

Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee

Meeting Venue
By Zoom

Meeting Date
Monday, 18 March 2024

Meeting Time
9.30 am

For further information please contact
Rachel Pugh
rachel.pugh1@powys.gov.uk



County Hall
Llandrindod Wells
Powys
LD1 5LG

12.03.24

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.	DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST
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To receive any disclosures of interests by Members relating to items to be considered at the meeting.

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

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

4.	MINUTES
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To authorise the Chair to sign the minutes of the previous meeting held as follows as a correct record: 11.01.2024 and 30.01.2024

(Pages 5 - 16)

5.	HOUSING
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To receive the report:

Housing Maintenance, Garage Maintenance and Management

(Pages 17 - 34)

6.	WORKING GROUPS
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To consider the papers from the Working Groups

1. Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Working Group – Heart of Wales Transition to Powys County Council.
2. Joint Scrutiny – Leisure Review.

(Pages 35 - 40)

7.	SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME
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To note that future meetings of the Committee will be held as follows:

Please note agenda items are subject to change

15.05.24	Pre-Meeting
20.05.24	Committee – Public 1. Election of Vice Chair 2. Leisure Review 3. Car Park Review 4. Public protection overview 5. Enhanced Homelessness 6. Llanigon Site Transfer
07.06.24	Work Programme Planning
12.07.24	Pre-Meeting
17.07.24	Committee – Public 1. Routes into Work with the Council 2. People Strategy 3. Complaints 2023-24 4. Artificial Intelligence framework 5. Customer Services Review 6. Mobile broadband connectivity
10.08.24	Work Programme Planning
04.09.24	Pre-Meeting
09.09.24	Committee – Public 1. ROWIP 2. bin collection 3. School Costs Recovery
27.09.24	Work Programme Planning
24.10.24-	Pre-Meeting
28.10.24-	Committee – Public

Committee Reflection

Following the close of the meeting the Committee is asked to take 5 to 10 minutes to reflect on today's meeting.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ECONOMY, RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT BY ZOOM ON TUESDAY, 30 JANUARY 2024

PRESENT

County Councillors A Davies, B Davies, A Jones, K Lewis, P James, C Kenyon-Wade and R Devlin

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs G Mitchell, C Masefield, L Rijnenberg

2. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest by Members relating to items to be considered at the meeting

3. DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPS

The Committee did not receive any disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

4. DRAFT 2024-2025 BUDGET

General

The Committee noted, observed, or requested that:

- In-depth paperwork was provided which in turn demanded significant deliberation. However, impact assessments could have been more detailed.
- It was useful that future ideas were presented within proposals for challenge, and concerns to be raised in advance of any decision making.

Finance Services

The Committee noted, observed, or requested that:

- Congratulations were shared that a positive start had been made to enable savings to be made whilst providing a fully committed service. Confirmation was provided that the service was comfortable with the reductions shown.
- It was asked how the capital receipt would be found and if County Farms would be considered for disposal, it was explained that the capital receipt target was based on proposed work around Sustainable Powys and the disposal of assets to help capital investment and keep borrowing within sustainable prudent limits.

Legal Services

The Committee noted, observed, or requested that:

- A budget allocation was not provided to the Registration Service and provided by charging a fee, which was almost a full cost recovery.
- Confirmation provided that a contribution towards the increased costs of Coroners was anticipated.

Community Development

The Committee noted, observed, or requested that:

- The Arts Service would be looking at other opportunities of funding to boost the small core budget and would explore how to make the service more sustainable.
- The leisure contract energy saving projects would contribute towards future savings in line with Sustainable Powys and place-based planning.
- It was explained that the Leisure Review was part of Sustainable Powys and would not be part of budget setting.
- Leisure centres would be sustainable for the financial year, joint working between services was ongoing to explore all options and opportunities.
- Concerns were raised around the size of the maintenance backlog programme of works for leisure centres and how it may increase. It was explained that it was jointly managed between Powys County Council and Freedom Leisure and officers felt that it was manageable.
- Library Services would be supported by additional grant funding for the next couple of years and the core budget would be reduced, the delivery of the service would not be impacted.

Workforce and Organisation Development

The Committee noted, observed, or requested that:

- It was felt that mileage had decreased due to online meetings for both travel time and travel costs, and reassurance was given that savings shown were achievable for the service.

Transformation and Democratic Services

The Committee noted, observed, or requested that:

- It was expressed that an increase in member travel may be seen in the near future with more councillors seeing the benefit of face-to-face meetings.
- 42 staff covered a variety of areas, staffing levels were already limited and other areas within the Council would not be able to conduct the work. After much challenge and discussion within the service additional savings proposals were not put forward and it was felt the service would be in demand to support the delivery of Sustainable Powys.

Property, Planning, & Public Protection

The Committee noted, observed, or requested that:

- Savings around the running costs would be made under the proposal to dispose of/rent the Gwalia building within the financial year, however associated costs would be incurred during the relocation of staff.
- A challenge around flag poles was answered that they would be removed from corporate buildings but retained at County Hall, savings would be gained by less inspection, remedial work and health and safety compliance costs.
- If the 10% increase for cemetery fees was approved the service would be able to achieve full cost recovery for the service.
- Corporate building daily cleaning would continue for certain areas and main areas cleaned once a week.
- To increase estate income additional buildings (Auto Palace) would be opened shortly. Occupancy levels at other buildings (Abermule Business Park) would achieve one hundred percent occupancy and the disposal of commercial units would be considered.
- PAT testing compliance legislation would remain a key priority and health and safety standards would be met; however, it was felt that the Council was over testing and resources could be utilised in other areas.

Highways, Transport and Recycling

The Committee noted, observed, or requested that:

- The proposal shown for grass cutting included county roads in urban areas only which would result in one full cut and any safety cuts required, it excluded all trunk roads as the Council carry out a service on behalf of the Trunk Road Agency with a separate specification.
- Funding had been received to work with partners for grass cutting and collection which would support savings.
- Due to the magnitude of savings needed, it was felt that removing the need of a third party and bringing the residual waste service inhouse would benefit the Council. Assurances were provided that the Abermule Bulking Station was working within permits and closely monitored by Natural Resources Wales. Concerns were raised around contamination, smells, and noise. It was stressed that residents' concerns had been mitigated and no additional resources or equipment would be required, and the site would incur two additional vehicle movements per day.
- Climate change and wetter conditions led to concerns around the ditching reduction, it was expected that eighteen weeks less ditching would be carried out each year.
- A full cost exercise was underway in relation to comments made that the increase in bus fares contradicted the whole sustainable model of the Council for accessibility to public transport which was heavily underutilised.
- Soft market testing was being undertaken to explore the industry standards around charging and booking systems in Household Recycling Centres, and how to provide the best service for the Powys residents. Concerns were raised that fly tipping may increase.
- The Blue Badge charge in car parks was an estimated figure as there was no baseline figures to compare to and only snap survey data.
- LED street lighting would support the savings needed by reducing energy, dimming and part night (turn off at a certain time) plans were in place. It was stressed that only the county road network plans were proposed, and dark skies status may be impacted due to trunk roads running through towns.
- A kerbside collection was provided for day-to-day cardboard and household recycling centres available for larger items. Additional blue cardboard boxes could be provided to residents if needed.
- Appendix C - Post 16 transport was not a statutory service, and a consultation would be needed for 12 months before a decision could be made. An exploration of options was being undertaken.
- Appendix C – Clarification was provided that each road would be individually assessed before a decision was taken around the maintenance need for unclassified roads.
- It was explained that a capital fund was built up from money received from services for replacement vehicles. The proposal was to pause the fund in order to support the pressures within the service. It was hoped that grant funding could be gained to support the purchase of electric vehicles in the near future.
- Structural maintenance of roads was shown to reduce, it was explained a report would be compiled to demonstrate rising costs and how grant funding could support future works as capital projects were long term programmes.

Scrutiny's Recommendation to Cabinet	Accept (plus Action & timescale)	Partially Accept (plus Rationale, Action & timescale)	Reject (plus Rationale)
1. Cabinet to consider options following concerns that the increase in bus fares contradicts the whole Council sustainable model for accessibility to public transport.		We partially accept the recommendation. However, it's important to note that bus fare increases have not increased for a number of years. We are aware of the importance of public transport particularly in a rural area, and there will be a fundamental review during 2024/25 to ensure we expand on the current provision that is sustainable and accessible for residents of Powys.	

5.	REPORTS
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Please see item 4

6.	IMPACT ASSESSMENTS
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Please see item 4

County Councillor Angela Davies (chair)

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ECONOMY, RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT BY ZOOM ON THURSDAY, 11 JANUARY 2024

PRESENT

County Councillor A Davies (Chair)

County Councillors B Davies, K Lewis, G Mitchell, S L Williams, J Charlton,

D A Thomas, P James, C Kenyon-Wade, R Devlin and Chloe Masefield

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies received: Cllrs L Rijnenberg, A Jones

J Gibson-Watt Cabinet Member for and Open and Transparent Powys

M Dorrance Cabinet Member for a More Prosperous Powys

2. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest by Members relating to items to be considered at the meeting.

3. DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPS

The Committee did not receive any disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

4. MINUTES

The Chair was authorised to sign the Minutes of the previous meeting on 11 December 2023 as a correct record.

5. RENT SETTING OVERVIEW

Background:

- The report provided an update on proposals for rents and service charges for Council House and garage rents and all property and tenancy related Service Charges, for the financial year 2024-25.
- And included recommendations for the Committee to consider before being presented to Cabinet later in the month.
- The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan will be provided to Scrutiny in the coming months.

