

Julie James AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MA/JJ/0630/24

John Griffiths MS
Chair
Local Government and Housing Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

4 March 2024

Dear John,

Thank you for the Local Government and Housing Committee's report on its Scrutiny of the Government's Draft Budget 2024 – 25. We are grateful for the Committee's work on this. Please find attached the Welsh Government's response in relation to Questions 12-16 which relate to Housing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie James". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Minister for Climate Change

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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.

Housing

Recommendation 12

The Welsh Government must make providing additional funding for the Housing Support Grant allocation ahead of the final budget a priority and should explore all possible options for doing so.

Response: Accept

The Welsh Government has provided an additional £5m for the Homelessness Prevention and Support Grant in the Final Budget, taking the total budget to almost £220m in 2024/25.

Within this budget, the Minister for Climate Change has allocated an additional £13m for the Housing Support Grant, taking it to just over £182m in 2024/25. This increase is intended to help address inflationary pressures in housing support services, particularly in respect of pay and helping the sector to meet our aspirations around Fair Work and the Real Living Wage.

Recommendation 13

The Minister for Climate Change should, when the information is available, provide this Committee with an update on progress made during the 2023-24 financial year in delivering the Welsh Government's target of 20,000 new social homes for rent

Response: Accept

The additional affordable housing provision statistical release for 2023-24 is expected late autumn. This publication will include details of all affordable housing delivery in 2023-24 and will report on progress towards our target of 20,000 homes for rent in the social sector.

Recommendation 14

The Welsh Government should provide a comprehensive list of the current state of remediation plans for high-rise residential buildings and the progress of developers' remediation works. Details should also be provided as to how the Welsh Government expect the allocations for building safety in the draft budget to deliver remediation works in 2024-25

Response: Accept in principle

High level details in respect to developer plans and the progress of works have already been made available, and there are plans to share these high-level figures on the Welsh Government website. As is the case in England, details of individual buildings are not shared publicly. However, developers and Responsible Persons are asked to share details of planned works with leaseholders through the terms of the contract.

An allocation of £127 million has been made for works in 2024 / 25, which is in line with anticipated spend and sufficient to undertake surveys, and support remediation works in orphan, social sector and other buildings requiring support.

Recommendation 15

The Welsh Government should make arrangements for data on social rent increases across Wales to be made publicly available

Response: Accept in principle

The Welsh Government collects a range of data on social housing stock and rents ([Social housing stock and rents \(gov.wales\)](#)) including data on the average weekly rent, which allow for comparison year on year.

In Scotland, social landlords are free to set their own rent increases, which makes it important for rent data to be published. In Wales, social landlords must adhere to the maximum rent cap imposed for that year.

As part of our work in reviewing the Welsh Government's Social Rent and Service Charge Standard, we will be working with the wider social housing sector to better understand how we can make more effective use of the range of data we currently collect. This is an important part of our work to embed affordability at the core of our future social rent policy, and means assessing the full extent of data availability and use, including data on income, earnings and wider household costs.

Recommendation 16

The Welsh Government should work with Care and Repair Cymru to explore the introduction of a grant to rectify hazardous disrepair to enable older people to live safely and independently and to prevent hospital admissions because of accidents at home.

Response: Accept in principle

The Independent Living Programme supports a broad range of activity through grants not only to Care and Repair Cymru and Care and Repair Agencies but also to Housing Association through Physical Adaptation Grants (PAG) and Local Authorities via the Enable programme.

We are committed to maintaining our support for this programme which includes continuing to support Care and Repair agencies, enabling them to deliver small adaptations rapidly to facilitate timely NHS hospital discharges and preventing unnecessary hospital admissions. This relieves costs on the NHS and reduces pressures on domiciliary and residential care.