

**Community  
Housing  
Cymru**



**Quarterly progress report:**  
**2016-19 Corporate Plan**

*April to June 2017*

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# Welcome.

Hello, and welcome to the first quarterly progress report for 2017/18.

This progress report details our latest key achievements and milestones on the priorities outlined in our Corporate Plan, which you can view [here](#).

While the Corporate Plan outlines the 'known' priorities, you'll also see from the report that flexibility is key to ensure we are in a position to respond and represent you on unforeseen events such as the tragedy at Grenfell Tower.

Also included is a **full media report** which highlights how we've been influencing the media agenda over the last three months.

Our priorities for the next quarter (July – September 2017) include:

- Respond to the Public Accounts Committee's report into the regulation of the sector in Wales.
- Work with the Bevan Foundation to understand the impact of Brexit on construction in Wales and work with the Welsh Government on steps to mitigate.
- Influence UK Government policy on LHA and Supported Accommodation.

- Represent the sector on the Welsh Fire Safety Advisory Group and continue to monitor developments following the Grenfell disaster.
- Prepare for our One Big Housing Conference (5/6 Oct) and Annual Conference (16/17 Nov). Save the dates now!
- Influence the discussions around the future direction of Planning Policy in Wales.
- Engage the sector in developing the long-term vision for housing associations in Wales within the Housing Horizons project, by holding events at the Eisteddfod and in north Wales.

If you have any questions on the information contained in this progress report, please don't hesitate to get in touch.



*Stuart Ropke*  
**Chief Executive**

## Our Mission.

- To positively influence Government policy.
- To support and promote the work of our members.
- To speak with one voice.
- To put members at the heart of everything we do.
- To work as one team to deliver our mission.

## Our Aim.

By 2019 we will be regarded by members as an invaluable and highly effective umbrella body. We will continue to promote the diversity of our membership and will have helped shape the external environment to enable them to prosper.

We will be the go-to organisation on housing issues in Wales, the partner of choice for stakeholders, and recognised and valued by Welsh Government as a sector that delivers.

Our work over the next two years will fall under four strategic themes.

1. *Supporting members to be resilient businesses.*
2. *Enabling the delivery of more quality and truly affordable homes.*
3. *Supporting members to build sustainable communities where people want to live.*
4. *Running a great member organisation.*

## April to June 2017 at a glance:

- **Launched our Corporate Plan for 2017/18 based on consultation with members.**
- **Coordinated the sector's response to the Grenfell tragedy.**
- **Co-developed a policy position on the future of rent setting in Wales.**
- **Re-convened the Homes for Wales Coalition for our General Election lobbying activity.**
- **Ran a successful recruitment campaign for CHC board positions.**
- **Launched research which 'Established the Challenge' facing the sector in 2036 as part of the Housing Horizons project.**
- **Collated, analysed and published the financial statements of Welsh Housing Associations in our Global Accounts publication.**
- **Ran two new conferences: HR & L&D and Leadership.**
- **Moved to outcomes based working under the Achieve Programme**



Themes:



## Corporate Plan Priorities 2017/18

Our Corporate Plan priorities for 2017/18 were launched during Quarter One. We consulted with the sector and are prioritising the things you said were most important to you and your organisation. What are the top 5 things we'll be focusing on?

You can read the document in full [here](#).



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Themes:



## Coordinating the Sector's response to Grenfell Tower tragedy

The awful events of 14th June have rightly placed fire safety at the front of our minds in the housing sector. Since the fire, we provided significant assistance to Welsh Government to provide information and support on high rise buildings owned by housing associations in Wales. In addition, we have delivered technical briefings to the media to ensure that reporting is accurate and have represented our members on radio as well as in print media.

CHC has worked to provide support and advice to members, particularly those with high rise blocks but also to those concerned about cladding and insulation on low rise buildings. We have called for a calm and holistic approach to the issue of ACM cladding and our calls for full system testing have been borne out by the announcement of full system testing by DCLG.

We are representing members on the Welsh Government Fire Safety Advisory Group and have given evidence along with members to the Assembly Inquiry on 13th July. You can watch this evidence session [here](#).

