

Welsh Government	Powys County Council
Annual Self-Certification Monitoring Return	
Name of Social Landlord	Powys County Council
Date return completed	
PART ONE (MANDATORY): Please answer all the following questions relating to your rental income.	
Questions for year APRIL 2021/22	
Q1. Please confirm the overall percentage increase you applied to your rents at April 2021 and stock numbers on the 31st March 2021.	Rent Increase for 2021-2022: CPI+1%, equivalent to 1.5%. Stock numbers 31.03.21: 5,389 homes.
Q2. Please confirm that the level of rent for an individual tenant did not rise more than CPI+1% plus an additional £2	The rent for individual tenants was capped at CPI +1% plus £2 for 2021-2022, so no individual tenant's rent was increased by more than this amount.
Questions for year APRIL 2022/23	
Q3. Please indicate the estimated gross annual rental income for 2022-23 for general needs and sheltered self-contained dwellings based on revised rents at April 2022 and stock numbers on the 31st March 2022. (Definition of 'estimated gross annual rental income' is the rental income you expect to receive for your whole portfolio of properties, including any new builds you are anticipating in year, and regardless of whether properties are occupied or void)	Gross Rental Income for 2022-2023: £27,255,024 Stock numbers 31.03.22: 5,433
Q4. Please confirm the overall percentage increase YOU INTEND to apply to your rents at April 2022	CPI - 3.1%

Q5. Please confirm you have a local rent and service charge policy in place.

Confirmed.

Q6: Please outline the factors you considered when assessing affordability when you set your rents and service charges for the 2022/23 rent year. Include details of how affordability for your tenants was taken into account and influenced the approach taken.

Housing Affordability

- House price to earnings ratio in Powys: 6.3 (UK - 7.69)
- Annual pay - gross - for all employee jobs in Powys: £31,200 (UK – £33,400)
- Average annual rent for Powys County Council (all property types): £4,927.
- Average annual heating costs (all properties) per annum Powys: £987 (England & Wales - £650).
- 35% of gross income (assumed maximum percentage of gross income to be spent on housing and energy costs): £10,920 per annum
- Powys County Council municipal rent plus energy costs (using multi-tenure energy cost data): £5,914 per annum

NB: Data for 2021 – source: www.plumpot.co.uk

Comparisons of Weekly Municipal Rent with Private Sector Rent, Living Rent and Social Landlords in Powys

	Median private rents (2021-2022)	Living rent (2021-2022)	Housing association average (2021-2022)	Median municipal rents (2021-2022)	Proposed municipal rents (2022-2023)
One bedroom	£76	£77	£79	£76	£82.05
Two bedrooms	£102	£100	£96	£90	£92.62
Three bedrooms	£127	£124	£109	£102	£104.82
Four bedrooms	£159	£ N/A	£128	£111	£113.92

	LHA January 2022 Rate (Brecon and Radnor)	LHA January 2022 Rate (Neath Port Talbot)	LHA January 2022 Rate (North Powys)	Median municipal rents (2021-2022)	Proposed municipal rents (2022-2023)
Single room allowance	£52.50	£62.50	£52.50	N/A	N/A
One bedroom	£71.86	£79.55	£67.89	£76	£82.05
Two bedrooms	£98.96	£95.00	£90.90	£90	£92.62
Three bedrooms	£115.07	£103.56	£109.32	£102	£104.82
Four bedrooms	£138.08	£121.40	£136.93	£111	£113.92

	<p>Rent Arrears The low level of rent arrears demonstrates that Powys rental charges are reasonable – for example, very few tenants are referred for eviction. Rent collected 2021-2022 Q1 to Q3 equates to 96.50% of all income due.</p> <p>Service Charges Service charges are recovered based on actual costs incurred in the last full year preceding 2022-2023.</p>
<p>Q7: Please outline the tenant involvement (engagement, consultation and feedback) undertaken and how feedback received has influenced your rent setting policy for the 2022/23 rent year.</p>	<p>STAR Survey Outcomes for 2021 Tenants were generally positive about rent and service charges providing value for money (78% and 77% satisfied respectively), and almost three quarters (74%) were satisfied with the overall quality of their home.</p> <p>Tenant Scrutiny Panel Meeting 14.01.22 A report on proposed rents for 2022-2023 was considered on 14.01.22 by the Powys Tenant Scrutiny Panel (TSP). The panel includes both tenant representatives and councillors.</p> <p>Concerns were expressed that with reported increases in living costs and increases in April of both National Insurance and Council Tax increases, tenants will be struggling with having a rent increase of 3.1%.</p> <p>The proposal to increase rents by the maximum amount allowed was discussed, with the TSP requesting clarification as to why this was being proposed. It was acknowledged that getting the balance between keeping rents affordable and being able to invest in current and new homes was challenging, with 4,000 households registered with ‘Homes in Powys’ for affordable and the 200 households in temporary accommodation, awaiting availability of more permanent accommodation.</p> <p>Tenant Feedback to Officers The Council’s Senior Income Officer collates feedback received by officers from tenants about current rents. Main points stated were: Powys County Council rent is seen as significantly cheaper than all other providers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenants felt Powys County Council rents were extremely good value for money as they see them as not just being for the properties themselves but also for the services they receive from Housing Services and the security being a Powys County Council tenant brings in comparison to other landlords, particularly the private rented sector. • There has been negative feedback regarding rent affordability when put in the context of the current financial climate. Although the annual rent increase is very rarely mentioned in itself, the common concerns expressed were annual council tax increases, struggles with cost of living and the price of utilities increasing.

