



At **Home** in **Powys**

**Housing Revenue Account Thirty Year
Business Plan 2022-2023**

March 2022

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At Home in Powys

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

In March 2022, Powys County Council approved its Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Thirty Year Business Plan for 2022-2023. The Business Plan, which operates on a rolling thirty-year basis, sets out all the information and activity that together allows the Council to successfully and sustainably approach manage and provide social housing for the people of Powys.

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

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

Housing Services in addition has adopted an approach that majors on liveability, maintainability and longevity in determining the way homes are designed maintained and refurbished. The Powys HRA Thirty Year Business Plan 2022-2023 contributes positively to maintaining and developing the Council's role as responsive and viable social landlord, focusing on helping people find, keep and enjoy their home. A balanced approach has been taken between maintaining and improving existing homes and increasing the range of affordable housing options available for the people of Powys. The Powys HRA Thirty Year Business Plan makes a substantial contribution towards making Vision 2025 a reality, which now includes Affordable Housing as one of its top priorities and support for the Mid Wales Growth Deal. It also contributes to the national outcomes the Welsh Government has for housing across Wales.

Vision 2025

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

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

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

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

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

Looking Ahead

The HRA faces many challenges in the years to come.

Maintaining the quality of homes

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

Developing new homes

- 👉 There are 4,190 households registered with 'Homes in Powys' as of February 2022 for a social rented home in Powys. This compares to 3,493 households in February 2021. The development of new secure, affordable homes – including by the Council – is the only long-term way to meet this demand and avoid people being homeless or having to live in crowded, poor condition, high cost privately owned rented accommodation. Vision 2025 includes a commitment by the Council to once again be a major provider of new homes in Powys.

Environmental sustainability

- 👉 Increasing the environmental sustainability of all the Council's homes is likely to require substantial investment, including support for the Welsh Government's policy of 'decarbonisation' of existing and new homes. This is in support of the British government's objective to have a 'net-zero' carbon economy and society by 2050. The average cost of making existing homes 'zero-carbon' remain best estimates – for Powys a total of £108,000,000 would be needed, based on research undertaken by Inside Housing¹. That equates to £20,000 per Council-owned home or over ten years, £38 per week per property.

Love Where You Live

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











These challenges mean that every aspect of the HRA needs to be considered for impact and efficiency. A zero-budget approach has been taken to the HRA Thirty Year Business Plan 2022-2023.

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

Outcomes and Services

Outcomes

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

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

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

- ✓ Number of new Housing Revenue Account homes completed: for 2022-2023 – 118 new homes and a further 33 in 2023-2024.
- ✓ Four homes acquired in 2022-2023 for social rent.
- ✓ Overall tenant satisfaction with the housing services provided by the Council: for 2022-2023 - 75%.
- ✓ Percentage of tenants satisfied with major programmes of repair and improvement: for 2022-2023 - 85%.
- ✓ Percentage of customer call backs satisfied with the responsive repairs service: for 2022-2023 - 95%.
- ✓ Percentage of heating appliances serviced in the previous 12 months: for 2022-2023 - 100%.
- ✓ Average end to end time for responsive repair: for 2022-2023 - 9 days.
- ✓ Percentage of rent collected: for 2022-2023 - 99.65%.
- ✓ Percentage of rent lost to empty properties: for 2022-2023 - 4%.

In 2022-2023, a new, improved Quality of Accommodation Standard – which sets out what new tenants can expect from their new home - will be introduced, providing for a better balance between aspirations of tenants, especially those moving to their first Council-provided home, the time taken to re-let empty properties and the financial resources available within the HRA Business Plan.

Services

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

To build on the past successes of Housing Services and to be better able to meet the challenges faced by the Council as both a landlord and strategic housing authority, a new structure for Housing Services has been developed. Called 'Moving on Up', the new delivery model will be rolled out ready for 2022-2023.






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

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

'Moving on Up' has created within Housing Services three teams – Housing Communities, Housing Quality and Housing Resources.

Housing Communities

Rationale for the Housing Communities division...

-  Clear focus across all aspects of finding, keeping and enjoying a home.
-  All homelessness services managed and delivered locally to facilitate closer client-council-service provider liaison.
-  Strong local understanding of communities and people to enhance, through local knowledge and local provision of estate and tenancy management services.
-  High visibility of the Council in neighbourhoods.
-  Teams to work with a mix of home working, hubs and drop-in centres to increase visibility and contact with communities and support the Council's New Ways of Working.

- 🏠 Close working links between housing and tenancy management, homelessness, Housing Support and agencies able to help people increase their incomes and quality of life.

Housing Communities service responsibilities...

- 🏠 'Homes in Powys' including allocation and letting of social homes, void management, understanding local housing markets (including highlighting acquisition and development needs).
- 🏠 Homelessness and housing advice services (including Housing First, Rapid Rehousing, temporary accommodation, enabling move-on options).
- 🏠 Supported housing services (including 'Housing Support').
- 🏠 'Rent First' - front-line income recovery.
- 🏠 'Love Where You Live' (including estate and neighbourhood management).
- 🏠 Tenancy management (including anti-social behaviour).
- 🏠 'Keeping in Touch'
- 🏠 Gypsy and traveller site management.
- 🏠 Encouragement of high management standards by private sector landlords.
- 🏠 Crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 🏠 UK Resettlement Scheme.
- 🏠 Homelessness Strategy.

Housing Quality

Rationale for the Housing Quality division...

- ✂ Expertise shared and able to be deployed more efficiently across all aspects of asset management and construction activity.
- ✂ Capacity and capability to provide and manage works in a variety of ways, each tailored to the outcome required (including direct provision and use of external providers where appropriate).
- ✂ Single approach to the provision of more places for people to live by embracing acquisition and new development.
- ✂ Strong health, safety and compliance capacity and capability for the benefit of all housing clients and services.
- ✂ Flexibility of resource deployment across all aspects of asset management to meet service needs.
- ✂ New build and improvement programme specifications continuously informed ongoing and current knowledge and intelligence about maintenance liabilities.
- ✂ Link aids, adaptations and disabled facilities grant work with wider asset management strategy and services to better inform works and development programmes.

Housing Quality service responsibilities...

