



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

**Housing Revenue Account Thirty Year  
Business Plan 2021-2022**

**March 2021**

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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 2021, Powys County Council approved its Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Thirty Year Business Plan for 2021-2022. 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.

The Powys HRA Thirty Year Business Plan 2021-2022 contributes positively to maintaining and developing the Council's role as responsive and viable social landlord. 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. Risks arising from changes by the Welsh Government to rent and affordable housing grant policy and inflationary construction costs are mitigated. 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 the Mid Wales Growth Deal. It will also contribute 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, new floors 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 3326 people registered with 'Homes in Powys' as of January 2021 for a social rented home in Powys. This compares to 2274 in January 2020. The development of new Council-owned homes 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 objective to have a zero-net carbon economy and society by 2050. The average cost of making existing homes zero-carbon remain best estimates – for Powys a total of £112,000,000 would be needed, based on research undertaken by Inside Housing<sup>1</sup>. That equates to £20,742 per Council-owned home.

### *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 therefore been taken to the HRA Thirty Year Business Plan 2021-2022.

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<sup>1</sup> 'The cost of net zero: social landlords' decarbonisation plans revealed' – Inside Housing (November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 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. 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 2021-2022 – 118 new homes.
- ✓ Overall tenant satisfaction with the housing services provided by the Council: for 2021-2022 - 75%.
- ✓ Percentage of tenants satisfied with major programmes of repair and improvement: for 2021-2022 - 85%.
- ✓ Percentage of customer call backs satisfied with the responsive repairs service: for 2021-2022 - 95%.
- ✓ Percentage of heating appliances serviced in the previous 12 months: for 2021-2022 - 100%.
- ✓ Average end to end time for responsive repair: for 2021-2022 - 9 days.
- ✓ Percentage of rent collected: for 2021-2022 - 99.65%.
- ✓ Percentage of rent lost to empty properties: for 2021-2022 - 4%.

Powys County Council has in place a detailed suite of eleven service standards, which govern everything it does as a landlord<sup>2</sup>.

- Allocations and Lettings
- Customer Care
- Estate Management
- Anti-social Behaviour
- Quality of Accommodation Standard
- Repairs and Improvements
- Tenant Involvement
- Tenancy Management
- Rent and Income Collection
- Leaseholder
- Equality and Diversity

In 2021-2022, the Quality of Accommodation Standard will be improved, to represent 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 has since becoming part of Housing and Community Development in early 2019 continued to provide services for our communities. It remains one of the best in Wales for collecting rent, it 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 is more than meeting 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 is being developed. Called 'Moving on Up', the new delivery model will be rolled out during 2021.

'Moving on Up' has been informed by feedback shared by members of the service and the Tenant Scrutiny Panel at workshops held in the autumn of 2020, current and past performance, a detailed look at workload data and the social and financial opportunities and challenges the Council faces across all services. Most importantly, the proposals have been shaped by what is wanted from the Council by the people of Powys.

'Moving on Up' will...

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<sup>2</sup> The Service Standards can be found at: Further details: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/2667/Council-Housing-Landlord-Service---Service-Standards>

- ☺ Provide more resources – financial, capacity and capability - for more efficient investment in homes and communities – including building new Council-owned homes, estate and cyclical maintenance, environmental sustainability and improvements to homes.
- ☺ Reduce complexity of the service to give greater clarity to clients and colleagues of where responsibilities rest.
- ☺ Increase flexibility to manage different delivery models for works to properties and support to vulnerable clients (including those who are homeless).
- ☺ Develop homelessness services to be better placed to respond to increasing demand and changing legislation expanding the scope of households who may be owed greater duties by the Council to keep or find a home.
- ☺ Support local delivery of services.

‘Moving on Up’ is being 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.

The current service structure is based around four area housing management teams.

-  Brecon and Ystradgynlais
-  Welshpool and Machynlleth
-  Llandrindod Wells
-  Newtown and Llanidloes.

The area-based housing management teams, which form the nucleus of ‘Tenancy Services’, are supported by centrally managed but locally based teams.

-  ‘Housing One’ the First Contact service that provides the internet and telephone connections with our tenants and clients.
-  ‘Asset Management’ which manages the investment necessary to make sure our homes are kept to high standard, now and in the future.
-  ‘Housing Solutions’ which provides strategic and policy support across the service in areas such as homelessness, oversees the Council’s work to improve the quality of privately owned housing and has responsibility for developing new Council-owned homes.

