



**Virtual Chief Executives SDG Meeting**

**Date:** 7 June 2022

**Time:** 10.000-12.00

**Venue:** Online

## NOTES

### In attendance

Organisation	Name	Job Title
1. Adra	Ffrancon Williams	Chief Executive
2. Aelwyd	Sharon Lee	Chief Executive
3. Bro Myrddin	Hilary Jones	Chief Executive
4. Caredig	Marcia Sinfield	Chief Executive
5. Coastal Housing Group	Debbie Green	Group Chief Executive
6. Community Housing Cymru	Clarissa Corbisiero	Director of Policy & External Affairs
7. Cynon Taf Community Housing Group	Victoria Slade	Chief Executive
8. First Choice Housing Association	Adrian Burke	Chief Executive
9. Grŵp Cynefin	Shan Lloyd Williams	Chief Executive
10. Melin Homes	Paula Kennedy	Chief Executive
11. Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association	Karen Courts	Chief Executive
12. Merthyr Valleys Homes	Lorraine Oates	Deputy Chief Executive
13. Newport City Homes	Ceri Doyle	Chief Executive
14. Newydd	Jason Wroe	Chief Executive
15. North Wales HA	Jayne Owen	Finance & Resources Director
16. RHA	Luke Takeuchi	Chief Executive
17. Taff Housing	Helen White	Chief Executive



Organisation	Name	Job Title
18. Tai Calon	Howard Toplis	Chief Executive
19. Trivallis	John Comber	Advisor & CE
20. Valleys to Coast	Liz Murray-Downie	Corporate Director of People, Culture and Organisation Design
21. Wales & West	Shayne Hembrow	Deputy Chief Executive

### **Apologies**

Cadwyn Housing Association	Kath Palmer	Chief Executive
Cardiff Community Housing Association	Hayley Selway	Chief Executive
ClwydAlyn	Clare Budden	Chief Executive
Community Housing Cymru	Stuart Ropke	Chief Executive
Linc Cymru	Scott Sanders	Chief Executive
North Wales Housing Association	Helena Kirk	Chief Executive
Monmouthshire Housing Association	John Keegan	Chief Executive
Valleys to Coast	Joanne Oak	Chief Executive

## **Actions and decisions**

### **Ukraine update**

Emma Williams, Welsh Government, attended the meeting and provided an update on Ukraine.

The focus on getting the move on system flowing effectively to keep pace with the number of people arriving. 5 welcome centres in place and a 6th soon to be opened.

Capital programme in place and has been well received.

Accommodation framework - process in place with local authorities to make offers. Challenge is to complete DBS property checks. Local authorities have worked together to ensure broad consistency across Wales and partners. The Welsh Government would welcome offers from HAs to support those checks via local authorities.

Capacity issues on support networks - Welsh Government would welcome additional support and capacity from housing associations.



The Welsh Government invited further approaches from housing associations and suggested that direct approaches to local authorities would be helpful.

**Action:** WG to explore with local authorities areas where focused support would be helpful. CHC to share this information with HAs once received.

## **Cumulative impact strategy**

Clarissa provided an overview of the [paper](#) and set out the context, strategy and risks and opportunities. Colleagues' views were sought on the overall approach and proposals under the three themes within the paper.

Whilst a range of views were expressed at both meetings, key areas of consensus were as follows:

- Policy making in silos is hiding the cumulative impact of policies and political ambitions and means that WG is unable to get a clear view on the overall impact and deliverability of their plans.
- Influencing in the policy silos will only achieve incremental change we need to make the case in a different way.
- Broad agreement that our strategy should be to try and create political and policy space for a change in approach in response to the rising cost of living.
- WHQS 2023 proposals in their current form are not deliverable. CHC should make the case strongly for a refreshed approach with a costed delivery plan and more realistic timeframe.

We also received a range of views on some of the suggested policy proposals and some comments on areas to build the evidence base. We have set out a refreshed narrative and next steps below based on the discussions to date. This has been circulated to Chief Executives and further views sought.

