

---

**CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**21/11/24**

---

**Attendance:**

**COUNCILLORS:**

Beth Lawton (Chair), Councillor Anwen Jane Davies, Jina Gwyrfai, R. Medwyn Hughes, Dewi Jones, Elwyn Jones, Linda Ann Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Linda Morgan, Gareth Coj Parry, John Pughe, Meryl Roberts, Angela Russell and Einir Wyn Williams.

**Officers Present:**

Llywela Haf Owain (Senior Language and Scrutiny Adviser) and Sioned Mai Jones (Democracy Team Leader).

**Also in attendance:**

Councillor Craig ab Iago (Cabinet Member for Housing and Property), Carys Fôn Williams (Head of Housing and Property), Hedd Tomos (Assistant Head of Housing and Property), Gareth Wyn Parri (Commissioning Team Leader), Sion Hughes (Director of Policy and Delivery, Adra Housing Association), Claire Shiland (Director of Operations, North Wales Housing), Melville Evans (Chief Executive, Grŵp Cynefin) and Edward Hughes (Executive Director of Care and Support, Tai Clwyd Alyn).

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors: Menna Baines and Rheinallt Puw.

**2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

A statement of personal interest was received from Councillors Eryl Jones-Williams and Gareth Coj Parry as they were Social Housing tenants. The interest was not prejudicial so they did not withdraw from the meeting.

**3. URGENT ITEMS**

None to note.

**4. MINUTES**

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 26 September, 2024 as a true record.

**5. SOCIAL HOUSING FIELD**

**(a) To consider the report on the Social Housing Field**

The report was submitted by the Head of Housing and Property Department. It was explained that an invitation had been extended to the housing associations that are operational in Gwynedd, namely Adra, Clwyd Alyn, Grŵp Cynefin and North Wales Housing, to join the meeting to respond to the Members' questions regarding the implementation of the Housing Allocations Policy. It was noted that the Allocations Policy had been scrutinised twice over the past two years.

The discussion was commenced by asking whether it was possible to receive a percentage of all housing allocations from the sample of 200 applications that had been received from the Housing Department. It was confirmed that the percentage was approximately between 15-20%. It was noted that the applications had been selected at random and that detailed work had followed to see what the local connection of individuals was, as well as their connection with the community where they had a social property. It was believed that the figures taken from the sample showed a clear pattern and gave assurances and credibility to the work completed. It was added that the 95% who were eligible were in the Gwynedd connection category due to their residency and that the rest was a small number, i.e. to provide or receive support from a person or provision in Gwynedd and it was asked for this to be evidenced. It was added that the Housing Department could provide the exact figure for the Members.

It was asked what the wait time was for bungalows in the Gwynedd and Meirionnydd area, emphasising their importance when releasing houses for families who genuinely needed them.

- It was noted that the figures on the demand for bungalows were not available today, but that the Housing Department would collect this information and provide it to the Members, as well as the list of the number of bungalows that the housing associations had so that there was a comparison between the demand and the supply.

It was noted that the Gwynedd social housing waiting list was long and it was asked why no more social housing were being built.

- In response to the question, it was explained that Gwynedd had joint social housing development plans which were prosperous and were acknowledged as a successful plan. It was noted that £50 million was being spent every year on social housing in Gwynedd. It was acknowledged that the number of houses that could be built were subject to funding and the availability of lands. It was hoped that the Local Development Policy would address these restrictions and that more funding would be available from the Government.

In terms of homelessness in Gwynedd, it was noted that the Housing Action Plan was worth £180 million and that a substantial proportion of this money had been earmarked for building and re-purposing houses for homelessness needs. In addition, it was noted that approximately 88 support units were being built in Gwynedd currently, with the hope of being able to remove people from unsuitable emergency accommodation. It was acknowledged that the housing crisis continued and that the Housing Department was seeking to address all housing needs.

