



*Neuadd y Sir / County Hall, Llandrindod, Powys, LD1 5LG*

## **QUESTIONS AT ANY TIME TO CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

Response by the Portfolio Holder:

Thank you for your question.

The Housing Service recognises the importance of upgrading and retrofitting our existing housing stock to make them more energy efficient, both in terms of responding to PCC and WG climate emergency declarations and in delivering benefits for our residents. As part of our new development programme, and programmed improvement works for existing housing stock, we are piloting such systems as Passivhaus, Ground Source Heat Pumps, Air Source Heat Pumps, and Solar panels. We will be closely monitoring and reviewing these pilot schemes, so that we fully understand the pros and cons of these technologies in order to inform future work programmes. The team want to ensure that the new technologies installed provide longevity, liveability and low maintenance to make sure that future generations do not inherit liabilities that could have been avoided. Officers are also considering the wider environmental priorities, for example looking at reusing materials. One of our Housing objectives is Green Powys, which includes the planting and greening of our housing estates, and we are also working towards tackling fuel poverty.

Welsh Government declared a Climate Emergency in Wales in April 2019. This has led to an increased focus on reducing carbon within the construction industry, with concrete and cement ranked as the world's third biggest man-made contributor to carbon emissions after energy and transport. This has been further heightened in the social housing sector with Welsh Government making the reduction of carbon in the construction and operation of social housing a key consideration when considering the grant funding of developments.

Powys County Council have led and project managed the Home Grown Homes project, which has supported and informed Welsh Government housing directorate policy and procedure. The project is currently concluding and produced a report, information, and tools to assist this agenda [Home-Grown Homes Project / Prosiect Cartrefi o Bren Lleol - Woodknowledge Wales](#). We have agreed with Welsh Government that, subject to securing funding, we are interested in supporting and project managing Home Grown Homes phase 2. The Council also introduced a wood encouragement policy in 2017, which is applied when procuring all new housing developments.

The Housing Service are carefully planning their strategy to meet the current needs, considering the location of our rural communities and construction types of our ageing housing stock within Powys. Not all modern decarbonisation methods fit or suit our housing stock, so we will carefully consider our options as Welsh Government announce their confirmed decarbonisation plans, following the Senedd elections in early May.