

Public Document Pack

Cabinet

Meeting Venue
By Teams

Meeting date
Tuesday, 2 March 2021

Meeting time
10.00 am

For further information please contact
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County Hall
Llandrindod Wells
Powys
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24/02/2021

Mae croeso i chi siarad yn Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg yn y cyfarfod.
Rhowch wybod pa iaith rydych am ei defnyddio erbyn hanner dydd, ddau ddiwrnod
gwaith cyn y cyfarfod.
You are welcome to speak Welsh or English in the meeting.
Please inform us of which language you wish to use by noon, two working days
before the meeting.

AGENDA

1.	APOLOGIES
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To receive apologies for absence.

2.	MINUTES
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To authorise the Chair to sign the minutes of the last meeting held as a correct record.

(Pages 3 - 8)

3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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To receive any declarations of interest from Members relating to items to be considered on the agenda.

4.	HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) THIRTY YEAR FINANCIAL BUSINESS PLAN STARTING 2021-2022
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To consider a report by County Councillor Iain McIntosh, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning and Economic Regeneration.

(Pages 9 - 74)

5.	COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS FROM THE COUNCIL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
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To consider a report by County Councillor Iain McIntosh, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning and Economic Regeneration.

(Pages 75 - 82)

6.	ESTYN REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S WORK TO SUPPORT SCHOOLS AND PUPIL REFERRAL UNITS MARCH - AUGUST 2020
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To receive and consider the Estyn review of the Council's support for Schools and Pupil Referral Units, March – August 2020.

(Pages 83 - 94)

7.	DELEGATED DECISIONS TAKEN BY PORTFOLIO HOLDERS
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To note the delegated decisions taken by Portfolio Holders.

(Pages 95 - 96)

8.	FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
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To consider the Cabinet forward work programme.

(Pages 97 - 98)

9.	EXEMPT ITEMS
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The Monitoring Officer has determined that category 3 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules applies to the following items. His view on the public interest test (having taken account of the provisions of Rule 14.8 of the Council's Access to Information Rules) was that to make this information public would disclose information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

These factors in his view outweigh the public interest in disclosing this information. Members are asked to consider these factors when determining the public interest test, which they must decide when considering excluding the public from this part of the meeting.

10.	16+ ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT IN POWYS
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To consider a report a report by County Councillor Rachel Powell, Portfolio Holder for Young People and Culture.

(To Follow)

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD AT BY TEAMS ON TUESDAY,
16 FEBRUARY 2021**

PRESENT

County Councillor M R Harris (Chair)

County Councillors MC Alexander, G Breeze, A W Davies, P Davies, H Hulme,
R Powell and I McIntosh

In attendance: County Councillors G Jones and P Roberts

1.	APOLOGIES
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Apologies for absence were received from the Corporate Director (Children and Adults) and Geraint Rees Senior Education Officer.

2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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County Councillor Myfanwy Alexander declared an interest in item 3 Llanfair Caereinion CP School and Caereinion High School – All Age School Proposal as a governor of Caereinion High School. She was covered by the general exemption for governors when speaking on school modernisation proposals.

The Chief Executive read from the statement issued by Powys Teaching Health Board on the Covid pandemic highlighting the alarming rise in the number of cases in Powys and reminding everyone to follow the guidance to keep safe.

3.	LLANFAIR CAEREINION C.P. SCHOOL AND CAEREINION HIGH SCHOOL - ALL-AGE SCHOOL PROPOSAL
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Cabinet gave further consideration to the proposal to proceed with the statutory process to amalgamate the two schools and to establish a new all-age school following the call-in of the decision by the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee. The Chair of the Committee outlined the reasons why the Committee were recommending why the decision should be deferred.

The Portfolio Holder for Education and Property confirmed that there was no departure from current policy in the proposal and that this would be a step in the journey of developing Welsh medium education provision. He didn't accept that the proposal would lead to upheaval and he was positive about the interaction with governors and parents to date.

County Councillor Gareth Jones spoke as the local member and he advised that there was strong support in the community of Llanfair Caereinion for this proposal to go ahead.

RESOLVED

- To approve the publication of a statutory notice to close both Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High**

School from the 31st August 2022, and open a new dual stream all-age school for pupils aged 4-18 on the sites currently occupied by Llanfair Caereinion C.P. School and Caereinion High School from the 1st September 2022.

- 2. To accelerate the dialogue with representatives of the two schools and the community to explore ways to develop and enhance the Welsh-medium provision in Llanfair Caereinion, and to include all feeder schools in this dialogue.**

4.	2021 ANNUAL REVIEW OF VISION 2025 OUR CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN, INCLUDING OUR STRATEGIC EQUALITY OBJECTIVES 2020-2024
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Cabinet considered an update to Vision 2025: Our Corporate Improvement Plan. The update had been considered by the Scrutiny Committees and a number of amendments had been made to strengthen the CIP in response to some of the points raised.

RECOMMENDED to Council that the proposed amendments to Vision 2025: Our Corporate Improvement Plan (as outlined in Appendix A) are approved for publication in the CIP Update 2021, with implementation from April 2021.

5.	QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT
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Cabinet considered the performance report for the third quarter of 2020/21. The report was in two parts, the first part dealing with the Council's response to Covid-19 and the second setting out details of the top 20 Powys specific performance measures, top priorities and milestones in the Corporate Improvement Plan 2018-23, Public Accountability Measures and progress against the Strategic Equality Plan.

The Leader and Cabinet members paid tribute to staff for continuing to deliver services despite the challenges of the pandemic.

RESOLVED that Cabinet notes the continued achievements and the tremendous response of the organisation during unprecedented and challenging times of a global pandemic, while balancing the need to progress business as usual and Vision 2025 priorities.

6.	STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER REPORT QUARTER 3 2020/2021
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Cabinet considered the Strategic Risk Register for the third quarter of 2022/21. The report set out details of the 12 strategic risks and the mitigating actions being taken to control them. Since the last report no risks had been escalated to the Strategic Risk Register, but Children's Services had reviewed their risks and

consolidated them into one risk. In addition to the Strategic Risk Register the Covid-19 Risk Register was reviewed weekly by EMT. Cabinet also noted the questions raised by the Scrutiny Committees and the responses provided by the Heads of Services.

RESOLVED that Cabinet notes the current Strategic Risk Register and is satisfied with progress against actions for Quarter 3.

7.	TREASURY MANAGEMENT QUARTER 3 REPORT
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Cabinet considered the Treasury Management report for Quarter 3 and noted that there had been no significant change in strategy since the last quarter.

RESOLVED that the Treasury Management report for Quarter 3 be accepted.

8.	HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT RENT AND RELATED CHARGES CHANGES FOR 2021-22
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Cabinet considered changes for Council Housing Rents, Garage Rents and all property and tenancy related Service Charges, for the financial year 2021-22. The Council's HRA Business Plan had been stress tested to see what changes in rents and services charges needed to be made to allow it to remain viable and able to increase the number of affordable homes available across Powys and a 1.5% increase was recommended. Cabinet was pleased to note that this was the lowest proposed increase for three years.

Cabinet was advised that the waiting list for social housing in the County was just over 3,200 currently with the main demand for one and two bedroom properties. The Council was doing significant work to address this with its social building programme.

RESOLVED

- 1. That with effect from April 5th, 2021 the average rent in Powys will increase by 1.5% (the average rent being £93.82 per week) for all 5,389 Council owned homes excluding service charges.**
- 2. That service charges charged to HRA tenants are amended from effect from April 5th, 2021 to allow the Council to recover the cost incurred in providing these services.**
- 3. That the weekly cost effect from April 5th, 2021 for Careline in 2021-2022 is £1.10 per week.**
- 4. That HRA garage rents in Powys with effect from April 5th, 2021 for 2021-2022 are increased by £2.64 per week.**
- 5. That garage plot charges effect from April 5th, 2021 for 2021-2022 increase by £20.04 per annum.**

6. That the weekly occupation charge from April 5th, 2021 charges for Gypsy and Traveller pitches in 2021-2022 will be increased by 1.5% the average rent being £105.24.
7. That all other rental and service charges, not detailed above, effect from April 5th, 2021 will increase by 1.5%.

9. CHILDREN'S SERVICES EARLY HELP STRATEGY

Cabinet considered the Early Help Strategy for Children's Services. The Early Help and Support focus of the strategy would implement partnership processes for the effective assessment of children and young people who would benefit from early help services. The Strategy would help ensure that resources were targeted where they would make the greatest difference. The Strategy was warmly welcomed by the Cabinet and the Leader congratulated the service on the progress being made.

RESOLVED that the Early Help Strategy is approved.

10. MID WALES ENERGY STRATEGY

Cabinet considered a report on the progress of the Mid Wales Energy Strategy that was being developed jointly with Ceredigion County Council and Welsh Government. The strategy was aligned to UK and Welsh Government strategies to achieve by 2050 a net zero carbon system that delivers social and economic benefits, eliminates fuel poverty, better connects Mid Wales to the rest of the UK and contributes to wider UK decarbonisation. The next delivery phase would require the appointment of a dedicated officer to lead on behalf of the region. A bid had been made to the Welsh European Funding Office for funding under the European Social Fund (ESF) Priority 5 (Public Services Reform and Regional Working). The bid outlined proposals to establish a Regional Collaboration Office that would provide the required capacity for a Growth Deal PMO, and agile capacity to support wider activity in support of economic development activity aligned to the wider strategy.

RESOLVED

1. As individual Local authorities (Powys & Ceredigion County Councils) to endorse commitment to the mid Wales Energy Strategy and sign off the strategy document.
2. Powys and Ceredigion Senior officers to work together to develop and agree governance arrangements for the preparation of a Mid Wales Energy Strategy Delivery Plan, including the establishment of an Advisory group to advise on the Mid Wales Energy Strategy Delivery Plan.

11.	FINANCIAL FORECAST FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2021 (AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2020)
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Cabinet considered an updated assessment of the projected year-end financial position, and the ongoing impact the Covid 19 pandemic was having on the Council's revenue budget for 2020/21. The full year projected deficit of £1.15 million reported at the end of the second quarter had reduced to a near balanced position forecast of £0.57 million at year end (excluding Delegated Schools and Housing Revenue Account (HRA)). Cabinet acknowledged the work of services bring in the budget close to target and the support of Welsh and UK governments.

72% or £8.93 million savings had been delivered and a further 7% £0.88 million were assured of delivery by Heads of Service. £2.582 million, 21% were unachieved and were at risk of delivery in this year, although some targets would be rolled forward into 2021/22.

The report also set out a number of virements that required Cabinet approval.

RESOLVED

- 1. That Cabinet note the budget position and the projected full year position to the end of March 2021.**
- 2. That the virements proposed in section 7 of the report are approved.**

1.

12.	CAPITAL FORECAST AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2020
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Cabinet received an update on the financial position of the Council's capital programme as at 31st December 2020. Actual spend and committed expenditure amounted to £64.94 million representing 68% of the total budget. Cabinet was advised that capital receipts were lower than forecast due to the impact the lockdown but that there were still sufficient receipts to support the transformation programme.

The report also set out a virement in respect of the Nant Helen Fund and capital bids for cyber security, ICT software, to build a Household Waste and Recycling Centre in Welshpool Depot and make improvements to Newtown and Llanfyllin depots.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the contents of the report are noted.**
- 2. That the virements proposed in section 4 of the report are approved.**
- 3. That the capital bids proposed in sections 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4 of the report are approved.**

County Councillor M R Harris (Chair)

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

CABINET EXECUTIVE

March 2nd, 2021

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Iain McIntosh
Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning & Economic
Regeneration

REPORT TITLE: Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Thirty Year Financial
Business Plan Starting 2021-2022.

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present for approval the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Thirty Year Financial Business Plan Starting 2021-2022.

2. Background

- 2.1 All councils in Wales in their role as the Strategic Housing Authority have the responsibility to plan for the housing needs of their population. Powys is one of the eleven stock retaining local authorities in Wales, providing 5,389 affordable, secure homes across the county, as well as plans to develop a further 250 new homes scheduled for completion by the end of 2025.
- 2.2 Landlord councils in Wales are required to present an “acceptable” HRA Business Plan, including a thirty-year financial model, to the Welsh Government each year. The Plan must conform to a structure and Business Plan parameters set out by the Welsh Government. This is to allow the Welsh Government to assess the progress of local authorities in maintaining the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) to be eligible for the annual Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) Grant (currently for Powys £3,699,000). Powys achieved WHQS compliance in December 2018.
- 2.3 The HRA borrows to fund capital works such as the new build and improvement programmes. The level of borrowing is closely monitored as this is related to annual capital financing costs. All councils in Wales have reached agreement with Welsh Government to remove the borrowing cap from HRAs with effect from March 2019, introduced by the Housing Act 2014 settlement payment. The Council is required by regulation to have regard to the Prudential Code when carrying out its duties under Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003. Any borrowing undertaken for the HRA Business Plan following the abolition of the borrowing cap will be ‘unsupported’, in so much as there will not be any financial support from the Welsh Government for the cost of such borrowing. Schemes, such as development of new homes, may however benefit from grants to help cover cost of such projects.
- 2.4 This means that the Council is able to borrow additional resources without statutory limit to fund investment in both existing and new homes, as long as

the income generated by the HRA from rents and other charges is able to cover the cost of servicing and repaying the debt.

- 2.5 On February 16th 2021 Cabinet approved an increase in rents and other charges levied by the HRA in line with the Welsh Government's policy for social housing rents, which calculates rent levels using a number of factors including economic and housing market data.
- 2.6 The impact of changes to the social security system has been taken into account in developing the Business Plan. Financial modelling has been carried out to account significant risks of increasing rent arrears and the additional resources needed to make sure that rent due to the Council is paid promptly.
- 2.7 The HRA Thirty Year Business Plan Starting 2021-22 for Powys:
 - Makes sure the HRA treasury management strategy is prudent and complies with the Council's approach to borrowing.
 - Sets a balanced budget with minimum reserve of £1,000,000 (or 3% of expenditure).
 - Allows the Council to maintain WHQS for current homes.
 - Supports the development of at least 250 new homes by 2025.
 - Balances the need to keep rents affordable with making sure that homes are maintained and kept in good condition.
 - Maximises revenue and expenditure efficiencies.
 - Complies with the Prudential Code

3. Advice

- 3.1 To make sure that the Council continues to make efficient use of its housing assets and operates a sustainable landlord service, the HRA Business Plan, as proposed for approval, has been informed by a long-term approach to important investment programmes.
- 3.2 Detailed proposals are set out in the HRA Business Plan narrative, attached as Appendix A to this report, for the five-year period starting in 2021-2022. This allows for a strategic approach to be taken to investment decisions and planning and allows for more informed consultation and communication with residents and tenants. A summary of the current proposals, for the five years beginning 2021-2022, is presented below. The figures for 2021-2022 will form the basis of the budgets for that particular year.
- 3.3 New Homes for Powys (Capital Programme)
 - 3.3.1 There were 3,326 (January 2021) people registered with Homes in Powys for affordable, rented homes. A new build housing programme is underway which will deliver at least 250 new council homes by 2025. Further schemes are being developed to expand this programme. Provision has been made in the HRA Business Plan to fund a potential increase to 425 homes both newly built and acquired (subject to land and development opportunities and any planning and regulatory consents being secured) by 2026. Developing homes available for let at social rents or sale at below market prices is not usually possible without direct grant support from the Welsh Government. This is to offset such expenditure as land acquisition and construction costs, which reflect open-market property values and rents. Such grant support is not

available to fund core HRA borrowing. At a time of rising land and construction costs, the scale and pace of continued development of homes available for accommodation at sub-market rates will depend upon the availability of grant from the Welsh Government. If grant falls and land and construction costs continue to increase, the Council will need to consider alternative financial models which subsidise the continued development of new homes by the HRA.

Table 3.3.1: New Homes for Powys Financial Summary 2021-22 to 2025-2026

Financial Year	HRA Business Plan Investment	Number of New Homes Completed and Let	Notes
2021-2022	£13,480,000	17	Investment planned for each year will cover completing earlier schemes, progressing current developments and preparing for future projects. Completions will be dependent upon securing all necessary planning and other regulatory consents, securing viable development sites and where needed social housing grant.
2022-2023	£17,122,000	121	
2023-2024	£22,112,000	31	
2024-2025	£20,548,000	144	
2025-2026	£15,068,000	112	
Total	£88,330,000	425	

3.4 WHQS (Capital Programme)

3.4.1 This programme is designed to make sure the Council's homes continue to meet the WHQS. The programme has been structured to smooth the peaks and troughs of funding and investment needs, with the focus on those components where replacement is most needed. Lower level of new resources are needed between 2023-2024 and 2027-2028 because the focus is now on maintaining rather than reaching the WHQS – the benefits of past investment will reduce the need for future expenditure. However, the age of the Council's housing is reflected in the need to invest in re-roofing works to reduce damp and increase thermal comfort. Many roofs are those originally installed when the properties were built. Investment in estates, including boundaries and fences, is considered to be an important part of the next phase of WHQS, which is to focus on the external environment of homes. Some of the investment activity within the WHQS programme also contributes to the objectives of the Green Powys and Compliance One Hundred programmes (see sections 3.5 and 3.6).

Table 3.4.1: WHQS Programme Financial Summary 2021-22 to 2025-2026

Investment	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Kitchens	£400,000	£600,000	£420,000	£400,000	£600,000
Bathrooms	£150,000	£473,000	£200,000	£200,000	£0
Rewiring	£200,000	£180,000	£120,000	£60,000	£100,000
Windows	£399,000	£399,000	£300,000	£0	£0
Roofing	£2,600,000	£1,500,000	£1,000,000	£400,000	£400,000
Walls	£500,000	£450,000	£400,000	£0	£0
Estate Works (contribute to Love Where You Live Programme)	£1,000,000	£1,400,000	£800,000	£800,000	£800,000

External Wall Insulation (contributes to Green Powys)	£500,000	£300,000	£0	£000,000	£0
Heating (contributes to Green Powys)	£1,500,000	£1,500	£1,400,000	£1,400,000	£1,400,000
Energy Efficiency (contributes to Green Powys)	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£700,000
Asbestos Management (contributes to Compliance One Hundred)	£150,000	£150,000	£100,000	£250,000	£0
Doors	£104,000	£250,000	£200,000	£0	£0
Miscellaneous WHQS	£1,220,000	£651,000	£250,000	£250,000	£150,000
Total	£9,223,000	£8,352,000	£5,690,000	£4,260,000	£4,150,000

3.5 Compliance One Hundred

3.5.1 The Compliance One Hundred programme is designed to make sure that all of the Council homes and associated assets are one hundred per cent compliant with all relevant and applicable legislation and regulation. The investment schemes detailed below are in addition to those included within the WHQS programme, detailed above in section 3.4 and Day-to-Day Repairs and Maintenance which includes all inspections and servicing of safety-critical components and assets, such as heating systems and lifts.

Table 3.5.1: Compliance One Hundred Programme Financial Summary 2021-22 to 2025-2026

Investment	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Fire Safety Works	£170,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000
Water Supply and Sewerage Works	£200,000	£150,000	£150,000	£200,000	£300,000
Legionella	£150,000	£150,000	£200,000	£250,000	£250,000
WHQS Contributions to Compliance One Hundred (Asbestos Management)	£150,000	£150,000	£100,000	£250,000	£0
Day-to-day Repairs Contribution to Compliance	£430,000	£480,000	£400,000	£310,000	£310,000

One Hundred					
Total Compliance One Hundred Investment Programme	£1,100,000	£1,030,000	£950,000	£1,110,000	£960,000

3.6 Green Powys

3.6.1 The Green Powys programme is designed to increase fuel efficiency and reduce fuel poverty for tenants of the Council and make tangible improvements to the wider environment, with a particular emphasis on increasing planting of trees, shrubberies and other actions to promote biodiversity, encourage appreciation of the natural world and give a greener feel to our communities.

