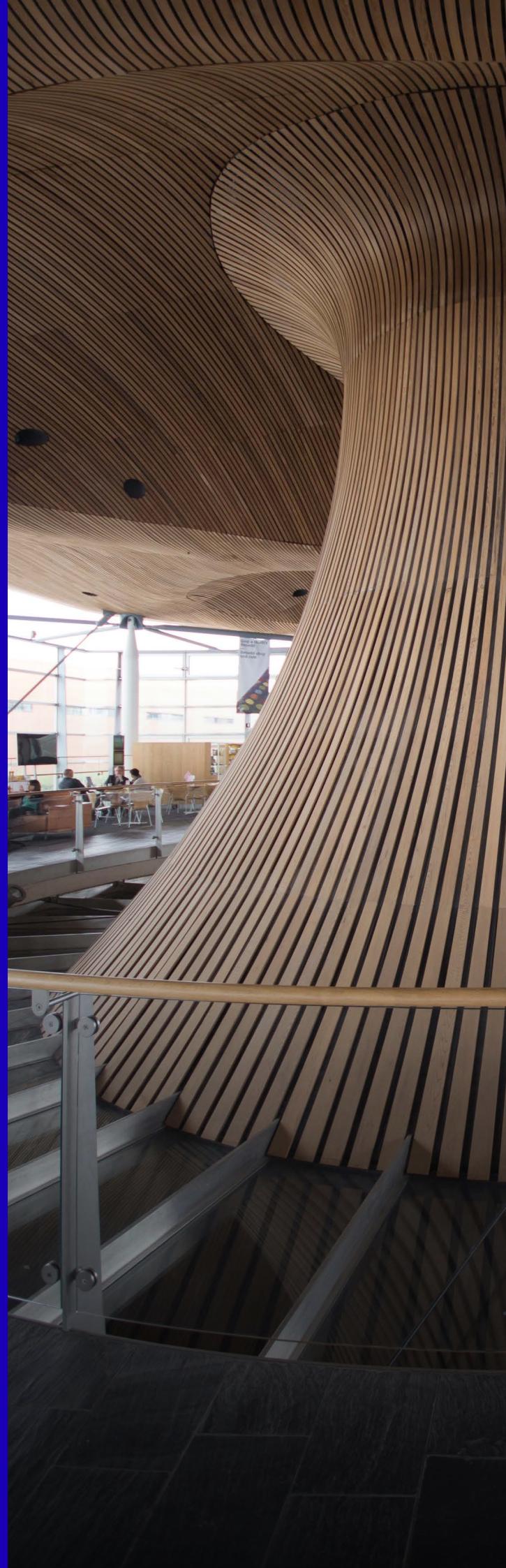




The Chartered
Institute of Building

CIOB Welsh Manifesto 2026



In this report

01 Foreword



02 Introduction



03 Recommendations



This report was written by David Kirby,
Senior Policy and Public Affairs Officer - Wales
Published by the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB). Copyright CIOB 2026

X: [@theCIOB](https://twitter.com/theCIOB)
Facebook: www.facebook.com/theCIOB
LinkedIn: search 'CIOB'
YouTube: [CIOBTV](https://www.youtube.com/ciobtv)

CIOB, 3 Arlington Square, Downshire Way, Bracknell, RG12 1WA, UK
+44 (0)1344 630 700 | policy@ciob.org.uk
Registered Charity No. (England and Wales) 280795 and (Scotland) SC041725

Foreword

The construction industry is a barometer of the economic landscape in Wales. As a country, we need to focus on wealth creation, innovation, employment, and sustainability, which will create demand for construction to drive the economy. We need the next Welsh Government to put these priorities first.



Within these priorities, there are plenty of opportunities to take advantage of Wales's abundant natural resources with sustainability and innovation at their heart.

Industries such as energy generation and storage, as well as food production, processing, and distribution. Can we harness rainfall in a better way? Can we build reservoirs with hydro electric generators and use that water in cooling for nearby data centres, allowing Wales to become a sustainable innovation hub for artificial intelligence? Can we expand these rural opportunities to year-round tourist attractions, providing a much-needed boost for local rural economies? Can we make Wales work better for Welsh people?

The answer to all of these is, or should be, "yes". These projects, however, must be developed alongside, owned by, and used for the benefit of communities, the people within them, and Wales as a whole.

The truth, however, is that without a thriving construction sector – the majority of which is Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) – none of these projects or wider Welsh Government aims will be successful.

While the Welsh Government and the Sixth Senedd has taken some steps to improve the construction sector through legislation like the forthcoming *Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act*, this manifesto calls for wider procurement reform, and to greater involve local authorities and councils in the tender process to ensure that any projects can deliver for communities.

This manifesto also recommends practical and realistic steps the next Welsh Government and Seventh Senedd could take to improve the construction sector to the benefit of Wales, including how to stimulate a more diverse workforce and ensure decarbonisation of our built environment.

CIOB looks forward to working with policymakers in 2026.

Wyn T Harries FCIOB
Chair, CIOB Wales Committee

66

This manifesto calls for wider procurement reform, and to greater involve local authorities and councils in the tender process to ensure that any projects can deliver for communities.

