

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Pwyllgor Archwilio

The National Assembly for Wales
Audit Committee

Adnewyddu Tai y Sector Preifat yng Nghymru
Renewal of Private Sector Housing in Wales

Cwestiynau 1-140
Questions 1-140

Dydd Iau 15 Ionawr 2004
Thursday 15 January 2004

Aelodau o'r Cynulliad yn bresennol: Janet Davies (Cadeirydd), Leighton Andrews, Alun Cairns, Jocelyn Davies, Mark Isherwood, Denise Idris Jones, Val Lloyd, Carl Sargeant, Christine Gwyther, Mick Bates.

Swyddogion yn bresennol: Syr John Bourn, Archwilydd Cyffredinol Cymru; Lew Hughes, Swyddfa Archwilio Genedlaethol Cymru; Gillian Body, Swyddfa Archwilio Genedlaethol Cymru; Ceri Thomas, Swyddog Cydymffurfio Dros Dro Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru.

Tystion: Syr Jon Shortridge, Ysgrifennydd Parhaol Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru; David Richards, Prif Swyddog Cyllid Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru; Brendon Hilbourne, Pennaeth yr Uned Sector Preifat, Cyfarwyddiaeth Tai Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru.

Assembly Members present: Janet Davies (Chair), Leighton Andrews, Alun Cairns, Jocelyn Davies, Mark Isherwood, Denise Idris Jones, Val Lloyd, Carl Sargeant, Christine Gwyther, Mick Bates.

Officials present: Sir John Bourn, Auditor General for Wales; Lew Hughes, National Audit Office Wales; Gillian Body, National Audit Office Wales; Ceri Thomas, Acting Compliance Officer, National Assembly for Wales.

Witnesses: Sir Jon Shortridge, Permanent Secretary, National Assembly for Wales; David Richards, Principal Finance Officer, National Assembly for Wales; Brendon Hilbourne, Head of Private Sector Unit, Housing Directorate, National Assembly for Wales.

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.30 a.m.
The meeting began at 9.30 a.m.*

[1] **Janet Davies:** Good morning. First of all, I welcome Committee members, members of the National Audit Office, the Auditor General, witnesses, and members of the public to this Audit Committee session. I remind everybody that the Committee operates bilingually. The headsets can be used to listen to the translation, as well as to hear the proceedings more clearly. I remind everybody to turn mobile phones, pagers, and other electronic devices off. It is very irritating for people who are listening to the translation when they get a buzz because a mobile phone is being contacted. Do any members have declarations of interest to make? No? Right. I will come to a declaration of interest of my own in a moment.

The next item on the agenda is the renewal of private sector housing in Wales. We will be taking evidence in connection with the National Audit Office report, 'Renewal of Private Sector Housing in Wales'. This report looks at the policy that Wales has been pursuing to try to improve the condition of private sector housing across the country for the last decade, and the changes that have come in since July last year. Since 1990, almost £1.5 billion has been allocated to the public by local authorities from money from central Government and the Assembly to make houses fit. This report sets out the potential benefits and risks of the new legislation that has come in. Before starting, I

[1] **Janet Davies:** Bore da. Yn gyntaf oll, croesawaf aelodau'r Pwyllgor, aelodau'r Swyddfa Archwilio Genedlaethol, yr Archwilydd Cyffredinol, tystion, ac aelodau'r cyhoedd i'r sesiwn hon o'r Pwyllgor Archwilio. Hoffwn atgoffa pawb bod y Pwyllgor yn gweithredu'n ddwyieithog. Gellir defnyddio'r clustffonau i wrando ar y cyfieithiad, yn ogystal â chlywed y trafodion yn fwy clir. Hoffwn atgoffa pawb am ddifodd eu ffoniau symudol, blipwyr, ac unrhyw ddyfeisiau electronig eraill. Peth annymunol iawn i bobl sy'n gwranddo ar y cyfieithiad yw clywed sïo oherwydd bod rhywun yn cysylltu â ffôn symudol. A oes gan unrhyw aelodau ddatganiadau o fuddiant i'w gwneud? Na? Iawn. Dof ddatganiad o fuddiant fy hun yn y man.

Yr eitem nesaf ar yr agenda yw adnewyddu tai yn y sector preifat yng Nghymru. Byddwn yn cymryd tystiolaeth mewn cysylltiad ag adroddiad y Swyddfa Archwilio Genedlaethol, 'Adnewyddu Tai y Sector Preifat yng Nghymru'. Mae'r adroddiad hwn yn edrych ar y polisi y mae Cymru wedi bod yn ei ddilyn i geisio gwella cyflwr tai yn y sector preifat ledled y wlad yn ystod y degawd diwethaf, a'r newidiadau a wnaed ers Gorffennaf y llynedd. Er 1990, mae bron i £1.5 biliwn wedi'i ddyrannu i'r cyhoedd gan awdurdodau lleol o arian gan Lywodraeth ganolog a'r Cynulliad i wneud tai yn addas. Mae'r adroddiad hwn yn nodi buddiannau a risgiau posibl y ddeddfwriaeth newydd sydd

need to place on record the fact that I was leader of Taff Ely Borough Council and vice chair of its housing committee during the period described in case study C in the report. However, I would also like to make the point that neither I, nor my husband when he was alive, ever applied for a repair grant of any description whatsoever.

I will now ask the witnesses to introduce themselves, please.

Sir Jon Shortridge: I am Jon Shortridge, the Permanent Secretary.

Mr Richards: I am David Richards, the Principal Finance Officer.

Mr Hilbourne: I am Brendon Hilbourne, the head of the private sector unit in the Housing Directorate.

[2] **Janet Davies:** Thank you very much. I will start the questioning, as usual. I refer to paragraph 1.1 of the Auditor General's report. The poor condition of Welsh housing has given concern for many years. Do you believe that the Assembly has done all it can to improve the condition of property in Wales?

Sir Jon Shortridge: Well, clearly, as the report indicates, there is still some way to go, so this is not a job completed. I think that the other thing to say is that the Assembly inherited a set of arrangements from the Welsh Office and that since 1990, when the then new system of mandatory renovation grants came in, government in Wales, if I can put it that way, has invested an enormous amount of money and effort into securing very significant improvements in the quality of the Welsh housing stock. The statistics in this NAO report demonstrate that that investment made a major

wedi ei chyflwyno. Cyn cychwyn, mae angen i mi gofnodi'r ffaith mai fi oedd arweinydd Cyngor Bwrdeistref Taf-Elai ac is-gadeirydd ei bwyllgor tai yn ystod y cyfnod a ddisgrifir yn astudiaeth achos C yn yr adroddiad. Fodd bynnag, hoffwn nodi hefyd nad oeddwn i, na fy ngwr pan oedd yn fyw, erioed wedi gwneud cais am grant trwsio o unrhyw fath.

Yr wyf yn awr am ofyn i'r tystion gyflwyno'u hunain, os gwelwch yn dda.

Syr Jon Shortridge: Syr Jon Shortridge, yr Ysgrifennydd Parhaol, ydw i.

Mr Richards: David Richards, y Prif Swyddog Cyllid, ydw i.

Mr Hilbourne: Brendon Hilbourne, pennaeth yr uned sector preifat yn y Gyfarwyddiaeth Dai, ydw i.

[2] **Janet Davies:** Diolch yn fawr iawn. Fi fydd yn dechrau'r cwestiynau, yn ôl yr arfer. Cyfeiriaf at baragraff 1.1 yn adroddiad yr Archwilydd Cyffredinol. Mae cyflwr gwael tai Cymru wedi bod yn achos pryder ers blynnyddoedd lawer. A ydych yn credu bod y Cynulliad wedi gwneud popeth o fewn ei allu i wella cyflwr eiddo yng Nghymru?

Syr Jon Shortridge: Wel, yn amlwg, fel y mae'r adroddiad yn dangos, mae llawer o waith i'w wneud o hyd, felly, nid yw'r dasg sydd wedi'i chwblhau eto. Credaf mai'r peth arall i'w ddweud yw bod y Cynulliad wedi etifeddu cyfres o drefniadau gan y Swyddfa Gymreig, ac er 1990, pan gyflwynwyd y system newydd o grantiau adnewyddu gorfodol, fod y llywodraeth yng Nghymru, os caf ei roi fel hynny, wedi buddsoddi llawer iawn arian ac ymdrech i sicrhau gwelliannau sylweddol iawn yn ansawdd stoc tai Cymru. Mae'r ystadegau yn yr adroddiad SAG hwn yn dangos bod y buddsoddi hwnnw

impact, but that there is still some way to go. The latest overall figure that we have from the 1998 survey, of 8.5 per cent of the housing stock still needing significant attention, shows that, while progress has been made, there is still more to do but—rightly in my view—the Assembly has taken the view that the approach should be much less prescriptive than it was in the 1990s.

[3] **Janet Davies:** Right. Thank you, Sir Jon. I think that it is good to see that there are far fewer unfit houses than there were, or at least a far lower percentage—perhaps that is not quite the same thing—than, for example, 20 years ago. However, I wonder whether there are any data available on the impact of poor housing on health and on the level of education that children achieve in school, because poor housing does have an effect on how well children can benefit from education?

Sir Jon Shortridge: I am personally not aware of any data making that causal link, but if Brendon is he will come in and make the point for me. However, there is very strong recognition by us as officials, and certainly within the Cabinet, that poor housing is one of the fundamental causes of the social problems that still remain in Wales. There is, certainly, a very strong connection between poor housing and poor health, and there is a connection between poor housing and educational opportunity. However, I do not have statistics to demonstrate it.

wedi cael effaith sylweddol, ond bod llawer i'w wneud o hyd. Mae'r ffigur cyffredinol diweddaraf sydd gennym o arolwg 1998, sef bod angen sylw sylweddol o hyd ar 8.5 y cant o'r stoc tai, yn dangos, er bod cynnydd wedi'i wneud, fod mwy eto i'w wneud, ond—yn iawn yn fy marn i—fod y Cynulliad wedi penderfynu y dylai'r dull fod lawer yn llai cyfarwyddol nag a oedd yn yr 1990au.

[3] **Janet Davies:** Iawn. Diolch, Syr Jon. Credaf ei bod yn dda gweld bod llawer llai o dai anaddas nag a fu, neu o leiaf ganran lawer is—efallai nad yw hynny'n union yr un peth—nag, er enghraifft, 20 mlynedd yn ôl. Fodd bynnag, tybed a oes unrhyw ddata ar gael ar effaith tai gwael ar iechyd ac ar lefel yr addysg y mae plant yn ei chyflawni yn yr ysgol, oherwydd bod tai gwael yn cael effaith ar y graddau y gall plant elwa o addysg?

Syr Jon Shortridge: Yn bersonol, nid wyf yn ymwybodol o unrhyw ddata'n gwneud y cysylltiad achosol hwn, ond os yw Brendon yn gwneud hynny, fe wnaiff y pwynt ar fy rhan. Fodd bynnag, mae cydnabyddiaeth gref iawn yn ein plith ni fel swyddogion, ac yn sicr yn y Cabinet, mai tai gwael yw un o achosion sylfaenol y problemau cymdeithasol sy'n parhau yng Nghymru. Yn ddi-os, mae cysylltiad cryf iawn rhwng tai gwael ac iechyd gwael, ac mae cysylltiad rhwng tai gwael a chyfleoedd addysg. Fodd bynnag, nid oes gennyf ystadegau i ddangos hynny.

Mr Hilbourne: I am not aware of any specific statistics. However, as Sir Jon says, it is one of the reasons, I think, that the Assembly has encouraged local authorities to think much more strategically when they are looking at housing renewal and not just deal with housing alone, but all the related socio-economic, health and education impacts.

[4] **Janet Davies:** Thank you. Carl, you have some questions?

[5] **Carl Sargeant:** Thank you, Chair. May I draw the witnesses' attention to paragraphs 1.4 and 1.5? Paragraph 1.4 states that the Welsh housing quality standard was introduced in 2002 for the social rented sector. Have any action plans been developed yet for housing outside the social rented sector to meet the Welsh housing quality standard?

Sir Jon Shortridge: That is one for Brendon.

Mr Hilbourne: There are no specific plans. The Welsh housing quality standard is a target standard that the Assembly Government would like all homes to aim towards. It is, in some respects, more straightforward with the social sector, where local authorities have much more direct control. With the private sector, of course, the major responsibility rests with owners themselves. So the short answer is that there are no specific plans but, nevertheless, it is a target that I think the Assembly Government would generally like local authorities to aim towards.

[6] **Carl Sargeant:** Okay. You say that the Assembly would like them to aim towards that; has the Assembly taken any steps to encourage this in the private sector?

Mr Hilbourne: Nid wyf yn ymwybodol o unrhyw ystadegau penodol. Fodd bynnag, fel y dywed Syr Jon, dyna un o'r rhesymau, yn fy marn i, pam mae'r Cynulliad wedi annog awdurdodau lleol i feddwl lawer yn fwy strategol pan fyddant yn edrych ar adnewyddu tai, nid ymdrin â thai ar eu pen eu hunain, ond yr holl effeithiau economaidd-gymdeithasol cysylltiedig, a'r effeithiau iechyd ac addysg.

[4] **Janet Davies:** Diolch. Carl, mae gennych rai cwestiynau?

[5] **Carl Sargeant:** Diolch, Gadeirydd. A gaf fi dynnu sylw'r tystion at baragraffau 1.4 ac 1.5? Mae paragraff 1.4 yn dweud bod safon ansawdd tai Cymru wedi'i chyflwyno yn 2002 ar gyfer y sector rhentu cymdeithasol. A oes unrhyw gynlluniau gweithredu wedi'u datblygu eto ar gyfer tai y tu allan i'r sector rhentu cymdeithasol i fodloni safon ansawdd tai Cymru?

Syr Jon Shortridge: Cwestiwn i Brendon yw hwn.

Mr Hilbourne: Nid oes cynlluniau penodol. Mae safon ansawdd tai Cymru yn safon darged yr hoffai Llywodraeth y Cynulliad i bob ty anelu tuag ati. I ryw raddau, mae'n symlach yn y sector cymdeithasol, lle mae gan awdurdodau lleol reolaeth lawer mwy uniongyrchol. Gyda'r sector preifat, wrth gwrs, y perchnogion eu hunain sydd â'r prif gyfrifoldeb. Felly, yr ateb byr yw nad oes cynlluniau penodol, ond mae'n darged, fodd bynnag, y crfedaf y byddai Llywodraeth y Cynulliad yn gyffredinol yn hoffi i awdurdodau lleol anelu tuag ato.

[6] **Carl Sargeant:** Iawn. Yr ydych yn dweud y byddai'r Cynulliad yn hoffi iddynt anelu tuag at hynny. A yw'r Cynulliad wedi cymryd unrhyw gamau i annog hyn yn y sector preifat?

Mr Hilbourne: The new renovation grant regime, which was introduced towards the middle of last year, was accompanied by very detailed guidance—non-prescriptive and non-statutory, but nevertheless guidance—for local authorities from the Assembly. That document refers to the Welsh housing quality standard and encourages local authorities to keep that in mind when they are looking at levels of renovation of the private sector stock.

[7] **Carl Sargeant:** Okay. So really we have not considered attaining the quality standard in private sector housing in Wales, and we do not know what the cost of that would be?

Mr Hilbourne: No.

[8] **Carl Sargeant:** Okay, thank you. Paragraph 1.5 states, as you said, that the responsibility for looking after private properties lies primarily with the owner. What more could we do to encourage owners to look after their properties?

Mr Hilbourne: Well, the new system gives local authorities a huge amount of flexibility and freedom in the way that they approach private sector renewal. In addition to grants, loans and other forms of assistance they are encouraged to provide help, guidance and advice to owners in terms of maintenance and looking after their properties in the longer term.

[9] **Carl Sargeant:** Okay. Thank you, Chair.

Mr Hilbourne: Gyda'r drefn newydd ar gyfer grantiau adnewyddu a gyflwynwyd tua chanol y llynedd—trefn anghyfarwyddol ac anstatudol, ond eto'n ganllawiau—cafwyd canllawiau manwl iawn gan y Cynulliad ar gyfer awdurdodau lleol. Mae'r ddogfen honno'n cyfeirio at safon ansawdd tai Cymru ac yn annog awdurdodau lleol i gadw hynny mewn cof pan fyddant yn edrych ar lefelau adnewyddu yn y stoc sector preifat.

[7] **Carl Sargeant:** Iawn. Felly mewn gwirionedd nid ydym wedi ystyried cyrraedd y safon ansawdd yn nhai'r sector preifat yng Nghymru, ac n wyddom beth fyddai cost hynny?

Mr Hilbourne: Na.

[8] **Carl Sargeant:** Iawn, diolch. Mae paragraff 1.5 yn nodi, fel y dywedasoch, mai cyfrifoldeb y perchennog yn bennaf yw gofalu am eiddo preifat. Beth arall y gallem ei wneud i annog perchnogion i ofalu am eu heiddo?

Mr Hilbourne: Wel, mae'r system newydd yn rhoi llawer iawn o hyblygrwydd a rhyddid i awdurdodau lleol yn y ffordd y maent yn mynd ati i adnewyddu'r sector preifat. Yn ogystal â grantiau, benthyciadau a mathau eraill o gymorth, cânt eu hannog i roi cymorth, arweiniad a chynghor i berchnogion o ran cynnal a chadw eu heiddo a gofalu amdanynt yn y tymor hirach.

[9] **Carl Sargeant:** Iawn. Diolch, Gadeirydd.

[10] **Janet Davies:** Thank you. I would just like to refer to the whole issue of surveys and the data that are available. The latest data on the condition of properties are five years old and, if I remember rightly, the previous survey was seven years before that. Do you think that there are problems caused by the lack of current data? How can we be sure that resources are targeted properly if the data are pretty well out of date?

Sir Jon Shortridge: I will take that first, if I may, although, again, Brendon is much closer to this. It has been a perennial issue in all my time working first in the Welsh Office and now here, as to how regularly you should be undertaking these house condition surveys. On the one hand, there is a very major investment being made in housing renewal and you need to be satisfied that that money is being properly spent. On the other hand, house condition surveys are very expensive in themselves and could be perceived by some people as quite intrusive. So, it is a matter of getting that balance right. The view that I have always taken, I think, when I have been discussing it with colleagues, is that about five to seven years is about the right sort of regularity for surveys of this nature, which—from memory—can cost in the order of £2 million. However, Brendon will have more up-to-date information.

Mr Hilbourne: Yes, the last survey was in 1998. There was an interim survey in 1993, and before that it was 1986, so there have been gaps between them. There is a survey under way at the moment and we would expect the initial data from that towards the middle of next year, which should give us an indication of how things have moved since 1998. There are, of course, regular statistics collected, which are produced in the Welsh housing statistics publication each year.

[10] **Janet Davies:** Diolch. Hoffwn gyfeirio at holl fater yr arolygon a'r data sydd ar gael. Mae'r data diweddaraf ar gyflwr eiddo yn bum mlwydd oed, ac os cofiaf yn iawn, cynhaliwyd yr arolwg blaenorol saith mlynedd cyn hynny. A ydych yn credu bod y diffyg data presennol yn achosi problemau? Sut y gallwn fod yn sicr fod adnoddau'n cael eu targedu'n gywir os yw'r data yn weddol hen?

Syr Jon Shortridge: Yr wyf am drafod hynny yn gyntaf, os caf, er bod Brandon, unwaith eto, lawer yn nes at hyn. Mae wedi bod yn fater parhaol yn ystod yr holl amser y bûm yn gweithio, yn gyntaf yn y Swyddfa Gymreig ac yma wedi hynny, ynglyn â pha mor rheolaidd y dylid cynnal yr arolygon hyd ar gyflwr tai. Ar y naill law, mae yna fuddsoddiad sylweddol iawn mewn adnewyddu tai, ac mae angen i chi gael eich bodloni fod yr arian yn cael ei wario'n iawn. Ar y llaw arall, mae arolygon cyflwr tai yn ddrud iawn, a gallai rhai pobl dybio'u bod yn ymwithiol iawn. Felly, mae'n fater o sicrhau'r cydbwysedd cywir. Credaf mai fy marn erioed, wrth drafod hyn gyda chydweithwyr, yw bod oddeutu pump i saith mlynedd yn ddigon rheolaidd ar gyfer arolygon fel hyn, sydd—o'r hyn y gallaf ei gofio—yn gallu costio tua £2 filiwn. Fodd bynnag, bydd gan Brendon wybodaeth fwy diweddar.

Mr Hilbourne: Oedd, yr oedd yr arolwg diwethaf yn 1998. Cynhaliwyd arolwg dros dro yn 1993, ac yn 1986 cyn hynny, felly, fe fu bylchau rhyngddynt. Mae arolwg yn cael ei gynnal ar hyn o bryd a byddem yn disgwyl i'r data cychwynnol o hwnnw fod yn barod tua chanol y flwyddyn nesaf, a dylai ddangos i ni sut y mae pethau wedi symud er 1998. Wrth gwrs, mae ystadegau rheolaidd yn cael eu casglu, sy'n cael eu cynhyrchu yng nghyhoeddiad ystadegau tai Cymru bob blwyddyn.

[11] **Jocelyn Davies:** Can I ask what an interim survey is?

Mr Hilbourne: The 1986 and the 1998 surveys went into a considerable amount of depth, with very large numbers of houses. The survey in 1993, which gave us more of an indication on an all-Wales basis, was less intensive than the other two. However, the latest data, the 1998 data, were from a detailed survey.

[12] **Janet Davies:** Thank you. Could we also look at the Welsh household and dwellings survey? What progress is being made on carrying that out? When will data be available?

Mr Hilbourne: The first results of that are likely to be towards the middle of 2005.

[13] **Janet Davies:** Are there any indications as to whether it will show any improvement?

Mr Hilbourne: At this stage, no. It is too early—the work has only just started on it.

[14] **Janet Davies:** Okay, thank you. Jocelyn?

[15] **Jocelyn Davies:** Paragraph 1.4 talks about the Assembly's housing policy. Do you think that the Assembly's target of reducing serious disrepair in all properties in Wales by half, by 2005, is realistic and achievable?

[11] **Jocelyn Davies:** A gaf fi ofyn beth yw arolwg dros dro?

