

Agenda – Local Government and Housing Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 5, Tŷ Hywel

Meeting date: 25 March 2026

Meeting time: 09.30

For further information contact:

Catherine Hunt

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddHousing@senedd.wales

Hybrid

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

09.30

2 Papers to note

09.30

2.1 Social housing supply

(Pages 1 – 29)

Attached Documents:

Paper 1: Social Housing Supply – Correspondence with the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government in relation to the follow-up inquiry on social housing supply

2.2 Legislative Consent: Armed Forces Bill

(Pages 30 – 31)

Attached Documents:

Paper 2: Armed Forces Bill – Letter from Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales to the Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee in relation to the Armed Forces Bill – 9 March 2026

2.3 Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Bill

(Pages 32 – 33)



Attached Documents:

Paper 3: Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Bill – Letter to the Chair of the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee – 2 March 2026

2.4 Sixth Senedd Legacy Work

(Pages 34 – 41)

Attached Documents:

Paper 4: Sixth Senedd Legacy Work – Correspondence from Crisis

Paper 5: Sixth Senedd Legacy Work – Letter from the Equality and Human Rights Commission – 27 February 2026

Paper 6: Sixth Senedd Legacy Work – Letter from Homes for all Cymru

2.5 Inquiry into community assets

(Pages 42 – 89)

Attached Documents:

Paper 7: Inquiry into Community Assets – Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government with the final report from the Community Asset Commission – 10 March 2026

2.6 Hazardous disrepair in social housing

(Pages 90 – 94)

Attached Documents:

Paper 8: Hazardous disrepair in social housing – Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government – 16 March 2026

Paper 9: Hazardous disrepair in social housing – Letter from Shelter Cymru with additional information following the meeting on 5 March 2026

3 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of this meeting

09.30

Private meeting

09.30 – 11.00

4 Follow-up inquiry on social housing supply

09.30 – 09.45

5 Hazardous disrepair in social housing: consideration of summary of key findings

09.45 – 10.15

(Pages 95 – 119)

Attached Documents:

Paper 10: Hazardous disrepair in social housing – summary of key findings

Paper 11: Hazardous disrepair in social housing – summary of evidence

6 Sixth Senedd Legacy work: consideration of draft report

10.15 – 11.00

(Pages 120 – 144)

Attached Documents:

Paper 12: Sixth Senedd Legacy Draft Report

Jayne Bryant MS
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government

4 March 2026

Dear Jayne

Social housing supply: follow up inquiry

As you are aware, the Local Government and Housing Committee conducted an inquiry into social housing supply during 2024, publishing our report *Social Housing Supply* in November of that year. The report made 17 recommendations to the Welsh Government and all but three were accepted either in full or in principle. Whilst social housing was the main focus of our inquiry, we are also interested in affordable housing and this is reflected in that work.

The impact of the shortage of social housing on people and families remains a priority for the committee. As such we have undertaken a follow up inquiry to evaluate progress in implementing our recommendations and those of the Affordable Housing Taskforce. To inform our work we took evidence from key stakeholders on 21 January 2026 and 5 February 2026. Lee Waters MS excused himself from this inquiry due to his involvement in the Affordable Housing Taskforce.

Whilst we welcome that progress has been made, it is clear from our evidence that delivery of social housing remains in crisis. Witnesses told us that a good momentum has been achieved over the last year with the sector working collaboratively to reach the 20,000 homes target. However, we also heard that progress has been slow in implementing the Taskforce and Committee recommendations. As such, Members agreed that I should write to you to highlight the key issues that emerged from our evidence sessions and the written submissions we received. This letter outlines areas of concern and asks for clarification and/or further information on certain matters to which we would welcome a response.

In our evidence sessions, witnesses highlighted the need for stronger leadership from the Welsh Government to ensure the housing emergency is understood as a shared, cross-cutting priority. They highlighted the need for greater clarity on the Welsh Government's expectations across different policy areas, such as the environment, net zero, and health, and how they interact with/conflict each other. For example, we heard that Natural Resources Wales's phosphates and more recently, [marine nitrates guidance](#) have significantly stalled social and affordable housing developments already in the planning system; and the long term target to achieve EPC A across all social housing was also raised as a barrier.

Codi Group said the sector was looking for "a more strategic approach to delivery"¹ moving forward. The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) and Shelter Cymru told us that in their view recognising the right to adequate housing would be the most effective means of addressing and resolving the housing emergency, whilst the WLGA said:

"If we continue to dilute our delivery in terms of trying to meet other objectives, we are not going to hit the targets for new build that we need... So, I don't disagree with the ambitions of the policies, but what I'd like to see is a timeline in terms of delivery so that we can focus at this point on the emergency and the housing crisis..."²

We believe the Welsh Government needs to show stronger leadership and develop a comprehensive strategy across its departments to ensure the housing emergency is fully recognised and addressed. Clear and consistent communication is also needed to make social housing supply a top priority throughout all areas of government. We believe that bringing the right to adequate housing into Welsh law would help establish this as an essential priority across the whole of the Welsh Government.

We would welcome an update on how the Welsh Government is ensuring that people's housing needs are being met.

We would also be grateful for clarity about how the Welsh Government will ensure that social housing supply is recognised and acted on as a cross-cutting priority across all departments so that policies in areas such as health, education, the environment and decarbonisation are aligned with, rather than competing against, the urgent need to deliver more social and affordable homes.

¹ Local Government and Housing Committee, 21 January 2026 – [ROF](#), paragraph 176

² Local Government and Housing Committee, 21 January 2026 – [ROF](#), paragraph 186

Most witnesses felt the Welsh Government was making some progress in implementing the Affordable Homes Taskforce recommendations. Both CIH and Codi Group said the recommendations were an opportunity to address systemic challenges in supply moving into the next Senedd term. Community Housing Cymru said that *"moving from recommendation to delivery has proved complex"*³, noting the large number of recommendations (41) and suggesting the Welsh Government should prioritise these. Similarly, the WLGA emphasised the need to *"move from a taskforce recommendation phase to a monitoring and implementation phase as quickly as possible."*⁴

However, third sector organisations said it was difficult to see progress from the outside, highlighting a lack of transparency around the Taskforce's progress. Shelter Cymru stated that *"on some of the recommendations that we believe are being taken forward, there's not yet the kind of public transparency about where things are in progress with those."*⁵ Whilst the Bevan Foundation noted in their written evidence that *"the implementation group should publish a progress report before the end of the Senedd term."*

We welcome your commitment⁶ to provide a progress update following the next meeting of the Affordable Housing Taskforce Implementation Group and would be grateful to receive this as soon as possible, and before the end of this Senedd term.

We would be grateful for a comprehensive and detailed breakdown of each Taskforce recommendation, setting out where measurable and identifiable progress has been made, as well as areas where progress has been slower than anticipated or absent.

Given the lack of transparency highlighted by some witnesses around the Taskforce's work, we would also welcome details of how the Welsh Government plans to communicate with the sector going forward.

Looking beyond the 20,000 target

We are pleased with the progress made toward the 20,000 homes target, especially in the last year, and all witnesses expressed confidence that this goal will be met by the end of 2026. However, they also highlighted the importance of being more transparent about the barriers that have been overcome so far, to ensure a sustainable pipeline for the future. Shelter Cymru questioned whether this increase in delivery was as a result of *"potentially unsustainable level of resource having been put*

³ Community Housing Cymru, written evidence, January 2026

⁴ Local Government and Housing Committee, 5 February 2026 – ROF, paragraph 14

⁵ Local Government and Housing Committee, 21 January 2026 – ROF, paragraph 22

⁶ Oral statement, More Homes, 3 February 2026 – ROF, paragraph 172

*in that will not continue*⁷, or if it was due to removing systemic barriers that could ensure a sustainable pipeline of social and affordable homes in the future.

Although not part of our formal evidence gathering, we note the Audit Wales [article](#) from 18 February on meeting the social and affordable homes target. In their view, data published by the Welsh Government is unclear about the true number of homes that meet the full target definition of new build, low carbon, social homes for rent. We share this concern and call for greater transparency as to how the homes included in the figures are defined. Audit Wales also express concern about the sustainability of the housing pipeline beyond the 20,000 target for this Senedd term, highlighting data which shows that between the final year of the previous target and the first year of the current target period, the number of social and affordable homes delivered fell by 26 per cent. Given the evidence we heard from stakeholders, we are concerned that a similar pattern could emerge after the current target period.

We would be grateful for clarification on which systemic barriers have been identified and how these have been addressed (or how the Welsh Government plans to address them) to ensure a sustainable pipeline of social and affordable housing post-2026.

We would also welcome an explanation for the 26 per cent drop in delivery of social and affordable homes at the start of this term along with projections for any anticipated drop for the coming term.

Social housing stock – 20 per cent target

The Welsh Government previously accepted in principle our recommendation that social housing should make up at least 20 per cent of Wales's total housing stock, and this was welcomed by stakeholders. In your [response](#)⁸ you stated that an *"analysis to understand the steps needed to secure a higher percentage (of housing stock) and to inform timescales"* would be undertaken.

We would welcome further details on this analysis and the timescales you are working towards for its completion.

We note the [new estimates](#) of additional housing need in Wales that were published on 12 February 2026. These estimate newly arising need of between 7,800 and 9,300 additional homes per year between July 2025 and June 2030, with a central estimate of around 8,700. We note that approximately 35 per cent of this need is estimated to be for affordable housing. However, this 35 per cent does not include the estimated existing unmet need of 9,400 homes, all of which is assumed to be for affordable housing but is counted separately. This is a change to the previous methodology, which combined existing and newly arising housing need over a five-year period and as such concluded that a higher percentage of that need – 48 per cent – was for affordable housing. Our

⁷ Local Government and Housing Committee, 21 January 2026 – [ROF](#), paragraph 76

⁸ [Welsh Government response](#) to the Committee's report on Social Housing Supply, January 2025, page 6

previous inquiry also heard some concerns that the methodology undercounts true existing housing need.

In our view the estimates are underpinned by an imperfect methodology with a lack of focus on social housing need as opposed to affordable housing need. We would urge caution that these figures should not be taken as an indicator of how much additional social housing Wales needs as they exclude certain important aspects such as rough sleeping, hidden homelessness and people living in unsuitable accommodation.

We would like to understand how the Welsh Government intends to ensure that this revised lower percentage does not lead to any reduction in the percentage of social and affordable housing that local authorities aim to achieve via their Local Development Plans.

We would welcome a view from the Welsh Government on what the new estimates suggest about true social housing need.

We would also welcome a view on the practicality of adopting a fuller estimate of social housing need that takes into account categories such as rough sleeping, hidden homelessness and people living in unsuitable accommodation.

National Development Corporation

We heard continued calls in our evidence sessions for the establishment of an arm's-length National Development Corporation (NDC) to prioritise and give focus to the Welsh Government's social and affordable housing programme. This was a recommendation we made in our initial inquiry and many stakeholders expressed disappointment that it was rejected by the Welsh Government. The Chartered Institute of Housing told us that they believe a NDC was *"fundamental to taking our response to the housing emergency beyond the political cycles and beyond the political targets that we set ourselves."*⁹

We acknowledge the establishment of the WG's Place Division, as set out in your response to our report, which has brought together land and regeneration functions. However, we are concerned about whether it has the capacity and cross-government strategic focus required, particularly beyond short-term political and funding cycles, to effectively support local authorities and housing associations in delivering social and affordable housing at the scale and pace needed to meet demand.

We also note developments elsewhere in the UK - the new [five year strategic plan](#) of [Homes England](#) which includes a new National Housing Bank, and the recent [announcement](#) of a national housing agency for Scotland – both national delivery bodies with long term remits to accelerate the pace of house building and regeneration. Homes England's corporate plan includes specific support for SME

⁹ Local Government and Housing Committee, 21 January 2026 - [RQP](#), paragraph 18

housebuilders. SMEs are vitally important for delivering social and affordable housing, a point emphasised by Castell Group in our evidence session, *"the SME contractors are really the core, once you move past the land and the permission. Without SME contractors, you won't build to target, especially on value for money."*¹⁰ We therefore believe it essential that any Wales arm's-length body should include explicit mechanisms to support SMEs.

We reiterate our previous recommendation that the Welsh Government establish a National Development Corporation (or equivalent arm's-length body) to provide long-term strategic leadership and delivery capacity for social and affordable housing in Wales. We remain of the view that the absence of a dedicated national enabling body limits Wales's ability to respond effectively to the housing emergency.

We would like the Welsh Government to reconsider setting up a National Development Corporation. In the absence of such a body, we would like you to set out what mechanisms are in place to ensure long term continuity and strategic focus on social housing delivery that go beyond electoral cycles and short-term targets.

We would also welcome information on whether the Welsh Government has considered if any elements of Homes England, and the proposed national housing agency for Scotland, could be applied here in Wales, including consideration of a funding model similar to the Homes England National Housing Bank.

Development Bank of Wales

Both the Committee and the Taskforce called for the Development Bank of Wales (DBW) to play a bigger role in funding social and affordable housing developments. However, we were concerned to hear from Castell Group that the DBW considers some investments "too risky"¹¹ and it does not support social housing. We were pleased that the Welsh Government accepted in principle our recommendation that the DBW should become a direct funder of social and affordable housing developments. We note the restrictions outlined in your [response](#) on DBW's ability to directly fund social housing in Wales, and welcome the *"exploratory work"* being undertaken on the possibility of a greater role for the DBW *"in managing existing and potential future Registered Social Housing Development Loans."*¹²

¹⁰ Local Government and Housing Committee, 5 February – [R.O.P.](#), paragraph 50

¹¹ Local Government and Housing Committee, 5 February – [R.O.P.](#), paragraph 109

¹² [Welsh Government response](#) to the Committee's report on Social Housing Supply, January 2025 – page 8

We would welcome an update on this work and details on how you are engaging with the Development Bank of Wales to increase their role in supporting the social and affordable housing sector.

Land value capture

The Welsh Government previously accepted in principle our recommendation to explore how more land value could be captured for the public benefit. We understand that since then, the Welsh Government has mainly sought to improve land value capture by streamlining section 106 processes. While this is welcome, we believe the Welsh Government should be looking to innovate in this area by exploring other forms of land value capture, such as strategic acquisition of land in areas where values are expected to rise, for example due to public infrastructure investment. This could form another valuable source of income for investment in affordable housing, learning from examples in other European nations.

We would appreciate an update on the Welsh Government’s exploration of the potential of land value capture including via land acquisition, taxation, and developer obligations.

We welcome the recent announcement by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language that the Welsh Government and UK Government will be holding a joint consultation on devolving powers to introduce a Vacant Land Tax (VLT) to the Senedd. We believe this could have an impact on increasing the number of social and affordable homes, and we look forward to further details as soon as possible.

Housing Standards

We were disappointed that the Welsh Government rejected our recommendation to develop a separate quality standard for acquisitions of permanent social homes. Evidence to both our initial and follow up inquiries highlighted that, while high “gold standard” requirements for new build homes are appropriate to avoid the need for retrofit, achieving all aspects of the WHQS 23 for existing homes may be cost-prohibitive and a barrier to bringing social homes into use at pace.

Shelter Cymru, Codi Group and the WLGA all said it was important to understand tenants’ needs and expectations and be pragmatic about what can be achieved in existing properties. The WLGA told us:

“I think it really would help to soften those targets a bit. For example, when you talk about acquisitions, there are a lot of properties that we simply wouldn't acquire because no amount of investment will let those reach the standard, and, surely, a home is a home. And when we're talking about slightly smaller rooms, is that really something that we should be focusing on?”¹³

¹³ Local Government and Housing Committee, 21 January 2026 – ROP, paragraph 193

We also note the UK Climate Change Committee's concerns about the EPC A target within the WHQS, stating in 2023 that "*retrofitting houses to achieve an EPC 'A' rating is costly and unlikely to be a cost-optimal approach to decarbonising homes.*"¹⁴

The evidence we've heard re-affirms our view that the Welsh Government should develop a separate quality standard for the acquisition of permanent social homes in consultation with social tenants. This should be distinct from the requirements applied to new build social housing.

We would like the Welsh Government to reconsider its position and commit to developing a separate acquisitions standard, distinct from new-build requirements, and developed in consultation with social tenants. In the absence of a separate standard, we would be grateful for details of how you intend to address the barriers to acquisitions so that more existing homes can be brought into the social sector.

Impact of NRW marine nitrates guidance

Stakeholders raised significant concerns about Natural Resources Wales's (NRW) new guidance on managing marine nitrate pollution and its impact on the delivery of social and affordable housing in parts of Wales.

We were concerned to hear that the NRW requirements were introduced with immediate effect, with no lead in period, stalling developments already in the planning system. According to the WLGA the halt on development due to new advice on marine nitrates was "*extremely worrying.*"¹⁵

We were concerned to hear that 11,800 homes are stalled in the south west Wales region, of which 2,300 are social and affordable homes. It was also concerning to hear that this is having a direct impact on 10,000 jobs and that local businesses are struggling due to the disruption to their pipeline of work. Similarly, Community Housing Cymru told us that 2,000 social and affordable homes are on hold in west Wales with "*900 of those almost there, in terms of where they were in the pipeline.*"¹⁶ They raised concerns that:

*"this is the second time in five years, actually, we've been in this situation—in a situation where important environmental considerations and protections are falling the heaviest on the housing sector."*¹⁷

They welcomed the Marine Nitrates Development Taskforce set up by the Welsh Government last October with the aim of restarting development as quickly as possible. However, they stressed the

¹⁴ UK CCC Progress report: Reducing emissions in Wales, June 2023 – page 60

¹⁵ Local Government and Housing Committee, 21 January 2026 – ROP, paragraph 217

¹⁶ Local Government and Housing Committee, 21 January 2026 – ROP, paragraph 218

¹⁷ Local Government and Housing Committee, 21 January 2026 – ROP, paragraph 218

need for quicker action and suggested that a temporary exemption for affordable housing should be considered.

