

Cyngor Sir Powys County Council

Impact Assessment (IA)

The integrated approach to support effective decision making



Please read the accompanying guidance before completing the form.

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

Service Area	Housing Services	Head of Service	Nina Davies	Director	Nigel Brinn	Portfolio Holder	Cllr Iain McIntosh
Proposal	Changes to Housing Rent and Service Charges for 2021-2021						
Outline Summary / Description of Proposal							

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA), which is the means by which all municipal landlords in Wales are expected to manage the financing of their landlord services, is funded primarily by the income generated from rents. Additional one-off payments are available from the Welsh Government to support the building of new council-owned homes. These payments are designed to reduce the cost of providing additional homes so that the future rent charges can be set at genuinely affordable social rent levels. An annual sum of £3.63m is made available to the Council by the Welsh Government – this is the Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) to support the maintenance of municipal housing to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS), which is set by the Welsh Government.

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

The rents the Council can charge for properties held within the HRA are subject to controls set by the Welsh Government. These controls include expected bands for different types of properties in different areas, assessed by reference to a number of market conditions including house prices, private rents and local incomes. Increases in rents are limited by a formula set by the Welsh Government. For the period 2020-2021 to 2025-2026 this formula allows social landlords in Wales, both councils and housing associations, to increase rents by no more than CPI+1%, averaged across each landlord’s entire stock. This means that while rents could be increased by more than CPI+1% on some properties, within the bands set by the Welsh Government, the overall increase for all homes cannot increase the income by more than CPI+1%. This approach is designed to encourage landlords to operate efficiently while maintaining pressure to keep all rents as affordable as practicable.

The HRA is able to recover service charges for services provided for specific properties or groups of property where it is more practical and efficient to provide services on a collective basis. Examples include grass cutting of communal areas in and around flatted blocks. Such charges are not subject to any formal controls but must not amount to more than the actual cost of providing the services.

The HRA in Powys owns a number of garages, garage sites and retail shops. The rents on these are not controlled by the Welsh Government and can therefore be set to reflect the Council’s strategic and financial aims for these assets.

This proposal, in the form of the Cabinet Report: “Housing Revenue Account Rent and Related Charges Changes for 2021-22”, sets out the Council’s proposals for all charges and rents relating to the HRA for the period 2021-2022.

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

Version	Author	Job Title	Date
V1	Andy Thompson	Professional Lead - Housing	January 27 th , 2021

Cyngor Sir Powys County Council

Impact Assessment (IA)

The integrated approach to support effective decision making



2. Profile of savings delivery (if applicable)

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-2025	2025-26
£ N/A	£ N/A	£ N/A	£ N/A	£ N/A	£ N/A

3. Consultation requirements

Consultation Requirement	Consultation deadline/or justification for no consultation
Public consultation required	<p>Changes to rents and service charges must be notified to tenants and affected residents no later than 28 days before the changes are due to come into effect. It is therefore necessary for the Council to come to a decision about its proposals by no later than February 28th to allow sufficient time for tenants and residents to be notified of the changes. Residents can respond to the proposed changes during this time. However all tenancy and related agreements issued by the Council make provision for annual changes and uplifts in rents and service charges.</p> <p>In addition to formally notifying tenants and affected residents, the Council will, in the interests of open governance, advise the following groups of its intentions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Housing Partnership • Tenant Scrutiny Panel

Cyngor Sir Powys County Council

Impact Assessment (IA)

The integrated approach to support effective decision making



4. Impact on Other Service Areas

**Does the proposal have potential to impact on another service area? (Have you considered the implications on Health & Safety, Corporate Parenting and Data Protection?)
PLEASE ENSURE YOU INFORM / ENGAGE ANY AFFECTED SERVICE AREAS AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY**

Income and Awards – impact on housing benefit payments for tenants not receiving social security housing assistance via the Universal Credit system.