Points raised by the Committee:	Responses received from Officers or Cabinet Members:
How was the Major Repairs Allowance calculated by Welsh Government. 2.3 Council would not receive the annual Major Repairs Allowance (MRA), worth £3,720,000 million in capital funding for 2024-2025 year, to support ongoing investment.	It was expected that the funding figure was based on the number of homes within the local authority, however officers would investigate more detail for the Committee.
Assurance was sought around the	It was explained that for both rents and

<p>process and decision making around the 6.7% rent increase proposal.</p>	<p>gypsy accommodation a cost analysis had been conducted to review service efficiency, which had seen Void times halved. Legal requirements demand additional costs in the coming months that all voids (450) require floor coverings and carpets. Inflation was also considered. Increased numbers in homelessness and prevention had seen a proposal drawn up to provide a Bed and Breakfast for temporary accommodation to reduce the use of private run businesses and drive costs down.</p>
<p>It was asked if a nonpayment calculation had been performed.</p>	<p>The nonpayment element had been considered and explained that the rate of increase had been calculated to ensure the ability to pay.</p>
<p>Had funding been provided for homelessness prevention and if so, how much would that be.</p>	<p>Homelessness and prevention services were run through the housing general fund and included in the overall budget setting which would be decided by full Council. Welsh Government discussions were ongoing around the options for prevention.</p>
<p>Concerns were shared around the correlation between the service spend on garages and the cost recovery of garage payments.</p>	<p>It was explained that the garage element of the service was under review due to the condition of the garages and would be considered for alternative use e.g. Housing or car parking.</p>
<p>Illegal immigration was raised and how it was dealt with for those waiting to be allocated for rehousing and how priority listing works.</p>	<p>Home Office homeless legislation was followed by the Council and emphasised that each individual application was considered with its own unique circumstances.</p>
<p>Page 19 – 3.4.2 it was asked if the work had been completed to remove all careline pullcords from circulation. And if charges would change to reflect what was installed for the user.</p>	<p>Work was underway to remove and replace all pullcords with a pendant or wrist band. It was agreed that charges would be reviewed.</p>
<p>Page 21 – it was asked if all gypsy sites had grass.</p>	<p>It was confirmed that not all sites had grass and those with waste land would be considered for development e.g. play areas.</p>
<p>What did the weekly gypsy site occupation charge include.</p>	<p>The sites contain a mixture of accommodation and electricity would be a separate charge for the residents.</p>
<p>The level of charges was questioned and asked what accommodation and amenities gypsy sites provide.</p>	<p>Each site/family had an amenity unit fully furnished.</p>
<p>Figures were compared and temporary accommodation showed figures that were</p>	<p>It was explained that temporary accommodation was fully furnished which</p>

challenged and stressed temporary accommodation is often for vulnerable people.	was replaced on a regular basis therefore costs were higher to recover, the current charge did not reflect the full amount required to maintain the service.
Would sufficient funds be available to meet the Welsh Government Housing Quality Standards	Currently funding was available, however a new standard would be introduced in April 2024 and discussions were on going between landlords and the Welsh Government around funding needed to meet new standards.

- The committee felt that all challenges and questions had been answered and clarified in full.
- It was asked that all considerations above were taken forward by the service.
- And agreed that the eight recommendations within the report had been fully processed and considered in depth to meet demands on the service.

10.1.1 That with effect from April 1st, 2024, the average rent in Powys will increase by 6.7% (the average rent being £108.24 per week) for all 5,524 Council owned homes, excluding service charges.

10.1.2 That service charges charged to HRA tenants are amended with effect from April 1st, 2024 (included in Table Two above) to allow the Council to recover the cost incurred in providing these services.

10.1.3 That the weekly cost from April 1st, 2024, for all tenants receiving the Careline community alarm service in 2024-2025 is £3.91 per week.

10.1.4 That HRA garage rents in Powys with effect from April 1st, 2024, for 2024-2025 are increased by 6.7% to £14.65 per week.

10.1.5 That garage plot charges effective from April 1st, 2024, for 2024- 2025 are £186.29 per annum.

10.1.6 That the weekly occupation charge from April 1st, 2024, charges for Gypsy and Traveller pitches in 2024-2025 will be increased by 6.7%, the average rent being £122.09.

10.1.7 That the charge for temporary accommodation increases, with effect from April 1st, 2024, for the year 2024-2025, by 6.7%

10.1.8 That all other rental, not detailed above, effective from April 1st, 2024, will increase by 6.7%. Service charges continue to be recovered on an actual basis.

Resolved: The Rent Setting Overview be noted.

6. CAR PARKING REVIEW UPDATE

Background:

- The presentation summarised the feedback from the ongoing Working Groups.
- The Officers stressed that the solutions within the presentation were themes and ideas and had not been validated or verified.
- The Committee were asked for comments that would be collated and added to the final report.
- A report with recommendations and costings would be provided to Cabinet later in the year.

Points raised by the Committee:	Responses received from Officers or Cabinet Members:
Tariffs	

Clarity was asked for around ticket types.	Permits were sold on an annual or seasonal basis (1,3,6 or 12 months) and valid in any long stay car park. An annual permit of £370 equates to just over £1 a day. Permits for Single use car parks had been commented by the Working Group.
It was felt that more imaginative ways were needed to encourage footfall into town centres, including options of half hour free car parking.	Suggested options had been logged on the presentation, however income would reduce.
It was commented that facilities differ in wards and each community would need a combination of parking options.	
How would the council facilitate unique car parking charges for each community.	Officers felt that options could be explored, benefits and equity would need to be demonstrated throughout the county.
It was suggested that a percentage of spaces for each car park could be designated free for certain periods of time.	
Prices were challenged and compared with those immediately across the border. It was felt that Ceredigion would not take demand away from Powys compared to that of closer local authorities.	Benchmarking had been part of the process and looked into neighbouring authorities including Ceredigion.
How much had the report cost.	Atkins commission was approximately £38k.
Enforcement Resources & Service Improvement /Innovation	
How many Parking Enforcement Officers were in post.	Full complement of eight full time equivalents were currently employed.
It was felt that the re-introduction of the short stay car park and changing the Parking Enforcement Officers working pattern would help towards solutions for the Council.	It was explained that the report would show short, medium, and long recommendations with costings.
It was asked if automation had been considered (cameras/barriers) which may be easier to implement than variable costing levels throughout Powys.	It is not believed that the legislation permits enforcement of off street car parks by ANPR systems, enforcement powers were restricted to moving traffic offences e.g. bus lanes, yellow boxes or no right turns. Barriers controlled car parks would demand a person to be contactable whilst barriers were in operation and capital outlay on the smaller car parks could not be justified.
Non-Pay and Display Car Parks	
It was suggested that digital monitors could be used to display prices and gain from advertising charges.	

<p>Would the Council consider a higher KW per hour charging machines for electric cars as it was expected that 1 hour of charging would provide approximately 25 miles.</p>	<p>The Council uses the Dragon Charging network with 21kWh fast chargers. The output of these were dependant on circumstance and capacity of the network which does vary the power they provide. Central government grants capped the cost per charger which limits the capacity of Electrical Vehicle Charing Points (EVCP) to maximum to 21kWh chargers. In addition to our EVCP network we have a concession agreement with SWARCO company that provides 50kw chargers in five car parks, this was a Welsh Government assisted funded project to provide a network of rapid chargers across Wales. Three sub stations had also been introduced in car parks using a green energy grant to future proof demand.</p>
<p>Did the scope of the review consider bringing in fees for all car parks, which could then provide all car parks with a set period of free parking.</p>	<p>It was confirmed that the suggestion had been covered in the scope of the review and would be reflected in the final report.</p>
<p>It was asked if community car parks were publicly owned for electric chargers to be installed.</p>	<p>Terms and conditions of the grant funding stipulate non streetcar parking; however, residents can use the chargers out of hours. Ticketing was considered and not always possible in non-public owned car parks. It was explained that as the network expanded the roles of both private and privately owned car parks would be explored more and for additional areas to be considered e.g. housing estates etc.</p>
<p>A request was made for longer term car park usage data to be shared to confirm usage.</p>	
<p>And asked if blue badge holders had to pay for parking.</p>	<p>Blue Badge (BB) holders currently had free parking in all off street car parks in any space. BB holders were provided with a guidebook that sets out permissions for on street parking Blue Badges: your rights and responsibilities GOV.WALES.</p>
	<p>The Portfolio Holder thanked everyone for contributions and stressed that the review was independent, informative and evidence based.</p>

- It was welcomed by the Portfolio Holder that the Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee would receive the final report before presented to Cabinet.
- The Committee agreed that the review process was full, in-depth, and encompassed all aspects.

Resolved: The Car Parking Review Presentation be noted.

7.	CLIMATE REPORT
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Background:

- The report provided a summary review of the main Netherwood Report commissioned in May 2023.
- The Netherwood Report focused on the scope of the programme and how pace could increase.
- Key elements from the report highlighted:
 - The climate programme and the work around it was not strategic enough.
 - A recommendation to reframe the current programme with a focus on decarbonisation and climate risk.
 - Leadership and governance would need to strengthen between the mix of strategic and operational levels.
 - A recommendation to change the approach and look wider than the carbon accounts.
 - To fully understand opportunities across the full organisation.
 - To evidence how resources and staff time will be committed.