Introduction

The built environment and construction sector in Wales remains a key economic driver and employer. As we said in our 2021 Manifesto, “it influences productivity and well-being at home and at work. It creates and maintains the places that people live, work, and play in, [and] the infrastructure that supports them.”

This sentiment remains true and continues to be acknowledged by policymakers of all levels and members of the public across Wales. However, since 2021 and the last Senedd election, the construction sector continues to struggle post-pandemic.

The industry faces a growing skills gap and recruitment issues, alongside continued high energy costs, material costs, labour costs and a struggling economy more widely. All of this pressure compounds and means that the sector in Wales struggles when compared to the rest of the UK, and many construction companies have ceased trading as a result. This is particularly negatively impacting SMEs, which make up the majority of the construction sector in Wales. Closures of larger businesses and contractors, however, show that no business is immune to these pressures. Broadly, these issues are similar as we look to the 2026 Senedd election that the industry was facing leading into the 2021 election.

The construction and built environment sector continue to be of the utmost importance, and failure to invest and protect the sector will have repercussions for many years to come. Welsh Government has recently published a *Digital Action Plan* for the Welsh construction sector and a *Built Environment Mission Statement*. While CIOB supports the intention of the latter, namely to set out a “strategic vision for a resilient, innovative, and socially responsible construction sector”², there are no concrete legislative or regulatory commitments included, and more support for the sector is sorely needed.

There are, however, many reasons to be optimistic about the industry. Wales has a unique ecosystem, boasting a built environment GCSE (or VCSE from 2027) and A-Level that most of the rest of the UK lacks. Additionally, legislation such as the *Wellbeing of Future Generations Act* is a scaffold on which long-term thinking can be achieved and the industry can flourish. The landscape of Wales lends itself to key economic drivers and opportunities, such as agriculture and food production, as well as renewable wind, solar, and tidal energy. The construction sector will have a key role to play in ensuring the public and communities can reap the benefits of any green energy revolution. Additionally, Construction Industry Training Board forecasts:

Construction output is forecast to **grow by 1.2% in 2025** in Wales, following a decline in 2024 (-17.8%). In the medium term, construction output is forecast to **average 1.9% per year between 2025 and 2029.**³

Additionally, CITB expects that “Wales [will] significantly outpace the UK in new housing growth over the next 5 years”⁴. This prospective growth, particularly in a key area like housing, is reason to be optimistic about the sector, and presents an opportunity for construction businesses and professionals in Wales.

Policy Background

- *Wellbeing of Future Generations Act*
- *UK Procurement Act* (adopted by a legislative consent motion in the Senedd)
- *Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act* (coming into force in early 2026)
- *Welsh Housing Quality Standard (2023)*
- *Building Safety (Wales) Bill*



Introduction

(continued)

CIOB's 2021 Manifesto: What's been achieved?



Build Quality and Safety

Our 2021 Manifesto called for “increased investment in construction to create safe, high-quality new buildings and improve and adapt existing properties, to ensure they are fit for purpose for the future generations that will use them.”

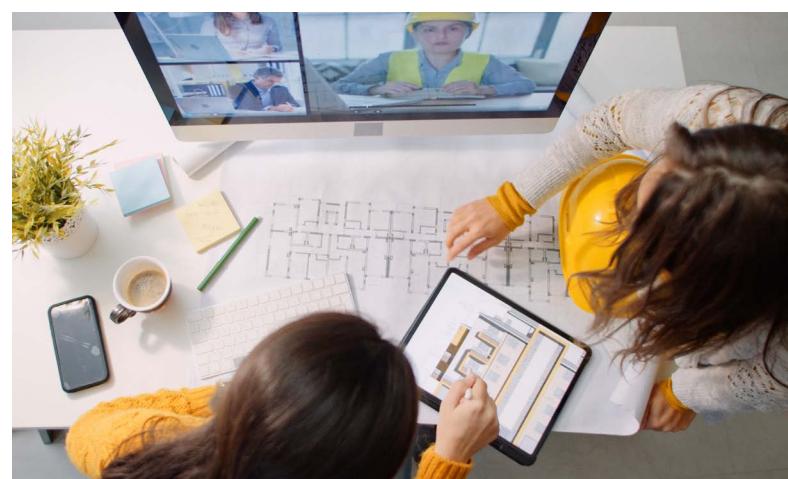
The Manifesto also “urged the [Welsh] Government to implement the findings of the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety to continue to lead on improving existing standards of building safety and quality, and to ensure that funding is made available to adequately support this reform”. Welsh Government committed £375m to fire safety leaseholder remediation, and in 2023 around a quarter of that had been spent.⁵

Broadly, Welsh Government has recognised the importance of these aims. In light of 2017's Grenfell Tower fire and subsequent UK-wide building safety regime changes, Welsh Government has adopted this legislation and has consulted on a number of amendments to the legislation to bring them in line with wider Welsh legislation. Welsh-specific legislation in this area will be key to the success of this regime, given the smaller number of high-risk and high-rise buildings in Wales compared to the rest of the UK, at which the legislation primarily seeks to legislate. At the time of writing, The Building Safety (Wales) Bill has been laid before the Senedd and is currently going through committee scrutiny.