While the Welsh Government is still dealing with phosphates issues which began in January 2021, evidence we heard suggests that this experience did not lead to a more strategic approach to the issuing of marine nitrates guidance. However, Audit Wales has a different perspective, and in their [article](#), state they believe the Welsh Government was more prepared this time.

In our evidence session, witnesses told us that they believed early warnings or steps to mitigate the risks for social housing developments were lacking, leading to considerable disruption of the pipeline and threats to people's livelihoods.

We would be grateful for a detailed outline of the steps the Marine Nitrates Development Taskforce is taking to urgently restart stalled housing developments, particularly for social and affordable housing schemes already in the planning pipeline.

Planning

We heard that there has been some welcome progress on streamlining planning processes and prioritising applications for social and affordable housing. However, we also heard that planning matters continue to be complex, increasing risks for developers. We heard that 11 out of Wales's 25 Local Development Plans are either expired or not in place and that this is making it harder to identify suitable sites.

The Affordable Housing Taskforce made detailed recommendations to streamline and expedite planning processes, and we look forward to hearing an update on implementation of these.

Many witnesses welcomed that the Welsh Government has increased planning fees, but some were uncertain about the extent to which the increased income is being allocated to planning departments. We note the Welsh Government's response to the consultation on '[Promoting a resilient and high performing planning service](#)' (June 2025) which states that a decision has been made not to ring-fence at this time.

We would like to understand the Welsh Government's rationale for not ring-fencing the income from increased planning fees to local authority planning departments. We would also like to know what the Welsh Government's monitoring on planning fees is revealing in terms of local authorities' income generation and the extent to which income is being allocated to planning.

Section 106 renegotiations

The Welsh Government [previously](#) accepted our recommendation to explore how to ensure that section 106 policy compliance is fully reflected in land values. We believe there is still a need to strengthen the arm of local authorities to hold firm on viability, to send a clear message to developers

and the land market. We note the recent report by Edward Shepherd and Sahiti Bhalla of Cardiff University which called for increased clarity and transparency in the system, including clear and comprehensive national viability guidance to be published as a Technical Advice Note. The Welsh Government previously told this Committee that it would consider whether further guidance would be helpful following the completion of work undertaken by Planning Officers Society Wales.

We would be grateful for an update from the Welsh Government on this work and a view as to what more may be needed to support local authorities to hold firm on viability.

Rent levels and rent convergence

Social rent affordability, and the prospect of rent convergence, was raised by several witnesses in written and oral evidence. While neither the Committee's report nor the Taskforce recommendations addressed social rent policy in detail, we have previously¹⁸ called for greater multi-year certainty in relation to social rent policy. We consider this to be an important area, particularly as the consequences of unaffordable social rents are likely to fall back on local authorities through increased pressure on homelessness services and temporary accommodation. Witnesses broadly welcomed the Welsh Government's 10-year rent and service charge policy (2026–36), published in September 2025, particularly for the long-term certainty it provides to social landlords.

Evidence we heard highlighted the need to balance affordability for current and future tenants with the financial sustainability of social landlords and their capacity to deliver new homes. The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) emphasised the need to consider rent policy within the broader funding framework for social housing delivery, whilst the Bevan Foundation suggested that relying on social rent income to fund new social housing is increasingly impractical and called for a comprehensive review of the financing of social housing.

Community Housing Cymru and the Welsh Local Government Association highlighted significant variation in social rent levels across Wales and argued that convergence could improve fairness between tenants and generate additional income for reinvestment in new homes. However, the WLGA emphasised that any move towards convergence would need to be phased and gradual to avoid sudden rent increases and protect affordability.

We would welcome details of how the Welsh Government will ensure that its 10-year rent policy balances tenant affordability with the financial sustainability of social landlords; and an update on the Welsh Government's review of rent convergence including any associated timescales.

¹⁸ Local Government and Housing Committee Report: Social Housing Supply, November 2024 – Recommendation 8

The Committee's recommendation for a workforce development strategy to attract more people into the construction industry was rejected by the Welsh Government. However, it is clear from the evidence we received both in our initial and follow up inquiries that workforce capacity is one of the biggest challenges facing the sector.

Stakeholders from across the sector emphasised that workforce shortages are already constraining delivery. Castell Group described the lack of skilled labour as a "*fundamental requirement*"¹⁹ requiring investment, highlighting rising salary costs and stated there are more jobs than people to fill them.

We heard several examples of good practice. For example, CIH told us that they are working with the Welsh Government to scope a Wales Development Academy intended to address core development skills gaps within local authority development teams. RSLs described their own training pathways including initiatives that place greater emphasis on engaging tenants in training and employment opportunities within the sector. The WLGA highlighted the success of local government in "*growing our own talent*"²⁰ through apprenticeship schemes for high-skilled roles, such as architects. They told us that retention rates of 80 per cent had been achieved for participants completing these programmes. This suggests that such approaches can contribute to workforce stability as well as skills development.

While we recognise these examples of good practice, witnesses highlighted the need for national oversight and coordination to support sustainable construction apprenticeships and placements. We heard that training opportunities need to be better aligned with an overarching housing strategy to ensure enough skilled workers for current and future social and affordable housing needs. The Home Builders Federation reinforced this view stating that although there is much already happening, "*it's very fragmented.*"²¹ They suggested that a national strategy could add value by providing leadership, coherence and better alignment of existing activity and resources.

We remain concerned that while individual organisations are taking action, the absence of national oversight limits their ability to collectively address workforce shortages. In our view workforce planning cannot be considered in isolation - training and skills development need to be aligned with wider housing policies to ensure a sustainable pipeline of skilled workers capable of meeting both current and future demand for social and affordable housing delivery. We believe that stronger leadership and coordination from the Welsh Government are needed to maximise the impact of existing initiatives and match skills provision to housing delivery priorities.

¹⁹ Local Government and Housing Committee, 5 February 2026 – [R.O.P.](#), paragraph 146

²⁰ Local Government and Housing Committee, 21 January 2026 – [R.O.P.](#), paragraph 249

²¹ Local Government and Housing Committee, 5 February 2026 – [R.O.P.](#), paragraph 148

We would like the Welsh Government to reconsider our recommendation to develop a workforce development strategy for the construction sector.

We would also be grateful for a detailed update on any progress that has been made to date in growing the workforce across the built environment.

The Affordable Housing Taskforce made detailed recommendations on skills. This included addressing workforce shortages across the built environment by strengthening training pathways, scaling good practice, and ensuring coordinated action across the Welsh Government, RSLs and skills bodies to build a sustainable pipeline of qualified workers. **We look forward to hearing an update on implementation of these.**

I would be grateful for a response as soon as possible, and by **19 March 2026** at the latest to enable it to be considered by the Committee and shared with stakeholders before the end of the Senedd term.

Yours sincerely



John Griffiths MS
Chair, Local Government and Housing Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Jayne Bryant AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Thai
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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18 March 2026

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter of 27 February and for the Committee's continued work in scrutinising progress on social housing supply. I am grateful to Members for the thorough follow-up inquiry and constructive challenge it brings.

I was pleased to hear the positive feedback from stakeholders that, despite the significant headwinds at play, good momentum has been achieved over the last year. This momentum means that Wales continues to make record progress in delivering additional affordable homes, through strong collaboration across local authorities, registered social landlords and the wider sector.

That said, I recognise that there are many challenges still at play and the collective response of the sector to these challenges led and supported by the Welsh Government, is critical to maintaining supply and building a pipeline of additional homes into the future.

We are making progress and I am pleased to attach responses to each of your questions in **Annex A**.

You will also wish to know, a Written Statement, due to be published today (19 March), will include an annex with progress updates against all the recommendations of the Affordable Housing Taskforce.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jayne Bryant". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial 'J'.

Jayne Bryant AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Thai
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government

Local Government and Housing Committee - Social Housing Supply: Follow up Inquiry – March 2026

	Committee Question/Ask	Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Housing Response
1	<p><i>We believe the Welsh Government needs to show stronger leadership and develop a comprehensive strategy across its departments to ensure the housing emergency is fully recognised and addressed. Clear and consistent communication is also needed to make social housing supply a top priority throughout all areas of government. We believe that bringing the right to adequate housing into Welsh law would help establish this as an essential priority across the whole of the Welsh Government.</i></p> <p>We would welcome an update on how the Welsh Government is ensuring that people’s housing needs are being met.</p>	<p>I have convened regular regional meetings across Wales with local authority housing lead members and officers (also attended by registered social landlords (RSLs)) to drive leadership of housing delivery and ensure that more homes is widely recognised amongst the top priorities of local authorities.</p> <p>Discussions at the regional roundtables has included reflecting on assessments of housing need. When the 20k target was set, it exceeded the affordable housing additional need estimates at the time - and we remain on course to exceed those need estimates. Indeed, the Welsh Government made providing More Homes a cross-Government priority to drive forward progress as one of four FM delivery priorities in September 2024.</p> <p>The roundtables have also focussed on the Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) process. LHMA’s are vital to determine local housing requirements and form a key part of the evidence base for awarding and allocating Welsh Government capital funding as well as informing Local Development Plans – and future Strategic Development Plans.</p> <p>I have also hosted roundtable discussions with housebuilders on matters spanning viability, funding, planning and skills.</p> <p>In February this year, Audit Wales noted that the Welsh Government has strengthened its governance of the 20k target through improved transparency and data quality, a Taskforce and implementation group coordinating delivery, and proactive action to address barriers such as planning capacity and environmental constraints.</p>

2 We would also be grateful for clarity about how the Welsh Government will ensure that social housing supply is recognised and acted on as a cross-cutting priority across all departments so that policies in areas such as health, education, the environment and decarbonisation are aligned with, rather than competing against, the urgent need to deliver more social and affordable homes.

The Welsh Government already recognises social housing supply as a cross-cutting priority and we are acting across portfolios to ensure delivery is supported rather than constrained by wider policy.

This has been amplified by the acceptance of Cabinet of all 41 recommendations of the Affordable Housing Taskforce.

Particular examples include a £9m investment by the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning in Planning and Environment Decisions Wales, Natural Resources Wales and the Planning Directorate to increase planning capacity and speed up decisions - a change designed specifically to align environmental, planning and housing objectives rather than allow them to operate in competition.

The Welsh Government has also provided financial support to areas affected by marine nitrates to ensure they can quickly put new tools, such as the Nutrient Calculator, and guidance into practice, including over £500,000 to the West Wales Nutrient Management Board and funding of up to £1.5million over three years to support Local Authorities.

In addition, the Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership has confirmed new level 2 apprenticeship pathways in bricklaying, site carpentry, scaffolding and building maintenance will be introduced later this year, improving entry level access to essential trades.

The primary objective of the Housing with Care Fund (HCF) is to increase the stock of housing to meet the needs of people with care and support needs.

The HCF is a preventative programme, building on the previous Integrated Care Fund (ICF) capital programme and underpins the

		<p>Programme for Government Commitment (PfG) to ‘support innovative housing to meet care needs.’</p> <p>We are also working with Health Boards and Local Authorities to release suitable public land, reflecting the fact that housing supply depends on coordinated action across the public estate. Housing delivery is also fully integrated with our decarbonisation and public-health goals through programmes such as the Optimised Retrofit Programme and the requirements of WHQS 2023, which improve energy efficiency, reduce fuel poverty and support better health outcomes.</p>
3	We would be grateful for a comprehensive and detailed breakdown of each Taskforce recommendation, setting out where measurable and identifiable progress has been made, as well as areas where progress has been slower than anticipated or absent.	A Written Statement, due to be published on 19 March 2026, will include an Annex with progress updates against all the recommendations of the Taskforce.
4	Given the lack of transparency highlighted by some witnesses around the Taskforce’s work, we would also welcome details of how the Welsh Government plans to communicate with the sector going forward.	<p>I convened and chair the ‘Affordable Housing Taskforce – Recommendations Implementation Group’. The Group has met four times since its establishment in July 2025 and includes representatives from across the sector. Delivering on the recommendations is a collective effort and the sector shares with the Welsh Government the responsibility for progress, improvement and change.</p> <p>Many of the recommendations require the leadership and support of our partners, to ensure they are implemented.</p> <p>Strong partnership arrangements are in place between Welsh Government Ministers and officials with the housing sector - both through formal engagement channels and ad-hoc engagement.</p>

		I have also provided updates on progress against the recommendations in Oral Questions and Statements.
5	We welcome your commitment to provide a progress update following the next meeting of the Affordable Housing Taskforce Implementation Group and would be grateful to receive this as soon as possible, and before the end of this Senedd term.	A Written Statement, due to be published on 19 March 2026, will include an Annex with progress updates against all the recommendations of the Taskforce.
6	We would be grateful for clarification on which systemic barriers have been identified and how these have been addressed (or how the Welsh Government plans to address them) to ensure a sustainable pipeline of affordable housing post-2026.	<p>The Affordable Housing Taskforce identified systematic barriers, and as noted above, I will provide progress updates against all the recommendations of the Taskforce on 19 March.</p> <p>An update on the work of the Marine Nitrates Development Taskforce is provided under recommendation 17.</p>
7	<p>Audit Wales also express concern about the sustainability of the housing pipeline beyond the 20,000 target for this Senedd term, highlighting data which shows that between the final year of the previous target and the first year of the current target period, the number of social and affordable homes delivered fell by 26 per cent. Given the evidence we heard from stakeholders, we are concerned that a similar pattern could emerge after the current target period.</p> <p>We would also welcome an explanation for the 26 per cent drop in delivery of social and affordable homes at the start of this term along with projections for any anticipated drop for the coming term.</p>	<p>We have published anticipated delivery Management Information data covering the coming Senedd term, however this doesn't include Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP) schemes and further Social Housing Grant (SHG) schemes in development programmes which are coming through.</p> <p>I have also recently announced £50 million for TACP in 2026-27 - enabling the scheme to re-open early and to give the sector time to prepare, so homes can be delivered quickly.</p>

8	<p>The Welsh Government previously accepted in principle our recommendation that social housing should make up at least 20 per cent of Wales's total housing stock, and this was welcomed by stakeholders. In your response you stated that an "analysis to understand the steps needed to secure a higher percentage (of housing stock) and to inform timescales" would be undertaken.</p> <p>We would welcome further details on this analysis and the timescales you are working towards for its completion.</p>	<p>As noted in response to question one, when the 20k target was set, it exceeded the affordable housing additional need estimates at the time - and we remain on course to exceed those need estimates by the end of 2026.</p> <p>We have backed the 20k target with record social housing funding of over £2 billion over this Senedd term – including £466m in 2025-26 alone - responding to Audit Wales's call for additional investment to meet the target.</p> <p>The latest estimates of additional housing need (2025-based) were published last month (February) and this now provides us with an updated evidence base to undertake further analysis.</p> <p>The further consideration of the recommendation will be a matter for an incoming government and will require detailed consideration of budget availability and priority, policy priorities as well as partners' delivery capacity, amongst other things.</p>
9	<p>We note the new estimates of additional housing need in Wales that were published on 12 February 2026.</p> <p>We would like to understand how the Welsh Government intends to ensure that this revised lower percentage does not lead to any reduction in the percentage of social and affordable housing that local authorities aim to achieve via their Local Development Plans.</p>	<p>As the statistical release notes, it is assumed that in addition to the affordable element of newly arising need, all existing unmet need is for affordable housing.</p> <p>Local authorities should maximise affordable housing delivery based on local evidence, with Local Housing Market Assessments (LHMAs) forming part of regular discussions between the Welsh Government and local authorities on funding and delivery priorities. Local Development Plans should continue to set ambitious, evidence-based affordable housing policies aligned with the Welsh Government's wider housing priorities.</p>

10	<p>We would welcome a view from the Welsh Government on what the new estimates suggest about true social housing need.</p>	<p>The estimates are not forecasts or housing targets, but they help us understand the pressures that may shape housing need over the next 20 years.</p> <p>They do not account for future policy changes, supply, or economic shifts - long-term estimates carry greater uncertainty.</p> <p>However, the data will help inform future policy development and any future review of Future Wales, as well as informing Future Trends reporting.</p> <p>At a local level, LHMA's are vital in understanding the local housing need of the diverse communities within each local authority, including tenure mix.</p> <p>LHMA's also provide crucial evidence to inform a local authority's Local Development Plan (LDP) process, which include targets for the number of affordable and market homes the authority aims to deliver over the plan period.</p> <p>LDPs must set out how and where the authority intends to provide the affordable and market homes to meet the target they have established.</p> <p>I have been engaging with Local Authorities on progress in updating and delivering against LHMA's, which are refreshed every two to three years, at regular regional roundtables.</p>
11	<p>We would also welcome a view on the practicality of adopting a fuller estimate of social housing need that takes into account categories such as rough sleeping, hidden homelessness and people living in unsuitable accommodation.</p>	<p>As the statistical release and Written Statement notes, the estimates are not forecasts or housing targets, but they help us understand the pressures that may shape housing need over the next 20 years.</p>

		<p>As noted in the statistical release and accompanying quality report, we recognise that estimating existing unmet need is challenging and current estimates are likely to underestimate the true level of unmet need. However, we are confident that we have drawn on the best available evidence and that the analysis provides a robust indication of the scale of unmet need.</p> <p>At present, we do not hold data on hidden homelessness. We will explore whether it is possible to capture this in future through the National Survey for Wales or the new Welsh Housing Survey.</p> <p>We have also been clear that need can also be met through adaptations and improvements to existing stock where appropriate, as well as through additional housing units.</p> <p>To that end, at local level, Local Authorities' Local Housing Market Assessments (LHMAs) and ongoing capital funding programming discussions with Welsh Government officials, are vital in understanding the local housing need of the diverse communities within each local authority.</p> <p>I have also been engaging with Local Authorities on progress in updating and delivering against LHMAs at regular regional roundtables.</p>
12	<p>We reiterate our previous recommendation that the Welsh Government establish a National Development Corporation (or equivalent arm's-length body) to provide long-term strategic leadership and delivery capacity for social and affordable housing in Wales. We remain of the view that the absence of a dedicated national</p>	<p>We acknowledge the Committee's concern about ensuring long term strategic continuity beyond electoral cycles. However, we are confident that this can be secured through existing mechanisms: long term national planning frameworks, strategic development plans, and the integration of land, regeneration and housing functions within the Welsh Government's Place Division. These approaches provide continuity, stability and alignment with wider Government policy objectives without</p>