Mr Hilbourne: Yr oedd arolygon 1986 ac 1998 yn drylwyr iawn, gyda nifer sylweddol iawn o dai. Yr oedd yr arolwg yn 1993, a roddodd fwy o syniad i ni o'r sefyllfa drwy Gymru gyfan, yn llai manwl na'r ddau arall. Fodd bynnag, yr oedd y data diweddaraf, sef data 1998, yn tarddu o arolwg manwl.

[12] **Janet Davies:** Diolch. A gawn ni hefyd edrych ar yr arolwg o gartrefi ac anheddau Cymru? Pa gynnydd sy'n cael ei wneud o ran cyflawni hwnnw? Pryd fydd data ar gael?

Mr Hilbourne: Mae'n debyg y bydd canlyniadau cyntaf hwnnw ar gael tua chanol 2005.

[13] **Janet Davies:** A oes unrhyw arwyddion a fydd yn dangos unrhyw welliant?

Mr Hilbourne: Ar hyn o bryd, nac oes. Mae'n rhy gynnar—dim ond megis cychwyn y mae'r gwaith arno.

[14] **Janet Davies:** Iawn, diolch. Jocelyn?

[15] **Jocelyn Davies:** Mae paragraff 1.4 yn trafod polisi tai'r Cynulliad. A ydych yn credu bod targed y Cynulliad o ostwng dadfeilio difrifol ym mhob eiddo yng Nghymru o'r hanner, erbyn 2005, yn realistig ac o fewn cyrraedd?

Mr Hilbourne: This is the target that the Assembly Government put into the national housing strategy following a considerable amount of work by a number of groups, involving a wide range of housing organisations, including local authorities. It is a target that the groups felt was achievable, but, quite clearly, until one has the results of the survey, whether that has been achieved it is not possible to say.

[16] **Jocelyn Davies:** So, they thought that it was achievable but you are not able to tell us whether it is achievable at this point?

Mr Hilbourne: Indeed, no.

[17] **Jocelyn Davies:** So, you have no idea whether it will be met?

Mr Hilbourne: Not until the survey results are available.

[18] **Jocelyn Davies:** Because it is a very ambitious target and there is very little time left.

Mr Hilbourne: The target is to reduce the levels compared with the results of the 1998 survey, so the time frame would be between 1998 and 2004. I could not speculate whether or not it is—

[19] **Jocelyn Davies:** We do not have any evidence at all to tell us how it has been going?

Mr Hilbourne: Not at this stage, no.

[20] **Jocelyn Davies:** Paragraph 2.6 tells us that the old fit-for-habitation standard is to be replaced. In what way will the new housing health and safety rating system differ from that old fit-for-habitation standard?

Mr Hilbourne: Dyna'r targed a osododd Llywodraeth y Cynulliad yn y strategaeth tai genedlaethol yn dilyn llawer iawn o waith gan nifer o grwpiau, yn cynnwys amrywiaeth eang o sefydliadau tai, gan gynnwys awdurdodau lleol. Mae'n darged y credai'r grwpiau ei fod o fewn cyrraedd, ond yn amlwg, nes i ni gael canlyniadau'r arolwg, nid oes modd dweud a yw hynny wedi'i gyflawni.

[16] **Jocelyn Davies:** Felly, credent ei fod o fewn cyrraedd, ond ni allwch ddweud wrthym a yw o fewn cyrraedd ar hyn o bryd?

Mr Hilbourne: Na, yn sicr.

[17] **Jocelyn Davies:** Felly, nid oes gennych unrhyw syniad a fydd yn cael ei gyflawni?

Mr Hilbourne: Dim nes bydd canlyniadau'r arolwg ar gael.

[18] **Jocelyn Davies:** Oherwydd ei fod yn darged uchelgeisiol iawn ac nad oes llawer o amser ar ôl.

Mr Hilbourne: Y targed yw gostwng y lefelau o'u cymharu â chanlyniadau arolwg 1998. Felly, y cyfnod fyddai rhwng 1998 a 2004. Ni allwn ddyfalu a yw hyn yn—

[19] **Jocelyn Davies:** Nid oes gennym unrhyw dystiolaeth o gwbl i ddweud wrthym sut mae wedi bod yn mynd?

Mr Hilbourne: Nac oes, ddim ar hyn o bryd.

[20] **Jocelyn Davies:** Mae paragraff 2.6 yn dweud bod yr hen safon addas-i-fyw i gael ei disodli. Ym mha ffordd y bydd system newydd i raddio iechyd a diogelwch tai newydd yn wahanol i'r hen safon addas-i-fyw?

Mr Hilbourne: The old standard, as figure 3 on page 5 of the report shows, was a pass-or-fail standard on a number of individual items. The new standard is going to be much more closely related to health and safety, so, for example, if a house has elements that may appear relatively small in isolation, but could actually be quite dangerous to the occupants—

[21] **Jocelyn Davies:** Could this be something like the electrics not being safe?

Mr Hilbourne: Yes, it could be a whole range of things. However, it is much more closely linked to the health and safety of the occupants. Once more, it links back to the recognition that health and housing are very closely associated.

[22] **Jocelyn Davies:** I see. So when will this be introduced?

Mr Hilbourne: It is a feature of the Housing Bill that had its second reading in Parliament last Monday, on 12 January. I think that it clearly depends on how long it takes for the Bill to go through Parliament. It is expected that enactment will be in late autumn, so by the time the thing is actually introduced it would probably be around spring 2005.

[23] **Jocelyn Davies:** Right, 2005-06. Have you any idea how much extra funding will be needed so that properties could be brought up to that standard?

Mr Hilbourne: No.

[24] **Jocelyn Davies:** None at all?

Mr Hilbourne: No.

[25] **Jocelyn Davies:** A considerable sum?

Mr Hilbourne: Safon llwyddo-neu-fethu ar nifer o eitemau unigol oedd yr hen safon, fel y mae ffigur 3 ar dudalen 5 yn yr adroddiad yn ei ddangos. Bydd y safon newydd yn ymwneud lawer yn fwy ag iechyd a diogelwch, felly, er enghraifft, os oes gan dy elfennau sy'n ymddangos yn gymharol fach ar eu pen eu hunain, ond a allai fod yn ddigon peryglus i'r preswylwyr mewn gwirionedd—

[21] **Jocelyn Davies:** A allai hyn fod yn rhywbeth fel offer trydan anniogel?

Mr Hilbourne: Gallai, gallai fod yn bob math o bethau. Fodd bynnag, mae'n ymwneud lawer yn fwy ag iechyd a diogelwch y preswylwyr. Unwaith eto, mae'n cysylltu â'r gydnabyddiaeth bod cysylltiad agos iawn rhwng iechyd a thai.

[22] **Jocelyn Davies:** Mi welaf. Felly, pryd fydd hyn yn cael ei gyflwyno?

Mr Hilbourne: Mae'n nodwedd yn y Mesur Tai a gafodd ail ddarllenriad yn y Senedd ddydd Llun diwethaf, ar 12 Ionawr. Credaf fod hyn yn dibynnu'n amlwg ar faint o amser a gymer i'r Mesur gael ei gymeradwyo gan y Senedd. Disgwylir iddo gael ei ddeddfu yn hwyr yn yr hydref, felly, mae'n debyg na fydd yn cael ei gyflwyno mewn gwirionedd tan y gwanwyn 2005.

[23] **Jocelyn Davies:** Iawn, 2005-06. A oes gennych unrhyw syniad faint o gyllid ychwanegol y bydd ei angen i sicrhau bod eiddo'n bodloni'r safon honno?

Mr Hilbourne: Nac oes.

[24] **Jocelyn Davies:** Dim o gwbl?

Mr Hilbourne: Nac oes.

[25] **Jocelyn Davies:** Swm sylweddol?

Mr Hilbourne: I am sorry, I do not know. I have no idea.

[26] **Jocelyn Davies:** No idea at all—okay.

The report tells us that £1.5 billion has been spent on renewal since the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Obviously, that is a huge amount of money. Do you think that it has been spent wisely?

Sir Jon Shortridge: There is nothing in this report to indicate that it has not been and this report provided an opportunity to provide that sort of value-for-money judgment. So I think that the overall sort of strategic answer to that is that there is very considerable evidence that, as a result of that investment, there has been a very significant improvement in the condition of the housing stock in Wales. Whether you could have had that same improvement with slightly less investment is a judgment, but I have seen no evidence to indicate that this money, taken as a whole, has been unwisely spent or misspent.

[27] **Jocelyn Davies:** Is it possible to estimate perhaps how much renewal would have taken place without the expenditure from the public purse, if people had been expected to maintain, renew and upgrade their own properties?

Sir Jon Shortridge: Well, there was means-testing associated with the grants that were being given, so, if there was a view that you could afford to improve your own house, then you would not be getting public money. At the margins, there may have been some people who, if public money had not been available, would have spent the money themselves. But that is a judgment, is it not? Going back to the earlier question, the motivation for the expenditure was not solely to improve the housing stock, it was to achieve the wider benefit that you get from

Mr Hilbourne: Mae'n ddrwg gennyf, nid wyf yn gwybod. Nid oes gennyf syniad.

[26] **Jocelyn Davies:** Dim syniad o gwbl—iawn.

Mae'r adroddiad yn dweud wrthym fod £1.5 biliwn wedi'i wario ar adnewyddu ers Deddf Llywodraeth Leol a Thai 1989. Yn amlwg, mae hwnnw'n swm enfawr o arian. A ydych yn credu ei fod wedi'i wario'n ddoeth?

Syr Jon Shortridge: Nid oes unrhyw beth yn yr adroddiad hwn i awgrymu nad yw wedi'i wario'n ddoeth, ac yr oedd yr adroddiad hwn yn gyfle i ddarparu barn felly am werth am arian. Felly, credaf mai'r math o ateb strategol cyffredinol i hynny yw bod tystiolaeth sylweddol iawn, o ganlyniad i'r buddsoddiad hwnnw, fod gwelliant pwysig iawn wedi digwydd yng nghyflwr y stoc tai yng Nghymru. Mater o farn yw a allech fod wedi cael yr un gwelliant gydag ychydig yn llai o fuddsoddi. Ond nid wyf wedi gweld tystiolaeth i awgrymu bod yr arian hwn, o'i ystyried yn ei gyfanrwydd, wedi'i wario'n annoeth neu ei gamwario.

[27] **Jocelyn Davies:** A oes modd amcangyfrif faint o waith adnewyddu a fyddai wedi'i wneud heb y gwariant cyhoeddus, pe bai disgwyl i bobl gynnal a chadw, adnewyddu a chodi safon eu heiddo eu hunain?

Syr Jon Shortridge: Wel, yr oedd profion modd yn gysylltiedig â'r grantiau a oedd yn cael eu rhoi, felly, os oeddech o'r farn eich bod yn gallu fforddio gwella'ch ty eich hun, yna ni fyddech yn cael arian cyhoeddus. Ar y cyrion, efallai fod yna rai, pe na bai arian cyhoeddus ar gael, a fyddai wedi gwario'r arian eu hunain. Onid mater o farn yw hynny? I fynd yn ôl at y cwestiwn cynharach, nid gwella'r stoc oedd yr unig gymhelliad dros y gwariant: y diben oedd sicrhau'r fantais ehangach a gewch o gael pobl i fyw mewn amodau byw da, priodol.

having people living in good, appropriate living conditions.

[28] **Jocelyn Davies:** Fine. Thank you.

[29] **Janet Davies:** I have one question before I bring Denise in. I think that we all probably have a picture in our heads of sort of the classical type of house that needs repair grants, either a terraced house in the Valleys or a small cottage in a rural area. However, I believe that any property over 10 years old is eligible these days. If that is the case, do you think that there may be something of a time bomb, particularly in terms of houses built in the 1960s and 1970s?

Sir Jon Shortridge: I think that that is one for Brendon.

Mr Hilbourne: Increasingly, as the renewal policies have changed since the early 1990s, the net has widened, if you like. In the early years, you are absolutely right, I think, that the concentration was on pre-1919 houses, of which there are significant numbers in Wales. However, increasingly, local authorities are tackling more modern houses that need attention, and the flexibilities in the new system enable them to do that now.

[30] **Janet Davies:** Thank you. Denise?

[31] **Denise Idris Jones:** If we turn to page 10 of the report and look at paragraph 3.7, it says that local authorities made very little use of loans, with only Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan making any use of them at all. Do you think that more use could have been made of loans during the last 13 years?

[28] **Jocelyn Davies:** Iawn. Diolch.

[29] **Janet Davies:** Mae gennyf un cwestiwn cyn i mi ofyn i Denise gyfrannu. Credaf fod gennym i gyd, mae'n debyg, ddarlun yn ein meddyliau o'r math clasurol o dy y mae angen grantiau trwsio arno, boed yn dy teras yn y Cymoedd neu'n fwthyn bach yn y wlad. Fodd bynnag, credaf fod unrhyw eiddo dros 10 oed yn gymwys bellach. Os yw hynny'n wir, a ydych yn credu y gallai fod yma fom amser o ryw fath, yn arbennig o ran tai a godwyd yn y 1960au a'r 1970au?

Syr Jon Shortridge: Credaf mai cwestiwn i Brendon yw hynny.

Mr Hilbourne: Yn fwyfwy, wrth i'r polisiau adnewyddu newid ers dechrau'r 1990au, mae'r rhwyd wedi ymestyn, os hoffwch chi. Yn y blynyddoedd cynnar, credaf eich bod yn hollol gywir fod y canolbwyntio wedi bod ar dai cyn-1919, ac mae nifer fawr o'r rhain yng Nghymru. Fodd bynnag, mae awdurdodau lleol yn gynyddol yn mynd i'r afael â thai mwy modern sydd angen sylw arnynt, ac mae'r hyblygrwydd yn y system newydd yn eu galluogi bellach i wneud nawr.

[30] **Janet Davies:** Diolch. Denise?

[31] **Denise Idris Jones:** Os cawn droi i dudalen 10 yn yr adroddiad ac edrych ar baragraff 3.7, mae'n dweud mai ychydig iawn o ddefnydd yr oedd awdurdodau lleol wedi ei wneud o fenthyciadau, a Chaerdydd a Bro Morgannwg yn unig yn eu defnyddio o gwbl. A ydych yn credu y gellid bod wedi defnyddio rhagor o fenthyciadau yn ystod y 13 mlynedd diwethaf?

Mr Hilbourne: The arrangements for loans in previous years, as the report rightly points out, was very limited, and I cannot speculate on why local authorities did not use them, but certainly the new system that was introduced in July last year changed the arrangements fairly significantly for loans, and now makes it much easier and much more of an alternative approach to grants for local authorities to use them. It is still very early days in the new system to know how it is going to pan out and the extent to which they are likely to use them.

[32] **Denise Idris Jones:** Thank you. So would the loans have made the limited amount of money allocated to local authorities to improve housing go further?

Mr Hilbourne: I think that it would have been a matter for the local authorities in that it would have been a judgment on their part whether in fact a loan or a grant would have been more appropriate at the time. As the report says, very few local authorities—

[33] **Denise Idris Jones:** Few actually took them up.

Mr Hilbourne: That was the case, yes.

[34] **Denise Idris Jones:** Paragraph 3.8 addresses the availability of grants for people with disabilities. Do you think that enough has been done through disabled facilities grants to make a real difference to people's lives?

Mr Hilbourne: Yr oedd y trefniadau ar gyfer benthyciadau yn y gorffennol, fel y dywedir yn gywir yn yr adroddiad, yn gyfyngedig iawn, ac ni allaf ddyfalu pam na chawsant eu defnyddio gan awdurdodau lleol. Ond yn sicr, oherwydd y system newydd a gyflwynwyd fis Gorffennaf y llynedd, newidiwyd y trefniadau ar gyfer benthyciadau yn ddigon sylweddol, ac mae hi lawer yn haws bellach ac yn ddull llawer amgen ar gyfer grantiau i awdurdodau lleol eu defnyddio. Mae'n dal yn gynnar iawn yn y system newydd i ni wybod sut yr aiff pethau ac i ba raddau y maent yn debygol o'u defnyddio.

[32] **Denise Idris Jones:** Diolch. Felly, a fyddai'r benthyciadau wedi gwneud i'r swm cyfyngedig o arian a ddyrannwyd i awdurdodau lleol i wella tai fynd ymhellach?

Mr Hilbourne: Credaf y byddai hynny wedi bod yn fater i'r awdurdodau lleol, oherwydd hwy fyddai'n penderfynu ai grant neu fenthyciad a fyddai wedi bod fwyaf priodol ar y pryd. Fel y dywed yr adroddiad, ychydig iawn o awdurdodau lleol—

[33] **Denise Idris Jones:** Ychydig a fanteisiodd arnynt mewn gwirionedd.

Mr Hilbourne: Ie, dyna a ddigwyddodd.

[34] **Denise Idris Jones:** Mae paragraff 3.8 yn mynd i'r afael â darparu grantiau ar gyfer pobl ag anabledau. A ydych yn credu bod digon wedi'i wneud drwy grantiau cyfleusterau i'r anabl i wneud gwahaniaeth gwirioneddol i fywydau pobl?

Mr Hilbourne: Yes. A disabled facilities grant is the one grant that remains mandatory under the new system, and expenditure on the grants has actually been increasing over the last few years. Something in the order of about £30 million a year is currently spent on disabled facilities grants. The indications are that they are making a significant difference.

[35] **Denise Idris Jones:** Do you have any idea how many people the grants now allow to live in their own homes who otherwise would have had to move out of them?

Mr Hilbourne: I do not have detailed information with me, but certainly a considerable number of people have been able to stay in their own homes, as a result of disabled facilities grants and other minor works grants, who might otherwise not have been able to do so.

[36] **Denise Idris Jones:** What administrative and value-for-money problems are there with a system of allocating grants to people with disabilities rather than properties?

Mr Hilbourne: The disabled facilities grants arrangements are slightly different from the main grant regime. For example, the means test for disabled facilities grants has certain allowances for disability and there is also a requirement that the health of the individual and the condition of the house be taken into account to assess what the appropriate adaptations would be. So it is very much a matter of a link between the housing authorities and the social services and social care departments in local authorities to make sure that that is the most suitable and appropriate approach for the individual.

[37] **Denise Idris Jones:** Right, thank you.

Mr Hilbourne: Ydw. Y grant cyfleusterau i'r anabl yw'r unig grant sy'n dal yn orfodol dan y system newydd, ac mae gwariant ar y grantiau wedi bod yn cynyddu mewn gwirionedd dros yr ychydig flynyddoedd diwethaf. Mae oddeutu £30 miliwn y flwyddyn yn cael ei wario ar hyn o bryd ar grantiau cyfleusterau i'r anabl. Mae'n ymddangos eu bod yn gwneud gwahaniaeth sylweddol.

[35] **Denise Idris Jones:** A oes gennych unrhyw syniad faint o bobl y mae'r grantiau nawr yn eu galluogi i fyw yn eu cartrefi eu hunain ond a fyddai wedi gorfod eu gadael fel arall?

Mr Hilbourne: Nid oes gennyf wybodaeth fanwl gyda mi, ond yn sicr mae nifer sylweddol o bobl wedi gallu aros yn eu cartrefi eu hunain, o ganlyniad i grantiau cyfleusterau i'r anabl a grantiau eraill ar gyfer mân waith, ond na fyddent fel arall hwyrach wedi gallu gwneud hynny.

[36] **Denise Idris Jones:** Pa broblemau gweinyddol a gwerth am arian a geir gyda system o ddyrannu grantiau i bobl ag anableddau yn hytrach nag i eiddo?

Mr Hilbourne: Mae trefniadau grantiau cyfleusterau i'r anabl ychydig yn wahanol i'r brif drefn grantiau. Er enghraifft, mae'r prawf modd ar gyfer grantiau cyfleusterau i'r anabl yn cynnwys lwfansau am anabledd, ac mae'n ofynnol hefyd i iechyd yr unigolyn a chyflwr y ty gael eu hystyried i asesu beth fyddai'r addasiadau priodol. Felly, mae hyn yn fater o gysylltiad rhwng yr awdurdodau tai a'r adrannau gwasanaethau cymdeithasol a gofal cymdeithasol mewn awdurdodau lleol, i sicrhau mai dyna'r dull mwyaf addas a phriodol ar gyfer yr unigolyn.

[37] **Denise Idris Jones:** Iawn, diolch.

[38] **Janet Davies:** Leighton?

[39] **Leighton Andrews:** Mr Hilbourne, I was not clear from your answer to Denise Idris Jones's question a moment ago as to whether you actually did have any data on how many people the grants had allowed to live in their own homes, or whether it was that you just did not have that to hand now.

Mr Hilbourne: There are data on the number of disabled facilities grants that have been issued. I do not have it to hand, but we could make it available to the Committee, clearly.

[40] **Leighton Andrews:** Thank you.

[41] **Janet Davies:** Could I ask, Mr Hilbourne, about how long people may have to wait for disability grants? I certainly get complaints from some in my area that they have waited perhaps nine or 12 months, which is an awfully long time if you are waiting for something of that sort.

Mr Hilbourne: Certainly. This is really a matter for individual local authorities. We have not set budgets for disabled facilities grants; the resources are largely unhypothecated. They are mandatory grants, and local authorities have six months in which to determine the grant application. It is largely a question of what priority individual local authorities attach to those grants in terms of the resources that they allocate to support them.

[38] **Janet Davies:** Leighton?

[39] **Leighton Andrews:** Mr Hilbourne, nid wyf yn glir o'ch ateb i gwestiwn Denise Idris Jones ychydig yn ôl a oedd gennych unrhyw ddata mewn gwirionedd am faint o bobl yr oedd y grantiau wedi'u galluogi i fyw yn eu cartrefi eu hunain. Neu nad oedd gennych y data hwnnw wrth law ar hyn o bryd.

Mr Hilbourne: Mae data ar gael ar nifer y grantiau cyfleusterau i'r anabl sydd wedi'u rhoi. Nid yw'r data gennyf ar hyn o bryd, ond gallem ei ddarparu i'r Pwyllgor, yn amlwg.

[40] **Leighton Andrews:** Diolch.