3.6.2 As the 'Green Heart of Wales' Powys County Council is working to improve the thermal comfort of its council-owned homes and at the same time helping to reduce the carbon footprint of the county. The cost of decarbonising all homes currently owned by the Council is difficult to quantify. However, a broad-brush estimate based on research undertaken by Inside Housing suggests a possible investment of £112,000,000 will be needed for Powys. The Council is exploring sustainable heating systems, such as ground source heat pumps and replacing gas-fired boilers with ones that can easily be converted to use hydrogen.

Table 3.6.2: Green Powys Programme Financial Summary 2021-22 to 2025-2026

Investment	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Damp Prevention	£150,000	£175,000	£175,000	£175,000	£200,000
Photo-voltaic (Solar Panels)	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000
Decarbonisation and Energy Efficiency	£90,000	£90,000	£100,000	£250,000	£250,000
WHQS Contributions to Green Powys	£2,500,000	£2,300,000	£1,900,000	£1,900,000	£2,100,000
Day-to-day Repairs Contribution to Green Powys	£300,000	£300,000	£325,000	£350,000	£350,000
Total Green Powys Investment Programme	£3,115,000	£2,940,000	£2,575,000	£2,750,000	£2,975,000

3.7 Fit for Life

3.7.1 The Fit for Life programme is designed to make the Council's homes better suited to the needs of older people and those with health-related needs that impair or adversely affect their mobility.

Table 3.7.1: Fit for Life Programme Financial Summary 2021-22 to 2025-2026

Investment	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Fit for Purpose	£1,800,000	£1,700,000	£1,400,000	£1,200,000	£1,000,000
Adaptations - Capital	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000
Adaptations - Revenue	£515,000	£528,815	£536,860	£548,130	£559,640
Total Fit for Life Investment	£2,565,000	£2,478,815	£2,186,860	£1,998,130	£1,809,640

3.8 Love Where You Live

3.8.1 The Love Where You Live tenancy sustainability strategy is designed to make the homes and estates managed by the Council places where people can enjoy their lives and we improve the wellbeing of our residents. The investment schemes detailed below are in addition to those included within the WHQS programme, detailed above in section 3.4.

Table 3.8.1: Love Where You Live Programme Financial Summary 2021-22 to 2025-2026

Investments	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Brecon Area Estate Improvements	£20,000	£25,000	£36,000	£36,000	£36,000
Newtown Area Estate Improvements	£20,000	£25,000	£36,000	£36,000	£36,000
Welshpool Area Estate Improvements	£20,000	£25,000	£36,000	£36,000	£36,000
Wye Valley Estate Improvements	£20,000	£25,000	£36,000	£36,000	£36,000
Ystradgynlais Estate Improvements	£20,000	£25,000	£36,000	£36,000	£36,000
Car Parking	£0	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000
Communal Area Improvements	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000
Garage Strategy	£200,000	£200,000	£400,000	£400,000	£400,000
Penybryn Regeneration	£700,000	£700,000	£300,000	£0	£0
Play Area Improvements	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000
WHQS Contributions to Love	£1,000,000	£1,400,000	£800,000	£800,000	£800,000

Where You Live (Estate and Boundary Works)					
Day-to-day Repairs Contribution to Green Powys	£819,900	£1,345,000	£1,371,400	£1,379,700	£1,406,300
Total Love Where You Live Investment	£2,944,900	£3,970,000	£3,251,400	£2,959,700	£2,986,300

3.9 Community Alarms (Capital Programme)

3.9.1 During 2019-2020, a review looked at the future of the Careline service for tenants of the Council. The review was prompted by the need to replace the current equipment, which is of an age that it is beyond economical maintenance and repair. Plans to replace the equipment in 2020-2021 were put on hold due to service restrictions introduced to manage the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The HRA Business Plan for 2021-2022 includes a one-off provision of £600,000 for the necessary capital investment to replace the Careline equipment with up-to-date kit that will be more reliable, less costly to maintain and able to offer a greater range of services.

3.10 Repairs and Maintenance (Revenue Programme)

3.10.1 Repairs and maintenance covers day-to-day repairs and cyclical maintenance to the Council's homes. The majority of this work is undertaken for the Council by its joint venture with Kier, Heart of Wales Property Services (HoWPS). HoWPS is paid an annual sum to undertake all works set out in a Service Agreement between itself and the Council. Any day-to-day works not covered in the agreement are funded on an as-needs basis by the Council.

3.10.2 A review of the services provided for the Council by HoWPS took place in 2020 with appropriate responses to the review's findings to be agreed early in 2021.

Table 3.10.2: Repairs and Maintenance Programme Financial Summary 2021-22 to 2025-2026

Investments	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
HoWPS Service Agreement	£5,303,130	£5,414,500	£5,528,200	£5,644,290	£5,762,820
HoWPS Service contingency	£170,000	£0	£0	£0	£0
Day-to-day and cyclical repairs not covered by HoWPS	£2,326,900	£2,518,170	£2,523,120	£2,493,720	£2,529,930

Service Agreement					
External Painting	£350,000	£357,350	£364,850	£372,510	£380,330
Estate and Grounds Maintenance	£888,970	£907,640	£926,700	£946,160	£966,030
Miscellaneous Expenditure	£142,320	£145,310	£148,360	£151,480	£154,660
Total Repairs and Maintenance Investment	£9,181,320	£9,342,970	£9,491,230	£9,608,160	£9,793,859

3.11 Housing Management System (Capital Programme)

3.11.1 The Council's current housing management system, QL, has a servicing agreement in place until 31st October 2021 with a provision to extend to 31st October 2022. Under current procurement rules, this cannot be extended beyond that date. Accordingly, provision has been made in the HRA Business Plan for the full cost of purchasing, installing and bringing into use a new housing management system. Work on this, with associated expenditure, will be completed in 2021-2022. The total cost is estimated at £1,000,000, with 20% spent in 2020-2021 and 80% in 2021-2022.

3.12 Acquisition of Properties (Capital Programme)

3.12.1 The Council has between 2019 and 2021 purchased 20 homes on the open market, the majority of which have been ex-municipal homes. In determining which properties to purchase there has been a focus on those in areas of high demand and where the new build programme is unlikely or due to planning and land restrictions, unable to meet the need. All such purchases are subject to the same viability criteria as new build, with additional allowances made for any works needed to bring the properties up to WHQS. The programme will continue to be a significant part of the work undertaken by the Council to increase the availability of genuinely affordable, secure rented homes across Powys.

3.13 Other expenditure within the HRA Business Plan includes Supervision and Management Costs, which cover the costs of managing the service, for example staff, support services and office costs, and the cost of funding debt taken on when the HRA became self-financing in 2014 and any additional borrowing secured to fund investment programmes.

4. Resource Implications

4.1 The HRA Business Plan submission to the Welsh Government sets out how the Council will fund the service, aggregating certain categories of expenditure within generic headings set by the Welsh Government to help manage the allocation of MRA. Councils are however free to allocate investment across programmes of their own choosing. Table 4.1 sets out how Powys County Council proposes to invest in and fund the HRA Business Plan

for next five years. All data is sourced from the HRA Thirty Year Financial Business Plan 2021-2022.

Table 4.1: HRA Business Expenditure, Income and Financing Summary 2021-2022 to 2025-2026

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Capital Expenditure					
WHQS Improvements & Maintenance	£9,223,000	£8,472,000	£5,848,000	£4,436,000	£4,373,000
<i>New build</i>	£11,880,000	£15,520,000	£19,112,000	£12,492,000	8,72,0000
Regeneration / Remodelling of existing stock	£4,480,000	£3,890,000	£3,322,000	£2,792,000	£1,121,000
<i>Acquisition of existing properties (Tab 8)</i>	£1,600,000	£1,600,000	£1,600,000	£1,600,000	£1,800,000
<i>Acquisition of Land</i>	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Other Improvements	£720,000	£492,000	£600,000	£711,000	£824,000
Other Capital Expenditure	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Slippage	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Sub Total	£27,903,000	£29,974,000	£30,482,000	£22,031,000	£8,992,000
Capital Funding					
Funding B/Fwd	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Major Repairs Allowance	£3,699,000	£3,699,000	£3,699,000	£3,699,000	£3,699,000
Capital Receipts	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Borrowing	£14,454,000	£15,980,000	£15,243,000	£9,127,000	£0
Other Funding Sources	£4,204,000	£5,815,000	£7,249,000	£4,932,000	£935,000
Capital Expenditure funded by HRA	£5,546,000	£4,481,000	£4,291,000	£4,273,000	£4,357,000
Sub Total	£27,903,000	£29,974,000	£30,482,000	£22,031,000	£8,992,000
Capital Funding Shortfall	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Capital Cumulative Shortfall	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Revenue Expenditure					
Management Costs	£7,088	£7,188	£7,291	£7,398	£7,518
Repairs & Maintenance	£8,292	£8,537	£8,771	£8,978	£9,259
Interest	£3,223	£3,484	£3,789	£4,036	£4,111
Capital Financing Charge	£2,597	£3,031	£3,499	£3,928	£4,137

Sub Total	£21,200	£22,239	£23,350	£24,341	£25,025
Revenue Funding					
Gross Rental Income	£26,332	£27,069	£27,857	£28,721	£29,815
Garages	£743,000	£752,000	£761,000	£770,000	£779,000
Service Charges	£290,000	£294,000	£297,000	£301,000	£304,000
Other Commercial Rental Income	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Voids	-£1,052,000	-£1,006,000	-£960,000	-£843,000	-£726,000
Bad Debts	-£790,000	-£679,000	-£605,000	-£628,000	-£657,000
WG Affordable Housing Grant (AHG)	£203,000	£203,000	£203,000	£203,000	£203,000
Interest on Balances	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Other Income	£97,000	£88,000	£89,000	£90,000	£91,000
Sub Total	£25,823,000	£26,720,000	£27,642,000	£28,613,000	£29,809,000
Surplus / - Deficit for Year	£4,623,000	£4,481,000	£4,291,000	£4,273,000	£4,783,000
Capital Expenditure funded by HRA	£5,546,000	£4,481,000	£4,291,000	£4,273,000	£4,357,000
Voluntary loan repayment	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Balance Brought Forward (HRA Reserve)	£1,924,000	£1,000,000	£1,000,000	£1,000,000	£1,000,000
Surplus / - Deficit after CERA	-£924,000	£0	£0	£0	£426,000
Balance Carried Forward (HRA Reserve)	£1,000,000	£1,000,000	£1,000,000	£1,000,000	£1,426,000

4.2 The financial model includes many assumptions, the primary ones are detailed below in section 4.3. Due to the long-term nature of the forecasts within the Business Plan, the uncertainty of the economic climate and the demands on the housing environment generally, these assumptions are extremely sensitive to change.

- 4.3 The primary assumptions made to inform the HRA Business Plan are:
- Rental income will increase by CPI + 1% per year, the maximum allowed by the Welsh Government's Rent Policy.
 - Service charges are increased for future years in line with inflation for full cost recovery.
 - The Welsh Government will in future years allocate grant to support the development of social and low-cost housing on a scheme-by-scheme basis. For the purposes of forward planning, an average grant rate of 35% has been assumed.

- The Welsh Government Major Repairs Allowance receivable is assumed to remain at previous levels of £3,699,000 per year.
 - Void loss and bad debt have been assumed at 7% (4% voids and 3% bad debt). Work continues with HoWPS, the Council's principal void works contractor, to reduce void turnaround times. This assumption also takes account of growing challenges collecting income from people reliant upon the social security system for all or part of their income.
 - Prudential borrowing interest rates have been assessed at 2.9% per annum.
 - General inflation at 2.2% for RPI in 2020-2021 and 1.2% afterwards and 1.7% for CPI in 2020-2021 and 0.5% annually afterwards
 - A minimum balance of £1,000,000 will be maintained over the medium term to mitigate against any future risks.
- 4.4 The Business Plan is subject to regular review to make sure new expenditure to be paid for by borrowing is for essential improvements or for schemes that have an element of pay back, such as the development of new homes. This is to make sure that there are no long-term issues of affordability and sustainability in respect of borrowing.
- 4.5 The Business Plan process requires the Council to assess the impact of a number of key variables and how changes in these may impact on priorities both in capital investment and for revenue budgets.
- 4.6 It should be noted that the HRA is ring fenced. This means it can only draw income from rental income, self-generated income and approved grants from the Welsh Government. It cannot benefit in any way from General Fund income. By the same token, the HRA can only be used to fund services and investment of direct benefit to domestic tenants of the Council. It cannot be used to fund General Fund services or investment. Welsh Government will later this year be issuing a revised HRA guide detailing what the HRA can and cannot fund.
- 4.7 The Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) notes the content of this report and is satisfied that the HRA business Plan is acceptable, that the assumptions contained within the report are appropriate and that the plan conforms to the structure and business plan parameters set out by Welsh Government. The plan is therefore viable and can supported from a financial perspective.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications but the requirement for a plan is set out in this report. The approval of the Business Plan is an executive function which does not have to be referred to full Council.
- 5.2 The Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: "I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report."

6. Data Protection

- 6.1 The proposals and recommendations contained in this report do not involve the processing of personal data.

7. Comment from local member(s)

7.1 This matter has equal effect across the Council.

8. Integrated Impact Assessment

8.1 An Impact Assessment is attached to this report as Appendix B.

8.2 The Impact Assessment shows that the proposals for the HRA Thirty Year Business Plan 2021-2022 set out in this report contribute positively to maintaining and developing the Council's role as responsive and viable social landlord. A balanced approach has been taken between maintaining and improving existing homes and increasing the range of affordable housing options available for the people of Powys. Risks arising from changes by the Welsh Government to rent and affordable housing grant policy and inflationary construction costs are well mitigated. The Powys HRA Thirty Year Business Plan makes a substantial contribution towards making Vision 2025 a reality, which now includes Affordable Housing as one of its top priorities.

8.3 The impact on the Council of not approving the proposed HRA Thirty Year Business Plan, set out in this report, will be considerable. There will be a high risk of the Council not being to comply with the Welsh Government's requirement for the Council to have in place by April 1st, 2021 a sustainable and viable HRA Thirty Year Business Plan. This may result in the loss of MRA (£3,699,000 per annum) and direct intervention by the Welsh Government in the management of the landlord service.

9. Recommendation

9.1 Cabinet is therefore recommended to approve the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Thirty Year Business Plan Starting 2021-2022.

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At Home in Powys

Housing Revenue Account Thirty Year Business Plan 2021-2022

March 2021

Index






At Home in Powys	1
Vision 2025	2
Looking Ahead	3
Outcomes and Services	4
The Powys Housing Market	8
Investment Strategy	13
Rents and Services Charges	22
Listening to Powys Communities	27
Sustainable Commissioning and Procurement	31
Risk Management and Monitoring & Evaluation	32

At Home in Powys

'Vision 2025', which is Powys County Council's strategic plan for improving the quality of life for everyone in Powys, includes Affordable Housing as one of its top six priorities. The Council provides flats, houses and bungalows for one in ten of all households so that they can make a good home in Powys. Making sure that the Council is able to continue to manage and develop a financially viable landlord service is essential to help people to be at home in Powys.

In March 2021, Powys County Council approved its Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Thirty Year Business Plan for 2021-2022. The Business Plan, which operates on a rolling thirty-year basis, sets out all the information and activity that together allows the Council to successfully and sustainably approach manage and provide social housing for the people of Powys.

'At Home in Powys' highlights the most significant elements of the full Business Plan:

-  How the Business Plan supports 'Vision 2025'.
-  Information on the housing needs in Powys.
-  How the Council works with tenants and other stakeholders to develop and monitor the HRA Business Plan.
-  How the Council will increase for the people of Powys, the range and choice of Council-owned homes.
-  How the Council will finance and operate the HRA Business Plan to make sure the Council's landlord service is responsive and meets the expectations of tenants and residents.

The Powys HRA Thirty Year Business Plan 2021-2022 contributes positively to maintaining and developing the Council's role as responsive and viable social landlord. A balanced approach has been taken between maintaining and improving existing homes and increasing the range of affordable housing options available for the people of Powys. Risks arising from changes by the Welsh Government to rent and affordable housing grant policy and inflationary construction costs are mitigated. The Powys HRA Thirty Year Business Plan makes a substantial contribution towards making Vision 2025 a reality, which now includes Affordable Housing as one of its top priorities and support the Mid Wales Growth Deal. It will also contribute to the national outcomes the Welsh Government has for housing across Wales.

Vision 2025

The HRA Business Plan is designed to make sure the Council's landlord service contributes to the priorities agreed in 'Vision 2025', which is the Council's Corporate Improvement Plan to improve the quality of life for everyone in Powys. 'Vision 2025' also contributes towards the outcomes agreed in the Powys Regional Partnership Board's 'A Healthy, Caring Powys' which is the health and care strategy for Powys and runs until 2027.

'Vision 2025' provides an important framework for involving residents, councillors, staff and other stakeholders, such as regulators, in improving public services in Powys. It focuses on the things that matter most for local people.

'Vision 2025' majors on four important themes in everyone's life:

- Economy: developing a vibrant economy.
- Health and care: leading the way in effective, integrated rural health and care.
- Learning and skills: strengthening learning and skills.
- Residents and Communities: supporting our residents and communities.

Supporting 'Vision 2025' is the Powys Public Service Board's 'Towards 2040' which is the Well-being Plan for Powys. 'Vision 2040' sets out the way Powys will contribute to the aspirations of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals to make sure public bodies in Wales are working towards improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of their areas.

Looking Ahead

The HRA faces many challenges in the years to come.

Maintaining the quality of homes

- 👉 The Council's housing stock is aging and in need to investment to make sure it can continue to provide homes now and in the future. Considerable high-cost investment is needed in many homes – for example new roofs, new floors and damp proofing. This is in addition to maintaining the Council's compliance with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) across all homes.

Developing new homes

- 👉 There are 3326 people registered with 'Homes in Powys' as of January 2021 for a social rented home in Powys. This compares to 2274 in January 2020. The development of new Council-owned homes is the only long-term way to meet this demand and avoid people being homeless or having to live in crowded, poor condition, high cost privately owned rented accommodation. Vision 2025 includes a commitment by the Council to once again be a major provider of new homes in Powys.

Environmental sustainability

- 👉 Increasing the environmental sustainability of all the Council's homes is likely to require substantial investment, including support for the Welsh Government's policy of 'decarbonisation' of existing and new homes. This is in support of the British objective to have a zero-net carbon economy and society by 2050. The average cost of making existing homes zero-carbon remain best estimates – for Powys a total of £112,000,000 would be needed, based on research undertaken by Inside Housing¹. That equates to £20,742 per Council-owned home.

Love Where You Live

- 👉 Improving the quality of life includes the estates where Council home are located. Greater investment is needed in estate management, maintenance and improvements to make sure that people can really love where they live.











These challenges mean that every aspect of the HRA needs to be considered for impact and efficiency. A zero-budget approach has therefore been taken to the HRA Thirty Year Business Plan 2021-2022.

¹ 'The cost of net zero: social landlords' decarbonisation plans revealed' – Inside Housing (November 23rd, 2020).

Outcomes and Services

Outcomes

Powys County Council's Housing Services have a Top Ten of outcomes for the work it does to help people to be at home in Powys. The HRA Business Plan contributes in some way to all these outcomes.

-  Increase our customer satisfaction ratings to be among the best in Wales.
-  Build at least 250 new council owned and managed homes by 2025, and to continue and grow our new build programme making the Council a major force in the housing market of Powys.
-  Increase the value for money we receive from our investment in repairing and maintaining our homes.
-  Maintain WHQS for all our homes, with a particular focus on improving energy efficiency and reducing damp.
-  All our homes to be one hundred per cent compliant with all health and safety requirements.
-  At least 99.65% of rent due collected every year.
-  Void rent loss reduced to 1.9% of the rent roll.
-  Speedy response to reduce and resolve homelessness.
-  Quick and user-friendly investment in homes for people who need aids, adaptations and disabled facilities to improve the quality of their lives.
-  A balanced housing market, offering desirable housing choices for people who live in Powys.

How well the Council is doing in making those outcomes a reality for people is measured and reported using a range of performance indicators, with targets set for each year.

