change

Heating

While some systems may be complaint with WHQS in terms of their age, they may not be providing the optimum balance of temperatures, or may have less modern controls. Consideration will therefore be given to uprading controls, or replacing with more appropriate whole systems, including renewable energy options.

Whole House Approach

The EPC for the property will also be reviewed, or obtained where one does not exist, so all aspects and impacts are collectively reviewed.

Procurement and Supply Chain

There is currently no specific arrangement for carrying out damp proofing works, so a dynamic purchasing system will be developed so there is a pool of specialist contractors available to carry out this work, and offer long term guarantees.

4.4 Consulting with residents

To maintain openness and transparency, the Response Repairs Sub-Group will be consulted on the development of this strategy and associated changes to policy and standards. The group will be used to approve the information and communication information to be developed and made available to residents.

We understand that there are fears about health risks associated with damp so propose to raise awareness by the following means:

- Articles in 'Investing in your Home' newsletter
- Discussions with tenant representatives at Resident Scrutiny Panel and Response Repairs Sub-Group
- Development of information leaflet to supplement CD's currently utilised.
- Availability of leaflets and CD's to hand out at estate days and events
- Briefing notes to inform Councillors and Assembly Members of the initiative, and should wider targeted investigations or work programmes take place

4.5 Costs

Initial Investigation Costs

The cost of initial inspection by HOWPS is included in the annual sum paid to them. In cases where it is believed further investigation is required, they will refer the matter to the Councils Housing Surveyor. At present BBACIT charge £600 for their survey, but the intention is to train and equip PCC staff to carry out these surveys.

Interim Costs

The costs of washing down and treating mould is included in the annual sum paid to HOWPS, as would be removal and treatment of fungi.

Further Investigation and Repair Costs

The costs of investigation and repairs to remedy water ingress and leaks is included in the annual sum paid to HOWPS, provided that substantial parts of, or whole component replacements are not required. Examples would include

- Repairing a roof, including replacing up to 50% of tiles

- Repairing or replacing areas of rendering or pointing provided this is not required for the whole property

The costs of investigation and works to remedy rising damp will not be included in the annual sum. If the situation requires complete replacement or installation of a Damp Proof Course, or replacement of concrete floors, this will be funded from Capital Budget.

Budget

Provision has been made for £500,000 per annum over the next five years to allow comprehensive solutions to be adopted. Costs may vary widely depending on the scope of work required, and typically will be

- up to £10,000 for full damp course treatment to walls (including replastering),
- up to £20,000 where concrete floors require replacement.

4.6 Asset Management

In order to address the weakness in information from the Savills survey, future stock condition surveys will be designed to collect more information about the type, location and potential causes of damp. It is proposed to commence a stock survey of 20% of Powys per year from 2019, and priorities will include streets or estates where there are historic, or increasing trends of damp problems.

Appendix 1 - Extract from Housing Health and Safety Rating Standard 2006, Operating Guidance

Potential for harm

Most vulnerable age group and statistical averages

1.02 The most vulnerable age group is all persons aged 14 years or under.

Basis of estimates

1.03 The averages for Class I outcomes were calculated from the mortality statistics for England and Wales for respiratory disease in children aged 0 to 14 years. The figures for Class II and III were calculated using the same criteria from data from the Hospital Episode Statistics. The estimates for Class IV outcomes were taken from GP consultation rates for coughs and wheeze.

1.04 Recent research has shown that low levels of background ventilation, without visible mould or dampness, can result in high indoor humidity levels and in greatly increased house dust mite populations. In consequence the average likelihoods given may be an underestimate, and should be considered as conservative.

Damp and Mould Growth							
Average likelihood and health outcomes for all persons aged 14 years or under, 1997-1999							
Dwelling type & age		Average likelihood 1 in	Spread of health outcomes				Average HHSRS scores
			Class 1 %	Class II %	Class III %	Class IV %	
Non HMOs	Pre 1920	446	0.0	1.0	10.0	89.0	11 (I)
	1920-45	400	0.0	1.0	10.0	89.0	12 (I)
	1946-79	446	0.0	1.0	10.0	89.0	11 (I)
	Post 1979	725	0.0	1.0	10.0	89.0	7 (J)
HMOs	Pre 1920	430	0.0	1.0	10.0	89.0	11 (I)
	1920-45	219	0.0	1.0	10.0	89.0	22 (H)
	1946-79	967	0.0	1.0	10.0	89.0	5 (J)
	Post 1979	644	0.0	1.0	10.0	89.0	8 (J)
All Dwellings		464	0.0	1.0	10.0	89.0	11 (I)

Physiological health effects

1.05 Both the detritus from house dust mites and mould spores are potent airborne allergens. Exposure to high concentrations of these allergens over a prolonged period will cause sensitisation of atopic individuals (those with a predetermined genetic tendency to sensitisation), and may sensitise non-atopic individuals. Once a person is sensitised relatively low concentrations of the airborne allergen can trigger allergic symptoms such as rhinitis, conjunctivitis, eczema, cough and wheeze. For a sensitised person, repeated exposure can lead to asthma, and it appears that the severity of the asthma intensifies with increasing humidity, house dust mite and mould levels.

1.06 Deaths from all forms of asthma in the UK are around 1,500 a year, of which around 60% has been attributed to dust mite allergy. 20 to 30% of asthma sufferers are sensitised to mould spores. One in eight children suffer with asthma in the UK, compared with one in thirteen adults.

Mould growth

1.08 Although less significant statistically in health terms, spores of many moulds and fungi (including timber attacking fungi) can be allergenic. The spores can also be carcinogenic, toxic and cause infections; the potential health effect varying with species. Fungal infection, whilst not common, is usually associated with those vulnerable to infection (such as those on immuno-suppressant drugs). Some fungi, particularly when in very high concentrations, can also colonise the airways of susceptible individuals, particularly asthmatics. Toxins from some moulds (mycotoxins) can cause nausea and diarrhoea, can suppress the immune system, and have been implicated in cancers. Although uncommon, these are serious if they occur.

Social and mental health effects

1.09 The mental and social health effects of dampness and mould should not be underestimated. Damage to decoration from mould or damp staining and the smells associated with damp and mould can cause depression and anxiety. Feelings of shame and embarrassment can lead to social isolation.

Appendix 2 - Extract from Welsh Housing Quality Standard

PART 1 - In a good state of repair

The Standard

The dwelling must be structurally stable, free from damp and from disrepair. The key building components must be in good condition. The walls must be in good condition as must the roof structure and coverings. External windows, doors and chimneys must also be in good condition.

Minimum Requirement

All dwellings must be in a good state of repair. The assessment of whether or not the dwelling is in a good state of repair will be carried out using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

Elements that will need to be assessed are:

1(a) structurally stable and free from disrepair (Primary)

1(b) free from damp (Primary)

Interpretation

1(b) Is the dwelling free from damp (Primary)?

This is referred to in the HHSRS Operating Guidance as HHSRS Hazard 1. This hazard assessment covers threats to health associated with increased prevalence of house dust mites and mould or fungal growths resulting from dampness and/or high humidities. The hazard incorporates threats to mental health and social wellbeing which may be caused by living with the presence of damp, damp staining and/or mould growth.

There are many variables to understanding the causes, likely impact and potential hazards relating to the dwelling being free from damp, which means that the assessment should be one of professional judgement rather than measurement. Consideration should be given to the design, condition and state of repair of the dwelling. The location, extent and duration of any dampness identified are important determinants of the effect it may have on dust mite populations and mould growth, and the consequent potential for harm (HHSRS Operating Guidance ref: pages 48

Appendix 3 - Extract from Powys WHQS Compliance Policy

1(b) free from damp – primary

HHSRS Hazard 1: Damp and mould growth

Powys standard

- A. Dwellings should be warm, dry and well-ventilated. Indoor relative humidity should be between 40% and 60%, except for short periods of fluctuation. This range is the optimum to limit the growth of house dust mite populations and mould growth. It is also the recognized comfort zone.
- B. The structure and finishes of a dwelling should be maintained free from rising, penetrating and traumatic dampness, or persistent condensation.
- C. Rising and penetrating dampness should be prevented by proper and adequate damp-proofing including damp proof courses and membranes and detailing around door and window openings. The external fabric should be kept in repair to prevent rain penetration. Preventative measures including frost protection, will help avoid traumatic problems such as burst pipes and tanks.
- D. All facilities which involve the use of water (for example, baths, wash hand basins, sinks, showers, and wc basins) should be properly installed to prevent or at least minimise the risk of dampness from splashing during normal use. Such facilities should be properly connected to a waste pipe capable of safely carrying waste water to a drainage inlet outside the dwelling.
- E. There should be properly installed rain water goods, including eaves gutters and rainwater fall pipes, capable of safely collecting rainwater discharged from the roof and carrying it safely away from the dwelling either into a drainage inlet or other proper means of disposal.
- F. Roof and underfloor spaces should be properly ventilated to ensure timber remains air dry to minimize the chance of fungal infection.
- G. The dwelling should be able to cope with normal occupant moisture producing activities without persistently high relative humidities. There should be provision for the safe removal of moisture-laden air during peak production. This should include extraction during cooking or bathing, either by mechanical means, or passive stack ventilation and direct venting of clothes drying facilities (whether tumble driers or drying cabinets) to the exterior.
- H. There should be sufficient and appropriate means of ventilation to deal with moisture generated by normal domestic activities without the need to open windows. Opening windows can result in heat loss, noise, and may be a security risk. There may be no need for additional background ventilation where windows are ill-fitting, no draught-stripping, and/or where there are open chimney flues. Where there is draught-stripping, or tight fitting windows, provision for background ventilation may be

necessary via trickle vents in replacement windows, insertion of high-level airbricks, or by a passive stack or a mechanical heat recovery ventilation (MHRV) system.

- I. If moisture levels are controlled, through adequate ventilation, dust mite populations can be significantly reduced by raising indoor temperatures. To achieve this, there should be adequate structural thermal insulation, and appropriate means of space heating.

DRAFT

Appendix 4 Further reading and sources of information

Housing Health and Safety Rating Standard 2006

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/15810/142631.pdf

Welsh Housing Quality Standard

<https://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/141030-whqs-guide-for-social-landlords-en.pdf>

Powys WHQS Compliance Policy

https://customer.powys.gov.uk/media/2765/WHQS-Compliance-Policy-2017-2018/pdf/WHQS_Compliance_Policy_2017-2018_June_2017_ENG.pdf

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Strategy to address thermal comfort and fuel poverty

Powys County Council
Housing Services



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Executive summary

Optimum thermal comfort is achieved through a balance of heating, insulation and ventilation. Complaints show a trend of residents feeling cold, and concerned about their or family's health. Some tenants report they have high bills or cannot afford to fully heat their homes.