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

Council Priority	How does the proposal impact on this priority?	<u>IMPACT</u> Please select from drop down box below	What will be done to better contribute to positive or mitigate any negative impacts?	<u>IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION</u> Please select from drop down box below
The Economy We will develop a vibrant economy	Even a modest increase in rent and service charges means that individual residents may have less disposable income available.	Poor	Judicious increases in social rents, as per this proposal, will allow the Council to support the development of new affordable, social rented homes. This programme supports the local economy providing employment opportunities and local spend. Rents remain at an affordable level, below that expected by private rented accommodation providers. The Council will be able to maintain its investment programme in municipal housing – which accounts for one in ten of all homes in Powys – providing employment and business opportunities for local and regional people and enterprises. This will help support the 'Powys Pound'.	Good

Cyngor Sir Powys County Council

Impact Assessment (IA)

The integrated approach to support effective decision making



Council Priority	How does the proposal impact on this priority?	IMPACT Please select from drop down box below	What will be done to better contribute to positive or mitigate any negative impacts?	IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION Please select from drop down box below
Health and Care We will lead the way in effective, integrated rural health and care	<p>Social rented housing is required to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard. This includes making sure homes are thermally efficient, do not suffer from intrinsic damp and have decent facilities for such things as food preparation and personal hygiene. Such requirements do not apply to other tenures.</p> <p>The proposed modest increase in rents allows this work to continue.</p>	Good	<p>The Council will with the rent changes set out in this proposal be able to maintain its investment programme to keep municipal housing at the Welsh Housing Quality Standard, providing for 10% of all households in Powys safe, healthy homes in both urban and rural locations.</p>	Good
Learning and skills We will strengthen learning and skills	<p>Homelessness, which continues to rise across Powys, can significantly affect households with children having a detrimental effect on the children's education as they do not have a suitable environment to learn. The proposed rent increase allows the Council to continue to increase the provision of accessible, secure and affordable homes across the county.</p>	Good	<p>Judicious increases in social rents, as per this proposal, will allow the Council to support the development of more affordable, social rented homes to help provide homes for families. An additional benefit of providing more homes in a way that can help stem the rise in homelessness is that the Council may not face such a steep increase in demands on its General Fund for services to help those at risk of or experiencing homelessness.</p>	Good
Residents and Communities We will support our residents and communities	<p>As landlord for one in ten of all Powys households, and responsible for the neighbourhoods of many owner occupiers living on estates developed by the Council, the Council needs to have the capacity and capability to maintain these areas to a high standard so that people can 'Love Where They Live'.</p> <p>The proposed rent increase will support this ongoing work.</p>	Good	<p>The reasonable and comparatively low increases in social rents set out in this proposal will allow the Housing Service to continue to positively support the well-being of neighbourhoods and communities through the Estate Maintenance Service, developing new Caretaker Service and supporting the provision and improvements of play areas on municipal housing estates.</p>	Good

Source of Outline Evidence to support judgements

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

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

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

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

Cyngor Sir Powys County Council
Impact Assessment (IA)

The integrated approach to support effective decision making



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

Cyngor Sir Powys County Council
Impact Assessment (IA)

The integrated approach to support effective decision making



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

Cyngor Sir Powys County Council Impact Assessment (IA)