Points raised by the Committee:	Responses received from Officers or Cabinet Members:
It was asked if work was aligned with Bannau Brycheiniog after receiving shared prosperity funding as concerns were raised around duplication.	<p>The report showed that the Council and Bannau Brycheiniog had a close joined up working relationship however the report identified that elements needed to be strengthened.</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder added that Bannau Brycheiniog was interviewed as part of the review and gave assurance the programme was aligned.</p>
Would actions be included in the report that were due to be received in March.	Officers were working on the action plan to follow on from the report recommendations and also a project roadmap.
Concerns were raised around the use of consultants and reflected on resource issues within the Council which prevented this to take place and asked for consultant costs.	The Portfolio Holder explained that budget of £11k had been set aside for the climate and nature emergency as part of the transformation fund and consultants with a wide span of connections provided in depth information towards the project which could not be achieved in-house.
It was asked if place-based planning was the main mechanism by which complex discussions were held with communities.	<p>Co-producing decarbonisation and climate resilience plans with residents was key.</p> <p>The report supported the focus the council had on Sustainable Powys and were keen to ensure engagement with communities.</p> <p>It was explained that different ways to capture and share opportunities were being explored to share the good work carried out.</p>
It was noted that Town and Community Councils could be approached to get	Officers would provide the Committee with further information that could be used for

items on agendas and work together.	Town and Community Councils.
	The Portfolio Holder thanked everyone for contributions towards the report and working together with other local authorities to move forward.

- The Committee agreed with the recommendations in the report and felt that it was a very complex subject to tackle.
- The report reflected the process and position of the project and felt that it was portrayed in a succinct manor.

11.1 To acknowledge the commissioned report completed by NSF on the council’s approach to its climate and nature change programme and to acknowledge the council and stakeholders’ position on the identified recommendations.

11.2 To agree the recommendation that the Climate and Nature Programme will be re-shaped, to support a wider strategic approach, enable stronger leadership and act as a conduit to develop effective plans and draw down appropriate funding to drive forward change.

11.3 To acknowledge the Climate and Nature Boards feedback on the order of importance of the priorities detailed (4.2).

11.4 To acknowledge the Governance review of the Climate and Nature Programme, which will improve and enhance effective partnership working bringing access to more knowledge, funds, innovation, and expertise ensuring our individual and collective journeys to net zero are quicker, cheaper, and provide better outcomes to our residents and communities.

11.5 To acknowledge the development of costed Action plans. The aim is to have initial plans completed by the end of Qtr 1, 2024. The plans will provide clarity and management of the overall cost and ensure that the council is prepared for future external grant funding opportunities.

Resolved: That the Climate Report be noted.

8.	SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME
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Resolved: The scrutiny work programme be noted.

County Councillor A Davies (Chair)


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Committee:	Economy, Residents and Communities
Date:	18.03.24
Subject:	Housing Maintenance; Garage Maintenance and Management

1. Who will be the Lead Officer(s) / Lead Cabinet Member(s) presenting the report?

Name:	Role:
Cllr Matthew Dorrance	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for a Fairer Powys
Andy Thompson	Interim Head of Housing
Dafydd Evans	Service Manager – Housing Communities
Mark Davies	Service Manager – Housing Quality


2. Why is the Scrutiny Committee being asked to consider the subject?

 **Property Maintenance** – overview of municipal housing stock – where the Council owns properties and of what type, key performance indicator results for maintenance and repair and compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements for Council-owned homes.

 **Garages** – overview of municipal garage stock – where, how many and construction types, cost to rent, cost to maintain, future use options.


3. Role of the Committee:


The role of the Committee in considering the subject is to:

 Consider the reach of the Council's housing and garage holdings, how they are maintained and in the case of garages, future options for the provision of garaging facilities.

4. Key Scrutiny Questions:

What Key areas should the Committee focus on:

 How effectively the Council maintains its homes and makes sure that they are compliant with all relevant health and safety legislation and regulations.

 Future options for the provision by the council of garages.

5. Guiding Principles for Scrutiny Members:

To assist the Committee when scrutinising the topic:

5.1 Impact the matter has on individuals and communities :

5.2 A look at the efficiency & effectiveness of any proposed change – both financially and in terms of quality

[focus on value]

5.3 A look at any risks

[focus on risk]

5.4 Looking at plans and proposals from a perspective of:

- Long term
- Prevention
- Integration
- Collaboration
- Involvement

[focus on wellbeing and future generations]

5.5 The potential impacts the decision would have on:

- protected groups under the Equality Act 2010
- those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage in their lives (when making strategic decisions)
- opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language [focus on equality and the Welsh language]

[focus on equality and Welsh Language]

Key Feeders (tick all that apply)

Strategic Risk		Cabinet Work Plan	
Director / Head of Service Key Issue	Yes	External / Internal Inspection	
Existing Commitment / Annual Report		Performance / Finance Issue	
Suggestion from Public		Referral from Council / Committee	
Corporate Strategic and Equality Plan	Yes	Impacting Public / other services	
Service Integrated Business Plan	Yes		
Suggestion from Members			
Partnerships			

**Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee
March 18th, 2024**

Report Author: County Councillor Matthew Dorrance
Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for a Fairer Powys
Lead Officer: Andy Thompson (Interim Head of Housing)
Report Title: Housing Maintenance; Garage Management

Report For: **Information**

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on Housing Services' maintenance of Council-owned housing and the management and maintenance of the Council's garage stock.

1.1.1 Property Maintenance – overview of municipal housing stock – where the Council owns properties and of what type, key performance indicator results for the maintenance of, and compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements, Council-owned homes.

1.1.2 Garages – overview of municipal garage stock – where, how many and construction types, cost to rent, cost to maintain, future use options.

2. Background

2.1 Maintenance of Council-owned Housing

- 2.1.1 The Council owned 5512 properties as of the end of 2023. A profile of the homes held in each Local Housing Market Area is attached to this report as Appendix A.
- 2.1.2 Council-owned housing is maintained by the Council's Housing Services department, with the Housing Quality division leading on all matters relating to asset management, maintenance, and improvement. Since July 2022, a directly employed and managed workforce has been responsible for undertaking the majority of day-to-day repairs and an increasing amount of work to make empty properties (voids) fit to let.
- 2.1.3 Prior to July 2022, this work had been outsourced to a joint venture with Kier. The decision to insource this important work was driven by a need to improve service quality by increasing accountability to tenants and members, maintain control over costs through reducing the links in the delivery chain and allow for closer, more flexible, and localised management. This includes dovetailing with estate and tenancy management (to offer tenants a simpler, more accountable services) and the design and development of new Council-owned homes (to make sure that the homes the Council designs and builds can be maintained cost effectively and efficiently).
- 2.1.4 The Council's housing stock is aging and increasingly in need of investment to make sure it can continue to provide homes now and in the future. Half the Council's homes are more than sixty years old – sixty years being the accepted time before a house will likely need a full refurbishment, unless work has been ongoing to renew components as they wear out. This is why Powys has an ethos of 'liveability, maintainability, longevity' for our asset management work. Whatever we do is designed to make each home a better place in which to live, be low maintenance and have a long and useful life. Investment and improvement programmes are focused on the works that are essential to keep a home safe and secure: kitchens and bathrooms when they are needed, replacing walkways for flatted blocks, new roofs, windows, and doors to keep the weather out, long-life easy-to-use and maintain heating systems and high levels of health and safety related compliance.

Table 2.1.4: Age of Powys Council-owned Homes		
Decade Built	Number of Homes	Percentage of Homes
1800's	11	0.20
1860's	12	0.22
1900's	27	0.49
1910's	19	0.34
1920's	50	0.90
1930's	201	3.64
1940's	306	5.54
1950's	751	13.59
1960's	1,342	24.28
1970's	2,131	38.55
1980's	429	7.76
1990's	114	2.06
2010's	6	0.11
2020's	129	2.33

- 2.1.5 The Council receives circa 703 number of repairs service requests a month. Of these, 25% are completed in accord with the time agreed with the tenant. However, not all repairs can be completed at the first visit – for example, the works may be more complex than described or as works progress further work is needed to undertake a thorough job.
- 2.1.6 The Council has circa 500 void properties per year. Works to make them fit to relet can range from a clean and safety checks to a full-scale refurbishment, which can be the result of the property’s age, the outgoing tenant not having reported repairs or damage and neglect by the outgoing tenant. In the case of neglect and damage, the cost of putting right the damage and neglect is recharged to the former tenant.
- 2.1.7 In 2023-2024, a new, improved Quality of Accommodation Standard – which sets out what new tenants can expect from their new home - was introduced, providing 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 Housing Revenue Account. This includes greater emphasis on making homes ready to move into – for example decoration where needed to make a house a home.
- 2.1.8 Reducing the time taken to let properties reduces void rent loss and helps people move more quickly into a new home – including for example those who are homeless and staying in temporary accommodation such as a ‘bed and breakfast’ type establishment. Since July 2022, when repairs and maintenance services returned from being provided by a private contractor to a directly employed workforce, Housing Services has reduced the average key-to-key time¹ for void properties from twenty-two weeks to twelve and a half weeks. The allocation and letting of properties once fit-to-let has also been on a continuous downward trend. However, further improvements are needed which is why a five programme of key-to-key targets is included in the Thirty-year Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2024-2025².

Table 2.1.8: Key-to-key Target Times for Letting Properties					
Year	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029
Calendar Days – Average	42 days	39 days	36 days	33days	30 days

- Excludes properties scheduled for demolition, disposal, major capital works and renovation and held for use by Social and Childrens’ Services.
- Targets are subject to approval by Cabinet 19.03.24.

