

## Housing Information Group (HIG) Meeting 26 September 2019

**Cydweli 1 and 2, Welsh Government Offices, Cathays Park, Cardiff**

### Attendees

Nia Roblin	United Welsh Housing Association
Angela Bowen	Carmarthenshire County Council
Nathan Hartley	Carmarthenshire County Council
Matthew Miller	Carmarthenshire County Council
Keryl Lanfear	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Jenny Murphy	Newport City Homes
Mark Harris	Home Builders Federation Ltd
Ross Thomas	Tai Pawb
Simon Lannon (SL)	The Welsh School of Architecture
Michelle Lewis	Citizens Advice
Juliet Morris (JM)	Care & Repair Cymru
Jo Patterson	Cardiff University
Bob Smith (BS)	Cardiff University
Bryony Haynes	Community Housing Cymru
Sarah Scotcher	Community Housing Cymru
Paul Webb (PW)	Welsh Government (KAS)
Luned Jones (LJ)	Welsh Government (KAS)
Sue Leake	Welsh Government (KAS)
Rhian Davies (RD)	Welsh Government (KAS)
Gowan Watkins (GW)	Welsh Government (KAS)
Laura Andrews	Welsh Government (KAS)
Huw Lewis	Welsh Government (KAS)
Lisa Dobbins (LD)	Welsh Government (Housing Policy)
Darren Hatton	Welsh Government (Housing Policy)
Cathy Johnson	Welsh Government (Housing Policy)
Sian Coggins	Welsh Government (Housing Policy)
Fran MacDonald (FM)	Welsh Government (Housing Policy)
Siwan Gwyndaf	Welsh Government (Housing Policy) (Videoconference)

### Apologies

Chantal Jordan	Carmarthenshire County Council
Ceri Meloy	Tai Pawb
Karl Thomas	Welsh Government
Paul Robinson	Welsh Government

## 1. Welcome and introduction

PW welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## 2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

There were no comments on the minutes of the previous HIG meeting. PW ran through the action from the last meeting:

- Action: BS to circulate a link to the [CACHE research reports](#) – completed.

## 3. Decarbonisation of homes through energy efficiency measures

LD and SL both presented on decarbonisation of home in Wales.

### Decarbonising Welsh homes

LD gave a presentation covering the requirements, recommendations and importance of decarbonising the housing stock in Wales. She highlighted the change in the target for reduction of carbon emissions by 2050 from 80 percent to 95 percent following advice from the Climate Change Committee. Such a reduction requires actions to decarbonise homes through a retrofit programme.

There were seven main recommendations made in the [Better Homes, Better Wales, Better World](#) report published 18 July 2019 which were all accepted (in principle) by the Housing and Local Government Minister (Julie James) earlier this week (24 September 2019). LD stated that there was cross-party support for these recommendations also and that programme development had already commenced with a view to implement during the new term of Government from summer 2021.

### Homes of today for tomorrow

SL covered the two main stages of decarbonising houses in Wales between 2020 and 2050 in detail. The first stage was understanding the challenge and the second step was a modelling exercise to understand the size and shape of the Welsh housing stock, and it's potential to be decarbonised.

SL presented his findings from stage one and outlined that the resulting model included:

- 14 dwelling models to represent the Welsh housing stock
- Four retrofit narratives to explore domestic retrofit options
- Three energy supply scenarios to investigate the impact of cleaner energy.

There were three scenarios considered (based on the original target of decarbonising 80 percent of homes by 2050, rather than the updated 95 percent target). Capital costs were presented followed by recommendations.

There were follow up discussions regarding heat pumps. SL had stated that heat pumps can increase the cost of energy bills despite being more efficient as the cost of moving to electricity from gas increases more than the reduction in bills. Therefore, solutions could involve heat pumps in addition to renewables.

He had been grateful to be able to use the results of the latest WHCS in the modelling work.

There was some discussion about evidence requirements e.g. recognising need to evaluate and understand impact on energy use within homes, taking account of behaviours and vulnerability of householders.

#### **4. Evidence on energy efficiency of homes and fuel poverty**

The group were made aware of the updated publication date of 23 October 2019 for the upcoming Energy Efficiency of Dwellings report.

GW presented on the main findings of the recently published Fuel Poverty report published on 29 August 2019:

- 155,000 households in fuel poverty, equivalent to 12 percent of all households (332,000, 26 percent; 2008). Of these 32,000 were in severe fuel poverty, equivalent to two percent of all households (60,000, five percent, 2008)
- 130,000 vulnerable households in fuel poverty, equivalent to 11 percent of all vulnerable households. (285,000, 29 percent; 2008). Of these 19,000 were in severe fuel poverty, equivalent to two percent of all vulnerable households (52,000, five percent: 2008).

GW also covered how the results compared to the other UK nations, the types of fuel poor households and fuel poor dwellings, and the reasons for the improvement since 2008.

JM pointed out that the improvement in fuel poverty is spread across all type of people rather than specifically vulnerable people. GW added that the Fuel Poverty Strategy that ran from 2010 to 2018 has elapsed and the new one is due to be consulted on this autumn.

#### **5. Innovative Housing Programme (IHP)**

DH discussed how the IHP have been demonstrating energy efficiency and zero carbon homes. The programme aims to create demonstrator schemes to help inform us about the type of homes we should support in the future, and also aligns with a number of goals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (WFGA). DH talked through the different types of housing that had been part of the programme during years one, two and three.

A requirement of this work is that all schemes will be required to provide access for third party to install monitoring meters to evaluate the impact of the new housing developments. However, no third party has carried out research on the available data yet. DH stated that there is likely to be one more year of funding for the IHP (extending it from three to four years).

#### **6. CaCHE update**

BS discussed paper (circulated during meeting) relating to the UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence and highlighted the forthcoming CaCHE events in Wales on 12 November 2018 ('Delivering Additional Affordable Housing in Wales') and 9 January 2020 (Housing conference). GW demonstrated the CaCHE Knowledge exchange hub to the group.

## **7. Housing update**

LJ gave overview of Housing Update Paper discussing what's been published and what's upcoming. She highlighted the latest homelessness statistics published today (26 September 2019) and the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) results due out next week (3 October 2019), and added that the estimates of housing need were published earlier this year.

## **8. Housing research**

RD gave an update on Housing Research (included within Welsh Government update paper). She advised that current work is ongoing with a few projects, one of which is to gain understanding of tenants' views and experiences of the private rented sector with regards to eviction, relationships with landlord, etc).

There is also a link to the draft National Development Framework (NDF) and a number of the Welsh Government consultations in Section 4 of the Housing Update Paper.

## **Any other business**

The HIG annual seminar will take place on 30 January 2021. LJ asked HIG members to consider potential topics.

Action: WG to ask HIG members to suggest topics for the January 2020 seminar.