We will continue to work with members, through the Fire Safety Network and other channels to ensure that excellent communication remains between Welsh Government and members, and that all necessary lessons are learned following the Grenfell Tower disaster.



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Themes:



## Developing Policy - Rent Setting

Following a series of roundtables and a CHC consultation with you on future options for rent setting we have **published a briefing note** which sets out a sector wide position on the future of rent setting in Wales. This is based on your feedback and the discussions over the past few months.

The policy argues for a more open and flexible approach to rent setting which places the principles of transparency, accountability, value and affordability at its heart. We have already opened discussions with Welsh Government about the detail of this and will be seeking to influence the Welsh Government review of the rent policy which started earlier this month.



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Themes:



## Developing Policy - Planning

In light of the pressure to deliver 20,000 homes during the current Assembly term, CHC continued its work to determine the issues that our members are experiencing in the planning of these homes. As well as discussions within the sector, we met with other agencies with an interest in the system, such as the Planning Officers Society Wales, Dŵr Cymru and the Welsh Local Government Association to talk through not just the issues that our members are experiencing, but also how we might achieve constructive solutions to overcome them. The information collected during these discussions has been used to inform a briefing paper which you can read **here**.



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Themes:



## Regulation

The new regulatory framework has been published and is now in full operation. The new framework is heavily based on discussions between the regulator, CHC and housing associations over the past year and will be reviewed in January 2018. CHC has **issued an in-depth briefing** on the framework and is continuing to work closely with housing associations and the regulator to monitor the implementation of the new framework.



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Themes:



## Public Affairs - General Election

Following the calling of a snap election by the Prime Minister in April, CHC reconvened the Homes for Wales coalition, including new members in the construction industry to campaign under the strapline 'Build the Economy after Brexit', with specific calls on welfare and construction. We have continued to work closely with MPs, with a number of meetings taking place since the election, and questions raised on supported housing and LHA in Parliament by Welsh MPs following these meetings.



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Themes:



## Public Affairs - Legislative Update

First Minister Carwyn Jones has revealed the Welsh Government's legislative programme for the next session of the Welsh Assembly, which includes legislation to ban letting agents' fees, and to reform the regulation of housing associations to deal with the issue of ONS reclassification. Our response to the consultation on the proposed regulatory changes is available [here](#).

Alongside this, the Abolition of Right to Buy (Wales) Bill continues to progress through the Assembly. CHC's evidence to the Equalities, Local Government and Communities committee is available [here](#).



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## Supported Housing

The General Election result has provided fresh possibilities to influence the funding of housing costs in supported housing at a UK level. The implementation of a Supported Housing Allowance (SHA), which would continue to provide the majority of rent and service charge through the benefits system, formed a key section of Homes for Wales' asks in the run up to the election. This call has also been made by the National Housing Federation and other bodies.

In Wales, we will continue to work with Welsh Government on the assumption that the current policy of LHA plus top-up will be implemented in April 2019. We are working closely with Welsh Government and partners through the Steering Group and will be holding two events at the end of July for members to discuss the sector's position and help shape the future of this fund with Welsh Government officials involved in the development of the future funding system.



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Themes:



## Governance

It has been a busy few months both internally - progressing with the implementation of CHC's new governance framework, as well as externally - working with members to develop our governance offer for the sector.

Throughout May and June we ran a successful recruitment campaign, which resulted in an influx of applications from a high calibre of candidates both from inside and outside the Sectors. The Nominations committee met in June to shortlist candidates for interview. Following interviews, the committee have recommend suitable candidates to the board and we are in the process of contacting successful applicants. The new board will be formally elected at our AGM in November.

Our governance offer to members is also progressing. We've just completed a roadshow of Wales to consult with members about what this offer will look like. We will update members in the next report.



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Themes:



## Housing Horizons

Our project to work with you to develop a vision for housing associations in 2036 continues. We have spoken to over 350 of you and have a series of road shows planned over the summer period to debate the questions that go to the heart of our sector. Who will we house? What services will we provide? What is our wider offer to the community? We will also be considering how we attract the workforce we need to deliver our bold ambitions.

We have worked with Savills to publish a data resource which sets out the key housing challenges facing us in Wales. You can read this and book onto our roadshow events [here](#).



