

# **A Local Housing Strategy for Powys 2016 - 2020**

# Contents

	<b>Page</b>
Foreword	3
Introduction	5
Vision, aims and objectives of the Local Housing Strategy	6
Housing and housing related challenges in Powys	14
The context for the Local Housing Strategy	16
The development of the Local Housing Strategy	18
Action Plan	20
Appendix 1 A profile of Powys	28

## Foreword

*We believe that a good quality, affordable home is a pre-requisite to enable families and individuals to lead fulfilled lives in their communities.*

As Portfolio Holders with responsibility for Housing we recognise the important roles that Powys County Council and its many key stakeholders must play, to enable the delivery of this simple statement. We also recognise that the local housing strategy is critical in respect of the delivery of the statement, ensuring that the resources available to tackle the challenge of delivering good quality, affordable homes are deployed to maximum effect and that housing connects with other services and initiatives to make best use of limited public funds.

We are delighted to present this local housing strategy, which sets out how Powys County Council and its strategic partners propose to find practical solutions to key housing issues which affect Powys. It has been produced in accordance with Welsh Government guidance and developed following extensive consultation. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who took the time to respond to the Housing Strategy survey, the results of which have been invaluable in helping to refine the priorities of the Strategy and action plan.

The strategy itself reflects the work and priorities of the Powys Strategic Housing Partnership and the visions and objectives of the Local Service Board, which are set out in the One Powys Plan. The local housing strategy is a forward looking document which looks at how the environment locally will be affected by a range of factors, and plans its response to these. This local housing strategy has been developed at a period of unprecedented change in terms of:

- fiscal policy (the reducing public sector settlement and welfare reform)
- legislative change (Housing (Wales) Act 2014; the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Social Services and Well Being Act 2015 and the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016)
- demographic change (the growth in the population of older people living in Powys and the reduction in the population of young people and people of working age)
- organisational change (the integration of Powys County Council and Powys Teaching Health Board, the shrinking public sector)

The strategy sets out the ambition of the council and its partners and clearly demonstrates the importance of housing in relation to the health and well-being of the population and how investment in housing benefits the local economy and the well-being of our citizens. We see housing as a critical piece of the jigsaw in:

- enabling vulnerable, older people to remain living independently in the community, which we regards as key to the delivery of the statement at the start of this introduction, but also key to the transformation of services for this group of citizens
- delivering area based regeneration, making Powys a great place to live, work and play
- tackling fuel poverty and digital exclusion.

The period covered by the local housing strategy will see significant investment in housing across the county, across all tenures and we whole heartedly welcome the initiatives outlined in the strategy and its accompanying action plan.



**Councillor Rosemarie Harris**

Portfolio Holder Buildings, Property  
and Housing (Chair of the Strategic  
Housing Partnership)

## **Introduction**

This is the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) for Powys. The LHS is presented in two separate but linked sections.

The first section of the document sets out the:

- agreed vision and direction of travel that the council and its key partners have developed to address these challenges
- main housing and housing related challenges which face the Council (in its role as the local housing authority) and other key agencies with whom the council works in partnership to address these challenges
- the context within which the LHS has been developed, the background to its development and the governance arrangements relating to the LHS

The second section of the document is a set of Operational Plans which sets out a series of actions related to the aims and objectives set out in the first section of document.

## **Vision, aims and objectives of the Local Housing Strategy**

This section of the document sets out the vision for the LHS for Powys, its three key aims and provides narrative in relation to the objectives contained in the strategy.

### **Vision and aims of the Local Housing Strategy**

The Local Service Board's One Powys Plan outlines the Local Service Board's vision and objectives, which is the key influence on the Local Housing Strategy.

The Local Service Board's vision is:

**We will work together to meet the needs of Powys citizens**

The One Powys Plan then identifies the following four priorities for improvement:

- **Integrated health and social care**
- **Transforming learning and skills**
- **Stronger communities**
- **Financially balanced and fit for purpose public services**

The Strategic Housing Partnership in developing the vision for the LHS was mindful of the key housing, and housing related challenges that face the county and the agenda for improvement set out in the One Powys Plan. The vision adopted by the Partnership is:

***“Ensuring a secure future in suitable housing for everyone in Powys”***

The Strategic Housing Partnership considers the term “suitable” to mean the following: affordable, appropriate in size and location and in good condition. The Strategic Housing Partnership has adopted the following three key strategic aims for the Local Housing Strategy:

- **To identify and meet the housing needs of the citizens of Powys**
- **To maximise the impact of housing expenditure on the economy of Powys**
- **To ensure that housing contributes to the delivery of stronger communities in Powys**

The following pages provide some narrative to the objectives and actions that each fall within each of these strategic aims.

## **Aim 1 - To identify and meet the housing needs of Powys**

### **Objective 1 – To identify the housing needs of Powys**

A Common Housing Register (CHR) and Allocations policy has been introduced across Powys, meaning that people in housing need (including those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness) and those who wish to apply for social housing only now need to approach one organisation and tell their story once. The establishment of the CHR means that the Council now holds real time data on the extent of declared housing needs in the county.

Alongside the CHR there is also the Local Housing Market Assessment which has been updated in 2016 which indicates need across all tenures, based upon population projections, income and house price data. This evidence base, which underpins housing policies contained in the Local Development Plan, will be maintained on a regular basis and will inform strategic decisions with regard to housing provision, such as the allocation of funding for the development of new homes. The LHMA update produced in 2014 and the recent review undertaken by Glyndwr University can be found at Appendix 2.