In response to a question about the number who were currently on the waiting list for social housing, it was noted that around 2,000-2,500 applications were on the register. It was added that the waiting list had been static with these numbers over the last decade so there had not been any recent increasing pressures. It was emphasised that these were not individuals, but rather applications for a unit. It was reported that it was possible to receive the figure in terms of individuals, if the Members wished to receive this. It was added that although the figures were static, the needs were higher and more complicated and that plans were in the pipeline in order to respond to the needs.

In terms of specific areas and housing needs on a local level, it was noted that it was possible to identify the figures for the wards in Gwynedd on the Cyngor Gwynedd website. It was proposed to provide a link to a relevant section of the website. It was noted that the data was being extracted from the system periodically and so it was up-to-date and reliable.

- The Housing Department was asked to check this link, which was to be seen on the Members' Intranet, to make sure that it worked as there had been a problem with the link.

In response to a question on the numbers of people who were homeless in Gwynedd, it was noted that the figures were around 500-600 at present. It was added that the local connection to Gwynedd was also relevant for homeless presentations and that the local connection to the area had to be acknowledged before the person could be accepted as homeless in the County. It was added that some exceptions existed, e.g. individuals escaping violence. It was noted that the Housing Department could provide the exact figures on the number who are homeless and the connection to Gwynedd for Members; a desire to accept this information was expressed. It was emphasised that the term homeless meant people who sofa-surfed with friends or family or stayed in bed and breakfast accommodation, and did not sleep on the streets.

Concern was expressed that the Welsh Government did not like the emphasis on local connection in the Gwynedd Allocations Policy and members asked about the control that Government had over the Gwynedd Allocations Policy.

- In response, it was agreed that Gwynedd prioritised local people within the Allocations Policy. It was noted that it the Welsh Government intended to introduce a white paper on homelessness and that this could impact who could present as homeless in Gwynedd and consequently, it could affect the Allocations Policy. It was noted that there would be a need to wait and see what the impact would be as the new requirements had not yet been confirmed and it was hoped that more would be learnt over the next 12 months. Members were reminded of the intention to come back to the Care Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the Allocations Policy at that time.

In response to a question on the process of applying for a social property, it was explained that one application form and one Allocations Policy had existed since 2012, when the Housing Options Team was established. It was explained that after that the application process had been centralised. It was noted that there was no longer a restriction on the number of areas that applicants can choose to be eligible for a property; applicants can note 1 area only if that is their wish, or they could note 20 areas. It was emphasised that individuals were required to prioritise and that there was a risk for individuals to be penalised if they refused the offer of a property in an area that was one of their choices.

A question was asked about the procedure once people had been included on the waiting list for social housing in Gwynedd. It was highlighted that the individual applications on the list were being prioritised in line with the Allocations Policy. It was explained that the Council's role did not look into the background of tenants, it was only to assess their needs. It was noted that the Housing Options Team was creating a waiting list in line with the Policy's priorities. It was explained that the housing associations did the follow-up work of signing the tenancy once an individual accepted an offer and did the affordability work and established the relationship with the new tenant.

It was asked whether it was possible to obtain assurances that follow-up help and support would be available for individuals who had presented as homeless whilst they were staying in bed and breakfast accommodation, specifically for any concerns they had about mental health.

- In response, it was noted that full support was being given to individuals presenting as homeless if they needed the support. Reference was made to specific officers within the homelessness team who dealt with mental health issues, noting that the support continued throughout the stay in the emergency accommodation.

In terms of Tai Teg, it was asked who the landlord was and who was maintaining these houses. It was also asked about the houses the Council bought as rented housing and for

a further explanation about these houses. In addition, it was asked about the Housing Department's opinion on house swaps.

- In response, it was noted that the housing associations and the Council used Tai Teg and that it was a system that was run to let intermediate housing on behalf of the housing associations and came under Grŵp Cynefin.
- It was highlighted that the Council also purchased intermediate housing and that Adra, as one of the Council's partners, managed the building and the tenancy but that the Council received an element of the rent. It was elaborated that Cyngor Gwynedd are the owners of these houses but that the control of the houses had been transferred to Adra for a specific period of time. It was confirmed that there were two lists, namely social housing and the Intermediate Housing list (Tai Teg).
- In terms of the views of the Housing Department on swapping social housing, it was reported that the Department did not have an opinion on house swaps, as it was the law and therefore they had no choice. The statutory act approved the right for tenants to swap with the tenant of any other social property in England and Wales and there was no right to refuse the swap without a good reason.