The Housing Service 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 seven housing associations.

The Council and Kier, a privately owned company, together own a Joint Venture Company called Heart of Wales Property Services (HoWPS) which is jointly owned by the Council and Kier. HoWPS has a five-year contract, starting in July 2017, for the delivery of responsive maintenance to HRA properties and some planned maintenance work. In addition, HoWPS delivers all responsive and planned maintenance to corporate properties and major capital projects on behalf of the Council. In autumn 2020, the Council undertook a detailed review of the service provided by HoWPS, taking account of performance and value for money. The responses needed to reflect the outcome of the review will be agreed by the Council in early 2021.

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.

In 2020, the findings of an up-to-date Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) covering Powys and seven other authorities (including two National Parks) were published. The LHMA provides a South & West Wales regional approach with disaggregated data of the nine Powys market areas and the Brecon Beacons National Park area.

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 Affordable Housing team to assess need in the County and 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 January 2020, 2274 people were registered with 'Homes in Powys'. The table below shows the number of applicants registered in each band. Bands One to Three (1892 applicants) are applicants with a housing need and are who ready to move. During the first three quarters of 2020-21 all social landlords providing homes in Powys let 506 properties.

### *Breakdown of Applicants Registered with Homes in Powys - by Band (December 2020)*

	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Total
<b>Number of Households</b>	16	101	1775	1126	308	3326

Household size has for a number of years been reducing in Powys. The table below shows a breakdown of the applicants registered at the end of December 2020 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.

### *Breakdown of Applicants Registered with Homes in Powys - by Minimum Bedroom Size (December 2020)*

Minimum bedroom size	Number of Households
One	1905
Two	893
Three	408
Four	104
Five	11
Six	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>3326</b>

The table below shows the tenure of applicants registered with Homes in Powys at the end of December 2020. 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.

### *Breakdown of Applicants Registered with Homes in Powys - by Current Tenure (December 2020)*

Current Tenure	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Grand Total
Adult Placement		1	9	6	2	18
Clwyd Alyn Housing Association Tenancy		8	20	25	6	59
Grwp Cynefin Tenancy			4	1	4	9

Gwalia Housing Tenancy		1	30	12	2	45
HM forces accommodation		1	2	1	1	5
In home provided by employer			15	4	2	21
Living in care			10	2	1	13
Living with parents			174	104	21	299
Lodging			32	7	7	46
Melin Homes Tenancy			1	7		8
Mid Wales Housing Association Tenancy	1	16	76	63	15	171
Newydd Housing Association Tenancy		1	14	10	6	31
Other	5		195	111	36	347
Other Social Landlord		1	73	96	22	192
Owner Occupier	1		124	60	14	199
Powys County Council Tenancy	6	65	202	148	38	459
Renting from a private	3		475	377	85	940
Rough Sleeper			71	10	9	90
Staying with friends/relatives			194	39	29	262
Temporary Accommodation			17		1	18
Wales & West Housing Association Tenancy		7	37	43	7	94
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>1775</b>	<b>1126</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>3326</b>

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 803 applicants followed by 'Homeless, or about to become homeless' at 737 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 (January 2020)***

Housing Need	Homes in Powys Partner Tenure	Non- Homes in Powys Partner Tenure	Total
Housing for older people required	47	235	282
Need to move to give or receive support and proven level of support is required and can be given	115	270	385

Found employment in the area and need to move closer to work or will otherwise lose that employment	33	104	137
Existing home is overcrowded	167	333	500
Other reason	328	826	1154
Current home planned to be demolished or needs major repairs	17	102	119
Existing house is too large for my needs	120	215	335
Experiencing anti-social behaviour or harassment	190	243	433
Experiencing domestic violence	26	104	130
Medical need or have a disability and my existing home is not appropriate for my needs	256	547	803
Current home has disabled adaptations which are no longer required	12	12	24
Homeless, or about to become homeless	47	690	737
Current home is unaffordable	63	398	461
Leaving prison	0	17	17

*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 and the 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 £493,064,549 in the homes it provides for the people of Powys. Of this, £188,638,939 will be invested in maintaining the WHQS and £24,940,000 will be invested in other major capital improvement programmes. The responsive and cyclical maintenance programmes will benefit from investment of £280,930,610. An additional £68,076,617 (excluding grant support) will be invested over the next five years 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 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 2021-2022, 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. The first 118 new Council-owned homes will be complete 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 425 homes by 2026 – raising the very real possibility of new development exceeding the Council's target of 250 new homes by this date. Progressing all new developments is dependent upon securing all necessary planning and other regulatory consents and securing viable development sites. However, land has been identified across Powys with the potential to develop another 1,000 Council homes.