Medical or psychological needs can result in some residents having demands for higher temperatures, or more prolonged periods of heating use than average. Rising fuel costs are causing fuel poverty, and this can be worse for those in off gas areas, and for those on pay meters.

Landlords have a responsibility to their tenants under legislation to provide a safe, warm and damp free home. The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS), and Housing Health and Safety Rating System 2006 (HHSRS), set out the requirements to meet, and the risks to address.

Powys have installed 1680 heating systems and externally insulated 1058 of properties in the last five years. The programme of works to ensure properties meet the Welsh Quality Homes Standard will conclude by December 2018.

Powys has the highest proportion of off gas stock in Wales, and are responding to the Welsh Governments initiatives to obtain additional funds to improve heating and insulation standards. Significant investment has been made in renewable heating technology, though there have been isolated cases of incorrect maintenance, or improper use, that have caused high heating bills.

There has also been significant investment in external wall insulation, but recent validation of data has shown unreliable assumptions and poor historic data. As a result more comprehensive programmes of roof insulation are needed.

Despite the improvements, a recent sample survey of 300 residents conducted by the Welsh Audit Office, states that 20% of residents reported concerns about their homes not being warm enough.

It is proposed to build on work carried out over the last year, and put in place a structured approach to dealing with hard to heat issues. This will start from the first contact and actions by Heart of Wales Property Services (HOWPS) or Powys County Council officers, and extend to advanced approaches to dealing with persistent problems.

Step 1 – ensure as much information is collected about reports of cold or hard/expensive to heat homes.

Step 2 – provide information to residents to assist them managing the thermal comfort within their homes.

Step 3 – Adopt a consistent approach with Heating Partnering Contractors to ensure there is a balanced approach to assessing a residents needs and choices with regard to the type of heating system required.

Step 4 – Adopt a whole house assessment considering ventilation and insulation of the property in difficult cases where residents' medical needs or vulnerabilities are a factor.

Step 5 – where no heating design or insulation faults are apparent, provide further information to residents to assist them managing their thermal comfort.

1. Introduction

Thermal comfort is optimised by achieving the right balance of heating, insulation and ventilation. It is impacted by the efficiency of the heating system, the buildings insulation levels, and design and orientation of the property. The ease of controlling the heating system, and ability to adjust the heat output in different rooms is important. Ventilation of the property also needs to be balanced and controllable to avoid excess draughts or heat loss.

Reports of feeling cold, or the home being too expensive to heat, can be due to any or all of the factors above, but also human issues such as medical conditions or budget available to heat the home. The Welsh Government states

“A household in Wales is in fuel poverty if they spend 10% or more of their income on energy costs, including Housing Benefit, Income Support or Mortgage Interest or council tax benefits on energy costs.

A household is in severe fuel poverty if they have to spend 20% or more of their income on energy costs.”

People who struggle to heat their homes warm usually have low incomes and are often the most vulnerable people in our communities. The latest estimate is that there are 291,000 households living in fuel poverty equivalent to 23% of households in Wales”.

For the purpose of this strategy the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) Operating Guidance is referred to in terms of risk. Part A of the guidance relates to PHYSIOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS, Section 2 extreme cold, and 3 refers to extreme heat. This strategies focus is on Section 2 Excess Cold. This details the highest risk group is persons over 65, that health effects can be caused with building temperatures below 19°C, and become very serious below 16°C.

Powys Context

Powys County Councils Housing Service manages approximately 5,400 properties, spread across Powys. In 2012 Powys County Council’s Housing Service commissioned Savills to carry out stock condition surveys and energy surveys (EPC) to all its stock. The findings were that the average energy rating (SAP) for Powys stock was 65.43, and 39.4% fell below the energy rating required by the Welsh Housing Quality Standard. This is contributed to by the proportion of ‘off gas’ stock, as explained under the Regional Problem heading below.

The Councils Welsh Housing Quality Standards components replacement programme was determined from these surveys. Internal process were amended in 2017 to ensure that there was an increased focus on targeting properties with lowest energy ratings. Prior to this, the priority for the external wall insulation programme was system-built precast concrete properties. This followed recommendations from Michael Dyson Associates for measures to preserve the structure of the buildings. These system built properties did lack insulation, and

their energy ratings are improved. However, it has become increasingly apparent that crosswall construction properties did not have insulation behind tile, timber or UPVC cladding.

In 2017 concerns started to develop with the accuracy of the data received from Savills, and a process was adopted to audit the data. Following this, meetings were held with Savills which resolved that a sample survey was required to check and validate information. This process and the findings are detailed in section 3.2.

In response to a request from the Welsh Government, an action plan was developed to ensure that Powys fully understand its position with the energy rating of its stock. This plan is shown at Appendix 1.

A Regional Problem

One of the biggest challenges for public landlords with rural stock is difficulty providing efficient and affordable heating for residents. Since the properties are 'off gas', the cheapest and most efficient form of fuel is not available.

Powys is a very large rural County, with the greatest number of 'off gas' properties in Wales (approximately 31,000). Powys County Council have 1,484 properties which do not have mains gas heating. This is over a quarter of the stock. Of these, 495 properties do not have a central heating system, and are heated either by room heaters or night-time storage/e; electric panel heaters.

History of Building Regulations over time

Requirements for heating and insulation were limited until 1985, when Part L of the building regulations was introduced. This contains a requirement to make reasonable provision for the conservation of fuel and power, with an approved document giving guidance on how to comply.

Part L was updated in 1995 and then again in 2002. It focused initially on energy efficiency and then from 2002 on Carbon Emissions.

In 2003, the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) was adopted. This required EU member states to adopt a whole-building calculation method for assessing the carbon emissions of new buildings and gave them three years in which to do this. For existing properties the EU directive enabled requirements for landlords to produce an EPC certificate for any new tenancies, and these requirements were put in place in 2006

Wall Insulation requirements

The compulsory requirements for wall insulation were not fully introduced until the 1985 building regulations. Some properties were built with 25mm of insulation following a change in the building regulations in 1976, though this related to exposed properties only. It was not until the building regulations in 1990 that requirements were introduced for thicker insulation.

It is worthwhile noting the measure of thermal efficiency, known as U Value and measured in $\text{W/m}^2\text{K}$, was 1.7 in 1965, compared to 0.6 in 1990, and currently 0.3.

Loft Insulation

The requirements for loft insulation started in the 1965 building regulations, however this could be only 25-50mm thick. The requirements increased to

- 75mm in 1973
- 100mm in 1985
- 150mm in 1990
- 200mm in 2002.

The measure of thermal efficiency, again as a U Value in $\text{W/m}^2\text{K}$, was 1.4 in 1965, compared to 0.35 in 1990. It is currently 0.17.

2. Background

2.1 Thermal Comfort

A property should be heated to maintain a temperature between 18 and 21 degrees, and radiators/heaters should be utilised in all rooms to avoid a cold spot in the house where condensation of water vapour generated in the home can occur. However, whole house heating can present a conflict with affordability, particularly for those in 'off gas' areas, or with key meters.

The walls and roof should be adequately insulated, and door and windows should be draught proofed. For existing buildings orientation to the prevailing weather, north facing aspect and solar gain are predetermined. The effects will vary with the seasons.

Ventilation should be designed to have permanent background air flow, and mechanical boost to extract steam in kitchens and bathrooms. It should not cause excessive heat loss. However, tenants can complain or feel uncomfortable with draughts from ventilation systems, and express concern this will cause heat loss raising bills.

2.2 Regulatory Requirements

The Welsh Housing Quality Standard

The WHQS standard has an overriding requirement for properties to be 'Adequately heated, fuel efficient and well insulated' It sets out

"All dwellings must be capable of being adequately heated at an affordable cost to the residents. Dwellings with inadequate heating cause discomfort and can pose a health risk.

Whether the dwelling can be adequately heated depends on the cost of providing the heat required and the ability of the resident to afford it. The eradication of fuel poverty, the inability to afford to heat one's dwelling, is a strategic priority for the Welsh Assembly Government as set out in 'Better Homes for People in Wales'.

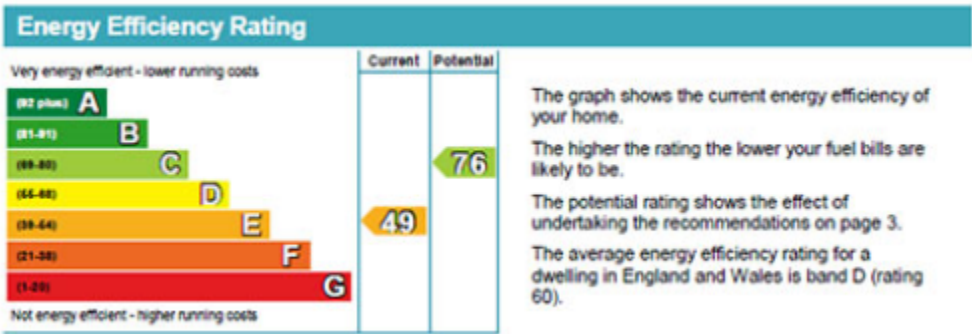
Meeting the cost of heating bills can be difficult for many residents. Landlords should do whatever they reasonably can to minimise the cost of heating dwellings to a comfortable level".

The standard treats thermal comfort as a primary requirement i.e. one that affects safety of residents. Its requirement is that properties must achieve a minimum SAP rating of 65.

The more detailed requirements have been adopted into Powys County Councils WHQS Compliance Policy, and the extract is shown in Appendix 2.

Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations (2012)

There is a compulsory requirement for landlords to provide is an Energy Performance Certificate to residents under the Energy Performance of Buildings (England and Wales) Regulations 2012. This adopts and clarifies the requirements of the **Energy Performance of Buildings Directive** 2002, implemented in the UK in 2006. The certificate contains a rating from A to G and a simplified RD SAP rating, as example below.



These certificates are the same as those required for owner occupiers selling properties. They can only be provided by assessors trained and accredited by one of the Governments approved EPC Energy Software Providers. The quality of EPC's varied considerably in early years, due to Assessor competence or interpretation, software design and scoring methodology limitations. It should be noted that a 5 point plus or minus tolerance in scoring was allowable. Tighter audit controls have been put in place, and the software requirements and scoring methodology were revised in 2015. Most of Powys EPC's use the older system.