Education, Skills, and Training

The 2021 Manifesto called for “the future Welsh Government to ringfence funding for the development of degree-apprenticeships in key areas of shortage, including construction management, quantity surveying, facility management, and building design”.⁶

Degree apprenticeships have been created in some of these key areas in Wales – supported by CIOB in partnership with other professional bodies and stakeholders – at three Welsh universities.⁷ We would, however, like to see these – and more – degree apprenticeships offered at more Welsh universities, coupled with increased focus on skills mapping, to give Welsh students the opportunity to learn and use these qualifications within Wales.



1. The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB), Welsh Election 2021 Manifesto: Our vision for the built environment in Wales (2021), p.3.
2. Construction News, [Welsh Government launches construction modernisation drive](#), (2025).
3. Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), [Construction Workforce Outlook Wales: Labour Market Intelligence Report 2025-2029](#), (2025), p. 8.
4. Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), [Construction Workforce Outlook Wales: Labour Market Intelligence Report 2025-2029](#), (2025), p. 8.
5. Inside Housing, [Around a quarter of £375m Welsh building Safety Fund spent so far](#), (2023).
6. The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB), Welsh Election 2021 Manifesto: Our vision for the built environment in Wales (2021), p. 8.
7. The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), [Degree apprenticeships in Construction Professions in Wales – Consultation](#), (2024).

Recommendations

Recommendations for the next Welsh Government and future Members of Senedd (MSs)

CIOB has three strategic focus areas. These are **Quality and Safety, Environment and Sustainability, and Skills Gaps**. All the policy recommendations below fit into at least one of these focus areas.

CIOB outlines five key policy recommendations in this Manifesto for the next Welsh Government.

01 Develop and implement a retrofit plan

Develop and implement a retrofit plan for the private housing market, including owner-occupiers, and an environmental remediation and mitigation plan to protect the wider built environment and the people that use it to protect them from extreme weather events as a result of global warming. While existing legislation and plans are starting to emerge for the social housing sector (through Welsh Government initiatives such as Tai ar y Cyd, the Optimised Retrofit Programme, and the Welsh Housing Quality Standard), lessons from these have yet to be fully applied to the private sector.

02 Create financial incentives for retrofit

Create financial incentives for retrofit measures on properties for all housing tenures and types. CIOB recommends 0% interest Help To Fix loan schemes as well as using the taxation system within Welsh Government's devolved powers, such as council tax and Land Transaction Tax (LTT).

03 Improve procurement processes

Improve procurement processes for public work. While new legislation passed during the 6th Senedd term aims to do this, it remains unclear how successful these reforms will be. **Improving tender processes and ensuring that they contain realistic time and cost aims** will open the market to more organisations, particularly SMEs based in Wales, ensuring that they can compete fairly with other organisations, **keeping important skills in Wales** for future generations.