2.1.9 With increased expectations by tenants and residents, a top priority for the Council is to make sure that the Council’s homes are always fully compliant with all relevant health and safety related legislation. The Compliance One Hundred programme is designed to make sure that all of the Council homes

¹
²

and associated buildings are one hundred per cent compliant with all relevant and applicable legislation and regulation.

2.2 Maintenance and Management of Council-owned Garages

2.2.1 The Council has 1,690 garages of which at the start of 2024, 801 were recorded as void/empty. Waiting lists are kept for each garage site, at the start of 2024 across Powys there were 856 applications registered for a garage; of these 277 were Powys County Council tenants.

2.2.2 Unlike municipal housing tenancies, there is no security of tenure for a garage. The Council can at any time, and without reason, issue a notice of intent to take possession of a garage.

2.2.3 The Council owns a total of 148 garage plots. These are pieces of land leased or rented to people on which they can install their own garage structure. The Council has no maintenance responsibilities for such structures. As for garages, there is no security of tenure for garage plots.

3. Advice

3.1 Maintenance of Council-owned Housing

3.1.1 Housing Services has since the insourcing of repairs and maintenance in July 2022 been developing a range of performance management systems to make sure the service is reliable, value for money, efficient and provides repairs to a good standard. Both quantitative and qualitative data and feedback is used to inform the way the service develops and makes changes to improve the overall quality of the work offered to our tenants.

3.1.2 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 - including the development of the HRA Business Plan. 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. The TSP has two sub-groups with a remit to consider repairs, maintenance, and improvements to tenants' homes.

- The Repairs and Voids Group is made of tenants, elected members, engagement officers and colleagues from the Housing Quality Team. The groups meet every month to consider and discuss repairs and maintenance services and uses the information to propose improvements of changes to such things as telephone and e-mail channels for tenants to make service requests, the quality and timeliness of repairs, the Quality of Accommodation Standard for void works, improvement programmes and overall performance.
- The Investing in Your Homes Group is a small group of tenants, elected members and contract management staff that meet once a month. The Group monitor the progress of investment work being carried out to tenants' homes and review the feedback from and responses to tenant questionnaires.

3.1.3 STAR Survey: In autumn 2023, the Council undertook a STAR³ satisfaction survey of tenants. Most of the results across the survey are higher than the last such survey, completed in 2021. The next STAR survey will be commissioned in 2025. The 2023 survey showed:

Overall Satisfaction...

- 👍 Now at 75% - 10% higher than 2019 and 4% higher than 2021.
- 👍 On a par with local authorities but below housing associations.

Rent - value for money...

- 💷 Now at 84% - 14% higher than 2019 and 6% higher than 2021.
- 💷 Above the median for all Welsh social landlords.

Repairs and Maintenance...

- 🔧 Overall satisfaction 66% - 12% higher than 2019 and 3% higher than 2021.
- 🔧 Below the median for Welsh social landlords.
- 🔧 Working age tenants less satisfied.
- 🔧 Recent repairs satisfaction now running at 80%.

Property...

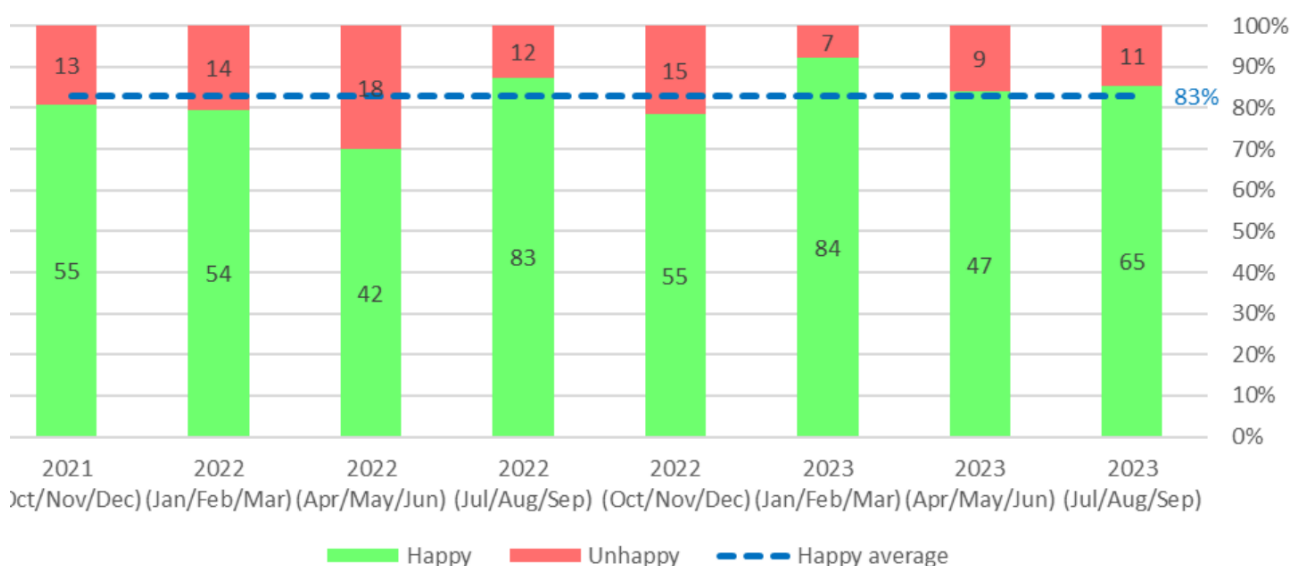
- 🏠 Quality 77% - 1% higher than 2019 and 4% higher than 2021.
- 🏠 On a par with local authorities but below housing associations.

Contact and Communication...

- 🗣️ Listens and acts now at 62% - 15% higher than 2019 and 7% higher than 2021. Above local authorities but below housing associations.
- 🗣️ Working age tenants less satisfied.
- 🗣️ Staff friendly and approachable 82%.

3.1.4 New Tenant Survey: The 'New Tenant Survey' is sent to every new tenant, seven weeks after their tenancy started. The surveys are completed either by email or a telephone call. The Resident Engagement Team follow up any outstanding issues and a quarterly report is provided to the TSP, the Housing Management Team and to everyone in the service through the Housing Services Update.

Table 3.1.4: New Tenant Survey results for 'Were you happy with the condition of your property when you moved in?'



3.1.5 Tell Us: 'Tell Us' visits are in-person visits face-to-face visits to tenants, meeting up with them at home to gather first-hand information about how they feel about the Housing Service. The Resident Engagement Team lead on this essential work, sharing feedback with the right teams within Housing Services and to everyone in the monthly Housing Services Update team newsletter. The feedback is qualitative and focuses on the experiences tenants and residents have of the services offered by Housing Services.

3.1.6 Stronger, Fairer, Greener: To make sure we keep on track, the 'Objectives' and 'Measures' set out in the Council's Corporate Strategic Equality Plan 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener', are used to help manage our services and understand what difference we are making for the people of Powys. These are reported and published quarterly as part of the Council-wide approach to performance management.

Table 3.1.6: 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener' Service Performance Indicators for Housing Services			
Objective	Measure	Target	Performance
			Year to Date 2023-2024 (Q1 to Q3 inclusive)
Give the people of Powys more opportunities to have a secure, affordable, well-maintained home.	Number of council-owned homes with an EPC improved from D, E, F or G to A or B.	84	63
Improve the quality of life for people who rent their homes from the Council.	Overall tenant satisfaction in the 2023-2024 STAR survey will increase from 75%, to 79% in the 2025-2026 survey and to 83% in 2027-2028's survey.	75%	Reported annually
Help people have a better quality of life and be able to stay in their own home for longer.	Aids and adaptations will be delivered within 180 days (from date of Occupational Therapist referral to certified completion of the work).	180	205

	Aids and adaptations will be delivered 90 days (from date of Occupational Therapist referral to certified completion of the work).	90	83
	Aids and adaptations will be delivered within 28 days (from date of ASSIST or Occupational Therapist referral to certified completion of the work).	28	29
Improve the quality of our tenants' homes	The number and percentage of repairs we delivered at the time agreed with the tenant.	75%	68%
	The number and percentage of tenants surveyed that are satisfied with major programmes of repair and improvement focusing on the primary elements of kitchens, bathrooms, and heating systems at point of completion.	80%	91%
	The number and percentage of tenants surveyed that are satisfied with major programmes of repair and improvement focusing on the primary elements of kitchens, bathrooms, and heating systems 12 months after completion.	No Data. Over the past year, a low number of kitchens and bathrooms have been replaced in tenanted properties. Replacements have been primarily in voids, where there has been a greater need to replace these components.	
	The number and percentage of tenants surveyed that are satisfied with the responsive repairs service.	90%	93%
	The number and percentage of Powys Council homes with a compliant, in date, heating safety certificate at the time of reporting (taking into account the number of homes subject to unresolvable non-access constraints).	100%	96.12%
	The number and percentage of new tenants who are satisfied with their new home.	80%	83%
	The average number of days taken to re-let a Council owned property.	166	156

3.2 As from February 2024, Housing Services is trialling a new approach to collecting tenant satisfaction with repairs to their homes. Within seven days of a repair being completed, all tenants will be asked to complete an online form (please see Appendix B). We will also be telephoning a % of tenants that do not have access to e-mail to make sure that as many people as possible can share with us their experiences of repairs services. Up until now we have been telephoning 10% of tenants who have had a repair. The new approach should increase the scope and quality of our understanding of the repairs and maintenance services offered to tenants.