Building Regulations

The full measure of thermal comfort for new build properties, as required by Part L of the building regulations, is the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) 2012. It too accounts for the buildings construction, insulation levels and includes costs of fuels used to heat the property. However, it works at a more detailed level than the RD SAP used with the EPC process. This will apply to Powys Housing Development Programme.

2.3 Wellbeing Implications

Risks from excess cold

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) Operating Guidance sets out the potential for harm, and identifies that those over 65 being at greatest risk.

Health effects.

The guide sets out a healthy indoor temperature is around 21°C, with a small

risk of health effects below 19°C. Below 16°C, there are serious health risks for the elderly including greatly increased risks of respiratory and cardiovascular conditions. Below 10°C a great risk of hypothermia, especially for the elderly, so sleeping in cold bedrooms is an added risk.

Full detail of the risks identified is shown at Appendix 3, though key points are

- Excess Winter Deaths, is greater in Britain than in most other countries of continental Europe and Scandinavia.
- Cardiovascular conditions (e.g. heart attacks and stroke) account for 50 per cent excess winter deaths.
- Respiratory diseases (e.g. 'flu, pneumonia, bronchitis) account for another third.
- Excess cold can also cause an increase in blood pressure/reduce resistance to infection because of the effect of cold air on bronchial lining and immune system/worsen symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis.

2.4 Fuel Types, efficiencies and costs

Gas – Gas is the most efficient and cheapest fuel, and cleanest type with its carbon emissions (CO₂) half those of oil-fired central heating and a third of those from coal.

LPG – LPG can be supplied from communal tanks or through use of cylinders (bottled gas). It is not as efficient as natural gas, and while a cleaner fuel, can be more expensive than oil.

Oil – provides an effective fuel source, and has lower carbon emissions than coal. It is cheaper than electricity in off gas areas. However, the cost of supply can cause issues, with minimum delivery volumes set by providers, and risk of sudden price increases. A storage tank is required in the garden, and its location and specification needs to comply with OFTEC regulations.

Solid Fuel – this may be in the form of coal, or wood, and dry storage for the fuel is required. Such systems usually require high user intervention to maintain the fuel source. Coal has similar costs to oil, and is cheaper than wood where there is not free supply. Wood requires a large amount of storage if used for whole house heating.

Electric – typically this will be in the form of a dual tariff, such as economy 7 or economy 10, though may be standard rate. The cheaper rate period is used to warm up the storage heaters, and hot water in the tank, and other electric use during the period will be cheaper. The peak rate is used at other times, and boosting heating and hot water can cancel out savings. Combined this is still twice the cost of gas, solid fuel and oil. The standard rate is three times the cost of gas. Unless generated by wind farms or water power, electricity produces high carbon emissions given the power plants used to generate it.

The Energy Savings Trust monitors and publishes average fuel prices as below

Table 1 – Fuel prices published by Energy Savings Trust

Fuel prices	Average price (pence/kWh)*	Standing charge (£/year)	Carbon dioxide factor (kgCO ₂ /kWh)
Gas	3.63	86.15	0.184
Coal / solid fuel	4.03	-	0.315
Oil	4.06	-	0.245
Wood pellet	5.44	-	0
LPG	6.53	-	0.214
Electricity (off peak economy 7)	8.08	81.76	0.381
Electricity (standard rate)	14.33	74.22	0.381

Fuel prices last updated in March 2018, based on average fuel costs over the previous 12 months

The Energy Savings Trust also report the savings that can be made using renewable technology. These are shown at Appendix 4. The most relevant comparator for Powys Stock is against electric systems and newer LPG boilers, as there are few G rated boilers fitted now.

Air Source Heating – typically £380 – £545 compared to newer LPG or electric heating systems but up to £900 compared to older storage heater system around £1,000 - compared to older LPG

Photovoltaic Panels (PV)

PV roof panels generate electricity that can be used by the householder, or can be fed back into the electricity grid. The savings on bills depend on the residents lifestyle, as the electricity generated is instant, and therefore only occurs during the warmer day light hours. The table below shows a resident that is home all day will achieve over twice the savings of someone that is out most of the day. Recent developments have seen batteries introduced to PV systems to store some of the electricity, and this will close the gap on savings.

Location		Savings on bills (£/year)				
		<i>Home all day</i>	<i>Home in the mornings</i>	<i>Home in the afternoons</i>	<i>Out all day until 4pm</i>	<i>Out all day until 6pm</i>
<i>Aberystwyth, Wales</i>		<i>£210</i>	<i>£170</i>	<i>£155</i>	<i>£105</i>	<i>£90</i>

Not all properties will be suitable for PV panels, as the roofs need to have a southerly aspect to capture the sun, and not be subject to shading from parapet walls, other buildings or trees.

Solar Panels

Solar Panels provide the primary source of hot water heating. However, the savings are moderate compared to the outlay. The cost of installing a typical solar water heating system is £4,000 - £5,000, whereas the savings are only £50-£95 per year depending on the main fuel water source. The system can provide most of your hot water in the summer, but much less during colder weather, when peak rate electricity is used. For this reason Solar Hot Water is only likely to be used as an exception. The savings depending on fuel source are shown in Appendix 4.

2.5 Common thermal comfort problems

Some rooms not warm enough – this may be due to the orientation of the property, or rooms that may have more than one external wall. Rooms in extensions to a property can often suffer from such reports, since they have three external walls, and can have a separate roof to the main property. The walls and roof to the extension may lack, or be insulated differently to the main building. A more simple cause may be a fault with the heat emitter in the room e.g. airlock in radiator.

Whole house not reaching or holding onto the required temperature – this can be caused by several reasons

- Faults with heating units causing lack of efficiency
- Design faults due to a boiler having inadequate capacity, or radiators not being correctly sized.
- Lack of, or faults with the insulation of the property
- Tenants not being aware of the need to adjust controls and time clock settings for colder conditions

Costing much too much to heat the property – this may be due to reasons above, though the cost of the heating fuel type, meter and tariff arrangements, and residents pattern of heating use are all considerations here.

Draughts – typically tenants report draughts around doors and windows, though this can be caused by cold shed due to the temperature of the glass being much lower than the room.

All of Powys properties have double glazing, and wherever possible radiators are placed under windows to minimize cold shed.

Ventilation draughts - As set out in Powys Damp Strategy, ventilation is important to create air changes that prevent damp in a property by controlling the humidity within the home. However, some residents will close or block up vents, or turn off mechanical ventilation, due to draughts, and put themselves and their home at risk of condensation problems.

2.6 Legal and Insurance implications

There has been a recent increase in claims from residents for high heating bills, and there is potential for claims of effects to health caused by inadequate heating. If there are faults with the heating and buildings insulation, the Council may fall liable for these costs. Care is therefore needed to ensure that complaints are investigated in a controlled way.

2.7 Current Policy and Standards

Powys WHQS Compliance Policy replicates the requirements of the WHQS standard and is set out Appendix 2.

The Quality of Accommodation Service Standard, otherwise referred to as the letting standard, sets out that properties should have a heating system that is safe, works and has an instruction manual. The standard was recently amended to ensure a property has at least 200mm of loft insulation. It require the kitchen to have a fan.

The Repairs and Maintenance Service Standard sets out that heating breakdowns are be treated as emergencies, and temporary heating will be provided until faults are fixed. It highlights the importance of prioritising repairs for the elderly and vulnerable.

The Quality of Accommodation Service Standard is due to be reviewed by the Tenant Scrutiny Panel, and the impact of this Strategy will considered as part of that process.

3. Thermal Comfort in Powys' housing stock

3.1 Stock Survey Data

Heating requirements

The stock surveys carried out in 2012 identified over 2150 properties which required replacement heating within 5 years, based on simple visual inspection or lifecycles. However, the life of the boiler component is not the only indicator. Some boilers can be economically maintained beyond their lifecycle, while others may have design or component faults that lead to premature replacement. The annual servicing programme and breakdowns are therefore a significant driver for the programme of heating works. A poor energy rating or complaints from residents can also prompt replacement.

It should be noted that nearly all of Powys properties have a form of heating that complies with the WHQS requirements, though some residents choose not to have installed or use what is in place. These cases are recorded as acceptable fails. The mix of types of systems installed is explained at Appendix 5.

Insulation requirements

The survey identified that around 555 properties may not have wall insulation. Of these 460 were solid wall or system built, so would be on the External Wall Insulation programme.

3.2 Energy ratings

At the time of Savills survey in 2012, the average SAP for the stock was 65.6 and there were 1875 properties with a SAP below 65.

Powys current records show the averages SAP rating across the stock is 65.43, which is detailed below. .

EPC Rating	Numbers or homes	SAP Band	Average SAP within Band
B	9	81 - 91	84
C	1982	69 - 80	72
D	2674	55 - 68	63
E	352	39 - 54	50
F	25	21 - 38	33
G	2	1 - 20	14

It should be noted that due to the QL Asset Management System not having an energy module, Powys use the EPC data which is held at Landmark for its energy ratings. Historically, these EPC's were not always updated following energy works, so Powys officers were trained

to do this. There have been complications with registration, so at present essential EPC's for voids or energy funding claims are outsourced.

Data Audit

In 2017 concerns started to develop with the accuracy of the data received from Savills, and a process was adopted to audit the data. The findings of the audit were that

- Properties that had LPG supplied as part of a district system with large remote communal tanks, were treated as having natural gas
- There was concern about accuracy of loft insulation records
- There was a trend of over estimation of floor areas
- No adjustments had been made for properties with cross wall construction, to reflect the different insulation levels of tile, timber or shiplap cladding

A meeting was held with Savills to discuss these concerns, and it was acknowledged by the Council that previous staff may not have provided accurate information regarding points 1 and 2. With point 2, this impacted on assumptions made at the time of the survey where access to lofts not possible.

Savills did acknowledge that they had not taken account of mixed construction on a property, but could do so as they had recorded that data as part of their stock condition survey. They also accepted there may be errors with floor areas, and they could not identify where assumptions about loft insulation were made.

The meeting resolved that sample survey of 68 properties was required to check and validate information and clarify the impact of anomalies. The results were

- that on average there was a 3% reduction in the SAP score in the sample, and
- most properties fell within the 5 point allowable tolerance when anomalies were amended.
- 12 properties had a negative change from 5 to 22 points lower
- 3 properties had an improved rating

It needs noting though this is in part due to the impact of changes in the governments methodology for scoring SAP. A further meeting was held to discuss the results of the survey, and resolved there is a need to remodel the wider data set, to take account of these anomalies, and include updates for work carried out by Powys.