### **1. Core narrative**

Increases in costs impact almost everyone - 8 in 10 people say that the cost of living has increased over the past year.

It doesn't impact on everyone equally. People that rent are 6 times more likely to not be able to afford an unexpected expense compared with those that own outright.

Without action, the rising cost of food, housing , energy will strengthen inequality and tip many more into poverty.

The challenge has changed and we must change with it.

This requires government and partners to:

**Spend public money in a way that brings the greatest benefit to the greatest number:** There is money already available in Welsh Government budgets - almost £2 billion in capital and £700m in revenue already allocated for housing and prevention support up to 2025. The strength of



Government policy and investment must be reorientated to help reduce bills for the greatest number at risk. This means a focus on investment in reducing the cost of living within existing homes for the early part of the Senedd period.

**A plan to deliver:** With so many challenges and uncertainties in the external environment it is crucial that our plans and ambitions are deliverable so that they can be relied on to create longer term and sustainable jobs and training opportunities. The current WHQS 2023 is not deliverable. We would like to see the Welsh Government work with social landlords, lenders and contractors to agree a revised approach which provides sufficient time and funding to make important progress and ensure that investment supports jobs and training opportunities locally.

**Invest in prevention but act now for those already at crisis point:** Taking action to reduce the impact of the punitive and costly impacts of welfare policy such as the bedroom tax and ensuring that crisis funding and support is available and accessible will help today. Joined up and multi agency investment will prevent more and more people reaching this point in the face of rising prices across the piece.

## **2. Actions**

CHC will commission and work with members on the following research to develop our case for change:

- Open book modeling on the implications of a range of rent scenarios. We anticipate doing this in partnership with WLGA and Welsh Government. We will also work with members to make clear the service impact of these scenarios.
- Research to demonstrate the scale of the challenge - this work will demonstrate the financial gap to deliver the proposed WHQS 2023.
- We will support Welsh Government to scope and commission research into a blended funding package to support financing decarbonisation. This will include more research on off balance sheet options, which would sit alongside a grant and investment programme.
- Support Welsh Government to interrogate data on the 20,000 new homes target to develop a reliable projection for delivery.

CHC will work with members to explore the following policy areas in further detail:

- Rent options and trade offs based on the modeling. This will include consideration of the elements of a longer term approach to rent.
- Consideration of the decarbonisation target including alternative approaches and explore what other barriers may hinder WHQS compliance, such as supply chain issues. .
- Further development of policy ideas to reduce the cost of living, including options to mitigate the impact of the bedroom tax, reduce energy bills and increase access to crisis support.

CHC will speak to key partners and senior civil servants to explore opportunities to collaborate on this work.

We would like to update Chief Executives on this work next month and a date will follow shortly for a further conversation.



## WHQS

Bethan Proctor and Paul Thompson provided an update on the work of two technical groups on financing decarbonisation and WHQS. Views were sought from the group on the standard. Their presentation can be found [here](#). The latest CHC briefing on WHQS 2023 is available [here](#).

There was a strong feeling within the group that CHC needed to be clear that the standard was not deliverable. In particular a number of group members highlighted that there are issues of supply chain, funding and phasing which meant that compliance with the standard was not achievable.

CHC confirmed that more work is planned to model the impact on business plans and that CHC's response and wider lobbying would take a strong line in response to the standard.

## Pathway to Board

Abdi Segulle, Program Manager for the Pathway to Board project, provided an update on the initiative. An information pack on the project is available [here](#).

For more details, Abdi can be contacted at [abdis@taffhousing.co.uk](mailto:abdis@taffhousing.co.uk)

## AOB

Paula updated that the next meeting will be on Tuesday 27 September in person. This meeting will be held jointly with Chairs and Vice Chairs.

Paula encouraged colleagues to share their views on future issues for discussion at the SDG via a [doopoll](#).