[41] **Janet Davies:** A gaf fi ofyn, Mr Hilbourne, am faint fydd pobl yn gorfod disgwyl i gael grantiau anabled? Yr wyf fi'n sicr yn cael cwynion gan rai yn fy ardal i am eu bod wedi gorfod disgwyl hwyrach am naw neu 12 mis, sy'n amser hir iawn os ydych yn disgwyl am rywbeth fel hynny.

Mr Hilbourne: Yn sicr. Mater i awdurdodau lleol unigol yw hyn mewn gwirionedd. Nid ydym wedi pennu cyllidebau ar gyfer grantiau cyfleusterau i'r anabl; mae'r adnoddau i raddau helaeth yn rhai heb eu clustnodi. Grantiau gorfodol ydynt, ac mae gan awdurdodau lleol chwe mis i benderfynu'r cais am grant. Mae'n fater yn bennaf o ba flaenoriaeth y mae awdurdodau lleol unigol yn ei rhoi i'r grantiau hynny o ran yr adnoddau y maent yn eu dyrannu i'w cynorthwyo.

[42] **Janet Davies:** Could I just get a bit of clarification? If authorities have six months in which to determine on them, that means that, once they are determined, the money has to be available for the applicant to go ahead. However, is there a way of putting off beginning the six-month period in which they have to determine on the application? Is it possible to sort of start later?

Mr Hilbourne: Local authorities themselves determine when they have a valid application, and the six months starts from the time that they receive a valid application.

[43] **Jocelyn Davies:** So you could make an application, but you might have to wait 12 months for the occupational therapist to call to assess you. Could the local authorities say that it is not a valid application until you have been assessed as requiring the work?

Mr Hilbourne: The statutory requirement of the housing authority is that there is an assessment by someone that the welfare authority is satisfied with. It does not actually have to be the local authority occupational therapist, so it would be a matter for individual local authorities. It would also be a matter for individual local authorities to defend any arrangements that they had in place if they were challenged.

[44] **Jocelyn Davies:** So it is not when you submit the application, it could be somewhere down the line that they say, 'This is currently now a valid application because you have been assessed'.

Mr Hilbourne: When it is valid, yes.

[45] **Jocelyn Davies:** I see. Well, there you are.

[46] **Janet Davies:** Okay. Val?

[42] **Janet Davies:** A gaf fi ychydig eglurhad? Os oes gan awdurdodau chwe mis i'w penderfynu, mae hynny'n golygu, ar ôl eu penderfynu, fod yn rhaid i arian fod ar gael er mwyni'r cais fynd yn ei flaen. Fodd bynnag, a oes ffordd i ohirio cychwyn y cyfnod chwe mis pan fydd yn rhaid iddynt benderfynu'r cais? A oes modd cychwyn yn ddiweddarach?

Mr Hilbourne: Yr awdurdodau lleol eu hunain sy'n penderfynu a oes ganddynt gais dilys, a bydd y cyfnod o chwe mis yn cychwyn o'r amser y byddant yn cael cais dilys.

[43] **Jocelyn Davies:** Felly, gallech wneud cais, ond gallai fod rhaid i chi ddisgwyl 12 mis i therapydd galwedigaethol alw i'ch gweld i'ch asesu. A allai'r awdurdodau lleol ddweud nad yw'n gais dilys nes yr asesir bod arnoch angen y gwaith?

Mr Hilbourne: Gofyniad statudol yr awdurdod tai yw bod rhywun y mae'r awdurdod lles yn fodlon ag ef yn gwneud asesiad. Nid oes raid ei wneud gan therapydd galwedigaethol yr awdurdod lleol, felly, byddai'n fater i awdurdodau lleol unigol. Byddai hefyd yn fater i awdurdodau lleol unigol amddiffyn unrhyw drefniadau a oedd ganddynt ar waith pe baent yn cael eu herio.

[44] **Jocelyn Davies:** Felly, nid yw'n fater pryd fyddwch yn cyflwyno'r cais: gallent ddweud yn ddiweddarach yn y broses, 'Mae hwn bellach nawr yn gais dilys oherwydd eich bod wedi eich asesu'.

Mr Hilbourne: Os yw'n ddilys, gallai.

[45] **Jocelyn Davies:** Mi welaf. Wel, dyna chi.

[46] **Janet Davies:** Iawn. Val?

[47] **Val Lloyd:** I have some questions on renewal areas. On page 11 there is quite an in-depth explanation and some case studies, and I have some in my own area so I am very familiar with them. What evidence is there that money spent on renewal areas achieves better value than that spent on individual grants?

Mr Hilbourne: The approach in renewal areas is much more strategic and enables economies of scale to be more easily achieved, and enables local authorities to link a whole range of regeneration activities and also to work more closely with the private sector in terms of leveraging-in additional resources. There is a long-term plan for renewal areas and they have been very successful in Wales. I think that there are 35 renewal areas now, and the feedback, certainly from local authorities, is that that is a much more effective approach in tackling a range of regeneration issues.

[48] **Val Lloyd:** Yes, I would agree with the general thrust of what you said. However, it does bring a set of problems. Would you see it as acceptable that, as a consequence of one area being designated a renewal area, some owners in that area receive help before others, who are outside the area but who have properties in a poorer condition, do?

Mr Hilbourne: When local authorities decide on declaring renewal areas, implicit in that declaration is the fact that those are areas that are regarded as a priority for attention. That is the first point. The second point is that renewal areas generally run in tandem with other policies that authorities have to tackle properties outside those areas, which still have some form of priority. It is not an exclusive approach that means that other properties do not get assistance.

[47] **Val Lloyd:** Mae gennyf rai cwestiynau am ardaloedd adnewyddu. Ar dudalen 11, mae yna esboniad trylwyr a rhai astudiaethau achos, ac mae gennyf rai yn fy ardal fy hun, felly, yr wyf yn gyfarwydd iawn â hwy. Pa dystiolaeth sydd bod arian a werir ar ardaloedd adnewyddu yn sicrhau gwell gwerth na'r hyn a werir ar grantiau unigol?

Mr Hilbourne: Mae'r dull mewn ardaloedd adnewyddu lawer yn fwy strategol ac yn golygu ei bod yn haws sicrhau arbedion maint, ac yn galluogi awdurdodau lleol i gysylltu amrywiaeth gyfan o weithgareddau adnewyddu yn ogystal â gweithio'n agosach gyda'r sector preifat o ran cyflwyno adnoddau ychwanegol. Mae yna gynllun hirdymor ar gyfer ardaloedd adnewyddu, sydd wedi bod yn llwyddiannus iawn yng Nghymru. Credaf fod 35 ardal adnewyddu bellach a'r ymateb, yn sicr gan awdurdodau lleol, yw bod hwn yn ddull llawer mwy effeithiol i fynd i'r afael ag amrywiaeth o faterion adfywio.

[48] **Val Lloyd:** Ie, byddwn yn cytuno ag ergyd gyffredinol yr hyn a ddywedwch. Fodd bynnag, mae'n arwain at gyfres o broblemau. A fydddech yn dweud ei bod yn dderbyniol, o ganlyniad i bennu un ardal yn ardal adnewyddu, fod rhai perchnogion yn yr ardal honno yn cael cymorth cyn pobl eraill, sydd y tu allan i'r ardal ond sydd ag eiddo mewn gwaeth cyflwr?

Mr Hilbourne: Pan fydd awdurdodau lleol yn penderfynu dynodi ardaloedd adnewyddu, mae'r ffaith fod yr ardaloedd hynny'n cael eu dewis i gael blaenoriaeth o ran sylw yn oblygedig yn y dynodiad hwnnw. Dyna'r pwynt cyntaf. Yr ail bwynt yw bod ardaloedd adnewyddu yn gyffredinol yn cyd-daro â pholisïau eraill sydd gan awdurdodau i fynd i'r afael ag eiddo y tu allan i'r ardaloedd hynny, sy'n parhau i gael rhyw fath o flaenoriaeth. Nid yw'n ddull cyfyngedig sy'n golygu nad yw eiddo eraill yn

cael cymorth.

[49] **Val Lloyd:** Thank you. I move now to paragraph 3.15 on page 12, which talks about the change in the assistance. Could you again let us know what impact the switch from house renovation grants to home repair assistance has had on the condition of housing in Wales?

Mr Hilbourne: There are two changes, in essence. There has been more of an emphasis on home repair assistance in recent years, whereas house renovation grants were more prevalent in the early years—I think principally because there was a backlog of major renovation works that needed to be done. The home repair assistance is much more suitable for helping people with relatively small problems with their homes to stay in their homes, for example, rather than having to move out—often in place, perhaps, of disabled facilities grants. That moves on to the new system, which, of course, introduces even more flexibility. It is a question of authorities deciding what the priorities are in individual cases and being able to tackle them with the appropriate form of assistance.

[50] **Val Lloyd:** Right, so are you telling me that the change, in effect, was better targeting, or was the change to smaller grants made in an effort to perhaps save money?

Mr Hilbourne: Obviously, I cannot speculate on why individual authorities adopted a particular approach, but I know from anecdotal evidence from authorities that they have felt that home repair assistance is more effective in targeting, rather than spending large sums of money on individual houses across the whole of an area.

[49] **Val Lloyd:** Diolch. Yr wyf am symud yn awr at baragraff 3.15 ar dudalen 12, sy'n sôn am newid yn y cymorth. A allwch eto ddweud wrthym pa effaith y mae'r newid o grantiau adnewyddu tai i gymorth trwsio cartrefi wedi ei chael ar gyflwr tai yng Nghymru?

Mr Hilbourne: Mae dau newid yn y bôn. Bu mwy o bwyslais ar gymorth trwsio cartrefi yn y blynyddoedd diwethaf, ond yr oedd grantiau adnewyddu tai yn fwy cyffredin yn y blynyddoedd cynnar—yn bennaf, mi gredaf, oherwydd bod gwaith adnewyddu mawr yr oedd angen ei wneud wedi crynhoi. Mae'r cymorth trwsio cartrefi lawer yn fwy addas ar gyfer cynorthwyo pobl sydd â phroblemau cymharol fach gyda'u cartrefi i aros yn eu cartrefi, er enghraifft, yn hytrach na gorfod symud allan—yn aml, efallai, yn lle grantiau cyfleusterau i'r anabl. Mae hynny'n symud ymlaen i'r system newydd, sydd, wrth gwrs, yn rhoi mwy fyth o hyblygrwydd. Mae'n ymwneud ag awdurdodau'n penderfynu beth yw'r blaenoriaethau mewn achosion unigol, a gallu mynd i'r afael â hwy gyda'r math priodol o gymorth.

[50] **Val Lloyd:** Iawn. Felly, a ydych yn dweud mai'r newid, i bob pwrpas, oedd gwell targedu, neu a newidiwyd i grantiau llai mewn ymdrech i arbed arian, efallai?

Mr Hilbourne: Yn amlwg, ni allaf ddyfalu pam y mabwysiadodd awdurdodau unigol ddull penodol, ond gwn o dystiolaeth lafar gan awdurdodau eu bod yn teimlo bod cymorth trwsio cartrefi yn fwy effeithiol wrth dargedu, yn hytrach na gwario llawer iawn o arian ar dai unigol drwy ardal gyfan.

[51] **Jocelyn Davies:** May I ask a supplementary on that? Did it mean that, under the old system, you may have had to have work done to your house that you did not really want to have done, but you had it done because you were then eligible for the entire grant?

Mr Hilbourne: Local authorities adopted a variety of approaches. I think that the new system—the latest changes that we introduced last year—mean that authorities can be much more focused and targeted. Under the mandatory grant system, all houses had to meet the whole of the fitness standard for each grant. That is much more flexible now.

[52] **Jocelyn Davies:** So you could have much less work done so that there is less for the house owner and less money and so on?

Mr Hilbourne: Yes. Elderly people, for example, do not necessarily want the huge disruption of major grant works and a minor works grant might actually address the problems that they have, not only in a cost-effective way, but in a way that is much more convenient and acceptable to them as individuals.

[53] **Val Lloyd:** There is a very interesting paragraph—paragraph 3.14—about the demolition of houses. Broadly post-war—sort of 1940s until the 1960s, I suppose—demolition seemed to be the approach of choice. That practice declined, but it now appears to be coming back. Do you think that demolition as a means of removing housing that is beyond repair has been used to full effect?

[51] **Jocelyn Davies:** A gaf fi ofyn cwestiwn ychwanegol am hynny? A oedd hyn yn golygu, dan yr hen system, eich bod efallai wedi gorfod gwneud gwaith ar eich ty nad oeddech am ei wneud mewn gwirionedd, ond eich bod yn ei wneud oherwydd eich bod wedyn yn gymwys i gael y grant cyfan?

Mr Hilbourne: Mabwysiadodd awdurdodau lleol amrywiaeth o ddulliau. Credaf fod y system newydd—y newidiadau diweddaraf a gyflwynwyd y llynedd—yn golygu y gall awdurdodau ganolbwyntio a thargedu lawer yn fwy. Dan y system grantiau orfodol, yr oedd yn rhaid i bob ty fodloni'r safon addasrwydd cyfan ar gyfer pob grant. Mae hynny lawer yn fwy hyblyg bellach.

[52] **Jocelyn Davies:** Felly, gallech wneud llawer llai o waith er mwyn bod llai i berchennog y ty a llai o arian, ac ati?

Mr Hilbourne: Gallech. Nid yw pobl hyn, er enghraifft, o reidrwydd eisiau'r tarfu hirfaith a ddaw o waith grant sylweddol, a hwyrach y gall grant mân waith mewn gwirionedd ddelio â'u problemau, nid yn unig mewn ffordd gost effeithiol, ond mewn ffordd sydd lawer yn fwy cyfleus a derbyniol iddynt fel unigolion.

[53] **Val Lloyd:** Mae paragraff diddorol iawn—paragraff 3.14—ynglyn â dymchwel tai. Tua'r cyfnod ar ôl y rhyfel—oddeutu'r 1940au tan y 1960au, mae'n debyg—ymddengys mai dymchwel oedd y dull a ddewisid. Dirywiodd yr ymarfer hwn, ond ymddengys ei fod nawr yn dod yn ôl. A gredwch fod dymchwel fel ffordd o gael gwared â chartrefi sydd y tu hwnt i'w trwsio wedi'i ddefnyddio i'w botensial llawn?

Mr Hilbourne: I suspect that in the early 1990s, the fact that there were fairly significant renovation grants available was one of the reasons why demolition reduced, as well as, I suspect, because of some of the experiences with demolition in the 1960s and 1970s. The situation is now different; with the new system, there is much more of an emphasis on addressing the problems with the most suitable mechanism, and much better targeting. For example, people can now get help and assistance to move house if, perhaps, a house has reached the end of its useful life, rather than for major renovation work that would not necessarily be the most cost-effective approach. That is probably a feature of why the balance has shifted over the period reflected in the report.

[54] **Val Lloyd:** In your opinion, is that why demolition rates have increased recently?

Mr Hilbourne: I suspect that may be the case, but I do not have any hard data to back that up.

[55] **Val Lloyd:** Very broadly, would there be any barriers to the use of demolition?

Mr Hilbourne: Not necessarily. I mean, there are the normal rules for acquisition, compulsory purchase, and so on, but I think that there would be more encouragement with local authorities that now find that houses have reached the end of their useful life to encourage people, with support, to find alternative accommodation.

[56] **Val Lloyd:** Thank you, Chair.

[57] **Janet Davies:** Thank you, Val. Mick, you have some questions.

Mr Hilbourne: Yr wyf yn tybio yn y 1990au cynnar mai un o'r rhesymau pam yr oedd llai o ddymchwel oedd bod grantiau adnewyddu eithaf sylweddol ar gael, a hefyd, yr wyf yn tybied, oherwydd rhai o'r profiadau a gafwyd o ddymchwel yn y 1960au a'r 1970au. Mae'r sefyllfa'n wahanol erbyn hyn; gyda'r system newydd, mae llawer mwy o bwyslais ar fynd i'r afael â'r problemau gyda'r mecanwaith mwyaf addas, a thargedu llawer gwell. Er enghraifft, gall pobl yn awr gael cymorth i symud ty os bydd ty, efallai, wedi cyrraedd diwedd ei oes ddefnyddiol, yn hytrach na gwneud gwaith adnewyddu sylweddol na fyddai o reidrwydd yn ddull mwyaf cost effeithiol. Mae'n debygol fod hynny'n un o'r rhesymau pam mae'r arfer wedi newid yn ystod y cyfnod a adlewyrchir yn yr adroddiad.

[54] **Val Lloyd:** Yn eich barn chi, ai dyna'r rheswm pam mae cyfraddau dymchwel wedi cynyddu'n ddiweddar?

Mr Hilbourne: Efallai fod hynny'n wir, ond nid oes gennyf unrhyw ddata cadarn i gefnogi hynny.

[55] **Val Lloyd:** Yn gryno iawn, a fyddai unrhyw rwystrau i rhag dymchwel?

Mr Hilbourne: Nid o reidrwydd. Er bod rheolau cyffredin ar gyfer caffael, prynu gorfodol, ac ati, credaf y byddai mwy o anogaeth gan awdurdodau lleol sy'n gweld bellach fod tai wedi cyrraedd diwedd eu hoes ddefnyddiol i gymell pobl, gyda chymorth, i ddod o hyd i lety arall.

[56] **Val Lloyd:** Diolch, Gadeirydd.

[57] **Janet Davies:** Diolch, Val. Mick, mae gennych rai cwestiynau.

[58] **Mick Bates:** Thank you, Chair. Moving on to paragraph 3.16, we see that the average house renovation grant provided in Wales was almost double the rate provided in England—£19,000 in Wales and £10,500 in England. Why were house renovation grants so much higher, on average, in Wales than in England?

Mr Hilbourne: I think that there are probably a number of reasons for that. The former Welsh Office, in the early 1990s, invested very heavily, partially because there were very much higher levels of unfitness in Wales than in England. The resources available in Wales were significant in order to address the backlog of the problem, and there was much more comprehensive renovation of individual properties in Wales than in England, I suspect.

[59] **Mick Bates:** So, it was simply that the condition was much worse in Wales?

Mr Hilbourne: The condition was much worse, yes, and the numbers as well—that is obviously going to affect individual costs.

[60] **Mick Bates:** Right. So has that resulted in the condition of housing improving more rapidly in Wales, or just to a higher standard, or both?

Mr Hilbourne: The indications from the last house condition survey were that the levels of unfitness had dropped more dramatically in Wales. So, the indications were that that expenditure had had a more effective impact in Wales.

[61] **Mick Bates:** So, in terms of effectiveness, then, the renovation that was completed was to a higher quality than that in England, presumably?

[58] **Mick Bates:** Diolch, Gadeirydd. I symud ymlaen i baragraff 3.16, gwelwn fod cyfartaledd y grantiau adnewyddu tai a ddarparwyd yng Nghymru bron ddwywaith y gyfradd yn Lloegr—£19,000 yng Nghymru a £10,500 yn Lloegr. Pam mae grantiau adnewyddu tai gymaint yn uwch, ar gyfartaledd, yng Nghymru nag yn Lloegr?

Mr Hilbourne: Credaf fod sawl rheswm, mae'n debyg, am hynny. Buddsoddodd y Swyddfa Gymreig gynt, ddechrau'r 1990au, yn drwm iawn, yn rhannol oherwydd bod lefelau llawer iawn uwch o dai anaddas yng Nghymru nag yn Lloegr. Yr oedd adnoddau sylweddol ar gael yng Nghymru i fynd i'r afael â'r broblem a oedd wedi crynhoi, ac rwy'n tybied bod llawer mwy o eiddo unigol wedi eu hadnewyddu'n helaeth yng Nghymru nag yn Lloegr.

[59] **Mick Bates:** Felly, y rheswm yn syml oedd bod y cyflwr lawer yn waeth yng Nghymru?

Mr Hilbourne: Oedd, yr oedd y cyflwr lawer yn waeth, a'r niferoedd hefyd—mae hynny'n amlwg yn mynd i effeithio ar gostau unigol.

[60] **Mick Bates:** Iawn. Felly, a yw hynny wedi golygu bod cyflwr tai wedi gwella yn gyflymach yng Nghymru, neu i safon uwch yn unig, neu'r ddau?

Mr Hilbourne: Yr arwyddion o'r arolwg cyflwr tai diwethaf oedd bod y lefelau anaddasrwydd wedi disgyn yn fwy dramatig yng Nghymru. Felly, yr arwyddion oedd bod y gwariant wedi cael effaith fwy effeithiol yng Nghymru.

[61] **Mick Bates:** Felly, o ran effeithiolrwydd, yr oedd y gwaith atgyweirio a wnaethpwyd o ansawdd uwch nag yn Lloegr, yn ôl pob tebyg?

Mr Hilbourne: I do not have detailed data of precisely what the situation was in England, but the indications, given that the level of unfitnes has fallen, are that that was probably the case.

[62] **Mick Bates:** Probably? Do you actually undertake comparisons between England and Wales in order to establish whether or not it was simply that the condition was worse, or that the work was completed to a higher quality?

Mr Hilbourne: Yes. The comparisons are limited to the information that comes out of the house condition surveys, which are carried out in England and in Wales—not necessarily at exactly the same time. There is an opportunity to look across both countries then, but not necessarily in respect of the level of quality of renovation that was achieved.

[63] **Mick Bates:** Sorry, may I just clarify that?

Mr Hilbourne: Certainly, yes.

[64] **Mick Bates:** You say that there is an opportunity to examine the differences. Is that actually part of the process? When you evaluate how the grants have been spent, do you actually undertake an evaluation that compares all the categories between England and Wales?

Mr Hilbourne: Not identically, because the surveys are undertaken on different bases. What we do is look at the level of improvement in terms of, for example, the extent to which levels of unfitnes have changed in England and Wales over a period.

Mr Hilbourne: Nid oes gennyf ddata manwl am yr union sefyllfa yn Lloegr, ond yr arwyddion, o ystyried bod y lefel anaddasrwydd wedi disgyn, yw bod hynny'n wir yn ôl pob tebyg.

[62] **Mick Bates:** Yn ôl pob tebyg? A ydych mewn gwirionedd yn cymharu Lloegr â Chymru er mwyn gweld ai'r rheswm yn syml oedd bod y cyflwr yn waeth, neu fod y gwaith wedi'i wneud i safon uwch?