Savills are currently carrying out this remodeling process, and the results will be used going forward to plan future improvement

3.3 History of Improvements

Wall Insulation

Much of Powys stock was built before the requirement to insulate walls was made compulsory from the mid 1980's. Most of these had cavity wall insulation installed when grants were made available in the 1990's. Much of this work was carried out through energy companies who were able to access the funding for this. In Powys a mixture of Urea Formaldehyde Foam, blown mineral fibre and polystyrene beads were installed. Some faults are becoming apparent with these works, as set out in Powys Damp Strategy.

There are several estates in Powys with timber, upvc and tiled cladding on the upper half of the wall, and these areas were not insulated at the time cavity wall insulation was installed. As stated earlier there is a need to better reflect the impact of this on the energy rating. Some of these homes with early timber frame wall construction, may have 15-25 mm of mineral wool or fibre insulation, though this may not be accurately reflected in the EPC.

Loft Insulation

Since requirements started in 1965, more of Powys properties were built with loft insulation, though most of these would be well below the current standards. Historic records of loft insulation and topping up programmes are poor and unreliable

We are therefore largely reliant on EPC surveys, which we have found can make incorrect assumptions when a roof cannot be accessed. Based on 2016 Landmark data, around 1800 lofts are below the WHQS recommendation of 200mm, and around half of these properties had a SAP below 65. Recent contract records for roofing where insulation is topped up are available, and this information is being collated.

Recent WHQS programme

In areas with mains gas supply, Powys policy is to replace with a gas system. In off gas areas residents are given a choice of oil, or air source. If residents wish to remain on solid fuel or electric heating their needs are accommodated if possible. As part of the programme

1680 properties have had heating systems installed in the last 5 years, and a further 320 are planned for this year.

1058 properties have had External Wall Insulation fitted, and an additional 260 are planned for this year

3.4 Powys response to the regional problem

We have installed 236 air source heat pumps in our 'off gas' properties, and have carried out extensive engagement with our tenants, tenant representatives and Housing Officers. Many of our off gas estates will already have a property on the estate with air source heating already installed. Heating Contractors and Officers provide controls advice once a new system has been installed so ensure that savings are realised and that the householder is happy with their system.

Our preferred heating solutions for off gas properties are condensing oil heating and air source heat pumps to reduce running costs and levels of fuel poverty. Both systems have their merits and drawbacks in terms of reducing levels of fuel poverty. For air source, it is important that people are not overpaying on their electricity tariffs, so we promote switching and sources of information for help with switching and changing from a prepayment to standard meter by referring to Citizens Advice energy advisers. The person is important, particularly for air source because we have vulnerable tenants and some would struggle to adapt to new heating controls, or due to medical reasons (e.g. circulation or mobility issues) they may heat the property to a higher temperature than is normal. We also want tenants to be happy with their choice of heating in the long term. The property is important because air source heating is more suitable for well insulated properties with good levels of loft insulation and cwi/ewi.

For oil, some people struggle with the high upfront payment required. It is important to consider these issues to reduce the fuel poverty gap as much as possible.

We have existing funding secured for heating works under the Welsh Housing Quality Standard, and will seek additional funding opportunities that would enable us to target more properties in a different way, which otherwise would not receive work for years to come. e.g. adding PV panels or solar heating as a supplement to existing full heating systems, or considering ground source with underfloor heating. These measures will be part of our WHQS plus approach referred to in Section 4.

3.5 Funding Opportunities

The current key direct funding opportunities for local authority housing include.

- Feed in Tariff (PV Panels)
- Renewable Heat Incentive (Air Source and Ground Source)
- ECO (some streams where council tenants are on benefits, e.g. CERO for loft insulation)
- Warm Homes Fund
- ARBED Am Byth (targeted at private sector but can include mixed tenure schemes)
- Fuel Poor Gas Connection Vouchers

Occasionally additional funding streams also become available on an intermittent basis. However, Powys data on the heating and insulation of its homes is sometimes too poor to fully evidence and meet the detailed criteria and evidence requirement for the bids. Powys therefore need to fully develop the correct resource to be able to ensure data is accurate, and can fully evidence bids

Citizens Advice, their partners and some third sector organisations are sometimes able to access small amounts of funding for tenants too e.g. top up for some prepayment meters and white goods etc.

4. The Way Ahead

It is proposed to continue to follow the current programmes, and also to pilot a WHQS standard plus approach to maximising thermal comfort for residents. This will take a combined approach to heating, insulation and ventilation improvements, and account for the properties energy rating, and resident medical needs and vulnerabilities. The aim will be to ensure the best levels of comfort are achieved for a tenants circumstances.

4.1 Proposed WHQS plus programme

The current WHQS programme comprises

- Heating replacements based on lifecycles of system, or breakdowns
- Some Heating replacements/upgrades for medical need or vulnerability issues
- External Wall Insulation to system built and high priority cross-wall construction properties
- Insulation top ups as part of the roofing programme, and voids

The proposed WHQS plus approach will add or increase

- Heating and insulation replacements for medical need or vulnerability issues
- Upgrades of heating timer and thermostatic controls for elderly or vulnerable persons
- A targeted and combined approach to improving heating and insulation to properties with an EPC rating below band D
- Top up of loft insulation when any other energy efficiency works or WHQS works are carried out or where the need is identified
- Ensure there is balanced insulation to properties with mixed construction
- Affordable EPC and ventilation measures when properties become void

4.2 Approach to dealing with reports of coldness or high heating bills

Receipt of tenants call reporting cold homes

As stated earlier, control is needed with complaints about cold homes or excess bills, and the process is set out below. A script will be agreed for HOWPS / Powys County Council contact center staff to follow. This will attempt to establish as much information about the problem, and categorise it under one of the thermal comfort problem headings. If not possible to do that, the matter must be recorded as 'tenant reports cold or high heating bills, investigation required'.

The proposed process for heating requests (not breakdowns)

1. Requests for replacement heating made to HOWPS or Powys County Council Contact Centres will be referred to Powys Heating Services and Renewables Officer.
2. Where property is on the WHQS programme it will be referred onto the appropriate contract officer to arrange work with the WHQS framework contractor

3. Where the property is not on the programme, or the request is because the tenant wants to change a heating system to a different type, the Heating Services and Renewables Officer will visit the resident to review and discuss options with the tenant
4. The design of the heating system will take account of the EPC for the property, and the tenants lifestyle, to ensure accuracy with heat loss calculations
5. Measures recommended by the EPC will be considered and ordered with the appropriate WHQS contractor or HOWPS
6. If there are no EPC records, the insulation levels should be checked on Powys component database, and validated during the pre-works survey as required. An EPC survey should be commission
7. The Councils Contract Officer will recommend the work required too, and obtain approval from, the Planned Maintenance and Improvement Team Leader

Process for heating breakdowns

- 1) Where heating breaks down, and is considered to beyond economic repair, it is will be referred to Powys Heating Services and Renewable officer, to review
- 2) If the decision is made to replace the system then the process above will be followed

Requests to insulate a property

- 1) Requests for loft insulation will be referred to the Housing Surveyor who will consult with the EPC & rewiring records to establish if this can be topped up.
- 2) Requests for insulating the walls of a property made to HOWPS or Powys Council Contact Centres will be referred to Powys Affordable Warmth and Renewable Energy Officer Heating Services and Renewables Officer.
- 3) Where property is on the WHQS External Wall Insulation programme it will be referred onto the appropriate contract officer to arrange with the WHQS framework contractor
- 4) Where the property is not on the programme, or the request is because the tenant is complaining about the current insulation levels, the Affordable Warmth and Renewable Energy Officer will review the EPC and Councils insulation records, and contact the resident to review and discuss options
- 5) Where the property has an E, F or G rating both loft and wall insulation improvements will be considered
- 6) If the property has a D or higher rating, the medical needs and vulnerabilities of the resident will be taken into account. Wall insulation works will be carried out where it is considered economical and essential for the resident to stay in their home
- 7) If the property has no EPC one will be arranged.
- 8) The design of the insulation will take account of the EPC for the property, and the heating type, to ensure needs of the resident and the property are met.

Complaints about high heating bills

These will be referred to Powys Heating Services and Renewable officer who will investigate

the adequacy and condition of the heating, insulation and ventilation of the property. Where there are no technical weaknesses or solutions, support with billing will be provided by the councils' tenancy support officers, and referrals made to Citizens advice where appropriate.

Hard to Heat cases

- 1) We will consider installing photovoltaic, or solar panels, on properties where low energy ratings or fuel poverty, cannot otherwise be addressed. The orientation of the property needs to be suitable before considering photovoltaics or solar panels.

4.3 Properties with low energy ratings

27 properties have an EPC rating of F or G, and 352 a rating of E. We propose to target these least efficient properties first. These will be located across the county.

EPC Recommendations Programme

At present public landlords are not obliged to carry out all the recommendations on an EPC certificate to improve the energy efficiency. Such recommendations are system generated, subject to assumptions made by EPC Assessors, and can include impractical options such as wind turbines. Therefore, they are best used as a guide to further works. In 2016 Landmark made available a download of EPC data for landlords. This is being reviewed alongside Powys records of work undertaken. The aim will be to establish a pro-active programme of energy efficiency improvement works as part of Powys' future 'WHQS plus' programme.

Meanwhile it is proposed that the EPC will be reviewed when a property becomes void, or has any heating or insulation or ventilation improvements carried out, and affordable and practical recommendations that will assist are carried out.

We will also conclude the review all properties with an E, F or G EPC rating and target improvements to these.

4.4 Operational delivery

Works will be carried out by specialist contractors where relevant, to secure long term guarantees. Heating and External Wall Insulation works and associated ventilation works will be delivered by WHQS contractors. Loft Insulation will be delivered by HOWPS on voids, and WHQS contractors during roofing works. We will work with HOWPS and suppliers to develop a process and work stream for one off ventilation upgrades

4.5 Consulting with residents

To maintain openness and transparency, the Investing in Homes Sub Group will be consulted with on this strategy. They will continue to be kept up to date with progress on cases, and will be encouraged to assist with communications with residents and have a representative at any meetings with residents should wider programmes of heating and insulation works be

developed. The group will be used to approve the information and communication information to be developed and made available to residents.