3.3. Compliance

3.3.1 The Housing Compliance Board meets every month to monitor the Council's work on making sure all homes are compliant with all relevant legislation and regulation relating to health and safety. The Board considers the full range of compliance duties and obligations on

the Council. The latest reports, from February 2024, are presented below.

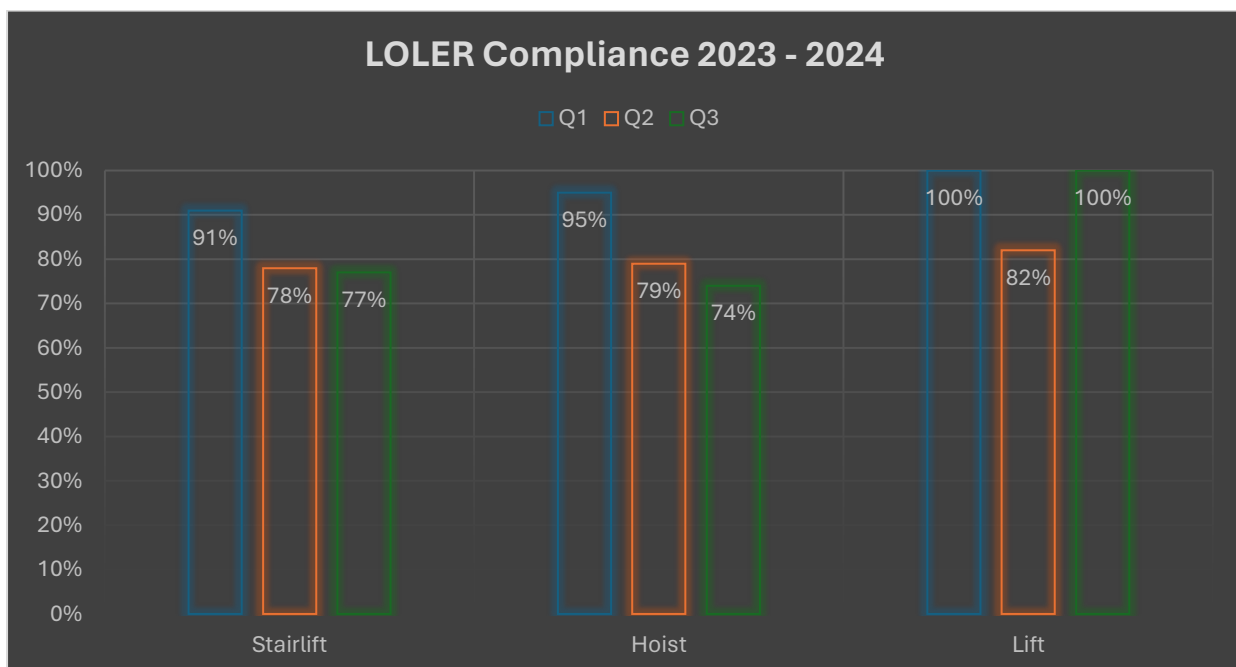
3.3.2 Legionella: ACOP L8⁴ Risk Assessments have been undertaken within communal areas and specific dwellings as necessary to comply with guidance and regulation. Legionella logbooks are placed at appropriate sites and, to increase accountability, temperature monitoring came in-house during 2023. Annual inspections take place using Housing Services' own workforce with the recruitment of the additional plumbers to undertake this work now complete.

Table 3.3.2: Legionella Surveys (as of February 2024)

Total number of surveys required	Surveys completed	% Complete
24	21	84%

- In February, there were three blocks where there are no communal facilities to test which are due a survey. These systems are tank fed and need to be tested in individual properties which we have a lag in access caused from festive period.

3.3.3 Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment (LOLER): LOLER elements are made up of stairlifts, hoists and vertical lifts. Compliance is achieved with an in-date servicing certificate and LOLER inspection. Processes are in place for installations, servicing, and maintenance.

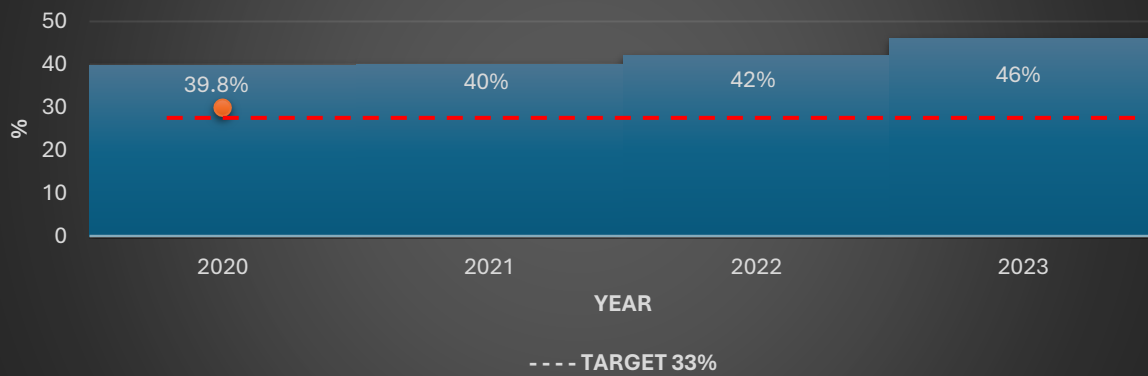


The fall in LOLER related performance mid 2023 was due to an audit by the Housing Services Compliance and Quality Assurance Team which identified seven additional lifting items to be included the programme.

3.3.4 Asbestos: There is a target, agreed as being acceptable by Welsh Government, for 33% of Council owned residential properties to have an asbestos survey. Housing Services now has a compliance rate of 46%.

4: ACOP L8 is the acronym for the approved code of practice for preventing the incidence of Legionnaire's disease: 'Legionnaires' disease: the control of legionella bacteria in water systems'. The code of practice provides practical advice on Legionella control and how to comply with the law.

Asbestos Reports Across Housing Stock 2020-2023



3.3.5 Fixed Electrical Testing (FET): All residential properties require a valid Electrical Installations Condition Report (EICR) once every five years, when a change of tenancy or when any major property damage or repair takes place. New requirements came into force December 1st, 2022, as part of the Renting Homes (Wales) Act for a valid EICR to be issued to each tenant.