Mr Hilbourne: Ydym. Mae'r cymariaethau'n gyfyngedig i'r wybodaeth sy'n deillio o'r arolygon cyflwr tai, a gyflawnir yng Nghymru a Lloegr—nid yn union yr un pryd, o reidrwydd. Mae cyfle i edrych ar y ddwy wlad, felly, ond nid o reidrwydd o ran lefel ansawdd y gwaith adnewyddu a wnaethpwyd.

[63] **Mick Bates:** Mae'n ddrwg gennyf, a gaf fi egluro hynny?

Mr Hilbourne: Wrth gwrs.

[64] **Mick Bates:** Yr ydych yn dweud bod cyfle i archwilio'r gwahaniaethau. A yw hynny'n rhan o'r broses mewn gwirionedd? Pan fyddwch yn gwerthuso sut y mae'r grantiau wedi'u gwario, a fyddwch mewn gwirionedd yn cynnal gwerthusiad sy'n cymharu'r holl gategorïau rhwng Cymru a Lloegr?

Mr Hilbourne: Nid yn union yr un peth, oherwydd bod yr arolygon yn cael eu gwneud ar wahanol seiliau. Yr hyn yr ydym yn ei wneud yw edrych ar lefel y gwelliannau, er enghraifft, o ran y graddau y mae lefelau anaddasrwydd wedi newid yn gych Nghymru a Lloegr dros gyfnod.

[65] **Mick Bates:** I see. Thank you. I will move on to paragraph 3.17 and figure 11, which shows how much was spent on each type of grant by each local authority in 2001. In figure 11, why does the use made of the different types of grant differ so significantly between authorities?

Mr Hilbourne: I think that only the individual local authorities would be able to answer that. The nature of the housing and house conditions does vary, obviously, widely between some authorities, although, quite clearly, in many cases, for example the Valleys authorities, they are fairly similar. Responsibility for deciding what type of grant to issue was down to individual authorities, and I think that that is what is reflected in the table.

[66] **Mick Bates:** So, presumably, coming back to my previous point on evaluation, do you have a process that evaluates the effective spend by each authority, for example, if Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council chooses to focus on home repair, that that home repair is done to a good standard, or, let us say in Powys where, they focus resource on renovation, that they are both working to an equally high standard?

Mr Hilbourne: It is the responsibility of the individual local authorities to determine precisely what works are covered by a grant, rather than the Assembly Government, and the extent to which those grants are used. Issues of value for money, and so on, are really responsibilities for individual local authorities. Now, the approach that authorities take differs. Quite clearly, authority members decide on what is appropriate for individual areas. We do collect data, obviously, on numbers of grants, levels of unfitness and expenditure, but that does not

[65] **Mick Bates:** Mi welaf. Diolch. Yr wyf am symud ymlaen i baragraff 3.17 a ffigur 11, sy'n dangos faint a wariwyd ar bob math o grant gan bob awdurdod lleol yn 2001. Yn ffigur 11, pam mae'r defnydd a wnaed o'r gwahanol fathau o grant mor sylweddol wahanol rhwng awdurdodau?

Mr Hilbourne: Credaf mai'r awdurdodau lleol unigol yn unig fyddai'n gallu ateb hynny. Mae natur y cartrefi a chyflwr y tai yn amrywio, yn amlwg, yn eang rhwng rhai awdurdodau, er eu bod, yn eithaf amlwg, mewn llawer achos, er enghraifft awdurdodau'r Cymoedd, yn ddigon tebyg. Cyfrifoldeb yr awdurdodau unigol oedd penderfynu pa fath o grant i'w roi, a chredaf mai hynny a adlewyrchir yn y tabl.

[66] **Mick Bates:** Felly, yn ôl pob tebyg, i ddod yn ôl at fy mhwynt blaenorol ar werthuso, a oes gennych broses sy'n gwerthuso effeithiolrwydd gwariant pob awdurdod, er enghraifft, os yw Cyngor Bwrdeistref Rhondda Cynon Taf yn dewis canolbwyntio ar drwsio cartrefi, bod y gwaith trwsio hwnnw'n cael ei wneud i safon dda, neu os yw Powys, dyweder, yn canolbwyntio'u hadnoddau ar adnewyddu, bod y ddau yn gwneud hynny i safon sydd lawn mor uchel?

Mr Hilbourne: Cyfrifoldeb yr awdurdodau lleol unigol yw pennu'n union pa waith a gynhwysir gan grant, yn hytrach na Llywodraeth y Cynulliad, ac i ba raddau y mae'r grantiau hynny'n cael eu defnyddio. Cyfrifoldebau awdurdodau unigol yw materion gwerth am arian, ac ati, mewn gwirionedd. Yn awr, mae dull awdurdodau lleol yn wahanol. Yn amlwg ddigon, aelodau awdurdodau sy'n penderfynu'r hyn sy'n briodol ar gyfer ardaloedd unigol. Byddwn yn casglu data, wrth gwrs, am niferoedd grantiau, lefelau anaddasrwydd a gwariant, ond nid yw

necessarily identify why individual authorities have adopted different approaches.

[67] **Mick Bates:** Is any attempt made to identify that at all, why they have these different approaches?

Mr Hilbourne: There is no formal mechanism.

[68] **Mick Bates:** I see, because when I look at Merthyr, for example, it spends relatively small amounts on disability. Would that not give cause for concern when you evaluate this spend?

Mr Hilbourne: I think that, as far as disability is concerned, because the grants are mandatory, local authorities do not really have the choice of whether to target those or other grants that are not mandatory. Mandatory grants, quite clearly, are there because the individual has a mandatory entitlement to a grant. The spread of the spending of mandatory disabled facilities grants is not subject to a particular pattern. Some authorities appear to have a higher demand for them than others do, but it is not a question of simply saying, 'Well, look, these are discretionary grants, we will not pay them'. There is a mandatory obligation on those.

[69] **Mick Bates:** Okay, fine. Thanks.

[70] **Janet Davies:** Mr Hilbourne, can I just make sure that I understood what you said? The standard of repairs achieved is the responsibility of the local authority. It would not be the responsibility of the owner, or of an agent of the owner, but of the local authority and, presumably, that would be because the local authority is coming up with the money?

hynny o reidrwydd yn nodi pam mae awdurdodau unigol wedi mabwysiadu dulliau gwahanol.

[67] **Mick Bates:** A wneir unrhyw ymdrech i nodi hynny o gwbl, pam mae ganddynt y dulliau gwahanol hyn?

Mr Hilbourne: Nid oes mecanwaith ffurfiol.

[68] **Mick Bates:** Mi welaf, oherwydd wrth edrych ar Ferthyr, er enghraifft, mae'n gwario symiau cymharol fach ar anabledd. Onid yw hynny'n achos pryder wrth i chi werthuso'r gwariant hwn?

Mr Hilbourne: O ran anabledd, credaf oherwydd bod y grantiau'n orfodol nad oes gan awdurdodau lleol ddewis mewn gwirionedd o ran targedu'r grantiau hynny neu grantiau eraill nad ydynt yn orfodol. Mae grantiau gorfodol, yn amlwg, yno oherwydd bod gan yr unigolyn hawl gorfodol i gael grant. Nid yw'r modd y mae gwariant y grantiau gorfodol ar gyfer cyfleusterau i'r anabl yn cael ei rannu yn dilyn patrwm penodol. Ymddengys fod mwy o alw amdanynt mewn rhai awdurdodau nag eraill, ond nid yw'n fater yn syml o ddweud, 'Wel, edrychwch, mae'r rhain yn grantiau dewisol, nid ydym am eu talu'. Mae ymrwymiad gorfodol ar y rheini.

[69] **Mick Bates:** Iawn. Diolch.

[70] **Janet Davies:** Mr Hilbourne, a gaf fi gadarnhau fy mod wedi deall yr hyn yr ydych wedi ei ddweud? Cyfrifoldeb yr awdurdod lleol yw safon y gwaith trwsio a wneir. Nid cyfrifoldeb y perchennog, neu asiant i'r perchennog, fyddai hynny, ond yr awdurdod lleol, a hynny, mae'n debyg, oherwydd mai'r awdurdod lleol sy'n cyfrannu'r arian?

Mr Hilbourne: Yes, the local authority is investing the public money, and it needs to be satisfied that that money is being spent effectively.

[71] **Janet Davies:** Thank you very much. Right, who wanted to come in next? Alun?

[72] **Alun Cairns:** Thank you, Cadeirydd.

Sir Jon, I want to refer to paragraphs 3.20 onwards, which relate to the problems of the current system, either in administration, maladministration or fraud. First of all, can I refer to the administration of the current problems? I refer you to paragraph 3.22, which, under the first bullet point, says that the lack of advertising means that:

‘many of those in greatest need are unlikely to know that they could be receiving assistance’.

Do you accept that statement to begin with, and do you think that it is acceptable?

Sir Jon Shortridge: I obviously accept the statement. Just for clarity, what was referred to here was the current system at the time that this report was published, but it is no longer the current system, because the new system was introduced in July.

These are, essentially, matters for local authorities and, increasingly, under what is now the current system, they are very much a matter for local authorities. They are being given the responsibility and the discretion to determine how they will address the problems of the housing stock in their areas, using the resources that are made available to them in a largely unhypothecated way now. They are accountable to their electorates, and there are systems of regulation and audit on them, notably through Best Value inspection and the Wales programme

Mr Hilbourne: Ie, mae'r awdurdod lleol yn buddsoddi'r arian cyhoeddus, ac mae angen iddo fod yn fodlon bod arian yn cael ei wario'n effeithiol.

[71] **Janet Davies:** Diolch yn fawr. Iawn, pwy oedd am gyfrannu nesaf? Alun?

[72] **Alun Cairns:** Diolch, Gadeirydd.

Syr Jon, yr wyf am gyfeirio at baragraffau 3.20 ymlaen, sy'n ymwneud â phroblemau'r system gyfredol, naill ai o ran gweinyddu, camweinyddu neu dwyll. Yn gyntaf oll, a gaf fi gyfeirio at weinyddu'r problemau cyfredol? Cyfeiriaf at baragraff 3.22, sydd, dan y pwynt bwled cyntaf, yn dweud bod y diffyg hysbysebu'n golygu:

‘nad yw llawer o'r rhai sydd â'r angen mwyaf yn debygol o wybod y gallent fod yn cael cymorth’.

A ydych yn derbyn y datganiad hwn i ddechrau, ac a ydych yn credu ei fod yn dderbyniol?

Syr Jon Shortridge: Yr wyf wrth gwrs yn derbyn y datganiad. Er mwyn esbonio, yr hyn y cyfeiriwyd ato yma oedd y system gyfredol pan gyhoeddwyd yr adroddiad hwn, ond nid hon yw'r system gyfredol bellach, oherwydd cafodd y system newydd ei chyflwyno ym mis Gorffennaf.

Materion i awdurdodau lleol, yn sylfaenol, yw'r rhain, ac yn gynyddol dan yr hyn sydd bellach yn system gyfredol, maent heb os yn fater i awdurdodau lleol. Maent yn cael y cyfrifoldeb a'r rhyddid i bennu sut y byddant yn mynd i'r afael â phroblemau stoc tai yn eu hardaloedd, drwy ddefnyddio'r adnoddau sydd ar gael iddynt mewn ffordd sydd nawr heb ei chlustnodi i raddau helaeth. Maent yn atebol i'w hetholwyr, ac mae systemau rheoleiddio ac archwilio arnynt, yn bennaf drwy arolygiad Gwerth Gorau a rhaglen Cymru ar gyfer gwella. Dyna gyd-destun

for improvement. That is the administrative context in which this work is now done.

[73] **Alun Cairns:** So, Sir Jon, in saying that, you are saying that the Assembly should accept no responsibility for, maybe, people in a very needy state not knowing about the grant system available?

Sir Jon Shortridge: No, I am not saying that. What I am saying—

[74] **Alun Cairns:** Well, I felt that you were passing the buck on to the local authority.

Sir Jon Shortridge: What I am saying is that we have moved from a highly centralised and prescriptive set of arrangements, which does put a significant degree of accountability on the Assembly, to one where we have a devolved system. It is for local authorities themselves, which are much closer to their local housing, to determine how their housing stock should be improved and renewed. The role at the all-Wales level, at the Assembly level, is to be monitoring how these arrangements are being implemented. The Assembly should seek to use its influence through the very substantial non-statutory guidance that we have given, and through the sorts of contacts that Brendon and his colleagues have with the authorities so that best practice can be shared and learned, and by making use of the Audit Commission in Wales so that it can exercise its regulatory function to help to improve the way in which the money is spent and the housing stock itself is improved. That is the system that we have.

gweinyddol gwneud y gwaith hwn ar hyn o bryd.

[73] **Alun Cairns:** Felly, Syr Jon, wrth ddweud hynny, yr ydych yn dweud na ddylai'r Cynulliad dderbyn cyfrifoldeb pan nad yw pobl, efallai, sydd mewn angen sylweddol yn gwybod bod y system grant ar gael?

Syr Jon Shortridge: Na, nid wyf yn dweud hynny. Yr hyn yr wyf yn ei ddweud—

[74] **Alun Cairns:** Wel, yr oeddwn yn teimlo eich bod yn bwrw'r cyfrifoldeb ar yr awdurdod lleol.

Syr Jon Shortridge: Yr hyn yr wyf yn ei ddweud yw ein bod wedi symud o set o drefniadau canolog a chyfarwyddol iawn, sydd yn rhoi cryn atebolrwydd ar y Cynulliad, i un lle mae gennym system wedi ei datganoli. Cyfrifoldeb awdurdodau lleol eu hunain, sydd lawer yn agosach at eu tai lleol, yw pennu sut y dylid gwella ac adnewyddu eu stoc tai. Y swyddogaeth ar lefel Cymru gyfan, ar lefel y Cynulliad, yw monitro sut y gweithredir y trefniadau hyn. Dylai'r Cynulliad geisio defnyddio'i ddylanwad drwy'r canllawiau anstatudol sylweddol iawn yr ydym wedi'u rhoi, a thrwy y mathau o gysylltiadau sydd gan Brendon a'i gydweithwyr gyda'r awdurdodau er mwyn gallu rhannu a dysgu arferion gorau. A dylai wneud hynny drwy ddefnyddio'r Comisiwn Archwilio yng Nghymru er mwyn iddo allu ymarfer ei swyddogaeth reoleiddio i helpu gwella'r ffordd y mae'r arian yn cael ei wario a'r stoc tai ei hun yn cael ei wella. Dyna'r system sydd gennym.

[75] **Alun Cairns:** You mentioned the non-statutory guidance that the Assembly has issued to local authorities, but the second bullet point under paragraph 3.22 states that, in Neath Porth Talbot County Borough Council, with 3,000 people on a waiting list, it was calculated that it would take 71 years to clear it at its existing rate of approval. Do you think that that is acceptable?

Sir Jon Shortridge: No, of course that situation is not acceptable, and that is one of the reasons why the new flexible system has been introduced, so that local authorities can target their money at what they see as the priorities.

[76] **Alun Cairns:** Those are just two of the problems—maybe the needy not understanding that they might be eligible for grant, as well as the long timescale that we could well face. If we are not to use non-statutory guidance, what means are available to the Assembly in order to improve this without being centralist, if you like?

Sir Jon Shortridge: Well, I suppose it is anticipating part 4 of the report. The view is that, having now got the condition of the housing stock into a much better condition than it was in the early 1990s, you have a policy where authorities are much freer to use the money that is available to them in the way that they think best. You then monitor the situation at the all-Wales level, but this is essentially devolution rolling out from the Assembly down to the local authorities, and they are taking the responsibility to address the condition of their housing stock and to put systems in place where they can learn from each other what works. I think that the new system will provide much greater opportunity for innovation than the monolithic, centralist system that we had, for very good reasons, in the 1990s.

[75] **Alun Cairns:** Soniech am y canllawiau anstatudol y mae'r Cynulliad wedi'u rhoi i awdurdodau lleol. Ond mae'r ail bwynt bwled dan baragraff 3.22 yn nodi amcangyfrif, yng Nghyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd Port Talbot, gyda 3,000 o bobl ar restr aros, y byddai'n cymryd 71 mlynedd i'w chlirio yn ôl ei chyfradd gymeradwyo bresennol. A ydych yn credu fod hynny'n dderbyniol?

Syr Jon Shortridge: Nac ydwyf, mae'n amlwg nad yw'r sefyllfa honno'n dderbyniol. A dyna un o'r rhesymau pan y mae'r system hyblyg newydd wedi ei chyflwyno, er mwyn i awdurdodau lleol allu targedu eu harian ar yr hyn a ystyriant yn flaenoriaethau.

[76] **Alun Cairns:** Dim ond dwy o'r problemau yw'r rheiny—pobl mewn angen heb ddeall y gallant fod yn gymwys i gael grant, ynghyd â'r amserlen hir y gallem ei hwynebu. Os nad ydym am ddefnyddio canllawiau anstatudol, pa ddulliau sydd ar gael i'r Cynulliad er mwyn gwella hyn heb fod yn rhy ganolog, os hoffech chi?

Syr Jon Shortridge: Wel, mae'n debyg ei fod yn rhagweld rhan 4 yn yr adroddiad. Y farn yw, ar ôl gwella cyflwr y stoc tai yn sylweddol nawr o'i gymharu â dechrau'r 1990au, fod gennyh bolisi lle mae gan awdurdodau lawer mwy o ryddid i ddefnyddio'r arian sydd ar gael iddynt fel y gwelant yn dda. Yr ydych wedyn yn monitro'r sefyllfa drwy Gymru gyfan. Ond datganoli yw hyn yn ei hanfod yn cael ei gyflwyno o'r Cynulliad i lawr i'r awdurdodau lleol, a hwythau'n cymryd y cyfrifoldeb o fynd i'r afael â chyflwr eu stoc tai a gweithredu systemau er mwyn iddynt allu dysgu gan ei gilydd beth sy'n gweithio. Credaf y bydd y system newydd yn gyfle llawer gwell i arloesi na'r system fonolithig, ganolog a oedd gennym, am resymau da iawn, yn y 1990au.

[77] **Alun Cairns:** Okay. I want to talk about high administration costs, as mentioned in the fourth bullet point:

‘In some local authorities the cost of administration of home repair assistance was higher than the grants awarded’.

Do you think that that is acceptable, and is it now under control?

Sir Jon Shortridge: Well, I think that Brendon can give you a fuller answer on this than I can, but I think that the basic point is that home repair grants tend to be very small, and so, by definition, the relationship between the cost and the administration will be different from a very significant, in the old days, mandatory grant. There is the issue of balance, is there not? In other parts of this report, there are comments on fraud, and you need a certain minimum of administration if you are to ensure that public money is to be spent properly.

[78] **Alun Cairns:** Does Mr Hilbourne want to respond?

Mr Hilbourne: The Assembly Government does not set any parameters for administration costs; that is a matter for authorities to set themselves. As Sir Jon said, I think, particularly with the smaller grants—the home repair assistance—inevitably, if the grant is small, the administration costs are going to be rather higher, but I think that that has to be balanced against the benefit to the home owner. In many cases, these are relatively small works enabling elderly people, perhaps, to stay in their own homes. The cost of administration also needs to be set against what the potential other costs would be, had they not received that grant.

[77] **Alun Cairns:** Iawn. Yr wyf am siarad am gostau gweinyddol uchel, fel a grybwyllir yn y pedwerydd pwynt bwled:

‘Mewn rhai awdurdodau lleol roedd y gost o weinyddu cymorth atgyweirio yn uwch na’r grantiau a ddyfarnwyd’.

A ydych yn meddwl bod hynny’n dderbyniol, ac a yw hyn dan reolaeth bellach?

Syr Jon Shortridge: Wel, credaf y gall Brendon roi ateb mwy cyflawn ar hyn nag y gallaf i, ond credaf mai’r pwynt sylfaenol yw bod grantiau trwsio cartrefi yn tueddu i fod yn fach iawn ac felly, o ganlyniad, bydd y berthynas rhwng y costau a’r gweinyddu yn wahanol i grant gorfodol sylweddol iawn, yn yr hen ddyddiau. Onid oes mater o gydbwysedd? Mewn rhannau eraill o’r adroddiad hwn, mae sylwadau ar dwyll, ac mae angen isafswm penodol o weinyddu arnoch os ydych am sicrhau bod arian cyhoeddus yn cael ei wario’n iawn.

[78] **Alun Cairns:** A yw Mr Hilbourne am ymateb?

Mr Hilbourne: Nid yw Llywodraeth y Cynulliad yn gosod unrhyw baramedrau ar gyfer costau gweinyddol; mae hynny’n fater i’r awdurdodau eu gosod eu hunain. Fel y dywedodd Syr Jon, yn arbennig gyda’r grantiau llai—y cymorth trwsio cartrefi—yn anochel, os yw’r grant yn fach, bydd y costau gweinyddol ychydig yn uwch, ond credaf fod angen cydbwysu hynny yn erbyn y manteision i’r perchennog ty. Mewn sawl achos, mae’r rhain yn waith trwsio cymharol fach sy’n galluogi i bobl hyn, efallai, aros yn eu cartrefi eu hunain. Mae hefyd angen gosod costau gweinyddol yn erbyn y costau posibl eraill, pe na baent wedi derbyn y grant hwnnw.

[79] **Alun Cairns:** Sir Jon, you mentioned earlier, when I talked about the problems of the administration, that this was, obviously, as at July, and things might well have changed since then. Can you give me some evidence in terms of on what basis you made the statement?

Sir Jon Shortridge: I think that the only evidence that I can give you is that we now have a totally different system, and local authorities have much greater discretion to do these things in their own way. We are only—what is it—about six months into the new arrangements, so I do not have evidence as to the extent to which there is a transition from the old arrangements to the new. However, it is clearly the case that you cannot judge the present arrangements purely on the basis of the past.

[80] **Alun Cairns:** Okay. Referring to maladministration, paragraph 3.23 states that:

‘Since 1994, 148 complaints have been made in respect of housing grants.’

Granted, that is a relatively small number in terms of the numbers of grants that have been awarded, but maladministration had been found in 27 of those cases, which is 18 per cent. How does that compare with other complaint ratios to the ombudsman?