It was asked how many were on the Tai Teg list. The Head of Housing and Property Department noted that it would be possible to send the information to Members. The importance of raising awareness about the Tai Teg list and intermediate housing was reiterated.

In response to a question about who made the final decision about who would receive a property, it was explained that the purpose of the Allocations Policy was to avoid a final decision by an officer. It was elaborated that by following the Policy that a list was being created based on priorities and the expectation was that in the formal agreement between the Council and the housing associations the list would be followed. It was explained that sometimes there would be rare exceptions when a tenant on the top of the list was not completely suitable for a specific property; at that time conversations would be held between the Council and the housing associations.

- It was asked whether there was a monitoring process to see how minor these exceptions were. It was reported that this data was available and that there were ongoing meetings on an operational and strategic level where these exceptions will be discussed. It was agreed that the Housing Department would do a piece of work and would share this information about the exceptions (by-passes) with the Members.

#### **(b) Questions to ask the Housing Associations (Adra, Clwyd Alyn, Grŵp Cynefin and North Wales Housing)**

The representatives of the housing associations were invited to the meeting. They ran through the questions that had been asked to the housing associations in the order in which they appeared on the Committee's Agenda, giving an opportunity for the representatives of the housing associations to respond and for the Members to ask further questions.

#### Implementing the Housing Allocations Policy

It was explained that the housing associations worked in partnership with Cyngor Gwynedd and that the housing associations had been part of the drawing up of the current Housing Allocations Policy back in 2019 with the Council and co-funding the Housing Options service. It was noted that the Adra housing association let 95% of their properties through the Allocations Policy and that the other 5% were allocated through internal controlled transfers due to reasons such as under-occupancy or the need for adaptations. It was also reiterated that a small percentage of tenancies commenced due to succession rights, which was a legal right.

North Wales Housing added that they had Supported Housing projects in Gwynedd and occasionally they would an internal management transfer to move a tenant from the Supported Housing to a social property without going through the housing register. It was noted that this happens when a tenant is ready to move on from the Supporting property and as a result frees up space in the Supported property for someone who needs this provision. Reference was made to other exceptions where allocations would be made outside the Policy, e.g. a risk to life because of domestic violence.

The comments from all housing associations were reiterated that the Allocations Policy was being implemented in full and that there was an honest and transparent working relationship between the Council and housing associations.

#### Waiting List

It was expressed that the applications to exclude some people from the waiting list were rare. Attention was drawn to part 3.47 of the Allocations Policy which identified why a person would be excluded from the register, e.g. historical criminal behaviour or attacking a member of housing association staff, as well as intensive anti-social behaviour and misuse of the property. It was also explained that it was also possible to exclude applicants from the housing register on a temporary basis and that this was the majority of cases, compared with the numbers that were permanently excluded.

It was reported that housing associations usually offered a property to the Local Authority's first nomination; but if unable due to valid reasons, e.g. a local matter relating to a specific allocation, this reason would be conveyed to the Local Authority and discussions would happen before coming to an agreement. It was emphasised that cases like these were very rare. The observation was reiterated by adding some reasons for not offering to the first applicant on the list (by-pass), e.g. the necessary support was not there for a tenant and the broader neighbourhood and did not work. It was noted that a risk assessment of the tenancy would be carried out and that the housing associations would do the background work. It was added that the housing associations sought to secure sustainable tenancies that would enable the tenants to settle in the community.

In response to a comment that the Housing Associations were undermining good work by changing the list, it was emphasised that these were exceptions that were made for the right reasons, e.g. affordability reasons as well as those noted above, in order to ensure that the tenant obtained a property that was suitable for them.