Section 50 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 places a requirement for local housing authorities to undertake a review of homelessness in its area and develop a homelessness strategy, based on the outcome of the review. All local housing authorities must have homelessness strategies in place by 2018 and the council will work with a range of partners to undertake its review and develop its homelessness strategy by this time. The emphasis of the homelessness strategy will be to work in partnership with key stakeholders to prevent, where possible, the incidence of homelessness and where this isn't possible to seek the most positive outcome for the citizen.

### **Objective 2 – Meeting the housing needs of the citizens of Powys by developing new homes**

The emerging Powys Local Development Plan (as amended by proposed Focused Changes, Jan 2016) indicates a need for the plan period (2011 – 2026) of 4,500 additional dwellings; an annual requirement of 300 new dwellings in the area of the County outside of the Brecon Beacons National Park. Whilst the bulk of the new development across the County will be undertaken by private developers, who will base their investment decisions on market intelligence, the Local Housing Market Assessment indicates that, on a County-wide basis, some 34% of these completions will need to be affordable. However, the viability assessment undertaken as a regulatory requirement of the LDP process indicates that this is not achievable by planning requirements under Section 106 agreements. The draft Powys LDP sets a proposed target of 1,257 affordable dwellings to be achieved over

the LDP plan period. The following are the achievable levels of contribution indicated in the Powys LDP from developments of 5 or more dwellings:

The target contributions required for each Price Area, subject to detailed viability assessments, are as follows:

- a. Central Powys – 30% contribution.
- b. Severn Valley - 20% contribution.
- c. Rural North - 10% contribution.
- d. South West/Ystradgynlais – 10% contribution.

The Brecon Beacons National Park does not divide its figures between the areas of the constituent Unitary Authorities, and its timeframe varies from that of this strategy. However it is clear that in the first 5 years of the LDP period, roughly aligned with this strategy period, the NPA provision of allocations for new dwellings in settlements within the Powys area of the Park are 301, of which 76 should be affordable. This is based on a 30% viability in the areas of Crickhowell and Hay-on-Wye and 20% in Brecon and surrounding areas.

Combining these figures gives a new dwelling requirement in the period of this strategy of 2,141 and it is realistic to project an affordable contribution of approximately 20% overall, or roughly 428 affordable properties provided by the planning system via section 106 agreements.

Alongside the planning system there will be development programmes delivered by housing associations to deliver affordable housing and the exit from the Housing Revenue Account subsidy regime means that the council is once again able to develop to meet housing needs.

Housing Association development has been constrained by a steady decline in the amount of Social Housing Grant (SHG) available to them and, in the financial climate since the crash of 2008, the borrowing conditions imposed by lenders. Added to this there are issues of economies of scale that affect the viability and deliverability of developments, especially in the smaller and more rural communities of Powys. This has been demonstrated to be true even where land has been made available by the Council at no cost.

Whilst Powys achieved the 2012 One Plan target of 200 new social rented homes by March 2015, this was due to Welsh Government and other initiatives and funding streams additional to those normally available and therefore unlikely to be repeated. The SHG programme allocated to Powys annually is £1,586,000.

Welsh Government in 2013 introduced the Housing Finance Grant as an alternative and supplementary means of funding for associations. This provides a revenue stream to associations, and from 2016 stock holding local authorities, to support borrowing equivalent to the 58% capital grant, repayable over 30 years. The

equivalent allocation of this revenue stream within Powys is projected to support borrowing of around £1,300,000.

The reform of the Housing Revenue Account finance introduced in April 2015, allowed Powys to exit the subsidy regime and will provide the council with the opportunity to develop homes to meet local needs. The council will initially wish to work in partnership with a development partner to deliver council homes, whilst improving its in-house skills to take on this function.

To maintain the supply of social rented homes in Powys the Council has applied to the Welsh Government for approval to suspend the Right to Buy. Whilst this safeguards the existing stock the council recognises that this limits the options for tenants who wish to move into home ownership, and the council will bring forward plans to support low cost home-ownership opportunities with housing association and private developers.

The Strategic Housing Partnership has commissioned a piece of work to identify the range of funding opportunities to address the key strategic housing need, based upon evidence emerging from on-going research and review.

In 2015 the Council in partnership with Carmarthenshire Council commissioned a Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), in accordance with Part 3 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. The assessment which involved extensive fieldwork with the Gypsy & Traveller community identified the need for 6 additional pitches in the communities of Brecon and Welshpool, in addition to the requirement for a permanent site of five pitches to meet existing identified need in Machynlleth. The council will be working to deliver the required pitches in each of the communities.

In addition, the current direction of travel of housing policy in the UK and in Wales, has seen the rapid growth of the private rented sector in recent decades. In Powys just under 15% of homes are privately rented and government policy has required local authorities to maximise the use of private sector properties to meet housing needs. The council is committed to working effectively with private sector landlords to improve the quality of housing and its management in the private sector and will bring forward a comprehensive action plan, as part of the homelessness strategy, which sets out how the council and partners will secure further improvement in this sector.

### **Objective 3 – Re-modelling housing and support services to meet the needs of identified populations**

Much of the specialist housing development for particular groups within the population, for example sheltered housing and older persons designated housing is

no longer fit for purpose, having been developed for a generation of older people 30 or 40 years ago.