[79] **Alun Cairns:** Syr Jon, bu i chi grybwyll yn gynharach, pan siaradais am y problemau gweinyddol, mai hyn, yn amlwg, oedd y sefyllfa ym mis Gorffennaf, ac efallai'n wir bod pethau wedi newid ers hynny. A ellwch roi tystiolaeth i mi o ran ar ba sail y gwnaethoch y datganiad hwn?

Syr Jon Shortridge: Credaf mai'r unig dystiolaeth y gallaf ei rhoi i chi yw bod gennym system hollol wahanol bellach, bod gan awdurdodau lleol lawer mwy o ryddid i wneud pethau yn eu ffordd eu hunain. Dim ond ers—faint yw hi—chwe mis y mae'r trefniadau newydd wedi bod ar waith, felly nid oes gennyf dystiolaeth o'r graddau y mae'r pontio wedi digwydd o'r hen drefniadau i'r rhai newydd. Fodd bynnag, mae'n amlwg na allwch bwysu a mesur y trefniadau presennol ar sail y gorffennol yn unig.

[80] **Alun Cairns:** Iawn. Gan gyfeirio at gamweinyddu, mae paragraff 3.23 yn nodi:

‘Ers 1994, mae'r Ombwdsmon wedi ymdrin â 148 o gwynion mewn perthynas â grantiau tai.’

Yn sicr, mae hwn yn nifer cymharol isel o ran niferoedd y grantiau sydd wedi'u dyfarnu, ond datgelwyd camweinyddu mewn 27 o'r achosion hynny, sy'n 18 y cant. Sut y mae hynny'n cymharu â chymarebau cwyno eraill i'r ombwdsmon?

Sir Jon Shortridge: I would have to give you a note on that because I do not account directly to the local government ombudsman. I do read his annual report, so I just monitor how the overall quality of administration in Welsh local authorities is going as taken by that measure. From memory, I would say that that is really quite a small proportion of the overall findings of maladministration that come to the ombudsman. That is 27 over nine years, or something, so it is around three a year. In relative terms, that is not significant.

[81] **Alun Cairns:** I appreciate that, and I am grateful for your answer, but if you could provide a note—

Sir Jon Shortridge: Yes, I will certainly do that.

[82] **Alun Cairns:** I would be grateful for that.

Do you feel that these complaints have rooted out the full extent of maladministration?

Sir Jon Shortridge: I cannot give you an informed answer on that. I think that there is a greater awareness of the ombudsman service in Wales now, so there is probably a greater tendency for people to resort to the ombudsman, but, almost by definition, only the more extreme complaints go to the ombudsman, and there are lower forms of maladministration—if I can put it in that way—which people do not complain about, but if they did, there would be a finding in their favour.

Syr Jon Shortridge: Byddai'n rhaid i mi roi nodyn i chi ar hynny oherwydd nad wyf yn atebol yn uniongyrchol i ombwdsmon llywodraeth leol. Yr wyf yn darllen ei adroddiad blynyddol, felly yr unig beth yr wyf yn ei wneud yw monitro ansawdd cyffredinol gweinyddu yn awdurdodau lleol Cymru yn ôl y mesurau hynny. O'r hyn a gofiau, byddwn yn dweud bod hon yn gyfran gymharol fach o'r canfyddiadau cyffredinol o gamweinyddu a ddaeth i sylw'r ombwdsmon. Mae hynny'n 27 dros naw mlynedd, neu rywbeth, felly mae hynny oddeutu tri y flwyddyn. Yn gymharol, nid yw hynny'n llawer.

[81] **Alun Cairns:** Yr wyf yn derbyn hynny, ac yr wyf yn ddiolchgar am eich ateb, ond pe gallech ddarparu nodyn—

Syr Jon Shortridge: Iawn, byddaf yn sicr o wneud hynny.

[82] **Alun Cairns:** Byddwn yn gwerthfawrogi hynny.

A ydych yn credu bod y cwynion hyn wedi amlygu yr holl gamweinyddu?

Syr Jon Shortridge: Ni allaf roi ateb goleuedig i chi ar hynny. Credaf fod gwell ymwybyddiaeth o'r gwasanaeth ombwdsmon yng Nghymru bellach, felly mae'n debyg bod tuedd uwch i bobl ofyn am gymorth yr ombwdsmon, ond, oherwydd hynny bron â bod, dim ond y cwynion mwyaf eithafol sy'n cyrraedd yr ombwdsmon, ac mae ffurfiau is o gamweinyddu—os ydych chi ei roi felly—lle nad yw pobl yn cwyno, ond pe baent yn gwneud, byddai'r canfyddiad o'u plaid.

[83] **Alun Cairns:** My final point relates to the fraud in the system. Paragraph 3.25 refers to a report by the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions, which shows a marked difference between the fraud in England and that in Wales. Wales had 2.2 cases of fraudulent activity per 1,000 grants paid, compared with England's rate of 0.4 per cent. Do we have more fraud or better detection?

Sir Jon Shortridge: I would like to think that it is better detection.

[84] **Alun Cairns:** Why? What evidence do you have to offer?

Sir Jon Shortridge: I think that I will invite Brendon to come in on this because he, personally, took quite a big initiative on it, as I understand it.

We, I think, have taken much stronger action to try to root out fraud in Wales than has been the case in England. It is easier for us, in a sense, in Wales because we have 22 local authorities, and you can get all the key players into a workshop or seminar at the same time and you can get the police in with them. They can then actively share experiences, learn from each other and raise the whole profile of the issue of fraud. That is what we have done in Wales, and I would like to think that, to a very significant extent—if not totally—the fact that we have had higher detection rates in Wales is as a result of that. However, Brendon can perhaps give you slightly more detail.

[83] **Alun Cairns:** Mae fy mhwynt olaf yn ymwneud â'r twyll yn y system. Mae paragraff 3.25 yn cyfeirio at adroddiad gan yr Adran dros Drafnidiaeth, Llywodraeth Leol a'r Rhanbarthau, sy'n dangos gwahaniaeth nodedig rhwng twyll yng Nghymru a Lloegr. Yr oedd gan Gymru 2.2 achos o weithgarwch twyllodrus fesul 1,000 grant a dalwyd, o'i gymharu â chyfradd Lloegr o 0.4 y cant. A oes gennym fwy o dwyll neu well datgeliad?

Syr Jon Shortridge: Hoffwn gredu mai gwell datgeliad ydyw.

[84] **Alun Cairns:** Pam? Pa dystiolaeth sydd gennych i'w gynnig?

Syr Jon Shortridge: Credaf fy mod am wahodd Brendon i gyfrannu yma oherwydd ei fod ef, yn bersonol, wedi chwarae rhan ganolog yn hyn, fel y deallaf i.

Yr ydym, yn fy marn i, wedi gweithredu'n fwy cadarn i geisio mynd at wraidd twyll yng Nghymru o'i gymharu â'r hyn ddigwyddodd yn Lloegr. Mae'n haws i ni, o un safbwynt, yng Nghymru oherwydd bod gennym 22 awdurdod lleol, a gellir cael yr holl chwaraewyr allweddol i weithdy neu seminar ar yr un pryd a chael yr heddlu i ymuno â hwy. Maent wedyn yn gallu rhannu profiadau'n weithgar, dysgu oddi wrth ei gilydd a chodi proffil cyfan twyll. Dyna'r hyn yr ydym wedi'i wneud yng Nghymru, a hoffwn feddwl, i raddau helaeth iawn—os nad yn llwyr—mai dyma'r rheswm ein bod wedi cael cyfraddau datgelu uwch yng Nghymru. Fodd bynnag, efallai y gall Brendon roi ychydig mwy o fanylion i chi.

Mr Hilbourne: Yes, thank you. The report of the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions actually recognises that we had a number of initiatives that involved seminars with local authorities and the police authorities in Wales, which raised the profile of the whole issue. I think that what that did, in the light of that—and according to the report—was that it actually identified that higher levels of fraud in Wales were detected. The indications are that that continued, and it is something that we built into the guidance on the new grant system to a very great extent—the importance of authorities continuing with that high level of vigilance to detect fraud.

[85] **Alun Cairns:** Thank you. Finally, Sir Jon—

[86] **Jocelyn Davies:** Before we move on, what sort of fraud are we talking about? People who are making the applications, the builders or who?

Mr Hilbourne: It is a mixture. It ranges from people not being truthful when making applications, for example, about their ownership of properties and income for the means test, and fraudulent activity involving collusion between builders and individual home owners. There is a whole range of possibilities. What we did was to draw on the experiences of those that were identified as a result of this exercise in order to draft very detailed guidance and advice for authorities in how they develop the new systems.

[87] **Jocelyn Davies:** Okay. Sorry, Alun.

Mr Hilbourne: Iawn, diolch. Mae adroddiad yr Adran dros Drafnidiaeth, Llywodraeth Leol a'r Rhanbarthau yn cydnabod mewn gwirionedd bod gennym nifer o fentrau a oedd yn cynnwys seminarau gydag awdurdodau lleol ac awdurdodau'r heddlu yng Nghymru, a gododd broffil yr holl fater. Credaf yng ngoleuni hynny—ac yn ôl yr adroddiad—mai'r hyn a wnaeth hynny oedd nodi bod lefelau uwch o dwyll yng Nghymru wedi'u datgelu. Yr arwyddion yw bod hynny wedi parhau, ac mae'n rhywbeth a ychwanegwyd gennym at y canllawiau ar y system grant newydd i raddau helaeth—sef y pwysigrwydd bod awdurdodau'n parhau i ddatgelu twyll gyda'r un sêl.

[85] **Alun Cairns:** Diolch. Yn olaf, Syr Jon—

[86] **Jocelyn Davies:** Cyn i ni symud ymlaen, am ba fath o dwyll yr ydym yn sôn? Pobl sy'n gwneud y ceisiadau, yr adeiladwyr neu pwy?

Mr Hilbourne: Mae'n gymysgedd. Mae'n amrywio o bobl yn cuddio'r gwir wrth wneud ceisiadau, er enghraifft, am eu perchnogaeth o eiddo ac incwm ar gyfer y prawf modd, a gweithgarwch twyllodrus yn cynnwys cydgynllwynio rhwng adeiladwyr a pherchnogion tai unigol. Mae pob math o bosibiliadau. Yr hyn a wnaethom oedd defnyddio profiadau y rheini a nodwyd o ganlyniad i'r ymarfer hwn er mwyn drafftio canllawiau manwl iawn a chyngor i awdurdodau ar sut i ddatblygu'r systemau newydd.

[87] **Jocelyn Davies:** Iawn. Mae'n ddrwg gennyf, Alun.

[88] **Alun Cairns:** Thank you, Jocelyn. Finally, Sir Jon, bearing in mind the issues that we have discussed in terms of administration, namely administrative problems, maladministration and fraud, and accepting that this is based on the former system rather than the new system, what actions will you be taking to improve it, bearing in mind the non-statutory guidance that the Assembly has chosen to take?

Sir Jon Shortridge: Currently, I am not proposing to take any further action, and the primary responsibility for the administration of housing grants, of whatever nature, rests with the local authorities, and it is for them, in the first instance, to take the necessary action. What we have done, as Brendon referred to, is to provide this very extensive non-statutory guidance, which they can, and do, draw on to assist them to develop systems of best practice. The other thing that we continue to do is to have a very close relationship with the relevant officials in the local authorities concerned so that we can all learn from each other about what works and what does not work. The final thing that I rely on, and local authority members rely on, is the audit process that that authority itself undergoes. I think that those arrangements at the moment are sufficient, given that what this report indicates is that there is no evidence here of very significant problems. In themselves, they are serious, but I would not regard them as being disproportionate, and I think, therefore, that the arrangements that we currently have in place are sufficient.

[89] **Alun Cairns:** Thank you.

[90] **Janet Davies:** Thank you, Alun. Chris, you have some questions?

[88] **Alun Cairns:** Diolch, Jocelyn. Yn olaf, Syr Jon, gan gofio'r materion yr ydym wedi'u trafod o ran gweinyddu, sef problemau gweinyddu, camweinyddu a thwyll yn bennaf, a derbyn bod hyn ar sail yr hen system yn hytrach na'r system newydd, pa gamau y byddwch yn eu cymryd i wella pethau, o ystyried y canllawiau anstatudol y mae'r Cynulliad wedi dewis eu cymryd?

Syr Jon Shortridge: Ar hyn o bryd, nid wyf yn cynnig cymryd unrhyw gamau pellach, ac mae'r prif gyfrifoldeb o weinyddu grantiau tai, o unrhyw fath, yn nwylo'r awdurdodau lleol, a'u cyfrifoldeb hwy, yn y lle cyntaf, fydd cymryd y camau angenrheidiol. Yr hyn yr ydym wedi'i wneud, fel y cyfeiriodd Brendon ato, yw darparu'r canllawiau anstatudol eang iawn hyn, fel y maent ac y gallant eu defnyddio i'w cynorthwyo i ddatblygu systemau arferion gorau. Y peth arall yr ydym yn parhau i'w wneud yw cynnal perthynas agos iawn â'r swyddogion perthnasol yn yr awdurdodau lleol dan sylw er mwyn i ni gyd allu dysgu am yr hyn sy'n gweithio a'r hyn nad yw'n gweithio gan ein gilydd. Y peth olaf yr wyf yn dibynnu arno, ac mae aelodau awdurdod lleol yn dibynnu arno, yw'r broses archwilio y mae'r awdurdod ei hun yn mynd trwyddo. Credaf fod y trefniadau hynny ar hyn o bryd yn ddigonol, o ystyried bod yr adroddiad hwn yn awgrymu nad oes tystiolaeth yma o broblemau difrifol iawn. Ohonynt eu hunain, maent yn ddifrifol, ond ni fyddwn yn ystyried eu bod yn anghymesur a chredaf, felly, bod y trefniadau sydd gennym ar waith ar hyn o bryd yn ddigonol.

[89] **Alun Cairns:** Diolch.

[90] **Janet Davies:** Diolch, Alun. Chris, mae gennych gwestiynau?

[91] **Christine Gwyther:** Thank you, Chair. Jon, I would like to explore a little more the guidance that was issued in August 2002. Are you confident that that guidance is adequate to ensure that local authorities are implementing their new housing renewal policies? Obviously, we know that it is not mandatory, but it talks about giving priority to the most vulnerable, especially households with disabled and older occupants, and ensuring that applicants for loans are properly advised. I think that that is certainly another precursor to any fraud investigation later on—whether people received the proper advice in the first place. Do you think that the advice that we gave is adequate for local authorities?

Sir Jon Shortridge: I will ask Brendon to come in because, if he did not draft it himself, he was certainly responsible for it, and he continues to be very responsible for the way in which it is implemented. This is very detailed and thorough guidance. It has been prepared in close consultation with local government. It has been prepared by a team of officials in the Assembly, which has worked, for the most part, in this area for a very long time. Brendon, if he likes, can tell you how long he personally has worked in this area. We have a lot of experience, therefore, which we have sought to feed into that guidance, and I actually prefer non-statutory guidance to prescriptive guidance because it sets the tone, and the tone is that we are providing this to help you and we shall be working with you on its implementation, and if things emerge through the implementation of this new system, where the guidance needs to be changed or strengthened, it will. Going back to what I was saying before about having 22 local authorities, we are in a very good position in Wales, as the team here can engage on either a one-to-one basis, or on a collective basis, with all 22 authorities, and we just have shared objectives. We all want to be using our best endeavours to use the money and

[91] **Christine Gwyther:** Diolch, Gadeirydd. Jon, hoffwn archwilio'r canllawiau a gyhoeddwyd yn Awst 2002 ychydig ymhellach. A ydych yn hyderus bod y canllawiau'n ddigonol i sicrhau bod awdurdodau lleol yn gweithredu eu polisiau adnewyddu tai newydd? Yn amlwg, gwyddom nad yw'n orfodol, ond mae'n trafod rhoi blaenoriaeth i'r bobl fwyaf agored i niwed, yn arbennig cartrefi gyda deiliaid anabl a hyn, a sicrhau bod ymgeiswyr am fenthyciadau yn cael eu cynghori'n iawn. Credaf heb os y dylai hynny ragflaenu unrhyw ymchwiliad i dwyll yn ddiweddarach—a wnaeth pobl dderbyn cyngor iawn yn y lle cyntaf. A ydych yn credu bod y cyngor a roesom yn ddigonol i awdurdodau lleol?

Syr Jon Shortridge: Yr wyf am ofyn i Brendon gyfrannu yma oherwydd, os na wnaeth y drafft ei hun, yr oedd yn sicr yn gyfrifol amdano, ac mae'n parhau i fod yn gyfrifol iawn am y ffordd y mae'n cael ei weithredu. Mae'r rhain yn ganllawiau manwl a thrylwyr iawn. Maent wedi'u paratoi mewn ymgynghoriad agos â llywodraeth leol. Maent wedi'u paratoi gan dîm o swyddogion yn y Cynulliad, sydd wedi gweithio, i raddau helaeth, yn y maes hwn am gyfnod hir iawn. Gall Brendon, os yw'n dymuno, ddweud wrthyfch am faint y mae ef yn bersonol wedi gweithio yn y maes. Mae gennym lawer o brofiad, felly, yr ydym wedi ceisio'i ychwanegu at y canllawiau, ac mae'n well gennyf ganllawiau anstatudol na chanllawiau cyfarwyddol oherwydd eu bod yn gosod y naws, a'r naws yw ein bod yn darparu'r rhain i'ch cynorthwyo a byddwn yn gweithio gyda chi ar eu gweithredu, ac os yw pethau'n dod i'r amlwg wrth weithredu'r system hon, lle bydd angen newid neu atgyfnerthu'r canllawiau, bydd hyn yn digwydd. Gan fynd yn ôl at yr hyn yr oeddwn yn ei ddweud yn gynharach am gael 22 awdurdod lleol, yr ydym mewn sefyllfa dda iawn yng Nghymru, oherwydd y gall y tîm yma weithio naill ai fesul un, neu gyda'i gilydd, gyda phob un

the systems that are available to improve the housing stock of Wales. So, I am confident that there is the basis here to provide you and me with the sort of assurance that you are seeking, but that assurance will only come if the guidance is used as a living, active document, not as something that we issued in, when was it, July 2002—

[92] **Christine Gwyther:** It was August.

Sir Jon Shortridge: August 2002, you are right. It is not something, therefore, that we issued and then forgot about. That is not the intention, but Brendon may just want to elaborate.

[93] **Christine Gwyther:** When you come in, Brendon, could you tell me please how many of the 22 authorities have actually taken up this advice?

Mr Hilbourne: I think that the first thing to say is that there is a statutory obligation on local authorities to set out in writing exactly the sort of assistance that they are going to give to individuals, and what the conditions are, so that people are aware of what they are going to get. That is the first point. I think that the second point is that the guidance is non-statutory, it is very detailed, and we worked very closely with local authorities for something like two years before the new system was introduced to make sure that they were well geared up for it. We have had a large number of seminars with local authorities and, as Sir Jon says, we do meet them all very regularly on a one-to-one basis, as well as collectively with groups of authorities with similar problems. All authorities were required to publish a housing renewal policy by 18 July 2003 and I know that they all drew very heavily on the guidance in order to do that. Certainly, the

o'r 22 awdurdod, a rhannu eu hamcanion. Yr ydym i gyd am wneud ein gorau glas i ddefnyddio'r arian a'r systemau sydd ar gael i wella stoc tai Cymru. Felly, yr wyf yn hyderus bod y sylfaen yma i ddarparu i chi a mi y sicrwydd yr ydych yn chwilio amdano, ond dim ond drwy ddefnyddio'r canllawiau fel dogfen fyw, weithredol y gellir sicrhau'r sicrwydd hwn, nid fel rhywbeth a gyhoeddwyd yn, pryd oedd hynny, Gorffennaf 2002—

[92] **Christine Gwyther:** Ym mis Awst.

Syr Jon Shortridge: Awst 2002, yr ydych yn iawn. Nid yw'n rhywbeth, felly, y bu i ni ei gyhoeddi cyn anghofio amdano. Nid dyna'r bwriad, ond efallai y bydd Brendon am ymhelaethu.

[93] **Christine Gwyther:** Pan fyddwch yn cyfrannu, Brendon, a allwch ddweud wrthyf faint o'r 22 awdurdod sydd wedi manteisio ar y cyngor hwn mewn gwirionedd?

Mr Hilbourne: Credaf mai'r peth cyntaf i'w ddweud yw bod ymrwymiad statudol ar awdurdodau lleol i nodi'n ysgrifenedig yr union fath o gymorth y maent am ei roi i unigolion, a beth yw'r amodau, er mwyn sicrhau bod pobl yn ymwybodol o'r hyn y byddant yn ei gael. Dyna'r pwynt cyntaf. Credaf mai'r ail bwynt yw bod y canllawiau'n anstatudol, maent yn fanwl iawn, ac inni weithio'n agos iawn ag awdurdodau lleol am oddeutu dwy flynedd cyn cyflwyno'r system newydd i sicrhau eu bod yn gwbl barod amdani. Yr ydym wedi cynnal llawer o seminarau gydag awdurdodau lleol ac, fel y dywedodd Syr Jon, yr ydym yn eu cyfarfod i gyd yn rheolaidd fesul un, ynghyd ag mewn grwpiau o awdurdodau sydd â phroblemau cyffelyb. Yr oedd yn ofynnol i bob awdurdod gyhoeddi polisi adnewyddu tai erbyn 18 Gorffennaf 2003 a gwn eu bod i gyd wedi defnyddio llawer ar y canllawiau er mwyn gwneud hynny. Yn sicr, yr arwyddion o'r ymateb

indications in the feedback that we have had from authorities are that they find the guidance very useful and something that they will develop over time. It is our intention to look at the guidance once the system has been up and running for a year or so, consider whether it needs any revision, and add good practice to it, drawing on authorities' experiences over the first year or so of the new system.

[94] **Christine Gwyther:** Did every authority draw up a policy by the due date?

Mr Hilbourne: Yes, they did, and I think that that goes back to one of the earlier questions. That policy was subject to local consultation because it had to set out how they proposed to give assistance locally, so, in terms of the publicity, there was clearly local publicity explaining what the authorities' proposals were.