Fixed Electrical % Compliant

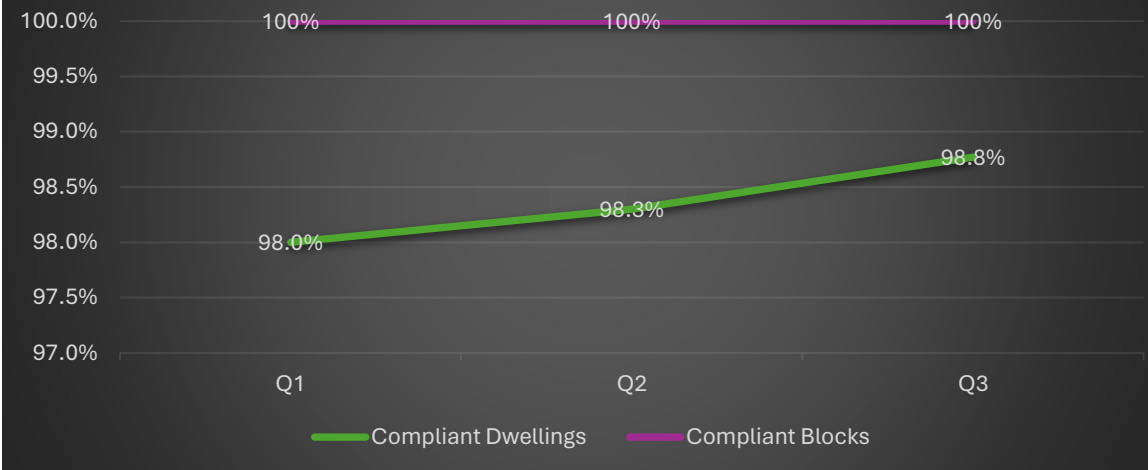


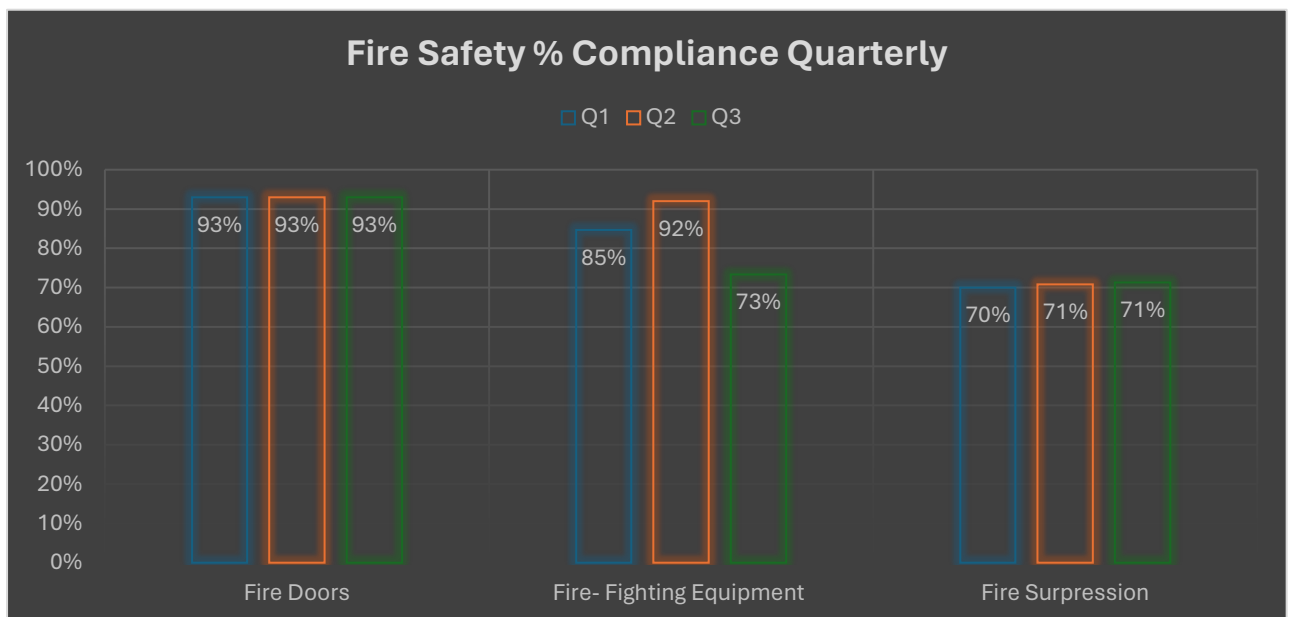
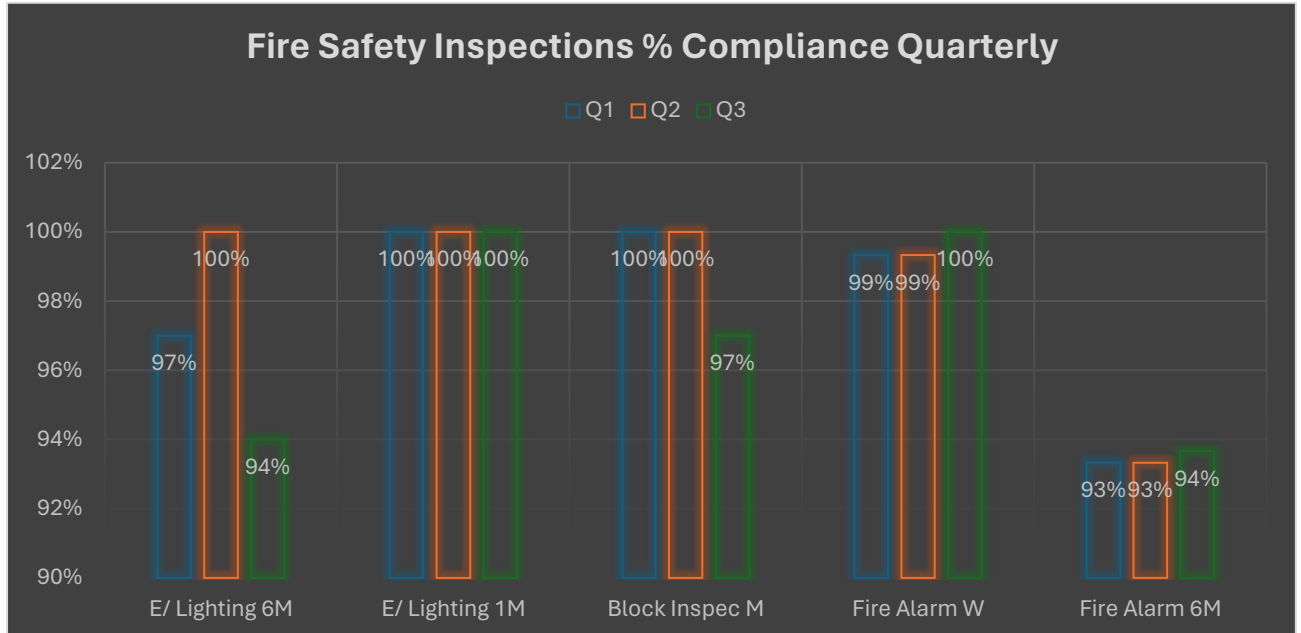
Table 3.3.5: Compliant Fixed Electrical Tests (as of February 2024)

Compliant properties Quarter Three (2023-2024)	Non-compliant properties Quarter Three (2023-2024)	% Compliant
5491	68	98.8%

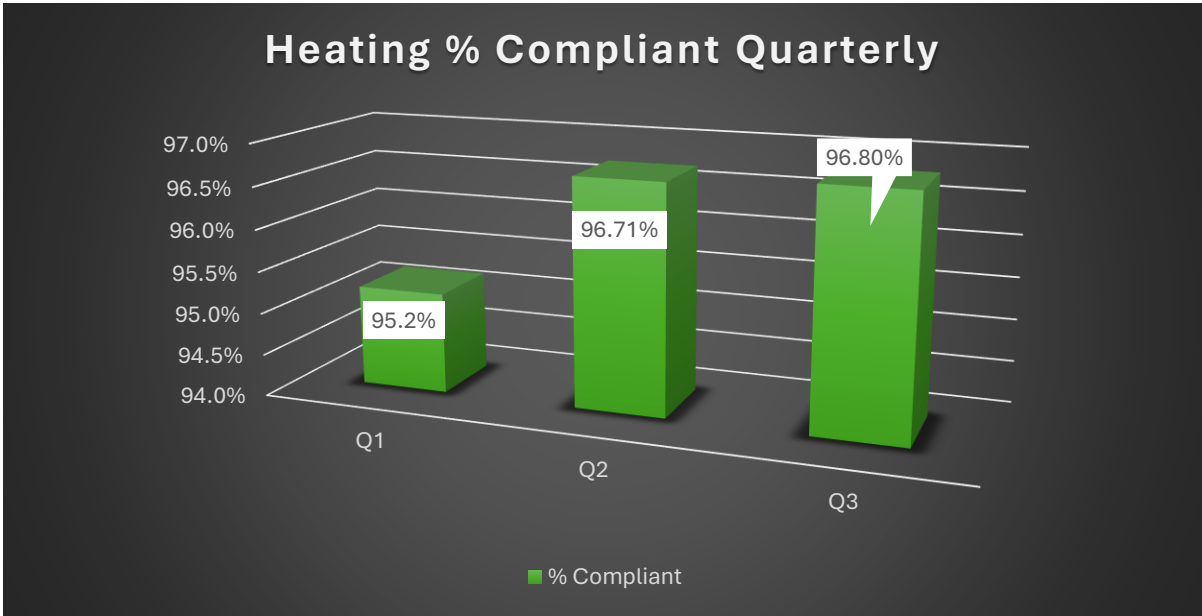
Non-Compliant Reasons:

- Void – 10
- Mitigated – 37 (awaiting reconfiguration/new build)
- Currently out of date – 21
- Awaiting repairs/rewire – 8
- Housing management – 6 (including hoarding)

3.3.6 Fire Safety – Fire Risk Assessments (FRA's): Fire risk assessments (FRAs) are overseen by a dedicated Action Group, to enhance the collaborative approach between Housing Service and Strategic Property to FRAs. The Housing Compliance and Quality Assurance Team has been working to jointly procure with Corporate Property a Fire Safety Contract covering fire doors, fire-fighting equipment and fire suppression equipment. This is to be in place for 2024/25. The outcome will secure access to a more robust supply chain. The first large scale project for remedial work to make sure fire doors are fully up to code has now been completed with additional projects underway in Quarter Four 2023-2024 following completion of a Powys Wide Fire Door contract award.



3.3.7 Heating Servicing: The Council has a legal duty to make sure all gas heating systems are serviced annually and that other heating systems are serviced and inspected in accord with best practise for each type of system. Servicing relies upon engineers being able to gain access to properties to service heating systems. A contract for an external provider of heating servicing will be mobilised by the end of the final quarter of 2023-2024.



Non-compliant properties...

- Air Source Heat Pump: 58.
- Unvented Cylinder: 11.
- Gas: 58 with 54 in 'non-access' procedure, three with booked appointment, one awaiting tenant response.
- Oil: 99 with 12 in 'non-access' procedure.
- Solid Fuel: 17.
- Solar: 6.

3.4 Garage Management

3.4.1 In 2020, a review of all garage sites was completed. The sites were assessed against a range of criteria including:

- Current occupancy
 - Current demand – in current state
 - Current condition
- Financial Considerations
 - Capital cost to retain in use
 - Annual revenue cost to maintain
 - Annual income
- Socio-economic considerations
 - Crime and community safety considerations
 - Community feedback
- Alternative Uses
 - Potential demand for site – new homes
 - Potential demand for site – car parking
 - Potential demand for site – new larger garages (right-sized to modern cars) for letting at commercial rates (payback in # years)
 - Alternative uses for garages (e.g. rent to classic car clubs)

3.4.2 The intention of the site-by-site review was to inform the management of garage sites across the County. A future use for each site was set out in the review:

- Keep and Manage

- Keep and Repair
- Close and Demolish

- 3.4.3 Since the review was completed, changing demand for garages, increased requests by communities for off-street parking and growing demand for new Council-housing have meant that each site is now reviewed on a case-by-case basis once a site becomes uneconomical or viable to let and/or maintain.
- 3.4.4 The age of the garages (all are more than thirty years old), the type of construction (many are made from prefabricated panels that are now deteriorating and for which there are no economically viable repair solutions), and the size of the garages (modern cars with few exceptions will fit into a typical Council garage) mean that their useful life as storage for cars and vans is extremely limited. The Council's garage stock includes a high number of garages for which there is little demand. Accordingly, the Council has adopted an approach to garages in which essential maintenance and repair, primarily related to safety and security related matters, is prioritised.
- 3.4.5 Using garages for general storage has been considered. This however has been discounted due to the insurance and management risks to the Council of providing complaint and robust storage for what could be an unknown variety of goods, materials, possessions, machinery, furniture, collectibles, and chattels. Use of the garages as business units has for similar reasons also been discounted. As garage sites become uneconomical to continue to let and maintain, consideration is given to alternative uses for the sites. This includes demolition to provide either car parking areas or development sites for new Council-owned homes. The viability for different uses is influenced by access to the sites (by people and vehicles), planning policy, size of the site and the availability of utility services.