- ✂ Acquisition and development of new homes by the Council - social rent, low-cost home ownership, market housing.
- ✂ Repair, maintenance and improvement of municipal homes.
- ✂ Maintaining the Welsh Housing Quality Standard for municipal homes (including WHQS Compliance Policy).

- ✘ Aids and adaptations (including disabled facilities grants, Fit for Life).
- ✘ Compliance across all municipal housing assets.

Housing Resources

Rationale for the Housing Resources team...

- 📁 Single resource for services, projects and policies that impact on and support all Housing Services.
- 📁 A co-ordinated insight into all housing markets, needs and aspirations across Powys informing investment and policy decisions on the provision, maintenance and management of homes.
- 📁 Environmental sustainability expertise and drive applied across all aspects of housing services.
- 📁 Focused and robust approach to income collection (including 'Rent First', support for Housing Officers, efficient and robust to managing rechargeable repairs, full recovery of Temporary Accommodation charges).
- 📁 Strong market research capacity and capability that understands all aspects of the way people experience their homes and neighbourhoods.
- 📁 Driving force for constant improvements in customer care.
- 📁 Coherent and clear messaging for all aspects of Housing Services.
- 📁 Performance management and co-ordination in one place providing the ability to understand and share all the experiences people have of the impact of our services on the quality of their homes and neighbourhoods.
- 📁 Expert approach to market research and client surveys.
- 📁 Ability to quality assure all services with a critical but friendly eye.
- 📁 Recognition that skilled administrative support is essential for all services to focus on their technical and professional outcomes.
- 📁 Co-ordinated and capable ICT support that is able to capture the needs of all service users and shape ICT support around Housing Services outcomes.

Housing Resources service responsibilities...

- 📁 Policy and practice development, co-ordination and continuous review.
- 📁 Housing market intelligence.
- 📁 Housing standards in the private sector (including enforcement of standards - HH&SRS, home improvement and town centre loans).
- 📁 Increasing the availability of homes and contributing to economic development by bringing empty homes and properties into use.
- 📁 Environmental sustainability including driving forward Green Powys, increasing energy efficiency and environmental sustainability across Housing Services, encouraging sustainable activity in the way services are designed and delivered and the way assets are built and maintained.
- 📁 Maximum income collection to maintain service viability.
- 📁 Gathering and sharing client experiences to improve, expand or reduce services according to market needs and demands.
- 📁 Customer Care programme co-ordination and quality assurance.
- 📁 Communication with communities to make sure there is clear understanding of housing's opportunities and constraints.

- ✎ Quality assurance to make sure all services are to a high standard (including audits, client research, member and tenant engagement).
- ✎ Administration and dissemination of STAR survey.
- ✎ Up to date, accurate performance management - administration, reporting, sharing and challenge.
- ✎ Efficient, service friendly ICT systems.
- ✎ Co-ordination, quality assurance, analysis and submission of all service, corporate and national performance indicator, statistical and data returns.
- ✎ Archiving and records.

Divisional Responsibilities within Housing Services

Housing Communities	Housing Quality	Housing Resources
<i>Helping people to find, keep and enjoy a home</i>	<i>Providing maintaining and improving homes</i>	<i>Understanding the way people experience their homes and communities</i>
Housing advice across all tenures	Building and acquiring new homes	Continuous market engagement to drive forward improvements in all the work we do
Homelessness prevention and resolution	Bringing empty properties into use as homes	Customer relationship management
Allocation of social homes in Powys	Repairs, maintenance and improvements to homes owned by the Council	Effective and interactive communications
Tenancy management of Council-owned homes	Encouraging higher maintenance standards by private property owners	Provision of information technology and data systems
Estate management	Compliance and health and safety across all Housing Services	Quality assurance and performance management
Management of gypsy and traveller sites	Aids, adaptations and disabled facilities work to increase the well-being of people in Powys	Income management
Love Where You Live	Welsh Housing Quality Standard	Environmental sustainability
Rent First	Asset Management Strategy	Housing market research and policy development

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

Allocation of all social housing in Powys is managed through ‘Homes in Powys’, a common allocation scheme that also offers a one-stop shop for people looking for a home. It is an on-line system making it easy for people to apply and amend their

applications as and when needed. One application is all that is needed for someone to be considered for all social housing provided in Powys by the Council and eight housing associations.

For the first three months of 2022-2023, a joint venture company called Heart of Wales Property Services (HoWPS) which is jointly owned by the Council and Kier, will continue to provide repairs and maintenance services, as it has since July 2017. In 2020-2021, the Council undertook a detailed review of the service provided by HoWPS, taking account of performance and value for money. The conclusion was that direct service provision would improve the quality of services to tenants. In 2021, the Council made the decision to end the contract with HoWPS. From July 2022, repairs and maintenance to all Council-owned homes will be delivered directly by Housing Services.

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

The Powys Housing Market

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

Every planning authority in Wales is expected to produce a Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) once every five years. The most recent LHMA for Powys covered the period 2016-2020 and therefore a new assessment has been developed for the period 2021 onwards.

The LHMA makes an important contribution to the Council achieving the outcomes set out in Vision 2025. It provides the Council with a strategic understanding of the housing need in Powys and provides an evidenced basis on which to plan strategically for meeting current and future housing. The LHMA also provides essential evidence for the formulation of the Local Development Plan (LDP), the principal planning guide required to be produced by every Planning Authority.

To have a complete picture of how housing markets function across local authority boundaries, it was decided to commission a regional LHMA in conjunction with seven other planning authorities. These are Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot along with the Brecon Beacons and Pembrokeshire Coast National Parks. This approach was supported by the Welsh Government.

Such a collaborative approach represented an opportunity to achieve efficiencies and sharing of resources in undertaking this important piece of research. Opinion Research Services (ORS) of Swansea was appointed to complete the LHMA. ORS was initially asked to provide a final report in the first half of 2020. This date had to be postponed until 2022, to take account of the impact of the demands and operational limitations created by the Covid 19 pandemic impacting on both ORS and the commissioning authorities and the availability of updated data population projections

Initial findings of the LHMA confirm Housing Services' understanding of need, from 'Homes in Powys' registrations, homelessness demand and ongoing interaction with tenants and residents:

- An ageing demographic with higher requirement for specifically age-related housing.
- A reduction in household size.
- An increase in overall household numbers.