We understand that there are fears about health risks associated with cold homes so propose to raise awareness by the following means:

- Article in 'Investing in your Home' newsletter
- Discussions with tenant representatives at Tenant Scrutiny Panel and Investing in Homes sub-group
- Development of information leaflets.
- Availability of leaflets and CD's to hand out at estate days and events
- Briefing notes to inform Councillors and Assembly Members of the initiative, and should wider targeted investigations or work programmes take place

4.6 Costs

Initial Investigation Costs

Powys employs officers to inspect properties and specify what heating work is required, so this included in the Asset Team salary budget. The costs of the design for heating is included in the WHQS arrangements with framework contractors.

The cost of investigation and works to establish insulation levels currently costs £600 per property. Training is being arranged, and equipment purchased, to allow Powys officers to carry such surveys as part of future workload. This cost can be absorbed within current salary budgets.

Budget

There is currently £2.16 million set aside in 18/19 for heating replacements, which includes provision for air source heating in off gas areas. A further £2.4 million is allocated for the next four years.

Provision has been made for £200,000 per annum over the next five years to allow additional renewable energy solutions such as photovoltaic panels or solar hot water. This will be targeted to improve energy ratings in hard to heat cases. Unit costs may vary depending on the scope of work required, and typically between £4,000 and £6,000.

There is £1.47 million available for External Wall Insulation in 18/19, and a further £3million to 2023. Other insulation improvements are budgeted within the roofing allocation (loft insulation), and the £500k per annum damp alleviation budget.

4.7 Asset Management

We are planning to commence a 20% sample of stock surveys from 2019. Were further trends

develop of reports of cold properties in a street, or on an estate, surrounding properties will be prioritised for the first batch of those surveys

To improve data on loft insulation, we will measure this when the property is void, and discuss with HOWPS the possibilities of their heating contractor recording this at the time of a heating service.

Appendix 1 – Energy Rating Action Plan

Key Steps	Responsible Officer	Accountable Officer	Consulted (who needs to input)	Informed (who needs to be informed)	Start Date	End Date	Status
Request Information regarding Process and Approach	Phil Dark	Phil Dark		Roger Francis	26 th October 2017	29 th November 2017	Done
Identify and Collate information for properties with no Energy Performance Information	Catrin Sneade/Cathy Green	Roger Francis		Phil Dark	26 th October 2017	29 th November 2017	Done
Meet to review information and the way forward	Roger Francis	Phil Dark		Brendon Burd	20 th November	20 th November 2017	Done
Develop programme of surveys to address 430 properties with no Energy Performance information	Catrin Sneade	Phil Dark	EPC4U Framework Contractor, delivering EPC's	Roger Francis	26 th November 2017	11 th December 2017	Done
Deliver EPC's and Sap ratings to 430 properties that have no Energy Performance Information	EPC4U/Catrin Sneade/Martin Harbour/Andrew Dowell/ Neal Parry	Roger Francis		Phil Dark	1 st December 2017	31 st October 2018	Ongoing
Arrange monthly progress meetings to evaluate progress and highlight non-access/refusals on programme	Catrin Sneade	Phil Dark		Roger Francis	27 th November 2017	30 th November 2017	Ongoing
Develop programme to survey properties and re-assess energy efficiency in F & G Banding	Martin Harbour/Andrew Dowell/ Neal Parry	Gary Knight		Cathy Green	1 st December 2017	28 th February 2018	Done yet to lodge EPC
Collate information and cross reference all properties that have received Heating and Insulation improvements since previous EPC was delivered	Cathy Green	Phil Dark	Catrin Sneade	Roger Francis	20 th November 2017	22 nd December 2017	Done
Review Banding E properties with SAP score of less than 65, analyse the recommendations and develop programme of works	Catrin Snead	Phil Dark	Martin Harbour/Andrew Dowell/ Neal Parry	Roger Francis	23 rd November 2017	31 st Sept 2018	Ongoing

Identify properties that are not viable to raise above SAP 65, and log constraints in categories Physical, Financial, Tenant and log as Acceptable Fails.	Catrin Sneade/Cathy Green	Phil Dark	Roger Francis		23 rd November 2017	31 st March 2018	Done but review per new Strategy
Analyse all above information and set 5 year programme to have all Housing properties surveyed and new EPC and SAP rating by 2023 as per 10 year rule	Phil Dark	Phil Dark	Catrin Sneade	Martin Harbour/Andrew Dowell/ Neal Parry	8 th January 2018	30 th October 2018	
Develop risk profiling template	Philip Dark	Phil Dark	Catrin Sneade	Roger Francis	27 th November 2017	31 st October 2018	
Review process for improving energy performance in voids, on Roofing and Heating Contracts, and update data.	Roger Francis	Phil Dark	Catrin Sneade/Cathy Green	Contracts Team	26 th October 2017	31 st December 2017	Done

Appendix 2 - Extract from Powys WHQS Compliance Policy

3(a) Heating systems must be reasonably economical to run and capable of heating the whole of the dwelling to a comfortable level in normal weather conditions

Primary

Powys standard

- A. Existing heating systems must be reasonably economic to run. A "reasonably economic to run" heating system would be one that is programmable (i.e. residents can control the temperature and timing), and of a size recommended for the dwelling it serves.
- B. The annual energy consumption for space and water heating must be estimated using the Government's Standard Assessment Procedure for Energy Rating of Dwellings 2012 (SAP 2012) method. A minimum rating of 65 out of 100 must be achieved.
- C. Lack of adequate ventilation and poor thermal performance of external walls and windows, in addition to inadequate background heating levels, are significant contributors to condensation in older dwellings. Of particular concern are kitchens and bathrooms in which large amounts of moisture are generated. All cost effective opportunities to upgrade the thermal and ventilation performance of the dwelling must be taken.
- D. Other factors that will impact on the overall SAP for the energy rating of a dwelling are as follows.
 - I. Loft insulation:
It is recommended that at least 200 mm of glass wool insulation, or the thermal equivalent, is provided in the loft. Whenever replacing or topping up existing insulation this thickness could be reduced when using materials with greater insulation, such as thermal quilting.
 - II. Ensuring that all the pipes and tanks in the roof space are lagged.
All pipes and tanks in the roof space should be lagged. 20 - 25mm is the minimum thickness of pipe insulation that should be used. There are two types of insulation. The preferred industry type is preformed foam cylinders that are split along their length so that they can be easily slipped onto the pipe. Insulating tape is used to seal the splits and join the sections. If using the preformed cylinders is not practical, then felt can be used. This should be double thickness and closely wrapped to the pipe.
 - III. Ensuring that the thermal performance of the external walls is adequate to avoid the likelihood of condensation:
All necessary steps should be taken to ensure the thermal performance of external walls is adequate to avoid the likelihood of condensation.

3(b) External doors and windows must be sufficiently well fitting so that they do not cause severe draughts
Primary
Powys standard External doors and windows must be sufficiently well fitting so that they do not cause severe draughts without reducing background ventilation. Additional draught stripping may be considered adequate.
3(c) The main entrance door should not open directly into the living room
Secondary
Powys standard The main entrance door should not open directly into the living room. The provision of a lobby area in a living room entered directly by the front door will cut down on unnecessary heat loss.
3(d) The hot water tank must be effectively insulated (Primary)
Primary
Powys standard The hot water tank must be effectively insulated. A factory foam jacket would be considered adequate. Existing unlagged hot water tanks should have a jacket fitted. This should cut heat loss by around 75%. If there is already a jacket fitted to the hot water tank, it should be at least 75mm (3") thick. If not, it should be replaced with a new heat saving one.

2.6 Acceptable fail: Cost of remedy

- a. In off gas areas it may not be possible to achieve the minimum SAP rating of 65, despite adequate insulation and heating. This is considered to be an acceptable fail.

Appendix 3 - Extract from Housing Health and Safety Rating Standard 2006, Operating Guidance

2 Excess cold

Description of the hazard

2.01 This category covers the threats to health from sub-optimal indoor temperatures.

Potential for harm

Most vulnerable age group and statistical averages

2.02 The most vulnerable age group is all persons 65 years or over.

Excess Cold							
Average likelihood and health outcomes for all persons aged 65 years and over, 1997-1999							
Dwelling type & age		Average likelihood 1 in	Spread of health outcomes				Average HHSRS scores
			Class 1 %	Class II %	Class III %	Class IV %	
Non HMOs	Pre 1920	330	34.0	6.0	18.0	42.0	1,066 (C)
	1920-45	340	34.0	6.0	18.0	42.0	1,035 (C)
	1946-79	400	34.0	6.0	18.0	42.0	880 (D)
	Post 1979	530	34.0	6.0	18.0	42.0	664 (D)
HMOs	Pre 1920	340	34.0	6.0	18.0	42.0	1,035 (C)
	1920-45	290	34.0	6.0	18.0	42.0	1,213 (C)
	1946-79	370	34.0	6.0	18.0	42.0	951 (D)
	Post 1979	350	34.0	6.0	18.0	42.0	1,005 (C)
All Dwellings		380	34	6	18	42	926 (D)

Basis of Estimates

2.03 The averages relate to persons aged 65 years or over who suffered illness, including fatal illness, as a result of cold homes in England and Wales in the years 1997, 1998 and 1999.

- The statistics for Class I were derived from data for cold/winter related mortality .
- The estimates for Class II and Class III include cardiovascular and respiratory illness serious enough to lead to hospital admission and are calculated from Hospital Episode Statistics.
- Class IV estimates are based on new GP consultations from the General Practice Research Database and the Fourth Morbidity Survey of General Practice.

2.04 The statistical evidence shows that there is a continuous relationship between indoor temperature and vulnerability to cold-related death. The colder the dwelling, the greater the risk. There are indications that with temperatures up to 19°C there will be some excess death. However, for these statistics it has been assumed that no cold-related deaths occur in dwellings which achieve 18°C hall temperature when the external temperature falls to 5°C.

Excess Cold

Health effects

2.05 A healthy indoor temperature is around 21°C, although cold is not generally perceived until the temperature drops below 18°C. A small risk of adverse health effects begins once the temperature falls below 19°C. Serious health risks occur below 16°C with a substantially increased risk of respiratory and cardiovascular conditions. Below 10°C the risk of hypothermia becomes appreciable, especially for the elderly.

2.06 There are approximately 40,000 more deaths between December and March than expected from the death rates in other months of the year. This seasonal fluctuation, Excess Winter Deaths, is greater in Britain than in most other countries of continental Europe and Scandinavia.