04 Adopt a more holistic view of construction skills

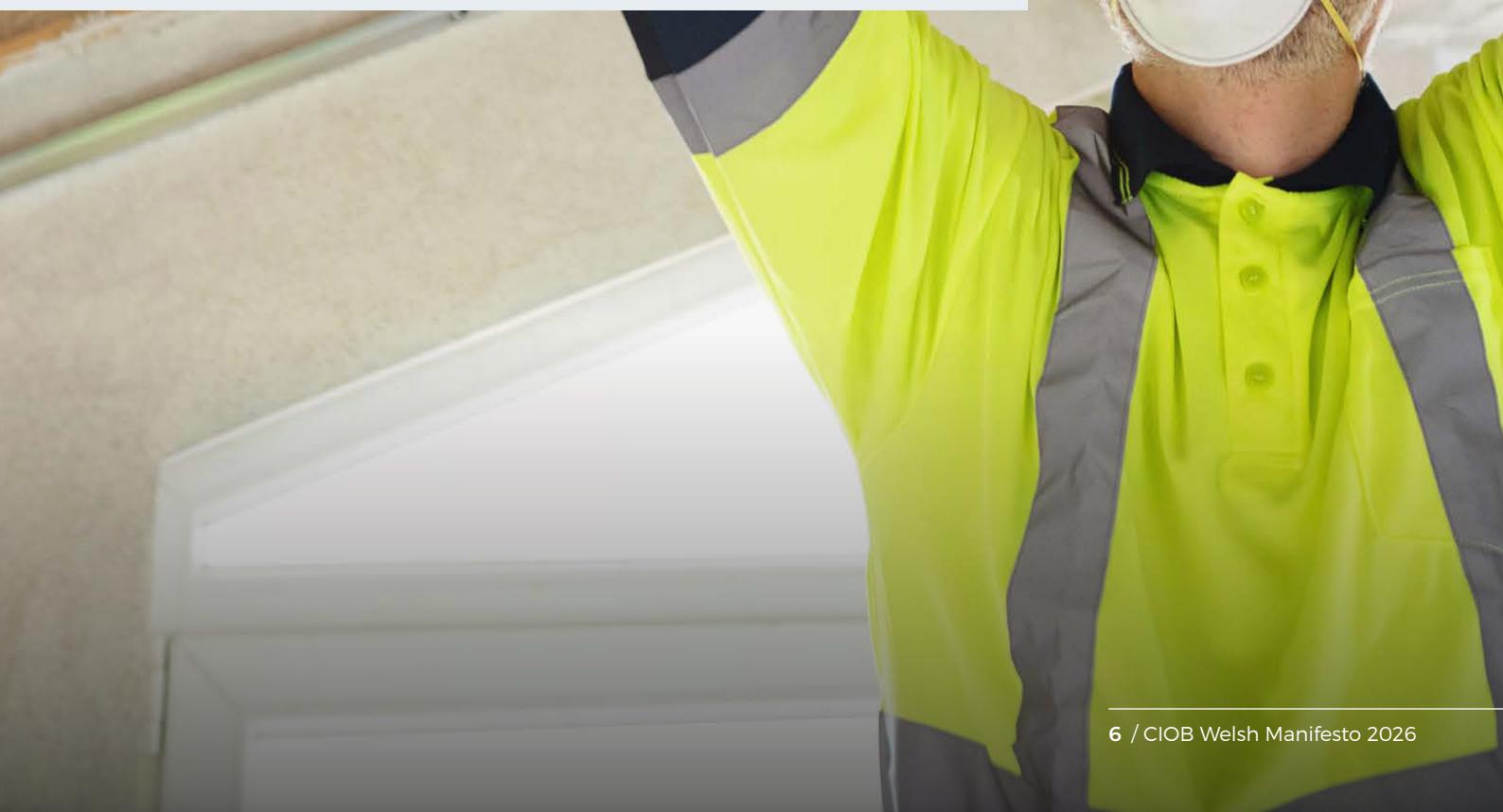
Adopt a more holistic view of construction skills, shifting the focus from just getting young people into the sector, to how to encourage people of all ages and backgrounds into the sector. Welsh Government should work with the construction sector to **improve training and retention of construction professionals** from a range of backgrounds. In particular, how can Welsh Government's existing schemes - for example around encouraging **ex-offenders** into work - be used to reduce the construction industry's skills gap? And what other innovative measures and programmes can be implemented to better support the sector?

05 Conduct a Welsh construction skills survey

Conduct a skills survey across Wales to identify what skills are needed and where, particularly in light of a future housing conditions survey. Construction companies can then use this information to upskill with confidence. UK Government's Occupation Shortage Lists do not go into sufficient detail as to **where specific skills are needed in Wales, how they can support industry, and what support needs to be offered to upskill in these areas**. Conducting a skills survey with these three focuses will mean bodies such as CIOB and educational institutions can **better design courses** they know will be valuable, and the future Welsh Government can **offer funding where appropriate** with the confidence that they will be put to good use.

Develop and implement a retrofit plan

Develop and implement a **retrofit plan for the private housing market**, including owner-occupiers, and an environmental **remediation and mitigation plan to protect the wider built environment** and the people that use it to protect them from extreme weather events as a result of global warming. While existing legislation and plans are starting to emerge for the social housing sector through Welsh Government initiatives such as Tai ar y Cyd, the Optimised Retrofit Programme, and the Welsh Housing Quality Standard, lessons from these have yet to be fully applied to the private sector.



Develop and implement a retrofit plan

(continued)

A long-term, joined-up retrofit plan would go a long way to providing assurance and confidence to the sector, ensuring they can reap the benefits of upskilling their workforce in green skills, thereby hopefully future-proofing their business for years to come. In recent CIOB research, *The SME Construction Landscape in Wales | Risk Factor Analysis*, construction professionals noted that a lack of data and knowledge was a significant barrier to upskilling. Regarding the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) in particular, construction professionals noted:

Local authorities cannot offer funding to contractors to undertake quality remediation and retrofit projects on properties without particular skills and competencies... but are uncertain as to the specifics of what they will need. To get an answer, they would have to undertake detailed surveys on thousands of properties, each with its own specific needs, and there is not enough resource or funding for that.⁸

Without this confidence and a long-term plan to guarantee a return on investment, many SMEs and even larger construction organisations are forced to stick to the status quo, to the detriment of innovation and Welsh Government's aims.

To support this plan, CIOB has long called for a new housing conditions and quality survey to be undertaken to identify problem areas across housing tenures, types, and geography, so that the construction sector can upskill in areas where there are particular gaps and ensure adequate housing across Wales. The last survey was undertaken in 2017/18, and since then continuing economic crises and worsening disrepair as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic - when work could not be carried out, continued to get worse, and then became possibly too expensive for the homeowner to repair - so the likelihood is the housing quality has worsened since that survey was undertaken. Accurate, actionable data will be key to protecting Wales's housing stock, which is some of the oldest in the UK.⁹ As such, we welcome Welsh Government's announcement in May 2025 that there would be a new Welsh housing survey.

CIOB largely remains technologically agnostic, and will support Welsh Government programmes and pilots that focus on innovative technologies such as domestic heat networks.