With the Homes in Powys data, the information is being used to inform the future of the Council's programme to build new council homes. This is co-ordinated through the Powys Strategic Housing Partnership with the plans of other social landlords to

make sure that all developments complement each other to meet the needs of the greatest number of households.





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

Local Housing Strategy for Powys

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

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

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

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

Homes in Powys

At the end of December 2021, 4,053 people were registered with ‘Homes in Powys’. The table below shows the number of applicants registered in each band at the end of December 2021. Bands One to Three (2,352 applicants) are applicants with a housing need and are who ready to move. During the first three quarters of 2021-221 all social landlords providing homes in Powys let 518 properties.

Households Registered with Homes in Powys - by Band (December 2021)

	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Total
Number of Households	37	101	2,214	1,381	320	4,053

Household size is reducing in Powys. The table below shows a breakdown of the applicants registered at the end of December 2021 by the bedrooms they require. This indicates a need to increase across Powys considerably the availability of smaller social homes. One-bedroom general needs homes currently make up just 20.4% of total social housing in Powys and just 6% of all homes regardless of tenure.

***Households Registered with Homes in Powys - Minimum Bedroom Size
(December 2021)***

Minimum bedroom size	Number of Households
One	2,274
Two	1,114
Three	520
Four	133
Five	11
Six	1
Total	4,053

The table below shows the tenure of applicants registered with Homes in Powys at the end of December 2021. The highest number of applicants are currently renting private sector accommodation, suggesting a clear desire for the security of tenure and affordable rents offered by social landlords.

Households Registered with Homes in Powys - Current Tenure (December 2021)

Tenure	Band One	Band Two	Band Three	Band Four	Band Five	Total
Renting from a private landlord	5		635	448	92	1,180
Powys County Council Tenancy	15	65	228	166	43	517
Living with parents	2	1	234	154	22	413
Other	4		212	123	27	366
Staying with friends/relatives	1		220	49	33	303
Other Social Landlord		2	106	122	28	258
Owner Occupier	1		138	93	19	251
Barcud	2	14	79	68	8	171
Wales & West Housing		7	58	60	2	127
Temporary Accommodation	3		93	4	9	109
Rough Sleeper	2		61	9	5	77
Clwyd Alyn Housing Association		10	24	28	9	71
Lodging	1		42	15	6	64
Newydd Housing Association Tenancy			16	11	5	32
Gwalia Housing Tenancy	1		15	11	1	28
In home provided by employer			13	4	2	19
Living in care			15	3	1	19
Adult Placement		1	10	4	3	18
Grwp Cynefin Tenancy			7	2	2	11
Melin Homes Tenancy		1	2	6	1	10
HM forces accommodation			6	1	2	9
Grand Total	37	101	2,214	1,81	320	4,053

Applicants who join Homes in Powys are asked to say why they require housing. Households can have more than one reason - for example a prison leaver may also be

threatened with homelessness. The table below shows the housing need reason declared by applicants. The highest housing need is 'Other Reason', the details of which will be recorded in the applicant's notes. Of the categorised housing needs 'Medical need or have a disability and my existing home is not appropriate for my needs' is the highest at 973 applicants followed by 'Homeless, or about to become homeless' at 888 applicants. There are significant numbers of applicants who cannot afford private sector accommodation, need to move due to care issues or their current accommodation is overcrowded or too large.

Housing Needs of Households Registered with Homes in Powys (December 2021)

Housing Need	Tenure (social landlord)	Tenure (private and other)	Total
Other Reason	336	1,028	1,364
Medical need or have a disability and my existing home is not appropriate for my needs	302	671	973
Homeless or about to become homeless within the next 56 days	42	846	888
Existing home is overcrowded	203	429	632
Experiencing anti-social behaviour or harassment	226	327	553
Current home is unaffordable	59	477	536
Need to move to give or receive support and proven level of support is required and can be given	145	385	530
Existing house is too large for my needs	120	259	379
Housing for older people required	61	296	357
Experiencing domestic violence	32	144	176
Found employment in the area and need to move closer to work or will otherwise lose that employment	32	123	155
Current home planned to be demolished or needs major repairs	17	135	152
Current home has disabled adaptations which are no longer required	9	12	21
Leaving prison	0	18	18
Grand Total	1,584	5,150	6,734

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


Powys housing markets are as diverse as the county itself. The north-west of Powys, in and around Machynlleth, is close to the Snowdonia National Park and the university town of Aberystwyth which is also the administrative centre of the county Ceredigion. Housing demand is strong, especially for affordable housing. The north-east of Powys is dominated by Newtown and Welshpool, towns with relatively good rail and road links to the West Midlands and the towns and conurbations serving the Merseyside area. Housing demand is high, with Welshpool in particular experiencing high demand for homes. The centre of the county is home to Llandrindod Wells, the

county town for Powys. South of Builth Wells is Brecon, which is part of the Brecon Beacons National Park. Like all national parks, property prices are high leading to very high demand for affordable housing in and around the town. The southernmost point of Powys is Ystradgynlais, a town with a proud industrial heritage and now on the edge of the Swansea commuter belt. The housing market is relatively balanced with pockets of low demand housing that no longer meets the needs and aspirations of today's households.


The risk of continued migration away from Powys by younger people, including those in their 20s and 30s, makes it more important than ever that there are affordable homes available not only to rent but also to buy. This makes the county's housing market more attractive and encourage younger and economically active households to stay in local communities. It will also help attract more young families move to the area and be at home in Powys. The shortage of affordable housing of all tenures in many parts of Powys mean that it is increasingly difficult for people who work in low wage sectors of the economy to remain living in the County. This will have a significant impact on the ability of employers to recruit to posts. The Council is developing a range of low-cost home ownership options for direct delivery itself and in partnership with housing associations.

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


Specialist Housing for Older People

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

Homes for Smaller Households

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

Accessible Housing

-  An aging population means that to make sure its homes remain useable by older people the Council will need to adapt or extend existing – and sometimes aging - accommodation or may have to buy and remodel properties to provide

homes for people who cannot access or live successfully in un-adapted dwellings.