A key requirement for the council is to enable frail older people to remain living independently within their own homes for longer, to reduce expenditure on residential and nursing care provision. The Strategic Housing Partnership has been consulted on the housing element of the Older Persons Commissioning Strategy. The council's housing service will be investing substantial capital sums in the fabric of its older persons accommodation, to ensure that it is fit for purpose and will be working with colleagues in adult social care and Powys Teaching Health Board to ensure the services required to provide care and support for older people living independently in the community are in place. In addition the housing service, along with partner housing associations will need to adopt a more flexible approach to the use of older persons' accommodation in Powys, to support efforts to reduce delayed transfers of care and provide step-up, step-down accommodation, providing a safe environment to enable older people to continue their re-ablement prior to discharge to their homes. The Accommodation Commissioning Intentions which is an addendum to the Joint Older Persons Commissioning Strategy can be found at Appendix 3.

In addition the council and Powys Teaching Health Board also seek to bring back citizens who are being cared for out of the county, to enable them to live closer to their families but also to reduce the cost of care. This will require the council and housing associations to reconfigure existing property or develop new purpose built accommodation, to meet this need.

Finally the council through its role as the administrator of the Supporting People Programme Grant (SPPG) will be working with colleagues in Children's Services, Adult Social Care, Powys Teaching Health Board, the Probation Service and the Community Rehabilitation Company and Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (PAVO) to develop and refine the approach to Early Intervention and Prevention, to ensure that support services are remodelled to more effectively meet the needs of individuals, to prevent homelessness and enable people to maintain their independence.

## **Aim 2 - To maximise the impact of housing expenditure on the economy of Powys**

### **Objective 1 – Home Grown Homes in Powys**

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 makes clear that decisions and actions taken today must have, at least, no negative effect on the well-being of future generations. The economy of the present should be looked at as a basis for future economic and social improvement.

Powys is a rural county with a substantial proportion of land containing forestry plantations and some industry in the processing of wood products and the development of timber framed construction.

The Strategic Housing Partnership is of the view that there are potential opportunities to increase the proportion of homes constructed using home grown and locally grown timber across Wales and beyond. The development of such opportunities would be of benefit to the wider economy of Powys and would substantially reduce the carbon footprint of the housing stock in the county.

Members of the Strategic Housing Partnership commissioned research to investigate the opportunities to grow the use of home grown and locally grown timber in construction locally, creating employment and training opportunities for local people and supply chain demand focussed on Powys and is seeking Arwain and Welsh Government Rural Development Fund funding to develop this initiative further.

### **Objective 2 – Recognising the impact of housing investment on the local economy**

Each year many millions of pounds are invested in the fabric of the housing stock and the economy of Powys by housing organisations, including the council, housing associations, private developers and private landlords.

The Strategic Housing Partnership will over the life of the LHS promote wider awareness of the scale of investment in the local economy by the housing sector, the impact that this has on employment in the county and the employment and training opportunities this creates for citizens who are in receipt of out of work benefits. We will work with a range of partners to develop the capacity of local businesses to take advantage of the opportunities offered by housing expenditure and we will work with training providers to ensure that the workforce of the future have the necessary skills to benefit from this investment.

### **Aim 3 - To ensure that housing contributes to the delivery of stronger communities in Powys**

#### **Objective 1 – Improving the quality of existing housing and neighbourhoods**

The council and its partners are committed to improving housing standards. The council and its housing association partners will continue to invest in their existing housing stock to ensure that it achieves the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by

2020. All members of the Strategic Housing Partnership are committed to improving the quality of homes and the neighbourhoods that they're located within.

The council will continue to support improvement in the private sector by the provision of landlord loans, home improvement loans, Town Centre loans and the Zero Interest Loans Fund (ZILF). In addition the Council will work with empty property owners to bring empty properties back into use by the administration of the Houses into Homes loan scheme and in the case of problematic empty properties by targeted action, determined by a multi-disciplinary problem empty property working group.

In addition the council will continue to work with private landlords to improve standards in the private rented sector by delivering the housing enforcement function and through the roll out of the Additional HMO Licensing Scheme and other housing and environmental legislation. In addition the Housing Service will collaborate with colleagues to actively pursue the proceeds of crime.

### **Objective 2 – Improving the management of the housing stock**

The council and its partner housing associations will identify opportunities to collaborate to improve the management of the social housing stock. The first concrete example of this collaboration is the Common Housing Register, and the Strategic Housing Partnership will identify other potential opportunities for collaboration, designed to improve services to tenants and residents.

The Council and its housing association partners will work in collaboration to address anti-social behaviour (ASB) within Powys. This will involve taking a victim-centred approach to ASB, robust action against those who commit acts of ASB and providing information to citizens to make them aware of the risks posed by rogue traders.

The council in its housing enforcement role will work with private landlords to implement Rent Smart Wales, to improve the quality of the management of the private rented sector housing stock.

### **Objective 3 – Tackling fuel poverty**

Investment by home owners and landlords in the fabric of their homes to improve energy efficiency has a positive impact not only on household budgets but also on health and well-being of the occupiers of property, eliminating cold, hard to heat homes.

All social landlords are committed to improving the energy efficiency of their properties but the council, its partner housing associations and third sector agencies want to go a stage further and reduce fuel poverty.

The council's HRA business plan sets out to replace inefficient heating systems in off gas areas with more environmentally friendly and energy efficient heating systems, such as air source heat pumps and where possible the installation of photo-voltaic cells.

We recognise that additional support is needed for tenants and home-owners to ensure that they use their heating system efficiently and that they are able to select the tariff that minimises their expenditure on energy. Social landlord members of the Strategic Housing Partnership are committed to working together to address fuel poverty by the provision of advice to tenants and residents, utilising a range of funding streams.

