

£20m to build homes fit for the future

The programme, which will initially be funded by £20m over the next two years, will contribute to the 20,000 affordable homes target the Welsh Government aims to provide over this term of government. The innovative homes, which will help to significantly reduce or eliminate fuel bills, will inform the Welsh Government about the type of homes it should support in the future.

The Cabinet Secretary made the announcement at the Innovative Housing Design Conference at the Cardiff City Stadium, jointly hosted by the Welsh Government, The Welsh Local Government Association and Community Housing Cymru.

He said:

“The housing sector in Wales is facing many challenges. We know we need to build more homes, quickly. We know the homes we build have to be cheaper to heat, more environmentally friendly and more capable of responding to the demographic challenges ahead.

“I’m looking for new ideas, new ways of doing things, both in terms of what we build and how we build them. We need to start looking at more innovation, at homes that can be built faster as panels in factories or whole units delivered to site on lorries. We need to look at what homes are made from and what else they offer in terms of fuel bills, carbon emissions, jobs.

“Building homes delivers important benefits beyond simply putting a roof over people’s heads. Alongside the well-documented health and education benefits that good quality housing provides for children and families, building homes of all tenures has a significant positive impact on the Welsh economy and on our communities. We can use the Welsh supply chain to unlock massive opportunities for growth and innovation in housing.

To qualify for support under the programme, homes must:

- be deliverable quickly
- be affordable and meet housing need
- create jobs and training opportunities, supporting Welsh businesses wherever possible
- significantly reduce or erase fuel bills and carbon emissions
- be healthy and comfortable to live in, reflecting the needs of the occupant
- be certified for quality.

“My ambition is to start changing the type of homes built in Wales.

Homes that are capable of being delivered at speed and cost and recycled, not just reused, if needs change. Homes that help to meet the challenges of climate change, fuel poverty and changing demographics with the huge pressures that puts on our health and social care budgets.”

Community Housing Cymru’s (CHC) Chief Executive Stuart Ropke said:

“CHC welcomes this latest investment by Welsh Government into innovative solutions for the housing crisis in Wales. Housing solutions need to be adaptable and flexible so that the sector can continue to provide a wide range of options for more people, and funding from this programme to turn aspiration into delivery will be key to this. The sector is up for the challenges set out in the Housing Supply Pact announced last December and we will continue to work with Welsh Government and WLGA to meet the 20,000 target.”

The WLGA’s spokesperson for housing, Councillor Dyfed Edwards, said:

“Local authorities have a full role to play in enabling and delivering the homes we need across Wales, and it is important that with this increased focus and investment in housing we do not miss the opportunity to explore new models of housing that deliver more efficient and affordable homes.”