	<p>enabling body limits Wales's ability to respond effectively to the housing emergency.</p> <p>We would like the Welsh Government to reconsider setting up a National Development Corporation. In the absence of such a body, we would like you to set out what mechanisms are in place to ensure long term continuity and strategic focus on social housing delivery that go beyond electoral cycles and short-term targets.</p>	<p>the risks and costs associated with creating a new arm's length organisation.</p>
13	<p>We would also welcome information on whether the Welsh Government has considered if any elements of Homes England, and the proposed national housing agency for Scotland, could be applied here in Wales, including consideration of a funding model similar to the Homes England National Housing Bank.</p>	<p>The Welsh Government is engaging with the UK Government and Devolved Administrations on their emerging new approaches. The next steps taken will be a matter for the incoming government.</p> <p>We have also shared information on successful approaches undertaken in Wales, including the role of the Development Bank of Wales, the Ely Mill model and the Wales Housing Partnership. Furthermore, we have exchanged information on our Registered Social Landlords (RSL) Development Loans and Land for Housing loans models.</p>
14	<p>We would welcome an update on this work and details on how you are engaging with the Development Bank of Wales to increase their role in supporting the social and affordable housing sector.</p>	<p>The Welsh Government has commissioned the Development Bank of Wales (DBW) to undertake this exploratory work.</p> <p>DBW support the housing sector in providing competitive finance for housing development.</p> <p>Its property development funds offer support to SME developers who often straddle private and affordable/social housing.</p> <p>It has also worked in conjunction RSLs to deliver mixed tenure schemes on a collaborative funding basis.</p>

		<p>DBW work with a number of RSLs through the Leasehold Support Scheme and has taken over management of a portfolio of RSL loans for WG.</p> <p>The Welsh Government is also looking at how it can leverage DBW partnerships with SMEs and RSLs to deliver cost-effective, housing projects for purchase by RSLs at completion.</p> <p>The Welsh Government is also exploring with DBW and Welsh Treasury ways to de-risk upfront planning/on board costs via sureties/bonds/warranty support.</p>
<p>15</p>	<p>We believe the Welsh Government should be looking to innovate in this area by exploring other forms of land value capture, such as strategic acquisition of land in areas where values are expected to rise, for example due to public infrastructure investment. This could form another valuable source of income for investment in affordable housing, learning from examples in other European nations</p> <p>We would appreciate an update on the Welsh Government’s exploration of the potential of land value capture including via land acquisition, taxation, and developer obligations.</p>	<p>The Welsh Government is actively advancing several strands of work in this space.</p> <p>First, the Welsh Government’s Place Division continues its strategic site search and acquisition activity, which enables the Welsh Government to secure land ahead of regeneration, infrastructure investment or market uplift. This approach has already demonstrated its value by enabling public sector led development and ensuring that land value growth is reinvested into outcomes such as affordable housing, low carbon construction and placemaking.</p> <p>We have developed and tested a land sale model, including sites in the Vale of Glamorgan, that is compliant with procurement legislation while capturing a greater proportion of land value uplift for public benefit. This model allows land value to incentivise low carbon development, ensures all homes meet the Welsh Development Quality Requirements (WDQR), and secures outcomes consistent with our affordable housing and social value objectives.</p>

		<p>It is important to recognise that that established mechanisms such as Section 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), remain available to local planning authorities. These tools already provide a statutory means of capturing land value uplift arising from development and ensuring that necessary community benefits, including affordable housing contributions, are secured.</p> <p>Overall, while we continue to explore additional opportunities for land value capture, particularly through strategic acquisition in areas expecting value growth, the Welsh Government is already progressing a suite of practical, proven mechanisms that ensure public investment and planning interventions deliver maximum benefit to Wales’s housing and regeneration ambitions.</p>
16	<p>The evidence we’ve heard re-affirms our view that the Welsh Government should develop a separate quality standard for the acquisition of permanent social homes in consultation with social tenants. This should be distinct from the requirements applied to new build social housing.</p> <p>We would like the Welsh Government to reconsider its position and commit to developing a separate acquisitions standard, distinct from new-build requirements, and developed in consultation with social tenants. In the absence of a separate standard, we would be grateful for details of how you intend to address the barriers to acquisitions so that more existing homes can be brought into the social sector.</p>	<p>As described in our response to the Committee’s previous report, the Welsh Government’s position is that we do not require a new standard for acquisitions.</p> <p>The Committee may wish to review our guidance on Buying Existing Dwellings (Eds) and Off the Shelf (OTS) properties, in particular the flexibility it offers in recognition that compliance with Welsh Development Quality Requirements (WDQR) 2021 is not always achievable for existing dwellings and off the shelf properties. It is our view that this flexible approach is working, as can be demonstrated from the full pipeline of compliant projects coming through our grant schemes.</p> <p>In addition to the flexibility offered, our funding schemes can be used to carry out improvements to acquisitions to ensure tenants are provided with homes of appropriate quality.</p> <p>To address perceived barriers to acquisitions and linked to recommendations in the Affordable Housing Taskforce from May 2025,</p>

		<p>Welsh Government housing officials continue to work productively with the sector and consider proposals on a case-by-case basis, recognising the urgent need for more homes.</p> <p>We have also introduced a mechanism so that if developers feel that the application of standards is blocking meaningful development opportunities, that these can be raised in the twice-yearly “check and challenge” meetings with me on the delivery of affordable housing.</p> <p>This approach has been successful, for instance in the recent case of the Boutique Student Living Swansea building.</p>
17	We would be grateful for a detailed outline of the steps the Marine Nitrates Development Taskforce is taking to urgently restart stalled housing developments, particularly for social and affordable housing schemes already in the planning pipeline.	<p>The Marine Nitrates Development Taskforce was established by the First Minister as a senior group with a specific remit to ensure development restarts in affected areas as quickly as possible. It brings together local planning authorities, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water and Natural Resources Wales alongside senior officials from across the Welsh Government to progress solutions at pace.</p> <p>All options are being considered and regular updates on progress are being provided through Written Statements. The Taskforce is considering a range of potential responses to stalled housing developments – informed by expert ecologist guidance – including de minimis, threshold-based, nutrient neutrality, and imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI).</p>
18	The Affordable Housing Taskforce made detailed recommendations to streamline and expedite planning processes, and we look forward to hearing an update on implementation of these	The Planning Consolidation Bill passed its final vote in the Senedd on 10 th March and is awaiting Royal Assent. Once commenced as an Act of the Senedd it will provide a single source of planning law in Wales providing clarity on planning processes. Any further changes to streamline processes will be a matter for the incoming government.

19	<p>We would like to understand the Welsh Government's rationale for not ring-fencing the income from increased planning fees to local authority planning departments. We would also like to know what the Welsh Government's monitoring on planning fees is revealing in terms of local authorities' income generation and the extent to which income is being allocated to planning.</p>	<p>We expect local authorities to choose to re-invest planning fees into improving resources within planning departments on a voluntary basis. As part of this we will be re-introducing the performance monitoring framework so that we can understand how performance is changing over time. We will monitor the situation, and should it become apparent that increased fee revenue has not been utilised towards resources and improved performance then it could be necessary to impose ring-fencing in the future.</p>
20	<p>S106 - The Welsh Government previously told this Committee that it would consider whether further guidance would be helpful following the completion of work undertaken by Planning Officers Society Wales.</p> <p>We would be grateful for an update from the Welsh Government on this work and a view as to what more may be needed to support local authorities to hold firm on viability.</p>	<p>The report on Public Sector Planning Resources in Wales identified viability expertise as an area where additional resources would be helpful. The development of further guidance on S106 will be a matter for the next government to take forward as there is not sufficient time to draft, publicly consult, review and amend any guidance prior to the end of this Senedd Term.</p>
21	<p>We would welcome details of how the Welsh Government will ensure that its 10-year rent policy balances tenant affordability with the financial sustainability of social landlords; and an update on the Welsh Government's review of rent convergence including any associated timescales.</p>	<p>The Welsh Government Rent and Service Charge Standard 2026-2036 fulfils my commitment to provide certainty and stability to social landlords and their tenants.</p> <p>Affordability remains at the heart of our social rent policy, and I have committed to embedding this further by developing an affordability framework, which will bring greater clarity and consistency to rent setting practice across Wales. This work is now underway and will form a central part of our wider programme to strengthen and clarify our approach to housing affordability.</p>

	<p>The ten-year Rent Standard also provides social landlords with added confidence to maximise all opportunities to leverage sources of private finance in the UK-wide financial market.</p> <p>Taking into account the wider economic environment and implications for social landlords and their tenants, I believe we have struck the right balance in Wales between the needs of social landlords and tenants – and the new Rent Standard has been widely well received.</p> <p>In the Written Statement I issued alongside the new Rent Standard, I acknowledged the debate around rent convergence. Stakeholders have highlighted the potential for rent convergence to generate additional income, and some have also made the case that rent convergence could lead to greater fairness for tenants.</p> <p>However, I am clear that rent convergence is inherently complex. There are significant implications for affordability, existing funding arrangements, and the interaction with systems such as Local Housing Allowance and welfare support. Any consideration of rent convergence must therefore begin with affordability.</p> <p>That said, I committed to exploring rent convergence further and will be commissioning expert research to better help us understand whether a policy of rent convergence would be appropriate for Wales. This research will explore the potential benefits, the risks, and the practical implications of any future approach, ensuring that we fully understand the complexities before reaching any conclusions.</p> <p>This research, together with the new affordability framework, will provide the evidence and tools needed to inform future policy development on housing affordability. This will ensure that any decisions we take continue to safeguard tenants, support investment in high-quality</p>
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		homes, and uphold our commitment to a fair and affordable social housing system.
22	We would like the Welsh Government to reconsider our recommendation to develop a workforce development strategy for the construction sector.	<p>The Welsh Government recognises that the construction and built environment sector is a key part of the Welsh economy and central to Welsh Government’s ambitions for promoting green, net-zero skills. Significant actions are already being taken to support the development of the workforce in the construction and net zero sectors, as stated in our response to the Committee’s original Recommendation 10.</p> <p>As noted in earlier responses, I will publish progress updates against all the recommendations of the Taskforce on 19 March.</p> <p>It will note that among the priority areas for the apprenticeship programme in 2026-27 are construction (including decarbonisation & retrofitting, and the new Level 2 construction Apprenticeships) and clean energy.</p> <p>The Welsh Government is also instructing Medr, to have regard to the priorities set out in the Welsh Government’s Apprenticeships: policy statement. This includes strengthening provision in strategically important sectors, ensuring the programme remains responsive to current and future skills needs, and supporting improved labour market outcomes for those furthest from the labour market.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Welsh Government is supporting regional skills development through initiatives such as the Optimised Retrofit Programme, Green Homes Wales and Warm Homes Nest schemes, which fund energy efficiency improvements to homes of all tenures across Wales, providing a reliable pipeline of demand for skilled low carbon retrofit jobs.</p>
23	We would also be grateful for a detailed update on any progress that has been made to date in growing the workforce across the built environment.	
24	We look forward to hearing an update on implementation of [the Taskforce’s] detailed recommendations on skills. This included addressing workforce shortages across the built environment by strengthening training pathways, scaling good practice, and ensuring coordinated action across the Welsh Government, RSLs and skills bodies to build a sustainable pipeline of qualified workers.	

		Welsh Government policy teams will continue to work across not only housing and residential decarbonisation policy but across a wide range of sectors, and with leading industry stakeholders, to analyse workforce gaps and support industry and training providers to respond.
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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref:KS/PO/127/2026

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair - Equality and Social Justice committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay,
Cardiff,
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CC: John Griffiths MS
Chair – Local Government and Housing committee

9 March 2026

Dear Jenny,

Thank you for your letter of 26 February regarding the Legislative Consent Memorandum (LCM) on the Armed Forces Bill. I am grateful for the Committee's work on this issue as we seek to embed further our support for the Armed Forces community in Wales. As Minister responsible for the Bill within Welsh Government, I am responding to you and this response has been developed with my colleagues Jayne Bryant, Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government and Rebecca Evans, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning.

I will address the three questions you raised in order below:

1. What discussions has Welsh Government had with the UK Government about providing funding to meet the cost of implementing the Bill?

The funding implications of the Armed Forces Bill 2026 Bill, particularly in relation to Clause 2 (Armed Forces Covenant), have been discussed regularly with UK Government during development of the Bill. On 27 January, I wrote to Minister for the Armed Forces, Al Carns MP, referencing the current position of UK Government that no additional resource is being provided to support public bodies with implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant legal duty of due regard. This was also the UK Government position with the Armed Forces Bill 2021 which first introduced the due regard duty in the areas of health, education and housing for local authorities, local health boards and schools in Wales.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

We will continue to engage with UK Government regarding the resource implications of the Bill and monitor and assess these implications with partners in Wales as the Bill develops.

2. What are the views of Welsh Government in relation to Clause 3 and does Welsh Government have any concerns about the potential use of compulsory purchase powers in Wales by the Defence Housing Service (DHS)?

The Welsh Ministers would not have a role in relation to compulsory purchase in Wales which relates to a reserved matter. The proposed functions of the DHS set out in the proposed section 343E within Clause 3 involve the supply and management of housing for defence personnel and their families, which we consider to be reserved. What is a concern is the ancillary functions to dispose of, regenerate or otherwise generate profit from former defence land. Such DHS projects may run counter to established Welsh Government or local authority place making strategies. The lack of role for the Welsh Ministers in confirming compulsory purchase orders that deliver such DHS projects would be one less opportunity to prevent damage to those placemaking strategies, put in place by Welsh bodies.

Despite the above concern, I am reassured that any development brought forward by the DHS would be subject to planning permission. This would need to be sought from planning authorities or on appeal from the Welsh Ministers in the normal way. In order to secure planning permission, DHS would have to engage in the preparation of development plans like any other developer (including the Welsh Government when acting as a developer). The plan preparation process would mean DHS proposals would be aligned with or incorporated within the development plan prepared by public bodies in Wales.

3. Has Welsh Government sought clarification on how the DHS will be expected to work with Welsh Government and local authorities in Wales?

As development undertaken by the DHS will require planning permission, it is expected that DHS will interact with the Welsh Government and local authorities in the same way as any other land developer. While reassurance has not been sought on detailed working arrangements, officials did seek clarification that the DHS would not be given powers within the planning system. Confirmation was provided by UK Government officials that DHS would need to obtain planning permission in the usual way. We will continue to engage with MOD and the DHS (once established) to ensure we have clear ways of working.

Yours sincerely,



Ken Skates AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Drafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru
Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales

Local Government and Housing Committee

Florence Eshalomi MP

Chair,

Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee

2 March 2026

Pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Bill

Dear Florence,

Thank you for your letter inviting the Local Government and Housing Committee to share our views on the draft Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Bill to help inform your pre-legislative scrutiny.

Although we have not undertaken any specific work on leasehold reform in Wales, our colleagues on the Senedd's Petitions Committee conducted an inquiry into estate management charges between 2022 and 2025 in response to a petition: [P-06-1307 The Welsh Government should commit to the adoption of the maintenance of new housing estates by local authorities](#). That Committee published a [report with recommendations](#) in May 2025, which the Welsh Government [responded](#) to.

Consideration of the petition was closed in November 2025 following a [plenary debate](#) on 17 September.

Members of the Petitions Committee paid tribute to the important work done by the late Hefin David MS, and stressed the importance of resolving the issue of 'fleecehold'. The Committee inquiry highlighted the lived experience of Welsh residents, and called for swift implementation of a regulatory regime that ensures prospective purchasers in Wales do not face these problems in the future. The Committee's position on this issue is set out here: [Stop 'wild west' of housing estate management fees](#).

Additionally, we recently conducted scrutiny of the Welsh Government's [Building Safety \(Wales\) Bill](#). In our Stage 1 [report](#) on that Bill we noted our concern at "the clear and significant risk identified in evidence that additional costs incurred by Accountable Persons and Principal Accountable Persons in order to meet the Bill's requirements will be passed on to residents and that such costs could further increase rents and service charges that many people are already struggling to meet". We therefore recommended (recommendation 6) that the Welsh Government should engage with representative

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bodies on behalf of tenants and leaseholders, including those engaged in provision of legal advice, to consider the adequacy and effectiveness of existing legal protections against the passing on of unreasonable costs by landlords to tenants and leaseholders. Our recommendation also called on the Welsh Government to consider whether further legal protections are needed within Welsh law, to ensure their suitability for the Welsh housing context.

This recommendation was accepted by the Welsh Government and the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government committed to engaging with representative bodies on behalf of tenants and leaseholders "to ensure that there is an understanding of the legal protections imposed by the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 which imposes requirements for what costs can be taken into account when determining the amount of service charge payable". The Welsh Government's response noted that the requirements are that costs are reasonably incurred and the service is of a reasonable standard to ensure that excessive costs are not permitted to be passed on to leaseholders. The response also referred to working with the UK Government on legislative reforms to improve protections and provide additional rights to leaseholders in England and Wales and noted that the draft Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Bill would include important reforms for leasehold homeowners in Wales.

I hope this information is helpful to your scrutiny of the draft Bill.

I am copying this letter to the Senedd's Petitions Committee.

Yours sincerely,



John Griffiths MS

Chair, Local Government and Housing Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Papur 4 / Paper 4 - Crisis

Agenda Item 2.4

Dear Chair,

As this Senedd term draws to a close, I wanted to write to thank you and the Committee for your engagement and thoughtful consideration of homelessness issues over the past few years.