2.07 Cardiovascular conditions (e.g. heart attacks and stroke) account for half the excess winter deaths, and respiratory diseases (e.g. influenza, pneumonia and bronchitis), account for another third. The increase in deaths from heart attacks occurs about 2 days following the onset of a cold spell, the delay is about 5 days for deaths from stroke, and about 12 days for respiratory deaths.

2.08 Although there is some excess winter deaths in all age groups, it becomes significant for those in the 45+ age group. The risk increases with age in a roughly linear pattern up to the 85+ age group, after which there is a marked increased risk.

2.09 The main causal factor for excess winter deaths appears to be changes in ambient (outdoor) temperature, but seasonal infections, and changes in behavioural patterns, air pollution levels and micronutrient intake may also account for some of the seasonal pattern.

2.10 The extent to which housing contributes is not clearly known, but the indication is that people living in dwellings that are poorly heated are at significantly greater risk. There is less evidence on the relationship between housing characteristics and health other than mortality. However, it is very probable that the findings in relation to cold-related mortality can be extended in broad terms to cardio-respiratory morbidity and health related quality of life.

2.11 Low temperatures can impair the thermoregulatory system of the elderly, and the very young whose thermoregulatory system is immature. Both these groups may spend a greater time indoors in cold weather and both will not move about as much as other groups in the cold.

2.12 Cold air streams may affect the respiratory tract and can slow the heart temporarily, increasing cardiovascular strain. When the whole body is cooled, blood pressure increases. The effect of cold air on the bronchial lining and immune system can reduce resistance to infection. Thus, sleeping in cold bedrooms has been shown to substantially increase risk.

2.13 The symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis can be worsened by cold. Low temperatures also aggravate sickle cell anaemia and the related thalassaemia, and can affect the healing of leg skin ulcers.

Appendix 4 – Savings brought by the use of renewable technology

Air Source Heating - Figures are based fuel prices as of April 2018.

Existing system	Fuel bill saving (per year)	Annual RHI payments (installations between 1st January 2018 to 31 March 2018)	Carbon savings (per year)
Old (G-rated) gas boiler	£400 - £465	£875 - £1,030	3,300 - 3,900 kg
New (A-rated) gas boiler	An increase of £35 - £55		1,200 to 1,400 kg
Old electric storage heaters	£800 - £990		4,600 - 5,700 kg
New electric storage heaters	£465 - £545		3,200 - 3,800 kg
Old (G-rated) oil boiler	£460 - £545		5,200 - 6,100 kg
New (A-rated) oil boiler	An increase of £45 - £55		2,300 - 2,700 kg
Old (G-rated) LPG boiler	£1,145 - £1,350		4,200 - 4,900 kg
New (A-rated) LPG boiler	£380 - £450		1,700 - 2,000 kg
Coal	£425 - £525		6,900 - 8,300 kg

Solar Panels

Solar water heating systems can achieve savings on your energy bills. Based on the results of a field trial, we conducted across a range of household and system sizes, typical savings from a well-installed and properly used system are £50 per year when replacing gas heating and £80 per year when replacing electric immersion heating. Savings will vary from user to user

Existing system	Fuel bill savings (£/year)	Carbon dioxide savings (kgCO ₂ /year)
Gas	£50	270 kg
Oil	£55	350 kg
Coal	£65	540 kg
Electricity	£80	390 kg
LPG	£95	310 kg

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Appendix 5 Heating Descriptions and Definitions

Heating system types

Full central heating – all rooms are heated with radiators, served from a central heat source. The hot water may be provided directly by the boiler, or via a hot water tank.

Full heating – Electric storage/panel heating – most typical in off gas areas, or in blocks of flats. Hot water is provided by a water tank.

Partial central heating – typical of solid fuel systems, here not all rooms have radiators, some may have secondary heaters.

Partial heating – most commonly solid fuel or electric storage heaters in some rooms

Secondary heating – this describes different forms of heating to the main heating type and may be fixed or portable

Portable heating only – while less common, as not compliant with regulations, some residents may choose to only use plug in electric or oil radiators, and any original boilers could be decommissioned.

1.5 Central Heat Sources

Combination or System Boiler

A combination boiler provides the heating and hot water, with no additional storage of hot or cold water. The hot water is instantly heated providing a constant source.

A system boiler works in conjunction with a hot water cylinder and cold water feed and expansion tanks in the loft.

Powys policy is to install combination boilers where possible to reduce maintenance and service costs, and free up storage space.

Back boiler – traditionally boilers were located behind the fire in lounge or dining room, and within a chimney stack. Older installations, particularly solid fuel, only had capacity to serve a limited number of radiators. These are system type boilers with a hot water cylinder

Communal boiler – blocks of flats, or houses in multiple occupation may be served by a communal boiler. This will provide all heating requirements. Hot water may be a communal supply, or via hot water tanks in each flat or room

Forms of renewable Energy

Heat Pump – this is a central heating unit that captures natural energy from the environment,

and converts it to generate heat. Air Source takes natural energy from the air, via a unit located outside. Ground Source takes heat from a liquid in pipes installed in bore holes or trenches in the ground.

Solar Heating panels – these capture the energy from the sun and warms water in a tank which can be used to supply hot water.

Photovoltaic panels – the panels capture the energy of the sun converting it into electricity, which supplies the house, and feeds back into the grid. The energy is instantly used, so full benefit will not be received when the property is not occupied. Recently batteries to store the electricity have made this more viable option.

Appendix 6 - Further reading and sources of information

Housing Health and Safety Rating Standard 2006

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/15810/142631.pdf

Welsh Housing Quality Standard

<https://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/141030-whqs-guide-for-social-landlords-en.pdf>

Powys WHQS Compliance Policy

https://customer.powys.gov.uk/media/2765/WHQS-Compliance-Policy-2017-2018/pdf/WHQS_Compliance_Policy_2017-2018_June_2017_ENG.pdf

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Overview and Scrutiny – Fit For the Future? – **Powys County Council**

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Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is also available in Welsh.

The team who delivered the work comprised Ian Phillips, Justine Morgan and Colin Davies under the direction of Jane Holownia.

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Summary report

Summary

- 1 This review explored with each of the 22 councils in Wales how 'fit for the future' their scrutiny functions are. We considered how councils are responding to current challenges, including the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 (WFG Act) in relation to their scrutiny activity, as well as how councils are beginning to undertake scrutiny of Public Service Boards (PSBs). We also examined how well placed councils are to respond to future challenges such as continued pressure on public finances and the possible move towards more regional working between local authorities.
- 2 As part of this review we also reviewed the progress that councils have made in addressing the recommendations of our earlier National Improvement Study **Good Scrutiny? Good Question?** (May 2014) (see **Appendix 2**). We also followed up on the proposals for improvement relevant to scrutiny that we issued in local reports including those issued to councils as part of our 2016-17 thematic reviews of Savings Planning and Governance Arrangements for Determining Significant Service Changes.
- 3 Our review aimed to:
 - identify approaches to embedding the sustainable development principle into scrutiny processes and practices to inform practice sharing and future work of the Auditor General in relation to the WFG Act;
 - provide assurance that scrutiny functions are well placed to respond to current and future challenges and expectations;
 - help to embed effective scrutiny by elected members from the start of the new electoral cycle; and
 - provide insight into how well councils have responded to the findings of our previous Scrutiny Improvement Study.
- 4 To inform our findings we based our review methodology around the Outcomes and Characteristics for Effective Local Government Overview and Scrutiny that were developed and agreed by scrutiny stakeholders in Wales following our previous National Improvement Study **Good Scrutiny? Good Question?**.
- 5 We carried out our fieldwork between February 2018 and April 2018. We undertook document reviews, interviewed a number of key officers and ran focus groups with key councillors to understand their views on Powys County Council's (the Council) current scrutiny arrangements and in particular how the Council is approaching and intends to respond to the challenges identified above.
- 6 We observed a sample of scrutiny meetings and reviewed relevant meeting documentation provided to members to support their scrutiny role, such as reports and presentations.

- 7 In this review we concluded that the Council has been slow to develop its scrutiny arrangements and there are fundamental areas it needs to address if scrutiny is to operate effectively and have impact in the face of future challenges.

Proposals for improvement

- 8 **Exhibit 1** contains our proposals for ways in which the Council could improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its overview and scrutiny function to make it better placed to meet current and future challenges.

Exhibit 1: proposals for improvement

Proposals for improvement	
P1	Be specific in the reports presented to overview and scrutiny why the committee is receiving the information and how this relates to the role of the scrutiny committee.
P2	Provide more training specifically for Chairs and Vice Chairs of overview and scrutiny committees to enable them to be more effective in their role.
P3	Make arrangements for further training for scrutiny committee members on the Well-Being of Future Generations (WFG) Act in order to help embed WFG considerations into the Council's decision-making processes.
P4	Strengthen arrangements for public and other stakeholder engagement in overview and scrutiny.
P5	Clarify the arrangements for feeding back overview and scrutiny committees' views to Cabinet and for Cabinet to respond to recommendations made.
P6	Put in place arrangements for assessing the effectiveness and impact of overview and scrutiny.

Detailed report

The Council has been slow to develop its scrutiny arrangements and there are fundamental areas it needs to address if scrutiny is to operate effectively and have impact in the face of future challenges

The Council's governance framework does not help to create a supportive environment for scrutiny to operate effectively and to have impact

- 9 The role of the overview and scrutiny function could be more clearly defined and needs to be better understood by members. The Council's constitution sets out that the Council has appointed three scrutiny committees. The Council's Audit Committee is included as a scrutiny committee, and while part of an Audit Committee's role is to scrutinise certain matters, it is more usual for an Audit Committee to be classed as separate from overview and scrutiny committees within Council constitutions. In contrast, the current draft Corporate Improvement Plan 2018-23 states that the Audit Committee is 'independent of both the cabinet and scrutiny functions'. Furthermore, although the Council has specified that there are three overview and scrutiny committees, section 7.4 of the constitution sets out a fourth committee, the Joint Chairs and Vice Chairs Steering Group.
- 10 Scrutiny members outside of the Joint Chairs and Vice Chairs Steering Group were unsighted of the role of that Steering Group and did not know that it scrutinised certain corporate items. For example, the Steering Group considered the draft Corporate Improvement Plan in February 2018. However, the linkages between the Steering Group and the other scrutiny committees and scrutiny working groups need to be clarified and disseminated amongst the wider scrutiny membership.
- 11 There is a general consensus amongst scrutiny members and scrutiny officers that the naming of two of the scrutiny committees as 'Scrutiny Committee A' and 'Scrutiny Committee B' is unhelpful as it is unclear what their respective remits are, albeit the constitution does set out their respective terms of reference. At the time we carried out our fieldwork, the Council was in the process of reviewing its scrutiny structure and intended to address this issue. Subsequently, the Democratic Services Committee presented a paper to the 17 May 2018 Council meeting proposing a new structure of four committees linked to the Council's priorities in its Vision 2025 (Audit Committee, Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee, Health and Care Scrutiny Committee and Economy, Residents and Community Scrutiny Committee). However, a motion to amend that proposal to three committees (Audit Committee, Learning Skills and Economy Scrutiny Committee and Health Care and Housing Scrutiny Committee) with the number of

members per committee increasing from nine councillors in the original proposal to 21 in the amendment, was carried at the meeting.