[95] **Christine Gwyther:** Okay, thank you. Chair, if I can move on to housing—

[96] **Jocelyn Davies:** May I just ask a question? I am sorry to keep butting in, but I did not see anything locally and I read the papers, so just because there is a requirement to publish does not mean that people actually see it. Is it not the same as the point that Mr Cairns made earlier about advertising the fact that things are available to those people who need it most, who are less likely to have access to that information?

a gafwyd gan awdurdodau yw bod y canllawiau'n ddefnyddiol iawn yn eu barn hwy ac yn rhywbeth y byddant yn ei ddatblygu gydag amser. Ein bwriad yw edrych ar y canllawiau unwaith y bydd y system wedi'i gweithredu am tua blwyddyn, ystyried a oes angen unrhyw ddiwygiadau, ac ychwanegu arferion da ati, gan ddefnyddio profiadau'r awdurdodau o'r system newydd yn ystod, oddeutu, y flwyddyn gyntaf.

[94] **Christine Gwyther:** A luniodd pob awdurdod bolisi erbyn y dyddiad?

Mr Hilbourne: Do, fe wnaethant, a chredaf fod hynny'n mynd yn ôl at un o'r cwestiynau cynharach. Yr oedd y polisi hwnnw'n destun ymgynghoriad lleol oherwydd bod yn rhaid iddo nodi sut yr oeddynt yn cynnig rhoi cymorth yn lleol, felly, o ran y cyhoeddusrwydd, yr oedd cyhoeddusrwydd lleol yn amlwg i egluro beth oedd cynigion yr awdurdodau.

[95] **Christine Gwyther:** Iawn, diolch. Gadeirydd, os caf fi symud at dai—

[96] **Jocelyn Davies:** A gaf fi ofyn cwestiwn? Mae'n ddrwg gennyf dorri ar draws eto, ond ni welais unrhyw beth yn lleol ac yr wyf yn darllen y papurau, felly nid yw'r ffaith ei bod yn ofynnol cyhoeddi yn golygu y bydd pobl yn ei weld mewn gwirionedd. Nid yw hyn yr un peth â'r pwynt y gwnaeth Mr Cairns yn gynharach am hysbysebu'r ffaith bod pethau ar gael i'r bobl hynny sydd â'r angen mwyaf, sy'n llai tebygol o fod â mynediad i'r wybodaeth honno?

Mr Hilbourne: I cannot comment on individual authorities and the approaches that they decided to adopt, obviously, but there was a requirement that there was local consultation and publicity. Now, the extent to which individual local authorities did that was something that local authority members would have had to have been satisfied with, quite clearly. The guidance does stress heavily the importance of not only providing assistance to individuals, but guidance and advice where perhaps assistance with central support is not appropriate.

[97] **Jocelyn Davies:** Okay.

[98] **Christine Gwyther:** Chair, can I move on to housing renewal areas? I think that a lot of us have seen where they can make a huge difference to communities, and I can see the great benefits in terms of cutting down administration and cutting down on fraud, I am sure. However, the latest figures do show that there has been a decline in the number of renewal areas: I think that it has gone down from 28 to 23 in Wales. Would you see that as a statistical blip, or is it a sign of a general trend that local authorities are losing faith, maybe, in that particular policy?

Mr Hilbourne: I do not think so. I am not quite sure about the figures because there are actually a total of 35 renewal areas that have either been declared or are likely to be declared shortly. Some of the renewal areas, of course, have now completed their period of 10 years, and more are coming on stream. I think that when the report was published there were 28 compared with the 35 now, and also I think that 16 authorities had renewal areas at the time of the report, and it is now 19 that have either had or are in the process of declaring renewal areas. The additional resources that the Assembly Government has made available for renewal areas for 2004-05 is

Mr Hilbourne: Ni allaf roi sylwadau ar awdurdodau unigol a'r dulliau y maent yn penderfynu eu mabwysiadu, yn amlwg, ond yr oedd yn ofynnol iddynt gynnal ymgynghoriad a rhoi cyhoeddusrwydd lleol. Yn awr, yr oedd i ba raddau yr oedd awdurdodau lleol yn gwneud hynny yn rhywbeth a fyddai'n gorfod bodloni aelodau awdurdodau lleol, yn amlwg. Mae canllawiau yn pwysleisio'n gryf y pwysigrwydd nid yn unig o ddarparu cymorth i unigolion, ond o roi arweiniad a chynghor lle nad yw cymorth canolog yn briodol o bosibl.

[97] **Jocelyn Davies:** Iawn.

[98] **Christine Gwyther:** Gadeirydd, a gaf fi symud ymlaen at ardaloedd adnewyddu tai? Credaf fod llawer ohonom wedi gweld lle mae modd gwneud gwahaniaeth enfawr i gymunedau, a gallaf weld y manteision gwych o ran lleihau'r gwaith gweinyddol a lleihau'r twyll, yn sicr. Fodd bynnag, mae'r ffigurau diweddaraf yn dangos y bu gostyngiad yn nifer yr ardaloedd adnewyddu: credaf ei fod wedi gostwng o 28 i 23 yng Nghymru. A fyddech yn ystyried hynny fel eithriad ystadegol, neu a yw'n arwydd o duedd gyffredinol bod awdurdodau lleol yn colli ffydd, efallai, yn y polisi penodol hwnnw?

Mr Hilbourne: Nid wyf yn credu hynny. Nid wyf yn hollol siwr am y ffigurau oherwydd bod cyfanswm o 35 ardal adnewyddu i gyd sydd naill ai wedi'u datgan neu'n debygol o gael eu datgan yn fuan. Mae rhai o'r ardaloedd adnewyddu, wrth gwrs, wedi cwblhau eu cyfnod 10 mlynedd bellach, ac mae rhagor ar fin gwneud hynny. Pan gyhoeddwyd yr adroddiad, credaf fod 28 o'i gymharu â'r 35 yn awr, a hefyd credaf fod gan 16 awdurdod ardaloedd adnewyddu pan gyhoeddwyd yr adroddiad, a bod 19 bellach wedi datgan neu yn y broses o ddatgan ardaloedd adnewyddu. Mae'r adnoddau ychwanegol y mae Llywodraeth y Cynulliad wedi'u darparu i

actually an increase of almost £5 million over the current year, which does indicate that this is something that authorities are keen on and are developing. I am increasingly being approached by authorities to talk to them about how they can develop this approach.

[99] **Christine Gwyther:** Thank you. The cyclical nature does explain that there could be a blip at the moment.

Mr Hilbourne: Yes.

[100] **Christine Gwyther:** Some authorities have believed, I think, that renewal areas were too restrictive, certainly in terms of the length of time that they had to operate. Now that that restriction is eased, at least, do you think that that will again give more confidence to local authorities to introduce renewal areas?

Mr Hilbourne: Yes, I think so. In Wales we have always had a slightly different approach, in that the minimum size of renewal areas has been smaller than it is in England, given the nature of some of the housing problems. The changes that were introduced in July 2003 not only enabled local authorities to decide on the length that a renewal area will run for, but also the levels of deprivation in the renewal area, and do not restrict them to a particular proportion of, for example, private sector housing. The problems in renewal areas span housing tenure, and it is important that authorities look at them in a much more comprehensive and cohesive way. The indications certainly are that more authorities are now looking at that approach, which may not have worked previously, because of the limitations and restrictions in the previous arrangements.

ardaloedd adnewyddu ar gyfer 2004-05 yn gynnydd o bron i £5 miliwn o gymharu â'r flwyddyn gyfredol, sy'n awgrymu bod hyn yn rhywbeth y mae awdurdodau'n awyddus i'w gyflawni a'i ddatblygu. Mae mwy a mwy o awdurdodau'n cysylltu â mi i drafod sut y byddai modd iddynt ddatblygu'r dull hwn.

[99] **Christine Gwyther:** Diolch. Mae'r naws gyloch yn egluro y gallai fod amgylchaidau eithriadol ar hyn o bryd.

Mr Hilbourne: Ydy.

[100] **Christine Gwyther:** Mae rhai awdurdodau wedi credu, fe dybiaf, bod ardaloedd adnewyddu yn rhy gyfyngol, yn sicr o ran yr amser a oedd ganddynt i weithredu. O ystyried bod y cyfyngiad hwnnw wedi'i lacio, o leiaf, a ydych yn credu y bydd hynny eto'n rhoi rhagor o hyder i awdurdodau lleol gyflwyno ardaloedd adnewyddu?

Mr Hilbourne: Bydd, yn ôl pob tebyg. Yng Nghymru yr ydym wedi defnyddio dull ychydig yn wahanol erioed, sef bod isafswm maint ardaloedd adnewyddu yn llai nag yn Lloegr, o ystyried natur rhai o'r problemau tai. Nid yn unig fod y newidiadau a gyflwynwyd yng Ngorffennaf 2003 wedi galluogi awdurdodau lleol i benderfynu ar gyfnod cynnal ardal adnewyddu, ond hefyd lefelau amddifadedd yn yr ardal adnewyddu, ac nid yw'n eu cyfyngu i gyfran benodol o, er enghraifft, tai sector preifat. Mae'r problemau mewn ardaloedd adnewyddu yn pontio deiliadaeth tai, ac mae'n bwysig bod awdurdodau yn edrych arnynt mewn ffordd lawer mwy cynhwysfawr a chydlynol. Yr arwyddion yn sicr yw bod rhagor o awdurdodau bellach yn edrych ar y dull hwn, na fyddai wedi gweithio o bosibl yn y gorffennol, oherwydd y cyfyngiadau yn y trefniadau blaenorol.

[101] **Christine Gwyther:** Okay. Thank you. Chair, may I ask a final question? Does the guidance that we issued in August 2002 include advice on how to deal with listed properties? I have many case studies of people living in absolute poverty in a beautiful listed property who do not have the money to do it up to any reasonable standard.

Mr Hilbourne: Yes, the guidance does touch on the approach that authorities should adopt where properties may be in conservation areas or are listed. We have examples in Wales of authorities that work closely with Cadw, for example, so that regeneration schemes draw on a variety of funding sources to tackle not only the immediate housing problems, but also some of the other issues that result from listing or being in a conservation area.

[102] **Christine Gwyther:** Okay. Thank you very much.

[103] **Janet Davies:** Thank you, Christine. Leighton, you have some questions?

[104] **Leighton Andrews:** You have, throughout your answers, referred to the fact that many of these issues are for local authorities to determine, and housing is, by and large, implemented at local authority level. Would you say that your approach to these questions is a pretty 'hands off' one?

[101] **Christine Gwyther:** Iawn. Diolch. Gadeirydd, a gaf fi ofyn un cwestiwn terfynol? A yw'r canllawiau a gyhoeddwyd yn Awst 2002 yn cynnwys cyngor ar sut i ddelio ag eiddo rhestredig? Mae gennyf sawl astudiaeth achos o bobl yn byw mewn tloedi pur mewn eiddo rhestredig hyfryd am nad oes ganddynt yr arian i'w ail-wneud i unrhyw safon resymol.

Mr Hilbourne: Ydynt, mae'r canllawiau'n trafod y dull y dylai awdurdodau ei fabwysiadu os yw eiddo mewn ardaloedd cadwraeth neu wedi'u rhestru. Mae gennym enghreifftiau yng Nghymru o awdurdodau yn gweithio'n agos â Cadw, er enghraifft, er mwyn sicrhau bod cynlluniau adnewyddu yn defnyddio amrywiaeth o ffynonellau cyllid i fynd i'r afael â nid yn unig y problemau tai brys, ond materion eraill hefyd sy'n deillio o restru neu o fod mewn ardal gadwraeth.

[102] **Christine Gwyther:** Iawn. Diolch yn fawr iawn.

[103] **Janet Davies:** Diolch, Christine. Leighton, mae gennych gwestiynau?

[104] **Leighton Andrews:** Gydol eich atebion yr ydych wedi cyfeirio at y ffaith bod nifer o'r materion hyn yn rhai i'r awdurdodau lleol eu pennu, ac mae tai, ar y cyfan, yn cael ei weithredu ar lefel awdurdod lleol. A fydddech yn dweud bod eich agwedd at y cwestiynau hyn yn un eithaf 'hyd braich'?

Sir Jon Shortridge: I will bring Brendon in because, to a significant extent, he has the ‘hands’. I do not regard it as a hands-off approach, but on the other hand, I do not regard it as intrusive. I think that it is getting the right balance. We want to ensure that there are arrangements and systems in place across Wales to satisfy ourselves that sufficient money is being directed to the needs of the housing stock, and being directed in the most appropriate way. However, it is then for the local authorities, through their renewal policies and through the administrative arrangements that they put underneath that, to ensure that that objective is being delivered. It is getting that balance, and the way in which we, under the new system, are seeking to operate with the authorities, is by providing help, guidance, influence, talking to them, learning from them, and giving them opportunities to learn from each other. I think that that is a very good model, and I am very hopeful that we can make it work. It is certainly a better model than that of the very old days when officials in Government departments effectively dictated what should happen in a local area on housing. Brendon, do you want to come in on that?

Mr Hilbourne: Yes. I certainly agree. I think that with the new system, it is very important that local authorities, which are best placed to determine what the local pressures and priorities are, have the flexibility to tackle those in the way that they feel is most appropriate, and we are certainly not centrally prescriptive in that respect. What we are able to do is to take the all-Wales overview and provide help, guidance and assistance to local authorities. We work very closely with authorities—there is an awful lot of contact—and, as Sir Jon said, there are only 22 of them and the network is very tight. I frequently address local authorities, meet local authorities, and get groups of authorities

Syr Jon Shortridge: Yr wyf am ofyn i Brendon gyfrannu yma oherwydd, i raddau helaeth, ef sy’n gyfrifol am y gwaith. Nid wyf yn ei ystyried fel dull hyd braich ond ar y llaw arall, nid wyf yn ei ystyried yn ymwithiol. Credaf ei fod yn ymwneud â sicrhau’r cydbwysedd cywir. Yr ydym am sicrhau bod trefniadau a systemau ar waith ledled Cymru i fodloni ein hunain bod digon o arian yn cael ei gyfeirio i anghenion y stoc tai, ac yn cael ei gyfeirio yn y ffordd fwyaf priodol. Fodd bynnag, cyfrifoldeb yr awdurdodau lleol wedi hynny, drwy eu polisiau adnewyddu a thrwy drefniadau gweinyddu y maent yn eu gweithredu fel sail i hynny, yw sicrhau bod y nod hwnnw yn cael ei gyflawni. Mae’n fater o sicrhau’r cydbwysedd hwnnw, a’r ffordd yr ydym ni, dan y system newydd, yn ceisio gweithredu gyda’r awdurdodau, yw drwy ddarparu cymorth, arweiniad, dylanwad, siarad â hwy, dysgu ganddynt, a chynnig cyfleoedd iddynt ddysgu gan ei gilydd. Credaf fod hynny’n fodel da iawn, ac yr wyf yn obeithiol iawn y gallwn wneud iddo weithio. Mae’n sicr yn well model na’r hen ddyddiau pan oedd swyddogion yn adrannau’r Llywodraeth yn penderfynu beth a ddylai ddigwydd mewn ardal leol o ran tai. Brendon, a ydych am gyfrannu yma?

Mr Hilbourne: Ydwyf. Yr wyf yn sicr yn cytuno. Credaf o ran y system newydd, ei bod yn bwysig iawn bod gan awdurdodau lleol, sydd yn y sefyllfa orau i bennu beth yw’r pwysau a’r blaenoriaethau lleol, yr hyblygrwydd i fynd i’r afael â’r rheini yn y ffordd fwyaf priodol yn eu barn hwy, ac yn sicr nid ydym yn gyfarwyddol yn ganolog yn y cyswllt hwnnw. Yr hyn yr ydym yn gallu ei wneud yw cymryd y safbwynt Cymru gyfan a darparu help, arweiniad a chymorth i awdurdodau lleol. Yr ydym yn gweithio’n agos iawn ag awdurdodau—mae llawer iawn o gysylltiadau—ac, fel y dywedodd Syr Jon, dim ond 22 ohonynt sy’n bodoli ac mae’r rhwydwaith yn gyfyng iawn. Yr wyf yn trafod yn gyson ag

together. We hold seminars and disseminate good practice to develop the system in Wales whereby authorities can learn from one another and whereby we, at the centre, can help them by being more aware of what is going on throughout the whole of the country.

[105] **Janet Davies:** Can I come in briefly, Leighton, before you go on? Are these consultations and seminars a development since the Assembly was established, or did it happen through the 1990s?

Mr Hilbourne: That happened through the 1990s, but with a much more centrally prescriptive system. The scope for authorities to go away from those seminars, as it were, and do what they felt was appropriate locally was much more limited. I think that since we have had the Assembly and the development of the new system, those have become far more productive and useful events for authorities than they may have been in the past.

[106] **Janet Davies:** Thank you. Sorry, Leighton.

[107] **Leighton Andrews:** Okay. Before I go on to risk, can I just be clear that you are happy that, as you have seen the new system operate, you have the right powers in place to enable local authorities to take the most advantage of it?

awdurdodau lleol, yn cyfarfod awdurdodau lleol, ac yn ymgynnull grwpiau o awdurdodau ynghyd. Yr ydym yn cynnal seminarau ac yn lledaenu arferion da i ddatblygu'r system yng Nghymru lle y gall awdurdodau ddysgu gan ei gilydd a lle y gallwn ni, yn y canol, eu cynorthwyo drwy fod yn fwy ymwybodol o'r hyn sy'n digwydd drwy'r wlad i gyd.

[105] **Janet Davies:** A gaf fi gyfrannu'n gyflym, Leighton, cyn i chi fynd ymlaen? A yw'r ymgynghoriadau a'r seminarau hyn wedi'u datblygu ers sefydlu'r Cynulliad, neu a ddigwyddodd gydol y 1990au?

Mr Hilbourne: Digwyddodd hyn gydol y 1990au, ond gyda system gyfarwyddol llawer mwy canolog. Mae'r cyfle i awdurdodau adael y seminarau hynny, fel petai, a gwneud yr hyn a ystyriant yn briodol yn lleol yn llawer mwy cyfyngedig. Credaf ers i ni gael y Cynulliad a datblygu'r system newydd hon, bod y rhain wedi bod yn ddigwyddiadau llawer mwy cynhyrchiol a defnyddiol i awdurdodau nag yr oeddent o bosibl yn y gorffennol.

[106] **Janet Davies:** Diolch. Mae'n ddrwg gennyf, Leighton.

[107] **Leighton Andrews:** Iawn. Cyn i mi fynd ymlaen at risg, a gaf fi sicrwydd eich bod yn fodlon, ar ôl gweld y system newydd yn cael ei gweithredu, bod gennych y pwerau cywir ar waith i alluogi i awdurdodau lleol fanteisio i'r eithaf arni?

Mr Hilbourne: At this stage, certainly, yes. It is still early days in that the authorities' policies were published back in July last year—some of them are still clearly working through some of the stuff that still flows over from the old system. However, the indications are that the balance is right at this stage.

[108] **Leighton Andrew:** Okay. If we can just look at some of the risks that are identified, in particular in paragraphs 4.13 and 4.14, are you happy that the housing renewal policies that local authorities are producing are actually in accordance with Assembly strategy?

Mr Hilbourne: The policies are really a matter for individual authorities, and what we have done is given them the non-statutory guidance. There is a whole range of information in the guidance that we have suggested that they take account of in developing their policies. Now, the policies are clearly sensitive to the particular housing dynamics of individual authorities and what they regard as their priorities, and it is important to bear in mind that these are the first policies that they have developed. They will change over time and will develop in the light of experience, but the indications are that a number of authorities have certainly taken advantage of the flexibilities and looked at innovative ways of tackling locally some of what the local issues and priorities and pressures are.

[109] **Leighton Andrews:** So basically, then, your strategy for housing renewal is to let local authorities do it? It is hands off, as I said earlier.

Mr Hilbourne: Ar hyn o bryd, oes, yn sicr. Mae'n ddyddiau cynnar o hyd oherwydd mai ym mis Gorffennaf y llynedd y cyhoeddwyd polisiau'r awdurdodau—mae rhai ohonynt yn amlwg yn parhau i weithio drwy rywfaint o'r materion sy'n dal i ddeillio o'r hen system. Fodd bynnag, mae'r arwyddion yn awgrymu bod y cydbwysedd yn iawn ar hyn o bryd.

[108] **Leighton Andrew:** Iawn. Os cawn ni edrych ar rai o'r risgiau a nodir, yn arbennig ym mharagraffau 4.13 a 4.14, a ydych yn fodlon bod y polisiau adnewyddu tai y mae awdurdodau lleol yn eu cynhyrchu yn cydymffurfio â strategaeth y Cynulliad mewn gwirionedd?

Mr Hilbourne: Mater i awdurdodau unigol yw'r polisiau mewn gwirionedd, a'r hyn yr ydym wedi'i wneud yw rhoi'r canllawiau anstatudol iddynt. Mae amrywiaeth eang o wybodaeth yn y canllawiau yr ydym wedi awgrymu y dylent ei hystyried wrth ddatblygu eu polisiau. Yn awr, y mae'n amlwg bod y polisiau'n sensitif i ddeinameg tai benodol awdurdodau unigol a'r hyn a ystyriant fel eu blaenoriaethau, ac mae'n bwysig cofio mai'r rhain yw'r polisiau cyntaf y maent wedi'u datblygu. Byddant yn newid gydag amser ac yn datblygu yng ngoleuni profiad, ond yr arwyddion yw bod nifer o awdurdodau yn sicr wedi manteisio ar yr hyblygrwydd ac wedi edrych ar ffyrdd arloesol o fynd i'r afael yn lleol â rhai o'r materion a blaenoriaethau a'r pwysau lleol.

[109] **Leighton Andrews:** Felly, yn syml, eich strategaeth ar gyfer adnewyddu tai yw gadael i awdurdodau lleol ei wneud? Mae'n hyd braich, fel y dywedais yn gynharach.

Mr Hilbourne: It is hands off in terms of being prescriptive, but hands on, as it were, in terms of trying to assist and help local authorities and to work with them to develop arrangements that enable them to tackle the local issues in a way that then cascades up, as it were, to the overall national issues in the Assembly's national housing strategy, 'Better Homes for People in Wales'.

[110] **Leighton Andrews:** We do have a housing strategy. How do you manage that tension between allowing local authorities to do what they want and ensuring that your strategic objectives are ultimately delivered?