The council will continue to provide funding for private sector owners to enable them to improve the thermal efficiency of their homes by the provision of the Zero Interest Loans Fund (ZILF) administered by the Robert Owen Community Banking Fund. This scheme will be used to specifically target energy efficiency and carbon reduction installations through use of a sustainable revolving loan fund.

#### **Objective 4 – Promoting financial and digital inclusion**

The Strategic Housing Partnership recognises that the impact of welfare reform has posed difficult challenges for the council and its partner housing associations. The welfare reform journey is only partially complete; with the recent extension of Universal Credit to Powys and the 2015 summer budget's extension of the Local Housing Allowance shared accommodation rate to under 35's in the social housing sector to come into force from April 2018.

The council and its partner housing associations will work in collaboration, within the context of the council's welfare reform strategy, to ensure that:

- applicants for housing are aware of their obligations and are provided with advice to maximise their income
- look to improve the credit histories of tenants, to enable them to access financial services
- both applicants for housing and existing tenants are supported to open bank accounts; and are provided with assistance to enable them to make best use of IT equipment to claim for benefits and also to access better deals for utilities etc.

## **Housing and housing related challenges in Powys**

This section of the document identifies the key housing and housing related challenges that confront:

- the council in its role as the local housing authority and its broader statutory role
- agencies who work in the housing field in Powys
- agencies who work in the health and social care fields in Powys
- citizens of Powys and users of services provided by a range of agencies in Powys.

The issues have been drawn from the profile of Powys, which is contained at appendix 1 and provides information about the geography, people, economy and housing in Powys.

### **Key challenges**

- The withdrawal of services from many rural communities makes life particularly difficult for those on low incomes. The dispersed nature of Powys means that residents, unless they live close to their workplaces, will spend proportionally more on transport than those living in urban areas in Wales.
- The growing number of households headed by older persons, their increasing frailty as they grow older, the suitability of the housing stock and the existing model of community services, to enable them to continue to live independently in their communities. This is set against a backdrop of reducing revenue for the council.
- The loss of young economically active households from the county and the impact that this loss has on the population profile of the county, the provision of services, the funding settlement for the council and workforce availability and skills.
- Whilst proportionally fewer Powys residents are dependent on out of work benefits, Powys has the lowest median take home pay in Wales. Coupled with relatively high house prices, this means that the local housing market is not affordable for a high proportion of Powys residents.
- There are 2,600 empty properties in Powys, which represents 4% of the housing stock. 1,278 homes (1.9% of the housing stock) have been empty for more than 12 months.
- There are a range of housing pressures in specific housing sub-market areas throughout Powys. In many areas of Powys, high house prices and low wages

mean that homes are unaffordable, further contributing to the out-migration of young economically active people from the county.

- The absence of mains gas in many areas of the county, the high cost of alternative fuels and low relative earnings means that fuel poverty is a problem for many.

## **The context for the Local Housing Strategy**

This section of the document sets out the context within which the LHS for Powys has been produced by Powys County Council and its partners.

The strategic framework within which the LHS has been developed draws on key UK, national and local drivers. These are shown below:

### **Key UK drivers**

- Welfare reform

### **Key national drivers**

- Wales a Better Country (2003)
- Improving Lives and Communities, Homes in Wales (2010)
- The Housing (Wales) Act 2014
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016
- Better Homes for People in Wales (2001, updated in 2009) – this sets out the requirement for a local housing strategy
- Wales Spatial Plan (2004, updated in 2008)
- Programme for Government – Welsh Homes
- Fuel Poverty Strategy, 2011 and National Energy Efficiency and Savings Plan, 2011
- Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013
- Vibrant and Viable Places, 2013
- Social Services and Well Being Act 2015
- Williams Commission on the future of local government in Wales

### **Key local drivers**

- The Powys One Plan which sets the vision, values and priorities for Powys County Council from 2015 - 2020
- The emerging Powys Local Development Plan
- The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Local Development Plan
- Joint Older Persons Commissioning Strategy
- Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan (2014 - 2018)
- Strategic Equality Plan (2016 – 2020)
- Housing Revenue Account Business Plan
- The emerging Economic Development Strategy
- The integration of health and social care services between Powys County Council and Powys Teaching Health Board

This Strategy aims to comply with the key themes set out by the Welsh Government in "Better Homes for People in Wales - A National Housing Strategy for Wales" as updated in Improving Lives and Communities, Homes in Wales (2010)

This provides a general, strategic housing framework, underpinned by a vision of opportunity for everyone to live in good quality and affordable housing whether for rent or to buy. It also sets out a number of key priorities in relation to housing quality across all tenures, homelessness, affordability and the elimination of fuel poverty.

There is an emphasis on partnership working to achieve the desired outcomes. This involves a commitment not only on the part of Powys County Council but key national and local partners across statutory, independent and voluntary sectors, including the Welsh Government, housing associations and other potential housing providers including the private sector, local communities and support agencies. The Council's aims and objectives (as the local housing authority) will only be achieved by developing ownership of and commitment to the Strategy across a range of agencies and interests.

## **The development of the Local Housing Strategy**

This section of the document describes how the document has been produced and the governance arrangements in respect of its agreement and monitoring.

### **The development of the Strategy**

This document has been developed by Powys County Council on behalf of the Strategic Housing Partnership.

The Powys Strategic Housing Partnership is an assembly of stakeholders with an interest in the provision and maintenance of housing of all tenures across Powys.