4.0 Resource Implications

- 4.1. All works to Council-owned homes and garages, including compliance work, must be funded through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)⁵. Income to the HRA from tenant rents and grants from the Welsh Government for the development of new homes (Social Housing Grant) and a contribution towards maintaining the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (Major Repairs Allowance).
- 4.2 The HRA cannot operate at a deficit. Neither can any HRA resources be used for services or any activity that does not primarily benefit tenants of the Council. This means that non-landlord related housing services – for example preventing and resolving homelessness, bringing privately owned empty properties into use as homes and making sure that privately rented accommodation is maintained and managed to an acceptable standard –

⁵ The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is used by the council to account for all income and expenditure relating to the council's residential landlord service. Under the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, all landlord local authorities must account separately for landlord and non-landlord services. The HRA cannot be used to cover any costs of services that do not primarily benefit tenants of the Council.

have to be funded by the Council's General Fund. By the same token, the General Fund cannot be used for the Council's housing landlord service.

- 4.3 Each year, by the end of March, the Council has to submit to the Welsh Government, after consideration and approval by Cabinet, a Thirty-year Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. The Business Plan sets out the detail of how the Council will manage and maintain its tenants' homes, build, and acquire additional housing to meet housing needs and aspirations and maintain payments on the borrowing undertaken to provide and improve the homes. The Business Plan sets budgets for the HRA and the landlord service.

Table 4.3: Day to Day Repairs, Maintenance , Compliance – Council housing		
Investments	2023-2024	2024-2025 (subject to approval by Cabinet)
Day to Day Repairs and Maintenance – Council housing		
Day to Day Repairs & Maintenance	£2,828,870	£1,971,000
Voids Repairs & Maintenance	£2,888,000	£2,975,000
Stock Survey (contributes towards WHQS-2023)	£0	£1,400,000
Repairs and Maintenance Compliance	£1,449,350	£1,515,000
Repair and Maintenance Adaptations	£590,000	£590,000
Total Repairs and Maintenance Investment		£8,450,000
Compliance One Hundred		
Fire Safety Works	£200,000	£500,000
Water Supply and Sewerage Works	£150,000	£30,000
WHQS Contributions to Compliance One Hundred	£150,000	£150,000
Revenue Compliance Repairs & Maintenance	£1,499,350	£1,515,000
Total Compliance One Hundred Investment Programme	£1,999,350	£2,195,000

- 4.4 In addition to Day-to-Day Repairs and Maintenance, the Council has four other investment programmes that contribute towards the upkeep of both homes and estates.

4.4.1 The Green Powys programme is designed to increase fuel efficiency, 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.

4.4.2 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.

4.4.3 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.

4.4.4 The WHQS Capital Programme is designed to make sure the Council's homes continue to meet the WHQS.

4.5 Garage Maintenance and Management

4.5.1 Garage rents are £14.65 per week, with VAT charged for those who are not housing tenants of the Council - £16.58 per week. The total rental income to the Housing Revenue Account from the provision of garages for 2024-2025 will be £625,140.

Table 4.5.1: Repairs and Maintenance Expenditure - Garages	
Year	Spend
2020	£2,669.36
2021	£29,103.25
2022	£17,327.95
2023	£ 6,568.25

4.5.2 The amount spent on garages is less than the income, meaning that garages represent a net generator of income for the Council's Housing Revenue Account.

4.5.3 Ten garage plots are subject to a lease agreement and the charge for those is £36 per annum. For the remaining 138 garage plots the charge is £186.29 per annum. Those subject to the lease agreement cannot have charges increased until the lease expires. The total 2024-2025 rental income for garage plots is £26,068.02.

4.6 [The Council's Section 151 Officer, the Head of Finance, has commented:](#) “

5. Legal implications

5.1 The Council's 'Principal Solicitor – Housing' has commented: The report sets out the need for a balanced HRA budget and draws attention to the fact that the Council has an aging housing portfolio which will need more investment in the years to come. Compliance has improved but access to properties is still an issue. Consideration should be given to trying to coordinate visits for compliance so that all or most elements can be tested at the same time. Changes in legislation, especially around Fire Safety will increase the financial pressure on the HRA.

5.2 [The Council's Monitoring Officer has commented:](#)

6. Climate Change & Nature Implications

6.1 There are no direct climate change or nature implications arising from the recommendations set down in this report.

7.0 Data Protection

7.1 The information contained in this report does not involve the processing of personal data.

8.0 Comment from local member(s)

8.1 The matters covered in this report have equal effect across all Council wards.

9.0 Integrated Impact Assessment

9.1 An Impact Assessment for the HRA Business Plan is completed each year, as part of the annual HRA Business Plan Cabinet Report.


10. Recommendation

10.1 To note the contents of this report.

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Email: andy.thompson@powys.gov.uk

Head of Service: Andy Thompson
Chief Operating Officer: Matt Perry
Corporate Director: Diane Reynolds

Appendix A: Powys Council Housing – December 2023

	Property type and bed size																					
	Bungalow				Bungalow Total	Bed-sit	Bedsit Total	Flat			Flat Total	House						House Total	Maisonette		Maisonette Total	Grand Total
	Bedrooms							Bedrooms				Bedrooms							Bedrooms			
	1	2	3	4				1	2	3		1	2	3	1	2	3		4	5		
Local Housing Market (LHM) Area	1	2	3	4		1		1	2	3		1	2	3	4	5	6	2	3			
LHM1 – Welshpool Triangle	86	256	3	1	346	13	13	50	78		128	3	124	259	4			390	17	32	49	926
LHM2 – Machynlleth Border	6	15			21			18	22		40		48	113	11			172		5	5	238
LHM3 – Newtown and Llanidloes	28	176	3		207			187	129	8	324	8	303	604	47	2	2	966	7	6	13	1,510
LHM4 – Knighton and Presteigne Border	18	61	1		80			30	42		72		9	148	6			163				315
LHM5 – Llandrindod Wells and Rhayader	37	63			100	1	1	11	134		145		36	164	13	1	1	215				461
LHM6 – Builth Wells and Llanwrtyd Wells	2	81			83			1		1	2		11	75	2			88				173
LHM7 – Brecon, Talgarth and Hay	134	141	1		276			76	96		172	2	57	472	36	3		570				1,018
LHM8 – Ystradgynlais Border	132	113	1		246				132		132		136	217	15	3		371				749
LHM9 – Crickhowell Border	14	21			35			23	20		43		5	38	1			44				122
Grand Total	457	927	9	1	1,394	14	14	396	653	9	1,058	13	729	2090	135	9	3	2,979	24	43	67	5,512

Appendix B: Housing Services Repairs Satisfaction Survey

Repairs Feedback

Your feedback for your recent Powys County Council Housing repair

Required

- What is your name?
- What is the first line of your address?
- How did you report your repair?
- Telephone?
- E-mail?
- Website?
- Housing Member of Staff

How Easy was it to report your repair?

- Very Easy
- Easy
- Difficult
- Very Difficult

Were you given a convenient appointment?

- Yes
- No

Did the operative arrive on time?

- Yes
- No

Was the repair fixed first time?

- Yes
- No

How would you rate your satisfaction with the overall repair?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied

Comments - what could we have done better?

Any further comments/feedback

6

Working Group Report to the Economy, Residents and Communities Health and Care / Learning and Skills

Working Group:	Joint Scrutiny Working Group – Leisure Review
Meetings Held:	From May 2023 – January 2024

Matters Considered:

The purpose of the Working Group was to examine, scrutinise and seek assurance on the effectiveness and impact of the Officer Working Group processes for the Leisure Review. In particular the Working Group considered the reliability, breadth, and depth of the information that the Officer Working Group had accessed while undertaking the Review.

The Working Group were not required to consider the potential outcomes and recommendations of the officer group and understood that the process would be undertaken by the Scrutiny Committees when the draft final report and recommendations were produced later in the year for consideration by Cabinet.

The Working Group were tasked to examine, scrutinise, and seek assurance around each element of the Leisure Review Workstreams, including:

1. The financial sustainability of the contract
2. The interaction with the school's service
3. Communication / engagement with stakeholders
4. Data / insight
5. Consideration of accessibility, poverty, equality agendas
6. The consideration of alternative delivery models
7. The conclusion of the asset review of the centres
8. Communications and engagement

Outcomes / Concerns / Observations:

- officers from the services were commended on the significant number of detailed documents, data, analysis, and officer time provided.
- questions, queries, and challenges aimed at officers were answered with complete clarity and confirmation although some information requested was not provided.
- aligned timelines with the Officer Working Group supported information to be shared at the earliest availability.
- Initial concerns were raised around resources and assurance sought to ensure that the process and officer work could be conducted and concluded comprehensively, that all options were being explored, budget processes and sustainability considered. Members received the required assurance.
- It was stressed that the pace in which the Council undertook the review was crucial to residents, staff and all those involved in the leisure industry. Timescales were realistic for the process to be conducted, completed and for proposals to be compiled and presented in a timely manner.
- the Working Group stressed the importance of the links identified between internal parties and officers, officers were encouraged to strengthen links to enable the Working Group to be kept informed and provide support during the process.
- It was noted that the information provided, and data analysis was only related to the Leisure Facilities run under the Freedom Leisure contract and did not include other leisure facilities run in the authority by charities, sports clubs, and other bodies.