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.

Further additions to the social housing available to people living in Powys will be secured through continuing the programme of property acquisitions. This will run at between ten and twenty per year depending 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.

### ***New Homes for Powys - Financial Summary 2021-22 to 2025-2026***

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>HRA Business Plan Investment</b>	<b>Number of New Homes Completed and Let</b>	<b>Notes</b>
2021-2022	£13,480,000	17	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 and other regulatory consents, securing viable development sites and where needed social housing grant.
2022-2023	£17,122,000	121	
2023-2024	£22,112,000	31	
2024-2025	£20,548,000	144	
2025-2026	£15,068,000	112	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£88,330,000</b>	<b>425</b>	

### **Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)**

Powys achieved the WHQS standard in December 2018. The focus has moved towards targeting ‘acceptable fails’<sup>3</sup> and maintaining WHQS over the next five years by:

-  Reviewing support and working methods for residents concerned about disruption.
-  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 2021-22 to 2025-2026***

<b>Investment</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2024-2025</b>	<b>2025-2026</b>
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<sup>3</sup> 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.

Kitchens	£400,000	£600,000	£420,000	£400,000	£600,000
Bathrooms	£150,000	£473,000	£200,000	£200,000	£0
Rewiring	£200,000	£180,000	£120,000	£60,000	£100,000
Windows	£399,000	£399,000	£300,000	£0	£0
Roofing	£2,600,000	£1,500,000	£1,000,000	£400,000	£400,000
Walls	£500,000	£450,000	£400,000	£0	£0
Estate Works (contribute to Love Where You Live Programme)	£1,000,000	£1,400,000	£800,000	£800,000	£800,000
External Wall Insulation (contributes to Green Powys)	£500,000	£300,000	£0	£000,000	£0
Heating (contributes to Green Powys)	£1,500,000	£1,500	£1,400,000	£1,400,000	£1,400,000
Energy Efficiency (contributes to Green Powys)	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£700,000
Asbestos Management (contributes to Compliance One Hundred)	£150,000	£150,000	£100,000	£250,000	£0
Doors	£104,000	£250,000	£200,000	£0	£0
Miscellaneous WHQS	£1,220,000	£651,000	£250,000	£250,000	£150,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£9,223,000</b>	<b>£8,352,000</b>	<b>£5,690,000</b>	<b>£4,260,000</b>	<b>£4,150,000</b>

## 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. 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 2021-22 to 2025-2026*

<b>Investment</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2024-2025</b>	<b>2025-2026</b>
Fire Safety Works	£170,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000
Water Supply and Sewerage Works	£200,000	£150,000	£150,000	£200,000	£300,000
Legionella	£150,000	£150,000	£200,000	£250,000	£250,000
WHQS Contributions to Compliance One Hundred (Asbestos Management)	£150,000	£150,000	£100,000	£250,000	£0
Day-to-day Repairs Contribution to Compliance One Hundred	£430,000	£480,000	£400,000	£310,000	£310,000
<b>Total Compliance One Hundred Investment Programme</b>	<b>£1,100,000</b>	<b>£1,030,000</b>	<b>£950,000</b>	<b>£1,110,000</b>	<b>£960,000</b>

## **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 bio-diversity, encourage appreciation of the natural world and give a greener feel to our communities.

As the ‘Green Heart of Wales’ Powys County Council is working to improve the thermal comfort of its council-owned homes and at the same time helping to reduce the carbon footprint of the county. The cost of decarbonising all homes currently owned by the Council is difficult to quantify. However, a broad-brush estimate based on research undertaken by Inside Housing suggests a possible investment of £112m will be needed for Powys. The Council is exploring sustainable heating systems, such as ground source heat pumps and replacing gas-fired boilers with ones that can easily be converted to use hydrogen.