The Commissioning Team Leader added that by-passes were not supposed to happen but it was acknowledged that it was inevitable on some occasions when there were valid reasons. It was noted that the list being produced by the Housing Options Team reflected the priorities of the Allocations Policy but discussions and constructive conversations took place should there be a disagreement, and that this was a reflection of the close relationship between the Council and the housing associations. It was acknowledged that there were concerns at times due to the expectation that the Policy was being followed but there was a need to acknowledge that there were differences between various organisations and that disagreements would arise occasionally. It was reported that the Housing Options Team monitored when this happened. It was noted that the Members could see the magnitude of the problem when they would receive the data from the Housing Department.

The views of the housing associations on the Government's White Paper were sought, expressing concern that the White Paper would impact local allocations and the priority given in Gwynedd to local connections.

- In response, the housing associations were not overly concerned as the local Allocations Policy was in place which ensured that the people of Gwynedd were

given priority. It was added that when the final White Paper was published and when it would be timely to review, the housing associations would do that jointly and in partnership with the Council.

A desire for the housing associations to discuss allocations was expressed, particularly new sites, with Local Members, so that the Members could encourage people to register and put their names forward within their wards. It was believed that such discussions would avoid animosity in the community.

#### House Swaps

It was noted that the housing associations' tenants had a Secure Occupancy Agreement, which meant that they had the right to house swap. It was elaborated that the housing associations had a right to refuse in some cases, e.g. anti-social behaviour, adapted properties or the swap would cause under-occupancy. The process where an application would be received and then the appropriate checks being completed, was explained. Statistics were shared, e.g. that 50 swaps had taken place in Adra housing associations in the past year, i.e. 25 cases of mutual swaps. It was noted that 46 of these had been within Adra stock in Gwynedd. It was noted that there was 1 case in Conwy and 3 cases further afield. It was explained that the tenants of housing associations had a legal right to do this.

Grŵp Cynefin reported a similar pattern with 20 swaps that had taken place over the past 3 years, with the majority within the County and 2 from outside. It was confirmed that 2 was the number of swaps in Gwynedd for North Wales Housing. It was noted that housing associations could refuse when there was a local agreement (s106) on the property, which gave priority to local people for the property; they could refuse under the Renting Homes Act and work within this legal framework.

A request was made for a further explanation on Adra data. It was expressed that the swap figures were 135 for the next three years in Adra, and 50 since November 2023. A comment was made that swaps worked well for many tenants and could be beneficial.

Members expressed concern about swaps from outside Wales and it was asked whether these swaps could be stopped. It was reiterated that this was a Government decision and housing associations did not have the right to refuse without a valid reason. It was suggested that a clause should be included in the Allocations Policy, noting the need for tenants to communicate with housing associations as an initial step and seek to swap locally. It was believed that there was room to encourage tenants to move within their communities.

#### Tenant support, under-occupancy and homelessness

It was acknowledged that under-occupancy was a problem as it was not possible to force tenants to leave their homes but it was explained that the housing associations had incentives to seek to encourage tenants to move to a smaller property, e.g. help with moving costs. An explanation of the challenges was given, such as not wanting to leave, and if tenants were able to cope with and afford their existing home, the housing associations could not force them to move. It was explained that Grŵp Cynefin were looking to create a Policy to address the challenges around under-occupancy.

It was explained that 13 years was the length of an average tenancy with Adra housing association and that the property was an individual's home, therefore it can be understood why many are unprepared to move. It was reported that the housing associations sought to secure plans that encouraged tenants to move, such as Stad Frondeg, Pwllheli, or Plas Penrhos, Penrhosgarnedd. It was reported that these new buildings gave tenants an incentive to move and targeted under-occupancy in specific areas which help release properties. It was highlighted that the bedroom tax did not affect pensioners in Wales.

It was added that support was being provided by the housing associations in order to prevent homelessness by the Tenancy Support Officers or Welfare Officers who often visit vulnerable tenants and assess the sustainability of the tenancy. It was explained that financial advice was being provided as well as support for tenants to maintain their tenancies. It was explained that there was close collaboration with the Council, and particularly the Housing service and Social Services this was essential in order to support tenants, as well as direct services by the housing associations such as Gorwel services from Grŵp Cynefin. It was acknowledged that there may be room to do more but the current arrangements worked well and it was believed that the housing associations managed to meet the needs of tenancies.

