220722 – Response to queries from ORP Evaluation session #1

1. Does WG have any plans to do a general public-wide campaign to increase understanding around climate change and net-zero. This would really help the housing sector with retrofit / WHQS2023.

*There is a piece of work being commissioned by WG.*

*I’ll feedback details of the plan to CHC.*

1. How did you manage educating tenants regarding the useage of the systems?

*Informing and supporting tenants with regard to retrofit works and new systems is critically important but varies on each ORP scheme. Landlords’ approaches vary by type of scheme, type of measures being installed and by their general approach. Some find that tenants prefer remote communications, whilst other rely on more direct local staff to provide support.*

*There is a ‘Community of Practice’ – supported by CHC and Cynnal Cymru that meets to examine the effectiveness of various approaches and is looking at the recommendations of ABC’s Social Science project.*

1. Is there a general standard for measuring success against net zero targets? - no of installs? EPC ratings? kWh?

*The methodology for measuring performance of existing homes is an evolving area of work.*

*In the proposed draft WHQS23 our expectation is that each social landlord will assess their own stock and advise WG of their specific plan to decarbonise homes. The measurement of success will be against these plans.*

*In terms of actual metrics, in the proposed draft WHQS23 Welsh Government has been advised to stick with the traditional tools used to assess energy performance of housing – The SAP model and in particular EER (SAP Bands) and EIR that are indicated on EPC certificates.*

*The WHQS23 guidance also targets a ‘Heat Loss Parameter’ metric to ensure that homes are suitable for decarbonised heating. This supports a pathway towards decarbonisation of heat and hot water.*

*We’ve stuck with the SAP model and methodology because whilst we recognise at has limitations, it is well understood.*

*However, other tools are being developed and can complement the use of SAP within WHQS. For example, Pathfinder consortia has developed a ‘Pathway to Zero’ tool which, whilst based on similar modelling as SAP, also includes for the future decarbonisation of grids. This helps ensure we get the investment levels in decarbonising homes right.*

1. Ultimately, a reduction of 52% carbon emissions doesn't come close to the requirements of decarbonisation and net zero. Retaining gas boilers will not be an option, I don't understand the rationale behind these trials.

*Agree – Hybrids by themselves won’t solve the decarbonisation problem and there are concerns about continued reliance on fossil fuels and the complexity of these systems.*

*They do have benefits for being a relatively simple to install method reducing carbon emissions, without increasing fuel bills especially in owner occupied older homes.*

*WGs approach to decarbonisation of social homes is that the landlord takes a stock-wide approach. In that sense, a 50% cut in carbon emissions to some homes, may form a useful part of a wider solution. Every g of carbon not emitted as one we don’t have account for else where!*

1. The new SAP 10 for EPC is going to penalise the use of electric for heat so likely to lose EPC points for a heat pump over a boiler

*Yes. SAP 10 does create challenges around achieving SAP points and EPC Bands. The WG understands that properties may appear to move backwards in terms EPC band. The important thing we’d like landlords to undertake is to develop a medium term plan for each property to respond to fuel cost, carbon emissions, and climate change resilience. Within that plan, at times, changes to SAP methodologies appear to make homes perform worse, and that will be accepted. Changes to SAP are not within WG’s control.*

1. If you intend to rely on trickle vents in future deep retrofit schemes in Carmarthenshire will you be undertaking hygrothermal modelling to ensure that moisture build up doesn't become a problem, with the knock-on effects on IAQ?

*Ventilation design needs to be carefully considered when undertaking improvements to insulation and airtightness of existing properties. When specifying actual works we expect landlords to follow PAS2035 which sets out a risk based design approach when dealing with older properties.*

*The choice between whether to use the Building Regulations specified natural ventilation standard or choose a ‘Mechanically Ventilated Heat Recovery’ system will depend upon the landlord’s choice and the particular risk factors – including resident vulnerabilities – associated with that property. So, for example, in a managed, older property an MVHR system might be more appropriate than in newer ‘general needs’ homes.*