The Council is taking part in the Welsh Government’s Optimised Retrofit initiative. Powys is 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 a member of the Welsh Government’s ‘Collaborative Innovation Support Programme’ project: ‘Zero Carbon: The development of a manual for the manufacture and assembly of a Zero Carbon, two-bedroom home for four

people'. This project will inform the development of standard design and construction methodologies for new-build zero-carbon homes.

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

***Green Powys Financial Summary 2021-22 to 2025-2026***

<b>Investment</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2024-2025</b>	<b>2025-2026</b>
Damp Prevention	£150,000	£175,000	£175,000	£175,000	£200,000
Photo-voltaic (Solar Panels)	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000
Decarbonisation and Energy Efficiency	£90,000	£90,000	£100,000	£250,000	£250,000
WHQS Contributions to Green Powys	£2,500,000	£2,300,000	£1,900,000	£1,900,000	£2,100,000
Day-to-day Repairs Contribution to Green Powys	£300,000	£300,000	£325,000	£350,000	£350,000
<b>Total Green Powys Investment Programme</b>	<b>£3,115,000</b>	<b>£2,940,000</b>	<b>£2,575,000</b>	<b>£2,750,000</b>	<b>£2,975,000</b>

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 wherever practicable the use of timber in construction work.

**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 2021-22 to 2025-2026***

<b>Investment</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2024-2025</b>	<b>2025-2026</b>
Fit for Purpose	£1,800,000	£1,700,000	£1,400,000	£1,200,000	£1,000,000
Adaptations - Capital	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000
Adaptations - Revenue	£515,000	£528,815	£536,860	£548,130	£559,640
<b>Total Fit for Life Investment</b>	<b>£2,565,000</b>	<b>£2,478,815</b>	<b>£2,186,860</b>	<b>£1,998,130</b>	<b>£1,809,640</b>

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 2021-22 to 2025-2026***

<b>Investments</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2024-2025</b>	<b>2025-2026</b>
Brecon Area Estate Improvements	£20,000	£25,000	£36,000	£36,000	£36,000
Newtown Area Estate Improvements	£20,000	£25,000	£36,000	£36,000	£36,000
Welshpool Area Estate Improvements	£20,000	£25,000	£36,000	£36,000	£36,000
Wye Valley Estate Improvements	£20,000	£25,000	£36,000	£36,000	£36,000
Ystradgynlais Estate Improvements	£20,000	£25,000	£36,000	£36,000	£36,000
Car Parking	£0	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000

Communal Area Improvements	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000
Garage Strategy	£200,000	£200,000	£400,000	£400,000	£400,000
Penybryn Regeneration	£700,000	£700,000	£300,000	£0	£0
Play Area Improvements	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000
WHQS Contributions to Love Where You Live (Estate and Boundary Works)	£1,000,000	£1,400,000	£800,000	£800,000	£800,000
Day-to-day Repairs Contribution to Green Powys	£819,900	£1,345,000	£1,371,400	£1,379,700	£1,406,300
<b>Total Love Where You Live Investment</b>	<b>£2,944,900</b>	<b>£3,970,000</b>	<b>£3,251,400</b>	<b>£2,959,700</b>	<b>£2,986,300</b>

### Penybryn Regeneration

In Penybryn, Ystradgynlais, the Council has a cluster of flats, for which there is little or no 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. 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

Repairs and maintenance covers day-to-day repairs and cyclical maintenance to the Council's homes. The majority of this work is undertaken for the Council by its joint venture with Kier, Heart of Wales Property Services (HoWPS). HoWPS is paid an annual sum to undertake all works set out in a Service Agreement between it and the Council. Any day-to-day works not covered in the agreement are funded on an as-needs basis by the Council. A review of the services provided for the Council by HoWPS took place in 2020, with responses that reflect the findings of the review to be agreed early in 2021.