It is important to remember, however, that hydrogen has been largely disproven as a means of domestic heating, given the timescales necessary to prove it works well and safely enough, perhaps most notably by the UK Government's advisory body, the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC), a view echoed by Welsh Government.¹⁰ It is imperative that the next Welsh Government also adopts this attitude. There is also low public confidence in hydrogen heating, as shown in any number of instances where pilot projects have been cancelled due to occupants' objections.¹¹ Any future domestic heating strategy should focus on proven technology and primarily electrified where the situation allows, such as heat pumps which have been proven to be suitable for the vast majority of properties. Focusing on these readily available technologies will create confidence within the construction industry to upskill their workforce and create a skills ecosystem where these areas prioritised.

It is important, however, to remember that "retrofit" does not only encompass decarbonisation of domestic heating and insulation measures. The Climate Change Committee (CCC) recently stated that "The UK should be prepared to cope with weather extremes as a result of at least 2C of global warming by 2050".¹² This is higher than the 1.5C of warming the Paris Agreement has so far failed to deliver.

Recent weather extremes – including flash flooding and heatwaves across much of Wales – has shown that our housing, infrastructure, wider built environment, and of course, people that live in and use these assets, are at risk. Our houses are designed to insulate and retain heat, and large-scale retrofit programmes have historically focused on insulating properties, which creates problematic overheating.

As such, any retrofit plan should include measures to reduce overheating in homes. Insulation remains important in the colder months, and for wider energy efficiency, but it cannot come at the cost of properties overheating.

8. The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB), *The SME Construction Landscape in Wales | Risk Factor Analysis*, (2024) p. 21.
9. BRE Trust, *The Housing Stock of the United Kingdom*, (2020), p. 2.
10. Welsh Parliament Senedd Research, *Hydrogen in Wales 2024: Research Briefing*, (2024), p. 17.
11. The Guardian, *Third pilot of household hydrogen heating shelved by UK Government*, (2024).
12. BBC, *Government told to prepare for 2C warming by 2050*, (2025).

Create financial incentives for retrofit

Create **financial incentives for retrofit measures** on properties for all housing tenures and types. CIOB recommends 0% interest **Help To Fix loan schemes** as well as using the taxation system within Welsh Government's devolved powers, such as **council tax and Land Transaction Tax (LTt)**.



Create financial incentives for retrofit

(continued)

A retrofit and implementation plan is extremely unlikely to succeed without a change to the funding structures in place for decarbonised heating. Current funding structures, such as the UK Government's Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS), face low uptake. CIOB consumer research carried out in 2023 found that less than 32% of people in Wales were even aware of the UK Government's Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS). Despite uplifting funding to a maximum of £7,500 to install a heat pump, many properties need significant remediation work to ensure a heat pump works properly, and, as such, consumers could have been left with a bill upwards of £24,000 in the worst situations to decarbonise their heating systems, even accounting for the funding. Despite being debunked, there continues to be scaremongering in the media around whether heat pumps are viable in housing, and public perception of them appears to be low.

Given that housing is responsible for around a fifth of Wales's carbon emissions, it has a key part to play in achieving decarbonisation. Retrofit measures, however, are considered too expensive for many homeowners to undertake, and as such additional ways to stimulate retrofit are needed.

The new housing conditions survey should consider how best to decarbonise properties (similar to the WHQS' Target Energy Pathways), with a focus on the private rental sector and owner-occupiers and the financial viability for this market to undertake retrofit measures at their own expense. With that in mind, CIOB would welcome additional financial incentives for this tenure to ensure they are able to decarbonise and reap the benefits of renewable energy in their home.

The first proposal to do this is through a "Help To Fix" loan scheme. Welsh Government, or trusted financial partners and lenders, could offer a 0% loan scheme to enable homeowners to improve their homes. The scheme could cover the full cost of home improvements such as double glazing, insulation, draft-proofing, new heating systems and even bigger jobs like loft conversions or extensions. Many of these aspects will have subsequent benefits for a property's energy efficiency. Offering loans for work such as this is the only way many homeowners could afford to undertake these measures and government should develop such a scheme if they seriously want to meet its energy and carbon reduction targets.

These measures will reduce energy consumption (but not exclusively focus on these measures), cut down carbon emissions, and bring down consumer bills, as well as ensure that the building is efficient enough for further retrofit works in the future.

Welsh Government should also examine measures to use the taxation system to incentivise decarbonisation. Land Transaction Tax (LTT) and Council Tax are devolved to Welsh Government, but hitherto have not been levied to incentivise homeowners. CIOB believes there is scope to reduce the tax burdens above or, in the case of LTT, remove altogether in certain situations, to free up money for people to instead use on decarbonising their properties.

Council Tax, for example, could be reduced on properties where owner-occupiers or private landlords have improved a property's energy efficiency rating,¹⁴ or significantly reduced its energy consumption. This additional incentive, coupled with the long-term cost saving of energy efficiency measures, may be enough to incentivise swathes of private housing tenures to decarbonise their properties when these measures are prohibitively expensive for many.

