

HOMES INSPECTION

Inspectors have commended Gwynedd and Anglesey's main housing association for its approach to its core business of providing homes in the area.

But an inspection earlier this year by the Wales Audit Office found there is also a scope for improvement in the way Cymdeithas Tai Eryri connects with its tenants and in its approach to continuous improvements.

"We're extremely happy that the four-member inspection team found our approach to providing and managing homes up to standard," said the Chief Executive of the 30-year-old Association, Walis George. "But we're equally disappointed with the weaknesses identified," he added.

The inspectors were especially impressed with Cymdeithas Tai Eryri's key role in establishing a Rural Housing Enabler who works with local communities in identifying local affordable housing needs in the most sparsely populated areas.

"The Rural Housing Enabler's work has already resulted in affordable housing developments in Dyffryn Ardudwy and Llanuwchllyn with others on the pipeline," added Walis George. "The local community councils were involved from the outset right through to the lettings process," he said.

The Inspectors' report also gives Cymdeithas Tai Eryri the thumbs-up to its arrangements for people with housing support needs and the Association's general lettings service. But the report also found that opportunities for tenant participation, its monitoring of equal opportunities and housing maintenance service had scope for considerable improvement.

"I welcome the inspectors' report as we don't want to be complacent about the need to continuously improve services to our clients," said Walis George. "Regular inspections provide an independent insight into what were doing right as well as how we can improve on our central role in providing secure and comfortable homes that meet the needs of local people," he added.

Cymdeithas Tai Eryri is governed by a 15-member voluntary Management Board that includes five elected tenant representatives as well as lay members. The Association manages 1,700 affordable homes in Gwynedd and Anglesey.

The Government of Wales Act 1998 stipulates regular inspections of housing associations in Wales in order to assess how they meet the expectations of the National Assembly for Wales' Government.

"Our responsibility now is to take on board what the Inspectors found and act accordingly," added Walis George.

"Cymdeithas Tai Eryri is undoubtedly on the right track but we obviously need to improve in a number of key areas in order to reach the highest possible standards expected."