Q8: Please state the date your Board/Council/Committee made or ratified the final decision on your rent setting for 2022/23	08.02.2022
Q9: Please explain how your annual assessment on operating costs and cost efficiencies has impacted on your rent setting decision for April 2022/23	<p>In 2021-2022, the Council undertook a detailed assessment of how repairs and maintenance services are provided for its tenants. This work included a detailed examination of the processes involved from service request to completion of repair. The process was found to be cumbersome and inefficient. All options for the future delivery of these services were assessed, with the recommendation to undertake direct provision of repairs and maintenance to municipal housing being adopted by the Council in summer 2021. The current contract with Heart of Wales Property Services will end in July 2022, with service thereafter being provided directly by Housing Services. The directly provided service will include, for example, more pre-inspections of repairs to improve diagnosis of problems, pre-empt future service requests and make sure that right first time, every time ethos applies wherever practicable to avoid repeat visits and focus on prevention rather than cure.</p> <p>In 2020-2021, the Council reviewed the structure of Housing Services, in response to changing service demands. In 2021-2022, a revised structure has been developed to allow more flexible deployment of resources across the whole service, increasing efficiency by, for example, introducing locally focused mini-teams to take ownership of all asset management works for patches of homes and make sure that responsive, cyclical and improvement works are better co-ordinated. The new structure is to be introduced in March 2022.</p>
Q10: Please provide any other comments or raise an issue in relation to your rent setting exercise for April 2022/23	There are as of January 10 th , 2022, 4,073 people registered with 'Homes in Powys' for secure, affordable housing, an increase from the December 2020 figure of 3,326. Maintaining and increasing the rate of development for new Council-owned homes is a major priority for the Council to meet this demand. Communities will benefit socially and economically by increasing the number of people who can enjoy secure, affordable accommodation – including current tenants who need to move and their families and friends who are not yet council tenants. The rent increase for Powys 2022-2023 will help support the expansion of our development programme to increase the availability of good homes for people living in our county.
PART TWO – Voluntary	
a) End all evictions into homelessness	

<p>Q11: Please confirm that you are strengthening your approaches designed to ensure you minimise all evictions and deliver on a new agreement not to evict into homelessness</p>	<p>Ongoing focus is continuing to minimise the threat of eviction through regular contact with tenants, maximising rent payment options and regular referrals by our Housing Officers, who are tasked with arrears case management, to our 'in-house' Tenancy support Team to provide tailored financial support which has contributed significantly to ongoing tenancy sustainability.</p>																												
<p>Q12: If you would like to provide further details please do so here:</p>	<p>To minimise potential evictions into homelessness, in the exceptional cases where possession proceedings are needed for ongoing breaches of tenancy conditions, our Housing Officers work alongside our Housing Options Officers. This is to ensure a timely consideration of the individual household's housing and support needs, in line with current homelessness legislation, including the provision of temporary accommodation where needed while ongoing work is done to secure settled, alternative accommodation.</p>																												
<p>b) Undertake a standardised tenant satisfaction survey</p>																													
<p>Q13: Confirm that you will complete a tenant satisfaction survey, including the core questions, for submission by 28th February 2022</p>	<p>STAR survey completed December 2021. The results show an increase in satisfaction with services when compared to the last such survey in 2019.</p> <div data-bbox="544 965 1385 1585"> <p>Overall Satisfaction – Key Survey Measures % very/fairly satisfied (2019 vs. 2021)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Measure</th> <th>2021</th> <th>2019</th> <th>2019 to 2021 change</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Overall satisfaction with services provided by Powys CC Housing Services</td> <td>71</td> <td>65</td> <td>+6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Your neighbourhood as a place to live</td> <td>88</td> <td>84</td> <td>+4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>That your rent provides value for money</td> <td>78</td> <td>71</td> <td>+7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The overall quality of your home</td> <td>73</td> <td>77</td> <td>-4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The way PCCHS deals with repairs & maintenance</td> <td>63</td> <td>54</td> <td>+9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>That PCCHS listens to your views & acts upon them</td> <td>55</td> <td>47</td> <td>+8</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><small>Comparisons made for all questions asked in both 2019 and 2021 Base (all, 2021): 704 Powys County Council - Tenants Satisfaction Survey 2021</small></p> <p><small>*Base = those who pay a service charge (201)</small></p> <p>beaufortresearch</p> </div>	Measure	2021	2019	2019 to 2021 change	Overall satisfaction with services provided by Powys CC Housing Services	71	65	+6	Your neighbourhood as a place to live	88	84	+4	That your rent provides value for money	78	71	+7	The overall quality of your home	73	77	-4	The way PCCHS deals with repairs & maintenance	63	54	+9	That PCCHS listens to your views & acts upon them	55	47	+8
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<p>c) Standards</p>																													
<p>Q14: Please confirm that all new build development financed by Welsh Government Housing Capital Funding, will comply with the new housing quality standard</p>	<p>Confirmed.</p>																												

<p>“WDQR 2021” across all tenures on sites.</p>	
<p>d) EPC A</p>	
<p>Q15: Please confirm that all new build financed by Welsh Government Housing Capital Funding will achieve energy efficient standard of EPC A and above.</p>	<p>Confirmed.</p>
<p>Authorised Signatory</p>	
<p>Name</p>	<p>Jane Thomas</p>
<p>Position (Section 151 Officer)</p>	<p>Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer)</p>
<p>Date</p>	