- ✓ Number of new Housing Revenue Account homes completed: for 2021-2022 – 118 new homes.
- ✓ Overall tenant satisfaction with the housing services provided by the Council: for 2021-2022 - 75%.
- ✓ Percentage of tenants satisfied with major programmes of repair and improvement: for 2021-2022 - 85%.
- ✓ Percentage of customer call backs satisfied with the responsive repairs service: for 2021-2022 - 95%.
- ✓ Percentage of heating appliances serviced in the previous 12 months: for 2021-2022 - 100%.
- ✓ Average end to end time for responsive repair: for 2021-2022 - 9 days.
- ✓ Percentage of rent collected: for 2021-2022 - 99.65%.
- ✓ Percentage of rent lost to empty properties: for 2021-2022 - 4%.

Powys County Council has in place a detailed suite of eleven service standards, which govern everything it does as a landlord².

- Allocations and Lettings
- Customer Care
- Estate Management
- Anti-social Behaviour
- Quality of Accommodation Standard
- Repairs and Improvements
- Tenant Involvement
- Tenancy Management
- Rent and Income Collection
- Leaseholder
- Equality and Diversity

In 2021-2022, the Quality of Accommodation Standard will be improved, to represent a better balance between aspirations of tenants, especially those moving to their first Council-provided home, the time taken to re-let empty properties and the financial resources available within the HRA Business Plan.

Services

Housing Services is part of the Council's Housing and Community Development division which itself is part of the Council's 'Economy and Environment Directorate'. Housing Services has since becoming part of Housing and Community Development in early 2019 continued to provide services for our communities. It remains one of the best in Wales for collecting rent, it has started building council homes again for the first time in forty years and is well on the way to being a compliance leader. Housing Services is more than meeting the challenges posed by Covid-19.

To build on the past successes of Housing Services and to be better able to meet the challenges faced by the Council as both a landlord and strategic housing authority, a new structure for Housing Services is being developed. Called 'Moving on Up', the new delivery model will be rolled out during 2021.

'Moving on Up' has been informed by feedback shared by members of the service and the Tenant Scrutiny Panel at workshops held in the autumn of 2020, current and past performance, a detailed look at workload data and the social and financial opportunities and challenges the Council faces across all services. Most importantly, the proposals have been shaped by what is wanted from the Council by the people of Powys.

'Moving on Up' will...





² The Service Standards can be found at: Further details: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/2667/Council-Housing-Landlord-Service---Service-Standards>

- ☺ Provide more resources – financial, capacity and capability - for more efficient investment in homes and communities – including building new Council-owned homes, estate and cyclical maintenance, environmental sustainability and improvements to homes.
- ☺ Reduce complexity of the service to give greater clarity to clients and colleagues of where responsibilities rest.
- ☺ Increase flexibility to manage different delivery models for works to properties and support to vulnerable clients (including those who are homeless).
- ☺ Develop homelessness services to be better placed to respond to increasing demand and changing legislation expanding the scope of households who may be owed greater duties by the Council to keep or find a home.
- ☺ Support local delivery of services.




‘Moving on Up’ is being designed around the rurality and geography of Powys, the largest county in Wales. A strong network of area-based housing management and maintenance teams will offer day-to-day services for our tenants and communities, working as much as possible out and about in our communities.

The new approach to service delivery will also take advantage of the opportunities revealed by the Council’s response to Covid-19 to work more efficiently. This will include replacing fixed-base office-based working with a neighbourhood-focused mix of working out on estates and developing and using local services and community hubs.

The current service structure is based around four area housing management teams.

-  Brecon and Ystradgynlais
-  Welshpool and Machynlleth
-  Llandrindod Wells
-  Newtown and Llanidloes.

The area-based housing management teams, which form the nucleus of ‘Tenancy Services’, are supported by centrally managed but locally based teams.

-  ‘Housing One’ the First Contact service that provides the internet and telephone connections with our tenants and clients.
-  ‘Asset Management’ which manages the investment necessary to make sure our homes are kept to high standard, now and in the future.
-  ‘Housing Solutions’ which provides strategic and policy support across the service in areas such as homelessness, oversees the Council’s work to improve the quality of privately owned housing and has responsibility for developing new Council-owned homes.

The Housing Service has excellent working relationships with colleagues in and clients of Adult Social Care, Children’s Services and Powys Teaching Health Board and this, coupled with the integration of health and social care in Powys, means the housing service better understands how to address the housing needs of vulnerable people in Powys.

Allocation of all social housing in Powys is managed through 'Homes in Powys', a common allocation scheme that also offers a one-stop shop for people looking for a home. It is an on-line system making it easy for people to apply and amend their applications as and when needed. One application is all that is needed for someone to be considered for all social housing provided in Powys by the Council and seven housing associations.

The Council and Kier, a privately owned company, together own a Joint Venture Company called Heart of Wales Property Services (HoWPS) which is jointly owned by the Council and Kier. HoWPS has a five-year contract, starting in July 2017, for the delivery of responsive maintenance to HRA properties and some planned maintenance work. In addition, HoWPS delivers all responsive and planned maintenance to corporate properties and major capital projects on behalf of the Council. In autumn 2020, the Council undertook a detailed review of the service provided by HoWPS, taking account of performance and value for money. The responses needed to reflect the outcome of the review will be agreed by the Council in early 2021.

The Council is creative and innovative in making effective use of HRA housing to meet the most pressing of housing needs. One example includes the measured deployment of HRA homes to provide higher quality emergency and temporary accommodation for people who are homeless. This creates savings for the Council's General Fund, as it reduces the Council's use of bed and breakfast accommodation in emergency situations. There are moreover no negative impacts on the HRA Business Plan. This approach has proven to be particularly helpful during the Covid-19 event in helping the Council to accommodate an increased number of homeless households.

The Powys Housing Market

The Powys Housing market is extremely diverse. That is only to be expected in a county that accounts for a quarter of the land mass of Wales. The distance from one end of Powys to the other is greater than the distance from London to Bristol. Powys has the lowest population density of all the principal areas of Wales. The sheer size of the county, and its remoteness from major conurbations, presents many challenges for developing, managing and maintaining homes.

In 2020, the findings of an up-to-date Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) covering Powys and seven other authorities (including two National Parks) were published. The LHMA provides a South & West Wales regional approach with disaggregated data of the nine Powys market areas and the Brecon Beacons National Park area.

With the Homes in Powys data, the information is being used to inform the future of the Council's programme to build new council homes. This is co-ordinated through the Powys Strategic Housing Partnership with the plans of other social landlords to make sure that all developments complement each other to meet the needs of the greatest number of households.





Rural Housing Enabler (RHE) funding from Welsh Government is used to support a resource in the Affordable Housing team to assess need in the County and inform the new build programme.

Local Housing Strategy for Powys

In September 2020, the Powys Strategic Housing Partnership agreed the Local Housing Strategy for Powys for 2021 through 2025. The vision adopted by the Partnership is:

- ✓ *In line with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and other appropriate legislation, the Powys Local Housing Strategy will contribute positively to a healthier, more equal and cohesive Wales (by achieving its aims and objectives)*

The Powys Local Housing Strategy will support Vision 2025 and contribute positively to a healthier, more equal and cohesive Wales by...

-  Strengthening our relationship with residents and communities through a greater understanding of their housing aspirations and needs (Vision 2025 – Residents and Communities)
-  Providing a balanced housing market across Powys through developing more affordable homes, both to rent and to buy (Vision 2025 – Vibrant Economy)
-  Making sure that homes are there to meet people's lifetime needs. (Vision 2025 – Health and Care)
-  Encouraging investment in the homes and services Powys needs. (Vision 2025 – Vibrant Economy)

Homes in Powys

At the end of January 2020, 2274 people were registered with 'Homes in Powys'. The table below shows the number of applicants registered in each band. Bands One to Three (1892 applicants) are applicants with a housing need and are who ready to move. During the first three quarters of 2020-21 all social landlords providing homes in Powys let 506 properties.

Breakdown of Applicants Registered with Homes in Powys - by Band (December 2020)

	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Total
Number of Households	16	101	1775	1126	308	3326

Household size has for a number of years been reducing in Powys. The table below shows a breakdown of the applicants registered at the end of December 2020 by the bedrooms they require. This indicates a need to increase across Powys considerably the availability of smaller social homes. One-bedroom general needs homes currently make up just 20.4% of total social housing in Powys.

Breakdown of Applicants Registered with Homes in Powys - by Minimum Bedroom Size (December 2020)

Minimum bedroom size	Number of Households
One	1905
Two	893
Three	408
Four	104
Five	11
Six	5
Total	3326

The table below shows the tenure of applicants registered with Homes in Powys at the end of December 2020. The highest number of applicants are currently renting private sector accommodation, suggesting a clear desire for the security of tenure and affordable rents offered by social landlords.

Breakdown of Applicants Registered with Homes in Powys - by Current Tenure (December 2020)

Current Tenure	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Grand Total
Adult Placement		1	9	6	2	18
Clwyd Alyn Housing Association Tenancy		8	20	25	6	59
Grwp Cynefin Tenancy			4	1	4	9

Gwalia Housing Tenancy		1	30	12	2	45
HM forces accommodation		1	2	1	1	5
In home provided by employer			15	4	2	21
Living in care			10	2	1	13
Living with parents			174	104	21	299
Lodging			32	7	7	46
Melin Homes Tenancy			1	7		8
Mid Wales Housing Association Tenancy	1	16	76	63	15	171
Newydd Housing Association Tenancy		1	14	10	6	31
Other	5		195	111	36	347
Other Social Landlord		1	73	96	22	192
Owner Occupier	1		124	60	14	199
Powys County Council Tenancy	6	65	202	148	38	459
Renting from a private	3		475	377	85	940
Rough Sleeper			71	10	9	90
Staying with friends/relatives			194	39	29	262
Temporary Accommodation			17		1	18
Wales & West Housing Association Tenancy		7	37	43	7	94
Grand Total	16	101	1775	1126	308	3326

Applicants who join Homes in Powys are asked to say why they require housing. Households can have more than one reason - for example a prison leaver may also be threatened with homelessness. The table below shows the housing need reason declared by applicants. The highest housing need is 'Other Reason', the details of which will be recorded in the applicant's notes. Of the categorised housing needs 'Medical need or have a disability and my existing home is not appropriate for my needs' is the highest at 803 applicants followed by 'Homeless, or about to become homeless' at 737 applicants. There are significant numbers of applicants who cannot afford private sector accommodation, need to move due to care issues or their current accommodation is overcrowded or too large.

Housing Needs of Households Registered with Homes in Powys (January 2020)

Housing Need	Homes in Powys Partner Tenure	Non- Homes in Powys Partner Tenure	Total
Housing for older people required	47	235	282
Need to move to give or receive support and proven level of support is required and can be given	115	270	385

Found employment in the area and need to move closer to work or will otherwise lose that employment	33	104	137
Existing home is overcrowded	167	333	500
Other reason	328	826	1154
Current home planned to be demolished or needs major repairs	17	102	119
Existing house is too large for my needs	120	215	335
Experiencing anti-social behaviour or harassment	190	243	433
Experiencing domestic violence	26	104	130
Medical need or have a disability and my existing home is not appropriate for my needs	256	547	803
Current home has disabled adaptations which are no longer required	12	12	24
Homeless, or about to become homeless	47	690	737
Current home is unaffordable	63	398	461
Leaving prison	0	17	17

N.B. An applicant may choose more than one housing need reason.


Powys housing markets are as diverse as the county itself. The north west of Powys, in and around Machynlleth, is close to the Snowdonia National Park and the university town of Aberystwyth which is also the administrative centre of the county Ceredigion. Housing demand is strong, especially for affordable housing. The north east of Powys is dominated by Newtown and Welshpool, towns with relatively good rail and road links to the West Midlands and the towns and conurbations serving the Merseyside area. Housing demand is high, with Welshpool in particular experiencing high demand for homes. The centre of the county is home to Llandrindod Wells, the county town for Powys. South of Builth Wells is Brecon, which is part of the Brecon Beacons National Park. Like all national parks, property prices are high leading to very high demand for affordable housing in and around the town. The southernmost point of Powys is Ystradgynlais, a town with a proud industrial heritage and now on the edge of the Swansea commuter belt. The housing market is relatively balanced with pockets of low demand housing that no longer meets the needs and aspirations of today's households.

The risk of continued migration away from Powys by younger people, including those in their 20s and 30s, makes it more important than ever that there are affordable homes available not only to rent but also to buy. This makes the county's housing market more attractive and encourage younger and economically active households to stay in local communities. It will also help attract more young families move to the area and be at home in Powys. The shortage of affordable housing of all tenures in many parts of Powys mean that it is increasingly difficult for people who work in low


wage sectors of the economy to remain living in the County. This will have a significant impact on the ability of employers to recruit to posts. The Council is developing a range of low-cost home ownership options for direct delivery itself and in partnership with housing associations.

The focus for social and affordable rented housing demand, which the HRA Business Plan is designed to contribute towards meeting, is for three main types of housing.


Specialist Housing for Older People

 Powys has an ageing population and a growing need to provide appropriate homes for the elderly. The largest increase in the elderly population is projected to be in and around Welshpool and to a lesser extent also in the Brecon, Talgarth & Hay and the Newtown and Llanidloes areas. Such housing may include sheltered housing/retirement accommodation extra care housing. Given commitments to care in the community, hybrid versions of these such as 'extra care lite' may also evolve. The provision of such a wide variety of housing will help older people to live independently for longer and release general needs housing for younger people.

Homes for Smaller Households

 Household sizes in Powys are getting smaller. In 1991, the average household size was approximately 2.5 people, in 2001 it had fallen to 2.3 persons and in 2011 was 2.25. The household projections indicate that household sizes are likely to reduce to an average of around 2.1 by 2031. The falling household size may result in the number of households remaining relatively steady or increasing despite the reducing population.

Accessible Housing

 An aging population means that to make sure its homes remain useable by older people the Council will need to adapt or extend existing – and sometimes aging - accommodation or may have to buy and remodel properties to provide homes for people who cannot access or live successfully in un-adapted dwellings.

Investment Strategy

Over the next thirty years, Powys County Council has the capacity to invest £493,064,549 in the homes it provides for the people of Powys. Of this, £188,638,939 will be invested in maintaining the WHQS and £24,940,000 will be invested in other major capital improvement programmes. The responsive and cyclical maintenance programmes will benefit from investment of £280,930,610. An additional £68,076,617 (excluding grant support) will be invested over the next five years in the development of new homes and the acquisition of existing properties for conversion to social housing. All borrowing for both new homes and buying and converting existing properties will only be for schemes that are financially viable and able to pay back the full cost of all borrowing incurred in bringing them to market. In this way, the Council is able to continue to expand the housing options available to the people in Powys while safeguarding the financial viability of the HRA.

The HRA investment programme represents a massive injection of resources into the local economy of Powys. Wherever practicable the Council will invest in ways that secure the benefits to the local economy.

A comprehensive Asset Management Strategy is being developed for all the assets held within the HRA. In 2018-2019, the first stage was finished - mapping all the open spaces and green areas held in the HRA. In 2019-2020, a garage review has been completed looking at the most effective way of making use of HRA's garage estate, which includes more than directly owned garages and assorted garage sites leased to individuals. Further work on the strategy in 2020-2021 was put on hold due to the impacts of Covid-19. This restricted access to properties and required a clear focus of all Council resources on supporting work to mitigate and manage the impacts of the pandemic. In 2021-2022, this work will resume, with a focus on understanding the energy efficiency of our homes.

New Homes for Powys

The Welsh Government expects local authorities to significantly increase the rate of municipal house building. The first 118 new Council-owned homes will be complete by March 2022. Further schemes are being developed to expand this programme. Provision has been made in the HRA Business Plan to support up to 425 homes by 2026 – raising the very real possibility of new development exceeding the Council's target of 250 new homes by this date. Progressing all new developments is dependent upon securing all necessary planning and other regulatory consents and securing viable development sites. However, land has been identified across Powys with the potential to develop another 1,000 Council homes.

The scale and pace of continued development will also depend upon the availability of grant from the Welsh Government to allow for the homes to be let at social rents. If grant falls and construction costs continue to increase, the Council will consider how it can develop homes for open market sale to generate surplus funds to underpin the affordable housing programme.




Further additions to the social housing available to people living in Powys will be secured through continuing the programme of property acquisitions. This will run at between ten and twenty per year depending upon the opportunities presented by the housing market, the availability where needed of social housing grants and how available properties match local housing needs and represent long-term value for money.

New Homes for Powys - Financial Summary 2021-22 to 2025-2026

Financial Year	HRA Business Plan Investment	Number of New Homes Completed and Let	Notes
2021-2022	£13,480,000	17	Investment planned for each year will cover completing earlier schemes, progressing current developments and preparing for future projects. Completions will be dependent upon securing all necessary planning and other regulatory consents, securing viable development sites and where needed social housing grant.
2022-2023	£17,122,000	121	
2023-2024	£22,112,000	31	
2024-2025	£20,548,000	144	
2025-2026	£15,068,000	112	
Total	£88,330,000	425	

Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)

Powys achieved the WHQS standard in December 2018. The focus has moved towards targeting ‘acceptable fails’³ and maintaining WHQS over the next five years by:

-  Reviewing support and working methods for residents concerned about disruption.
-  Tackling damp properties and targeting improvements to improve thermal comfort and reduce fuel poverty.
-  Effective management of component replacement lifecycles.

This programme is therefore designed to make sure the Council’s homes continue to meet the WHQS. Some of the investment activity within the WHQS programme also contributes to the objectives of the Green Powys and Compliance One Hundred programmes.

WHQS Financial Summary 2021-22 to 2025-2026

Investment	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
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³ Acceptable Fails: Acceptable Fails are circumstances where it is either impossible or not cost effective for a property to be brought up to WHQS or where a tenant refuses to have the work carried out. Currently Powys has 2221 properties that have acceptable fails. Acceptable Fails fall into four categories: Resident Choice; Physical Constraint; Cost of Remedy; Timing of Remedy. The majority of Powys Acceptable Fails are due to Cost of Remedy with 1514 elements falling beneath cost effectiveness to replace as opposed to affordability and 594 properties through Resident Choice.

Kitchens	£400,000	£600,000	£420,000	£400,000	£600,000
Bathrooms	£150,000	£473,000	£200,000	£200,000	£0
Rewiring	£200,000	£180,000	£120,000	£60,000	£100,000
Windows	£399,000	£399,000	£300,000	£0	£0
Roofing	£2,600,000	£1,500,000	£1,000,000	£400,000	£400,000
Walls	£500,000	£450,000	£400,000	£0	£0
Estate Works (contribute to Love Where You Live Programme)	£1,000,000	£1,400,000	£800,000	£800,000	£800,000
External Wall Insulation (contributes to Green Powys)	£500,000	£300,000	£0	£000,000	£0
Heating (contributes to Green Powys)	£1,500,000	£1,500	£1,400,000	£1,400,000	£1,400,000
Energy Efficiency (contributes to Green Powys)	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£700,000
Asbestos Management (contributes to Compliance One Hundred)	£150,000	£150,000	£100,000	£250,000	£0
Doors	£104,000	£250,000	£200,000	£0	£0
Miscellaneous WHQS	£1,220,000	£651,000	£250,000	£250,000	£150,000
Total	£9,223,000	£8,352,000	£5,690,000	£4,260,000	£4,150,000

Compliance One Hundred

The Compliance One Hundred programme is designed to make sure that all of the Council homes and associated assets are one hundred per cent compliant with all relevant and applicable legislation and regulation. With increased expectations by tenants and residents, this is a top priority for the service. A Housing Compliance Board was established in December 2019 to drive forward a focused approach to compliance. A dedicated team of skilled officers has been drawn from across the service to form a Compliance One Hundred Project team. This team is now delivering all that needs to be done to make sure that the Council's homes are always fully compliant with all relevant health and safety related legislation.

The investment schemes detailed below are in addition to those included within the WHQS programme and Day-to-Day Repairs and Maintenance which includes all inspections and servicing of safety-critical components and assets, such as heating systems and lifts.