The Vision of the partnership is:

***“Ensuring a secure future in suitable housing for everyone in Powys”***

The purpose of the partnership is to contribute to the formation of housing strategy for the County and to provide input to the development of housing and housing related policies and give consideration to potential new ways of working for the Council and partner agencies. It is critical that the work of the Partnership follows the strategic direction established by the Local Service Board in the One Powys Plan.

The partnership is intended to give as wide and inclusive a perspective as possible on housing issues within Powys, focusing on the challenges created by the geography, demography and economy of the County. This will include:

- the identification of housing needs
- the development of new housing and use of the existing housing stock to meet housing needs
- the prevention and alleviation of homelessness
- the management and maintenance of the existing housing stock

The primary function of the partnership is to be a forum for discussion and agreement in respect of recommendations arising from work undertaken by a number of specifically agreed work-streams, which the Partnership will establish to address a range of housing and housing related issues. These workstreams form the aims of the LHS.

The document was developed following a series of workshops held to develop the workstreams and the initial draft of the document was considered by the Strategic Housing Partnership at its meeting in February 2016. Following this meeting the comments of the partners to the initial draft were incorporated into an amended version of the document, which was presented to the Council’s Cabinet in March for approval prior to formal consultation.

The draft Strategy was revised in the light of comments received during the formal consultation process and an amended version of the document was presented to the Strategic Housing Partnership for its approval, prior to being presented to the Portfolio Holder for Property, Building and Housing and the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Planning who approved the adoption of the document by Powys County Council.

### **Governance arrangements for the Local Housing Strategy**

Progress in achieving the actions set out in the LHS for Powys will be monitored by the Powys Strategic Housing Partnership. In addition the work of the Strategic Housing Partnership is reported to the LSB's Stronger Communities Programme Board.

In addition, various actions contained within the Strategy will be reported to the LSB's Stronger Communities Programme Board and the Health and Adult Social Care Integrated Leadership Board.

## Aim 1 - To identify and meet the housing needs of the citizens of Powys

### Objective 1 – To identify the housing needs of the citizens of Powys

Outcome	Actions	By whom	Named Lead	By when
Develop and maintain a clear understanding of the housing needs of the citizens of Powys	Update LHMA on a bi-annual basis	PCC Housing Services	Service Manager Housing Solutions, PCC	Feb 2018
	Effectively manage CHR to ensure it provides a source of real-time information on need for social housing across the County	PCC Housing Services	Service Manager Housing Solutions, PCC	On-going
	Undertake a homelessness review and produce a homelessness strategy for Powys	PCC Housing Services	Service Manager Housing Solutions, PCC	Review November 2017 Strategy March 2018

### Objective 2 – Meeting the housing needs of the citizens of Powys by developing new homes

Outcome	Actions	By whom	Named Lead	By when
Ensure sufficient supply of land for housing across the County	Adoption of PCC Local Development Plan	PCC Planning Services	Professional Lead – Planning Policy, PCC	April 2017
	Work with in partnership to ensure the application of Brecon Beacon National Park Authority LDP policies	PCC Housing Services Brecon Beacons National Park Authority	Head of Housing, PCC	On-going

Ensure development of mixed tenure communities to meet the needs of Powys population	Produce documentary report on opportunities for funding development of affordable and social housing, to ensure that all opportunities are considered	Strategic Housing Partnership	Doug Hughes Architects	Autumn 2016
	Agree an approach that targets development of social housing for rent to areas of greatest need	Strategic Housing Partnership	Service Manager Housing Solutions, PCC	Autumn 2016
	Deliver 650 affordable homes across the county over the next five years	PCC Housing Services Housing associations Private developers Private landlords	Service Manager Housing Solutions, PCC	On-going

### Objective 3 – Re-modelling housing and support services to meet the needs of identified populations

Outcome	Actions	By whom	Named Lead	By when
Ensure that frail older people are able to continue to live independently in the community for longer	Ensure that all older person designated housing has level access and is capable of conversion into accessible housing	PCC Housing Service Housing Associations	Service Manager – Asset Management, PCC	March 2020
	Re-configure accommodation and care and support services to enable identified existing older persons accommodation to be designated “Extra Care Lite”	PCC Housing Service Housing Associations	Service Manager – Asset Management, PCC	March 2020
Development of seamless early intervention and prevention services for the citizens of Powys	Support the development of the integrated approach to early intervention and prevention, ensuring that the Supporting People Programme Grant plays an appropriate part in the development and roll out of these services	PCC Powys Teaching Health Board Third sector partners	Health and Social Care Change Manager, PCC	March 2019

## Aim 2 - To maximise the impact of housing expenditure on the economy of Powys

### Objective 1 – Home Grown Homes in Powys

Outcome	Actions	By whom	Named Lead	By when
Increase the use of home-grown and locally grown timber in the building industry	Deliver the first stage of the Home Grown Homes project, by co-ordinating the activities of the project's partners	PCC, Housing Association partners, Wood Knowledge Wales, Welsh Government	Housing Strategy Team Leader, PCC	31 March 2020
Increase employment in the timber industry in Powys	Increase proportion of jobs in forestry industry <sup>1</sup>	PCC, Housing Association partners, Wood Knowledge Wales, Welsh Government	Housing Strategy Team Leader, PCC	31 March 2020
	Increase jobs in production processing industry <sup>2</sup>	PCC, Housing Association partners, Wood Knowledge Wales, Welsh Government	Housing Strategy Team Leader, PCC	31 March 2020
	Increase jobs in timber manufacturing and construction industry <sup>3</sup>	PCC, Housing Association partners, Wood Knowledge Wales, Welsh Government	Housing Strategy Team Leader, PCC	31 March 2020
	Increase proportion of new homes social housing properties constructed in Powys using home, and locally grown, timber <sup>4</sup>	PCC, Housing Association partners, Wood Knowledge Wales, Welsh Government	Housing Strategy Team Leader, PCC	31 March 2020