I appreciate that you may currently be considering the Legacy Report for the incoming Committee following the election in May. In anticipation of this, I thought it might be helpful to share a copy of the Crisis manifesto (available in [English](#) and [Welsh](#)). The key themes set out in the manifesto closely align with priorities identified across the wider sector.

In particular, Crisis is keen to see the next Welsh Government ensure that the new Homelessness and Social Housing Allocations (Wales) Bill is effectively implemented and properly resourced. Following the Committee's careful scrutiny of the Bill during this Senedd term, we hope the incoming Committee will continue to play an important role in reviewing progress with implementation and ensuring the legislation delivers the greatest possible impact.

Furthermore, as highlighted in the Committee's recent inquiry into social housing supply, it will be essential for the next Welsh Government to hold a strong focus on increasing the supply of social housing at pace. With around 94,000 people on social housing waiting lists across Wales and approximately 11,000 people living in temporary accommodation each month, there is a clear need to expand the availability of affordable homes. In particular, boosting housing supply in line with local need — especially for those experiencing homelessness — will be critical.

To underpin this work, Crisis believes it will also be important to renew a national action plan to end homelessness. The annual report from the Ending Homelessness National Advisory Board has not yet been published; however, it will highlight the important role the current national action plan has played in setting a clear direction for a housing-led, trauma-informed and person-centred approach, as well as laying key foundations for progress. It will also emphasise the value of renewing this strategy in the next Senedd term to maintain momentum and accelerate progress towards ending homelessness in Wales.

The report will also include recommendations from the Board's Task and Finish Groups, which have focused on areas such as building a resilient homelessness workforce, health inclusion, race and homelessness, and the transition to a rapid rehousing approach — whereby systems and infrastructure enable people experiencing homelessness to access settled housing as quickly as possible, alongside the support needed to rebuild their lives. I hope these recommendations will be of interest to the incoming Committee as it considers the next steps towards ending homelessness in Wales.

I hope this information is helpful. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if I can provide any further information in the meantime.

Many thanks again to Committee members for their collaboration and commitment to addressing homelessness throughout this Senedd term.

Best wishes,
Debbie Thomas
Head of Policy in Wales, Crisis

Local Government and Housing
Committee
Senedd Cymru

Via email only

Friday 27 February 2026

Dear Chair,

Subject: Wales Impact Reports and Legacy Report

The Equality and Human Rights Commission is Britain's equality and human rights regulator for Great Britain and an 'A' status National Human Rights Institution for Wales and England, and for reserved matters in Scotland.

We have worked closely with the Local Government and Housing Committee during the Sixth Senedd and thought we would support your legacy reporting by linking you to our Wales Impact Reports.

Bydd y Comisiwn yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg.

The Commission welcomes correspondence in Welsh or English.

Ff/T: 029 2044 7710

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[Wales Impact Report 2024 to 2025 | EHRC](#)

[Wales Impact Report 2023 to 2024 | EHRC](#)

[Wales Impact Report 2022 to 2023 | EHRC](#)

[Wales Impact Report 2020 to 2021 | EHRC](#)

Some examples, relevant to the work of the Committee, in our Impact Reports include:

The Committees report on the general principles of the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Bill reflecting a number of our recommendations and highlighted our evidence. These recommendations included:

- calling for the Welsh Government to publish an Equality Impact Assessment of the Bill
- the Local Government Survey proposed in the Bill should reflect protected characteristics

Bydd y Comisiwn yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg.

The Commission welcomes correspondence in Welsh or English.

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Monitoring Welsh Government progress towards its international human rights obligations

Our [Human Rights Tracker](#) is an online tool that monitors how effectively the Welsh and UK governments are meeting their human rights obligations. It currently contains more than 70 assessments of the Welsh Government's actions in response to recommendations issued by UN Human Rights Committees. We believe this evidence base is a valuable resource for informing the Committee's legacy report, providing an up-to-date picture of the state of human rights in Wales across a broad range of thematic areas.

Our briefing, [Monitoring Welsh Government progress towards its international human rights obligations](#), provides the background and information regarding monitoring processes. This briefing introduces the process for monitoring compliance with international UN treaties which will be useful for future Committees

Additional Information : Briefing - Equality and human rights in Wales.

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This briefing provides a robust evidence-based snapshot of the most pressing equality and human rights issues in Wales, taken from our state of the nation [Is Wales Fairer? 2023](#) report. This highlights what has been achieved during the Sixth Senedd, in addition to the equality and human rights issues that will need to be addressed during the next Senedd.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Local Government and Housing Committee for your work during the Sixth Senedd. If there is anything you would like us to clarify, or would like any further information, please let us know.

Yours sincerely,

Ruth Coombs
Head of Wales

Direct telephone: 029 2044 7710

Bydd y Comisiwn yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg.

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John Griffiths, MS,
Chair of the Local Government and Housing Committee
John.Griffiths@senedd.wales
cc. SeneddHousing@senedd.wales

Dear Chair,

I am writing on behalf of Homes for All Cymru and in anticipation of the Committee drafting its legacy report as this Senedd term draws to a close.

As a coalition of third-sector housing and homelessness organisations working across Wales, we have very much welcomed the work of the Committee over this term. Particularly, the recent scrutiny of the Homelessness and Social Housing (Allocations) Bill, as well as the Committee's inquiries into temporary accommodation and social housing supply to name but a few.

I have no doubt that the findings of these valuable inquiries will help to inform the Committee's legacy report for the next parliament. In addition, we thought it would be timely to share with you some of the conversations that Homes For All Cymru has had regarding our shared priorities for the next Senedd term, particularly as we developed [our joint manifesto](#).

These points include:

- **The need to deliver social homes at pace.**

As a coalition, we are clear that an insufficient supply of social homes is a significant factor in our high levels of homelessness as well as the prevalence of long stays in temporary accommodation in Wales. Given the Committee's recent report on social housing supply, I am sure this will already be on your agenda.

Our hope is that the next Committee continues to play a key role in ensuring that the Welsh Government drives forward with the delivery of social rent homes at pace to match need, learning from and developing solutions to barriers.

- **The need to embed sustainable, person-centred solutions to prevent and end homelessness**

Members of Homes For All Cymru have welcomed the recently passed Homelessness and Social Housing Allocations (Wales) Bill. It places a much-needed emphasis on homelessness prevention and improving support to help people build a life beyond homelessness.

However, to make sure this Bill fulfils its potential as world-leading legislation and helps to drive down homelessness levels, it will be imperative that it is appropriately resourced, implemented, monitored and reviewed.

As identified throughout the Committee's scrutiny of the Bill, there are aspects of the new law which hold the potential to be delayed in implementation, misinterpreted, or which could be helpfully expanded upon during key review points (such as the public sector body duties and the exemptions from local connection). We would warmly welcome the next Committee having a continued key role in scrutinising the effective implementation of the law.

In addition, across recent years, homelessness services have struggled with tight budgets. We are keen to ensure that the next Welsh Government is held to account on sufficiently funding services so that they can help to deliver the aims of the Bill – especially through the Housing Support Grant and the Homelessness Prevention Grant.

- **Setting out a long-term vision and strategy so that a suitable, safe and genuinely affordable home is both a right and a reality for everyone in Wales**

Homes For All Cymru understands the importance of our homes as providing the foundations for healthy and fulfilling lives.

To ensure that we continue to build upon the work of this Senedd term to help us move towards ending homelessness, and to press ahead with securing good quality and genuinely affordable homes for all, across all tenures – Homes For All Cymru members believe it will be critical that the next Welsh Government sets out a clear long-term strategy and ensures that a suitable, safe, and genuinely affordable home is both a right and a reality for everyone in Wales.

As the Committee has recognised throughout its work, homelessness and housing insecurity comes at a significant human cost to the thousands of households across Wales affected. Not having a stable place to call home creates lasting trauma. It makes it difficult to seek employment, see friends and family, and stay healthy.

Homelessness also comes at a substantial cost to our wider public services. Currently, local authority housing options teams describe themselves as being in “firefighting mode” and are footing bills of [nearly £100million for temporary accommodation](#). In addition, we know that long periods of homelessness and housing insecurity can lead to further pressures on wider services as, for example, the risk of developing health issues is increased.

We hope that the next Committee will continue a focus on looking at the progress made towards ending homelessness and the housing emergency, given the moral and financial imperative to do so and the wider societal benefits.

I hope this information is helpful. May I take this opportunity to again thank the Committee members on behalf of myself and Homes For All Cymru members. As a coalition we are grateful for your engagement across the sector this Senedd term and for the important contribution that the Committee has made in the context of the housing emergency in Wales.

Yours sincerely,



Ruth Power, Chair, Homes for all Cymru

CEO, Shelter Cymru

ruthp@sheltercymru.org.uk

The members of Homes For All Cymru are:

Age Cymru	Homeshare Wales
Bevan Foundation	Housing Justice Cymru
Care and Repair Cymru	Llamau
Chartered Institute of Building	MCS Charitable Foundation
Community Housing Cymru	Mind
CIH Cymru	Platform
CITB Wales	RNIB
Crisis	Salvation Army
Cwmpas	Shelter Cymru
Cymorth Cymru	Tai Pawb
Disability Rights Task Force	The Bevan Foundation
Disability Wales	The Wallich
Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team	TPAS Cymru
EYHC	Welsh Refugee Council
Goleudy	Welsh Women's Aid
Gypsies and Travellers Wales	



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref MA/JP/3209/25

John Griffiths MS,
Chair,
Local Government & Housing Committee

John.Griffiths@senedd.wales

10 March 2026

Dear John,

I am pleased to share with your committee the final report of the Community Asset Commission. I want to express my deep gratitude to the members of the Commission, Cardiff University, and all those who contributed their time, expertise, and lived experience to this important work.

I am passionate about empowering Welsh communities. Community assets – our libraries, green spaces, cultural centres, and local facilities – are the beating heart of our towns and villages. They are places where people come together, where identities are celebrated, and connections made, building community resilience and improving well-being. I believe that communities themselves are best placed to shape the future of these assets, and I am determined that Welsh Government policy will support them in doing so.

The report sets out a clear, evidence-based proposal for the strategic framework for community asset transfer and management in Wales, highlights the barriers communities face and provides practical recommendations to ensure that asset transfer and management in Wales becomes simpler, fairer, and empowers communities.

A key recommendation of the report is to strengthen community ownership by implementing Community Right to Buy legislation, which I fully support. Whilst this government is committed to introducing a Welsh Government Bill early in the next Senedd term, it is of course a matter for the next administration to consider.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Meanwhile, the Welsh Government remains committed to supporting communities. The long-standing Community Asset Loan Fund (CALF) and Community Facilities Programme (CFP) continue to provide financial support to invest in community facilities. The Ystadau Cymru guidance on Community Asset Transfer remains available along with case studies and additional resources.

[Community Asset Transfer \(CAT\): guidance for applicants | GOV.WALES](#)

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jayne Bryant". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jayne Bryant AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Thai
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government



**Community Asset Commission
Task & Finish Group Final Report
November 2025**

**Drafted in Partnership with Andrew Flynn, School of Geography and Planning,
Cardiff University.**

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Chair's Foreword

The people who care the most about communities are the people who live in them. Yet, frequently, these are the groups who feel the most dis-empowered when decisions are made which directly affect the ways their communities develop and, ultimately, how people live their lives.

This is especially true when decisions are made about the ways that under-used and redundant buildings and land are owned and used. Decisions are often made remotely and based on considerations which have little reference to the needs and aspirations of the people who are most affected by those decisions.

Yet, within an increasingly challenging financial environment, it is often community groups led by local people, who are offering innovative and sustainable solutions on how to save community services and facilities. There are so many successful examples throughout Wales of this happening in respect of assets such as pubs, libraries, hotels, community centres and community land. In many towns and villages in Wales, community owned assets now provide the physical, linguistic and emotional spaces for establishing environmentally aware buildings providing economic and social activities in places previously deemed "unviable".

In many Welsh speaking communities, assets that have passed into community ownership make a positive and dynamic contribution to the linguistic vitality of those communities. This report endorses the recommendations made by the 2024 Commission on Welsh Language Communities in respect of securing long term support for community groups in Welsh speaking areas and ensuring their sustainability.

Given the undoubted success of many asset transfer projects, this Report supports the need to establish structures and mechanisms that will increase community empowerment by making the ownership and management of community assets a less confusing and less risky process for all involved. The recommendations in this Report therefore present evidence based, innovative ways to make the process of transferring assets to community groups a lot easier. The Report further develops recommendations made in the Senedd Report "Community Assets" published in October 2022 and builds on extensive research and accumulated knowledge into community assets conducted in Wales, and beyond, over decades. These have all been invaluable references in the production of this Report.

A large and varied number of participants have freely given their time and expertise to the process of completing this work. The process has involved conducting a series of workshops carried out under the guidance of Professor Andrew Flynn and Dafydd Thomas of Cardiff University, ably supported by WCVA staff, and conducting subsequent meetings of the Task and Finish Group which further analysed the topics covered in the workshops. Thank you to all who were involved.

The final Report is therefore the product of a robust research and evidence-based approach which explores, in depth, the broadly based consensus that communities in Wales are dis-empowered in comparison to their counterparts in England and Scotland when it comes to owning and managing community assets. The Report

makes recommendation on the legislative and policy changes which are needed to address this imbalance.

The Report's recommendations indicate how community asset transfers can work effectively both for the organisations which hold the assets, as well as for those who receive them. The successful implementation of the recommendations will require positive inputs from all stakeholders. The benefits will have lasting and positive effects on Welsh communities for many generations to come.

1. Executive Summary

Debate on the future of community assets in Wales is at a critical juncture. On the one side, ongoing financial challenges make the provision of public services and maintenance of assets within communities more challenging, and on the other side, many communities are keen to be able to manage and control assets to shape their futures. The diversity of assets, communities and stakeholders means that there are multiple perspectives on the challenges that are faced and the solutions on offer in asset transfer and management. The range of views and actors is both a strength – it enables tailored solutions to local issues – and a problem – expertise and knowledge is diffused and, from a community perspective, can be difficult to access in a timely manner.

Approach

Working alongside the Task and Finish Group, Cardiff University collected data via Workshops, key person interviews and documents. Data collection was undertaken in an inclusive manner. For example, most Workshops took place online because participants found that convenient. Workshops also included simultaneous Welsh-English translation. Data was organised in a thematic manner, so that we could reflect the diversity of stakeholders' views. A draft of the research report was peer reviewed by members of the Task and Finish Group.

Findings

From the workshops, interviews and subsequent discussions we found:

- Enormous enthusiasm for community assets and a desire among key stakeholders for communities to have the opportunity to acquire and manage further assets.
- Communities and the organisations that support them show enormous resourcefulness and entrepreneurialism.
- Community organisations often feel hamstrung and unable to deliver on their potential for local development.

Part of the challenge here is that the system of community asset transfer and management is complex and may not be able to provide support at key junctures (e.g. when acquiring an asset). Empowering communities to be able to realise their potential needs to be central to asset transfer and management going forward.

What do we recommend?

In developing the Recommendations, The Task and Finish Group has given attention to ensuring that the range of stakeholders' views are considered. Delivery of the Recommendations depends on commitment and resources by those involved in asset transfer and management. Community assets have wide ranging impacts, and the recommendations need to be thought of in a holistic way because there are multiple benefits across organisational and policy agendas.

There are five Strategic Themes:

1. Foundations for Policy and Legal Reform;
2. Strategic Planning and Governance.
3. Community Empowerment and Skills Development.
4. Asset Identification, Valuation and the Transfer Process; and
5. Financial Innovation and Longer-term Investment.

Within each of these Themes a set of Recommendations has been developed. The Recommendations are shown below in Table 1.

Table 1: Themes and Recommendations

Strategic Themes	Recommendation
1. Foundation for Policy & Legal Reform	1. Welsh Government should introduce Community Right to Buy legislation in Wales that will be applicable across public, private and third sectors
	2. Adopt a presumption of approval for community asset requests, with refusal permitted only where a clear and compelling justification is provided.
	3. The Ystadau Cymru guidance should be revised to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and expect asset transfer. • Ensure the systematic integration of asset transfer within the strategic and operational plans of public bodies. • Incorporate appropriate buy-back or reversion clauses to safeguard the continued delivery of public benefit and protect the long-term public interest.
	4. Require Audit Wales and other auditors to place explicit emphasis on community benefits as a core criterion in relevant evaluations.
2. Strategic Planning & Governance	1. Require public bodies to include community assets in strategic/corporate/asset management/wellbeing plans
	2. Appoint community asset champions (e.g. in Senedd, councils) to a) develop networks of support and guidance; b) encourage organisations to learn from one another; and c) be a source of information on best practice within organisations.