CIOB has also previously proposed LTT deferral on investment properties, whereby investors are encouraged to fix up older, perhaps empty, less energy efficient housing stock before reselling them on the open market. In these instances, the investors would not pay LTT, but when the enhanced, more energy efficient property is sold to a new owner, LTT is then paid by the new buyer. These properties are often overlooked by buyers as the work to fix them up would be intrusive and prohibitively expensive, but deferring LTT – and perhaps coupling this with grants from any new iteration of Welsh Government's National Empty Homes Grant Scheme – could incite investors to take these properties on, bring them to up to standard, and mean that Wales's empty, run down homes once again become habitable, safe, green, and comfortable.

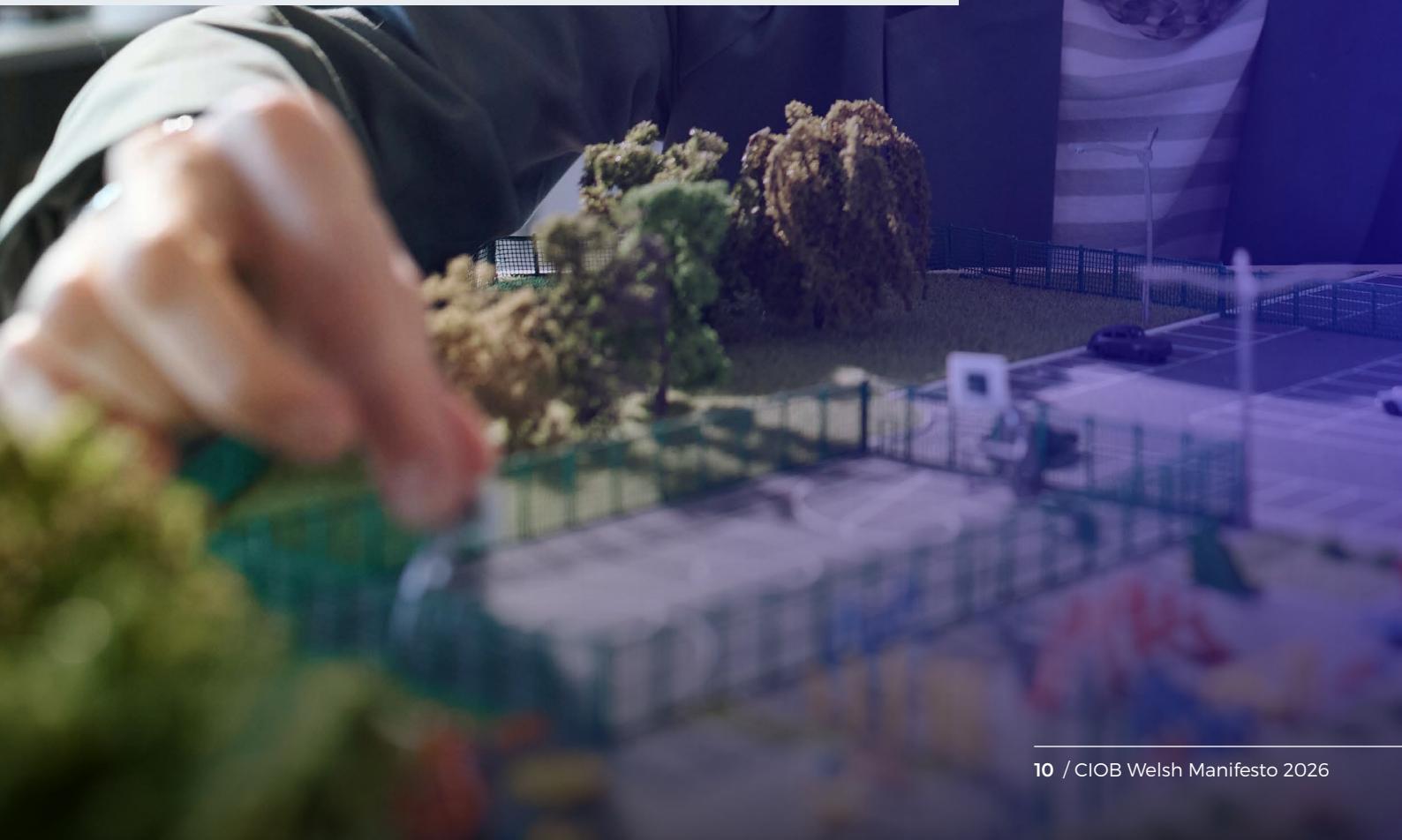
13. Welsh Government, [Decarbonising Welsh Homes: Stage 2 Report](#), (2019), p. 17.

14. I.e., to a specific EPC rating. While CIOB believes EPCs are, broadly, not fit for purpose, they are the framework within which we currently have to work.

Improve procurement processes

Improve procurement processes for public work. While new legislation passed during the 6th Senedd term aims to do this, it remains unclear how successful this will be.

Improving tender processes and ensuring that they contain realistic time and cost aims will open the market to more organisations, particularly SMEs based in Wales, ensuring that they can compete fairly with other organisations, **keeping important skills in Wales** for future generations.