Investment Strategy

Over the next thirty years, Powys County Council has the capacity to invest £403,433,000 in maintaining the WHQS and £487,616,000 in other major capital improvement programmes. The responsive and cyclical maintenance programmes will benefit from investment of £520,272,000.

The investment programme includes £83,516,262 (excluding grant support) over the next five years alone in the development of new homes and the acquisition of existing properties for conversion to social housing. All borrowing for both new homes and buying and converting existing properties will only be for schemes that are financially viable and able to pay back the full cost of all borrowing incurred in bringing them to market. In this way, the Council is able to continue to expand the housing options available to the people in Powys while safeguarding the financial viability of the HRA.

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

A comprehensive Asset Management Strategy is being developed for all the assets held within the HRA. In 2018-2019, the first stage was finished - mapping all the open spaces and green areas held in the HRA. In 2019-2020, a garage review has been completed looking at the most effective way of making use of HRA's garage estate, which includes more than directly owned garages and assorted garage sites leased to individuals. Further work on the strategy in 2020-2021 and in 2021-2022 was put on hold due to the impacts of Covid-19. This restricted access to properties and required a clear focus of all Council resources on supporting work to mitigate and manage the impacts of the pandemic. In 2022-2023, this work will resume, with a focus on understanding the energy efficiency of our homes.

New Homes for Powys

The Welsh Government expects local authorities to significantly increase the rate of municipal house building. Land has been identified across Powys with the potential to develop another 1,000 Council homes. A total of 39 new Council-owned homes will be completed by March 2022. Further schemes are being developed to expand this programme. Provision has been made in the HRA Business Plan to support up to 439 homes by 2025 (with a further 70 for 2026-2027) – raising the very real possibility of new development comprehensively exceeding the Council's target of 250 new homes by 2025. Progressing all new developments is dependent upon securing all necessary planning and other regulatory consents and securing viable development sites. In addition, a resolution will need to be found to the challenges to new development posed by the need to mitigate phosphate discharges.

The scale and pace of continued development will also depend upon the availability of grant from the Welsh Government to allow for the homes to be let at social rents. If grant falls and construction costs continue to increase, the Council will consider how

it can develop homes for open market sale to generate surplus funds to underpin the affordable housing programme. The Council will also be exploring the options for increasing the range of low-cost home ownership options that can be offered in Powys.


Further additions to the social housing available to people living in Powys will be secured through continuing the programme of property acquisitions. The numbers to be bought will depend upon the opportunities presented by the housing market, the availability where needed of social housing grants and how available properties match local housing needs and represent long-term value for money. Particular attention will be given to acquiring smaller homes as these are those most in demand by households registered with 'Homes in Powys'. In 2018-2019, 21 homes were bought, followed by four in 2019-2020, three in 2020-2021 and between April and December 2021, a further eleven.

New Homes for Powys - Financial Summary 2022-23 to 2026-2027

Financial Year	HRA Business Plan Investment ² (Acquisitions)	Number of New Homes Completed (+ acquisitions)	Notes
2022-2023	£10,321,729 (£800,000)	118 (4)	Investment planned for each year will cover completing earlier schemes, progressing current developments and preparing for future projects. Completions will be dependent upon securing all necessary planning, environmental and other regulatory consents, securing viable development sites and where needed Social Housing Grant.
2023-2024	£20,980,093 (£800,000)	33 (4)	
2024-2025	£23,563,151 (£800,000)	134 (4)	
2025-2026	£15,695,771 (£800,000)	154 (4)	
2026-2027	£12,955,518 (£800,000)	70 (4)	
Total	£83,516,262 (£4,000,000)	509 (20)	



Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)

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

-  Reviewing support and working methods for residents concerned about disruption.

² Gross expenditure, excluding Social Housing Grant or other grants that may be available.

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

-  Tackling damp properties and targeting improvements to improve thermal comfort and reduce fuel poverty.
-  Effective management of component replacement lifecycles.

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

WHQS Financial Summary 2022-23 to 2026-2027

Investment	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027
Kitchens	£600,000	£420,000	£400,000	£600,000	£800,000
Bathrooms	£472,500	£200,000	£200,000	£0	£400,000
Rewiring	£90,000	£120,000	£60,000	£100,000	£45,000
Windows and Doors	£649,000	£500,000	£100,000	£0	£200,000
Roofing	£1,500,000	£1,000,000	£400,000	£400,000	£400,000
Walls	£650,000	£650,000	£650,000	£650,000	£650,000
Estate Works (contribute to Love Where You Live)	£1,100,000	£1,200,000	£1,300,000	£1,200,000	£1,200,000
Heating (contributes to Green Powys)	£1,500,000	£1,400,000	£1,500,000	£1,400,000	£1,400,000
Energy Efficiency (contributes to Green Powys)	£240,000	£150,000	£300,000	£150,000	£150,000
Asbestos Management (contributes to Compliance One Hundred)	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000
Management Fees	£770,000	£777,700	£785,480	£793,330	£801,260
Miscellaneous WHQS	£430,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000
Total	£8,151,500	£6,817,700	£6,095,480	£5,693,330	£6,446,260

Compliance One Hundred

The Compliance One Hundred programme is designed to make sure that all of the Council homes and associated assets are one hundred per cent compliant with all relevant and applicable legislation and regulation. With increased expectations by tenants and residents, this is a top priority for the service. A Housing Compliance Board was established in December 2019 to drive forward a focused approach to

compliance. A dedicated team of skilled officers has been drawn from across the service to form a Compliance One Hundred Project team, which will become a permanent part of the service under 'Moving on Up'. This team is now delivering all that needs to be done to make sure that the Council's homes are always fully compliant with all relevant health and safety related legislation.