The integrated approach to support effective decision making



Well-being Goal	How does proposal contribute to this goal?	IMPACT Please select from drop down box below	What will be done to better contribute to positive or mitigate any negative impacts?	IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION Please select from drop down box below
<p>A globally responsible Wales: A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.</p> <p>Human Rights - is about being proactive (see guidance)</p> <p>UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Convention gives rights to everyone under the age of 18, which include the right to be treated fairly and to be protected from discrimination; that organisations act for the best interest of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and the right to be heard.</p>	<p>There is growing demand for safe and secure homes in Powys that are affordable to people with modest incomes, the county face the increased risks of more homelessness having detrimental impacts of social well-being, poor standards of accommodation affecting the quality of life and opportunities available to children and their parents and poorly maintained housing increasing fuel poverty and necessitating excessive use of fuels to keep homes warm. Maintaining rent income allows the council to provide quality homes that underpin wellbeing and a good start in life for young people.</p>	Good	<p>The reasonable and comparatively low increases in social rents set out in this proposal will allow the Housing Service to continue to positively support the well-being of neighbourhoods and communities by increasing the availability of high quality, fuel efficient homes.</p>	Good
<p>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language: A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.</p>				
<p><i>Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and treating the Welsh language no less favourable than the English language</i></p>	<p>Housing Services currently involves and engages with tenants through communication in their language of choice</p>	Neutral	<p>The reasonable and comparatively low increases in social rents set out in this proposal will allow the Housing Service to continue to positively support communications with tenants in the language of their choice, including Welsh.</p>	Neutral
<p><i>Opportunities to promote the Welsh language</i></p>	<p>No impact expected</p>	Choose an item.		Choose an item.
<p><i>Welsh Language impact on staff</i></p>	<p>No impact expected</p>	Choose an item.		Choose an item.
<p><i>People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation.</i></p>	<p>No impact expected</p>	Choose an item.		Choose an item.
<p>A more equal Wales: A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).</p>				

Cyngor Sir Powys County Council

Impact Assessment (IA)

The integrated approach to support effective decision making



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

Cyngor Sir Powys County Council

Impact Assessment (IA)

The integrated approach to support effective decision making



Source of Outline Evidence to support judgements

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

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

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

Principle	How does the proposal impact on this principle?	IMPACT Please select from drop down box below	What will be done to better contribute to positive or mitigate any negative impacts?	IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION Please select from drop down box below
Prevention: <i>Understanding the root causes of issues to prevent them from occurring.</i>	The Housing Service has adopted a preventative agenda with regard to its statutory duties, including maintaining homes to the WHQS and making sure homes are available, where possible, for those face with or experiencing homelessness.	Neutral	Judicious increases in social rents, as per this proposal, will allow the Council to support the development of more affordable, social rented homes to help provide and maintain a rising number of high quality, affordable homes in Powys that will help prevent the social and economic problems associated with homelessness, insecure homes and poor quality accommodation.	Good
Integration: <i>Taking an integrated approach so that public bodies look at all the well-being goals in deciding on their well-being objectives.</i>	The importance of affordable, secure housing is an essential foundation for people to have a good education, be healthy, find decent employment and to be able to participate in their communities. Many other agencies find their work hindered and hampered if their clients do not have a safe, secure, affordable homes of the type offered by the Council.	Neutral	Judicious increases in social rents, as per this proposal, will allow the Council to support the development of more affordable, social rented homes to help provide and maintain a rising number of high quality, affordable homes in Powys that will help support the ability of Housing Services to contribute to the work of such diverse bodies and agencies examples including the Powys Teaching Health Board, Dyfed Powys Police, the Council's own social services teams, education services, the Mid-Wales Growth Deal	Good
Preventing Poverty: Prevention, including helping people into work and mitigating the impact of poverty.	The lack of genuinely affordable homes, let at social rents, is directly linked to poverty. The more people have pay in rent, the less they have for other expenditure, exacerbating poverty and poor quality of life. The same applies if people are compelled to live in thermally inefficient accommodation, where high heating costs can add to the problems of low incomes, causing practical poverty.	Poor	Providing the opportunity for the Council to support the development of more affordable, social rented homes – and maintain those it currently owns to a high standard with reducing energy needs - by making judicious increases in rents will support the economy by allowing people to have more money to spend in the wider economy. This will help reduce poverty.	Good
Unpaid Carers: Ensuring that unpaid carers views are sought and taken into account	No impact expected	Unknown		Unknown

Cyngor Sir Powys County Council

Impact Assessment (IA)