- 12 In 2017 the Strategic Director – Resources carried out a review of the scrutiny service. The review stated that ‘scrutiny needs a higher profile – or at least a more positive one’, We recognise that this review is an open and honest account of the scrutiny service and clearly sets out perceived flaws in the scrutiny arrangements and areas where improvement is needed. However, in 2013 the Council carried out a self-evaluation of scrutiny for our aforementioned **Good Scrutiny? Good Question?** Report. A number of areas that were highlighted as needing improvement in 2013 had either got worse or stayed the same and were classed as hindering the improvement of scrutiny. For example, the Strategic Director’s 2017 review of the scrutiny service concluded that the arrangements for overview and scrutiny challenging poor performance and its causes were ‘hindering improvement.’
- 13 There have historically been relationship difficulties between Cabinet and Scrutiny, although members and officers told us that this relationship is showing signs of improvement recently. Scrutiny has at times been seen as overly negative and sometimes not sufficiently apolitical. Conversely, scrutiny members expressed ongoing frustration about often not getting a response from Cabinet as to whether suggestions/recommendations from scrutiny had been taken on board or not.
- 14 Scrutiny committee members have received training to help equip them for their roles. However, a questionnaire completed by senior managers as part of the Strategic Director’s 2017 review of the scrutiny service identified that more training was needed for members to improve constructive challenge and effective questioning. Some members we spoke to felt that there was not enough of a focus on scrutiny as part of their induction. There was also a strong feeling amongst members that they required training on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- 15 The role of scrutiny support officers is generally well-regarded, although capacity is stretched and there is limited resource available to carry out research for members. The Strategic Director’s 2017 review of the scrutiny service recognised this and recommended that both scrutiny support officers should be made full time and an additional one Full Time Equivalent post should be created. The 2018-19 budget subsequently allocated £12k for ‘Scrutiny Team Review’ but there is no narrative in the budget reports as to what the plans for this money are.
- 16 Progress has been slow in setting up a committee to scrutinise the Powys Public Services Board (PSB). There are other councils in Wales where scrutiny of the PSB is relatively well-established. The Council anticipates that the committee will be set up and ready to start scrutinising the PSB in the near future.

The Council recognises that its scrutiny function needs to improve. There is scope for improvement in how scrutiny is planned, how scrutiny meetings are conducted and how forward work programmes are developed

- 17 We found several examples where scrutiny has raised concerns regarding the timeliness and/or quality of information that it receives. For example, the minutes of the Leisure/Culture Scrutiny Group on 18 September 2017 record the following:
- The Group make the following observations to Cabinet/Management Team in respect of the draft Cabinet Report shared with the scrutiny group (attached at Appendix A): Despite timescales being agreed before the summer the report was provided late to scrutiny. It became apparent during scrutiny that the report provided still required work before it would be submitted to Cabinet. It is requested that Cabinet/Management team stress the need for reports requiring pre-cabinet scrutiny are provided with sufficient detail and in sufficient time for consideration.
- 18 A lot of the actual scrutiny work is carried out by working groups that sit under either scrutiny committee 'A' or 'B'. As part of our fieldwork, we observed some of these meetings and there were strengths that were apparent. For example, there was a good level of member engagement in the meetings and the atmosphere was constructive and apolitical.
- 19 One potential area for improvement is that information that scrutiny receives, for example officer reports, tends to lack a covering report setting out why the item is coming to scrutiny and what is expected of members in respect of that item. Providing such clarity would help scrutiny members to fully understand their roles.
- 20 As a lot of the actual scrutiny work is carried out by the working groups in meetings which are not publicly accessible, there was a need for the Council to reflect on whether such an approach is sufficiently transparent. The Council has considered this and the Democratic Services Committee paper to Council on 17 May sets out that 'as a general principle all matters would be considered at a full meeting of a Scrutiny Committee. However it was accepted that there may be a need to have an occasional task and finish working group, for specific purposes, but they would operate on a time limited basis.' The Strategic Director's 2017 review of the scrutiny service recognised that scrutiny needs to improve its engagement with the public, but the Working Group arrangements are not conducive to improving such engagement. Furthermore, the Council has not had any input from other external witnesses/third parties recently and so there is scope to improve scrutiny's wider engagement. The Democratic Services Committee paper to Council on 17 May sets out a commitment that scrutiny committee should generally be held in public unless confidential matters were being discussed, and the Council should investigate the possibility of webcasting scrutiny committee meetings in future. Members told us that when planning the scrutiny of agenda items, they do not consider 'how' an item will be best scrutinised, for example by arranging site visits

or calling external witnesses. 'How' an item is scrutinised should be given the same consideration at the forward work programming stage as 'what' items are to be scrutinised.

- 21 Scrutiny forward work planning is part of the role of the Chairs and Vice Chairs Joint Steering Group. Work programmes are also considered by scrutiny committees 'A' and 'B' albeit those committees only tend to meet on a quarterly basis. The Strategic Director's 2017 review of the scrutiny service report states that 'more work is required to co-ordinate the scrutiny and Cabinet Work Programmes to assist the pre-scrutiny of major decisions to be undertaken by the Cabinet'. However, officers were clear that the Council is currently doing a lot more pre-decision scrutiny; about eighteen months ago pre-decision scrutiny was not really taking place. Nevertheless, we consider that there is scope for a more focused, slimmed-down scrutiny forward work programme that concentrates on the significant issues that the Council is facing.
- 22 Both the Cabinet and scrutiny forward work programmes are published on the Council website. The scrutiny forward work programme could be clearer *why* items are to be scrutinised and (in the 20 February 2018 version of the scrutiny forward work programme) a number of the 'description' fields are empty. Similarly, the Cabinet forward work programme is lacking in detail and not very informative. Also, the links between the respective work programmes could be stronger.
- 23 We are aware of two other recent examples where the planning of items has not been as effective as it could have been. The Cabinet minutes of 30 January 2018 refer to the Corporate Leadership and Governance Plan and the Chair of the scrutiny group comments that 'observations had to be submitted by email due to a Council budget seminar being called when the group had been due to meet. He regretted that there had not been enough time to scrutinise such an important document...' Also, the minutes of the Finance Scrutiny Panel of 8 February 2018 record 'The Panel are concerned by the lateness of the budget proposals being made available. It gives no time for adequate scrutiny to influence the final budget. With the increased pressures on the budget the Panel believes that it should be given more opportunity to comment on the emerging budget at a much earlier stage. The Panel has therefore not been able to adequately scrutinise the budget and its implications and Members should note this.'
- 24 Although we witnessed a good level of member engagement in our meeting observations, at times the questioning was too parochial. We held focus groups with members and a theme of more robust chairing of scrutiny meetings emerged, for example for chairs to ensure that all information that the committee required is provided and setting action plans arising from meetings. From the comments we received it appears that chairing skills training would be helpful.
- 25 There has also been a long-standing issue of variable member attendance at meetings. While mitigating against that is essentially a matter for individual councillors and group leaders, the Council has been proactive at looking at technological developments that may, in future, facilitate remote attendance. It has

provided members with Skype training and officers have discussed this issue with Welsh Government, as they are conscious that remote attendance may be particularly beneficial given the size of Powys and its rurality.

The Council does not evaluate the impact of overview and scrutiny and cannot demonstrate its overall effectiveness

- 26 Although the Council carried out reviews of the scrutiny function in 2013 and 2017, it does not systematically evaluate the impact of scrutiny. We were told that impact could be demonstrated in cases where Cabinet have accepted recommendations on items of pre-decision scrutiny. However, as set out above, scrutiny members expressed frustration at not receiving information back from Cabinet setting out their reasons for accepting or rejecting scrutiny committee recommendations. Overall, the Council cannot demonstrate that scrutiny is sufficiently impactful.
- 27 A recent example of scrutiny resources being expended yet having no apparent effect is the scrutiny of the Staylittle Outdoor Centre agenda item. The Leisure/Culture Scrutiny Working Group considered the matter on 18 September 2017 and made two recommendations to Cabinet. There is then a disconnect between those recommendations and the covering report sent to Cabinet on 10 October 2017, as the covering report does not refer to those recommendations. The covering report actually contains a section that asks 'What changes have been made since the date of Scrutiny and explain why Scrutiny recommendations have been accepted or rejected'. However, the explanation that is given does not relate to the points raised by the Leisure/Culture working group. Therefore, there is no record of how the points raised by scrutiny were considered and the minutes of the Cabinet meeting are similarly silent.
- 28 Whilst we recognise that, in general, the impact of scrutiny is not always tangible, given the amount of resources that the Council expends on scrutiny i.e. member and officer time devoted to formal scrutiny meetings and scrutiny working groups, it is important that the Council considers how best to maximise the impact of such resource intensive work. The Council would benefit from exploring different and more creative ways of doing scrutiny to maximise the resources available and outcomes achieved and where it can add most value, particularly in view of the significant shortfall it is facing in the 2019-20 budget.

Appendix 1

Outcomes and characteristics for effective local government overview and scrutiny

Exhibit 2: outcomes and characteristics for effective local government overview and scrutiny

Outcomes	Characteristics
What does good scrutiny seek to achieve?	What would it look like? How could we recognise it?
1. Democratic accountability drives improvement in public services. 'Better Services'	<p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i) Scrutiny has a clearly defined and valued role in the council's improvement arrangements.ii) Scrutiny has the dedicated officer support it needs from officers who are able to undertake independent research effectively, and provide Scrutiny members with high-quality analysis, advice and training. <p>Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">iii) Overview and Scrutiny inquiries are non-political, methodologically sound and incorporate a wide range of evidence and perspectives. <p>Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">iv) Overview and scrutiny regularly engages in evidence based challenge of decision makers and service providers.v) Scrutiny provides viable and well evidenced solutions to recognised problems.