Compliance One Hundred Financial Summary 2021-22 to 2025-2026

Investment	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Fire Safety Works	£170,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000
Water Supply and Sewerage Works	£200,000	£150,000	£150,000	£200,000	£300,000
Legionella	£150,000	£150,000	£200,000	£250,000	£250,000
WHQS Contributions to Compliance One Hundred (Asbestos Management)	£150,000	£150,000	£100,000	£250,000	£0
Day-to-day Repairs Contribution to Compliance One Hundred	£430,000	£480,000	£400,000	£310,000	£310,000
Total Compliance One Hundred Investment Programme	£1,100,000	£1,030,000	£950,000	£1,110,000	£960,000

Green Powys

The Green Powys programme is designed to increase fuel efficiency and reduce fuel poverty for tenants of the Council and make tangible improvements to the wider environment, with a particular emphasis on increasing planting of trees, shrubberies and other actions to promote bio-diversity, encourage appreciation of the natural world and give a greener feel to our communities.

As the ‘Green Heart of Wales’ Powys County Council is working to improve the thermal comfort of its council-owned homes and at the same time helping to reduce the carbon footprint of the county. The cost of decarbonising all homes currently owned by the Council is difficult to quantify. However, a broad-brush estimate based on research undertaken by Inside Housing suggests a possible investment of £112m will be needed for Powys. The Council is exploring sustainable heating systems, such as ground source heat pumps and replacing gas-fired boilers with ones that can easily be converted to use hydrogen.

The Council is taking part in the Welsh Government’s Optimised Retrofit initiative. Powys is engaged with the Sero pilot project to develop a methodology to make sure that whole-house solutions to increase the environmental efficiency of homes are specified and introduced in a way that does not disadvantage residents or counteract each other. The Council is a member of the Welsh Government’s ‘Collaborative Innovation Support Programme’ project: ‘Zero Carbon: The development of a manual for the manufacture and assembly of a Zero Carbon, two-bedroom home for four

people'. This project will inform the development of standard design and construction methodologies for new-build zero-carbon homes.

The investment schemes detailed below are in addition to those included within the WHQS programme.

Green Powys Financial Summary 2021-22 to 2025-2026

Investment	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Damp Prevention	£150,000	£175,000	£175,000	£175,000	£200,000
Photo-voltaic (Solar Panels)	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000
Decarbonisation and Energy Efficiency	£90,000	£90,000	£100,000	£250,000	£250,000
WHQS Contributions to Green Powys	£2,500,000	£2,300,000	£1,900,000	£1,900,000	£2,100,000
Day-to-day Repairs Contribution to Green Powys	£300,000	£300,000	£325,000	£350,000	£350,000
Total Green Powys Investment Programme	£3,115,000	£2,940,000	£2,575,000	£2,750,000	£2,975,000

Powys County Council continues to lead the 'Home Grown Homes' initiative. This is a partnership project between housing associations, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), Community Housing Cymru (CHC), Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales. The aim is to increase the use of domestically grown and processed timber in the provision of new homes. This will help support local economic activity and contribute positively towards a more sustainable environment and economic growth and resilience. The project is delivered by a consortium of Wood Knowledge Wales, Cardiff Metropolitan University and Coed Cymru.

As part of its commitment to the 'Home Grown Homes' project the Council has in place a Wood Encouragement Policy to encourage wherever practicable the use of timber in construction work.

Fit for Life

The Fit for Life programme is designed to make the Council's homes better suited to the needs of older people and those with health-related needs that impair or adversely affect their mobility.

Fit for Life Financial Summary 2021-22 to 2025-2026

Investment	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Fit for Purpose	£1,800,000	£1,700,000	£1,400,000	£1,200,000	£1,000,000
Adaptations - Capital	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000
Adaptations - Revenue	£515,000	£528,815	£536,860	£548,130	£559,640
Total Fit for Life Investment	£2,565,000	£2,478,815	£2,186,860	£1,998,130	£1,809,640

The adaptations budget of covered by between capital and revenue budgets, acknowledging that a number of larger adaptations should be treated as capital expenditure.

Love Where You Live

The ‘Love Where You Live’ tenancy sustainability strategy is working to make the homes and estates managed by the Council places where people can enjoy their lives. It includes such investment as improvements to our garage sites, additional parking where needed, investment in walls, fencing and security to properties and improved garden areas, footpaths and estate lighting. ‘Love Where You Live’ is closely linked to ‘Green Powys’. The investment schemes detailed below are in addition to those included within the WHQS programme.

Love Where You Live Financial Summary 2021-22 to 2025-2026

Investments	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Brecon Area Estate Improvements	£20,000	£25,000	£36,000	£36,000	£36,000
Newtown Area Estate Improvements	£20,000	£25,000	£36,000	£36,000	£36,000
Welshpool Area Estate Improvements	£20,000	£25,000	£36,000	£36,000	£36,000
Wye Valley Estate Improvements	£20,000	£25,000	£36,000	£36,000	£36,000
Ystradgynlais Estate Improvements	£20,000	£25,000	£36,000	£36,000	£36,000
Car Parking	£0	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000

Communal Area Improvements	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000
Garage Strategy	£200,000	£200,000	£400,000	£400,000	£400,000
Penybryn Regeneration	£700,000	£700,000	£300,000	£0	£0
Play Area Improvements	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000
WHQS Contributions to Love Where You Live (Estate and Boundary Works)	£1,000,000	£1,400,000	£800,000	£800,000	£800,000
Day-to-day Repairs Contribution to Green Powys	£819,900	£1,345,000	£1,371,400	£1,379,700	£1,406,300
Total Love Where You Live Investment	£2,944,900	£3,970,000	£3,251,400	£2,959,700	£2,986,300

Penybryn Regeneration

In Penybryn, Ystradgynlais, the Council has a cluster of flats, for which there is little or no housing demand and which are in poor condition. Proposals have been developed and shared with the local community to resolve what was seen by local people as a problem adversely affecting their lives. The flats were empty, unsightly and attracted anti-social behaviour. Over the next three years, some of the flats will be demolished, others reconfigured into high-quality apartments for single people and couples and the centre of the estate greened as an attractive open space.

Community Alarms

During 2019-2020, a review looked at the future of the Careline service for tenants of the Council. The review was prompted by the need to replace the current equipment, which is of an age that it is beyond economical maintenance and repair. Plans to replace the equipment in 2020-2021 were put on hold due to service restrictions introduced to manage the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The HRA Business Plan for 2021-2022 includes a one-off provision of £600,000 for the necessary capital investment to replace the Careline equipment with up-to-date kit that will be more reliable, less costly to maintain and able to offer a greater range of services.

Day-to-day Repairs and Cyclical Maintenance

Repairs and maintenance covers day-to-day repairs and cyclical maintenance to the Council's homes. The majority of this work is undertaken for the Council by its joint venture with Kier, Heart of Wales Property Services (HoWPS). HoWPS is paid an annual sum to undertake all works set out in a Service Agreement between it and the Council. Any day-to-day works not covered in the agreement are funded on an as-needs basis by the Council. A review of the services provided for the Council by HoWPS took place in 2020, with responses that reflect the findings of the review to be agreed early in 2021.

Repairs and Maintenance Financial Summary 2021-22 to 2025-2026

Investments	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
HoWPS Service Agreement	£5,303,130	£5,414,500	£5,528,200	£5,644,290	£5,762,820
HoWPS Service contingency	£170,000	£0	£0	£0	£0
Day-to-day and cyclical repairs not covered by HoWPS Service Agreement	£2,326,900	£2,518,170	£2,523,120	£2,493,720	£2,529,930
External Painting	£350,000	£357,350	£364,850	£372,510	£380,330
Estate and Grounds Maintenance	£888,970	£907,640	£926,700	£946,160	£966,030
Miscellaneous Expenditure	£142,320	£145,310	£148,360	£151,480	£154,660
Total Repairs and Maintenance Investment	£9,181,320	£9,342,970	£9,491,230	£9,608,160	£9,793,859

Housing Management System

To improve the efficiency of Housing Services by taking advantage of the latest in information technology, provision has been made in the HRA Business Plan for the full cost of purchasing, installing and bringing into use a new housing management system. Work on this, with associated expenditure, will be completed in 2021-2022. The total cost is estimated at £1,000,000, with 20% spent in 2020-2021 and 80% in 2021-2022.

During 2020-2021, a fully mobile approach has been developed for housing management and maintenance officers. This means they will be able to access all management systems for housing no matter where they are in Powys – subject of

course to cell phone reception being available which is not always the case in an area as deeply rural as Powys. This will speed up the response to customer enquiries and mean that officers will be able to spend more time working out in Powys neighbourhoods and communities. The new 'total mobile' system is to be introduced in the first quarter of 2021-2022, subject to it being possible to complete field testing within the confines of Covid-19 working restrictions.

Acquisition of Properties

The Council has between April 2019 and March 2021 purchased 20 homes on the open market, the majority of which have been ex-municipal homes. In determining which properties to purchase there has been a focus on those in areas of high demand and where the new build programme is unlikely or due to planning and land restrictions, unable to meet the need. All such purchases are subject to the same viability criteria as new build, with additional allowances made for any works needed to bring the properties up to WHQS. The programme will continue to be a significant part of the work undertaken by the Council with £8,200,000 set aside over the next five years to increase the availability of genuinely affordable, secure rented homes across Powys.

Other expenditure within the HRA Business Plan includes Supervision and Management Costs, which cover the costs of managing the service, for example staff, support services and office costs, and the cost of funding debt taken on when the HRA became self-financing in 2014 and any additional borrowing secured to fund investment programmes.

Rents and Service Charges

The Council is the largest social landlord in Powys with 5,421 properties under its management, as of March 31st, 2021. This includes thirty-two new homes in Brecon⁴ which will come on stream at the end of 2020-2021 and the start of 2021-2022. The breakdown of homes owned by the Council...

- 39.4% are three bedroomed properties.
- 42.6% are two bed properties - this includes a substantial number of older persons' accommodation and 30.7% of these two bed homes are houses.
- 18.8% are flats.
- 25.5% are bungalows.
- 36.1% are designated for older persons.

General Needs Properties - by Type and Number of Bedrooms

Property Type	Bedrooms						Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Bungalow	11	10	1				22
Double House					1		1
First Floor Flat	47	155	7				209
Ground Floor Bedsit	4						4
Ground Floor Flat	45	137	1				184
House	26	708	2076	121	7	3	2941
Maisonette		24	40				64
Second Floor Flat	13	18					31
Third Floor (or higher) Flat	3	4					7
Totals	149	1056	2125	121	8	3	3463

Properties Designated for Older Persons

Property Type	Bedrooms						Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Bungalow	443	904	8	1			1356
Double House							
First Floor Flat	89	143	1				233
Ground Floor Bedsit	9						9
Ground Floor Flat	144	197	1				342
House			1				1
Maisonette							
Second Floor Flat							
Third Floor (or higher) Flat							
Totals	693	1253	11	1			1958

⁴ The Maes Maendu, Brecon new homes scheme made up of 12 x 1-bedroom flats, 15 x 2-bedroom houses, 3 x 3-bedroom houses, 2 x 4-bedroom houses and 1 x 5-bedroom house.

Since 2017-2018, the Council has used a rent setting model which takes account of property type, property size and fuel type (fuel type is being used as a proxy indicator for SAP rating and will be replaced when complete data on SAP ratings of individual homes is available). Rents are set within the Welsh Government’s overall guidance which sets target rent bands to make sure that local authorities and housing associations set reasonable rents.

The Council’s HRA Business Plan has been stress tested to see what changes in rents and services charges need to be made to allow it to remain viable and able to increase the number of affordable homes available across Powys. The conclusion is that a rent increase for 2021-2022 of CPI+1%, equivalent to 1.5%, is necessary to make sure that the Housing Services is sustainable and able to provide homes and services for both current and future tenants. Such an increase allows rents to remain affordable and so does not contribute excessively to any increase in the cost of living for the Council’s tenants.

The Council has therefore approved a recommendation that with effect from April 2021 the average rent in Powys will increase by 1.5% (£1.39 per week) for all 5389 Council owned homes. This is considerably lower than last year’s average increase of £2.42 per week. Tables below show the average rent in 2020-21 and 2021-22 and also shows the rent of the properties which will experience the greatest increase. It should be noted that the figures show rents over a 52-week rent year. In Powys rents are charged over a 48-week rent year with two ‘rent free weeks’ at Christmas and two ‘rent free weeks’ at Easter.

HRA Rents for 2020-21 and 2021-22

	Current Rent - 2020-2021	Recommended Rent - 2021-2022	Weekly Increase
Average HRA rent	£92.43	£93.82	£1.39
Maximum HRA rent	£156.78	£159.13	£2.35

The Council is during the Covid-19 pandemic taking a proportionate and pragmatic approach to the collection of rent. While the ‘Rent First’ ethos remains the guiding principle, tenants who are facing unavoidable financial challenges linked to the Covid-19 event are being offered additional support to secure additional income, including for example submitting claims for claims for housing benefit and universal credit, and accessing advice via the Councils money advice team. The Tenancy Support Officers and the Housing Management and Options Officers are keeping in touch with people to make sure that help is offered as soon as possible to prevent arrears climbing to high levels. The approach is proving to be successful in maintaining income to the HRA. At the end of January 2021 income recovery was running at 96.18% of rent due; for the same period last year this was 97.55%. This rigorous but pragmatic approach will continue in 2021-2022 when it is expected to yield a similar success rate.

Powys Service Charges for 2020-2021 and 2021-2022

Service Charge	Highest Weekly Service Charge		Lowest Weekly Service Charge (where a charge is made)		How the Service Charge is Calculated
	2020-2021	2021-2022	2020-2021	2021-2022	
Grounds maintenance	£1.59	£2.47	£0.04	£0.06	Calculated on a site-by-site basis, based on the size of the site and the cost of undertaking the work
Communal cleaning	£1.61	£1.61	£1.61	£1.61	Based on the total cost of the work, divided by all those who receive the service.
Communal heating and lighting	£0.91	£1.18	£0.91	£1.18	Based on the total cost of the service, divided by all those who receive the service.
Fire safety work	£1.74	£1.33	£0.12	£0.04	Based on actual costs per block and divided by all residents of the block.
TV aerials	No cost as of 21.1.2020	No cost as of 14.01.2021	No cost as of 21.1.2020	No cost as of 14.01.2021	Based on the costs associated with each aerial and divided by all potential users of the aerial system.
Repairs to entrance doors	TBA	N/A	TBA	N/A	Based on actual costs per block and divided by all residents of the block.
Communal washing lines	£0.44	£0.44	£0.26	£0.26	Based on actual costs per block and divided by all residents of the block.
Sewerage treatment	£5.65	£9.46	£5.65	£9.46	Based on the total cost of the work, divided by all those who

					receive the service.
Lift maintenance	No costs in 20/21	£0.43	No costs in 20/21	£0.23	Costs split equally between tenants with lifts (for servicing)
Repairs to communal areas in flats	£2.45	N/A	£0.01	N/A	Costs per block divided between all residents of the block

There has been an increase in repairs needed to sewerage and water treatment plants to make sure that the systems remain legally compliant and operate in a way that satisfies the requirements of Natural Resources Wales. A programme of capital investment is being put in place as part of the Business Plan to replace aging equipment which is becoming more likely to need repairs.

Garage and Garage Plot Rents for 2020-21 and 2021-22

	Existing Rent - 2020-21	Recommended Rent - 2021-22
Garage Rents	£9.86 per week	£12.50 per week
Rent for Garage Plots	£138.96 per annum	£159.00 per annum

A review has been completed of all the garage sites and plots owned by the Council. The review considered the demand for and suitability of garages for car parking, the condition of the buildings and the options for other uses for the sites, for example the development of new homes or car parking. For garage provision to continue to be viable, investment in the existing garage estate or new build garages to accommodate modern cars will be necessary in those sites that are to be retained.

Resourcing the Powys HRA Business Plan

The thirty-year Powys HRA Business Plan has been produced in accordance with the model supplied by the Welsh Assembly Government and is attached with the electronic version of this document. The financial assumptions in resourcing the Business Plan are sensitive to changes in forecast income and expenditure, investment and inflation rates. Accordingly, a number of assumptions have had to be made in planning ahead for our programme of investment in existing and additional municipal homes for the people of Powys.

Powys HRA Business Plan Assumptions

- 👉 General inflation at 2.2% for RPI in 2020-2021 and 1.2% afterwards and 1.7% for CPI in 2020-2021 and 0.5% annually afterwards
- 👉 Major Repairs Allowance: £3,699,000 annually over 30 years.

- ☞ Allowable Rent Increases: CPI target plus 1.0% uplift, as per guidance issued by Welsh Government.
- ☞ Usable Reserves: Contingency of a minimum of £1,000,000 per annum.
- ☞ Voids and Bad Debts: 7% (4% voids and 3% bad debt)
- ☞ Responsive Repairs and Cyclical Maintenance Costs: Rate of inflation (RPI) for years 1 – 30.
- ☞ Payments to HoWPS (until 2022): The annual changes to the contract fee paid to HoWPS for the five-year period, which influence the investment needed in repairs and maintenance, have been assumed according to the figure agreed and the formula set out in the Service Agreement and used for 2021-2022. This takes account of efficiency savings included within the Service Agreement between the Council and HoWPS.
- ☞ Repairs and Maintenance (after 2021):
- ☞ Major Repairs: 0.9% annually above inflation (RPI) for years 2 - 4
- ☞ Rate of inflation: (RPI) for years 5 – 30
- ☞ Financial Support for New Social Housing: Changes are expected to how the Welsh Government will in future years allocate grant to support the development of social and low-cost housing on a scheme-by-scheme basis. For the purposes of forward planning, a grant rate of 35% has been assumed.

Income from Asset Sales

We do not anticipate any substantial income from land or asset sales, as Right to Buy (RtB) sales have ended. In the event that Council decides to sell HRA land or other assets, such as properties beyond economical repair or for which there is no social housing demand, at anything more than nominal cost then this would have a positive impact on funding by allowing the Council to reduce borrowing. However, any beneficial effects will to some extent be tempered by reductions in income.

Listening to Powys Communities

Powys County Council takes a comprehensive approach to involving, engaging and understanding our tenants and communities. This includes:

- 🔗 Tenant Scrutiny Panel (TSP) with a number of focused sub-groups –including the Investing in Your Homes (WHQS) Group, and a Repairs Group.
- 🔗 Love Where You Live tenancy sustainability strategy.
- 🔗 Housing Repairs Surgeries.
- 🔗 Publication twice a year of our Open House newsletter.
- 🔗 Publication twice a year of our Welsh Housing Quality Standard newsletter.
- 🔗 Regular use of questionnaires and surveys.
- 🔗 Housing Services Group 100 consultative forum.
- 🔗 Extensive use of social media, including the Powys County Council website and bespoke Facebook pages for housing services.
- 🔗 Affordable Housing engagement events and housing need assessments.

Tenant Scrutiny Panel

The Tenant Scrutiny Panel (TSP) is a countywide, tenant led panel and has a considerable impact on Council decisions about the housing service. Membership includes tenant representatives to provide experience and knowledge from a tenants' perspective, four County Councillors and the Cabinet Member with the portfolio responsibility for Housing. The TSP is chaired by a tenant and the panel members agree the agenda items for scrutiny and discussion. Joint decisions are made at the TSP meetings between the Council and tenants. Guest speakers also attend the meetings as requested by the tenant representatives.



The Investing in Your Homes Group (WHQS) sub-group of the TSP is a small group of tenants, elected members and contract management staff that meet once a month. They monitor the progress of investment work being carried out to tenants' homes, review the feedback from and responses to tenant questionnaires, are involved in discussions for environmental works, help produce newsletters and attend Open Days and Community Events.

The Repairs Sub-group is a group of tenants, elected members, engagement officers, repairs staff and representatives from HoWPS. The group meets monthly to discuss the repairs service, make sure that tenant experiences are understood by the Council and HoWPS and drive forward service improvements.