### ***Repairs and Maintenance Financial Summary 2021-22 to 2025-2026***

<b>Investments</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2024-2025</b>	<b>2025-2026</b>
HoWPS Service Agreement	£5,303,130	£5,414,500	£5,528,200	£5,644,290	£5,762,820
HoWPS Service contingency	£170,000	£0	£0	£0	£0
Day-to-day and cyclical repairs not covered by HoWPS Service Agreement	£2,326,900	£2,518,170	£2,523,120	£2,493,720	£2,529,930
External Painting	£350,000	£357,350	£364,850	£372,510	£380,330
Estate and Grounds Maintenance	£888,970	£907,640	£926,700	£946,160	£966,030
Miscellaneous Expenditure	£142,320	£145,310	£148,360	£151,480	£154,660
<b>Total Repairs and Maintenance Investment</b>	<b>£9,181,320</b>	<b>£9,342,970</b>	<b>£9,491,230</b>	<b>£9,608,160</b>	<b>£9,793,859</b>

### **Housing Management System**

To improve the efficiency of Housing Services by taking advantage of the latest in information technology, provision has been made in the HRA Business Plan for the full cost of purchasing, installing and bringing into use a new housing management system. Work on this, with associated expenditure, will be completed in 2021-2022. The total cost is estimated at £1,000,000, with 20% spent in 2020-2021 and 80% in 2021-2022.

During 2020-2021, 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 the first quarter of 2021-2022, subject to it 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 20 homes on the open market, 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 £8,200,000 set aside over 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 5,421 properties under its management, as of March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. This includes thirty-two new homes in Brecon<sup>4</sup> which will come on stream at the end of 2020-2021 and the start of 2021-2022. 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	11	10	1				22
Double House					1		1
First Floor Flat	47	155	7				209
Ground Floor Bedsit	4						4
Ground Floor Flat	45	137	1				184
House	26	708	2076	121	7	3	2941
Maisonette		24	40				64
Second Floor Flat	13	18					31
Third Floor (or higher) Flat	3	4					7
<b>Totals</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>1056</b>	<b>2125</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3463</b>

### Properties Designated for Older Persons

Property Type	Bedrooms						Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Bungalow	443	904	8	1			1356
Double House							
First Floor Flat	89	143	1				233
Ground Floor Bedsit	9						9
Ground Floor Flat	144	197	1				342
House			1				1
Maisonette							
Second Floor Flat							
Third Floor (or higher) Flat							
<b>Totals</b>	<b>693</b>	<b>1253</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>			<b>1958</b>

<sup>4</sup> The Maes Maendu, Brecon new homes scheme made up of 12 x 1-bedroom flats, 15 x 2-bedroom houses, 3 x 3-bedroom houses, 2 x 4-bedroom houses and 1 x 5-bedroom house.

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). Rents are set within the Welsh Government’s overall guidance which sets target rent bands to make sure that local authorities and housing associations set reasonable rents.

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 2021-2022 of CPI+1%, equivalent to 1.5%, is necessary 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 2021 the average rent in Powys will increase by 1.5% (£1.39 per week) for all 5389 Council owned homes. This is considerably lower than last year’s average increase of £2.42 per week. 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 2020-21 and 2021-22***

	<b>Current Rent - 2020-2021</b>	<b>Recommended Rent - 2021-2022</b>	<b>Weekly Increase</b>
<b>Average HRA rent</b>	£92.43	£93.82	£1.39
<b>Maximum HRA rent</b>	£156.78	£159.13	£2.35

The Council is during the Covid-19 pandemic taking a proportionate and pragmatic approach to the collection of rent. While the ‘Rent First’ ethos remains the guiding principle, tenants who are facing unavoidable financial challenges linked to the Covid-19 event are being offered 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 Tenancy Support Officers and the Housing Management and Options 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 end of January 2021 income recovery was running at 96.18% of rent due; for the same period last year this was 97.55%. This rigorous but pragmatic approach will continue in 2021-2022 when it is expected to yield a similar success rate.

**Powys Service Charges for 2020-2021 and 2021-2022**

Service Charge	Highest Weekly Service Charge		Lowest Weekly Service Charge (where a charge is made)		How the Service Charge is Calculated
	2020-2021	2021-2022	2020-2021	2021-2022	
Grounds maintenance	£1.59	£2.47	£0.04	£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	£1.61	£1.61	£1.61	Based on the total cost of the work, divided by all those who receive the service.
Communal heating and lighting	£0.91	£1.18	£0.91	£1.18	Based on the total cost of the service, divided by all those who receive the service.
Fire safety work	£1.74	£1.33	£0.12	£0.04	Based on actual costs per block and divided by all residents of the block.
TV aerials	No cost as of 21.1.2020	No cost as of 14.01.2021	No cost as of 21.1.2020	No cost as of 14.01.2021	Based on the costs associated with each aerial and divided by all potential users of the aerial system.
Repairs to entrance doors	TBA	N/A	TBA	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	£0.26	Based on actual costs per block and divided by all residents of the block.
Sewerage treatment	£5.65	£9.46	£5.65	£9.46	Based on the total cost of the work, divided by all those who