The integrated approach to support effective decision making



Principle	How does the proposal impact on this principle?	IMPACT Please select from drop down box below	What will be done to better contribute to positive or mitigate any negative impacts?	IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION Please select from drop down box below
Safeguarding: Preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children, young people and adults with health and social care needs who can't protect themselves.	The Council's landlord service provides secure housing opportunities to help support households with children and vulnerable adults. This benefits the welfare of those concerned and helps to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm.	Neutral	Judicious increases in social rents, as per this proposal, will allow the Council to support the development of more affordable, social rented homes to increase the overall capacity of the Council to help people needing safeguarding related support.	Neutral
Impact on Powys County Council Workforce	None expected	Neutral		Neutral
Source of Outline Evidence to support judgements				
Welsh Government Rent Policy (December 2019); Welsh Government Rent Notification Notice (November 2020); Powys HRA Business Plan (2020); STAR Survey of Tenant Satisfaction (June 2019); WHQS Compliance Policy for Powys (2020-2021); Homeless Review and Strategy (2018); Compliance One Hundred Board reports; Housing Improvement and Assurance Board reports; 'Love Where You Live' Tenancy Sustainability Strategy (2018); WHO 12 ³ quarterly returns; 'Homes in Powys' housing waiting list data; Housing Service performance data.				

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

Severity of Impact on Communities	Scale of impact	Overall Impact
Low	Low	Low
Mitigation		
Increasing rents means the council can continue to:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Operate a viable and sustainable HRA. This will mean it may maintain WHQS. 👉 Maintain the current housing stock to a habitable standard, increasing health and well-being problems for residents. 👉 Continue the development programme for new homes, increasing the choice and options open to people looking for a safe, secure and affordable place to live in Powys. 👉 Provide tangible support to other Council services to help provide a balanced and coherent range of services to the people of Powys. 		

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

Cyngor Sir Powys County Council

Impact Assessment (IA)

The integrated approach to support effective decision making



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

The increases in rents proposed are within the parameters set by the Welsh Government's Rent Policy and are therefore likely to be accepted by the Welsh Government and residents in Powys. However, the Council will in future need to provide evidence to the Welsh Government of efficient and cost effective management of housing services to be able to increase rents at the maximum rate allowed by the Government. It is as yet unclear how the Welsh Government will assess this evidence and what action it may take should it consider the Council's proposals to be inadequate or do not meet its criteria for allowing full rent increases.

Description of risks			
Risk Identified	Inherent Risk Rating Impact X Likelihood (See Risk Matrix in guidance document)	Mitigation	Residual Risk Rating Impact X Likelihood (See Risk Matrix in guidance document)
Rent and charges increases proposed are not approved	9	Services and investment plans will be reviewed to identify those which can be reduced with the least risk to the integrity of the condition of the Council's housing assets, the development of new homes and the core management activities of letting homes promptly and collecting income due to the Council. Such programmes will be scaled back to bring overall expenditure in line with income.	4

10. Overall Summary and Judgement of this Impact Assessment?

Outline Assessment (to be inserted in cabinet report)	Cabinet Report Reference:
The impact on the Council of being able to increase rents by the amount set out in this proposal, will be considerable, as it will underpin a sustainable HRA Business Plan for 2021/22 and subsequent years.	

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

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

12. On-going monitoring arrangements?

What arrangements will be put in place to monitor the impact over time?

All HRA budgets are reviewed on a monthly basis.

Please state when this Impact Assessment will be reviewed.

December 2021 (to help inform and shape rent and service charge proposals for 2022-2023 Rent Year and the 2022-2023 HRA Business Plan update)

13. Sign Off

Position	Name	Signature	Date
Impact Assessment Lead:	Andy Thompson	<i>Andy Thompson</i>	January 26 th , 2021
Head of Service:	Nina Davies		
Director:	Nigel Brinn		
Portfolio Holder:	CLlr Iain McIntosh		

14. Governance

Decision to be made by	Cabinet	Date required	February 16 th , 2021
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FORM ENDS