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

Compliance One Hundred Financial Summary 2022-23 to 2026-2027

Investment	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027
Fire Safety Works	£200,000	£200,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000
Water Supply and Sewerage Works	£250,000	£250,000	£200,000	£100,000	£100,000
Legionella	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000
WHQS Contributions to Compliance One Hundred	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000
Day-to-day Repairs Contribution to Compliance One Hundred	£510,000	£400,000	£310,000	£310,000	£225,000
Total Compliance One Hundred Investment Programme	£1,160,000	£1,050,000	£810,000	£710,000	£625,000

Green Powys

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

For 2022-2023, the Welsh Government asked all local authority landlords to estimate the costs of 'decarbonisation' of all municipal homes. Estimating such a figure is challenging, because of many factors outside the control of the Council or households themselves. For example, the way energy is produced and supplied to homes may make a major contribution towards 'decarbonisation' – the roll out of hydrogen availability produced by electrolysis using green electricity generated by wind, solar and nuclear power and increased grid capacity to supply more green electricity directly to homes. The increased use of recycled, long-life materials and products and components sourced locally within Wales and Great Britain, reducing environmental

transport costs, may also contribute towards a more environmentally friendly – and economically beneficial - approach to the construction and refurbishment of homes.

The current estimates for the lifecycles of components such as heat pumps and solar panel inverters and the currently higher maintenance costs of the new technologies being promoted as making a contribution to ‘decarbonisation’, when balanced against the long life of such improvements as additional insulation. mean that a prudent approach of spreading the initial costs over ten years has been adopted. This allows scope for replacement systems, where necessary, to be funded from 2033-2034 onwards and to account for any additional maintenance costs of more complex heating, ventilation and water management systems.

Powys has adopted a ‘decarbonisation’ figure of £20,000 per home, based on research undertaken in 2020 by Inside Housing magazine⁴. The total cost for the initial investment to ‘decarbonise’ all 5,433 homes owned by the Council over the period 2022-2023 through 2032-2033, excluding borrowing costs, amounts to £108,000,000. The cost per property per week over ten years, excluding inflation, is £38 which if external grant funding is not sourced, may need to be added to the rent paid by tenants.

To address high energy costs, special attention is to be paid to those Council-owned homes that have an Energy Performance Certificate rating of ‘E’, ‘F’ or ‘G’. A ‘whole house’ approach – called ‘Project E, F, G’ - is to be developed during 2022-2023 for work to start during 2023-2024 to reduce the need for energy in these properties, reducing the cost of living for those living in these homes as well as improving environmental sustainability. Funding for these properties will be prioritised within existing programme.

The Council has taken part in the initial phases of the Welsh Government’s Optimised Retrofit initiative. Powys engaged with the Sero pilot project to develop a methodology to make sure that whole-house solutions to increase the environmental efficiency of homes are specified and introduced in a way that does not disadvantage residents or counteract each other.

The Council is paying particular attention to how it can efficiently and effectively replace gas-fired boilers with ones than can easily be converted to use hydrogen.

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

Green Powys Financial Summary 2022-23 to 2026-2027

Investment	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027
Damp Prevention	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000

⁴ The cost of net zero: social landlords’ decarbonisation plans revealed’ – Inside Housing (November 23rd, 2020).

Photo-voltaic (Solar Panels)	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£0
Decarbonisation and Energy Efficiency	£90,000	£100,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000
WHQS Contributions to Green Powys	£1,650,000	£1,550,000	£1,550,000	£1,550,000	£1,550,000
Day-to-day Repairs Contribution to Green Powys	£540,000	£569,540	£579,000	£588,950	£874,000
Total Green Powys Investment Programme	£2,605,000	£2,544,540	£2,704,000	£2,713,950	£2,924,000

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

As part of its commitment to the ‘Home Grown Homes’ project the Council has in place a Wood Encouragement Policy to encourage the use of timber in construction work, where timber is the most suitable material for the job in hand.

Fit for Life

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

Fit for Life Financial Summary 2022-23 to 2026-2027

Investment	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027
Fit for Purpose	£1,700,000	£1,400,000	£1,200,000	£0	£0
Adaptations - Capital	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000
Adaptations - Revenue	£590,000	£602,390	£615,040	£641,140	£654,600
Total Fit for Life Investment	£2,540,000	£2,252,390	£2,065,040	£891,140	£904,600

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

Love Where You Live

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

Love Where You Live Financial Summary 2022-23 to 2026-2027

Investments	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027
Brecon Area Estate Improvements	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000
Newtown Area Estate Improvements	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000
Welshpool Area Estate Improvements	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000
Wye Valley Estate Improvements	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000
Ystradgynlais Estate Improvements	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000
Car Parking	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000
Communal Area Improvements	£75,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000
Garage Strategy	£300,000	£400,000	£400,000	£400,000	£0
Pen-y-bryn Regeneration	£700,000	£700,000	£300,00	£0	£0
Play Area Improvements	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000
WHQS Contributions to Love Where You Live (Estate)	£1,100,000	£1,200,000	£1,200,000	£1,200,000	£1,200,000

and Boundary Works)					
Day-to-day Repairs Contribution to Green Powys	£540,000	£569,540	£579,000	£588,950	£874,000
Total Love Where You Live Investment	£3,435,000	£3,669,080	£2,988,000	£3,007,900	£3,178,000

Penybryn Regeneration

In Penybryn, Ystradgynlais, the Council has a cluster of flats, for which there is erratic housing demand and which are in poor condition. Proposals have been developed and shared with the local community to resolve what was seen by local people as a problem adversely affecting their lives. The flats were empty, unsightly and attracted anti-social behaviour. On-site construction works have been delayed by two years, due to the impact of the Covid-19 event. However, over the next three years, some of the flats will be demolished, others reconfigured into high-quality apartments for single people and couples and the centre of the estate greened as an attractive open space.

Community Alarms

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

Day-to-day Repairs and Cyclical Maintenance

For the first three months of 2022-2023, a joint venture company called Heart of Wales Property Services (HoWPS) which is jointly owned by the Council and Kier, will continue to provide these services, as it has since July 2017. In autumn 2020, the Council undertook a detailed review of the service provided by HoWPS, taking account of performance and value for money. The conclusion was that direct service provision would improve the quality of services to tenants. In 2021, the Council made the decision to end the contract with HoWPS. From July 2022, repairs and maintenance to all Council-owned homes will be delivered directly by Housing Services.