Outcomes	Characteristics
What does good scrutiny seek to achieve?	What would it look like? How could we recognise it?
2. Democratic decision making is accountable, inclusive and robust. 'Better decisions'	<p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Scrutiny councillors have the training and development opportunities they need to undertake their role effectively. ii) The process receives effective support from the Council's Corporate Management Team which ensures that information provided to scrutiny is of high quality and is provided in a timely and consistent manner. <p>Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii) Scrutiny is Member led and has 'ownership' of its work programme taking into account the views of the public, partners and regulators whilst balancing between prioritising community concerns against issues of strategic risk and importance. iv) Stakeholders have the ability to contribute to the development and delivery of scrutiny forward work programmes. v) Overview and scrutiny meetings and activities are well-planned, chaired effectively and make best use of the resources available to it. <p>Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> vi) Non-executive Members provide an evidence based check and balance to Executive decision making. vii) Decision makers give public account for themselves at scrutiny committees for their portfolio responsibilities.
3. The public is engaged in democratic debate about the current and future delivery of public services.	<p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Scrutiny is recognised by the Executive and Corporate Management team as an important council mechanism for community engagement. <p>Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) Scrutiny is characterised by effective communication to raise awareness of, and encourage participation in democratic accountability. iii) Scrutiny operates non-politically and deals effectively with sensitive political issues, tension and conflict. iv) Scrutiny builds trust and good relationships with a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders. <p>Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> v) Overview and scrutiny enables the 'voice' of local people and communities across the area to be heard as part of decision and policy-making processes.

Appendix 2

Recommendations from the report of the Auditor General's national improvement study 'Good Scrutiny? Good Question?' (May 2014)

Exhibit 3: recommendations from **Good Scrutiny? Good Question?** Scrutiny Improvement Study

Recommendation	Responsible Partners
R1 Clarify the role of executive members and senior officers in contributing to scrutiny.	Councils, Welsh Government, Welsh Local Government Association
R2 Ensure that scrutiny members, and specifically scrutiny chairs, receive training and support to fully equip them with the skills required to undertake effective scrutiny.	Councils, Welsh Government, Welsh Local Government Association
R3 Further develop scrutiny forward work programing to : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide a clear rational for topic selection; • be more outcome focussed • ensure that the method of scrutiny is best suited to the topic area and the outcome desired; and • align scrutiny programmes with the council's performance management, self-evaluation and improvement arrangements. 	Councils
R4 Ensure that scrutiny draws effectively on the work of audit, inspection and regulation and that its activities are complementary with the work of external review bodies.	Councils, Staff of the Wales Audit Office, CSSIW, Estyn
R5 Ensure that external review bodies take account of scrutiny work programmes and the outputs of scrutiny activity, where appropriate, in planning and delivering their work.	Staff of the Wales Audit Office, CSSIW, Estyn

Recommendation	Responsible Partners
R6 Ensure that the impact of scrutiny is properly evaluated and acted upon to improve the function's effectiveness; including following up on proposed actions and examining outcomes.	Councils, Welsh Government, Welsh Local Government Association
R7 Undertake regular self-evaluation of scrutiny utilising the 'outcomes and characteristics of effective local government overview and scrutiny' developed by the Wales Overview & Scrutiny Officers' Network.	Council
R8 Implement scrutiny improvement action plans developed from the Wales Audit Office improvement study.	Councils
R9 Adopt Participation Cymru's 10 Principles for Public Engagement in improving the way scrutiny engages with the public and stakeholders.	Councils

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Scrutiny date	Scrutiny Committee	Item	Cab/Mgmt Team Date	Cab Date
20/09/2018	PSB	Steps towards 2040 Well-being Plan Review effectiveness of WCCIS		
Wed 26/09/18	HCH	LAC strategy and Education of LAC Update on Bannau Camlas - Deferred new date TBA		
Mon 01/10/18	LSE (Estyn attending to observe)	Standards incl LAC, attendance, exclusions, use of PDG Annual Estyn Inspection outcomes Youth Service restructure review - Deferred new date TBA	13/11/2018	28/11/2018
Wed 03/10/18	HCH	Homelessness Strategy Love where You Live Strategy (Housing)	23/10/2018 13/11/2018	06/11/2018 28/11/2018
Tue 9/10/18	Joint Chairs and Vice-Chairs			
Mon 15/10/18	HCH	BUPA Care Homes (b/f from Dec 2018) Social Care Perf Reports (August 2018) Notes - Improvement and Assurance Board		
Wed 17/10/18	LSE	Review of Pre-School provision HOWPS Annual Report	23/10/2018	06/11/2018
Wed 24/10/18	FSP	Budget		
Thur 01/11/18 (will not run)	HCH	Improvement Plans (3) - Topic TBA		
Fri 02/11/18	LSE	HAMP (deferred from Aug)	14/11/2018	28/11/2018
			11/12/2018	15/01/2019
Thur 08/11/18	HCH	Social Care Perf Report (Sept 2018) WHQS WAO Housing Inspection (confirmed)	04/12/2018	18/12/2018

Fri 09/11/18 (possibly won't run)	LSE	date to be used for education briefing School Org/Post 16		
Tue 13/11/18	Joint Chairs and Vice-Chairs	CIP Performance Reports		28/11/2018
Fri 16/11/2018	Audit	Corp Tracker, Risk Register, AGS Improvement Plans (1) - Topic TBA		
November	FSP	Budget		
Wed 21/11/18	LSE (invite audit reps)	Funding formula review		
Thur 22/11/18	HCH	Review of Daytime Activities OP Improvement Plans (2) - Topic TBA	04/12/2018	18/12/2018
Mon 10/12/18	HCH	Crime and Disorder Social Care Perf Reports (October) Update on Bannau/Camlas		
Tues 11/12/18	Joint Chairs and Vice-Chairs	Vision 2025: Our CIP Quarter 2 2018-19 Performance Report Vision 2025: Our CIP – 'Where are we now – Analysis document' (Overview presented to Joint Chairs for comment)		04/12/2018
Thur 13/12/18	LSE	ALN Review	11/12/2018	15/01/2019
Wed 19/12/18	FSP	Budget		
2019				
Thur 03/01/19	HCH			
Fri 04/01/19	LSE			
Wed 09/01/19	Audit	Workforce Strategy and Plan		
Tue 15/01/19	Joint Chairs			
Wed 16/01/19	HCH	Update on Virtual Ward and Integrated Team CIW update on Inspection - Children's Services		

		Children Looked After Permanence Gipsy and Traveller Site Machynlleth and changes to Housing Allocation Scheme		
Fri 18/01/19	LSE	Categorisation of schools (increase in green/yellow)		
Thur 31/01/19	PSB	Update on integrated social and health care staffing increase Update on Integrated disability service		
Wed 06/02/19	HCH	Leaving the Care Service Review of progress on foster carers strategy		
Fri 08/02/19	LSE	ERW		
Thurs 14/02/19	Audit	Corporate Support Services remodel Workforce Strategy and Plan		
Mon 18/02/19	Joint Chairs			
Wed 27/02/19	HCH	Early Help/Edge of Care Participation and Voice		
Fri 01/03/19	LSE	Youth Structure Review		
Tue 19/03/19	Joint Chairs	DRAFT of Vision 2025: Our CIP (UPDATE 2019/20 – Proposed changes to CIP for 2019/20)		
Mon 25/03/19	Audit	Gender Pay Report		
Wed 03/04/19	HCH	Housing Association Development		
Fri 05/04/19	LSE	Support for children and families - early years Public Toilets Strategy		
Fri 12/04/19	Audit	Engagement and Communications Strategy TM Q4		
Mon 15/04/19	Joint Chairs			

Thurs 25/04/19	HCH	Improve housing choice availability incl extra care Supported housing update Impact of Roll Out of Universal Credit on HRA		
Fri 26/04/19	LSE	Proportion of revenue spend increase 2% 18/19 Review marketing opportunities and programme Check progress against removing barriers to employment		
Mon 29/04/19	PSB	Developing integrated commissioning with PTHB - care homes		
9/05/19	Audit	Annual Employment Monitoring Report		
14/05/2019	Joint Chairs	Annual Governance Statement DRAFT of Vision 2025: Our CIP 2019/20 Update and Annual Report 2018/19		
22/05/19	HCH	Community Hubs Local Housing Market Assessment		
24/05/2019	LSE			
10/06/19	Audit (seminar)	Draft Statement of Accounts Annual Governance Statement		
12/06/2019	HCH	HRA New Build Programme Closer to Home		
14/06/2019	LSE			
17/06/2019	Joint Chairs	Strategic Equality Plan - End of Year		
03/07/2019	HCH	Community Transport service - progress Placement Sufficiency		
05/07/2019	LSE			
08/07/2019	Joint Chairs	Vision 2025: Our CIP Quarter 4 2018-19 Performance Report		18/06/2019

15/07/2019	Audit	TM Review and Q1		
18/07/2019	PSB	Annual Report Wellbeing Plan		
19/08/2019	HCH	Tenants Satisfaction Survey		
23/08/2019	LSE			
30/08/2018	Audit Seminar	SoA		
06/09/2019	Audit Committee	Final Statement of Accounts Annual Governance Statement		
09/09/2019	HCH			
10/09/2019	Joint Chairs			
11/09/2019 (pm)	LSE			
13/09/2019	Audit	Final Statement of Accounts Annual Governance Statement		
01/10/2019	PSB			
09/10/2019	HCH	HRA Asset Management Strategy		
11/10/2019	LSE			
14/10/2019	Joint chairs			
15/10/2019	Audit			
31/10/2019	HCH			
01/11/2019	LSE			
11/11/2019	Audit			
18/11/2019	Joint Chairs			
20/11/2019	HCH			

22/11/2019	LSE			
11/12/2019	HCH			
13/12/2019	LSE			
16/12/2019	Joint Chairs			
19/12/2019	Audit			
2020				
Q1 2020	LSE	Proportion of revenue spend increase 2% 19/20 Assess effectiveness of marketing programme Check inward investment strategy and action plan		
	HCH			
	Audit			
	Joint Chairs			
Q2 2020	LSE	Increase % of pupils assessed in Welsh in Year 2		
	HCH			
	Audit			
	Joint Chairs			