	<p>3 Provide financial resources to public bodies and Ystadau Cymru to strengthen their strategic planning; guide resource allocation for asset transfer and ongoing management support; and nurture staff capacity</p> <p>4. Establish a property-focused social enterprise to operate as a purchaser and/or manager of community assets.</p>
3. Community Empowerment and Skills Development	<p>1. Develop and accredit a CPD and skills programme on community asset transfer and management that is made available on a voluntary basis to community groups and other stakeholders</p>
	<p>2. Ensure that financial and institutional support mechanisms are inclusive, accessible, and tailored to the needs of community-led enterprises.</p>
	<p>3. Establish a Centre of Excellence for Community Assets to improve practice support learning by working with the public, private and third sectors</p>
4. Asset Identification, Valuation, and the Transfer Process	<p>1. Create a national database and map of past and potential asset transfers.</p>
	<p>2. Ensure public bodies and communities contribute to asset registers</p>
	<p>3. Develop and apply an agreed social and environmental value methodology, to be used alongside exchequer value in asset transfer decisions. This framework should underpin discount-based transfers where community benefits are demonstrably clear.</p>
	<p>4. Community benefits in this context will recognise that the community empowerment generated from asset transfers can also impact on the language vitality of communities. Community assets provide bilingual employment and Welsh speaking-spaces where local Welsh speakers, learners and non-Welsh speakers are immersed in the language. Community assets in many Welsh Speaking communities stimulate and underpin socio-economic activity which directly and indirectly supports community language vitality. In addition, community assets should be seen as integral to the Welsh Government's language ambitions.</p> <p>5. There should be long-term recognition of the value of The Welsh language as a</p>

	<p>community strength which is not reliant on short-term grant funding for support. As the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities 2024 argued, "if social enterprises and businesses are good for the Welsh language, then they should be supported for the social benefit derived from them" (2024, p67) and "Welsh should be treated as a social good central to community projects." (2024, p81)"</p>
	<p>6. Enable communities to request asset leases or purchases as a formal mechanism for demonstrating local support.</p>
<p>5.Financial Innovation and Long-term Investment</p>	<p>1. Revise Transforming Towns and similar programmes to fund community Right to Buy.</p>
	<p>2. Promote and sponsor alternative finance mechanisms for community asset acquisition that reflect the aspirations and needs of communities across Wales</p>
	<p>3. Require councils to use enforcement, financial assistance, and debt recovery strategically to aid Community Asset Transfers</p>

Who are we?

In its inquiry into community assets, the Senedd's Local Government and Housing Committee recommended that the Welsh Government, in partnership with Ystadau Cymru set up a Community Asset Commission (the Task and Finish Group). The Commission began its work in March 2024 as a Task and Finish Group. It had a diverse membership, who represented key stakeholder groups. The members of the Task and Finish Group who have overseen the production of the Report are listed below in Table 2.

Table 2 - List of Task and Finish Group members and their interests/expertise

Chair	Gwyn Roberts	Galeri Caernarfon Chartered town Planner and Chartered Surveyor
Academic	Sarah Nason	Rural Assets: Policy and Practice Insights from the Devolved Nations Reader in Law - Bangor University
Welsh Government	Richard Baker	Deputy Director - Place Division Ystadau Cymru Board
Welsh Government	Andrew Charles	Deputy Director – Cohesive Communities
Welsh Government	Chris Buchan	Head of Third Sector Policy & Support
NHS Wales	Neil Frow	NHS Shared Services Partnership Ystadau Cymru Board
Natural Resources Wales	Dominic Driver	Head of Land Stewardship
Local Authority	Lorna Cross	Vale of Glamorgan Council Vice Chair Ystadau Cymru Board
Town and Community Councils	Lyn Cadwallader	One Voice Wales Ystadau Cymru Board
Third Sector - Grants	John Rose	National Lottery Community Fund Wales

Third Sector - Loans	Alun Jones	Wales Council Voluntary Action Ystadau Cymru Board
Third Sector	Casey Edwards	CWMPAS – Community Housing and social business
Third Sector/Independent	Chris Blake	Green valleys, Project Skyline, DTA Wales, and formerly Community Energy Wales.
Third Sector	Meleri Davies	Strategic Director - Partneriaeth Ogwen
Third Sector	Chris Cowcher	Plunkett Foundation Head of Policy and Communications
Sector Representative	Adam Kennerley	CEO, The Development Trusts Association Wales (DTA Wales), the independent membership-based network of development trusts and community companies in Wales.
Rural Housing Enabler	Joanna Rees	Barcud

The work of the Task and Finish Group focused on land, building and natural assets – local facilities which bring people together, including art centres, libraries, museums, green spaces and leisure centres. Assets in the public, private or voluntary sector and those under community ownership were all within its remit. As a Task and Finish Group, we were asked to advise the Minister for Climate Change and Rural Affairs; the Minister for Housing and Local Government, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language and the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice on how to improve the system of community asset transfer and management and how to empower communities to develop assets (Ystadau Cymru 2024).

Independent academic research and thematic stakeholder workshops were conducted by Cardiff University from 24 September 2024 to understand the challenges faced by community assets; options for ownership and management, and to scope proposals to take the community asset agenda further forward.

The Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) provided independent secretariat support to the Task and Finish Group throughout its work.

2. Introduction

Community assets represent a diverse range of buildings, locations and landscapes, ranging from libraries to allotments, as well as the skills, knowledge and networks of people who live and work within a community (Local Government and Housing Committee 2022). Community assets provide basic goods and services on which communities rely for their social, cultural and economic vitality and environmental resilience (Background Paper Workshop 1, 2024) and as such can be considered integral to the foundational economy.

Recent years have seen a flurry of cross sector activity in seeking to better understand and promote community assets in Wales. Notable contributions include:

- The Local Government and Housing Committee's report on Community Assets (2022) sought to ease the process of community asset transfer.
- The Bevan Foundation (2020) has highlighted how community assets can be particularly beneficial in socially and economically marginal areas as a source of wealth building.
- The IWA (2022) believe that community asset policy needs to be reinvigorated to enable citizens to regain more control over their futures.
- Cwmpas (no date) suggest that making more land and assets available for community-led housing would make a positive contribution to the Welsh housing crisis.
- Community Ownership, A Way Forward for Wales Plunkett Foundation (2024) argued that there should be a community right of first refusal on private assets coming on to the market.

The diversity of views on community assets in part reflects the variety of organisations interested in how community assets can be nurtured, and in part the array of assets that exist within and around our communities. While much attention is given to the transfer of assets by public bodies, especially local government, the transfer of assets from the private sector, such as pubs, shops, post offices and land also matter greatly to communities and their wellbeing. What emerges is a complex array of organisations, who work at a variety of scales, to deliver wellbeing and resilience via community assets.

While there are UK-wide dimensions to debates on community assets (e.g. on funding and management), there are also distinctive discussions within the devolved nations that are taking place. For example, the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government, Jayne Bryant (2025), noted in a speech to the Senedd:

“[c]ommunity assets serve as a valuable purpose for people across Wales. Whether we're talking about libraries, education facilities, cultural centres, sports clubs or green spaces, these are hubs for our community that foster a sense of belonging and pride”.

As well as recognising the value of community assets, the Cabinet Secretary also argued first, that “the Welsh Government is fully committed to safeguarding our community assets, which in turn supports local activities, heritage and culture.” Second, the Cabinet Secretary sought to develop a distinctive perspective on assets, pointing to their importance for “bringing people together and championing local

identities ... They're spaces where we share experience, support each other and build stronger, more resilient communities". Third, that Welsh Government wishes "to empower communities, providing them with the financial resources necessary to maintain and enhance their community assets."

3. What did we do? The Methodology

Cardiff University developed an integrated approach to analyse community asset transfer and management in Wales, aiming to generate informed recommendations. This process included six thematic workshops, a Task and Finish Group, 41 key person interviews, and documentary analysis. The workshops explored topics such as current systems, effective practices, outreach, strategic improvements, and final recommendations. The Task and Finish Group, informed by the Senedd Local Government and Housing Committee's themes, examined policy frameworks, asset transfer schemes, barriers to ownership, and cross-border lessons. Their discussions helped refine workshop insights and guided further research.

Interviews with stakeholders from Wales, Scotland, and England provided diverse perspectives on asset perceptions, partnerships, transfer processes, and reform ideas. A documentary database supported thematic analysis across policy and academic sources. The final workshop synthesized all findings into 32 draft recommendations, which were later streamlined and organized under Strategic Themes for broader accessibility. This inclusive and transparent process enabled the development of recommendations that address the complex challenges facing community asset development in Wales. More detailed information on the methodology can be found in Annex 7

4. What did we find out? The Analysis

The development of key analytic – and policy – themes (Strategic Themes) has been developed in an iterative manner drawing upon inductive and deductive approaches (Swain 2018). The deductive approach drew upon preexisting knowledge and insights into community assets and their governance and was used as a framework for the data collection (e.g. guiding interview questions, search terms for documents and early interpretation of data). The inductive approach developed lines of analysis based on detailed scrutiny of the data that had been collected. This resulted in refinement of literature search terms, themes to be looked for in key person interviews and subjects for recommendations.

The following Strategic Themes have emerged and are key to understanding community assets and their management and meeting the terms of our brief as a Task and Finish Group. The relationship between community asset transfer and management and the Strategic Themes is illustrated in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1 Enhancing opportunities for community assets

Strategic Theme 1: Foundations for Policy and Legal Reform

Among individuals and organisations engaged in asset transfer and management, there is an ongoing assessment of risks and liabilities, opportunities for funding, and how notions of community and public interest may best be delivered. Often these debates are intertwined with questions about whether assets held by public bodies should be transferred as leasehold or freehold arrangements.

At present, the guidance from Ystadau Cymru (2019) on the relationship between freehold and leasehold arrangements is neutral. Two key passages state:

“A Local Authority may dispose of an asset at below full market value, usually when a disposal will benefit the community through the ‘promotion or improvement’ of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area or when the value of the asset disposed is less than £2 million” (p.8).

“The Transferring Body needs to consider the length of the lease and whether it is appropriate to transfer the freehold. This decision should be influenced by the

amount of capital that the incorporated body would need to develop the building and the business idea” (p.16).

This guidance is widely used by local authorities as a model of good practice, though interviewees suggest it is more relevant for local government than for other public bodies such as Natural Resources Wales, and of limited value to community groups.

To enable the passage of assets, communities should have the right to request that public bodies transfer assets either through ownership or lease. Promoting community empowerment would involve a presumption in favour of a community’s request unless there are good reasons for refusal (Workshop 4, Workshop 6, Gillespie 2024).

Debates on transferring assets—especially those subject to community right to buy—are likely to become increasingly prominent in Wales. The UK Government has committed to a “Right to Buy’ Assets of Community Value” in England (MCHLG 2024), creating a more robust pathway to community asset ownership. Wales now has the opportunity to develop its own legislation.

Legislative Models Across the UK

In Scotland, the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 introduced a Community Right to Buy (CRtB), further extended by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. This allows community bodies to register an interest in land or buildings and, when those assets are put up for sale, to exercise a right of first refusal. Scottish Ministers oversee the register and valuation process, and community bodies must be geographically defined and democratically constituted. The legislation is grounded in sustainable development and includes stronger rights for crofting communities, including enforced sale provisions.

In England, the Localism Act 2011 established a weaker right to bid for Assets of Community Value (ACVs), allowing communities to nominate assets and, if listed, to trigger a moratorium period when the asset is put up for sale. However, this does not guarantee a right to buy. The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill seeks to strengthen this by introducing a right of first refusal for communities to buy listed assets when put up for sale, increasing the moratorium period and expanding the definition of ACVs to include sporting and economically significant assets. Local authorities maintain the registers and make decisions on listings.

In Wales, the Localism Act 2011 provisions were never commenced. Two options now present themselves:

Option One: Commence the 2011 Act provisions. However, these are outdated and misaligned with Welsh policy frameworks such as the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Option Two: Introduce new Welsh legislation that includes a right to buy from both public and private owners, tailored to Welsh policy priorities including sustainable development, the Welsh language, and social and economic human rights (Workshop 4, Workshop 6, Interview 5).

Implications and Strategic Considerations

Community right to buy legislation can strengthen future community development and should be a priority for Welsh Government. It must be accompanied by rights to list and bid for assets, and apply across public, private, and third sectors (Workshop 4, Workshop 6, Personal Communication 4). However, existing organisational constraints must be acknowledged:

- NHS Wales Estatecode restricts asset retention to healthcare-related functions (NHS Wales SSP 2018, para 4.2), limiting leasing options (Personal Communication 2).
- Natural Resources Wales prioritises sustainable management of natural resources, which may be difficult to override (Personal Communication 6).
- Some assets are critical to strategic goals such as service delivery, capital receipts, or spatial development, making them unsuitable for transfer (Personal Communications 1–3).

Existing powers can also be better used. Audit Wales (2021) encourages councils to use enforcement, financial assistance, and debt recovery powers to support regeneration. Welsh Government initiatives to revive empty homes and regenerate town centres (e.g., Neath Port Talbot Council, 2024) show how restoration and regeneration can align with community asset transfer.

Welsh legislation must address:

- What types of assets are covered, and whether “assets” should be defined or left open with exclusions.
- What constitutes a community body, and whether “communities of interest” (e.g., Welsh speakers) can exercise rights.
- How sustainable development, as defined in the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, is embedded.
- Whether asset registers are maintained by local authorities or Welsh Ministers.
- What democratic procedures (e.g., ballots) are required to validate community interest.
- What timescales apply for registration, notification, moratorium, and valuation.
- What appeal and review mechanisms are available, ideally through devolved Welsh tribunals.

Community asset transfer and the development of a statutory right to buy represent powerful tools for advancing community empowerment, sustainable development, and regeneration in Wales. Drawing on lessons from Scotland and England, and informed by the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Wales has the opportunity to craft legislation that reflects its unique social, cultural, and policy landscape. A future Welsh framework should balance flexibility with clarity, enabling both geographically defined communities and potentially communities of interest to

participate meaningfully. As highlighted in Workshops 4 and 6, the time is ripe for bold legislative action that supports community ownership, aligns with strategic public goals, and ensures that asset transfer becomes a cornerstone of inclusive and resilient local development.

Refer to Appendix 8 for an extended analysis of the legislative landscape by Sarah Nason of Bangor University.

Strategic Theme 2: Strategic Planning and Governance

Information gathered through the Workshops and interviews makes it clear that community groups, public bodies and the private sector need a shared understanding of how assets enhance community wellbeing, so that communities can approach receptive asset owners in the public, private and third sectors.

Public bodies are responsible for a wide variety of assets such as:

- an extensive building stock within the NHS estate
- landscape-scale resources under NRW management
- community halls, sports facilities and green spaces, land for affordable housing can be held by local government.

Public bodies are subject to different rules governing asset disposal (see also above). Under present regulations local government asset transfers have a well-established process, but we found that approaches amongst public bodies varies, for example, those for local government asset transfer work in rather different ways than those, for say, NRW.

Even within public bodies, like local government, there is considerable variation to be found: for some councils, asset transfer is a minor activity and for others it can involve a significant amount of time of senior managers (interview 40). For instance, there are initiatives supported directly and indirectly by local authorities to assist asset transfer and management. Perhaps, not surprisingly, from the perspective of community groups seeking to acquire assets, the diversity of practices that ensues is confusing and frustrating. In developing recommendations for public bodies, we have sought to ensure they are empowered in the transfer of assets, that public bodies further empower communities, and that we are sensitive to place, asset and public body (for example, the rules and purposes that govern organisations). In this context, organisational champions can be a vital tool for fostering innovation in public services (Molloy et al 2024).

When a community group acquires an asset from the public, private or third sector, there are likely to be funding challenges. From the perspective of community leaders, the funding climate for community assets is becoming increasingly difficult. As more communities acquire and seek to acquire assets, then competition among groups for resources increases. There are innovative funding solutions available, for example, Ynys Môn (2021) and Neath Port Talbot Council (2015) aim to gain voluntary community benefits from major developments and energy developments respectively (Personal Communication 5). Funding for the capital costs of an asset may be available but funding to support the running costs of a service-based asset are often more difficult to obtain. Funding bodies set the rules for their funding

schemes, and these may coincide to a greater or lesser extent with the needs and priorities of individual community groups. When external funds are gained, they are time limited, typically up to three years which may not be a timeframe that is sympathetic to a community group's long-term planning of its asset(s) (Kennerley 2024).

Attention also needs to be given to resource implications for public bodies of future commitments to asset transfer. As one participant commented, "Unfunded support [for asset transfer] will not be prioritised" (Personal Communication 3); while another participant argued that we "do not have the resources and time" to dedicate to asset transfer (Personal Communication 2). To enable the ambitions of empowering communities, public bodies, including Ystadau Cymru, will need dedicated resources, including staff, to support asset transfer and work with local groups (for example, the "RCT Together" Approach presentation Workshop 5).

From a community perspective the timescale to acquire an asset can be a frustrating experience. On the one side, asset transfer can be a long, drawn-out process as the transferring organisation follows its procedures and timetable, and on the other side, can be too short with limited notice provided that an asset may be available for transfer. Moreover, rarely do timetables for asset transfers coincide with opportunities for funding applications. As public and private assets become available to communities, how their acquisition may be funded becomes an increasingly acute issue. Compared to community organisations, the private sector can often step in at short notice to buy an asset that comes up for sale (Kennerley 2024; interview 41; Personal Communication 2). As a result, communities miss out on assets that could enhance their wellbeing and wealth creation.

There is much expertise that can be drawn on for organisations that wish to acquire property including the following:

- Coalfields Regeneration Trust has a fund that invests in industrial estate development in England and Scotland and could be extended to Wales (Rowson-Woods 2025). The profits (rents from the factories, offices, warehouses) are then made available to groups operating in former coalfields areas.
- Business in Focus (<https://www.businessinfocus.co.uk/>) is a business support social enterprise that provides spaces for such things as co-working and meetings. Business in Focus works with the private sector and community groups.
- The Ethical Property Company (<https://www.ethicalproperty.co.uk/>) works across the UK and buys property on behalf of ethical investors and then lets office space to charities, non-profit organisations and other ethical companies.
- Social Enterprise Stakeholder Group (SESG) includes DTA Wales, Cwmpas, WCVA, Social Firms Wales and UnLtd and has experience of funding and transferring assets.
- Ystadau Cymru is "a partnership between public and third sector organisations within Wales ... to enable, support, and encourage excellence in public sector collaborative asset management" and is invaluable for being able to draw together key stakeholders.

The variety of organisations that can usefully contribute to support property purchase and management, shows the demand for such services. While specialist knowledge is valuable, it does mean that resources and expertise can be diffuse and may not be comprehensive (for example, there may be less knowledge relating to some assets).

One way to overcome the diffusion of expertise and problematic timescales for funding asset purchases is to establish a property focused social enterprise. This organisation could purchase assets from public bodies, private and third sectors as requested by community groups. Community groups would have a longer time frame in which to raise the necessary funding to arrange a purchase or a lease from the social enterprise.