Love Where You Live

In 2018, the Council launched its Tenant Sustainability Strategy 'Love Where You Live'. Love Where You Live focuses on how tenancy and estate management can help people enjoy their homes and neighbourhoods. It has three themes:



- 🏠 **Understanding.** To continually improve we need to know what to improve by understanding how our services and estates are experienced by tenants and residents.

-  People. To help people be able to enjoy their homes and communities, we can support, encourage and help people to play an active part in their communities and economy as well as improve their own personal well-being.
-  Place. To give people reasons to love where they live, we need to make sure that the environment is green and thriving, clean and tidy – in short, a pleasant place to be.

As part of Love Where You Live the Council has:

-  Improved the speed and impact of how the Council responded to tenant and resident concerns about the quality of their environment, including for example the quality of grass cutting, maintenance of shared spaces and day-to-day estate management. A full caretaker service was introduced across the County along with two dedicated, directly managed in-house grounds and estate maintenance teams. As a result, there have been visible and tangible improvements to the way the Council's estates look and feel.
-  Trialled 'Pop-up Powys', a joint project with the Council's Library service to take services out into the community, making creative use of the mobile library service. This has been extremely popular in rural areas, improving the Council's understanding of how people experience its services and what type of homes they and their communities need now and in the future.
-  Introduced a fresh approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour, which streamlined the process to make sure that the right agency with the powers to deal with problems was involved as soon as possible. A more robust approach has been taken to cases where there are clear breaches of tenancy conditions, with injunctions and other legal action being deployed where they are the only reasonable solutions.
-  Reviewed the operational plan that has been put together for the 41 play areas located on housing estate land, so that a strategic approach to investing into the areas can be developed to prioritise the work at each play area over the next 5-10 years.

In 2021-2022, Love Where You Live' will:

-  Pilot a tri-Annual Tenancy Visit and 'Housing MoT' for every tenant, which will allow for closer relationships between the Council and our tenants, helping us to work together to respond promptly to any requests for help and support to sustain tenancies and encourage financial independence.
-  Introduce a new approach to helping people maintain and manage their gardens, which will include a mix of more robust enforcement of tenancy conditions, direct intervention where necessary and support for people to gain gardening skills.

Housing Repairs Surgeries

Fifteen area-based Housing Repairs Surgeries are held twice a year throughout the County at a time, date and location to suit the needs of the tenants who want to attend the meetings. These events have had to be suspended during 2020-2021 due to the restrictions placed on meetings and events arising from the Covid-19 event. A new

approach to engaging with tenants is being planned for when Covid-19 restrictions are lifted, building on the trial at the end of 2019-2020 of 'Pop-up Powys' in which housing teams visited communities for a few hours, to meet and discuss with tenants and residents their aspirations for their homes and communities and the better understand their experiences of housing services.

'Open House' Newsletter

The 'Open House' newsletter is produced twice a year (summer and winter) and is distributed to all Council tenants in Powys. The newsletter contains housing news, information and articles. The newsletter is available to view on the Powys County Council website.

'Investing in Your Homes' Newsletter

The 'Investing in Your Homes' newsletter is produced twice a year (spring and autumn) and is distributed to all Council tenants in Powys. The newsletter contains news about works completed under the WHQS programme, the contractors carrying out the works and general news about WHQS in Powys.

Questionnaires and Surveys

In 2019, the Council took part in the STAR survey of tenants. The survey showed:

- 65% overall satisfaction.
- 77% satisfied with quality of the home.
- 84% happy with neighbourhood as a place to live.
- 71% felt rent provides value for money.
- 65% felt service charge provides value for money.
- 54% satisfied with repairs and maintenance.

While the overall level of satisfaction was good, particularly with the quality of homes, neighbourhood and value for money, the Council wants to do even better. A Customer First Improvement Plan was introduced in October 2019 to guide and monitor work underway to improve tenant satisfaction along with initiatives and future changes to policy and process. It has included enhanced customer service training. The changes being introduced by 'Moving on Up' and the new approach to delivering repairs and maintenance are designed, through increased localisation of service delivery, better specification of works and rigorous quality assurance, to increase customer satisfaction.

From November 2011, random calls have been made to tenants who have reported repairs that need attending to. This is done by the Council's own First Contact officers and assesses the customer experience from the moment they try to report the repair to when it is completed. Initial results show satisfaction running at 75%. The survey was suspended between March and September 2020, in recognition of the impact of the Covid-19 event. Latest results show for the period between September 2020 and January 2021, out of the 112 calls made, 80 tenants stated that they were very

satisfied/satisfied with the repairs to their homes which gives a satisfaction rating of 78.5%.

The Council regularly carries out surveys with tenants after their homes have been improved through the WHQS programme. These surveys are carried out either by post or telephone. All comments are considered by the Investing in Your Homes (WHQS) Sub-group with recommendation for changes being forward to the teams responsible for managing the work. The latest surveys show that 86% of tenants are currently happy with the improvements made to their homes.

Housing Services One Hundred Group

Housing Services Group 100 is a group of active tenants who act as sounding board and consultative panel for the Council. They are consulted (by telephone, email or questionnaire) according to their preference on the area of Housing Services they would like to be consulted about (allocations, repairs, tenant participation, etc.) The views, opinions and suggestions are used by the Housing Service to inform the way policy and practice are developed. Feedback is sent to the members on the outcomes of the consultations and how their views have influenced decisions made by Housing Management. Members also receive an annual newsletter.

Social Media

An increased amount of information about the Housing Services is available electronically via the internet and social media. All information is published in both Welsh and English.

Sustainable Commissioning and Procurement

Sustainable Commissioning and Procurement is a thread which runs through the Council's Commissioning and Procurement Strategy. The Council's Regeneration Strategy and Statement of Intent is committed to ensuring that major investment opportunities of the kind afforded by the HRA Business Plan can benefit the local economy and provide the widest possible community benefits.

For WHQS, the Council will either award three-year Contracts with the option of extending these for up to a further twelve months or tenders on a scheme-by-scheme basis, depending on the nature of the works being purchased. The Council will continue to use sustainable development criteria in determining value for money including assessing the impact of economic, environmental and social factors when tendering for housing related goods, services and works.

Suppliers and contractors are encouraged to embrace sustainability through the application of contract award criteria which will take into account not only financial factors but also whole life cost and the implications for society, the economy and the environment. There will be opportunities to expand this further, to the benefit of local industry and enterprise, as the United Kingdom develops its own trade and public procurement policies following the nation's departure from the European Union on January 31st, 2020.

The Council will, wherever possible, work with suppliers to realise the benefits of sustainable procurement. Examples include:

- Adopting whole-life costs and community benefits as the contract award criteria.
- Adopting our own financial standing orders to establish criteria of "economically most advantageous" as the optimum combination of whole life costs and benefits as the best value contract award criteria.
- Implementing sustainable design and procurement strategies, and building sustainability into procurement processes and contracts, where relevant.
- Inviting proposals for the delivery of community benefits (economic, social and environmental) that are relevant to the contract and that add value to the Powys One Plan, including targeted recruitment and training and enterprise opportunities.
- Reducing the cost of doing business with the Council by reducing the costs of tendering, for example through E-tendering.
- Working with the Welsh Government to assist local small to medium enterprises (SMEs) and micro-businesses with the public sector tendering process.
- Involving tenants more closely in the procurement process and in evaluating the effectiveness of contractors.

Risk Management and Monitoring & Evaluation

Housing Improvement and Assurance Board

In October 2020, the Housing Improvement and Assurance Board begin working to assist and provide advice to the Council to support and drive forward improvement in the Council's Housing Services, with particular regard to governance, asset management, compliance and quality assurance.

The Housing Improvement and Quality Assurance Board provides strategic support by:

- Enabling corporate focus and support to make sure that all relevant corporate activity supports the changes needed to improve the quality of Housing Services and the experience of tenants and residents.
- Driving forward corporate activity to unblock constraints that are identified as blocking or hindering improvements.
- Providing review, challenge and creative input for the improvements being developed by Housing Services, making sure improvement are robust and sustainable.
- Support Housing Services to be able to make continuous improvement part of good business practice.
- Apply the Council's Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework as quality control for the improvements being taken forward by Housing Services and the Council as a whole.

The Housing Improvement and Quality Assurance Board has general responsibilities for:

- Providing challenge and support to Housing Services in pursuit of improving service standards and achievement, with particular regard to governance, asset management, compliance and quality assurance.
- Oversee a well-documented Housing Improvement and Quality Assurance Action Plan, to be endorsed by the Housing Improvement and Quality Assurance Board, with clear milestones and targets for improvement.
- Overseeing, monitoring and supporting the progress made by Housing Services in taking forward the Action Plan.
- Advising the Chief Executive Officer, Corporate Director and Portfolio Holder monthly on progress and make, if necessary, recommendations for further support or modification to the existing support arrangements.
- Considering any recommendations that the Corporate Improvement Board and Scrutiny Committee may make to drive forward Housing Services improvements with particular regard to governance, asset management, compliance and quality assurance.

Risk Management

The risks to the HRA Business Plan are included and managed using the Council's Risk Management Procedure. This is regularly reviewed and updated as necessary to reflect

changing risk profiles and scenarios, by the Council's Executive Management Team as well as Housing Services senior managers. The Risk Register considers all HRA project risks including new build, WHQS, income recovery, repairs and maintenance services and compliance.

Housing Services Risk Register 2021-2022

Risk	Consequences	Mitigations
<p>Insufficient financial resources to deliver Housing Services (both Housing Revenue Account - HRA and Housing General Fund - HGF)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service outcomes not delivered (HGF and HRA). • Health & safety implications of not consistently meeting statutory requirements (HRA). • Deterioration in standard of homes and assets (HRA). • Limited capacity to provide additional affordable homes (HRA). • Undermining of quality of life, community sustainability and cohesion (HGF and HRA). • Inability to maintain Welsh Housing Quality Standard (HRA). • Reduced repairs and maintenance service contributing to adverse customer outcomes and landlord-tenant relationship (HRA). • Council unable to meet statutory duties to homeless households (HGF). • Council unable to maintain payments on loans (HRA). • Reduced services to those needing aids, adaptations and disabled facilities to maintain quality of life (HRA and HGF). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous and robust financial monitoring and treasury management (HGF and HRA). • Zero budget-based approach for HRA Thirty Year Business Plan Review (HRA). • Value engineering to reduce improvement and new build home programmes cost (HRA). • Void management changes to minimise rental loss (HRA). • Maintain 'Rent First' approach, including pro-active tenancy support and rigorous performance management, to income recovery (HRA). • Reprofile services, standards and expenditure to bring in line with income (HRA and HGF). • Develop alternative sources of income (HRA and HGF). • Reprofile asset base to match available resources (HRA).
<p>Failing to meet all applicable statutory requirements providing for the health and safety of the occupants in the home.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased risk of death & serious injury. • Reputational risk. • Failure to support well-being and peace of mind of residents and tenants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued delivery of Compliance One Hundred project to drive up compliance and quality assurance with clear focus on... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Fire Safety; Asbestos Management; Fixed Electrical Installations; LOLER; Water Systems; Heating Systems.</i>
<p>Tenants and residents not effectively involved in strategic decision making, service monitoring and shaping service delivery and outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor customer satisfaction ratings. • Ineffective service delivery that is not able to define, deliver and demonstrate value for money. • Increased risk of challenge that services are not delivered in an equitable and fair way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active, evidenced, continuous and representative tenant involvement. • Tenant Scrutiny Panel actively involved providing oversight, challenge and proposals for service improvements. • Introduction of new Quality of Accommodation standard to

		<p>reflect quality of home expected by tenants at the start of their tenancy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll-out of regular ‘Housing MoT’ for every Council home to capture individual views & identify any issues impacting on tenancy sustainability. • Implementation of ‘Love Where You Live’ Strategy which is centred on a clear understanding of individual tenant’s expectations. • Continuously and routinely capture and respond to tenants’ views and service experiences.
Allocation and lettings not effectively contributing to meeting housing demand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failing to use housing assets effectively can contribute to homeless issues, overcrowding and social dislocation – all of which will adversely impact on the well-being of communities. • Social and economic disruption experienced by people living in homes and communities that hinder their ability to participate in work and community life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing quality assurance of allocation and letting performance to identify how effective housing demand is being met, identify service improvements and inform the development of new homes. • Ongoing focus to make sure that investment in homes is matched to housing needs. • Working with individuals to help them take the lead in resolving their housing needs providing appropriate support as and when needed. • Collaborative working with all social landlords, housing developers and other accommodation providers to better match supply with demand.
Unable to secure and/or fund viable opportunities for the development and acquisition of new social housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to meet Vision 2025 objective to deliver 250 homes by the end of 2025. • Increased waiting lists and homelessness arising from a reduced ability to meet housing needs. • Community stability undermined by reduced housing opportunities for as wide a range of households as possible. • Financial viability of HRA Business Plan undermined by reduce ability to increase income through increase income from increased stock numbers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value engineering of design and construction to increase value-for-money. • Identify opportunities for cross subsidy from market housing to increase resources for investment in social housing. • Increase collaborative working with economic development team and agencies to be better placed to take advantage of commercial-to-residential conversion opportunities. • Identify alternative funding sources for investment in social homes.

Repairs and maintenance service and improvement programmes failing to deliver high quality services and outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer satisfaction falls, reducing confidence by tenants in the Council. • Properties fall into disrepair, increasing future maintenance liabilities. • Excess costs are generated by remedial work to put right poor-quality repairs. • Safety standards are compromised by poor quality or non-delivered repairs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous quality assurance of work for example post-inspections and tenant surveys informing changes in policy and process. • Amend delivery model to address performance failings and improve services. • Value engineer specifications.
Technical and cost challenges of making substantial environmental improvements to housing assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to improve long term environmental sustainability across all aspects of the environment (for example use of unsuitable materials or systems for house construction and improvement) will hinder contributions towards a better environment for everyone. • Long term maintenance liabilities (including for example increased costs and shorter or increased number of component replacement cycles) that may increase costs and harm the environment. • Reduced consumer appeal of municipal housing. • Unfunded design requirements reducing provision of additional affordable and secure housing opportunities for households with low and middle incomes. • Financial insecurity for private home-owners arising from unfunded changes to systems and components (for example heating systems). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous review and research of all systems, components and materials to identify those which contribute positively and cost effectively to long term environmental sustainability. • Increased use of locally sourced (Powys > Wales > United Kingdom > Global) materials and components. • Increased use of recycled materials. • Increased involvement of communities in designing and approving materials, systems and components. • Reconfiguration of grants and loans programmes to support home-owners to make proven and effective changes to reduce any negative environmental impact of their homes. • Increased greening of estates to improve overall well-being and environmental quality.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Council continually monitors and evaluates the impact on the HRA Business Plan of service requirement and financial variables and how changes in these may impact on priorities both in capital investment and for revenue budgets. Monthly meetings of a group of senior housing and financial specialists make sure that budget profiles are maintained and that costs are kept under control.

Financial and managerial control measures include:

- 👉 Assessing the validity and sustainability of different sources of funding such as the use of prudential borrowing to support housing provided outside of but complementary to the HRA.
- 👉 Correct deployment of capital and revenue funding.

- 👉 Keeping under review all HRA revenue expenditure to make sure that the Council identifies and makes, wherever possible, meaningful revenue savings.
- 👉 Continued development of the QL housing management system. This now has enhanced property features reporting allowing for an expanded asset management register to not only capture the information from stock condition surveys but also capture details of compliance components such as asbestos and smoke detectors.
- 👉 Progressing self-sufficiency in the ability to generate mid- and long-term lifecycle forecasting, so the Council does not have to rely on outsourced providers for this critical intelligence about our housing assets.
- 👉 Use of a Dynamic Purchasing System to increase the speed of delivery of Estate works and Cyclical Decoration Programmes.

The HRA Business Plan assumptions and performance against targets and expectations are regularly subject to scrutiny. A monthly budget report is produced by the Council's finance team, which details the monthly status of the HRA. A group of senior officers meet each month to manage progress on the HRA Business Plan with the authority to make operational changes to make sure that investment programmes are managed effectively. 'New Homes for Powys' is overseen by the New Development Project Board, chaired by the Council's Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning & Economic Regeneration. During 2021-2022, a report on progress on the HRA Business Plan will be submitted to the TSP for scrutiny and comment.

Please read the accompanying guidance before completing the form.

This **Impact Assessment (IA)** toolkit, incorporates a range of legislative requirements that support effective decision making and ensure compliance with all relevant legislation. **Draft versions of the assessment should be watermarked as “Draft” and retained for completeness. However, only the final version will be made publicly available. Draft versions may be provided to regulators if appropriate. In line with Council policy IAs should be retained for 7 years.**

Service Area	Housing Services	Head of Service	Nina Davies	Director	Nigel Brinn	Portfolio Holder	Cllr Iain McIntosh
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Proposal	Housing Revenue Account Thirty Year Business Plan 2021-2022						
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Outline Summary / Description of Proposal

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is the means by which all municipal landlords in Wales are expected to manage the financing of their landlord services. It is funded primarily by the income generated from rents. Additional one-off payments are available from the Welsh Government to support the building of new council-owned homes. These payments are designed to reduce the cost of providing additional homes so that the future rent charges can be set at genuinely affordable social rent levels. An annual sum of £xxx is made available to the Council by the Welsh Government – this is the Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) to support the maintenance of municipal housing to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS), which is set by the Welsh Government.

All local authorities in Wales have the responsibility to plan for the housing needs of their population in their role as Strategic Housing Authority. However only 11 of the 22 authorities in Wales have, like Powys, retained their council housing stock and consequently play a role in the direct provision of affordable, good quality homes as a social housing landlord. The 11 stock remaining authorities in Wales are required to present an ‘acceptable’ HRA Business Plan (including a thirty-year financial model) to the Welsh Government each year for the Welsh Government to assess the progress of local authorities towards meeting and/or maintaining the WHQS to be eligible for the Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) Grant (currently for Powys £xxx). Powys achieved WHQS in December 2018. The HRA Business Plan must conform to a structure and Business Plan parameters as set out by the Welsh Government. However, the associated narrative can be in a format determined by each local authority.

The Council cannot use its General Fund (GF) to subsidise the provision of municipal landlord services and the HRA cannot be used to fund services which are expected to be paid for out of the GF. The HRA is required by the Welsh Government to, at all times, be sustainable and self-financing. In short, it can – with the limited exceptions set out above – only spend what it collects in rental income. That expenditure must also cover the debts incurred to buy and build the housing stock. These are long term loans managed on behalf of the Housing Service by the Council’s Treasury Team.

The HRA Thirty Year Business Plan 2021-2022 for Powys:

-  Sets out the Council’s vision as a social housing landlord, with the objectives and standards needed to make that vision a reality;
-  Plans investment against the availability of finance;
-  Communicates the Council’s housing plans to its tenants, members, the Welsh Government, other stakeholders, partners and the wider community.