Further details were provided on the energy and heating support service being provided jointly between some of the housing associations in order to address the challenges facing their tenants. It was expressed that the housing associations had a substantial fund to assist tenants with living costs.

It was added that eviction was the last option and that support and advice was always offered before reaching that step. It was emphasised that time and effort was being spent to collaborate with tenants in order to ensure that they were able to stay in their tenancies.

The Housing Department was asked to provide under-occupancy figures to the Members.

- The Commissioning Team Leader expressed that under-occupancy within the social housing stock was a priority within the Housing Allocations Policy and was one of the emergency Housing needs, if it financially put the tenancy at risk, therefore cases of under-occupancy brought applicants close to the top of the list.

It was asked how many houses the housing associations had in Gwynedd.

- In response, it was noted that Adra had 7,300 properties in their housing stock and that 90% of their stock was in Gwynedd. It was noted that North Wales Housing had 900 stock in Gwynedd, which included Extra Care Housing and Supported Housing properties, as well as social properties. It was reported that Grŵp Cynefin had 1,900 properties in Gwynedd, which was a mix of social rented properties, supported housing, Extra Care schemes and part-ownership and intermediate housing properties. Clwyd Alyn noted that they only had the stock in Penrhos, Pwllheli, in Gwynedd at present.

It was asked how much money housing associations had in the fund to help prevent homelessness and where that money came from.

- In response, it was noted that funds were being created internally and that a sum of money was being allocated internally to the poverty funds or the under-occupancy funds which came from money being created by the income of the housing association.
- It was added that the Council received a Housing Support Grant from the Government every year, which was a substantial grant, and that the Council commissioned services from the housing associations which provided support to individuals and avoided homelessness. It was expressed that there was very close collaboration with partners to ensure the existence of projects which contributed to these objectives.

It was asked about how much difference that new buildings, e.g. the 28 new flats in Frondeg, Pwllheli, was making to the waiting list.

- In response, it was noted that 8 had been transferred to the flats in Frondeg, Pwllheli as internal controlled transfers as they were under-occupying and lived in 2-3 bedroom houses. It was noted that this had released an element of pressure

but it had not made a big difference to the figure of 2,000-2,500 who were on the waiting list, but that every scheme helped.

It was suggested that the housing associations should collaborate on a campaign in the new year to raise awareness of the incentives for tenants to move to smaller properties. It was also suggested that there was room to be creative and consider different schemes such as the home share scheme that was being used by the Council to help with homelessness. The housing associations gave thanks for the idea and expressed that they could collaborate on the campaign around reducing the size of properties.

#### Housing quality and maintenance work

It was reported that a backlog of maintenance work continued in the housing associations since Covid times. Reference was made to the new WHQS (Wales Housing Quality Standard) which listed what was mandatory for the housing associations to do and what was required by the Welsh Government since this year. It was noted that there were new standards that the housing associations had to comply with and others that would require planning. It was expressed in general that the stock profile of the housing associations were old.

Adra referred to the investment they had made in their properties and reported that they had made a £60 million investment in their stock during the last three years. These investments included building new houses, investing in existing houses and improving the customer care service. It was noted that it currently cost £12,000 on average to bring a property that had become vacant back into use and up to standard before a new tenant could move in.

It was highlighted that every social property had to be carpeted before being re-let and that the kitchen and toilet had to meet the Wales Housing Quality Standard, e.g. sockets in specific places, etc. It was noted that it was essential for housing association properties to be standardised to facilitate arrangements should regular or emergency repair work arise in the property.

In response to a question on how easy it was for Members to contact the housing associations, North Wales Housing noted that they had a website and that their phone number and e-mail address could be found on the website. They added that they were happy to discuss with local members and were open to suggestions on how to improve the contact. Clwyd Alyn said that they had a specific contact number for Members, as well as a contact centre and a clear complaints procedure. Reference was made to the Councillor-specific e-mail address that Adra had, and that many members used it.