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Themes:



## Social Impact/Value

Many thanks to those who responded to our social value survey which will be fed into the work we are doing around value for money. A final report will be issued shortly and work is in progress to develop guidance and offer awareness raising workshops on social value in the coming months.

## Renting Homes Wales Act (2016)

We hosted 3 seminars supporting over 90 individuals to better understand the Renting Homes Wales Act. Following on from these events, we have set up a Yammer Network to keep members up to date on the implementation stages of the Act and ensure that members have the opportunity to feed into the process.

If you would like to be included in this network, please get in touch.



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## Launch of Global Accounts – the Financial Statements of Welsh Housing Associations

We published the 2015/16 Financial Statements of Welsh housing associations this quarter. The 'Global Accounts' included a suite of 10 value-for-money indicators highlighting sector averages across several areas.

Overall the results present a picture of a strong and resilient sector, showing balance sheet growth and the generation of necessary surpluses in order to build new homes and continue to deliver quality services to its tenants and communities.

Associations have invested heavily in major repairs to provide quality homes, as well as working to mitigate the risks to both tenants and their businesses posed by the challenges of welfare reform. It is pleasing to note that nearly 90% of the sector's spend is retained within Wales meaning the sector continues to act as a key contributor to the Welsh economy.

The report, sponsored by Principality Building Society, can be viewed in full [here](#).



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Themes:



## Membership Benefits

### What are the benefits of being a member of CHC?

Our **member offer** outlines how we will continue to work on your behalf to influence, connect, support and inform so that you can continue to invest in communities and change lives. **Click on the link below** to find out what we're offering you as part of your membership in 2017/18 and look back at some achievements where we have positively influenced your operating environment.

**Who's who at CHC** - We've put together an up to date list of who's who at CHC. **Have a look.**



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Themes:



## Conference Round-up

**CEO & Leadership Conference** - The changes within CHC's conference programme for 2017-2018 continued this quarter with the first ever CHC Leadership conference, which was held at Cardiff City Stadium. The Conference followed CHC's CEO conference, which was chaired by broadcaster and journalist Bethan Rhys Roberts; and keynote speakers included Tracy Myhill, CEO, Welsh Ambulance Service and Karel Williams, Professor of Accounting and Political Economy, Manchester Business School.

We'll be reviewing the format of our leadership conference for 2018/19 and will be publicising further details in due course.

**HR & L&D Conference** - The conference held in May brought together staff from Human Resource and Learning and Development teams within the social housing sector for the first time. Attended by over 60 delegates, the conference addressed subject areas through a mixture of keynote sessions, sub plenaries, training tasters and workshops including; behavioural insights, mergers, the apprenticeship levy and reflective practice. Following excellent feedback, we'll be running this conference again in 2018/19.



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Themes:



## Communications Update

We continued to influence the news agenda during the last quarter and you can read our latest report [here](#). Coverage spanned a wide range of outlets from trade press to broadcast and print and covered issues such as the Grenfell tragedy, new house building figures, CHC's PR and Communications Awards and the Homes for Wales General Election Campaign.

We also published 21 new blogs this quarter, including a blog on planning, Housing Horizons from Savills and the Older People's Commissioner's perspective, and a blog by Tracy Myhill, CEO of the Welsh Ambulance Service.

We launched phase two of Housing Horizons at our Leadership Conference in June. We commissioned Savills to undertake research to 'Establish the Challenge', and have produced this short **video** based on the findings.

We also ran our first Twitter chat about shaping our vision under the Housing Horizons project, and produced a Storify to capture the **online discussion**.



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Themes:



## CHC move to 'Achieve'

Over the last 6 months, CHC has been reviewing how we work to ensure staff are motivated and in control of what they are doing, and to know how their work contributes to CHC's Corporate Plan.

As a result of this, we have moved to 'Achieve' which is a new way of working where instead of focusing on inputs, particularly time, we are focusing on outputs and outcomes.

The benefit for staff is that we are clearer about our responsibilities and accountabilities and have more control over our time and how we manage work within an agreed period. CHC has been supported by Chwarae Teg to implement Achieve. Please contact me if you would like more information.



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# Until next quarter.

It's been another busy quarter! You can expect our next quarterly progress report in October.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact one of the members of the team.

*Get in touch.*



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