Mr Hilbourne: It is a question of working in partnership with local authorities, and a whole range of issues in the national housing strategy fall into the same category. The responsibility for delivery on the ground of policies that enable the Assembly to meet its overall housing strategy rests with other organisations, principally local authorities. It is a question, I think, of working with the authorities and developing arrangements with them to ensure that the whole approach that they are adopting actually accords with the national strategy. Now, we clearly monitor the progress on the national housing strategy, and if issues emerge that suggest that that is not happening, then we quite clearly will meet with and talk to local authorities about how that can be addressed.

[111] **Leighton Andrews:** Have there been any occasions when you have felt the need to do that?

Mr Hilbourne: Mae'n ddull hyd braich o ran bod yn gyfarwyddol, ond yn ymarferol, fel petai, o ran ceisio cynorthwyo a helpu awdurdodau lleol a gweithio gyda hwy i ddatblygu trefniadau sy'n eu galluogi i fynd i'r afael â'r materion lleol mewn ffordd sydd wedyn yn rhoadru i fyny, fel petai, i'r materion cenedlaethol cyffredinol yn strategaeth dai genedlaethol y Cynulliad, 'Cartrefi Gwell i Bobl Cymru'.

[110] **Leighton Andrews:** Mae gennym strategaeth dai. Sut yr ydych yn rheoli'r tyndra hwnnw rhwng caniatáu i awdurdodau lleol wneud yr hyn y maent am ei wneud a sicrhau bod eich amcanion strategol yn cael eu bodloni yn y pen draw?

Mr Hilbourne: Mae'n fater o weithio mewn partneriaeth ag awdurdodau lleol, ac mae amrywiaeth eang o faterion yn y strategaeth dai genedlaethol yn dod o fewn yr un categori. Mae'r cyfrifoldeb i ddarparu ar sail polisïau sy'n galluogi i'r Cynulliad fodloni ei strategaeth dai gyffredinol yn nwylo sefydliadau eraill, sef yr awdurdodau lleol yn bennaf. Mae'n ymwneud â gweithio, yn fy marn i, â'r awdurdodau a datblygu trefniadau gyda hwy i sicrhau bod pob agwedd ar y dull o weithio y maent yn ei fabwysiadu yn gydnaws â'r strategaeth genedlaethol. Yn awr, yr ydym yn amlwg yn monitro cynnydd yn y strategaeth dai genedlaethol, ac os oes materion yn codi sy'n awgrymu nad yw hynny'n digwydd, byddwn yn amlwg yn cyfarfod ag awdurdodau lleol ac yn trafod sut y gallant fynd i'r afael â hyn.

[111] **Leighton Andrews:** A fu achlysuron pan yr ydych wedi teimlo bod angen gwneud hynny?

Mr Hilbourne: Not to date but, as I explained, it is still fairly early in the new system. To date, certainly from the indications that we have had since the policies have been published, that has not so far been a particular issue.

[112] **Leighton Andrews:** Okay. One of the other risks that is identified in the report is the possibility that the quality of local authorities' renewal policies may not be sufficiently high. What is your take on the policies that have been developed so far?

Mr Hilbourne: The policies vary considerably, as I explained, depending on what the local issues and local priorities are. Authorities have taken varying approaches in terms of the extent to which they are prepared to be or intend to be innovative in the early years or the early part of the new system. The policies do not need the approval or endorsement of the Assembly; there is no statutory requirement for that, although, quite clearly, we have a major interest in them. At this stage, no particular issues or problems have emerged that have caused us to question anything specific.

[113] **Leighton Andrews:** How do you assess the quality of local authorities' housing renewal policies?

Mr Hilbourne: There is no formal mechanism for assessing the quality of the policies. At this stage, the policies are really documents that local authorities themselves must be satisfied with. It is a question once again of the balance that Sir Jon mentioned between having a central system that is not centrally prescribed, and local authorities having the responsibility. If an authority decides that a particular policy approach is what it feels is appropriate, then that really must be a matter for it to defend locally.

Mr Hilbourne: Ni fu hyd yma ond, fel yr eglurais, mae'n ddyddiau cynnar o hyd ar y system newydd. Hyd yma, yn sicr o'r arwyddion yr ydym wedi'u cael ers cyhoeddi'r polisiau, nid yw hyn wedi bod yn fater penodol hyd yn hyn.

[112] **Leighton Andrews:** Iawn. Un o'r risgiau eraill a nodwyd yn yr adroddiad yw'r posibilrwydd na fyddai ansawdd polisiau adnewyddu awdurdodau lleol yn ddigon da. Beth yw eich barn ar y polisiau sydd wedi'u datblygu hyd yma?

Mr Hilbourne: Mae'r polisiau'n amrywio'n sylweddol, fel yr eglurais, gan ddibynnu ar y materion lleol a'r blaenoriaethau lleol. Mae awdurdodau wedi dilyn dulliau amrywiol o ran i ba raddau y maent yn fodlon neu'n bwriadu bod yn arloesol yn y blynyddoedd cynnar neu ran gynnar y system newydd. Nid oes angen i'r Cynulliad gymeradwyo neu ardystio'r polisiau; nid oes gofyniad statudol i wneud hynny, er, yn amlwg, mae gennym ddiddordeb mawr ynddynt. Ar hyn o bryd, nid oes unrhyw faterion neu broblemau penodol wedi codi sydd wedi peri i ni gwestiynu unrhyw beth penodol.

[113] **Leighton Andrews:** Sut yr ydych yn asesu ansawdd polisiau adnewyddu tai awdurdodau lleol?

Mr Hilbourne: Nid oes mecanwaith ffurfiol ar gyfer asesu ansawdd y polisiau. Ar hyn o bryd, mae'r polisiau yn ddogfennau y mae'n rhaid i'r awdurdodau lleol eu hunain fod yn fodlon â hwy. Mae'n ymwneud eto â'r cydbwysedd y crybwyllodd Syr Jon rhwng gweithredu system ganolog nad yw'n cael ei phennu'n ganolog, a'r cyfrifoldeb yn nwylo'r awdurdodau lleol. Os yw awdurdod yn penderfynu bod dull polisi penodol yn briodol, yna bydd yn rhaid i hyn fod yn fater y gall ei amddiffyn yn lleol.

[114] **Leighton Andrews:** May I ask how many people work in your unit?

Mr Hilbourne: The unit covers a whole range of activities that go beyond private sector renewal. In the unit working on private sector renewal there are, I think, about seven or eight people.

[115] **Leighton Andrews:** So there is no model or anything that you set down of the kinds of things that you want local authorities to do?

Mr Hilbourne: The guidance sets out a whole range of issues that we suggest that authorities should take account of in developing their policies. What it does not do is set out a model policy and, for example, given the different housing dynamics, different priorities and different pressures, some authorities will put more emphasis and more weight on some aspects of the guidance than others.

[116] **Leighton Andrews:** Okay.

[117] **Janet Davies:** Thank you, Leighton. Mark?

[118] **Mark Isherwood:** I would like to develop the issue of risk. Could I first just clarify a couple of points that have developed through this? Clearly, the success of the previous scheme is detailed in the document that we have before us, which states that levels of unfit housing declined from 19.5 per cent in 1986 to 8.5 per cent in 1998. So, clearly, the new policy needs to show an improvement even on that. That will be measured by outcomes, obviously, for local people. How will you systematically monitor that to ensure that progress is being achieved?

[114] **Leighton Andrews:** A gaf fi ofyn faint o bobl sy'n gweithio yn eich uned?

Mr Hilbourne: Mae'r uned yn ymdrin ag amrywiaeth eang o weithgareddau sydd y tu hwnt i adnewyddu yn y sector preifat. Yn yr uned sy'n gweithio ar adnewyddu yn y sector preifat, credaf fod oddeutu saith neu wyth o bobl.

[115] **Leighton Andrews:** Felly nid oes model neu unrhyw beth yr ydych yn ei bennu ynglyn â'r mathau o bethau yr ydych am i awdurdodau lleol eu gwneud?

Mr Hilbourne: Mae'r canllawiau yn nodi amrywiaeth eang o faterion yr ydym yn awgrymu y dylai awdurdodau eu hystyried wrth ddatblygu eu polisiau. Yr hyn nad yw'n ei nodi yw model o bolisi ac, er enghraifft, o ystyried y gwahanol ddeinamegau tai, gwahanol flaenoriaethau a gwahanol bwysau, bydd rhai awdurdodau yn rhoi mwy o bwyslais a phwys ar rai agweddau ar y canllawiau nag eraill.

[116] **Leighton Andrews:** Iawn.

[117] **Janet Davies:** Diolch, Leighton. Mark?

[118] **Mark Isherwood:** Hoffwn ymhelaethu ar fater risg. A gaf fi'n gyntaf ofyn am esboniad am ychydig bwyntiau sydd wedi'u datblygu drwy hyn? Yn amlwg, mae manylion am lwyddiant y cynllun blaenorol yn y ddogfen sydd o'n blaenau, sy'n nodi bod lefelau tai anaddas wedi gostwng o 19.5 y cant yn 1986 i 8.5 y cant yn 1998. Felly, yn amlwg, mae angen i'r polisi newydd ddangos cynnydd i ni ar hynny hyd yn oed. Bydd hyn yn cael ei fesur gan ganlyniadau, yn amlwg, ar gyfer pobl leol. Sut y byddwch yn monitro hynny'n systematig i sicrhau bod cynnydd yn cael ei gyflawni?

Mr Hilbourne: The various house condition surveys will measure reductions in fitness and repair costs and so on. We do monitor regularly the levels of expenditure and grant activity—actually a range of renovation activity, rather than just grant activity—under the new system. As I said, at this stage it is still in its infancy, but over time that will give us an indication of how successful the system is.

[119] **Mark Isherwood:** Right. Just to help me understand, on the funding—and perhaps I have missed this—what degree of hypothecation exists?

Mr Hilbourne: From 2004-05, the only hypothecation will be for renewal areas. All of the rest of housing renovation activity will be funded by local authorities from their unhypothecated resources.

[120] **Mark Isherwood:** So that is from the revenue support grant and locally raised council tax?

Mr Hilbourne: Yes.

[121] **Mark Isherwood:** Right. In terms of additional private sector funding, are you also taking account of, for instance, schemes proposed by the Council of Mortgage Lenders to help the banking-excluded who live in unfit properties?

Mr Hilbourne: Bydd y gwahanol arolygon o gyflwr tai yn mesur gostyngiadau mewn costau addasrwydd a thrwsio ac ati. Yr ydym yn monitro lefelau gwariant a gweithgarwch grant yn rheolaidd—amrywiaeth o weithgarwch adnewyddu mewn gwirionedd, yn hytrach na gweithgarwch grant yn unig—dan y system newydd. Fel y dywedais, ar hyn o bryd mae'n ddyddiau cynnar o hyd, ond gydag amser bydd hyn yn rhoi arwyddion i ni o lwyddiant y system.

[119] **Mark Isherwood:** Iawn. Er mwyn i mi gael deall yn iawn, o ran yr ariannu—ac efallai fy mod wedi colli hyn—faint o glustnodi sydd?

Mr Hilbourne: O 2004-05, caiff arian ddim ond ei glustnodi ar gyfer ardaloedd adnewyddu. Bydd yr holl weithgarwch adnewyddu tai arall yn cael ei gyllido gan awdurdodau lleol o'u hadnoddau sydd heb eu clustnodi.

[120] **Mark Isherwood:** Felly mae hynny o'r grant cymorth refeniw a'r dreth gyngor a godir yn lleol?

Mr Hilbourne: Ydy.

[121] **Mark Isherwood:** Iawn. O ran cyllid ychwanegol yn y sector preifat, a ydych hefyd yn ystyried, er enghraifft, cynlluniau a gynigir gan Gyngor y Benthycwyr Morgais i gynorthwyo pobl heb gyfrifon banc sy'n byw mewn eiddo anaddas?

Mr Hilbourne: We have developed a small working group with the Council of Mortgage Lenders, local authorities and a number of housing organisations to look, for example, at the scope for developing loan arrangements, perhaps, for those people who may not qualify for grants, but may have difficulty accessing commercial loans. That work is ongoing. There are a number of issues that need to be resolved in that, but at this stage the difficulty has been in identifying the size of that sector of the market. However, that work is ongoing.

[122] **Mark Isherwood:** Briefly again on renewal areas—the emphasis here is obviously on private sector housing—what measures, if any, are being taken to look at this practice elsewhere where action zones or renewal areas address both social housing and private housing within the same renewal project?

Mr Hilbourne: The changes to the renewal area rules this year, as I explained, freed up authorities from having to have a particular proportion of private sector housing. We now have several examples in Wales of renewal areas where there is fairly significant public sector housing as well as private sector housing. What is important there, as I explained earlier, is to ensure that the regeneration crosses tenures. It is all about tackling the problems in a community rather than in one tenure within a community. We periodically develop good practice on renewal areas and hold seminars with local authorities and the intention is, as the experience develops from these areas where there is a cross-tenure approach, to disseminate that to other authorities.

Mr Hilbourne: Yr ydym wedi datblygu gweithgor bach gyda Chyngor y Benthycwyr Morgais, awdurdodau lleol a nifer o sefydliadau tai i edrych, er enghraifft, ar y posibilïadau o ddatblygu trefniadau benthyca, o bosibl, ar gyfer y bobl hynny nad ydynt yn gymwys ar gyfer grantiau, ond sy'n wynebu anawsterau efallai wrth geisio benthyciadau masnachol. Mae'r gwaith hwn ar y gweill ar hyn o bryd. Mae nifer o faterion sydd angen eu datrys yn hyn o beth, ond ar hyn o bryd yr anhawster yw nodi maint y sector hwn yn y farchnad. Fodd bynnag, mae'r gwaith hwn ar y gweill.

[122] **Mark Isherwood:** Yn gryno eto ar ardaloedd adnewyddu—y mae'r pwyslais yma yn amlwg ar dai yn y sector preifat—pa fesurau, os o gwbl, sy'n cael eu cymryd i edrych ar yr arfer hwn mewn mannau eraill lle mae parthau gweithredu neu ardaloedd adnewyddu yn mynd i'r afael â thai cymdeithasol a thai preifat o fewn yr un prosiect adnewyddu?

Mr Hilbourne: Mae'r newidiadau i reolau'r ardaloedd adnewyddu eleni, fel yr eglurais, yn sicrhau bod gan awdurdodau ryddid rhag gorfod cael cyfran benodol o dai yn y sector preifat. Mae gennym sawl enghraifft yng Nghymru bellach o ardaloedd adnewyddu lle mae llawer o dai yn y sector cyhoeddus ynghyd ag yn y sector preifat. Yr hyn sy'n bwysig yma, fel yr eglurais yn gynharach, yw sicrhau bod yr adnewyddu yn croesi deiliadaethau. Mae'n ymwneud â mynd i'r afael â phroblemau mewn cymuned yn hytrach nag mewn un ddeiliadaeth o fewn cymuned. Yr ydym yn datblygu arferion da yn gyson mewn ardaloedd adnewyddu ac yn cynnal seminarau gydag awdurdodau lleol a'r bwriad, wrth i brofiadau ddatblygu o'r ardaloedd hyn lle y mae croes-ddeiliadaeth, yw rhannu hynny gydag awdurdodau eraill.

[123] **Mark Isherwood:** So, to an extent, that will also be determined by local authorities' future decisions on stock transfer and so on?

Mr Hilbourne: That will have some influence, yes.

[124] **Mark Isherwood:** Moving on then quickly, paragraphs 4.16 to 4.17 on risk address whether local authorities have the capacity to make the most of the new system. Also, paragraph 4.17 states that changes to local government

'have already served to start making local authorities think in a different way.'

Do any of the new policies produced by local authorities so far look innovative?

Mr Hilbourne: Yes. We have examples from a number of authorities where they have developed local forms of assistance, local grants, to tackle particular local issues. One authority, for example, has developed a local grant simply to help disabled people with stair lifts without their having to go through the whole process of disabled facility grants. There are others that have developed innovative approaches to help landlords to improve their properties, perhaps where they are linked with nomination rights for local authorities. There are a range of innovative new ideas that are beginning to emerge, even in the early stages of the new system.

[125] **Mark Isherwood:** Right. Well, I was going to ask you to give us some examples, but obviously you have just given us some examples.

[123] **Mark Isherwood:** Felly, i ryw raddau, bydd hynny hefyd yn cael ei bennu gan benderfyniadau awdurdodau lleol yn y dyfodol ar drosglwyddo stoc ac ati?

Mr Hilbourne: Bydd hynny'n cael rhywfaint o ddylanwad, bydd.

[124] **Mark Isherwood:** Gan symud ymlaen yn gyflym, mae paragraffau 4.16 i 4.17 ar risg yn mynd i'r afael ag a oes gan awdurdodau lleol y gallu i fanteisio i'r eithaf ar y system newydd. Yn ogystal, mae paragraff 4.17 yn nodi bod newidiadau i lywodraeth leol

'eisoes wedi dechrau gwneud i awdurdodau lleol feddwl mewn ffordd wahanol.'

A oes unrhyw un o'r polisiau newydd a gynhyrwyd gan awdurdodau lleol wedi ymddangos yn arloesol hyd yma?

Mr Hilbourne: Do. Mae gennym enghreifftiau o nifer o awdurdodau sydd wedi datblygu dulliau lleol o roi cymorth, grantiau lleol, i fynd i'r afael â materion lleol penodol. Mae un awdurdod, er enghraifft, wedi datblygu grant lleol yn syml i gynorthwyo pobl anabl gyda lifftiau grisiau heb fod angen iddynt fynd drwy holl broses grantiau cyfleusterau i'r anabl. Mae eraill wedi datblygu dulliau arloesol o gynorthwyo landlordiaid i wella eu heiddo, os ydynt yn gysylltiedig o bosibl â hawliau enwebu i awdurdodau lleol. Mae amrywiaeth o syniadau newydd arloesol yn dechrau ymddangos, hyd yn oed yng nghyfnodau cynnar y system newydd.

[125] **Mark Isherwood:** Iawn. Wel, yr oeddwn am ofyn i chi roi rhai enghreifftiau i ni, ond yn amlwg yr ydych newydd roi ychydig o enghreifftiau i ni.

Mr Hilbourne: Yes, I have. I have some more, obviously—

[126] **Mark Isherwood:** Perhaps you could develop that then. That would be helpful.

Mr Hilbourne: Yes, sure. Just bear with me for one moment; I have a few here.

Right. Sorry, I did not have them all to hand immediately. One authority has developed a minor works grant that is concentrated on occupiers and tenants that fall into particular tax bands. Another authority has provided priority home improvement assistance to owners in renewal areas or areas that are designated as Communities First areas. There is a small repair assistance grant in one authority to provide discretionary help, particularly to low income owners, for improvements and adaptations. There are various fast-track application systems that a number of authorities have introduced. One authority has a particular grant to help to bring empty property over shops back into use, with some assistance. There is another authority that has assistance to help to prevent people from going into hospital by adapting their homes in fairly minor ways. Another authority has a particular scheme to help children with asthma with no grant conditions, so that they can get access to help very quickly. So, there are a whole range of activities, even at the very early stages of the new system, which we would expect to develop and to become good practice that other authorities may want to adopt.

[127] **Mark Isherwood:** To develop particularly on that last comment, paragraph 4.17 goes on to talk about peer pressure, which:

Mr Hilbourne: Do. Mae gennyf ragor, yn amlwg—

[126] **Mark Isherwood:** Efallai y gallwch ymhelaethu ar hynny. Byddai hynny'n ddefnyddiol.

Mr Hilbourne: Iawn. Os byddwch yn amyneddgar â mi am eiliad; mae gennyf rai yma.

Iawn. Mae'n ddrwg gennyf, nid oeddynt wrth law yn syth. Mae un awdurdod wedi datblygu grant ar gyfer mân waith sy'n canolbwyntio ar breswylwyr a thenantiaid o fewn bandiau treth penodol. Mae awdurdod arall wedi gwneud cymorth gwella tai yn flaenoriaeth i berchnogion mewn ardaloedd adnewyddu neu ardaloedd sydd wedi'u dynodi fel ardaloedd Cymunedau yn Gyntaf. Mae grant bach fel cymorth trwsio ar gael mewn un awdurdod i roi cymorth dewisol, yn arbennig i berchnogion ag incwm isel, i wneud gwelliannau ac addasiadau. Mae amryw o systemau ymgeisio carlam wedi'u cyflwyno gan sawl awdurdod. Mae gan un awdurdod grant penodol i gynorthwyo pobl i ddechrau defnyddio eiddo segur uwchben siopau, gyda rhywfaint o gymorth. Mae awdurdod arall yn cynnig cymorth i atal pobl rhag gorfod mynd i'r ysbyty drwy addasu eu cartrefi mewn ffyrdd cymharol syml. Mae awdurdod arall yn gweithredu cynllun penodol i gynorthwyo plant gydag asthma heb amodau grant, er mwyn iddynt gael cymorth yn gyflym iawn. Felly, mae amrywiaeth eang o weithgareddau, hyd yn oed yng nghyfnodau cynnar y system newydd, a disgwyliwn eu datblygu a'u gwneud yn arferion da y gall awdurdodau eraill o bosibl ddewis eu mabwysiadu.

[127] **Mark Isherwood:** I ymhelaethu'n benodol ar y sylw diwethaf, mae paragraff 4.17 yn mynd ymlaen i sôn am bwysau cymheiriaid, a ddylai:

‘should help to foster the innovative thinking required; there should be plenty of opportunities for authorities to learn from each others’ experiences’.

What systematic checks and balances are in place to make sure that that happens? How are you going to share good practice among local authority staff, both within local authorities and between them?

Mr Hilbourne: The various local authority representative organisations, such as the Welsh Local Government Association and the Society of Directors of Public Protection in Wales, work very closely with us to disseminate information. We get involved with seminars, conferences and networks. Given that there are only 22 local authorities, it works very effectively. We also plan to look again at the detailed non-statutory guidance once the system has been up and running for a year or so, as I explained, and look at the scope for attaching good practice notes to that, drawing on authorities’ experience.