Repairs and Maintenance Financial Summary 2022-23 to 2026-2027

Investments	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027
HoWPS Service Agreement	£1,353,620	£0	£0	£0	£0
HoWPS Service Contingency	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Housing Quality Repairs and Maintenance Service	£3,931,245	£5,190,957	£5,119,801	£5,227,320	£5,337,090
Vehicle Financing (Revenue)	£129,625	£176,463	£180,169	£0	£0
ICT	£137,000	£120,000	£124,000	£0	£0
Day-to-day and Cyclical Repairs (not covered by HoWPS Service Agreement)	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Day-to-day and Cyclical Repairs	£1,813,110	£1,460,960	£1,399,593	£1,556,936	£1,535,947
External Painting	£450,000	£459,450	£469,100	£478,950	£764,010
Estate and Grounds Maintenance	£865,300	£865,300	£865,300	£865,300	£865,300
Miscellaneous Expenditure	£311,130	£317,170	£323,337	£329,634	£336,063
Total Repairs and Maintenance Investment	£8,991,030	£8,590,300	£8,481,300	£8,458,140	£8,838,410

Please note: Includes contributions from each Housing Quality Repairs and Maintenance Service, Day-to-day and Cyclical Repairs and Miscellaneous Expenditure towards the Green Powys, Love Where You Live and Compliance One Hundred programmes.

Housing Management ICT Systems

During 2021-2022, a fully mobile approach has been developed for housing management and maintenance officers. This means they will be able to access all management systems for housing no matter where they are in Powys – subject of course to cell phone reception being available which is not always the case in an area as deeply rural as Powys. This will speed up the response to customer enquiries and mean that officers will be able to spend more time working out in Powys neighbourhoods and communities. The new ‘total mobile’ system is to be introduced in 2022-2023, earlier roll-out having been held back by it not being possible to complete field testing within the confines of Covid-19 working restrictions.

Acquisition of Properties

The Council has between April 2019 and March 2021 purchased 28 homes on the open market, with a further eleven between April and December 2021, the majority of which have been ex-municipal homes. In determining which properties to purchase there has been a focus on those in areas of high demand and where the new build programme is unlikely or due to planning and land restrictions, unable to meet the need. All such purchases are subject to the same viability criteria as new build, with additional allowances made for any works needed to bring the properties up to WHQS. The programme will continue to be a significant part of the work undertaken by the Council with £800,000 set aside over each of the next five years to increase the availability of genuinely affordable, secure rented homes across Powys.

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

Rents and Service Charges

The Council is the largest social landlord in Powys with 5,433 properties under its management, as of March 31st, 2022. The breakdown of homes owned by the Council...

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

General Needs Properties - by Type and Number of Bedrooms

Property Type	Bedrooms						Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Bungalow	21	22	1	-	-	-	44
Double House	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
First Floor Flat	56	158	7	-	-	-	221
Ground Floor Bedsit	5	-	-	-	-	-	5
Ground Floor Flat	53	143	1	-	-	-	197
House	14	709	2079	124	7	3	2936
Maisonette	-	25	40	-	-	-	65
Second Floor Flat	13	18	-	-	-	-	31
Third Floor (or higher) Flat	3	4	-	-	-	-	7
Totals	165	1079	2128	124	8	3	3507

Properties Designated for Older Persons

Property Type	Bedrooms						Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Bungalow	434	895	7	1	-	-	1337
Double House	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
First Floor Flat	86	140	1	-	-	-	227
Ground Floor Bedsit	9	-	-	-	-	-	9
Ground Floor Flat	141	191	1	-	-	-	333
House	-	-	2	-	-	-	2
Maisonette	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Second Floor Flat	8	9	-	-	-	-	17
Third Floor (or higher) Flat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	678	1235	11	1	-	-	1925

Since 2017-2018, the Council has used a rent setting model which takes account of property type, property size and fuel type (fuel type is being used as a proxy indicator for SAP rating and will be replaced when complete data on SAP ratings of individual

homes is available). In 2022-2023, the Council will be reviewing its rent setting model to take account of changing factors such as the increasing energy efficiency of newly built and substantially refurbished homes.

The Council’s HRA Business Plan has been stress tested to see what changes in rents and services charges need to be made to allow it to remain viable and able to increase the number of affordable homes available across Powys. The conclusion is that a rent increase for 2022-2023 of 3.1%, the CPI figure for September 2021, is appropriate to make sure that the Housing Services is sustainable and able to provide homes and services for both current and future tenants. Such an increase allows rents to remain affordable and so does not contribute excessively to any increase in the cost of living for the Council’s tenants.

The Council has therefore approved a recommendation that with effect from April 2022 the average rent in Powys will increase by 3.1% (£2.55 on average per week) for all 5433 Council owned homes. Tables below show the average rent in 2020-21 and 2021-22 and also shows the rent of the properties which will experience the greatest increase. It should be noted that the figures show rents over a 52-week rent year. In Powys rents are charged over a 48-week rent year with two ‘rent free weeks’ at Christmas and two ‘rent free weeks’ at Easter.

HRA Rents for 2021-22 and 2022-23

	Rent 2021-2022	Rent - 2022-2023	Weekly Increase
Average HRA Rent	£93.82	£96.37	£2.55

The Council has during the Covid-19 pandemic taken a proportionate and pragmatic approach to the collection of rent. This approach will remain as the nation emerges from the pandemic. While the ‘Rent First’ ethos remains the guiding principle, tenants who have faced and many continue to face unavoidable financial challenges linked to the Covid-19 event will benefit from additional support to secure additional income, including for example submitting claims for claims for housing benefit and universal credit, and accessing advice via the Councils money advice team. The Financial Support Officers and the Housing Officers are keeping in touch with people to make sure that help is offered as soon as possible to prevent arrears climbing to high levels. The approach is proving to be successful in maintaining income to the HRA. At the start of Quarter Four 2021-2022 income recovery is running at 97.14% of rent due; for the same period last year this was 96.99%. This rigorous but pragmatic approach will continue in 2022-2023 when it is expected to yield a similar success rate.