Cyngor Sir Powys County Council

Impact Assessment (IA)

The integrated approach to support effective decision making



1. Version Control (services should consider the impact assessment early in the development process and continually evaluate)

Version	Author	Job Title	Date
V1	Andy Thompson	Professional Lead - Housing	January 29th, 2021
V2	Andy Thompson	Professional Lead - Housing	February 5 th , 2021

2. Profile of savings delivery (if applicable)

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-2026	2026-27
£ N/A	£ N/A	£ N/A	£ N/A	£ N/A	£ N/A

3. Consultation requirements

Consultation Requirement	Consultation deadline/or justification for no consultation
Public consultation required	<p>The Council will, in the interests of open governance, advise the following groups of its intentions for the HRA Thirty Year Business Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Housing Partnership • Tenant Scrutiny Panel

Page 60

4. Impact on Other Service Areas

Does the proposal have potential to impact on another service area? (Have you considered the implications on Health & Safety, Corporate Parenting and Data Protection?) PLEASE ENSURE YOU INFORM / ENGAGE ANY AFFECTED SERVICE AREAS AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY
Financial Services – financial management of loans and revenue and capital financial income and expenditure

5. How does your proposal impact on the council's strategic vision?

Page 61

Council Priority	How does the proposal impact on this priority?	<u>IMPACT</u> Please select from drop down box below	What will be done to better contribute to positive or mitigate any negative impacts?	<u>IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION</u> Please select from drop down box below
The Economy We will develop a vibrant economy	Social housing let at genuinely affordable rents, lower than for example those charged by private landlords, allows households to keep more of their income for their own use and expenditure the wider Powys economy.	Good	Maintaining a viable and sustainable HRA Thirty Year Business Plan, as set out in this proposal, will allow the Council to support the development of more affordable, social rented homes, supporting the economy by allowing people to have more money to spend in the wider economy. It will allow more homes to be let at rents that are genuinely affordable, below that charged by private rented accommodation providers. The Council will also be able to maintain its investment programme in municipal housing – which accounts for one in ten of all homes in Powys – providing employment and business opportunities for local and regional people and enterprises. This will help support the 'Powys Pound'.	Good
Health and Care We will lead the way in effective, integrated rural health and care	Social rented housing is required to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard. This includes making sure homes are thermally efficient, do not suffer from intrinsic damp and have decent facilities for such things as food preparation and personal hygiene. Such requirements do not apply to other tenures.	Good	The Council will with the investment programmes set out in this proposal be able to maintain its investment programme to keep municipal housing at the Welsh Housing Quality Standard, providing for 10% of all households in Powys safe, healthy homes in both urban and rural locations.	Good

Cyngor Sir Powys County Council

Impact Assessment (IA)

The integrated approach to support effective decision making



Council Priority	How does the proposal impact on this priority?	IMPACT Please select from drop down box below	What will be done to better contribute to positive or mitigate any negative impacts?	IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION Please select from drop down box below
Learning and skills We will strengthen learning and skills	<p>Homelessness, which is rising across Powys and has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, can significantly affect households with children having a detrimental effect on the children's education as they do not have a suitable environment to learn. Maintaining the Council's ability to increase the provision of accessible, secure and affordable homes will positively impact on the learning opportunities of many children.</p>	<p>Good</p>	<p>The investment programmes set out in this proposal will allow the Council to continue to support the development of more affordable, social rented homes to help provide homes for families. An additional benefit of providing more homes in a way that can help stem the rise in homelessness is that the Council may not face such a steep increase in demands on its General Fund for services to help those at risk of or experiencing homelessness.</p>	<p>Good</p>
Residents and Communities We will support our residents and communities	<p>As landlord for one in ten of all Powys households, and responsible for the neighbourhoods of many owner occupiers living on estates developed by the Council, the Council needs to have the capacity and capability to maintain these areas to a high standard so that people can 'Love Where They Live'.</p> <p>The Housing Service supports active intelligence gathering about the way its services are received, experienced and perceived by the people of Powys, allowing improvements to be made that benefit people across the county.</p>	<p>Good</p>	<p>The HRA Business Plan sets out clear investment plans to support the 'Love Where You Live' tenancy sustainability strategy. This will allow the housing service to continue to positively support the well-being of neighbourhoods and communities through the Estate Maintenance Service, developing the Caretaker Service and supporting the provision and improvement of play areas on municipal housing estates.</p>	<p>Good</p>

Page 62

Source of Outline Evidence to support judgements

Welsh Government Rent Policy (December 2019); Welsh Government Rent Notification December 2020; Powys HRA Business Plan (2020); STAR Survey of Tenant Satisfaction (June 2019); WHQS Compliance Policy for Powys (2019-20); Homeless Review and Strategy (2018); Compliance One Hundred Board Reports (January 2020 through January 2021); 'Love Where You Live' Tenancy Sustainability Strategy (2018); WHO 12¹ quarterly returns; 'Homes in Powys' housing waiting list data; Housing Service performance data.

6. How does your proposal impact on the Welsh Government's well-being goals?

Page 63

Well-being Goal	How does proposal contribute to this goal?	IMPACT Please select from drop down box below	What will be done to better contribute to positive or mitigate any negative impacts?	IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION Please select from drop down box below
A prosperous Wales: An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.	Social rents, which are provided by Council-owned homes, allow households to keep more of their income for their own use rather than it going to private landlords. Maintaining the ability of the Council to fund new affordable homes will enhance the ability of Powys to attract and retain the employees needed to contribute towards prosperous Wales. The benefits of this investment increases in the high housing cost areas of Powys.	Good	Providing the opportunity for the Council to support the development of more affordable, social rented homes by having in place a balanced and sustainable HRA Thirty Business Plan will support the economy by allowing people to have more money to spend in the wider economy. It will also keep rents at a genuinely affordable level, below that expected by private rented accommodation providers. The Council will also be able to maintain its investment programme in municipal housing – which accounts for one in ten of all homes in Powys – providing employment and business opportunities for local and regional people and enterprises. This will help support the 'Powys Pound'.	Good
A resilient Wales: A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).	Maintaining the ability of the Council to fund 'Love Where They Live' and 'Green Powys' will result in a improving natural environment in and around council owned homes.	Good	Investment in 'Love Where They Live' and 'Green Powys' is designed to increase planting and improve maintenance of the natural environment on housing estates. The HRA Business Plan includes provision for increasing the thermal efficiency of council homes, reducing environmental damage and reducing running costs for residents.	Good

¹ WHO 12: mandatory quarterly return to the Welsh Government, reporting the incidence of homelessness in Powys and the work undertaken by the Council to both prevent and deal with homelessness.

Cyngor Sir Powys County Council
Impact Assessment (IA)

The integrated approach to support effective decision making



Well-being Goal	How does proposal contribute to this goal?	<u>IMPACT</u> Please select from drop down box below	What will be done to better contribute to positive or mitigate any negative impacts?	<u>IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION</u> Please select from drop down box below
<p>A healthier Wales: A society in which people’s physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.</p> <p>Public Health (Wales) Act, 2017: Part 6 of the Act requires for public bodies to undertake a health impact assessment to assess the likely effect of a proposed action or decision on the physical or mental health of the people of Wales.</p>	<p>Social rented housing is required to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard. This includes making sure homes are thermally efficient, do not suffer from intrinsic damp and have decent facilities for such things as food preparation and personal hygiene. Such requirements do not apply to other tenures.</p> <p>Insufficient social rented housing of the type provided by the Council means that many people are compelled to find accommodation that may have higher rents, less tenure security and poorer housing conditions, all of which contribute to poor mental and physical health.</p> <p>Homelessness, which is currently rising across Powys, can significantly affect the health of affected households. One the main causes of homelessness is the lack of secure, affordable rented accommodation of the type provided by the Council.</p>	<p>Good</p>	<p>Having in place a balanced and sustainable HRA Thirty Business Plan, as per this proposal, will allow the Council to support the development of more affordable, social rented homes to help provide and maintain a rising number of ‘healthier’ homes in Powys.</p>	<p>Good</p>

Page 64

Well-being Goal	How does proposal contribute to this goal?	<u>IMPACT</u> Please select from drop down box below	What will be done to better contribute to positive or mitigate any negative impacts?	<u>IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION</u> Please select from drop down box below
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities: Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected Communities.</p>	<p>The Council’s role as a social landlord is consistent with all relevant Powys County Council strategic plans, in particular the ‘Powys Housing Strategy’, ‘Vision 2025’ and ‘Love Where You Live’. All the partnerships and organisations responsible for these strategic plans believe and support the principle that communities can thrive and prosper if individuals, families and groups are treated fairly, with respect, and given access to rights and services – which includes a safe, secure and affordable home. Indeed, a decent home is for most people the foundation of being able to have and enjoy a decent life.</p> <p>Maintaining the ability of the Council to fund new affordable homes, by making sure that the HRA Thirty Year Business Plan carefully manages the resources available to it, will enhance the ability of Powys to make sure that communities, especially those in rural areas, remain viable and sustainable by offering homes for people across the socio-economic spectrum.</p>	<p>Good</p>	<p>The Council will be better able by maintaining a balanced, sustainable and long term HRA Thirty year Business Plan to support the development of more affordable, secure, social rented homes and maintain those it already owns to a decent standard, providing the bedrock for ‘attractive, viable, safe and well connected communities’ by progressing the pragmatic changes to rents for social housing contained in this proposal.</p>	<p>Good</p>

Cyngor Sir Powys County Council

Impact Assessment (IA)

The integrated approach to support effective decision making



Page 66

Well-being Goal	How does proposal contribute to this goal?	IMPACT Please select from drop down box below	What will be done to better contribute to positive or mitigate any negative impacts?	IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION Please select from drop down box below
<p>A globally responsible Wales: A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.</p> <p>Human Rights - is about being proactive (see guidance)</p> <p>UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Convention gives rights to everyone under the age of 18, which include the right to be treated fairly and to be protected from discrimination; that organisations act for the best interest of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and the right to be heard.</p>	<p>With social housing in Powys not being able to meet growing demand for safe and secure homes that are affordable to people with modest incomes, maintaining a strong and balanced HRA Business Plan will help reduce the risk of the county having more homelessness with consequential detrimental impacts of social well-being, poor standards of accommodation affecting the quality of life and opportunities available to children and their parents and poorly maintained housing increasing fuel poverty and necessitating excessive use of fuels to keep homes warm.</p>	<p>Good</p>	<p>The pragmatic investment proposals set out in this proposal will allow the Housing Service to continue to positively support the well-being of neighbourhoods and communities by increasing the availability of high quality, fuel efficient homes.</p>	<p>Good</p>
<p>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language: A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.</p>				
<p><i>Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and treating the Welsh language no less favourable than the English language</i></p>	<p>Housing Services currently involves and engages with tenants through communication in their language of choice</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Maintaining a viable HRA Business Plan will allow Housing Services to continue to positively support communications with tenants in the language of their choice, including Welsh.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>
<p><i>Opportunities to promote the Welsh language</i></p>	<p>No impact expected</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>		<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p><i>Welsh Language impact on staff</i></p>	<p>No impact expected</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>		<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p><i>People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation.</i></p>	<p>No impact expected</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>		<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>A more equal Wales: A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).</p>				

Cyngor Sir Powys County Council

Impact Assessment (IA)

The integrated approach to support effective decision making



Well-being Goal	How does proposal contribute to this goal?	IMPACT Please select from drop down box below	What will be done to better contribute to positive or mitigate any negative impacts?	IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION Please select from drop down box below
<i>Age</i>	Homes are provided by the Council for people of all age groups. There is growing need amongst younger people for a first home and an aging population who need homes better suited to their needs, for example level access.	Good	A balanced and sustainable HRA Business Plan will allow the Council to support the development of more affordable, social rented homes to help provide and maintain a wider choice of homes for people of all age groups. The 'Fit for Life' programme will help improve access to homes for older people and those with mobility needs.	Good
<i>Disability</i>	Funding set aside in the HRA Business Plan for aids and adaptations works improve the quality of homes for people who need help to better enjoy their home and cope with disabilities.	Good	The HRA Business Plan will allow the Housing Service to continue to support a comprehensive programme of aids and adaptations. Provision has been made for the 'Fit for Life' programme will help improve access to homes for those with mobility needs.	Good
<i>Gender reassignment</i>	No impact expected	Choose an item.		Choose an item.
<i>Marriage or civil partnership</i>	No impact expected	Choose an item.		Choose an item.
<i>Race</i>	No impact expected	Choose an item.		Choose an item.
<i>Religion or belief</i>	No impact expected	Choose an item.		Choose an item.
<i>Sex</i>	No impact expected	Choose an item.		Choose an item.
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>	No impact expected	Choose an item.		Choose an item.
<i>Pregnancy and Maternity</i>	No impact expected	Choose an item.		Choose an item.

Page 67

Cyngor Sir Powys County Council

Impact Assessment (IA)

The integrated approach to support effective decision making



Source of Outline Evidence to support judgements

Welsh Government Rent Policy (December 2019); Welsh Government Rent Notification December 2020; Powys HRA Business Plan (2020); STAR Survey of Tenant Satisfaction (June 2019); WHQS Compliance Policy for Powys (2019-20); Homeless Review and Strategy (2018); Compliance One Hundred Board Reports (January 2020 through January 2021); 'Love Where You Live' Tenancy Sustainability Strategy (2018); WHO 12² quarterly returns; 'Homes in Powys' housing waiting list data; Housing Service performance data.

7. How does your proposal impact on the council's other key guiding principles?

Principle	How does the proposal impact on this principle?	IMPACT Please select from drop down box below	What will be done to better contribute to positive or mitigate any negative impacts?	IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION Please select from drop down box below
Sustainable Development Principle (5 ways of working)				
Long Term: Looking to the long term so that we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.	A housing service with the foundation of a sustainable, financially viable HRA Thirty Year Business Plan is better able to progress its preventative agenda (preventing homelessness, housing market dysfunction, poor housing standards).	Good	The Council will be better able to support the development of more affordable, secure, social rented homes and maintain those it already owns to a decent standard, providing a solid foundation for future generations to have secure, affordable homes by following the HRA Thirty Year Business Plan set out in this proposal.	Good
Collaboration: Working with others in a collaborative way to find shared sustainable solutions.	The service currently collaborates with a number of organisations and agencies.	Good	A sustainable and adequately resourced HRA Thirty Year Business Plan will help the Council to work more effectively with a range of businesses, investors and service agencies to provide together services needed and desired by the people of Powys.	Good
Involvement (including Communication and Engagement): Involving a diversity of the population in the decisions that affect them.	The Housing Service supports active intelligence gathering about the way its services are received, experienced and perceived by the people of Powys, allowing improvements to be made that benefit people across the county.	Good	The Housing Service will be better able, with a solid and sustainable HRA Thirty Year Business Plan, to continue to engage with neighbourhoods and communities if the HRA remains sustainable and viable and able to finance the needs and desires, where practicable, of tenants.	Good

Page 68

² WHO 12: mandatory quarterly return to the Welsh Government, reporting the incidence of homelessness in Powys and the work undertaken by the Council to both prevent and deal with homelessness.

Principle	How does the proposal impact on this principle?	IMPACT Please select from drop down box below	What will be done to better contribute to positive or mitigate any negative impacts?	IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION Please select from drop down box below
Prevention: <i>Understanding the root causes of issues to prevent them from occurring.</i>	The Housing Service has adopted a preventative agenda with regard to its statutory duties, including maintaining homes to the WHQS and making sure homes are available, where possible, for those face with or experiencing homelessness.	Good	A solid and sustainable HRA Thirty Year Business Plan, as per this proposal, will allow the Council to support the development of more affordable, social rented homes to help provide and maintain a rising number of high quality, affordable homes in Powys that will help prevent the social and economic problems associated with homelessness, insecure homes and poor quality accommodation.	Good
Integration: <i>Taking an integrated approach so that public bodies look at all the well-being goals in deciding on their well-being objectives.</i>	The importance of affordable, secure housing is an essential foundation for people to have a good education, be healthy, find decent employment and to be able to participate in their communities.	Good	The HRA Business Plan, as proposed, will allow the Council to support the development of more affordable, social rented homes to help provide and maintain a rising number of high quality, affordable homes in Powys that will help support the ability of Housing Services to contribute to the work of such diverse bodies and agencies examples including the Powys Teaching Health Board, Dyfed Powys Police, the Council's own social services teams, education services, the Mid-Wales Growth Deal	Good
Preventing Poverty: Prevention, including helping people into work and mitigating the impact of poverty.	The lack of genuinely affordable homes, let at social rents, is directly linked to poverty. The more people have pay in rent for example to private landlords, the less they have for other expenditure, exacerbating poverty and poor quality of life. The same applies if people are compelled to live in thermally inefficient accommodation, where high heating costs can add to the problems of low incomes, causing practical poverty. Maintaining a sound municipal landlord services helps combat all of these problems.	Good	Providing the opportunity for the Council to support the development of more affordable, social rented homes – and maintain those it currently owns to a high standard with reducing energy needs - by having place a sustainable and adequately resourced HRA Thirty Year Business Plan will support the economy by allowing people to have more money to spend in the wider economy. This will help reduce poverty.	Good

Cyngor Sir Powys County Council

Impact Assessment (IA)

The integrated approach to support effective decision making



Page 70

Principle	How does the proposal impact on this principle?	IMPACT Please select from drop down box below	What will be done to better contribute to positive or mitigate any negative impacts?	IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION Please select from drop down box below
Unpaid Carers: Ensuring that unpaid carers views are sought and taken into account	No impact expected	Unknown		Unknown
Safeguarding: Preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children, young people and adults with health and social care needs who can't protect themselves.	The Council's landlord service provides secure housing opportunities to help support households with children and vulnerable adults. This benefits the welfare of those concerned and helps to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm.	Good	A sustainable and adequately resourced HRA Thirty Year Business Plan, as per this proposal, will allow the Council to support the development of more affordable, social rented homes to increase the overall capacity of the Council to help people needing safeguarding related support.	Good
Impact on Powys County Council Workforce	Well planned and adequately financed deployment of HRA resources and capacity in the Housing Service will reduce pressures on Childrens and Adults Services particularly where lack of suitable, sustainable and secure accommodation could, if there is no social housing available, be a contributory factor to the need for interventions by social services.	Good	A solid and sustainable HRA Thirty Year Business Plan, as per this proposal, will allow the Council to support the development of more affordable, social rented homes to increase the overall capacity of the Council to support the work of Childrens and Adults Services, where housing changes can contribute to an overall improvement is the quality of life for vulnerable clients.	Good
Source of Outline Evidence to support judgements				
Welsh Government Rent Policy (December 2019); Welsh Government Rent Notification Notice (November 2020); Powys HRA Business Plan (2020); STAR Survey of Tenant Satisfaction (June 2019); WHQS Compliance Policy for Powys (2020-2021); Homeless Review and Strategy (2018); Compliance One Hundred Board reports; Housing Improvement and Assurance Board reports; 'Love Where You Live' Tenancy Sustainability Strategy (2018); WHO 12 ³ quarterly returns; 'Homes in Powys' housing waiting list data; Housing Service performance data.				

8. What is the impact of this proposal on our communities?

Severity of Impact on Communities	Scale of impact	Overall Impact
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³ WHO 12: mandatory quarterly return to the Welsh Government, reporting the incidence of homelessness in Powys and the work undertaken by the Council to both prevent and deal with homelessness.

High	High	High
Mitigation		
<p>Making sure the Council's Housing Service has financially robust HRA Thirty Year Business Plan, set as part of this proposal means that it will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Operate a viable and sustainable HRA, maintain WHQS and securing inward funding from the Welsh Government. ☞ Maintain the current housing stock to a habitable standard, increasing health and well-being problems for residents. ☞ Continue the development programme for new homes, enhancing the choice and options open to people looking for a safe, secure and affordable place to live in Powys. ☞ Provide tangible support to other Council services to help provide a balanced and coherent range of services to the people of Powys, reducing risks to the well-being of those who are vulnerable. 		

9. What are the risks to service delivery or the council following implementation of this proposal?

Successful implementation of this proposal will support service delivery in other areas of the Council's work, including for example establishing accommodation options for young people and families. There are risks that may arise if the HRA Business Plan cannot be delivered if, for example, income falls short of expectations due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. A robust and rigorous approach to income recovery is already mitigating the risks presented by Covid-19. These include a reduction of housing opportunities and a slow down in the ability of the Council to maintain and improve the quality of municipal homes.