					receive the service.
Lift maintenance	No costs in 20/21	£0.43	No costs in 20/21	£0.23	Costs split equally between tenants with lifts (for servicing)
Repairs to communal areas in flats	£2.45	N/A	£0.01	N/A	Costs per block divided between all residents of the block

There has been an increase in repairs needed to sewerage and water treatment plants to make sure that the systems remain legally compliant and operate in a way that satisfies the requirements of Natural Resources Wales. A programme of capital investment is being put in place as part of the Business Plan to replace aging equipment which is becoming more likely to need repairs.

### Garage and Garage Plot Rents for 2020-21 and 2021-22

	Existing Rent - 2020-21	Recommended Rent - 2021-22
<b>Garage Rents</b>	£9.86 per week	£12.50 per week
<b>Rent for Garage Plots</b>	£138.96 per annum	£159.00 per annum

A review has been completed of all the garage sites and plots owned by the Council. The review considered the demand for and suitability of garages for car parking, the condition of the buildings and the options for other uses for the sites, for example the development of new homes or car parking. For garage provision to continue to be viable, investment in the existing garage estate or new build garages to accommodate modern cars will be necessary in those sites that are to be retained.

### 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*

- 👉 General inflation at 2.2% for RPI in 2020-2021 and 1.2% afterwards and 1.7% for CPI in 2020-2021 and 0.5% annually afterwards
- 👉 Major Repairs Allowance: £3,699,000 annually over 30 years.

- ☞ Allowable Rent Increases: CPI target plus 1.0% uplift, as per guidance issued by Welsh Government.
- ☞ Usable Reserves: Contingency of a minimum of £1,000,000 per annum.
- ☞ Voids and Bad Debts: 7% (4% voids and 3% bad debt)
- ☞ Responsive Repairs and Cyclical Maintenance Costs: Rate of inflation (RPI) for years 1 – 30.
- ☞ Payments to HoWPS (until 2022): The annual changes to the contract fee paid to HoWPS for the five-year period, which influence the investment needed in repairs and maintenance, have been assumed according to the figure agreed and the formula set out in the Service Agreement and used for 2021-2022. This takes account of efficiency savings included within the Service Agreement between the Council and HoWPS.
- ☞ Repairs and Maintenance (after 2021):
- ☞ Major Repairs: 0.9% annually above inflation (RPI) for years 2 - 4
- ☞ Rate of inflation: (RPI) for years 5 – 30
- ☞ Financial Support for New Social Housing: Changes are expected to how 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, a grant rate of 35% has been assumed.

### ***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 was introduced across the County along with two dedicated, directly managed in-house grounds and estate maintenance teams. As a result, there have been visible and tangible improvements to the way the Council's estates look and feel.
-  Trialled 'Pop-up Powys', a joint project with the Council's Library service to take services out into the community, making creative use of the mobile library service. This has been 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.
-  Reviewed the operational plan that has been put together for the 41 play areas located on housing estate land, so that a strategic approach to investing into the areas can be developed to prioritise the work at each play area over the next 5-10 years.

In 2021-2022, Love Where You Live' will:

-  Pilot a tri-Annual Tenancy Visit and 'Housing MoT' for every tenant, which will allow for 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 are 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. These events have had to be suspended during 2020-2021 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 lifted, building on the trial at the end of 2019-2020 of 'Pop-up Powys' in which housing teams visited communities for a few hours, to meet and discuss with tenants and residents their aspirations for their homes and communities and the better understand their experiences of housing services.

### **'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 2019, the Council took part in the STAR survey of tenants. The survey showed:

- 65% overall satisfaction.
- 77% satisfied with quality of the home.
- 84% happy with neighbourhood as a place to live.
- 71% felt rent provides value for money.
- 65% felt service charge provides value for money.
- 54% satisfied with repairs and maintenance.