[128] **Mark Isherwood:** Right. Well, moving on to paragraph 4.18, again on risk, this points out that fraud may continue to be a problem, or could potentially increase. Do the systems for allocating finance to the public look like they would have sufficient safeguards to prevent that fraud or to reduce the likelihood of fraud being perpetrated? I am thinking here of both potential fraud by the public, and also fraud within a local authority. Again, paragraph 4.18 says:

‘If local authorities follow this guidance they may develop tight local controls’.

‘helpu i feithrin y dull arloesol o feddwl sydd ei angen; dylai fod digon o gyfle i awdurdodau ddysgu o brofiadau ei gilydd’.

Pa ddulliau o archwilio systematig sydd ar waith i sicrhau bod hyn yn digwydd? Sut yr ydych yn mynd i rannu arferion da ymhlith staff awdurdodau lleol, o fewn awdurdodau lleol a rhyngddynt?

Mr Hilbourne: Mae’r sefydliadau amrywiol sy’n cynrychioli awdurdodau lleol, fel Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru a Chymdeithas Cyfarwyddwyr Gwarchod y Cyhoedd Cymru, yn gweithio’n agos iawn gyda ni i ledaenu gwybodaeth. Yr ydym yn cymryd rhan mewn seminarau, cynadleddau a rhwydweithiau. Gan mai 22 awdurdod lleol yn unig sydd gennym, mae’n gweithio’n effeithiol. Yr ydym hefyd yn bwriadu edrych eto ar y canllawiau anstatudol manwl ar ôl i’r system fod ar waith am flwyddyn neu fwy, fel yr eglurais, ac edrych ar y posibiladau o ychwanegu nodiadau arferion da at hynny, gan ddefnyddio profiadau awdurdodau.

[128] **Mark Isherwood:** Iawn. Wel, gan symud ymlaen at baragraff 4.18, eto ar risg, nodir yn y fan hon y gall twyll barhau i fod yn broblem, neu y gallai, o bosibl, gynyddu. A yw’n ymddangos bod gan y systemau ar gyfer dyrannu cyllid i’r cyhoedd ddigon o fesurau diogelwch i atal y twyll hwn neu i leihau’r posibilrwydd o gyflawni twyll? Yr wyf yn meddwl yma am dwyll posibl gan y cyhoedd, a hefyd twyll o fewn awdurdod lleol. Eto, mae paragraff 4.18 yn dweud:

‘Os bydd awdurdodau lleol yn dilyn y canllawiau hyn efallai y byddant yn datblygu rheolaethau lleol tynn’.

To me, that seems a little loose, so I am hoping to get some more reassurance from you.

Mr Hilbourne: The guidance goes into considerable depth on the importance of having systems in place to detect fraud, whether internal or external. The importance of that, you are absolutely right, cannot be overemphasised, but the local authorities' internal audit systems, the Audit Commission and the checks on all aspects of local authority activities will be brought to bear on this in the same way as on anything else that authorities do.

Sir Jon Shortridge: If I can just add to that, so that there is no misunderstanding, the responsibility to protect local authorities from fraud rests with the local authority officials themselves and, ultimately, with the chief executive. That is where the accountability is. My role, and our role, is to make sure that the nature of the risks that those authorities could be running as a result of these activities are well known and understood, which is why the guidance is so important, as is the fact that Brendon and his team are actively keeping that guidance under review and seeking to learn from experience throughout Wales.

[129] **Mark Isherwood:** If allegations of fraud are made against a local authority or a section of a local authority at any level, and if the local authority then appoints, for instance, external auditors to investigate that, could that not be seen as a conflict of interest, where the local authority is setting the terms of reference for that investigation?

I mi, mae hyn yn ymddangos ychydig yn llac, felly yr wyf yn gobeithio cael mwy o sicrwydd gennyh chi.

Mr Hilbourne: Mae'r canllawiau yn trafod yn fanwl bwysigrwydd gweithredu systemau i ganfod twyll, boed yn fewnol neu'n allanol. Ni ellir gorbwysleisio hynny, yr ydych yn hollol gywir, ond bydd systemau archwilio mewnol awdurdodau lleol, y Comisiwn Archwilio a'r gwiriadau ar bob agwedd ar weithgareddau awdurdodau lleol yn berthnasol i hyn yn yr un ffordd ag y maent yn berthnasol i bopeth arall y mae awdurdodau'n ei wneud.

Syr Jon Shortridge: Os caf fi ychwanegu at hynny, er mwyn sicrhau nad oes camddealltwriaeth, cyfrifoldeb swyddogion awdurdodau lleol eu hunain yw diogelu awdurdodau lleol rhag twyll ac, yn y pen draw, cyfrifoldeb y prif weithredwr ydyw. Dyna lle mae'r atebolrwydd. Mae fy swyddogaeth i, ac ein swyddogaeth ni, yn ymwneud â sicrhau bod natur y risgiau y gallai'r awdurdodau hynny eu hwynebu o ganlyniad i'r gweithgareddau hyn yn hysbys ac yn ddealladwy, a dyna pam mae'r canllawiau mor bwysig, ynghyd â'r ffaith bod Brendon a'i dîm wrthi'n adolygu'r canllawiau a cheisio dysgu o brofiadau ledled Cymru.

[129] **Mark Isherwood:** Os oes honiadau o dwyll yn cael eu gwneud yn erbyn awdurdod lleol neu adran o awdurdod lleol ar unrhyw lefel, ac os yw'r awdurdod lleol wedi hynny yn penodi, er enghraifft, archwilwyr allanol i ymchwilio i hynny, oni ellid ystyried hynny fel gwrthdaro buddiannau, lle mae'r awdurdod lleol yn pennu'r cylch gorchwyl ar gyfer yr ymchwiliad hwnnw?

Sir Jon Shortridge: I would have thought that an external auditor would take a very close interest in fraud, or potential evidence of fraud and, while it might welcome some terms of reference that the local authority would give it, it would reserve the right itself to determine exactly how it was going to examine and audit the matter concerned.

[130] **Mark Isherwood:** Even if it falls outside a timescale set by the local authority?

Sir Jon Shortridge: Well, I may need to reflect on that question if I have misunderstood something. However, essentially, I see the role of the external auditors to satisfy themselves on a whole range of matters, including fraud, and they will not be constrained by any conditions that someone like me might try to impose on them, and rightly so.

[131] **Mark Isherwood:** Thank you. I turn to paragraphs 4.19 and 4.20, which discuss the risk that the public may not perceive as fair a system that varies between local authorities. What work, if any, has been done to assess the public's perception of the old and new systems for accessing financial help with housing renovations?

Sir Jon Shortridge: I think that that is mainly for Brendon.

Syr Jon Shortridge: Byddwn yn tybio y byddai archwilydd allanol yn dangos diddordeb mawr mewn twyll, neu dystiolaeth bosibl o dwyll ac, er y byddai o bosibl yn croesawu rhyw gylch gorchwyl y byddai'r awdurdod lleol yn ei bennu, byddai'n cadw'r hawl ei hun i bennu'n union sut y byddai'n arolygu ac yn archwilio'r mater dan sylw.

[130] **Mark Isherwood:** Hyd yn oed os yw y tu hwnt i amserlen a bennir gan yr awdurdod lleol?

Syr Jon Shortridge: Wel, efallai y bydd angen i mi fyfyrrio ar y cwestiwn hwnnw os wyf wedi camddeall rhywbeth. Fodd bynnag, yn y bôn, credaf mai swyddogaeth yr archwilwyr allanol yw bodloni eu hunain ar amrywiaeth eang o faterion, gan gynnwys twyll, ac ni fyddant yn cael eu cyfyngu gan unrhyw amodau y gallai rhywun fel minnau geisio'u gosod, ac mae hynny'n ddigon teg.

[131] **Mark Isherwood:** Diolch. Yr wyf yn troi at baragraff 4.19 a 4.20, sy'n trafod y risg na fydd y cyhoedd efallai yn ystyried bod system sy'n amrywio rhwng awdurdodau lleol yn un deg. Pa waith, os o gwbl, sydd wedi'i wneud i asesu barn y cyhoedd am yr hen system a'r un newydd wrth geisio cael gafael ar gymorth ariannol i adnewyddu tai?

Syr Jon Shortridge: Credaf mai mater i Brendon yw hwnnw yn bennaf.

Mr Hilbourne: I think that the first point is that local authorities have had to publish their housing renewal policies and, while I cannot comment on the extent or nature of the publicity, the guidance quite clearly sets out the fact that they should not only publicise it, but consult with local interested people. As I say, I cannot comment on individual local authorities' activity. It is not for the Assembly to be prescriptive; the Assembly cannot be prescriptive about how authorities approach that. What is important, I think, in that document, is that people in the locality know what assistance they may or may not be likely to get. In other words, the policy should set out what the local authorities' priorities are. Inevitably, there will be people who will not receive assistance who, under the previous system, may have done so. That will be a matter for the local authority in terms of what its priorities are, and issues that the individual would need to take up with the local authority.

[132] **Mark Isherwood:** So, from your end of this, there would be no actual formal public consultation?

Mr Hilbourne: No.

[133] **Mark Isherwood:** Okay, thank you.

[134] **Janet Davies:** Thank you, Mark. I have a couple of questions, and the first is to Sir Jon. We have had a few questions on fraud in the latter part of this hearing. Do you think that the danger of fraud embedded in a council's culture would have disappeared with local government reorganisation?

Sir Jon Shortridge: Sorry, I missed that—embedded in?

Mr Hilbourne: Credaf mai'r pwynt cyntaf yw bod awdurdodau lleol wedi gorfod cyhoeddi eu polisiau ar adnewyddu tai ac, er na allaf roi sylwadau ar ehangder neu natur y cyhoeddusrwydd, mae'n amlwg bod y canllawiau yn nodi y dylent nid yn unig ei gyhoeddi, ond y dylent hefyd ymgynghori â phobl leol sydd â diddordeb. Fel y dywedais, ni allaf wneud sylwadau ar weithgarwch awdurdodau lleol unigol. Ni ddylai'r Cynulliad fod yn gyfarwyddol; ni all y Cynulliad fod yn gyfarwyddol ynglyn â sut y mae awdurdodau yn mynd i'r afael â hynny. Yr hyn sy'n bwysig, yn fy marn i, yn y ddogfen honno, yw bod pobl leol yn gwybod pa gymorth y maent yn debygol neu'n annhebygol o'i gael. Mewn geiriau eraill, dylai'r polisi nodi beth yw blaenoriaethau'r awdurdod lleol. Yn anochel, ni fydd pawb a fyddai wedi derbyn cymorth dan y system flaenorol yn derbyn cymorth dan y system newydd. Bydd hynny'n fater i'r awdurdod lleol o ran beth yw ei flaenoriaethau, a materion y bydd angen i'r unigolyn eu trafod â'r awdurdod lleol.

[132] **Mark Isherwood:** Felly, o'ch safbwynt chi, ni fyddai ymgynghoriad cyhoeddus ffurfiol mewn gwirionedd?

Mr Hilbourne: Na.

[133] **Mark Isherwood:** Iawn, diolch.

[134] **Janet Davies:** Diolch, Mark. Mae gennyf rai cwestiynau, ac mae'r cyntaf i Syr Jon. Yr ydym wedi clywed rhai cwestiynau am dwyll yn rhan ddiwethaf y gwrandawriad hwn. A ydych yn credu y bydd y perygl o dwyll sy'n rhan annatod o ddiwylliant cyngor wedi diflannu ar ôl ad-drefnu llywodraeth leol?

Syr Jon Shortridge: Mae'n ddrwg gennyf, collais hynny—yn rhan annatod o'r diwylliant?

[135] **Janet Davies:** Embedded in a council's culture. Do you think that it would have disappeared with local government reorganisation?

Sir Jon Shortridge: I cannot comment on that. As far as I am concerned, all officials, certainly senior officials, in local government have a responsibility to establish a culture in their organisation that is based on the seven values of public life, and they should have arrangements in place actively to root out any possibilities for fraud. It is my impression that the standards of public administration in local government in Wales are quite high. They could be higher; there are incidents of fraud, some of which are referred to in this document. I think that the new arrangements that have come into place following the Assembly, through the Wales programme for improvement, and through the greater opportunity for peer pressure and for using audit and regulation to drive up standards, should all be helping to ensure that the standard of financial administration generally is increased and, therefore, that the risk of fraud is reduced. However, as anyone who has had a career in public administration knows, you must always be vigilant as these things can and do happen if the opportunities for them are created.

[136] **Janet Davies:** Okay. Thank you, Sir Jon. I have two financial questions, just to clarify a couple of issues in my mind. The first is about the funding for the now unhypothecated grants. Previously, repair grants were funded out of supplementary credit approvals, mainly—virtually entirely in fact. These unhypothecated grants are obviously not funded in that way. Are they funded from basic credit approvals, from the general revenue settlement, or from a mixture of the two? If it is from revenue, have the councils' revenue settlements

[135] **Janet Davies:** Yn rhan annatod o ddiwylliant cyngor. A ydych yn credu y bydd wedi diflannu ar ôl ad-drefnu llywodraeth leol?

Syr Jon Shortridge: Ni allaf wneud sylwadau ar hynny. O'm rhan i, mae gan bob un o swyddogion, yn sicr uwch swyddogion, llywodraeth leol gyfrifoldeb i sefydlu diwylliant yn eu sefydliad sy'n seiliedig ar y saith o werthoedd ym mywyd cyhoeddus, a dylent roi trefniadau ar waith i ganfod unrhyw bosibilrwydd o dwyll. Yr wyf i o'r farn bod safonau gweinyddiaeth gyhoeddus mewn llywodraeth leol yng Nghymru'n gymharol dda. Gallent fod yn well; mae achosion o dwyll, a chyfeirir at rai yn y ddogfen hon. Credaf y dylai'r trefniadau newydd sydd wedi'u gweithredu ers sefydlu'r Cynulliad, drwy raglen Cymru ar gyfer gwella, a thrwy y cyfleoedd pellach i gymheiriaid ddwyn pwysau a chyfleoedd i ddefnyddio archwiliadau a rheoliadau i wella safonau, gynorthwyo i sicrhau bod safon gweinyddiaeth ariannol yn gwella'n gyffredinol ac, felly, bod y risg o dwyll yn lleihau. Fodd bynnag, fel y gwyr unrhyw un sydd wedi cael gyrfa mewn gweinyddiaeth gyhoeddus, mae'n rhaid bod yn wyliadwrus drwy'r amser gan y gall y pethau hyn ddigwydd os oes cyfleoedd ar eu cyfer yn cael eu creu.

[136] **Janet Davies:** Iawn. Diolch, Syr Jon. Mae gennyf ddau gwestiwn ariannol, er mwyn egluro un neu ddau o faterion. Mae'r cyntaf yn ymwneud â'r cyllid ar gyfer y grantiau sydd erbyn hyn heb eu clustnodi. Yn y gorffennol, yr oedd grantiau trwsio'n cael eu cyllido gan gymeradwyaethau credyd atodol, yn bennaf—bron yn gyfan gwbl a dweud y gwir. Mae'n amlwg nad yw'r grantiau hyn sydd heb eu clustnodi yn cael eu cyllido yn y ffordd honno. A ydynt yn cael eu cyllido o gymeradwyaethau credyd sylfaenol, o'r setliad refeniw cyffredinol,

increased to take account of this?

Mr Hilbourne: For the current financial year, they were funded from a mixture of supplementary credit approvals and basic credit approvals. For the next financial year, when the prudential system is introduced, they will be funded principally from the general capital funding, which includes capital grants, but authorities, with the flexibilities in the system, are free to use whatever other resources they may have available to supplement that if it enables them to address a local priority.

[137] **Janet Davies:** Okay, thank you. That has cleared that in my mind. The second matter is that, in the past, there were occasions when a repair grant actually exceeded the value of the property. Is there a ceiling to stop that happening, or is that, in effect, excluded because house prices have risen so much?

Mr Hilbourne: When home renovation grants became discretionary in 1996, the upper limit was removed, in effect. The new system increases that flexibility—there is no grant limit set centrally, although a number of local authorities have decided to introduce an upper limit locally. I think that that needs to be read alongside the flexibility that authorities now have to offer alternative forms of help, for example, assistance with moving house if perhaps the cost of repairs exceeds the value and it is not cost-effective to undertake it. However, those are issues that individual local authorities have taken account of in their new housing renewal strategies.

neu o gymysgedd o'r ddau? Os yw o refeniw, a yw setliadau refeniw y cyngor wedi'u cynyddu i ystyried hyn?

Mr Hilbourne: Ar gyfer y flwyddyn ariannol bresennol, fe'u cyllidwyd o gymysgedd o gymeradwyaethau credyd atodol a chymeradwyaethau credyd sylfaenol. Ar gyfer y flwyddyn ariannol nesaf, pan gyflwynir y system ddarbodus, byddant yn cael eu cyllido'n bennaf o'r cyllid cyfalaf cyffredinol, sy'n cynnwys grantiau cyfalaf, ond mae gan awdurdodau, gyda'r hyblygrwydd yn y system, ryddid i ychwanegu at hynny drwy ddefnyddio unrhyw adnoddau eraill sydd ganddynt os yw'n eu galluogi i fynd i'r afael â blaenoriaeth leol.

[137] **Janet Davies:** Iawn, diolch. Mae hynny wedi egluro hyn i mi. Yr ail fater yw bod achosion, yn y gorffennol, lle yr oedd grant trwsio yn fwy na gwerth yr eiddo mewn gwirionedd. A oes terfyn uchaf i atal hyn rhag digwydd, neu, i bob pwrpas, a yw hyn yn amherthnasol am fod prisiau tai wedi codi cymaint?

Mr Hilbourne: Pan ddaeth grantiau adnewyddu cartrefi yn ddewisol yn 1996, symudwyd y terfyn uchaf, i bob pwrpas. Mae'r system newydd yn cynyddu'r hyblygrwydd hwnnw—ni osodir terfyn grant yn ganolog, er bod nifer o awdurdodau lleol wedi penderfynu cyflwyno terfyn uchaf yn lleol. Credaf fod angen ystyried hynny ochr yn ochr â'r hyblygrwydd sydd gan awdurdodau bellach i gynnig gwahanol fathau o gymorth, er enghraifft, cymorth i symud ty os yw costau gwaith trwsio o bosibl yn uwch na'r gwerth ac na fyddai gwneud y gwaith yn gost-effeithiol. Fodd bynnag, mae'r rheini yn faterion y mae awdurdodau lleol unigol wedi'u hystyried yn eu strategaethau newydd ar adnewyddu tai.

[138] **Janet Davies:** Okay, thank you, that is great. I have a general question at the end. Do you think that the intended benefits of the new policy on housing renewal will outweigh the possible risks that could be there?

Mr Hilbourne: Local authorities were very keen to see the changes that were introduced towards the middle of last year. When the statutory instrument was introduced and the new system was debated in the Assembly, Members were unanimously in favour of it. There are risks in the system, but I think that what is important is that those are effectively managed by local authorities, and that is something that we have been very anxious to emphasise in the detailed guidance. The opportunities are there if authorities decide to take advantage of them.

[139] **Janet Davies:** Right, thank you.

Sir Jon Shortridge: May I just add to that? More generally, I think that the model that we have applied is, in principle, a very good model because it seeks to get the balance of responsibilities between the Assembly and local government right, in my view. However, as the report rightly indicates, there are risks associated with it, so to ensure that it works effectively, all sides have to work very actively to seek to make it work. We will certainly have to monitor at the all-Wales level just how well authorities, individually and collectively, are performing. I think that if we can make this work it will be very much to the benefit of Wales and, in particular, those people currently living in poor quality housing.

[140] **Janet Davies:** Thank you very much, Sir Jon. I thank all the witnesses. A draft transcript of the evidence-taking session will be sent to you before it is published.

[138] **Janet Davies:** Iawn, diolch, mae hynny'n wych. Mae gennyf gwestiwn cyffredinol i gloi. A ydych yn credu y bydd buddiannau arfaethedig y polisi newydd ar adnewyddu tai yn gorbwysu'r risgiau posibl y gellid eu hwynebu?

Mr Hilbourne: Yr oedd awdurdodau lleol yn awyddus iawn i weld y newidiadau a gyflwynwyd tua chanol y llynedd. Pan gyflwynwyd yr offeryn statudol a phan trafodwyd y system newydd yn y Cynulliad, yr oedd Aelodau'n unfrydol o'i phlaid. Mae risgiau yn y system, ond credaf mai'r hyn sy'n bwysig yw bod y rheini'n cael eu rheoli'n effeithiol gan awdurdodau lleol, ac mae hynny'n rhywbeth yr ydym wedi bod yn awyddus iawn i'w bwysleisio yn y canllawiau manwl. Mae cyfleoedd ar gael os yw awdurdodau'n penderfynu manteisio arnynt.

[139] **Janet Davies:** Iawn, diolch.

Syr Jon Shortridge: A gaf fi ychwanegu at hynny? Yn fwy cyffredinol, credaf fod y model yr ydym wedi'i weithredu, mewn egwyddor, yn fodel da iawn oherwydd ei fod yn ceisio sicrhau bod y cydbwysedd rhwng cyfrifoldebau'r Cynulliad a llywodraeth leol yn gywir, yn fy marn i. Fodd bynnag, fel y mae'r adroddiad yn ei nodi'n gywir, mae risgiau'n gysylltiedig â hyn, felly er mwyn sicrhau ei fod yn gweithio'n effeithiol, mae'n rhaid i bob ochr weithio'n galed iawn i geisio gwneud iddo weithio. Bydd yn rhaid i ni'n sicr fonitro ar lefel Cymru gyfan i weld pa mor dda y mae awdurdodau, yn unigol a chyda'i gilydd, yn perfformio. Os gallwn wneud i hyn weithio credaf y bydd er budd Cymru ac, yn benodol, y bobl hynny sy'n byw mewn tai o ansawdd gwael ar hyn o bryd.

[140] **Janet Davies:** Diolch yn fawr iawn, Syr Jon. Diolch i'r holl dystion. Bydd trawsgrifiad drafft o'r sesiwn cymryd tystiolaeth yn cael ei anfon atoch cyn ei gyhoeddi.

Daeth y sesiwn cymryd tystiolaeth i ben am 11.00 a.m
The evidence-taking session ended at 11.00 a.m.