Improve procurement processes

(continued)

In Wales, 99% of construction companies are small and medium enterprises (SMEs), 96% of which employ fewer than 13 people.¹⁵ Welsh Government estimates the financial contribution of SMEs to the public sector is around £7b.¹⁶ Despite this, CIOB research showed that procurement was a huge barrier to SME construction companies for a range of reasons, including SMEs not having the same dedicated procurement resource as larger contractors, a complex tender process, and unrealistic financial and time constraints for projects.¹⁷

Some recent policy, such as the *Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales)* Act which will come into effect in 2026, seeks to increase opportunities for SMEs in public construction projects over £2m. While the introduction of these measures is welcome and shows that Welsh Government is aware of problems facing the construction sector, the key to this act's success will be strict monitoring, enforcement, and proportionality.

As such, CIOB encourages the next Welsh Government to introduce further devolution of tendering and procurement to local authorities, with the caveat that this needs to go alongside additional funding, resourcing, and training for these bodies. Local authorities are uniquely placed to identify and source local suppliers and contractors who can undertake work competently, without having to rely on larger organisations (as has been the default, historically, as they can take more financial risks when tendering for projects) and overlooking SMEs.

CIOB's *The Construction Landscape in Wales* research also found that the registration process for Sell2Wales – which every public body has to use according to Welsh Government legislation – was arduous and resource intensive. When they were registered, however, the system does work largely as intended. That being said, the tender process itself is time-consuming. This is problematic for many smaller businesses, many of whom do not have the time or resource to devote to applying for all these tenders. Additionally, when they are unsuccessful and have spent a lot of time applying, no feedback is offered, which may make them unlikely to apply for other projects in the future.

There are opportunities, however, for below-threshold contracts to better involve local authorities, who are uniquely placed to identify local businesses that will keep their local economy thriving and do the best job.

15. Constructing Excellence Wales (CEW), *Construction By Numbers 2019*, October 2019, p. 2.

16. Welsh Government, Welsh Procurement Policy Note WPPN 07/21: Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs)-friendly procurement, (2023).

17. The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB). *The SME Construction Landscape in Wales | Risk Factor Analysis*, (2024) p. 2, p. 4.

Adopt a more holistic view of construction skills

Adopt a more holistic view of construction skills, shifting the focus not just from getting young people into the sector, but how to encourage people into the sector. Welsh Government should work with the construction sector to **improve training and retention of construction professionals** from a range of backgrounds. In particular, how can Welsh Government's existing schemes – for example around encouraging **ex-offenders** into work – be used to reduce the construction industry's skills gap? And what other innovative measures and programmes can be implemented to better support the sector?



Adopt a more holistic view of the construction skills

(continued)

CIOB has long called for innovative ways to increase the skills base in the construction sector. Without these skills, Welsh Government will fail to deliver social housing and a good public sector for Wales.

The traditional pipeline of skills in the sector – primarily apprenticeships for 16-18-year-olds – no longer suffices. Competition is at an all-time high for entry-level roles, and many construction companies in Wales, particularly SMEs, simply cannot afford apprentices. This is for a range of reasons, including providing sufficient, sustainable mentoring which necessitates a loss of some productivity on site, as well as not having a sustainable pipeline of work to train an apprentice to a suitably qualified level. There are also perception problems within the industry that means fewer young people, parents, and teachers see the value in a career in construction: a recent CIOB survey showed that 68% of young people in Wales aged 16-24 hold a positive view of the construction sector, but less than 30% said they would consider a career in the sector. Additionally, 40% of young people in Wales said construction careers were not covered in careers advice they received whilst in education.

While apprenticeships are and will inevitably continue to be critical to the construction sector, CIOB would like to see the next Welsh Government shift its focus from solely getting young people into the industry, and instead focusing on *people* more generally. That is to say, there is a wealth of transferable skills that could be put to good use in the construction sector, including those recently made redundant from Tata Steel in Port Talbot.

CIOB's recently published research into training ex-offenders into the construction sector is one such way to do this, and we are proud to be co-funding a pilot scheme in Wales to train prisoners on VR headsets during their sentences to give them a foundational knowledge of the construction sector and, perhaps more importantly, an interest in the sector and an understanding of the roles available within it. Additionally, schemes such as this will identify people with an aptitude for construction skills, and encourage them to seek careers in the sector upon their release. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with members of the 7th Senedd and the next Welsh Government to discuss learnings and next steps from this pilot project.