- A suggestion was made for the Council to prepare a bespoke form to use when there was a problem in a property, so that Councillors could fill it in accordingly. Members also asked to receive a contact form including the phone numbers and e-mail addresses of different departments within the Housing Associations so that they could make direct contact with the most suitable person.

In response to a question about selling stock, Adra reported that they had sold 7 of their properties since 1 January 2020, and in that same period they had built hundreds of new houses. It was highlighted that the money received from property sales went towards building new Houses in the County. It was detailed that this property went on the market with a 106 agreement (s.106) in order to encourage local buyers. It was added that the housing associations did not sell properties on a whim, and only considered this as the final option.

In response to a question on the waiting time for repairs to be completed and complaints from some of the County's residents regarding the process, Adra noted that a specific timetable existed within the housing association to complete maintenance work. It was



elaborated that there was flexibility within the timetable if the tenant was vulnerable. It was noted that they dealt with 20,000 repairs requests every year and that the satisfaction of their tenants with their repairs service was 90%. In order to improve this figure and the communication within Adra, it was reported that a cross-departmental corporate project was in the pipeline in terms of the maintenance service and that every element of communication within the process would receive attention over the coming year.

North Wales Housing elaborated on their targets to complete repairs and reported on some of the challenges that existed, e.g. tenants not allowing them access to the property or a delay in obtaining parts or materials that are essential to complete the repair, and other factors that could lead to a delay. It was added that they had an in-house repairs team and that the tenants appreciated this service.

Reference was made to the Government's expectation for all social properties to have an 'A' EPC rating by 2035, noting that housing associations would have a programme of continuing improvement; however, this would not happen at pace. It was reported that there was an element of flexibility in terms of meeting this target, therefore there was no huge pressure on housing associations at present; however, it was acknowledged that there was not much time to meet the targets. It was noted that the housing associations would work through their plans before submitting them to the Welsh Government in March 2025 and then they would see the way forward following this.

It was questioned whether the way that some of the tenants lived led to problems in the properties, e.g. drying laundry inside the house, not allowing the house to breathe, which led to damp and mould. In response, it was believed that some rendering and insulation work would improve the property's EPC but it was believed that there was room to ensure that an element of educating took place to accompany the work, i.e. to make the best of the property in terms of its performance and in to prevent damp and mould.

Data was sought from the Adra housing association in terms of how many properties had damp and mould. In response, the Adra representative reported that the data was being reported to the Government every quarter and they would provide that data to Members. Members were asked to refer specific cases forward to the housing associations outside this Committee, ensuring that their enquiries would receive attention.

#### Empty houses and buying houses

It was reported that North Wales Housing currently had one long-term empty property and 31 empty properties within the operational empty period; 13 of these were in Gwynedd. It was noted that properties were currently empty for an average period of 25 days and this was mainly due to the WHQS standards that had to be complied with before a new tenant moved in. Clwyd Alyn reported similar figures, noting that they took 28 days on average to bring an empty property back into use. It was added that specific needs, e.g. the need to carpet or install new floors at a property could add time to the process, or if the property needed a new kitchen or bathroom, this could mean that the property was empty for more time before it was ready for the new tenant. It was noted that every property was assessed individually and that work was completed as quickly as possible.

The national average figure of empty social housing stock in Wales at any time was given, namely 2%. It was noted that the average for Gwynedd was 1.6%. It was added that 1.7% of Adra's housing stock were currently empty, which equated to 100-120 empty houses, which was less than the national average. It was noted that it took 2 months on average to get a property ready to re-let as substantial work was usually done to improve the property. It was noted that 96% of the tenants who received a property were satisfied with the condition of the property.

In response to the question about whether the housing associations had bought former Council houses in the last 3 years, there was consensus amongst the housing associations that they tended to invest capital funding in new houses and that this was their focus. Adra noted that they had bought 3-4 Council properties in the last 3 years, because of the challenges of buying old houses and bringing them up to WHQS standards.