Page 71

Risk Identified	Inherent Risk Rating Impact X Likelihood (See Risk Matrix in guidance document)	Mitigation	Residual Risk Rating Impact X Likelihood (See Risk Matrix in guidance document)
Rent and charges increases assumed in the Business Plan are not possible due to changes in local and national rent and charging policy	8	Services and investment plans will be reviewed to identify those which can be reduced with the least risk to the integrity of the condition of the Council's housing assets, the development of new homes and the core management activities of letting homes promptly and collecting income due to the Council. Such programmes will be scaled back to bring overall expenditure in line with income.	4
Grants for new homes are reduced by the Welsh Government	8	This can be mitigated by considering the development of open market homes for sale, to generate profits to cross subsidise the development of affordable homes. Smarter procurement, with careful specification of homes, may also be able to contribute to reductions in costs without compromising user-experience and longevity of the homes to be built.	4

Cyngor Sir Powys County Council

Impact Assessment (IA)

The integrated approach to support effective decision making



Construction costs continue to rise	12	This can be mitigated by considering the development of open market homes for sale, to generate profits to cross subsidise the development of affordable homes. Smarter procurement, with careful specification of homes, may also be able to contribute to reductions in costs without compromising user-experience and longevity of the homes to be built.	6
Welsh Government pursues with vigour its de-carbonisation proposals for existing homes without sufficient funding being made available to fund the necessary changes.	12	Mitigation of this risk will require additional investment beyond that available to the HRA. Social landlords in Wales are discussing with the Welsh Government options for funding this national objective.	6

10. Overall Summary and Judgement of this Impact Assessment?

Outline Assessment (to be inserted in cabinet report)	Cabinet Report Reference:	Section 8
<p>The Impact Assessment shows that the proposals for the HRA Thirty Year Business Plan 2021-2022 set out in this report contribute positively to maintaining and developing the Council's role as responsive and viable social landlord. A balanced approach has been taken between maintaining and improving existing homes and increasing the range of affordable housing options available for the people of Powys. Risks arising from changes by the Welsh Government to rent and affordable housing grant policy and inflationary construction costs are well mitigated. The Powys HRA Thirty Year Business Plan makes a substantial contribution towards making Vision 2025 a reality, which now includes Affordable Housing as one of its top priorities.</p> <p>The impact on the Council of not approving the proposed HRA Thirty Year Business Plan, set out in this report, will be considerable. There will be a high risk of the Council not being to comply with the Welsh Government's requirement for the Council to have in place by April 1st, 2021 a sustainable and viable HRA Thirty Year Business Plan. This may result in the loss of MRA (£xxx per annum) and direct intervention by the Welsh Government in the management of the landlord service.</p>		

11. Is there additional evidence to support the Impact Assessment (IA)?

What additional evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?
N/A

12. On-going monitoring arrangements?

What arrangements will be put in place to monitor the impact over time?
All HRA budgets and investment programmes are reviewed on a monthly basis.
Please state when this Impact Assessment will be reviewed.
December 2021 (to help inform and shape the HRA Thirty Year Business Plan proposals for 2022-2023).

Page 72

13. Sign Off

Position	Name	Signature	Date
Impact Assessment Lead:	Andy Thompson	<i>Andy Thompson</i>	29.01.21
Head of Service:	Nina Davies		
Director:	Nigel Brinn		
Portfolio Holder:	CLlr James Evans		

14. Governance

Decision to be made by	Cabinet	Date required	March 9th, 2021
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FORM ENDS

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CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.**CABINET EXECUTIVE****March 2nd, 2021**

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Iain McIntosh
Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning & Economic
Regeneration

REPORT TITLE: Community and Economic Benefits from the Council
Housing Development Programme

REPORT FOR: Information

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Council had under construction new Council homes construction in Brecon (32 units), Sarn (7 units), Newtown (26 units), Llanidloes (22 units) and Clyro (13 units). These homes will help address the rising demand across the county for affordable homes.
- 1.2 Housing construction brings wider economic and social benefits to communities in Powys. The Council expects those building homes to contribute to community and economic development. This report informs Cabinet about the way the house building programme is contributing to the wider outcomes set out in Vision 2025, highlighting the importance of the Council continuing to support the construction of new Council homes.

2. Background

- 2.1 Vision 2025 includes the objective to deliver 250 new Council homes by the end of 2025. The Council housing development programme now includes 227 units, with 100 homes already under construction.
- 2.2 The development of new Council homes in Powys has been widely publicised. A series of 'Meet the Buyer' events took place during 2019-2020, to encourage local enterprises to consider participating in the programme. No Powys based main contractors successfully tendered for the contracts but local communities in Powys are still benefiting from the developments, including Powys based sub-contractors.
- 2.3 In February 2020, work began at Cradoc Close /Heol y Ffynnon in Brecon, followed in July 2020 by schemes in Sarn and at the Bowling Green site in Newtown, on the site of former livestock market in Llanidloes in September 2020 and in October 2020 in Clyro. The contract has been awarded for eighteen homes at the Red Dragon site

in Newtown, on which construction will be under way before the end of March 2021. By February 2021, 118 units will be under construction with a total contract value of £20,193,053.

- 2.4 Completion of Sarn and Cradoc Close/Heol y Fynnon is scheduled for April 2021, in August 2021 for the Bowling Green site in Newtown, and in September/October 2021 the scheme in Llanidiloes.

3. Advice

- 3.1 The economic and community benefits for each of the housing schemes under construction are detailed in Appendix 1. Highlights include:
- The appointment of 35 sub-contractors, 31 of which are Welsh based and 14 are Powys based.
 - Details of employment created for more than 70 persons.
 - A high number of training and educational opportunities offered including for apprentices.
 - A wide range of community engagement and benefits offered and planned for each of the sites.
- 3.2 The community and economic benefits will continue to be monitored as construction phases develop on both existing and new sites. The Housing Services Development Team will continue to report every month to the New Project Development Board the benefits of the development programme.
- 3.3 A summary of the benefits that communities are gaining from the house building programme, in addition to the increase in housing choices for local households, will be reported to the Transformation Delivery Board.

4. Resource Implications

4.1 Financial

- 4.1.1 The Council's Thirty Year HRA Business Plan is able to continue to support the development by the Council of more new homes. This will allow more communities and local businesses the opportunities to gain wider socio-economic benefits from a continuing, long term development programme.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.
- 5.2 The Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: "I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report."

6. Comment from local member(s)

6.1 No comments have been sought as the report is for Information.

7. Integrated Impact Assessment

7.1 An Impact Assessment is not required for this report as the Council Housing Development Programme has been included in the Impact Assessment for the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and an impact assessment has been provided for the appropriate Vision 2025 objective.

8. Recommendation

8.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

8.1.1 Note the contribution the Council's Housing Development Programme is making to Vision 2025 and the social and economic wellbeing of communities in Powys.

Contact Officer:	Dafydd Evans
Tel:	01938 551019
Email:	dafydd.evans@powys.gov.uk

Head of Service: Nina Davies

Corporate Director: Nigel Brinn

Appendix A

Council Housing Development Programme *Delivering Benefits for Local Businesses and Communities*



Scheme: Heol-y-Ffynnon, Brecon

Contractor: Hale

Construction Start Date: February 2020

Sub-contractors

- ✓ Eight Subcontractors - 100% Welsh, with two being Powys Based *

Site workers and connected staff

- ✓ Forty-eight persons in total – 100% Welsh, with sixteen being Powys residents *

*Figures w/c 29/10/20

Community Engagements and Initiatives – completed

- ✓ ‘Meet the Buyer’ event held in Castle Hotel, Brecon
- ✓ Hale and subcontractors raised £500 for the Brecon food bank in response to the unprecedented needs of the local community during the Covid-19 pandemic
- ✓ Engaged with the Maendu Well conservation group with the view of linking up to their existing path and offering them a new section of path ahead of handover to allow enhanced route to the Crug.

Community Engagements and Initiatives – planned

- ✓ Considering request by a member of Brecon Town Council for a picnic bench for the town centre.

Community Engagement and Initiatives – cancelled due to Covid-19

- ✓ Hale had attended and agreed to support the multi-agency schools project that had been set up by PCC project officer whereby items for the site was to be made with recycled timber from the site by students from 3 local high schools and Brecon college.
- ✓ Hale had also offered transport for a tree felling event for students at Park wood, Talgarth. Due to Covid-19 and school closures in March, the event was unfortunately cancelled. Schools didn't have the procedures to allow for the assembly of the items nor were site visits possible.
- ✓ Due to the pandemic and programme demands Hale have needed to purchase the bird/bat boxes and carry on with a bridge that they were going to invite third year college students to assist in the engineering. Timber is currently being set aside with the hope that at least one school will be able to make some bin stores before occupancy of the project.
- ✓

Targeted Recruitment, Training and Education

- ✓ Careers Fayre - Hale had a stall at the event at Builth Wells and spoke to several students regarding the opportunities within the construction industry.
- ✓ Four local labourers engaged, two of which were previously long term unemployed.
- ✓ Provided thirteen weeks of Relevant Work experience for a local student who returned from university.
- ✓ Engaged with the local Jobcentre and have had, and will continue to have, placements for work experience.
- ✓ Apprenticeships – since being appointed Hale supply chain have appointed three apprentices to date on the back of this contract.

Scheme: Sarn

Contractor: Pave Aways

Construction Start Date: June 2020

Sub-contractors

- ✓ Fifteen sub-contractors, with 13 Welsh (86.67%) and 6 being Powys based.

Site workers

- ✓ Site manager and assistant visiting site manager are from Powys as is the apprentice carpenter.

Community Engagements and Initiatives - completed

- ✓ Two site visits conducted for the Focus School on 6th October and 13th October 2020.
- ✓ A £1,200 donation has been made to Sarn Village Hall.

Community Engagements and Initiatives – planned

- ✓ Undertake repairs to slates and flashing on the Focus School roof – work to be undertaken during school holidays to reduce covid risks.
- ✓ Repainting works to external doors and other white woodwork at Sarn Village Hall. To be undertaken at the end of the project when the car park is no longer being used.
- ✓ Repairs to slabs Sarn Village Hall agreed – to be undertaken at the end of the project when car park no longer being used.

Targeted Recruitment, Training and Education

- ✓ Joinery apprentice employed on permanent contract and will be taken through his complete apprenticeship and onwards with permanent work.
- ✓ Site Manager completed NVQ6 Site Management (September 2020).
- ✓ Site Manager completed First Aid at Work (October 2020.)
- ✓ Telehandler training (October 2020 – training was on site at Sarn).
- ✓ Construction Skills workshop (Build a Bench) booked at Sarn in partnership with the DWP on Wednesday 2nd December. Targeted at unemployed young people, it's part of the Mentoring Circles initiative. Virtual presentation already completed on

Monday 16th November. See website link for more details

<https://www.paveaways.co.uk/2020/11/19/michelle-mentors-the-next-generation/>

- ✓ Kickstart Scheme – application is in with Cambrian Training and it is planned to take on a person for the Sarn project.
- ✓ Two persons being registered to do Site Assessed NVQs.

Scheme: Bowling Green, Newtown

Contractor: Pave Aways

Construction Start Date: June 2020

Sub-contractors

- ✓ Eight sub-contractors, with 6 Welsh (75%) and 4 being Powys based.

Community Engagement and Initiatives – completed

- ✓ A meet the buyer event specifically for Bowling Green / Sarn was held November 20th.
- ✓ A £2,000 donation to local charity “Bike to the Future”, a local charity which provide bikes to those who do not own one to encourage healthy activities.

Community Engagement and Initiatives – planned

- ✓ £2,000 donation to Newtown Scout Group.
- ✓ Possible sponsorship and repairs to Newtown Bowling Club.
- ✓ Possible local event for local residents.
- ✓ Work for Wildlife Trust £750 labour equivalent – tree planting and hedgerow/scrub clearance.

Targeted Recruitment, Training and Education

- ✓ Site manager took part in a video for Careers Wales in August 2020 on site at Bowling Green. This has been shared with all schools in Powys. Another video is being planned, to cover the work of one of the trades/professions.
- ✓ Apprentice Carpenter on site for three days carrying out work on the building’s timber frame.
- ✓ Two office staff being supported to achieve professional qualifications.

Scheme: Former Livestock Market, Llanidloes

Contractor: J Harper and Sons

Construction Start Date: September 2020

Sub-contractors

- ✓ Four sub-contractors, with 4 Welsh* (100%) and 2 being Powys based.
(*2 contractors in SY postcode area which is deemed to be in Wales for WG employment assessment).

Site workers

- ✓ There are 18 site workers to date, 12 of which are from Powys.

Pending Sub-contractors from Powys

- ✓ JJP, Llanidloes – Mechanical, Electrical, Sprinklers and PV.
- ✓ Evans Surfacing and Landscaping, Llanidloes.
- ✓ R Edwards, Llandrindod Wells – Bricklayers.

Community Engagement and Initiatives - Completed

- ✓ Meet the buyer event held and at least one local sub-contractor who attended event has been engaged to date.
- ✓ School visit – Contractor has met with two local headmasters to discuss arrangements for future school visits and engagement in new year.

Community Engagements and Initiatives - Planned

- ✓ Sponsorship, financial contribution and support to local organisation/community projects to improve the surrounding area and town – discussion ongoing and to be agreed.

Targeted Recruitment, Training and Education

- ✓ Discussion with sub-contractors pre-contract about apprenticeships – confirmation of apprenticeships to be provided.
- ✓ Site Manager is currently renewing SSSTS training.
- ✓ Staff training matrix to follow and full details of proposed recruitment, training etc to be provided in next month's report.

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Dear Dr Caroline Turner,

During the early autumn term, the Welsh Government asked us to undertake a review of local authorities work in supporting their learning communities in schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) during the period from March to October 2020.

This letter outlines the outcome of this work in Powys local authority. The content of the letter is based on virtual meetings with officers, the cabinet lead member for education and a sample of schools and PRUs. We have also considered the supporting documentation provided by the local authority and the feedback from surveys of school/PRU leaders, governors, teachers and support staff, parents and pupils. We have referred to the outcomes of the surveys where relevant, although the surveys were mainly be used to inform the national report which was published on our website on 15 January. Here is a link to that report.

We would like to thank your staff for giving of their time to discuss their work with us and for providing additional information on request.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Meilyr Rowlands".

Meilyr Rowlands

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

The local authority's work to support its schools and the PRU March- August 2020

Leadership and collaboration

Powys local authority was quick to respond to the challenges of COVID-19 and implemented operational changes swiftly to ensure schools, parents/carers and pupils had access to information and support. Senior officers from the Schools and Education Service participated actively with the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors in the local authority's 'Silver Command' group from the beginning of the pandemic.

Local authority officers arranged regular updates for cabinet members. The use of a digital media platform allowed for scheduled meetings to resume earlier than in many other local authorities and these included full council and scrutiny meetings. The regular meetings with cabinet and elected members has further strengthened working relationships and improved the information sharing processes across the local authority.

Powys local authority made good use of the central communications team to share the work that clusters developed during this time with parents/carers and the wider community. Schools and parents told us that they appreciated the clear information and guidance available to them. In particular the swift, personalised responses to individual queries meant leaders and parents felt supported and valued. Local authority officers also held weekly meetings with headteachers, governing bodies and management committees.

The extensive use of a digital media platform has been a positive development which officers consider is likely to change their ways of working in the longer term, especially as the large geographical area of Powys has been a barrier to effective communication and attendance at meetings in the past. Local authority officers worked closely across service areas and with external partners, and school leaders report positively on the greater degree of collaboration and joint working.

In June, in contrast to most local authorities across Wales, Powys schools welcomed pupils back for four weeks rather than three. The additional week was agreed after dialogue with school leaders, governing bodies, council members, and trade unions. In addition to helping pupils re-engage with their learning and reducing the summer holiday the extra week allowed local authority officers to trial and prepare for full re-opening in September. This strengthened the positive working relationships and facilitated preparations for the reopening of all schools and PRUs to all pupils in September.

Promoting learning

The local authority provided guidance to schools and parents in their Continuity of Learning and Distance Learning Plan. Schools were supported to prepare for this new approach to teaching and learning. They were encouraged to consider the

training needs of their staff in order that they could deliver distance learning experiences. Senior challenge advisers shared helpful digests containing advice, guidance and useful links.

In Powys in week one and two of the Continuity of Learning and Distance Learning Plan, the Schools and Education Service was pro-active in providing schools with guidance, facilitating the sharing of good practice and addressing connectivity issues. The local authority established that nearly 900 families did not have a suitable device for learning and over 300 that had no internet access. In response to this, the local authority asked school clusters to identify spare digital equipment which could be repurposed for home use for those learners who did not have access to devices. In addition, the local authority ensured all staff in school had the equipment they needed to deliver distance learning. School leaders in our engagement calls and surveys reflect that the support from Powys' digital learning team for addressing hardware, access and training needs has been outstanding.

Cameo: Support from the digital learning team and putting it into practice

The local authority asked all schools to prepare for the lockdown period by familiarising staff and pupils with Hwb and other ICT tools. In Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant, staff and pupils were confident in using most of the Hwb tools but other platforms were quite new to them. The local authority provided clear instructions on how to set up a platform for each class group. The headteacher reflects that officers were extremely helpful in ensuring that pupils had access to digital equipment and WiFi access. The cluster group worked effectively to share ICT resources between schools. This school loaned equipment to pupils in other schools, with the technicians at the secondary school changing the set-up of all laptops to meet the needs of the pupils and staff.

All teachers provided tasks through 'Assignments' section of the platform including reading materials and numeracy tasks. They moved to synchronous and asynchronous methods early on in order to keep in touch with pupils. Powys provided useful guidance regarding safeguarding concerns which had earlier prevented schools from undertaking such activities.

In the non-maintained sector, the local authority Early Years Advisory Teachers (EYATs) supported settings via email, telephone, and social and digital learning platforms. Guidance, resources, and examples of distance learning from across the authority were shared with all practitioners. The Athrawon Bro and advisory teachers also provided well-received support materials suitable for first and second Welsh language learners.

At the beginning of June, the local authority established a group of officers, headteachers and teachers to help schools prepare for distance learning. The Teaching and Learning group were responsible for looking at different models of distance learning, sharing practical solutions to issues, and identifying approaches with the most positive impact on learning. The group identified that the best approach included a mixture of online and personalised classroom learning. Local

authority officers worked with the school improvement consortium (ERW) to share knowledge and good practice regarding approaches to distance learning. The group produced models, which could be adapted to reflect the context of each individual school. The group reported to senior officers in the Education Cell Group twice per week and shared information on distance learning with schools weekly.

Clusters of schools met at least weekly, with the cluster leader of learning meeting fortnightly with the Interim Chief Education Officer and senior challenge advisers to discuss progress, issues and to share practice and resources. The frequency of meetings developed consistency and strengthened the working relationships. Some schools embraced the change to distance learning with confidence whilst others needed further training and support. The local authority produced examples of remote and digital learning and shared these with schools on a weekly basis. The focus was on approaches to digital learning, resources, and networks.

Supporting vulnerable learners.

The themes of 'Wellbeing', 'Connectivity', 'Learning and learners' and 'Remote teaching and Provision' in the local authority Continuity of Learning and Distance Learning Plan were mirrored in the operational Distance Learning Plan. The local authority put in place a fortnightly publication of actions to support schools to implement the plan.

The local authority established an emotional health and wellbeing work-stream comprising colleagues from education, the educational psychology team, youth services, health, children's services and from commissioned services, such as counselling organisations. The work was informed by the 'Powys Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy', which was circulated to all schools and early years' settings in March 2020. The main purpose of the work-stream was for colleagues to share concerns, identify ever-changing areas of need and to provide support, guidance, and training. The work-stream co-ordinated closely with the emergency childcare hubs to provide a 'team around the hub' and with challenge advisers to share resources in support of the continuity of learning. Weekly Emotional Health meetings were in place between services where the level and type of service being offered to children and young people was shared and any gaps and cross-working opportunities identified and actioned.

The local authority's provision for childcare hubs has been agile and responsive to the changing circumstances. Initially 15 schools across the county were established to provide Emergency Childcare Hubs (ECHs) and Emergency Childcare Specialist Hubs (ECSHs). As time progressed an increasing number of vulnerable learners attended hubs due in part to the focused work between Education and Children's Services to promote pupil attendance at hubs. As a result, an additional hub was opened in Brecon to support the increase in numbers.

Local authority officers held daily virtual meetings with leaders of all the hubs to provide support and guidance and amend practice where necessary. Officers also held weekly multi-agency meetings with social services, health, and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to a co-ordinated approach to supporting vulnerable learners. Numbers attending the hubs increased over time

partly because the joint work between schools and Children's Services helped to ensure that learners who were more vulnerable accessed the hubs.