<sup>1</sup> Target established in the first year of the Home Grown Homes Project

<sup>2</sup> As above

<sup>3</sup> As above

<sup>4</sup> As above

## Objective 2 – Recognising the impact of housing investment on the local economy

Outcome	Actions	By whom	Named Lead	By when
Provide a clear picture of the value of the Housing Sector to the economy of Powys	Capture all information provided by social landlords via the “Value Wales” toolkit to produce an annual impact statement	PCC Housing Services Housing association partners	Housing Strategy Team Leader, PCC	June 2017
	Produce an estimate of the value of private sector housing to the Powys economy.	PCC Housing Services Private sector partners	Private Sector Housing Team Leader, PCC	June 2017
Ensure that housing’s contribution to the regeneration programme within Powys is maximised	Effective collaboration on regeneration initiatives via the One Powys Plan Stronger Communities Programme Board	PCC Housing association partners Private sector partners	Service Manager Housing Solutions, PCC	On going
Ensure the workforce of the future is adequately skilled	Work with training providers and other partners to increase training options.	PCC Housing association partners Training agencies	Service Manager Tenancy Services, PCC	On-going
Ensure that Powys businesses are in a position to benefit from housing investment	Promote the use of local businesses and products where possible	PCC Housing association partners	Strategic Programme Manager (Resources), PCC	On-going

### Aim 3 - To ensure that housing contributes to the delivery of stronger communities in Powys

#### Objective 1- Improving the quality of existing housing and neighbourhoods

Outcome	Actions	By whom	Named Lead	By when
Ensure all social rented homes in Powys achieve the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) by 2020	Ensure all Council Housing achieves WHQS by 2018	PCC Housing Services	Service Manager – Asset Management, PCC	March 2018
	Ensure Wales & West HA maintains WHQS in its homes in Powys	Wales & West HA		On-going
	Ensure all Mid Wales HA homes in Powys achieve WHQS by 2020	Mid Wales HA		March 2020
	Ensure Melin HA maintains WHQS in its homes in Powys	Melin Homes		On-going
	Ensure Grwp Gwalia maintains WHQS in its homes in Powys	Grwp Gwalia		On-going
	Ensure Grwp Cynefin maintains WHQS in its homes in Powys	Grwp Cynefin		On-going
	Ensure Newydd HA maintains WHQS in its homes in Powys	Newydd HA		On-going
	Ensure Pennaf Housing Group maintains WHQS in its homes in Powys	Pennaf Housing Group		On-going
Work with private owners to bring back empty properties into use	Continue to focus attention on problem empty properties through a mixture of financial incentive and enforcement	PCC Problem Empty Property Working Group	Private Sector Housing Team Leader, PCC	On-going
	Continue to administer the Welsh Government “Houses into Homes Loan Scheme”, to bring back empty properties back into use	PCC Housing Services	Private Sector Housing Team Leader, PCC	On-going
Improve quality of town centres	Continue to administer the Town Centre Loan scheme, improving the quality of town centres and delivering accommodation in these areas.	PCC Housing Services & Regeneration	Community Development Officer, PCC	On-going
Ensure that effective action is undertaken to	Utilise Housing Act powers to ensure privately rented properties achieve minimum standards	PCC Housing Services	Private Sector Housing Team Leader, PCC	On-going

secure improvement in private rented accommodation				
--	--	--	--	--

## Objective 2 – Improving the management of the housing stock

Outcome	Actions	By whom	Named Lead	By when
Work collaboratively with housing association partners to improve the efficiency and delivery of services to tenants and residents	Continue to support the common housing register in Powys	PCC Housing Services Housing Association partners	Service Manager Housing Solutions, PCC	On-going
	Identify further opportunities for collaborative working in the areas of homelessness prevention, financial and digital inclusion and tackling fuel poverty	PCC Housing Services Housing Association partners	Head of Housing, PCC	On-going
Improve the quality of management of the private rented sector housing stock	To raise awareness of Rent Smart Wales and enforce the registration and licensing of private landlords and lettings agents	PCC Housing Services	Private Sector Housing Team Leader, PCC	From November 2016
	Work in partnership with private landlords to increase the number of affordable, well-managed private rented properties in Powys, used to accommodate people in housing need	PCC Housing Services	Private Sector Housing Team Leader, PCC	On-going

### Objective 3 - Tackling fuel poverty

Outcome	Actions	By whom	Named Lead	By when
To reduce the number of homes which are not connected to the mains gas network in Powys and improve the efficiency of heating systems in homes in off-gas areas	Work collaboratively to increase the number of connections to the mains gas network in Powys within the social housing sector	PCC Housing Services Housing Association partners	Service Manager Asset Management, PCC	On-going
	Increase the number of air-source heat pumps installed in Council homes in Powys in off-gas areas	PCC Housing Services	Service Manager – Asset Management, PCC	On-going
To ensure that support is available to enable vulnerable householders to minimise their expenditure on energy	Maximise take-up of NEST within Powys amongst vulnerable owners and tenants	PCC Housing Services Care & Repair in Powys NEST	Affordable Warmth and Renewable Energy Officer, PCC	On-going
	To raise awareness of and increase number of vulnerable householders referred to Energy Best Deal, provided by Powys Citizens Advice	PCC Housing Services Housing Associations Care & Repair in Powys	Affordable Warmth and Renewable Energy Officer, PCC	On-going