#### Communication and complaints

It was reported that the housing associations had Complaints Policies but they tried to deal with matters before they became formal complaints. It was noted that housing associations aimed to respond to tenants within 10 working days of receiving a complaint. Clwyd Alyn noted that they had a Complaints Panel which was a mix of housing association staff and residents and that this Complaints Panel met every quarter to look for potential improvements within the complaints procedure.

North Wales Housing noted that their complaints figures were very low and therefore they were currently doing some work to ensure that complaints were recorded correctly and to promote the complaints process. It was noted that complaints could be positive in order to improve and reflect the service being provided. Adra noted that they had one officer who was a point of contact for the complaints.

It was asked whether it was possible for Members to receive a copy of the general tenancy agreements of housing associations in order to assist them when they received complaints by the public regarding social housing tenants.

- In response, the housing associations offered to share a copy of the Anti-social Behaviour Policy with the Members. It was noted that if Members received complaints about cases of law-breaking, the Police were the first point of contact. It was noted that if members received any other complaints for them to contact the usual point of contact, and the complaints would be forwarded to the Area Team which dealt with cases of anti-social behaviour.

Reference was made to an example of good practice from Grŵp Cynefin recently where a Member received an e-mail listing what houses would become empty over the coming weeks, and asking the Councillor to encourage the residents to make contact. All housing associations were encouraged to follow this example. This attention was supported by the Members, noting that it would be good for Councillors to know when a house would become empty in their ward, and a further message noting when those houses have been allocated.

An appeal was made for Adra to loosen their Members policy somewhat. It was acknowledged that it was great to have a single point of contact most of the time, but Members felt that it would be valuable to have a chat with a Team Leader or Head of Department in Adra on some occasions, instead of the single officer who was a point of contact for Members. It was believed that this would be valuable in order to be able to build a relationship and educate Members for the reasons behind things that were more technical in nature.

- In response, Adra noted that the single point of contact worked well and that they were still eager for this to continue, particularly with initial enquiries or less complicated enquiries. It was noted that Catrin Thomas had been appointed to lead that team recently, and this feedback from Members would be fed back to the company in order to see whether the process could be reviewed. It was added that Adra would attend the four Area Forums soon in 2025, and that the arrangements were in place to give Members an opportunity to receive information on a more local level.

The housing associations were thanked and they noted that today's discussion had been an eye-opener and that the Members had learnt a lot about the procedure. The housing associations were thanked for their honesty, reporting that the meeting had been very educational. It was hoped that the housing associations received more money from the Welsh Government over the coming years in order to be able to increase the numbers of social properties and hopefully reduce the waiting lists. The housing associations were thanked for their observations and for their time.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. To accept the report, noting the information and thanking the Housing and Property Department for the comprehensive information submitted.**
- 2. To request additional information from the Housing and Property Department regarding:**
  - **The numbers on the waiting list for bungalows in Gwynedd and in the Meirionnydd area.**
  - **The Homelessness figures and how many of these do not originate from Gwynedd.**
  - **A link to the page on the Members' Intranet which provides ward-level data on the Housing Register.**
  - **Data on housing exchange numbers (mutual exchanges).**
  - **Data about the Tai Teg register and the figures.**
  - **The under-occupancy figures.**
  - **The exceptions to the Allocation Policy over the past 5 years stating the reasons.**
- 3. To express concern regarding:**
  - **The lack of input from the Council when Housing exchanges take place.**
  - **The potential future implications of the White Paper for Gwynedd's Allocations Policy.**
  - **The lack of a reduction in the numbers on the Common Housing Register over the last ten years.**
  - **The homeless numbers in the County.**
  - **Communicate with the Housing Associations and suggest that the Housing Department should provide a standard form for Members to complete on behalf of tenants when maintenance is required including the provision of points of contact for the various Housing Association Departments.**
- 4. To accept the information received from the Housing Associations and their responses to members' questions that will be summarised in the Committee's minutes.**

The meeting commenced at 10.30 and concluded at 15.45.