The eight elements of the process scrutinised provided:

Working Group Report to the Economy, Residents and Communities Health and Care / Learning and Skills

- assurance that all investigative aspects were thoroughly researched, and a full and comprehensive data set was provided to benchmark and provide comparisons.
- valuable insights were gained from external guests providing first hand experiences to the Working Group to gain further understanding and knowledge of potential alternative options for the management and control of leisure facilities.
- the approach to engagement was all-inclusive and evidence demonstrated the expansive range reached and the return of valuable data received. Engagement methods and the span of reach were encouraged by the Working Group to ensure that as many of the residents in Powys took part as possible through the survey undertaken.
- Members received details regarding the level of school utilisation of facilities and examples of how facilities are being used to support individual residents' wellbeing goals and health preventions, although the group did not receive sufficient input from Schools, Health, or Social Services.
- confirmation was received from officers in respect to regular updates on performance from Freedom Leisure together with feedback from Sport Development and other services the data received is subject to compliance and internal audit checks.
- Consideration was given to the Council's Corporate & Strategic Equality Plan that sets out the Stronger, Fairer, Greener Vision for the future and includes the well-being key priority objectives.

The documents provided and scrutinised included:

- a full cost matrix with Finance Officers on hand to explain each step of the process and how the different elements of the review fed in to produce proposals for consideration. This included the provision of an interactive model that officers can use in the future that provided a very good analysis of the potential impact on service delivery to users and the available alternatives
- a summary of the detailed condition surveys and decarbonisation assessments offered evidence demonstrating that processes had been undertaken to a high standard and consistent throughout. Members also received details of the methods used to assess the revenue and capital requirements needed to meet the authority's aspirations for conditions of the building in the portfolio.
- an in-depth review of the condition survey was undertaken, and the processes followed by officers, in respect to the dry and wet facilities provided at the Leisure Centre in Ystradgynlais.
- a presentation from a Trustee of the Hay on Wye Swimming Pool and the Manager of Crickhowell Sports Centre was given to provide two different delivery models in respect of a charity run pool and a School managed dry sports facility.
- full analysis of the public engagement survey and the lengths taken to ensure inclusivity for the residents and how the results were a fundamental part in demonstrating how wide and varied the leisure offer was within Powys.

Information not provided Working Group.

- members expressed concern that some of the financial performance data of each Leisure Centre was not accessible to be shared.
- payments to Freedom Leisure were not split between dry use facilities and pool use which the Working Groups felt schools would struggle with costings.

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- Information was provided for the number of schools using each pool, but the number of hours of swimming undertaken by schools over the year for each pool was not provided. (But now available)

Conclusions:

- overall, the Working Group concluded that each element had been considered and conducted thoroughly for the best outcome for the residents of Powys and the Council as a whole.
- that from the results of the customer survey, the facilities were seen to be a very valuable facility for each of the localities that they were based in.
- that the running and operational costs of the current portfolio of assets, can be met within the Council's current budget for the service and that Freedom Leisure appear to be running the centres at a profit. However, the capital requirement and investment exceeds the budget available now and, in the future, this will now need to be reviewed in light of the budget proposals for 2024-25 and future years.
- that there was an apparent significant difference, based on the figures presented, in the cost per activity across each of the centres. Although the lack of a full breakdown of the £2m+ paid by the Schools Service for its use of the facilities places a level of unreliability on these figures.
- that following the completion of the condition surveys and other property work that the authority has a significant capital investment requirement to bring the current portfolio of assets up to its condition target and to meet net Zero carbon targets.
- that a number of the dry side facilities were essential to meet the curriculum requirements of the Co-located high school site.
- that the draft report produced contains the full dashboard analysis of the data for leisure facilities in the county managed and run by other providers. And the total number of hours delivered to meet health and wellbeing needs are presented on a per centre basis (referrals & Welsh Government schemes).
- Assurance was provided that the School Service as part of the Schools Transformation Programme works closely with the Leisure Team to provide total costs of delivering the school curriculum including all transport cost as well as direct delivery.

Recommendations to the Economy, Residents and Communities / Health and Care / Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committees: Recommendations to the Cabinet;

Scrutiny's Recommendation	Accept (plus Action & timescale)	Partially Accept (plus rationale, action & timescale)	Reject (plus Rationale)
1. When Scrutiny is undertaken on the final report the members of the scrutiny committee/s should be provided with the full financial performance and activity data.			

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2. That a more detailed analysis of the school usage of swimming pools would be considered in future evaluations. For example the distance in which schools travel to facilities and the full transport cost and provision.			
3. To ensure that the total cost of delivering the school curriculum include all transport cost as well as direct delivery.			

Working Group Report to the Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee

Working Group:	Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee Heart of Wales Property Services (HoWPS) Working Group
Meetings Held:	From March to February 2024

[2023-00-00 G&A HoWPS Working Group Recommendations to Cabinet .docx](#) – approved by G&A Cttee

Matters Considered

The purpose of the Working Group was to examine, scrutinise, seek assurance and investigate the processes undertaken to re-integrate the functions previously performed by HoWPS back under Powys County Council management.

To identify any lessons to be learned, to inform the Councils work regarding the future delivery of Council functions.

The Working Group were tasked to scrutinise the lessons learnt review and examined in particular:

1. The findings of the decision-making process that led to the reinterrogating of HoWPS functions back to the council.
2. The transition of the functions of HoWPS back in house (Operational implications / Financial implications / Intellectual property)
3. Evaluate the outcome following re-interrogation of the service in house. (Financial costs / quality & quantity of work / Employee & customer experience)
4. Clarify what financial targets and Key performance indicators (KPI's) have been set moving forwards and how these will be monitored.
5. Investigate how the Architects element of the service will function.

Outcomes / Concerns / Observations:

- the Working Group acknowledged and expressed appreciation, for all the challenging work that was undertaken before, during and after the transition to make it successful.
- an extensive piece of work took place to review HoWPS/Kier processes/practises, which identified challenges within the Joint Venture and recognised that the break clause would be implemented.
- questions, queries, and challenges aimed at officers were answered with complete clarity and confirmation. Officers shared experiences with the Working Group and demonstrated how obstacles were tackled and resolved.
- substantial detailed documents were shared to provide openness and full transparency in which the Working Group were grateful.
- it was stressed that the pace in which the Council undertook the transition was crucial and at pace to achieve tight deadlines. Timescales were challenged but felt were realistic for the process to be conducted, completed and for actions to be undertaken in a timely manner.
- confirmation and assurance was received that regular reviews were undertaken to monitor progress and meetings held at all levels for fluid communication, to support workstreams and advance and complete actions.
- the five elements above were examined in depth with officers providing support and step by step guidance to ensure that all areas were included. The Working Group concluded that all elements had been thoroughly and carefully considered.

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The five elements of the process scrutinised provided:

- assurance that a full and comprehensive data set was shared. That the lessons learnt findings that were gathered from the workshop provided the Working Group with clarity over how the transition was experienced and would be held in regard for future endeavours.
- that all actions were thoroughly investigated, researched, and undertaken comprehensively with full consideration of the whole Council. Options and opportunities had been investigated and explored with budget processes and sustainability fully considered.
- initial concerns were raised around limited resources within the Council and assurance sought to ensure that the process and officer work was conducted and concluded comprehensively, however it was felt that additional duties had been added to staff workloads to complete the transition on time during extremely difficult exceptional circumstances .
- challenging areas identified were due to the high number of staff, equipment, data, and services involved and each having specific needs in which barriers were a regular hurdle to resolve. The Working Group noted that certain areas of the project could have been initiated before the outset of the project to ensure that services were aware and could comprehensively prepare for the transition.
- valuable insights were gained from operatives who provided first hand experiences to the Working Group to gain further understanding of the processes within the transition and how they were carried out.
- the approach to engagement was all-inclusive and evidence demonstrated the range of options taken to ensure all members of staff received updates and progress reports.
- a successful recruitment campaign was noted by the Working Group and pleased how the whole recruitment process had been updated and made easier for applicants.
- concerns were raised around the use of services from external organisations and although the need was recognised the Working Group felt that the Council could consider the lessons learnt document at the outset of any future project.

Documents provided and scrutinised included:

- a monthly financial ledger with Finance Officers on hand to explain each step of the process and how the different elements fed into the overall budget for the transition.
- a report from each service alongside a verbal summary reflected on the transition, it provided the Working Group details of process methods used and joint working workflows.
- Key Performance Indicators provided a snapshot in time and insight into how services were performing, which the Working Group would revisit in the near future for an update.
- a fleet report demonstrated a single but significant element within the transition. It included charges that the Working Group felt were excessive and challenged the officers to provide an outcome report to satisfy the questions asked.

Conclusions:

- Overall, the Working Group concluded that decisions and actions had been undertaken thoroughly for the best possible outcome for the Council as a whole but more importantly the residents of Powys which have gained positively from the transition.
- The Working Group would revisit the subject matter and undertake a further site visit in July 2024 to gain a full two year review.