#### Objective 4 – Financial and digital inclusion

Outcome	Actions	By whom	Named Lead	By when
Minimise impact of welfare reform changes on households in Powys	Identify and raise awareness of impact of future welfare reform changes on households in Powys and the impact on landlords' rental income	PCC Housing Services & Income & Awards Housing Association partners Third sector agencies	Service Manager Landlord Services, PCC	On-going
	Ensure that vulnerable households are aware of their entitlements and obligations and are provided with advice to maximise their income and raise awareness of their housing options	PCC Housing Services & Income & Awards Housing Association partners Third sector agencies	Service Manager Landlord Services, PCC	On-going
To improve financial and digital inclusion amongst vulnerable groups	Work collaboratively to support vulnerable tenants to open bank accounts and to develop credit histories	PCC Housing Services & Income & Awards Housing Association partners Third sector agencies	Service Manager Landlord Services, PCC	On-going
	Work collaboratively to ensure that vulnerable households are able to access IT to claim benefits and secure financial advantages	PCC Housing Services & Income & Awards Housing Association partners Third sector agencies	Service Manager Housing Solutions, PCC	On-going

## A Profile of Powys

### Geography

Powys is the largest county in Wales. It stretches from the border with Wrexham and Gwynedd in the North, to the Swansea Valley and the Brecon Beacons in the South. It incorporates two planning authorities, including the Brecon Beacons National Park as well as the County Council. It borders Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire in the West, Shropshire and Herefordshire in the East, Gwynedd and Wrexham in the North, and Monmouthshire, Merthyr, Neath Port Talbot and Rhondda Cynon Taff in the South.

Powys is the green heart of Wales, at 518,108 hectares it is twice as large as the next largest Welsh local authority area. Powys covers a quarter of Wales and is the most sparsely populated county in England and Wales, with only 26 persons per square kilometre in 2013.

In 2011 an estimated 58.7% of Powys residents lived in villages, hamlets and isolated dwellings, compared with the Welsh average of 17.1%. In 2014, an estimated 48% of Powys residents lived in areas<sup>7</sup> ranked the worst 10% in Wales for access to services on foot or by bus in Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2014.

3910 km<sup>2</sup> (75.5%) of land in Powys was farmed in 2013, (Wales 75.2%). 69.5% of Powys was grassland, 2.8% was used for crops and horticulture, 2.8% was used for farm woodland<sup>8</sup> and 0.4% for other agricultural purposes.

Land use planning in Powys is determined by Powys County Council for the majority of the county, and the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, in the part of the county which falls within the Brecon Beacons National Park. Powys County Council's Local Development Plan which is currently unadopted and awaiting examination, can be found ([insert hyperlink](#)). The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority adopted Local Development Plan can be found [here](#).

A copy of the 2015 Joint Housing Land Availability Study can be found [here](#).

### People

Powys had an estimated population of 132,705 in mid-2013, representing an increase of 3.4% from mid-2003, the population of Wales grew at 4.9% over the same period.

It is estimated that there were 58753 households in Powys in mid-2013, representing an increase in households of 0.6% since mid-2011, (Wales 1.1%).

The average household size in Powys fell from 2.24 people per household in 2011, (Wales 2.31), to 2.23 in 2013, (Wales 2.30), due to the national trends of longer life expectancy and more elderly people living alone.

It is estimated that 18770 of Powys households in mid-2013 were single persons, (Wales 410934), 20649 were two adults with no children, (410193 Wales) and 4968 were three or more adults with no children, (132910 Wales). 1192 were 'single parent' families, (38088 Wales) and 11262 were families with two or more adults, (275701 Wales).

Powys has an older population when compared to the population of Wales. The 2013 mid- year estimates produced by the Welsh Government are shown in table 1 below. A copy of the Council and Powys Teaching Health Boards Joint Older Persons Commissioning Strategy can be found ([insert hyperlink](#)).

**Table 1.**

Age Group	% of Powys population	% of Wales population
0 – 15 years	15.4	16.8
15-64 years	59.9	63.7
65-74 years	13.5	10.7
Over 75 years	11.1	8.8

There were 1,246 live births to Powys mothers, and 1,506 registered deaths of Powys residents, representing a net natural decrease of 260 people over the calendar year 2013, continuing the trends of the previous decade. The estimated life expectancy at birth in 2011-13 was 80.4 years for Powys men, (Wales 78.3), and 83.7 years for Powys women, (Wales 82.3).

It is estimated that 5,110 people moved into Powys from the rest of the UK and 5,170 moved out of Powys to elsewhere in the UK between mid-2012 and mid-2013, a small net loss due to internal migration of -60 people. However it is also estimated that 200 people moved out of Powys to destinations outside the UK, whereas 280 moved into Powys from abroad, giving a net gain due to international migration of - 80. Overall there was a net outward migration of 20 people between mid-2012 and mid-2013. This reversed the inward migration trend of the previous decade.

The net impact of migration between Powys and the rest of the UK in the year ending mid-2013 was that the Powys population gained 0 children under 5, 170 adults aged 20 to 24, 90 adults aged 40 to 49, 80 adults aged 50 to 59 and 10 adults aged 60 to 69 but lost 570 of the 'student' group aged 15 to 19 with no net change in any other age groups.