While the overall level of satisfaction was good, particularly with the quality of homes, neighbourhood and value for money, the Council wants to do even better. A Customer First Improvement Plan was introduced in October 2019 to guide and monitor work underway to improve tenant satisfaction along with initiatives and future changes to policy and process. It has included enhanced customer service training. The changes being introduced by 'Moving on Up' and the new approach to delivering repairs and maintenance are designed, through increased localisation of service delivery, better specification of works and rigorous quality assurance, to increase customer satisfaction.

From November 2011, random calls have been made to tenants who have reported repairs that need attending to. This is done by the Council's own First Contact officers and assesses the customer experience from the moment they try to report the repair to when it is completed. Initial results show satisfaction running at 75%. The survey was suspended between March and September 2020, in recognition of the impact of the Covid-19 event. Latest results show for the period between September 2020 and January 2021, out of the 112 calls made, 80 tenants stated that they were very

satisfied/satisfied with the repairs to their homes which gives a satisfaction rating of 78.5%.

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 86% 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 31<sup>st</sup>, 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 2021-2022*

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

		<p>reflect quality of home expected by tenants at the start of their tenancy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roll-out of regular ‘Housing MoT’ for every Council home to capture individual views &amp; identify any issues impacting on tenancy sustainability.</li> <li>• Implementation of ‘Love Where You Live’ Strategy which is centred on a clear understanding of individual tenant’s expectations.</li> <li>• Continuously and routinely capture and respond to tenants’ views and service experiences.</li> </ul>
Allocation and lettings not effectively contributing to meeting housing demand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Social and economic disruption experienced by people living in homes and communities that hinder their ability to participate in work and community life.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Ongoing focus to make sure that investment in homes is matched to housing needs.</li> <li>• Working with individuals to help them take the lead in resolving their housing needs providing appropriate support as and when needed.</li> <li>• Collaborative working with all social landlords, housing developers and other accommodation providers to better match supply with demand.</li> </ul>
Unable to secure and/or fund viable opportunities for the development and acquisition of new social housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to meet Vision 2025 objective to deliver 250 homes by the end of 2025.</li> <li>• Increased waiting lists and homelessness arising from a reduced ability to meet housing needs.</li> <li>• Community stability undermined by reduced housing opportunities for as wide a range of households as possible.</li> <li>• Financial viability of HRA Business Plan undermined by reduce ability to increase income through increase income from increased stock numbers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value engineering of design and construction to increase value-for-money.</li> <li>• Identify opportunities for cross subsidy from market housing to increase resources for investment in social housing.</li> <li>• Increase collaborative working with economic development team and agencies to be better placed to take advantage of commercial-to-residential conversion opportunities.</li> <li>• Identify alternative funding sources for investment in social homes.</li> </ul>

Repairs and maintenance service and improvement programmes failing to deliver high quality services and outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer satisfaction falls, reducing confidence by tenants in the Council.</li> <li>• Properties fall into disrepair, increasing future maintenance liabilities.</li> <li>• Excess costs are generated by remedial work to put right poor-quality repairs.</li> <li>• Safety standards are compromised by poor quality or non-delivered repairs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous quality assurance of work for example post-inspections and tenant surveys informing changes in policy and process.</li> <li>• Amend delivery model to address performance failings and improve services.</li> <li>• Value engineer specifications.</li> </ul>
Technical and cost challenges of making substantial environmental improvements to housing assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Reduced consumer appeal of municipal housing.</li> <li>• Unfunded design requirements reducing provision of additional affordable and secure housing opportunities for households with low and middle incomes.</li> <li>• Financial insecurity for private home-owners arising from unfunded changes to systems and components (for example heating systems).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous review and research of all systems, components and materials to identify those which contribute positively and cost effectively to long term environmental sustainability.</li> <li>• Increased use of locally sourced (Powys &gt; Wales &gt; United Kingdom &gt; Global) materials and components.</li> <li>• Increased use of recycled materials.</li> <li>• Increased involvement of communities in designing and approving materials, systems and components.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Increased greening of estates to improve overall well-being and environmental quality.</li> </ul>

## 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 2021-2022, a report on progress on the HRA Business Plan will be submitted to the TSP for scrutiny and comment.