Strategic Theme 3: Community Empowerment and Skills Development

There is a widespread perception that compared to communities in England and Scotland, those in Wales are not sufficiently empowered to acquire assets. For instance, in Scotland there are bodies such as Community Land Scotland which can provide training and support potential and new asset owners (see <https://www.communitylandscotland.org.uk/our-work/>). Lack of empowerment among community organisations covers a range of issues including:

- lack of capacity (e.g. effective use of finance to fund acquiring and managing assets, practical understanding of building management, sustainable land management practices)
- over-reliance on a small number of individuals to achieve transfer of an asset and then to run it,
- limited access to ever more competitive funding so curbing community aspirations and the contribution of an asset to community development (evidence from Workshop 6, key person interviews).

It is equally important to recognise that there are asymmetries of power between those who control assets – and can determine if and when to release them – and community groups who are placed in a relationship of dependency. While rules and regulations over asset transfer and management modify imbalances of power, they do not change their unequal nature (Hutcheon 2024).

Communities themselves are diverse, and this too needs to be recognised. So, amongst communities, attitudes towards assets and institutions are uneven across Wales: for some local government and other public bodies are regarded as custodians of assets, a benevolent state; while for other communities there is a more sceptical approach to public bodies and a more positive one to the prospects of community initiatives; while for others there is a tradition of community self-reliance and development in which public bodies tend to be perceived as long absent or inadequate in their service provision.

Helping to shift the perception that community groups and public bodies may have of one another, will require significant changes in terms of the availability, accessibility and use of language when it comes to producing guidance and information for asset holders, communities and public bodies to ensure that they are sufficiently informed and suitably empowered to engage in a more inclusive agenda.

In a policy and practice context that is likely to become increasingly dynamic, participants feel that staff in public bodies need to be better informed and empowered to more consistently embrace the potential of community asset transfer. For instance, collaborative working between communities and councils could identify priority spaces and buildings that groups can revive and bring back into productive use or restore for environmental purposes through community transfer. While public bodies can recognise the value of asset transfers, they are concerned at the lack of resources to help fulfil community expectations (Personal Communications 1 and 3).

Strategic Theme 4: Asset Identification, Valuation and the Transfer Process

Data collection among participants, shows that communities, particularly in rural areas have often felt that they have needed to complement and increasingly supplement public services, and that access to assets aids their cause. While the demise of private assets, such as pubs and shops, undermines efforts to encourage community resilience. In both urban and rural areas communities recognise opportunities to make more productive use of assets and so contribute to community wealth building. Being able to buy or lease assets that matter to a community is one way of empowering a community and giving it added opportunity to shape its future.

Knowledge of where assets are to be found, the nature of those assets and the potential for asset development can help to shape community narratives on their history and future well-being. While there are asset registers in England and Scotland (House of Commons Library 2022), data in Wales is fragmented (e.g. Data Map Wales <https://datamap.gov.wales/>) and can be dated. The most comprehensive source of data on assets is provided by BCT (2020 and 2024) and its interactive map is a valuable resource for showing the distribution of different types of assets. It should be possible to develop a database and map of asset transfers from the public and private sectors, the type of asset, the nature of the transfer (e.g. lease, freehold), date of transfer and the organisation that has responsibility for the asset (Coates et al 2021, p32).

A more fine-grained approach to asset mapping is provided by Together for Change who have sought to identify in Pembrokeshire, community assets that impact well-being (Orford et al 2024). Other detail on community asset transfer can be found in council corporate asset management strategies, though, the information can be partial and is dated. For example, Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council provide helpful data on asset transfers relating to the Property, the Lessee/Tenant, the date from which the transfer took place and the length of the agreement (Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council 2020).

Where assets have been identified that are suitable for transfer to the community there are inconsistencies among community groups, public bodies and funders in how a social value may be attributed to an asset. In some cases, there is a well-established methodology for attaching a social value to an asset, while in other cases a social value may be based on professional judgment and experience. Even where there is a social value for an asset, it is often not clear how that may be used in decision making, particularly when it is weighed against an exchequer value for an asset. An exchequer value for an asset has clear guidelines on how it is to be

established, is understood, and legitimate, while this is clearly not the case for a social and environmental valuation. An agreed approach to valuation is important so that communities, funders, policy actors and those with assets can fully appreciate the contribution that community assets can make to wellbeing and development (see Social Value Cymru).

Strategic Theme 5: Financial Innovation and Long-term Investment

In the Workshops and Statements in Workshop 6 there was a common feeling that community groups often view the acquisition of an asset, whether it be from the private or public sector, as a practical means to save or maintain services, even if in a reduced form. There are also examples of where groups wish to utilise assets to reintroduce services that have disappeared (e.g. youth club, Workshop 3). The public sector and community groups recognise that asset transfer can deliver local wellbeing and corporate goals for a suitably empowered, engaged and financed community.

While there is an important physical element - a building - to service provision these facilities are much more than that as they nurture social capital to help maintain and develop social wellbeing and a sense of community. The intangible nature of some community assets is widely recognised but often undervalued (Workshop 1, interview 21, interview 22). Both the service that is available via an asset and the sense of wellbeing that can be generated, are critical in times of precarity in income and employment.

As Workshop participants have pointed out, however, community asset transfers will not affect uniform change. For instance, right to buy or arranging leaseholds can be more problematic in an urban setting (Gillespie 2024). With regard to right to buy, it can be more difficult to define a geographic community in an urban area and for both purchasing an asset or arranging a leasehold, land values tend to be higher which makes the transfer of an asset more expensive.

Just over 2.5 million people in Wales live in towns and cities. Audit Wales (2021, p4) has argued that “towns remain at the heart of Welsh life and are places that people value and love.” However, the nature of development in towns and cities has become increasingly problematic with inequality, pollution and decaying infrastructure and buildings. As Audit Wales (2021) has pointed out, regeneration efforts have not created the anticipated wellbeing benefits for citizens. Community asset transfer could be an alternate vehicle that generates benefits for citizens as well as alleviating some of the problems that Welsh towns face in the future.

Empowering communities will, therefore, depend on opportunities that groups have to raise finance (see Strategic Theme 2). Alternative approaches to raising finance for the acquisition and management of assets in Wales were the subject of intense debate in Workshop 6 and its accompanying statements and interviews (especially interview 38). Novel ideas for funding the acquisition and management of assets include the use of Community Bonds, Social Impact Investing, Community Shares, Local Government Loans and Guarantees and partnerships with the private sector. Participants were also keen to recognise that community assets that support the

Welsh language should be seen as integral to the Welsh Government's language ambition. Community assets provide bilingual employment and Welsh speaking-spaces where local Welsh speakers, learners and non-Welsh speakers are immersed in the language. Community assets in a number of Welsh Speaking communities have stimulated and underpinned socio-economic activity which indirectly supports community language vitality. There should be long-term commitments to community assets and how they can support the Welsh language and not a reliance on short-term grant funding (The Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities 2024). As The Commission argued, "Welsh should be treated as a social good central to community projects." (2024, p81)

Strategic Framework for Community Asset Transfer and Management in Wales

Strategic Theme 1: Foundations for Policy and Legal Reform (Years 1–2)

Establish the legislative and policy baseline necessary to enable and protect community asset transfer and management.

Recommendations

1. Welsh Government should introduce Community Right to Buy legislation in Wales that will be applicable across public, private and third sectors
2. Adopt a presumption of approval for community asset requests, with refusal permitted only where a clear and compelling justification is provided.
3. The Ystadau Cymru guidance should be revised to:
 - Promote and expect asset transfer.
 - Ensure the systematic integration of asset transfer within the strategic and operational plans of public bodies.
 - Incorporate appropriate buy-back or reversion clauses to safeguard the continued delivery of public benefit and protect the long-term public interest.
4. Require Audit Wales and other auditors to place explicit emphasis on community benefits as a core criterion in relevant evaluations.

Lead Organisation: Welsh Government

Suggested supporting stakeholders include:

- Audit Wales
- Ystadau Cymru
- One Voice Wales
- Future Generations Commissioner's Office
- Legal academics and policy think tanks

Strategic Theme 2: Strategic Planning and Governance (Years 1–3)

Create the institutional mechanisms and accountability for long-term success.

Recommendations

1. Require public bodies to include community assets in strategic/corporate/asset management/wellbeing plans

2. Appoint community asset champions (e.g. in Senedd, councils) to a) develop networks of support and guidance; b) encourage organisations to learn from one another; and c) be a source of information on best practice within organisations.
3. Provide financial resources to public bodies and Ystadau Cymru to strengthen their strategic planning; guide resource allocation for asset transfer and ongoing management support; and nurture staff capacity
4. Establish a property-focused social enterprise to operate as a purchaser and/or manager of community assets.

Lead Organisation: Welsh Government

Suggested supporting stakeholders include:

- Local Authorities
- Future Generations Commissioner
- Welsh Local Government Association
- Cwmpas
- DTA Wales
- Plunkett UK
- Community Housing Cymru

Strategic Theme 3: Community Empowerment and Skills Development (Years 1–5)

Equip communities with the tools, knowledge, and legitimacy to manage assets.

Recommendations

1. Develop and accredit a CPD and skills programme on community asset transfer and management that is made available on a voluntary basis to community groups and other stakeholders
2. Ensure that financial and institutional support mechanisms are inclusive, accessible, and tailored to the needs of community-led enterprises.
3. Establish a Centre of Excellence for Community Assets to improve practice support learning by working with the public, private and third sectors

Lead Organisation: Community-led learning partnerships (e.g. Building Communities Trust/Cwmpas/DTA Wales)

Suggested supporting stakeholders include:

- Ystadau Cymru
- Public Sector Academy Cymru
- Colleges and Universities
- Community networks

Strategic Theme 4: Asset Identification, Valuation, and the Transfer Process (Years 2–5)

Improve transparency, fairness and sustainability in the transfer process.

Recommendations:

1. Create a national database and map of past and potential asset transfers.
2. Ensure public bodies and communities contribute to asset registers
3. Develop and apply an agreed social and environmental value methodology, to be used alongside exchequer value in asset transfer decisions. This framework should underpin discount-based transfers where community benefits are demonstrably clear.
4. Enable communities to request asset leases or purchases as a formal mechanism for demonstrating local support.

Lead Organisation: Welsh Government

Suggested supporting stakeholders:

- Local Authorities
- Welsh Government Digital Services
- Community asset mapping projects
- Natural Resources Wales

**Strategic Theme 5: Financial Innovation and Long-term Investment
(Years 3–6)**

Secure and broaden financial pathways to empower sustained community ownership.

Recommendations:

1. Revise Transforming Towns and similar programmes to fund community Right to Buy.
2. Promote and sponsor alternative ownership mechanisms for community asset acquisition that reflect the aspirations and needs of communities across Wales
3. Require councils to use enforcement, financial assistance, and debt recovery strategically to aid Community Asset Transfers

Lead Organisation: Welsh Government

Suggested supporting stakeholders:

- Development Bank of Wales
- Wales Council for Voluntary Action
- National Lottery
- Philanthropic foundations
- Community Land Trusts

Priorities Timescale Diagram



Timeline Overview

<u>Year</u>	<u>Focus</u>
Year 1	Legislative advocacy, reform of guidance, initiating training and planning.
Years 2–3	Establishing data infrastructure, embedding CAT and asset management in corporate plans, beginning community training.
Years 3–4	Full rollout of skills and financial frameworks, establishing social enterprise support.
Years 4–5	Evaluation and refinement of systems; growing pipeline of asset transfers.
Years 5–6	Long-term funding mechanisms and integrated national model for CAT in place.

The timetable and priorities allow for monitoring and feedback from delivery to ensure timely learning.

Moving the process forward

The Report has been co-produced with stakeholders who have ownership of its content. Co-production needs to continue with the delivery of the Report's Strategic Themes and Recommendations as their delivery needs to be shared widely amongst the stakeholders. The Task and Finish Group should ensure that the process of co-production is continued.

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Appendix 1

The Methodology

To take forward analysis of the current situation of community asset transfer and management in Wales and provide recommendations based on that analysis, an interlinked process was developed by Cardiff University. This consisted of:

- Thematic workshops
- Interviews with over 40 key people
- Documentary analysis
- Reflections and feedback on the information gathered from each process stage by the Task and Finish Group, before
- Developing Recommendations.

The following sections provides a brief overview of each stage in this process.

Thematic Workshops

Five online workshops and one face to face workshop were held between September 2024 and February 2025 – focusing on the following:

1. Sharing Information on the Current System of Community Assets
2. Exploring Effective and Ineffective Practices from Wales and Elsewhere
3. Outreach: Working With Practitioners, Communities and Policy Makers
4. Exploring Options to Improve the ‘System’
5. Strategy, Leadership, and Resourcing – Delivering Change
6. Reviewing the Process: Developing Recommendations.

The Stakeholder Workshops were organised to allow space for reflection and exploration of ideas; a space where ideas can be tested and validated.

Task and Finish Group

Our work as a Task and Finish Group was shaped by the earlier deliberations on community assets of The Senedd Local Government and Housing Committee. The Committee’s work was based around four themes (Ystadau Cymru 2024), and these also informed our work:

- “Whether the current statutory and policy framework empowers communities in Wales to develop community assets.

- The extent in which the Community Asset Transfer scheme promotes and supports effective development of community assets.
- To explore barriers and challenges faced by communities in taking ownership of public or privately owned community assets, including finance and support services.
- To discover what lessons can be learnt from beyond the Welsh border.”

We met regularly to discuss the feedback from each of the Workshops. As well as testing out the ideas in the Workshop reports, feedback from the Task and Finish Group for Cardiff University included suggestions for further areas of research and interviewees, documents and potential speakers for future Workshops.

Key Person Interviews

In total, 41 interviews have been conducted. Interviews typically lasted for 90 minutes and took place online. Most interviews were with individuals, but a small number involved two or three people. Interviews were recorded and transcribed using TurboScribe. TurboScribe has a high level of accuracy but to ensure that any errors in transcription were minimised each transcription was quality checked, which often meant amending place and organisational names.

To begin with interviewees were identified using personal contacts and recommendations of members of the Task and Finish Group. Interviewees were asked to suggest further people to contact. Some of these suggestions attended Workshops and/or were interviewed. The Workshop participants were also asked to provide recommendations for interviewees or to be interviewed. There were also efforts to identify interviewees in areas where there might have been gaps in knowledge (e.g. environment, heritage).

Interviewees were drawn from across Wales as well as experts from Scotland and England. Interviewees also covered the range of interests involved in policy making and practice for community assets. More specifically, interviewees were drawn from public bodies, funders, community networks, academia and community groups.

Interview themes for those in the community and those based in organisations were developed at the outset of the project. Similar themes were covered for both sets of interviewees (e.g. perceptions of community assets, partnerships) but were addressed in different ways, for example, an interview with a PSB may have asked about the organisational process for transferring an asset, while for a community group members perceptions of how they understood that process would have been explored. Specific topics for those in organisations included how they sought to achieve change and where they looked to for ideas on how to improve asset transfer and management. Interviews with those in the community examined perceptions of place and development and who the group worked with.

All interviews were conducted according to the ethical data collection guidelines of Cardiff University (Cardiff University 2025).

Documentary Analysis

The development of a documentary database began early on. Task and Finish Group members were asked to suggest documents, and these were compiled as a bibliography by Welsh Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA). Further documents were identified as follows:

- Welsh Government bibliography on community assets
- Searching through the websites of organisations involved directly or indirectly with the transfer and management of community assets for relevant documents and case studies. Particular attention was given to organisations who had members on the Task and Finish Group.
- Interviewees were asked for their recommendations of suitable documents
- Using google and google scholar to search for documents. Search terms included: UK/Wales/Scotland/England community asset/asset management; Asset transfer/management funding; community asset case study; community asset challenges/achievements/lessons/experiences/opportunities.

The collection of documents could then be organised for analysis as needed, for example, by type of organisation, asset or funding.

Legislative Options: Summary Briefing Paper

This paper sets out, in brief, some of the key legislative approaches to community rights to buy land and other assets in Scotland and England. This paper also covers community asset transfers from public bodies. It sets out some key options for Wales. It does not constitute legal advice, nor report on detailed research. For more detail research and evidence see:

- Sarah Nason, '[Legislating to Empower Communities: Comparing Community Asset Acquisition Law in the UK](#)' (SSRN, September 2022)
- Dani Hutcheon, Sarah Nason, Bobby Macaulay, Davide Natalini, Margaret Currie, John Hallett, Kieran Sinclair and Richard Osterhus, '[Rural Assets: policy and practice insights from the devolved nations](#)' (Nuffield Foundation and British Academy 2024), especially Appendix 1: 'Comparative analysis of current policy and legal frameworks'.

1. The Scottish approach: Land reform and the community right to buy

- 1.1. The development of community asset acquisition in Scotland has been historically connected to the highly concentrated ownership of land, and the so-called 'land question': "[who owns Scotland?](#)" as well as to public services reform, and community empowerment. Not long after devolution, a [Land Reform Policy Group](#) concluded that the system of landownership inhibited development in rural communities, causing natural heritage degradation resulting from poor land management. Some of the earlier legal interventions in Scottish land reform related to rural and particularly crofting communities.
- 1.2. More broadly, in the public sector context, a [report](#) on the future delivery of public services recommended that reforms "must aim to empower individuals and communities receiving public services by involving them in the design and delivery of the services they use". [Scottish Government](#) policy seeks to empower communities through various actions including by making it easier for communities to take over land and buildings in public ownership through asset transfer.
- 1.3. The [Land Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#) introduced a duty on Scottish Ministers to publish a [Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement](#) explaining the Government's vision for the ownership, use and management of land, setting out how it sees the balance between the rights of landowners, managers, local communities, and wider society. The land reform agenda is connected to sustainable development, and policies around social and economic human rights.
- 1.4. The [Land Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2003](#) (the 2003 Act) introduced a [Community Right to Buy](#) (CRtB), providing the opportunity for communities across Scotland to register an interest in land and buildings (privately and publicly owned) and buy that land/building at market value once it is offered for sale. Initially the CRtB

applied to rural settlements of less than 10,000 people, however the [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#) (the 2015 Act) extended this right to buy to the whole of Scotland. The CRtB works by allowing a “community body” (that is, members of a locality associated together in a suitable legal personality) to acquire land/buildings in certain circumstances.

