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Chairs of Registered Social Landlords  
Chief Executives of RSLs  
Community Housing Cymru  
Directors of Housing for Local Housing Authorities  
Federation of Master Builders  
House Builders Federation  
TPAS Cymru  
Welsh Local Government Association

17 August 2021

Dear Colleagues,

### **Launch of the new standard for building affordable housing in Wales**

I am delighted to announce the launch of our new standard to replace the Development Quality Requirements (DQR) 2005. DQR, as it was widely known, has provided a benchmark standard for new affordable homes in Wales over the last 16 years. Much has changed since then, and the standard needs to meet new challenges to the way we design and build homes.

In 2019, I invited the independent panel leading the Affordable Housing Supply Review, to make recommendations about what a new standard could look like. I accepted their recommendation to *“develop new consolidated and simplified standards for new build grant funded homes and affordable homes delivered through planning agreements (under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) and planning conditions”*.<sup>i</sup>

### **Broad support for the new standard in the Formal Consultation**

A proposed new standard titled “Beautiful Homes and Spaces” (BHS) was the subject of a formal twelve week consultation last year. There was a majority of support for the proposals and a great deal of interest in accessibility (Lifetime Homes), space and low carbon design. The Welsh Government response to the consultation may be reviewed at the following link:

<https://gov.wales/mandatory-quality-standards-new-homes>

### **The new standard will be announced formally on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2021**

After due consideration of the responses I am delighted to inform you that the new standard, re-named “Welsh Development Quality Requirements 2021 – Creating Beautiful Homes & Places” (WDQR 2021) will be announced and may be reviewed at the following link:

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Julie.James@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Julie.James@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Julie.James@gov.Wales](mailto:Correspondence.Julie.James@gov.Wales)

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

<https://gov.wales/development-quality-requirements-housing-associations-and-localauthorities-2021>

WDQR 2021 sets new quality requirements for social housing centred on flexibility, space and sustainability. This government is determined to step up to meet the climate change challenge. The standard therefore features bold new requirements about low carbon design as well as a “non-fossil” fuel requirement for domestic heating and hot water systems.

### **How to apply the standard**

The standard will be applied in full to all publicly-funded affordable housing schemes submitted to Welsh Government at “concept” stage for technical scrutiny from 01 October 2021.

New affordable homes delivered through planning agreements (under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) and planning conditions will only be required to meet the Appendix A and Appendix B “space requirements” for agreements entered into after 01 October 2021. These same “space requirements” will also apply to Help to Buy Wales (HtBW) should the scheme continue beyond 2023.

Increasing housing supply is a key ambition for Welsh Government. Through WDQR 2021 the social landlord sector is now leading the way in terms of requiring new build homes funded with public money to be high quality, beautiful and low carbon. These standards are designed to maximise community, economic and wellbeing outcomes, and support equalities and social justice. The aim is that these standards will be applicable to all new build homes in Wales in future.

To ensure a smooth transition to the new requirements, I have instructed officials to invite you to a workshop event on 16 September 2021, where the standards will be discussed and opportunities given for questions, so you are clear how the new standard will be implemented. In the meantime, if you have any queries or concerns about Welsh Government’s expectations for the future of new homes built in Wales, or how the standard will work in practice, please contact my officials at [SHGSchemeDelivery@gov.wales](mailto:SHGSchemeDelivery@gov.wales)

Yours sincerely



**Julie James AS/MS**

Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd  
Minister for Climate Change