The proportion of people aged 75 and over in Powys increased from 9.7% in mid-2003, (Wales 8.3%), to 11.1% in mid-2013, (Wales 8.8%), due to the national increase in life expectancy and the net out-migration of the student age group from Powys.

In 2013, 307 adult overseas nationals living in Powys were allocated a National Insurance Number (NINo) on the National Insurance Recording & Pay As You Earn System (NPS), equivalent to 0.4% of the resident population aged 16 and over, (Wales 0.6%).

In 2011 an estimated 1.6% of Powys residents identified themselves as from a non-white background, (Wales 4.4%).

An estimated 18.6% of Powys residents could speak Welsh according to the 2011 Census of Population, (Wales 19.0%).

In May 2014, 7,640 Powys residents, equivalent to 5.8% of the Powys population, were in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, (Wales 7.8%) and 710 Powys residents were in receipt of Incapacity Benefit / Severe Disablement Allowance, equivalent to 0.9% of Powys residents aged 16 to 64, (Wales 1.3%).

## **Economy**

The National Accounts economic indicator, Gross Value Added (GVA) per head at current basic prices, rose in Powys from £12,661 in 2010, (Wales £15,407), to £13,417 in 2011, (Wales £15,696). This represented a rise over the year from 61.5% of the UK GVA per head in 2010, (Wales 74.9%), to 64.3% in 2011, (Wales 75.2%).

In May 2014, 1.0% of Powys people aged 16 and over were claiming Income Support, (Wales 1.9%).

In 2013 there were 219 new cases of bankruptcy orders in Powys, equivalent to 20.4 cases per 10,000 adults aged 18 and over, (Wales 24.5).

HMRC estimated that in the 2011-12 tax year the median self-employment income among Powys residents was £10,400, (Wales £9,890), the median average employment income was £16,000, (Wales £18,100) and the median average pension income was £11,700, (Wales £12,200).

At the end of 2013 there were 5,745 active businesses in Powys, a net decline of 0.9% from the 5,795 active at the start of the year, (Wales 2.0%).

In 2012, production industries contributed 16.3% of the total Gross Value Added in the regional accounts for Powys, (Wales 19.9%). The construction industry contributed 9.4%, (Wales 6.4%).

77% of the enterprises in the 2013 Inter-Departmental Business register (IDBR) for Powys were Micro Enterprises employing less than 5 people, (Wales 66%).

In September 2014, an estimated 11% of the Powys workforce aged 16 to 64 were employed in agriculture and fishing, (Wales 2%), 2% in energy and water, (Wales 2%), 11% in manufacturing, (Wales 11%), 10% in construction, (Wales 7%), 16% in distribution, hotels and restaurants, (Wales 19%), 4% in transport and communications, (Wales 6%), 9% in banking, finance and insurance, (Wales 12%), and 30% in the public sector, (Wales 35%). The remainder were employed in other services.

The median gross weekly pay for full-time jobs in Powys in 2014 was £414.80, an increase of 0.3% from the previous year, (Wales £473.40, an increase of 0.6%).

An estimated 54.2% of Powys residents aged 16 to 64 in June 2013 were in fulltime employment (Wales 50.5%), 21.7% were in part-time employment, (Wales 18.5%), 2.6% were unemployed, (Wales 5.5%) and 20.6% were economically inactive, (Wales 25.0%). 19.1% were self-employed, (Wales 9.1%).

In October 2015 the Powys employment rate was 78.1% compared to a Welsh rate of 70.9%. In December 2014, 2.6% of Powys youth aged 20 to 24 were unemployed and claiming Job Seekers allowance (JSA), (Wales 4.0%). Overall, 1.2% of all residents aged 16 to 64 were claiming JSA, (Wales 2.4%).

## **Housing**

There are 64,195 residential properties on the Council Tax Register in Powys. Of these 1,384 (2.1%) have been empty for less than 12 months and 1,278 (1.9%) have been empty for more than 12 months.

In Powys 69% of properties are owner occupied (Wales 67.7%), 14% are rented from a social landlord (Wales 16.4%) and 14.8% are rented from private landlords (Wales 14.2%).

The Land Registry's House Price Index gave an average price of £147,246 for houses sold in Powys in November 2014, (Wales £118,762), representing an increase of 2.8% from November 2013, (Wales an increase of 1.7%).

The recently completed Local Housing Market Assessment shows that there are high levels of housing need in the following housing sub market areas:

- Welshpool
- Newtown & Llanidloes
- Brecon
- Hay

A copy of the most recent update of the Local Housing Market Assessment can be found (insert hyperlink) and a report produced by Glyndwr University critiquing the update can be found (insert hyperlink).

Office for National Statistics (ONS) data for 2014 gives an average house price for Powys of £160,000. Comparing this with the average salary, above, ONS arrive at a ratio of house price to salary of 8:4 for Powys. There will be some variation in this according to the local market areas within Powys.

In October 2013, 21.1% of the homes in Powys for which the heating fuel type was known used oil as their main heating fuel, (Wales 5.7%), and 14.7% of the homes in Powys for which the wall type was recorded had uninsulated solid walls, (Wales 13.3%). Figure for % of homes off gas network.

A copy of the recently completed Gypsy and Traveller accommodation assessment, which identifies the need for pitches for families from the Gypsy & Traveller community can be found (insert hyperlink).