- 1.5. Part 2 of the 2003 Act provides a more general CRtB, whereas [Part 3](#) refers specifically to Crofting Communities (introducing stronger rights which amount in effect to enforced transfer from existing owners). Whereas the Crofting CRtB can lead to an enforced sale, the Part 2 CRtB gives the relevant community body a right of first refusal, meaning the owner cannot be forced to transfer the land/building, and the community right only engages once the land/building is put up for sale.
- 1.6. To acquire this right of first refusal, a community must first [register an interest](#) in the land/building it seeks to acquire in a public register. The Register of Community Interests in Land is maintained by the Keeper of the Registers of Scotland and is available [online](#). The Register of Community Interests in Land – Community Bodies, is shared between the Keeper of the Registers of Scotland and the Scottish Ministers.
- 1.7. If an owner decides to sell that land/building, they should [notify the Scottish Ministers](#), who then have [seven days to notify the community body](#) which has a registered interest, the community body then has [30 days to confirm](#) that it will seek to exercise its right to buy.
- 1.8. The right covers land (and buildings on land) in which the community can demonstrate an interest, including land sufficiently near to land with which the community has a connection. Legislation covers registration of a community interest; exercise of a community right to buy; and appeals and compensation.
- 1.9. Exercising the CRtB requires a suitable [“community body”](#). A community body may be a company limited by guarantee whose articles of association must be tailored to have no fewer than ten members, provide that at least three quarters of the members of the company are also members of the local community (and that those members have control of the company), and provide that any surplus funds or assets of the company are to be applied for the benefit of the community. As originally enacted, the 2003 Act obliged communities to incorporate as a company limited by guarantee, following the 2015 Act, they may form a Scottish charitable incorporated organisation or a community benefit society. Similar rules then apply as regards such an entity’s constitution, membership, and application of any surplus generated. In all cases, the body must have been recognised by Scottish Ministers as having a main purpose consistent with furthering the achievement of sustainable development.

- 1.10. To exercise the CRtB, a community is defined by reference to either one or more postcode units or a “prescribed type of area” (specified by Scottish Ministers, e.g. an electoral ward or island). A community comprises persons from time-to-time resident in that postcode unit, or in one of those postcode units, or in the prescribed type of area, and entitled to vote at a local government election in a polling district which includes the unit(s) or area. This is in effect a community united by location/proximity.
- 1.11. The rights to register an interest in, and to buy land/buildings, require local support. For the general CRtB Scottish Ministers must be satisfied that the proportion of members of the community who have [voted in a ballot](#) on the question of whether the community body should buy the land/building is, in the circumstances, sufficient to justify the community body’s proceeding to buy the land/building; and that the majority of those voting have voted in favour of the proposition that the community body buy the land/building. Here the community is determined by postcode unit(s), or other prescribed type of area, and entitlement to vote in local government elections.
- 1.12. When a community body confirms it wishes to proceed with exercising its CRtB, Scottish Ministers will appoint an [independent valuer](#) to conduct a full market valuation of the land.
- 1.13. In short, the approach here is that a defined “community body” has a right to apply to the Scottish Ministers to register an interest in private or public land/buildings (with some excepted types of land/buildings). A designated body must maintain a register of interests in land/buildings (this is the Keepers of the Registers of Scotland essentially on behalf of the Scottish Ministers). When an owner decides to sell land/building so registered, they must notify the Scottish Ministers, who then notify the community body with a registered interest. The community body then has a set time in which to decide whether to exercise its right to buy. The legislation covers procedures, reviews/appeals, timescales and so on. Specifically, here, a community body is defined by reference to geographical area with a connection to the land/building in question, community members must vote in a ballot to buy the land/building, and the purposes of the community body must relate to sustainable development (as assessed by Scottish Ministers).
- 1.14. Potentially, a limitation of this approach is that the community body must include a sufficient proportion of members living in a particular geographical area and so excludes pure ‘communities of interest’ e.g. with an interest in culture, history, language etc, where a sufficient proportion of the members do not also live in a set geographical area with connections to the land/buildings sought to be acquired. However, including ‘communities of interest’ where members do not necessarily have a present physical closeness to the land in question might be thought to go against policy objectives.

2. England: Localism, Assets of Community Value and the English Devolution Bill

Localism Act 2011: The Right to Bid for Assets of Community Value

- 2.1. Currently, the [Localism Act 2011](#) (2011 Act) includes rights for communities to list and bid for Assets of Community Value (ACV).
- 2.2. Part of the background to such new rights was a [2006/2007 review](#) of asset transfer powers and policies established by the then Labour Government. This found that sufficient legal powers existed for local authorities to transfer assets to community management or full ownership, but that a culture of using these powers regularly and effectively had not been established. The review's vision for the future was "recognition that optimising the use of public assets is not the primary objective: the over-riding goal is community empowerment". Under the Coalition Conservative and Liberal Democrat Government, the Localism Act 2011 introduced provisions giving communities a right to identify a building or land believed to be of importance to their social wellbeing; if the asset comes up for sale, the community is given a fair chance to bid to buy it on the open market. The term "asset" is not defined in the 2011 Act but includes land and other real assets.
- 2.3. [Part 5](#) of the Localism Act 2011 enables a suitably constituted community interest group to nominate local assets to be listed as ACVs by the relevant local authority, whether these assets are currently in public or private ownership. A local authority must maintain a list of land in its area that is land of community value, this list is to be known as its list of assets of community value. Subject to other provisions of the 2011 Act, it is for the local authority to decide the form and contents of its list of ACVs. Part 5 of the Localism Act 2011 enables a suitably constituted community interest group to [nominate local assets to be listed as Assets of Community Value](#), whether these assets are currently in public or private ownership. Assets may only be included in the list of ACVs in response to a community nomination or where otherwise permitted.
- 2.4. Community nominations are defined as nominations made by a parish council or a voluntary or community body with a local connection. A body other than a parish council has a local connection with land or assets in a local authority's area if the body's activities are wholly or partly concerned with the local authority's area, or with a neighbouring local authority's area.
- 2.5. If listed ACVs come up for sale, there are [moratorium periods](#) during which community interest groups with a legal identity can submit an intention to bid.
- 2.6. For the purposes of Chapter 3 of Part 5 of the 2011 Act, whether a particular building or other land in the local authority's area is of community value depends on the local authority's opinion as to whether it furthers the [social wellbeing or social interests](#) of the community, or did so in the recent past and will realistically

continue to do so, or could do so within the next five years. “Social wellbeing” is not defined in the 2011 Act, whereas “social interests” is defined as including cultural, recreational, and sporting interests. Upper Tribunal decisions interpret some of these provisions, although what constitutes “social wellbeing” and the “local community” is, as the Tribunal has put it, a “highly contextual question, depending upon all the circumstances of the particular case” (*Crostone Ltd v Amber Valley Borough Council* [2015] UKFTT CR/2014/0010 (GRC) at [17]).

- 2.7. The owner is prevented from disposing of an asset listed as of community value unless certain conditions are satisfied, including that the owner must notify the local authority in writing of their wish to dispose, and that a relevant moratorium period has ended. Specifically, that an interim moratorium period (of six weeks) has ended without the local authority receiving a written request from a community interest group for the group to be treated as a potential bidder, or that a full moratorium period (of six months) has ended.
- 2.8. The moratorium on sale under the 2011 Act gives communities a right to bid for an asset before the owner can transfer to anyone else.
- 2.9. The [Assets of Community Value \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) provide a more detailed definition of bodies that have a local connection allowing them to nominate assets to be listed as being of community value, and to enable them to bid for assets. The Regulations also provide more detail on the expected contents of community nominations, the procedure when considering whether to list assets, procedures for reviews and appeals against decisions under the 2011 Act, and the moratorium period (among other matters).
- 2.10. As introduced, the 2011 Act provisions around ACVs were also intended to apply in Wales, but the provisions have not been commenced in Wales.
- 2.11. The key aspects of this approach include that defined community bodies can apply to have local assets listed in a register of ACVs. Assets are not defined in the legislation but include land and other real assets. Individual local authorities maintain their registers of assets that have been nominated as of community value. Community bodies must be referential to a geographical area, the same with Scotland above, so pure communities of interest are not covered. To be included in a register, assets must be of community value, as determined by the relevant local authority. Assets in both private and public ownership can be registered (with some exceptions). Where an asset is registered, an owner wishing to sell must inform the local authority, which then notifies interested community bodies. There is then a moratorium period during which interested community bodies have a right to bid for the asset, and during which the owner cannot sell to anyone else. Relevant procedures, timescales, and appeal/review provisions, are covered in primary legislation, and in more detailed secondary legislation.

2.12. The main limitation of this approach is that community bodies have only a right to bid, and not a right to buy.

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill

2.13. Section 60 of the [English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill](#) introduces a new community right to buy ACVs and provides additional express protection for sporting assets.

2.14. Section 60 seeks to achieve this through Schedule 27 of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill which seeks to insert a new Chapter 2A into Part 5 of the 2011 Act. The new Chapter 2A introduces a right for community bodies to buy ACVs. In essence many provisions are similar to those of the earlier right to bid (in terms of nominating assets of community value, that community bodies must be referential to a geographical area, that local authorities must maintain registers of assets listed as being of community value and so on). However, in essence, preferred community bodies (those initially registering the asset of community value), are now given a right of first refusal to buy the relevant asset when it comes up for sale, within a specific moratorium period during which the owner cannot sell to another bidder.

2.15. The community body and asset owner will either negotiate a price for the asset, or an independent valuer will set a price based on the market value. Under Community Right to Buy, the moratorium on the sale of the asset will be extended from six months to 12 months, giving community groups more time to raise funding to meet the agreed purchase price. Asset owners will be able to ask the local authority to check that community bodies are making sufficient progress on the sale six months into the moratorium.

2.16. The definition of an ACV will also be expanded, seeking to protect a wider range of assets, including those that support the economy of a community and those of historical importance to the community.

2.17. The Bill also introduces a new type of ACV, the Sporting Asset of Community Value (SACV) and aims to automatically designate all eligible sports grounds as such. As with other ACVs, community bodies will have the first right of refusal when a ground is put up for sale. SACV status will also provide some other enhanced protections for sports grounds.

2.18. Notably, as the original 2011 Act applied to both England and Wales, the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill makes some consequential amendments, such that the right to bid for ACVs would then only apply to Wales, with the stronger right to buy applying in England. The Explanatory Memorandum to the Bill notes that the legal provisions (right to bid) will remain the same for Wales (though as noted, these have not been commenced in Wales).

2.19. In essence, the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill amends the right to bid for ACVs to become a stronger right to buy, a right of first refusal for community bodies with a registered interest when a public or private owner decides to sell an ACV. Many provisions remain similar to the 2011 Act, with some expansion of the definition of ACVs and added protection for sporting assets.

3. Community rights to buy: Options for Wales

OPTION ONE: Subject to some necessary amendments and updating, commence Chapter 3 of Part 5 of the Localism Act 2011, rights to register and bid for assets of community value.

3.1. This is not likely a realistic option as the legislation was drafted for England and Wales some 15 years ago and does not account for key developments such as the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which defines “sustainable development”. The Localism Act 2011 also preceded the current devolution settlement under the Wales Act 2017, and Welsh policies relating to land and community empowerment. The Localism Act 2011 right to bid is also weaker than a community right to buy. Welsh Ministers had said, as far back as 2014, that they considered the 2011 Act to [fall short](#) by not including a right to buy, and there is a substantial body of opinion and evidence, as discussed in the present Task & Finish Group Report and extensive research, in favour of a stronger right for communities.

OPTION TWO: Introduce new Welsh legislation including a right for communities to buy land and other assets from both private and public owners.

3.2. If the provisions of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill are enacted and commenced, the differences between the Scottish legislation and the English legislation become less around the nature of the right (which would then in both jurisdictions be for communities to have a right of first refusal when listed/registered assets are put up for sale by both private and public owners) and more around the type of assets covered, criteria for listing, decision-making bodies, legal definitions of community bodies, relevant time periods, procedures for valuing assets, routes to appeal and review and so on.

For example:

- The Scottish legislation generally refers to land but is taken to include buildings, and various other assets are expressly excluded
- The English legislation in force refers to, but does not define “assets”, whilst the new Bill also does not define assets, it expands the definition of “community value” and provides express protection for sporting assets (as with the Scottish legislation, certain assets are expressly excluded)
- The Scottish legislative criteria for a community body to list land/buildings for the purposes of the right to buy relates to the community body being concerned with “sustainable development”

- The English legislation in force, and the provisions of the new Bill, refer to Assets of Community Value, with such being defined by reference to social wellbeing and social interests of the relevant community
- In both Scotland and England, community bodies must be referential to a geographical area, and democratic (voting) requirements must be met for community bodies to exercise their rights, but the meaning of community body and the precise requirements are different in each jurisdiction respectively
- In Scotland, ultimately the Scottish Ministers (through the Keeper of the Registers of Scotland) maintains the register of community interests in land with respect to the CRtB, and Scottish Ministers make key decisions around listing and exercise of the right, whereas in England (both under the right to bid and the proposed right to buy) it is local authorities that are required to make decisions around listing Assets of Community Value, and which are required to maintain local registers of assets that have been nominated as of community value and those the authority has decided are not of community value.

3.3 The precise provisions of Welsh legislation would then need to be worked out, but some matters can be initially stated as important:

- It is likely that criteria for listing an asset with a view to exercising the community right to buy should be referential to “sustainable development” as defined in the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, expressly referencing the seven wellbeing goals (rather than the English terminology of Assets of Community Value)
- That other considerations might be added here, in particular seeking to give added emphasis to preservation and promotion of the Welsh language
- The Welsh policy context in relation to social and economic human rights, including potential legislative protection of a right to housing, ought to be considered
- That rights of appeal/review relating to decisions under the community right to buy legislation should likely be to the devolved Welsh tribunals
- That right to buy legislation must dovetail with existing/future Welsh policy around land use

Key matters community right to buy legislation must address include:

- What types of assets are to be covered by the community right to buy, only land and buildings, or other assets, and how are these to be defined? Should ‘assets’ be defined or should there just be exclusions of particular types of assets with the term itself left undefined?
- What type of community body can buy land or other assets? What provisions should be made around the membership and purposes of such community bodies?
- Should community bodies have as one of their main purposes the furtherance of “sustainable development” as defined under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFGA)? How else should the provision of

WFGA dovetail with the right to buy legislation? What should be the requirements around the Welsh language?

- Is community to be defined in whole or in part by geographical area, postcode condition or other reference to geographical area, or can so-called 'communities of interest' also exercise the right to buy land or other assets? How would community bodies that are based on 'communities of interest' be defined under the legislation? Is there a case for Wales being the first UK nation to give community rights to buy to 'communities of interest' is this too risky as such communities are hard to define? (e.g., this could be a community of Welsh speakers regardless of where the members of that community live – presently such a community could seek an asset transfer, but no UK legislation as yet in force or proposed would allow such a community a right to buy without a physical residence condition for most members also being satisfied)
- How should communities register an interest in land or other assets, what is the process for doing this and which body/bodies should maintain the register and make decisions in respect of it (individual local authorities or the Welsh Ministers) what appeal/review processes should there be with respect to registration decisions?
- What democratic procedures will be put in place? E.g., should the community body hold a ballot on the question of whether it should buy the land/asset in question, what would be the necessary minimum proportion of members voting in favour that is sufficient to justify the community body proceeding to buy the land/building etc?
- What will be the timescales under the legislation, for example, timescale for the body maintaining the relevant register of community interests in land/assets to register assets following an application? Once land/assets are up for sale, how long will a community body with a registered interest have to notify its intention to exercise its right to buy, how long should the moratorium period on sale be?
- What rights will there be to appeal/review various decisions under the legislation? In the first instance these should lie to the devolved Welsh Tribunals.

4. Community asset transfers from public bodies

4.1. The above sections relate to legislated community rights to bid for and to buy assets from both private and public owners often at market value or an otherwise independently valued or negotiated price. These should not be confused with community asset transfers from public bodies to communities.

4.2. In all four nations of the UK, local authorities, and in some cases other public bodies, are empowered to transfer assets to communities under their general powers. Many local authorities, and other public bodies, have developed community asset transfer policies and procedures. Local authorities, and some other public bodies, are variously empowered to dispose of assets at below market value if such is likely to promote or achieve community benefits including

economic wellbeing and/or regeneration, social wellbeing, or environmental wellbeing.