Powys Service Charges for 2021-2022 and 2022-2023

Service Charge	Highest Weekly Service Charge		Lowest Weekly Service Charge (where a charge is made)		How the Service Charge is Calculated
	2021-2022	2022-2023	2021-2022	2022-2023	

Grounds maintenance	£2.47	£2.47	£0.06	£0.06	Calculated on a site-by-site basis, based on the size of the site and the cost of undertaking the work
Communal cleaning	£1.61	£1.55	£1.61	£1.55	Based on the total cost of the work, divided by all those who receive the service.
Communal heating and lighting	£1.18	£1.07	£1.18	£1.07	Based on the total cost of the service, divided by all those who receive the service.
Fire safety work	£1.33	£1.00	£0.04	£0.08	Based on actual costs per block and divided by all residents of the block.
TV aerials	No costs for 21/22	No costs for 22/33	No costs for 21/22	No costs for 22/33	Based on the costs associated with each aerial and divided by all potential users of the aerial system.
Repairs to entrance doors	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Based on actual costs per block and divided by all residents of the block.
Communal washing lines	£0.44	£0.44	£0.26	£0.44	Based on actual costs per block and divided by all residents of the block.
Sewerage treatment	£7.90	£5.97	£7.90	£5.97	Based on the total cost of the work, divided by all those who receive the service.
Lift maintenance	£1.62	£1.62	£0.23	£0.32	Costs split equally between tenants with

					lifts (for servicing)
Repairs to communal areas in flats	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Costs per block divided between all residents of the block

Garage and Garage Plot Rents for 2021-22 and 2022-23

	Rent - 2021-22	Rent 2022-23
Garage Rents	£12.50 per week	£12.89 per week
Rent for Garage Plots (not subject to a fixed rate at time of letting)	£159.00 per annum	£163.93 per annum

Resourcing the Powys HRA Business Plan

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

Powys HRA Business Plan Assumptions

- ↳ Rental income will increase by CPI + 1% per year, the maximum allowed by the Welsh Government's Rent Policy, with the exception of 2022-2023 when rent increases have been limited by the Welsh Government to CPI only.
- ↳ Service charges are increased for future years in line with inflation for full cost recovery.
- ↳ The Welsh Government will in future years allocate grant to support the development of social and low-cost housing on a scheme-by-scheme basis. For the purposes of forward planning, an average grant rate of 35% has been assumed.
- ↳ The Welsh Government Major Repairs Allowance receivable is assumed to remain at previous levels of £3,732,000 per year.
- ↳ Void loss and bad debt have been assumed at 7% (4% voids and 3% bad debt). Work continues to reduce void turnaround times, with substantial improvements already made in the time taken to let a property once it has been returned to the Council, fit to let. This assumption also takes account of growing challenges collecting income from people reliant upon the social security system for all or part of their income.
- ↳ Prudential borrowing interest rates have been assessed at 2.9% per annum.
- ↳ General inflation at 4.9% for RPI in 2021-2022 and 3.8% afterwards and 3.1% for CPI in 2021-2022 and 2.55% annually afterwards

- ↳ A minimum balance of £1,000,000 will be maintained over the medium term to mitigate against any future risks.

Income from Asset Sales

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

Listening to Powys Communities

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

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

Tenant Scrutiny Panel

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



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

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





Love Where You Live

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



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

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

As part of Love Where You Live the Council has:

-  Improved the speed and impact of how the Council responded to tenant and resident concerns about the quality of their environment, including for example the quality of grass cutting, maintenance of shared spaces and day-to-day estate management. A full caretaker service is in place across the County along with two dedicated, directly managed in-house grounds and estate maintenance teams.
-  ‘Pop-up Powys’ which takes services out into the community, using a mobile office vehicle will become part of Housing Services in 2022-2023. This follows a successful trial of the concept, which was extremely popular in rural areas, improving the Council’s understanding of how people experience its services and what type of homes they and their communities need now and in the future.
-  Introduced a fresh approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour, which streamlined the process to make sure that the right agency with the powers to deal with problems was involved as soon as possible. A more robust approach has been taken to cases where there are clear breaches of tenancy conditions, with injunctions and other legal action being deployed where they are the only reasonable solutions.
-  A strategic approach in place for investment in play areas located on housing estate land.

In 2022-2023, Love Where You Live’ will:

-  Pilot the ‘Keeping in Touch’ initiative for every tenant, who will once every three years receive a personal visit from their local Housing Officer. This will encourage and support closer relationships between the Council and our tenants, helping us to work together to respond promptly to any requests for help and support to sustain tenancies and encourage financial independence.
-  Introduce a new approach to helping people maintain and manage their gardens, which will include a mix of more robust enforcement of tenancy conditions, direct intervention where necessary and support for people to gain gardening skills.

Housing Repairs Surgeries

Fifteen area-based Housing Repairs Surgeries, usually held twice a year throughout the County at a time, date and location to suit the needs of the tenants who want to attend the meetings, had to be suspended during 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 due to the restrictions placed on meetings and events arising from the Covid-19 event. A new approach to engaging with tenants is being planned for when Covid-19 restrictions are

completely lifted and to support the new direct provision of repairs and maintenance to be introduced in July 2022.

‘Open House’ Newsletter












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

‘Investing in Your Homes’ Newsletter

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

Questionnaires and Surveys

In 2021, the Council undertook a STAR survey of tenants. The survey showed:

-  Overall satisfaction with Powys County Council as a landlord is 71%.
-  Satisfaction with the neighbourhood is 88%.
-  Tenants feeling safe and secure in their home is 87%.
-  Tenants considering their rent as value for money (VFM) is 78%.
-  Tenants considering service charges as VFM is 77% of those paying service charges.
-  Satisfaction with the overall quality of accommodation is 74%.
-  Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance was 63%.
-  Satisfaction with the way that the Council listens to and acts on tenants’ comments is 55%.
-  Satisfaction with the way Housing Services deals with anti-social behaviour is 51%.
-  Satisfaction with opportunities to participate in decision making processes is 44%.
-  Having a say in how services are managed is rated at 42%.

All of these results are an improvement over the 2019 STAR survey results except for perception of the overall quality of the home, which shows a decrease in satisfaction of 4%.

Housing Services has identified two important areas for deeper research, based in the lowest satisfaction ratings. These can be summarised as:

- ↳ What is it that our tenants consider we do not listen to? How do we improve this perception?
- ↳ There appears to be a decline in trust on delivery. We need to understand why trust is lacking and what needs to be done to secure the trust of tenants in the Council.