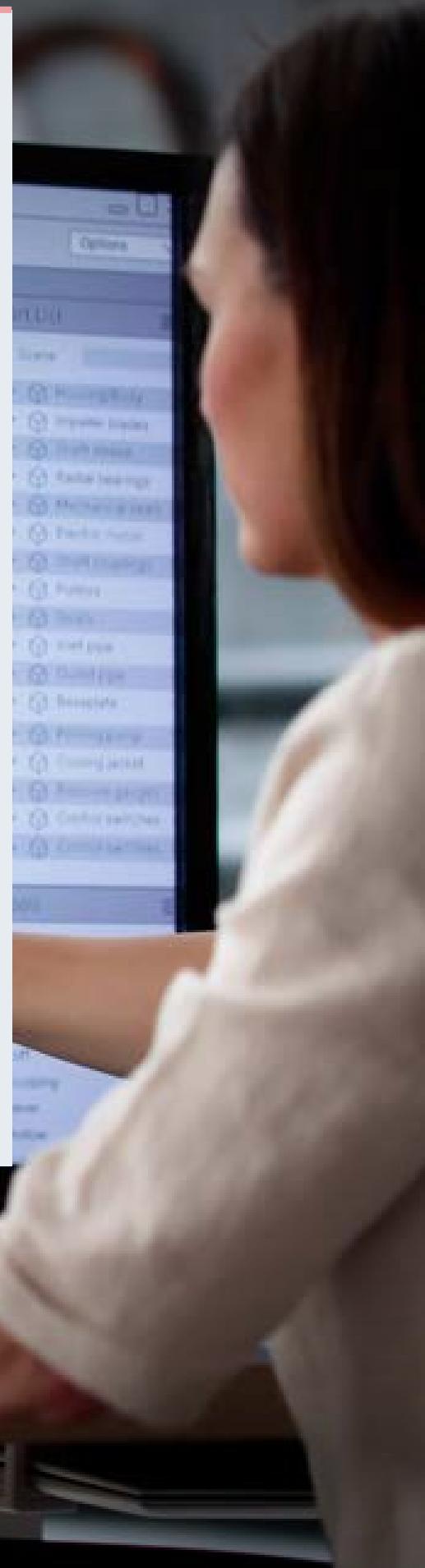
Additionally, in their Manifesto, the Welsh Refugee Council (WRC) outlines plans to "strengthen our workforce now with the energy, skills, and ambition that sanctuary seekers bring".¹⁸ The WRC identifies construction as one such area which may benefit from the wealth of experience asylum seekers may bring, and offers a win-win scenario in which asylum seekers can support their families without relying on Government support, they will contribute to the economy through taxation, and Welsh construction businesses will have a ready supply of skilled, motivated workers to meet record demand.¹⁹ CIOB is working with the WRC to ensure construction companies are well-placed to offer opportunities to these people.

18. Sanctuary Coalition Cymru & Welsh Refugee Council, *Sanctuary That Works For Wales*, (2025), p. 3.

19. Institute of Welsh Affairs (IWA), *What if the solution to Wales' skills crisis was already here – but trapped by red tape?*, (2025).

Conduct a Welsh construction skills survey

Conduct a **skills survey** across Wales to identify what skills are needed and where, particularly in light of a future housing conditions survey. Construction companies can then use this information to upskill with confidence. UK Government's Occupation Shortage Lists do not go into sufficient detail as to **where specific skills are needed in Wales, how they can support industry, and what support needs to be offered to upskill in these areas**. Conducting a skills survey with these three focuses will mean bodies such as CIOB and educational institutions can **better design courses** they know will be valuable, and the future Welsh Government can **offer funding where appropriate** with the confidence that they will be put to good use.



Conduct a Welsh construction skills survey

(continued)

The previous proposal about adopting a more holistic approach to skills in Wales will only be successful if we know where best to put those skills to use. As such, CIOB is calling for a Welsh skills survey to understand the needs of the construction sector and how these vary across Wales. We know, for example, that mid and north Wales faces different skills pressures to the South-East, and they consistently lose potential and current talent to larger scale projects elsewhere in Wales and across the border to areas like Merseyside.

For the housing sector, the aforementioned housing conditions survey will go a long way to identifying these gaps, and then construction companies can upskill or retrain staff with the confidence of getting a return on their investments. These skills will also be put to use in public sector assets such as hospitals, many of which are in various states of disrepair.

While the UK Government has previously published Shortage Occupation Lists, and more recently Immigrant Salary Lists, these are arguably too Anglo-centric, broad, and have less relevance to Welsh needs.

Members of Senedd (MSs) from across the political spectrum have called for similar initiatives, and CIOB is well-placed to support from a construction skills angle. This may also be an opportunity to identify construction-adjacent fields that need greater focus, including the planning sector. Identifying shortages in the planning system, where these are happening across Wales and in what departments, as well as ensuring current staff is well-trained in all aspects of the planning process, will give Welsh Government clear targets and remove one cause of project delays.²⁰

This would, indeed, give people the skills that they are learning – whether a young person in a construction apprenticeship or someone undergoing upskilling or retraining later in life – will be valuable and allow them to work wherever in Wales they choose. This will also have subsequent benefits for communities, and prevalence of Cymraeg in these areas, as more people may want to stay in their hometowns with their families.

²⁰ According to CIOB research [The SME Landscape in Wales | Risk Factor Analysis](#), construction SMEs overwhelmingly believed that delays in granting planning permission, SABs, and highways authorisation was one of the main causes of delays to projects in Wales.

**The Chartered
Institute of Building,**

3 Arlington Square,
Downshire Way,
Bracknell,
RG12 1WA, UK

Tel: +44 (0)1344 630 700

ciob.org

Registered Charity No.
(England and Wales)
280795 and
(Scotland) SCO41725

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Gold

© Copyright 2026

 **CIOB**
The Chartered
Institute of Building