- 4.3. These community asset transfer powers are different from and separate to the powers granted under right to bid/right to buy legislation in England and Scotland. Asset transfers can be by way of ownership, lease, license, or some other right to occupy, manage, or steward land or other assets.
- 4.4. [Local authorities](#) in Wales (and some police, fire and national park authorities) can dispose of land at below market value where such furthers social, economic, and/or environmental wellbeing, and where the unrestricted value of the land does not exceed £2 million (and above £2 million with consent of Welsh Ministers). Other public bodies in Wales may dispose of assets to communities, but the specific legal requirements to be met may differ. The work of the Task and Finish Group exposed some confusion amongst public bodies in Wales as to what these requirements are.
- 4.5. Best practice guidance on asset transfers from public bodies (primarily local authorities) is provided by [Ystadau Cymru](#).
- 4.6. It is only in Scotland where there is additional legislation relating to community asset transfers. [Part 5 of the Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#) (2015 Act) provides a right for communities to request asset transfers from “[relevant authorities](#)”. These are public bodies listed in [Schedule 3](#), including the Scottish Ministers, local authorities, and other entities like the Scottish NHS, and Scottish Police Authorities. Communities can use this legislation to seek ownership of assets, or a right short of ownership, such as a lease or a right to manage or occupy. Community asset transfers from public bodies under Part 5 of the 2015 Act can be made to communities of interest. An eligible “[community transfer body](#)”, is defined as either a “community-controlled body” or a body designated as such by Scottish Ministers. A community could be any group feeling they have something in common, which could be living in the same area, but could also be shared interests or characteristics. Such ‘communities of interest’ can include faith groups, ethnic or cultural groups, people affected by a particular disability, sports clubs, conservation groups and heritage associations. This could range from local groups to national or international bodies with thousands of members. Where ownership is not sought, there is no requirement to incorporate in any specific form (although it seems likely that given the financial responsibility associated with leasing that a public body or any funders would expect a tenant to adopt a suitable form). Where a community body seeks to [acquire ownership](#), it must have a suitable legal personality normally having a minimum of 20 members.
- 4.7. The right to request an asset transfer is not triggered by anything in particular and, subject to certain restrictions, a community can expect any request to be given due consideration. The community can request ownership or a lease of the land/asset, and the request must state the asset to which the request relates, the

reasons for making the request, the benefits which the community transfer body considers will arise if the authority were to agree to the request, and the price that the community would be prepared to pay.

- 4.8. The relevant authority is not allowed to sell the asset until it considers the request, and it must give [due consideration to the application](#) based on the scheme set out in the legislation, including whether agreeing to the request would be likely to promote or improve economic development, regeneration, public health, social wellbeing, or environmental wellbeing. The relevant authority *must agree* to the community's asset transfer request unless there are reasonable grounds for refusing it. There are clear routes to [reviews and appeals](#) under the legislation.
- 4.9. Under the 2015 Act, there is also a duty on relevant authorities in Scotland to [establish and maintain a register of land](#), which, to the best of the authority's knowledge and belief, is owned or leased by the authority. This provision is intended to assist community bodies in identifying property that may be available for asset transfer. Every relevant authority must make arrangements to enable members of the public to inspect, free of charge, its register of land at reasonable times and at such places as the authority may determine and make its register of land available on a website, or by other electronic means, to members of the public. The [Community Empowerment \(Registers of Land\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2016](#) provide further detail, including on what types of land are not required to be registered.
- 4.10. Various research has considered the impact of this legislation and the possible pros and cons of legislating for community asset transfers from public bodies. The pros include generally that legislation aims to lay down a clear procedure that enables communities (and public authorities) to understand their rights and obligations, with the aim that a consistent approach is taken across public authorities (asset transfer is then not a so-called 'post code lottery' depending on variable compliance with 'guidance'). In Scotland, the 2015 Act changes the balance of power such that a public authority must consider an asset transfer request and must agree to that request unless it has reasonable grounds to refuse (generally speaking without legislation, public authorities cannot necessarily be forced to consider asset transfer requests or be forced to grant a request where reasonable – although failure to comply with their own stated policies could be subject to judicial review). The 2015 Act also introduced clear appeal/review rights (for both communities and public authorities) which again empowers communities especially who may not be aware of or able to exercise other means of review (such as judicial review of policy decisions). Some public authorities report that the existence of legislative duties, as opposed to weaker duties under policy/guidance, enables them to justify devoting more resources to community asset transfers.
- 4.11. The cons, are said to be that the legislative procedure is 'bureaucratic', complex, and time consuming, and that many public authorities prefer negotiating

and entering into asset transfers outside the legislative process as this can be more flexible and more easily tailored to the specific circumstances of the authority and the community body, in the context of the particular asset and other variable factors. In the earlier years after the legislation's coming into force, most community asset transfers from public authorities still took place outside the legislative scheme. This situation is beginning to change, but it is still the case that many asset transfers take place outside of the scheme, under the general powers of local authorities. There is no obligation to transfer exclusively under the scheme set out in the 2015 Act. There have also been some concerns around poor and variable compliance with the 2015 Act, and a recent [Scottish Government review](#) has made recommendations for further reforms, particularly to strengthen relevant statutory guidance and for better alignment with the Scottish Public Finance Manual (which provides guidance on proper handling and reporting of public funds). The review also recommends that more robust information is required on Relevant Authorities' registers of land and that there should be a more consistent approach in recording of data across localities. Ultimately, this legislation cannot force public authorities to transfer assets and particularly cannot force them to transfer ownership as opposed to a lease.

5. Community asset transfer guidance and legislation: Options for Wales

In the context of community asset transfers from public bodies, the main options likely are:

OPTION ONE: No Change - community asset transfers already happen in Wales, under public body policies and procedures, and utilising Ystadau Guidance.

This maintains but does not seek to improve the existing situation and seems unlikely to be the best option. The Guidance has not been updated since 2019.

OPTION TWO: Update, revise and strengthen Ystadau Guidance for community asset transfers.

Guidance could be updated, particularly reflecting the findings of research since the revised version was published in 2019 (following publication of the initial version in 2015). This could potentially provide a clearer statement of community empowerment aims, and strengthen the position of communities through procedural requirements, including adding more detail on the quality of reasons that should be provided to communities, and a requirement to provide further information to communities about how they can challenge decisions. Operating a presumption in favour of granting asset transfers could be encouraged within the guidance, but this would not be legally binding.

OPTION THREE: Introduce legislation (similar to the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015) specifically governing community asset transfers, which could include set procedures, a right to request an asset transfer, a right to

require public bodies to consider requests, and a duty to grant requests unless the public body has reasonable grounds for refusal, with provisions for appeal (to a devolved Welsh tribunal) and so on

At present, only Scotland has such legislation, and its reception has been mixed, though broadly positive and improving with time. The level of support for this kind of legislation in Wales at present is less clear than with respect to the need to introduce community right to buy legislation, and introducing a form of community asset transfer legislation alongside a Welsh specific community right to buy, might not be ideal in terms of the demands on legislative drafting and time. However, this would likely be the most ambitious package for communities, particularly as, at least under the Scottish system, this gives legal rights to ‘communities of interest’ as well as ‘communities of geography’ (the latter being the standard approach to defining community under right to buy) and would avoid piecemeal reform.

OPTIONS FOUR: Update, revise and strengthen Ystadau Guidance for community asset transfers, continue to monitor the use of guidance and incidence of asset transfers and experiences of them, collect robust data, with a view to the potential reconsideration of the need for additional legal rights (similar to the Scottish community asset transfer approach) in the longer-term.

This option has the benefit of introducing one major change, community right to buy, whilst updating and revising guidance on asset transfers. It is more of a ‘wait and see’ approach as to whether further legislation might be needed on community asset transfers from public bodies.

6. Additional rights to force transfer to communities in force in Scotland

6.1. In Scotland, [Part 3A of the 2003 Act](#), introduced by the 2015 Act, gives community bodies a right to acquire “eligible land” if in the opinion of Scottish Ministers, it is wholly or mainly abandoned or neglected, or the use or management of the land is such that it results in or causes harm, directly or indirectly, to the environmental wellbeing of a relevant community. Scottish Ministers should assess for eligible status based on certain factors; “Abandoned or neglected land” forms one category, “detrimental land” another.

6.2. Ministers must consider the land’s physical condition (which might include whether it is a risk to public safety or the wider environment); designation or classification; or use or management. For “detrimental” land, Ministers must consider use or management of land and look at whether harm to environmental wellbeing in a technical sense has in fact occurred. The community must have already tried to purchase the land before a forced sale can occur.

6.3. Where the land acquisition turns on environmentally detrimental status, the community scheme must be capable of fixing the problem, and the community must have invited the relevant regulator to act. Assuming Scottish Ministers give consent, they will appoint an independent valuer to determine the market price, to be paid by the community body within six months.

6.4. This legal right is unlikely to be used as a first option for communities, but rather it is a backstop where other methods of acquisition have failed.

6.5. The [Land Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#) introduced an additional right for communities to acquire land from private owners for sustainable development. Assuming statutory tests are satisfied, and subject to payment of an independently valued price within six months of consent being granted by Scottish Ministers, the sale to the community is compelled.

6.6. Communities must meet substantial hurdles to exercise this right, including satisfying Ministers of sustainable development potential and significant community benefit.

6.7. This right does not require a willing seller, and there is scope for the community body to nominate a third-party purchaser.

7. Additional legal rights for communities to acquire land/assets in Wales

7.1. The provisions in section 6 of this paper relating to Scotland include additional rights for communities to acquire land that is abandoned or neglected, and to acquire land for the purposes of sustainable development (in both cases this includes from private owners). These rights are relatively new, although some instructive example case-studies starting to occur. These rights are not intended to be used in the first instance but rather are to be used where other legal options for communities to acquire land have failed. These rights can even compel an owner to sell.

7.2. There is a general question of whether there is an additional need for any Wales-specific rights for communities to acquire land (such as for sustainable development purposes) or for other reasons that might fit with the Welsh specific context of broader land reform and development. There is a question of whether general legislation introducing a community right to buy for community bodies in Wales (relating to land/assets in public and private ownership when they come up for sale) is sufficient, or whether any additional rights might also be beneficial, up to and including rights to compel sale even from an unwilling owner?

8. Additional obligations on public bodies

8.1. In Scotland, the Keepers of the Registers of Scotland (essentially on behalf of the Scottish Ministers) maintain a register of land in which community bodies have registered an interest (for the purpose of potentially exercising their right to buy). In England, local authorities (and some other public authorities), are required to main lists of assets that have been successfully nominated as being Assets of

Community Value (and an additional list of assets proposed for nomination but which the authority considers not to be Assets of Community Value).

- 8.2. In Scotland, there is also an additional duty on relevant authorities to establish and maintain a register of land, which, to the best of the authority's knowledge and belief, is owned or leased by the authority. This provision is intended to assist community bodies in identifying property that may be available for asset transfer. Every relevant authority must enable members of the public to inspect, free of charge, its register of land at reasonable times and at such places as the authority may determine and must make its register of land available on a website, or by other electronic means, to members of the public.
- 8.3. Were Wales to enact right to buy legislation this would include some form of register, either maintained by Welsh Ministers or by individual public authorities, including assets nominated by communities with a view to potentially exercising their right to buy. An additional duty on public authorities to establish and maintain a publicly available register of their land/buildings, would be beneficial in assisting community bodies to identify property that may be available for asset transfer. Some public bodies already provide information on their websites etc, but there could be further consideration of a specific legal duty (noting the issues in Scotland around variable compliance, and variability in the formatting and robustness of information presented). However, this would place an additional burden on public authorities.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

John Griffiths MS
Chair, Local Government & Housing Committee
Cardiff Bay
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16 March 2026

Dear John

Further to my officials' attendance to provide evidence to the committee on social housing disrepair, I am writing in respect of the Committee's request for further information regarding the findings from the most recent tenant satisfaction survey. Specifically, any insight as to why this survey might indicate that satisfaction with repairs and maintenance is, on average, lower for stock-holding local authorities than for registered social landlords (RSLs).

Firstly, it is important to provide certain caveats in relation to the data. The survey data is provided by social landlords and published by the Welsh Government to support transparency and enable tenants to engage directly with their landlords about their performance and to make comparisons with other organisations. However, the data is not validated by the Welsh Government.

While the tenant satisfaction survey is based on a standard set of questions the collection method is not specified, social landlords are only required to have undertaken a survey within the last two years. Consequently, data being compared may not relate to the same period across all social landlords, and there are often seasonal fluctuations in respect of disrepair. Social landlords also use a range of collection methods which can include face-to-face interviews, online and telephone surveys, these differing approaches can impact on response rates and the demographic profile of respondents.

Nonetheless, there are several factors that may help to explain the apparent difference in average satisfaction levels in relation to repairs and maintenance between stock-holding local authorities and RSLs.

Local authorities are more likely to manage a higher proportion of older housing stock than RSLs, who have been developing and acquiring new homes over a longer timeframe. Older homes are more susceptible to maintenance issues and disrepair and are also more likely

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

to present serious hazards¹, which can in turn affect tenants' experiences of repairs and maintenance.

Unlike stock holding local authorities, RSLs are regulated by Welsh Ministers with the Regulatory Framework for Welsh Registered Social Landlords² setting clear regulatory expectations for RSLs. The framework is explicit that protecting tenants is one of the key purposes of regulation and emphasises the importance of effective tenant engagement and involvement in decision-making. There are clear regulatory standards relating to delivering high quality services (including effective repairs and maintenance), empowering tenants to influence the design and delivery of services and the provision of safe, high-quality accommodation, against which RSL performance is assessed.

Stock-holding local authorities are not regulated in the same way. Decisions about asset management, service delivery and tenant engagement are a matter for individual authorities and are shaped by local democratic accountability arrangements.

The Welsh Government is taking steps to strengthen transparency and visibility for tenants across all social landlords. Under the Rent Standard, the quarterly tenant satisfaction survey is being expanded to include local authorities for the first time. At the same time, we will also be moving from anonymised reporting to individualised reporting for both RSLs and local authorities. This will improve visibility and enable tenants to more easily hold their social landlords to account. I have also announced my intention³ to collaborate with a number of local authorities to explore how transparency could further be strengthened through the voluntary adoption of regulatory standards for tenant services.

I hope this provides helpful context for the Committee in interpreting the survey findings.

Yours sincerely



Jayne Bryant AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Thai
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government

¹ [Welsh Housing Conditions Survey 2017-18: headline report \(updated\)](#)

² [The Regulatory Framework for Welsh Registered Social Landlords](#)

³ [Written Statement: Welsh Government Rent and Service Charge Standard 2026-2036 \(29 September 2025\) | GOV.WALES](#)

Damp and disrepair in Shelter Cymru casework

Overview and context

Overview

On Thursday 5 March 2026, Shelter Cymru provided oral evidence to the Local Government and Housing Committee. In responding to questions from Members, Robin White (appearing on behalf of Shelter Cymru) highlighted the value of Shelter Cymru data in providing additional insight to the extent of this issue. Following a request from the Committee, this short paper has been drafted to provide an overview of some of that data

We hope that this data adds additional value to our existing contributions on this topic. We would ask that advance notice is provided if any of this data is included in published reports by the Committee.

Context

There are a number of caveats and context issues to be considered when using this data:

1. This data represents a snapshot in time and is from a 10-month period (06/05/2025 – 05/03/2026) rather than a full year. This time period reflects recent changes to how Shelter Cymru captures data in our work and the fact that a longer period would return data that was not comparable.
2. Shelter Cymru provides housing advice in a variety of ways, some of which will not be recorded in this data set. For example, this data does not cover advice people may have taken from the more than 30,000 visits that were made to relevant advice pages on our website.
3. Cases are all unique, and data presented in this way and at this level does not necessarily reflect that. To gain a fuller picture of both the extent and impact of damp and disrepair, it would be necessary to review individual cases in greater detail. While this work is possible, it is not something Shelter Cymru has the capacity to undertake. If the Welsh Government felt that work was valuable, then we would be happy to talk with them about what support would be needed to make it possible.

Headline data

At the Committee session on 05/03/2026, Robin White highlighted that in January 2026 damp and disrepair cases accounted for 15% of our work. It should be noted that our monthly data does show some seasonal variation, as might be expected with this issue. However, results for December and November of 2025 were broadly similar, with more than 14% of cases involving damp and disrepair.

As noted above Our online advice pages also saw significant traffic to relevant pages, with almost 30,000 unique visits between 01/01/2025 and 31/12/2025.

Below we have provided a more detailed breakdown of relevant data covering the period 06/05/2025 – 05/03/2026. As noted above, capacity has only allowed us to do an initial review of data at this stage and a deeper dive that included reviews of specific cases would likely yield additional insights. While we would be happy to undertake that work we would likely require financial support from a third party in order to make it possible.

Ddamp and disrepair by tenure

Tenure Type	Percentage of damp and disrepair caseload
Home Owner	4%
Homeless: Sofa Surfing	1%
Homeless: Supported Living	0%
Homeless: TA	4%
Other	1%
PRS	62%
Social Home	27%

Damp vs. disrepair by tenure

Note: Cases recorded with one issue may also have other issues present but these might not be recorded as well. This is why a review of case notes would be necessary to deliver a complete picture.

Tenure Type	Percentage of dampness caseload	Percentage of other disrepair caseload
Home Owner	4%	4%
Homeless: Sofa Surfing	1%	2%
Homeless: Supported Living	0%	0%
Homeless: TA	3%	5%
Other	1%	1%
PRS	63%	60%
Social Home	27%	26%

Ddamp and disrepair by household type

Household Type	Percentage of damp and disrepair caseload
Adult Household	7%
Couple	7%
Couple & Children	13%
Extended Household	2%
Single Man	18%
Single Parent Man	1%
Single Parent Woman	22%

Single Woman	31%
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Ddamp and disrepair by age

Age	Percentage of damp and disrepair caseload
18-25	16%
26-35	29%
36-49	33%
Over 50	22%

Key findings

We believe key findings from this data set for the committee to take note of are:

- The Private Rented Sector is responsible for a significant proportion of our work on disrepair, however, it is clearly also a major issue for social housing tenants that come to us for support. Based on anecdotal feedback from members of staff in our Housing Services Team, we believe there is a potential difference between when social housing tenants and private rented sector clients might approach us. Clients who live in the private rented sector are, in our experience, more likely to come to us as a first port of call. On the other hand, social housing tenants appear more likely to come to us when they feel alternative routes have been exhausted. One of the impacts of this difference would be that damp and disrepair is less likely to be an issue among social housing tenants but where it is present it is perhaps more likely to be a significant issue or a complex case.
- Single person and single parent households appear to over-represent in this data. This also reflects the fact that those groups are often at greater risk of bad housing or poor housing conditions.
- When looking at the overall profile of our client base there is no significant trend in over representation of certain age categories when it comes to damp and disrepair.

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Agenda Item 6

By virtue of paragraph(s) ix of Standing Order 17.42

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