The Youth Intervention Service (YIS) were in contact with pastoral and safeguarding leads in secondary schools to identify which additional young people could benefit from the extra support available from their service. The YIS and Detached Youth Work Team worked together with schools to identify those young people in Year 11 who would struggle to make a successful transition into employment, education or training, including those for which the current circumstances had a negative impact on their transition plans. The Detached Youth Work team and partners including Careers Wales offered support to these young people. In our phone calls, many headteachers singled out the Youth Intervention Service for praise. They welcomed the opening up of provision to all who needed it without a lengthy referral process.

Cameo: Effective work of the local authority youth service

The Youth Intervention Service (YIS) continued to deliver one-to-one support to some of the most vulnerable young people in Powys who were open to the service. These young people had a variety of support needs, some of which were exacerbated due to the impact of schools closing. The individually tailored support was initially offered by phone and digitally and was reviewed regularly by the team and managers, adapting to changes in young people's emotional health as the lockdown period continued. Support was also offered to the parents of young people open to YIS, to help them to deal with issues around behaviour, boundaries, loss of routine and the effect of being in closer proximity as a family. The Detached Youth Work Team also continued to offer one-to-one support to the vulnerable young people aged 16-25, including learners in post-16 education. The team also worked with Housing to offer essential support to the increasing number of young people presenting as homeless during this time.

As a result of increased anxiety and a range of other mental health issues in children and young people, demand for counselling significantly increased. The local authority reported in June 2020 that they had 190 active cases, with an increase of 60 referrals during the lockdown period. Of the 60 new referrals, 30 were from Year 6 pupils, which would usually be the annual total. The local authority used additional funds from Welsh Government to reduce the waiting list for counselling. The local authority also accessed grant funding to implement play therapy and counselling support for younger pupils in early years' settings and schools. The pre-school team work closely with Health Visitors and Flying Start providers to support children and families. This approach was part of the 'team around the cluster' approach.

In addition, the local authority rolled out a training programme to all school staff on trauma-informed approaches. They have highlighted pupil's mental health and wellbeing as a concern from discussions with school leaders. The trauma-informed approach will continue during the autumn term.

The local authority developed bespoke safeguarding policies for both Emergency Childcare Hubs (ECHs) and Emergency Childcare Specialist Hubs (ECSHs). Children's Services and the Schools and Education Service were aware of the learners who were children looked after (CLA) and those who were on the child

protection register. Each hub was provided with the list of these children who attended their hub's catchment. This was checked and updated on a weekly basis by the Schools and Education Service and re-distributed to hub leaders.

The local authority focused on the additional engagement of vulnerable learners especially pupils on the child protection register. The Schools and Education Service worked closely with Children's Services and health professionals to identify vulnerable learners, and to ensure that these learners were tracked and supported. In addition, officers identified and supported those learners from their rolls who they considered vulnerable, but who did not fall within the official definition given by Welsh Government.

By the middle of April, the PRU provisions were opened to pupils as the staff and local authority officers recognised that many of the PRU pupils experienced difficulty engaging with special school hubs.

The local authority's work to support its schools and the PRU from September

Leadership and collaboration

Since September, local authority leaders have continued to reflect and refine their focus and activities to support schools and PRUs. They have been able to establish clear protocols and procedures that can be put into place quickly when needed, for example when a positive case of COVID-19 is identified. School leaders report they are confident about the support they receive from the local authority for either routine matters or urgent cases such as when a pupil or member of staff reports a positive case of COVID-19. Services across the authority work closely together and schools consider there to be a coherent response to any query or issue.

Leaders have endeavoured to ensure regular, timely and clear communication with schools, partners and stakeholders. School leaders value the regular contact with the interim Chief Education Officer and other officers. They express the view that officers in the local authority, particularly the interim Chief Education Officer, have made it a priority to support their wellbeing and ensure they are not managing difficult situations alone.

Effective channels of communication have been put in place in order to disseminate information quickly along with the thinking behind any decisions. Headteachers are involved in decision-making groups regarding all aspects of the local authority's responses. The feedback from all stakeholders is considered very carefully and headteachers are positive about how agile and responsive the local authority and its officers has been throughout the pandemic.

The local authority has adapted quickly to using online meeting tools and digital communications and understands the advantages they bring. They reflect regularly on how beneficial changes they have made in response to the pandemic will become established in practice going forward. A good example of this is how challenge

advisers have been reallocated to work across clusters of schools. The benefits of this were recognised quickly during hub working in the summer term and this has become an established and well-regarded way of working.

Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, officers and elected members have continued to address the recommendations from the most recent inspection report. For example, the local authority has recently published details of its 10-year Strategy for Transforming Education in Powys. As far as possible, it has maintained the schedule in its post-inspection action plan and has recognised the benefits of the enhanced communication and trust developed through cluster and hub working since March 2020.

Promoting learning

Local authority officers in Powys continue to gather and share beneficial ideas to promote learning in their schools and PRUs during the autumn term. They do this through regular online authority-wide meetings, digital newsletters and cluster meetings that are attended by challenge advisers. Officers have regularly distributed helpful Powys specific guidance on a range of useful learning topics, for example how to adapt assessment when work is online. The guidance includes links to further reading and research associated with each topic to prompt dialogue and discussion in cluster meetings.

In our conversations with schools, headteachers were very positive and grateful for the ideas and resources that challenge advisers are sharing. They tell us that their challenge advisers have helped them to filter the large volume of information that was being shared by a range of partners, and to decide on the most relevant approaches for their schools. In particular, they value the stronger links and joint working across clusters that began to flourish when the hubs were established at the start of the pandemic. Challenge advisers have nurtured a focus on improved relationships between sectors, curriculum continuity and shared pedagogical approaches.

Challenge advisers are encouraging schools to explore the pedagogical principles outlined in Successful Futures and adopted for a Curriculum for Wales and focus on one or two at a time to enrich learning. They are also prompting school leaders to adopt the 'Schools as Learning Organisations' tools for self-evaluation and to pinpoint areas for development. Although challenge advisers are mindful of the extra challenges posed to school leaders by the ongoing pandemic, they have continued to support schools to consider carefully priorities for improvement and to develop their school development plans. Headteachers we spoke to felt that the authority had managed this balance well and agreed it was important to maintain a focus on school improvement as well as managing urgent issues linked to COVID-19.

To support schools who have had to manage COVID-19 cases and pupils and staff self-isolating, officers also communicate practical advice on managing distance learning. This compliments the guidance shared by ERW. Officers have shared questions for governing bodies to use to help them understand new digital ways of

working. The local authority has also continued to support schools to manage provision of services and access to the internet, including providing laptops for all Year 12 pupils. Although there is some confusion in a few schools about the difference between blended learning and distance learning, headteachers tell us that the support from the digital learning teams has been extremely helpful. Advice and guidance from the local authority has enabled teachers to try new approaches with confidence, including live streaming of lessons. This guidance has also enabled a number of schools to monitor access and engagement with the available digital tools and hold follow up conversations with learners who are self-isolating.

Cameo: Putting professional learning into practice and monitoring engagement with distance learning during the firebreak

In Ysgol Calon Cymru, at the beginning of the pandemic both learners and teachers were provided with laptops and the means to access the internet where necessary by the local authority. An intensive period of professional learning was put in place, and as result the digital skills of teachers improved significantly. During the firebreak in November, the school was able to provide a full online timetable with over 60% of lessons being live streamed for pupils in Year 9 and above. As a result of the earlier professional learning, the school was able to analyse pupils' access and engagement with digital tools promptly and pastoral staff were able to contact pupils swiftly if they did not log on to learning and follow up on any issues arising.

Officers engaged with all post-16 learners through the Powys Learning Pathways website during the summer holidays. This helped learners to feel supported and engaged after a period of disruption to their learning. At the same time, local authority officers made helpful bridging units available to learners about to start post-16 courses. These units, together with the contact, have helped learners transition to their post-16 studies. At present, pupils have to remain at their own school for all learning as it is not possible to visit other campuses, even if their subject teachers are based elsewhere. Supported by officers in the local authority, subject teachers have live streamed lessons so that all pupils can access them. As the local authority had already used remote learning through their 'e-sgol' programme, the transition to online learning was comparatively seamless and schools and learners are familiar with how to make the best use of it.

For the most part, the local authority and ERW have aligned their strategic plans to provide a programme of professional learning opportunities for schools and PRUs. This has been particularly successful regarding training for online and digital learning. Many schools and PRUs feel that these opportunities are easy to access online and less teaching time is lost for training. Local authority network meetings for senior leaders are very much valued by schools. Generally, subject leaders appreciate opportunities to meet but a few express the view that there is too much duplication when both the local authority and ERW run meetings. Support for pupils'

Welsh language skills has been particularly valuable to schools. Local authority officers in the early years team have provided helpful guidance to non-maintained settings and schools. The material outlines how to develop pupils' skills in the outdoor learning environment as well as how to organise classroom practice to meet foundation phase principles.

The local authority has provided detailed guidance for schools and PRUs to support their use of the 'Recruit, recover, raise standards: the accelerating learning programme' grant funding. This includes a consideration of baseline assessment to ensure learners' needs are identified and addressed, and links to how to identify evidence-informed practice. Challenge advisers have worked alongside senior leaders to plan schools' approaches and have ensured the plans build in opportunities for monitoring and evaluation. The local authority has also issued helpful guidance for governing bodies on how to evaluate schools' use of the grant funding.

Supporting vulnerable learners

The local authority continues to place the wellbeing of their pupils at the centre of their re-establishing learning strategies since schools reopened fully this term. The establishment of the 'Team around the hub' approach during the lockdown period helped to ensure that learners received the appropriate support when they needed it most. This has evolved further to encompass a localised support network based on clusters of schools across the local authority. The 'Team around the cluster' approach makes good use of the positive working relationships between local authority education officers and challenge advisers, with that of other partners such as social services, healthcare services and counselling providers. The use of virtual meetings has meant that key personnel are more readily available to discuss individual needs of vulnerable pupils and provide bespoke advice when required. Such regular meetings have also provided a better understanding of the issues affecting Powys as a whole, for example the increase in pupils eligible for free school meals as a result of increasing unemployment. In addition, most school leaders identified that the 'team around the cluster' approach allowed them to access specialist support far easier than before. The improved lines of communication has helped them to better understand which specialist services are available to support vulnerable learners and whom they need to contact to access them.

Headteachers appreciate the work of Education Welfare Officers (EWO) and describe their dedication in supporting vulnerable learners again since September. They, along with the Educational Psychologists Team, have maintained contact with children looked after (CLA), those on the child protection register and adopted children, in order to ensure that their needs are being met. In addition, headteachers received beneficial support from Powys' behavioural support team who worked alongside other professionals such as EWOs to support learners who found it difficult to return to school. In such cases, beneficial plans were put in place to support individual learners and their families and to help reassure them that it was safe to

return, often through a phased return approach. For example, an educational psychologist engaged proactively with a school and the family of a child who was fearful about returning to school, providing useful advice and coping strategies to help the child re-engage successfully with their learning.

Cameo: Beneficial support to help welcome pupils back to school from the educational psychology team

The local authority educational psychology team facilitate a network to support schools and continued to do so during lockdown. They have prioritised topics to avoid schools being overwhelmed by information overload. They also identified useful online training opportunities. Headteachers felt that the materials and the training offered to all staff on trauma and how to cope and deal with it was particularly useful. They described how it had enriched staff discussions afterwards as well as equipping them to deal with anxious pupils on return to school. They also benefitted from the information on how to prepare the building and their welcome to pupils returning based on the SWAN approach - the need to offer a Safe, Welcoming, Accepting and Nurturing environment for all.

Many secondary school leaders and staff were positive about the involvement of the local authority's youth service, which has been very proactive in supporting vulnerable learners as they return to school. During the autumn term, youth workers visited the key market towns between 5pm and 7pm to engage with learners in an informal way. This provided useful opportunities to check on their wellbeing and to help direct them to support if required.

The local authority reported a significant rise in the number of families opting to educate their children at home since schools reopened. At the beginning of November, around 200 pupils were being taught at home, which is considerably higher than the 130 pupils who had registered for 'Elective home education' prior to the closing of schools in March 2020. Again, local authority support services such as education welfare officers, youth workers, challenge advisers and the educational psychologist team worked with families to provide help and support.

In line with the local authority's key message on focussing on pupils' wellbeing and their readiness to learn on their return to school in September, nearly all schools adapted their curriculum to prioritise these key aims. This was particularly true for vulnerable learners, including those with English as an Additional Language and those who may have recently arrived in Powys as refugees having already witnessed severe trauma in their lives. In addition to the commissioned counselling services which re-established face-to-face support during the autumn term, the local authority appointed a teacher to lead on support for these vulnerable pupils. As a result, case workers worked with schools and families to establish bespoke support through a range of agencies and local government services.

Nearly all headteachers who took part in our engagement phone calls praised highly the support they had received with regards to health and safety issues. Headteachers valued the guidance from the local authority health and safety

specialists when they had to prepare for the reopening of their schools in September. They commended the effectiveness and clarity of advice provided by the local authority, especially around issues relating to the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable pupils such as those requiring specialist support. They ensured that the advice and guidance was issued in a timely manner so that school leaders were not overwhelmed. As a result, headteachers felt confident that they were well prepared for the reopening of schools and to make important decisions on health and safety issues at a local level when the need arose. They particularly appreciated the weekly headteachers' virtual meetings which helped to disseminate and discuss important health and safety guidance. The fortnightly virtual meetings with Chairs of Governors also helped to reinforce key messages and guidance which could then be discussed with school leaders at a local level, to ensure the health and safety of pupils including vulnerable learners.

The use of virtual meetings and the 'Team around the Cluster' approach continues to encourage effective multi-agency working. This has been very beneficial for schools across Powys which covers such a large geographical area. For example, representatives from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services have been present at headteacher and 'Team around the cluster' meetings to warn of issues that are affecting parts of Powys during the pandemic, such as the possible increased risk of suicide amongst teenagers. Since September, most specialist services have returned to face-to-face work wherever possible, working closely with schools and families to provide support safely. Clear guidelines and appropriate risk assessments has given schools and specialist services the confidence to re-engage as much as possible in face-to-face support.

The improved communication at directorate level has also helped to improve multi-agency working and has brought about a more integrated approach to support schools and learners. For example, better communication between the Schools and Education Directorate and the Children Services Directorate has helped provide better-targeted support to the most vulnerable pupils who are on the Child Protection Register. In addition, the local authority has ensured that most statutory processes and referrals for pupils with special educational needs has continued through effective partnership working. When this hasn't been possible, the local authority has put purposeful temporary arrangements in place to support learners as much as possible. For example, schools have been able to refer pupils to support through the Youth Intervention Service without having to go through the usual lengthy referral process.

As was the case during the lockdown period, the local authority has continued to support school and PRU staff with a range of online professional learning opportunities including on attachment difficulties and relationship-based play. Much of this training has focussed on supporting pupils' health and wellbeing, particularly those who are most vulnerable. School leaders commented positively on the quality and relevance on the training available by the local authority and ERW, particularly around supporting vulnerable pupils. For example, the training and support materials for all staff on dealing with trauma-related issues have been very valuable

this term as pupils returned to school. In particular, headteachers commented on how such training could be easily accessed by all staff.

In addition, challenge advisers have also organised bespoke cluster-based training and projects to meet the needs of schools in different areas of Powys, for example they organised 'mindfulness' projects to support pupils' wellbeing this term. A notable feature of the support network in Powys this term is the continuation of school-to-school collaboration and the willingness of leaders and staff to provide bespoke training and guidance to colleagues across the local authority. A good example of this is the training provided by staff of the pupil referral unit on supporting pupils' behaviour and their readiness to learn on their return to school. Such collaboration has increased the resources available to schools as well as providing facilitators with valuable professional development and leadership opportunities.

9 February	Portfolio Holder for Education and Property	Approved the appointment of school governors
9 February	Portfolio Holder for Young People and Culture	Approved the purchase of a property in Newtown for a residential children's home.
12 February	Portfolio Holder for Environment	Gave approval to initiate the Traffic Regulation Order consultation procedure in accordance with The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996; and if no substantive objections are received for the proposal be implemented.
17 February	Portfolio Holder for Education and Property	Approved the appointment of school governors.

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Cabinet / De Title	Portfolio Holder	Lead	Decision Maker
19/03/21 Llangedwyn/Llanfechain proposal	Councillor Phyl Davies	Emma Palmer	Cabinet
19/03/21 Ysgol Bro Hyddgen Language Proposal – Consultation Report	Councillor Phyl Davies	Emma Palmer	Cabinet
19/03/21 Valuing Residential Care	Councillor Myfanwy Alexander	Dylan Owen	Cabinet
19/03/21 Mid Wales Growth Deal IAA	Councillor Rosemarie Harris	Clive Pinney	Cabinet
13/04/21 Mid Wales Regional Economic Framework	Councillor Iain McIntosh	Gareth Jones	Cabinet
13/04/21 Biodiversity & Resilience of Eco Systems	Councillor Iain McIntosh	Sian Barnes	Cabinet
13/04/21 February Financial position Rev / Cap	Councillor Aled Davies	Jane Thomas	Cabinet
13/04/21 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment	Councillor Iain McIntosh	Kimberly Caruana	Cabinet
Options for improvement of the broadband infrastructure in			
13/04/21 Powys	Councillor Graham Breeze	Diane Reynolds	Cabinet
13/04/21 Use of Robotics in Administration	Councillor Graham Breeze	Diane Reynolds	Cabinet
13/04/21 Social Care Charter	Councillor Myfanwy Alexander	Dylan Owen	Cabinet
13/04/21 Highways Operation - Management of Change	Councillor Heulwen Hulme	Matt Perry	Cabinet
13/04/21 Welshpool Housing Office	Councillor Iain McIntosh	Nina Davies	Cabinet
13/04/21 ECO 3 Revision report	Councillor Iain McIntosh	Nina Davies	Cabinet
18/05/21 Post 16 Report	Councillor Phyl Davies	Emma Palmer	Cabinet
18/05/21 Caereinion All Through School Objection report	Councillor Phyl Davies	Emma Palmer	Cabinet
18/05/21 Moving on Up	Councillor Iain McIntosh	Nina Davies	Cabinet
25/05/21 Quarter 4/End of Year Performance Report	Councillor Graham Breeze	Emma Palmer	Cabinet
25/05/21 Quarter 4/ End of Year Strategic Risk Register Report	Councillor Aled Davies	Jane Thomas	Cabinet
25/05/21 Mount Street / Cradoc Consultation Report	Councillor Phyl Davies	Emma Palmer	Cabinet
Ysgol Dyffryn Trannon Language Category Consultation			
25/05/21 Report	Councillor Rosemarie Harris	Emma Palmer	Cabinet
15/06/21 Castle Caereinion Consultation Report	Councillor Phyl Davies	Emma Palmer	Cabinet
15/06/21 Llanbedr Consultation Report	Councillor Phyl Davies	Emma Palmer	Cabinet
15/06/21 Churchstoke Consultation Report	Councillor Phyl Davies	Emma Palmer	Cabinet
15/06/21 Llanfihangel Rhydithon Consultation Report	Councillor Phyl Davies	Emma Palmer	Cabinet
22/06/21 Draft WESP	Councillor Phyl Davies	Emma Palmer	
06/07/21 CIP Annual Report	Councillor Rosemarie Harris	Emma Palmer	Cabinet
06/07/21 Ysgol Bro Hyddgen Objection report	Councillor Phyl Davies	Emma Palmer	Cabinet
06/07/21 School Budget Outturn reports	Councillor Phyl Davies	Emma Palmer	Cabinet

27/07/21 Quarter 1 Performance Report	Councillor Graham Breeze	Emma Palmer	Cabinet
27/07/21 Quarter 1 Strategic Risk Register	Councillor Aled Davies	Jane Thomas	Cabinet
02/11/21 Quarter 2 Performance Report	Councillor Graham Breeze	Emma Palmer	Cabinet
02/11/21 Quarter 2 Strategic Risk Register	Councillor Aled Davies	Jane Thomas	Cabinet
08/02/22 Quarter 3 Performance Report	Councillor Graham Breeze	Emma Palmer	Cabinet
08/02/22 Quarter 3 Strategic Risk Register	Councillor Aled Davies	Jane Thomas	Cabinet