The findings of the STAR survey will be shared with the Tenant Scrutiny Panel, which will be engaged in the work to determine what needs to be done to address these areas of concern.

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

Housing Services One Hundred Group

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

Social Media

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

Sustainable Commissioning and Procurement

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

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

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

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

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

Risk Management and Monitoring & Evaluation

Housing Improvement and Assurance Board

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

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

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

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

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

Risk Management

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

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

Housing Services Risk Register 2022-2023

Risk	Consequences	Mitigations
<p>Phosphate Restrictions - Rivers Wye and Usk Catchment areas affecting new Council Housing developments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing developments will be required to mitigate phosphates., as required by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) at the end of March 2021. • The policy and mitigations available are currently unclear as no policy/procedure has been agreed between planning authorities and NRW. • Planning permissions will require phosphate mitigation, there will be additional costs in either offsetting mitigations or installing additional plant/systems to mitigate phosphate. Mitigations required will affect the financial viability of schemes. • Development schemes in affected areas cannot be progressed until policy and procedure is agreed between planning authorities and NRW. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular liaison with Planning, NRW and Welsh Government regarding mitigations and policy.
<p>Import-export barriers imposed or tolerated by the EU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced exports leading to instability in exporting businesses. • Reduced employment opportunities. • Reduction in supply of products imported from the EU, reducing economic and construction activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage exporting business to find new non-EU markets. • Encourage and support domestic business to develop products for import substitution. • Training and development for people to take advantage of changing economic opportunities. • Increase focus on local (Powys>Wales>Britain) sourcing by the Council (and other bodies) of materials, goods and services (taking advantage of proposed changes to public procurement rules).

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

		<p>centred on a clear understanding of individual tenant's expectations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuously and routinely capture and respond to tenants' views and service experiences.
Allocation and lettings not effectively contributing to meeting housing demand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failing to use housing assets effectively can contribute to homeless issues, overcrowding and social dislocation – all of which will adversely impact on the well-being of communities. Social and economic disruption experienced by people living in homes and communities that hinder their ability to participate in work and community life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing quality assurance of allocation and letting performance to identify how effective housing demand is being met, identify service improvements and inform the development of new homes. Ongoing focus to make sure that investment in homes is matched to housing needs. Working with individuals to help them take the lead in resolving their housing needs providing appropriate support as and when needed. Collaborative working with all social landlords, housing developers and other accommodation providers to better match supply with demand.
Unable to secure and/or fund viable opportunities for the development and acquisition of new social housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to meet Vision 2025 objective to deliver 250 homes by the end of 2025. Increased waiting lists and homelessness arising from a reduced ability to meet housing needs. Community stability undermined by reduced housing opportunities for as wide a range of households as possible. Financial viability of HRA Business Plan undermined by reduce ability to increase income through increase income from increased stock numbers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value engineering of design and construction to increase value-for-money. Identify opportunities for cross subsidy from market housing to increase resources for investment in social housing. Increase collaborative working with economic development team and agencies to be better placed to take advantage of commercial-to-residential conversion opportunities. Identify alternative funding sources for investment in social homes.
Repairs and maintenance service and improvement programmes failing to deliver high quality services and outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer satisfaction falls, reducing confidence by tenants in the Council. Properties fall into disrepair, increasing future maintenance liabilities. Excess costs are generated by remedial work to put right poor-quality repairs. Safety standards are compromised by poor quality or non-delivered repairs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous quality assurance of work for example post-inspections and tenant surveys informing changes in policy and process. Amend delivery model to address performance failings and improve services. Value engineer specifications.

<p>Technical and cost challenges of making substantial environmental improvements to housing assets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to improve long term environmental sustainability across all aspects of the environment (for example use of unsuitable materials or systems for house construction and improvement) will hinder contributions towards a better environment for everyone. • Long term maintenance liabilities (including for example increased costs and shorter or increased number of component replacement cycles) that may increase costs and harm the environment. • Reduced consumer appeal of municipal housing. • Unfunded design requirements reducing provision of additional affordable and secure housing opportunities for households with low and middle incomes. • Financial insecurity for private home-owners arising from unfunded changes to systems and components (for example heating systems). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous review and research of all systems, components and materials to identify those which contribute positively and cost effectively to long term environmental sustainability. • Increased use of locally sourced (Powys > Wales > United Kingdom > Global) materials and components. • Increased use of recycled materials. • Increased involvement of communities in designing and approving materials, systems and components. • Reconfiguration of grants and loans programmes to support home-owners to make proven and effective changes to reduce any negative environmental impact of their homes. • Increased greening of estates to improve overall well-being and environmental quality.
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Monitoring and Evaluation

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

Financial and managerial control measures include:

- 👉 Assessing the validity and sustainability of different sources of funding such as the use of prudential borrowing to support housing provided outside of but complementary to the HRA.
- 👉 Correct deployment of capital and revenue funding.
- 👉 Keeping under review all HRA revenue expenditure to make sure that the Council identifies and makes, wherever possible, meaningful revenue savings.
- 👉 Continued development of the QL housing management system. This now has enhanced property features reporting allowing for an expanded asset management register to not only capture the information from stock condition surveys but also capture details of compliance components such as asbestos and smoke detectors.
- 👉 Progressing self-sufficiency in the ability to generate mid- and long-term lifecycle forecasting, so the Council does not have to rely on outsourced providers for this critical intelligence about our housing assets.

- 👉 Use of a Dynamic Purchasing System to increase the speed of delivery of Estate works and Cyclical Decoration Programmes.

The HRA Business Plan assumptions and performance against targets and expectations are regularly subject to scrutiny. A monthly budget report is produced by the Council's finance team, which details the monthly status of the HRA. A group of senior officers meet each month to manage progress on the HRA Business Plan with the authority to make operational changes to make sure that investment programmes are managed effectively. 'New Homes for Powys' is overseen by the New Development Project Board, chaired by the Council's Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning & Economic Regeneration. During 2022-2023, a report on progress on the HRA Business Plan will be submitted to the TSP for scrutiny and comment.