

# Public Document Pack

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Head of Legal and Democratic Services  
Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol a Democraataidd



To: ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

CS/NG

23 January 2013

Ceri Owen 01352 702350  
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Dear Sir / Madam

A meeting of the **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, MOLD CH7 6NA** on **TUESDAY, 29TH JANUARY, 2013** at **2.00 PM** to consider the following items.

Yours faithfully

Democracy & Governance Manager

## **AGENDA**

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

2 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive any declarations of interests from Members.

4 **COUNCIL MINUTES** (Pages 1 - 20)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the previous meetings held on the 25 October and 13 November, 2012.

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The Council welcomes correspondence in Welsh or English  
Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawau gohebiaeth yn y Cymraeg neu'r Saesneg

5 **CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

6 **PETITIONS**

7 **NOTICE OF MOTION** (Pages 21 - 22)

The following Notices of Motion have been received:-

(1) Councillor C.S. Carver

"In the interests of openness and transparency, this Motion calls for the Council to publish a separate supplementary report to coincide with and accompany the presentation to Council of the Annual Statement of Accounts.

This supplementary report to contain, in the same style and presentation as the existing Senior Employee Emoluments – Salary over £150,000 per year and Salary over £60,000 per year, the same financial information for ALL Council Employees, Consultants and 'Non-permanent Posts' with a Salary over £60,000 per year who are NOT listed within the existing framework of the Annual Statement of Accounts.

In instances where those employees are in post for less than the financial year, then both their actual Salary and equivalent annualised Salary are to be shown."

(2) Councillors: C.J. Dolphin, R. Dolphin, N.M. Matthews, R.J.T. Guest, H.J. McGuill, N. Phillips and A. Bragg

"Council notes:

1. The relentless increase in domestic energy costs and the consequent similar increase in instances of fuel poverty in Flintshire.
2. the Switching Energy Scheme operated by South Lakeland District Council for the benefit of residents of that Council – **A summary of the scheme is attached for Members information.**

Accordingly, Council requests the Director of Environment to investigate the advantages and disadvantages of introducing a similar scheme in Flintshire and to bring a report to the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee as soon as practical."

8 **QUESTIONS**

To note the answers to any questions submitted in accordance with County Council Standing Order No. 9.4(A).

9 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS ON COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The Minute Book, Edition 2 2012/13 has been circulated to Members. Members are now entitled to ask questions on these minutes, subject to certain limitations, and answers will be provided at the meeting. Members are requested to bring to the meeting their copy of the Minute Book. Any questions must have been received by the Democracy and Governance Manager prior to the close of business on Wednesday 23 January, 2013.

- 10 **FLINTSHIRE COMMUNITY COVENANT** (Pages 23 - 40)  
Report of the Chief Executive enclosed. Ms. Tanya Clancy, Military Civil Integration Officer for 160 (Wales) Brigade, will provide a short presentation at the meeting.
- 11 **ADOPTION OF THE COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME - APRIL 2013**  
(Pages 41 - 100)  
Report of the Head of Finance enclosed.
- 12 **SERVICE REVIEW DECISIONS OF THE BETSI CADWALADR UNIVERSITY HEALTH BOARD**  
The Chief Executive and Director of Community Services to give a verbal report on the implementation of the decisions of the Board on the service review reports presented to it on 18 January, and on the arrangements for service transition. The decisions of the Board and the background reports are available on the Board's website - <http://tinyurl.com/b5jvmkv>
- 13 **FLINTSHIRE LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2012 - 2017** (Pages 101 - 144)  
Report of the Director of Community Services enclosed.
- 14 **ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2013/14 OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES** (Pages 145 - 152)  
Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services enclosed.
- 15 **BUILDINGS OF LOCAL INTEREST PROCEDURE** (Pages 153 - 180)  
Report of the Director of Environment enclosed.
- 16 **CHINESE LANTERNS**

At its meeting on 13 September 2011 the County Council considered a notice of motion about Chinese Lanterns and resolved "*That in view of the inherent danger to livestock, farm produce and the countryside in general caused by the release and launch of Chinese Lanterns, the County Council calls upon the Westminster Parliament and/or the Welsh Government to introduce legislation to ban the sale and use of such flying devices.*" Representations were subsequently made to Westminster Government calling for Parliament to introduce legislation to ban the sale and use of Chinese/sky lanterns.

To date the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) have not been minded to introduce specific legislation, preferring instead to rely upon the General Product Safety Regulations. However, they have issued guidance to the trade, including an example of a safety leaflet which can be obtained from Flintshire Trading Standards.

In May 2012, the Wales Heads of Trading Standards (WHOTS) carried out a survey into the availability, supply and labelling of Chinese Lanterns across Wales and produced an article summarising the results; some initial headline figures can be viewed via the link <http://tinyurl.com/an7c63e>

On the 17th December 2012 the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) commissioned an independent review of Chinese Lanterns. This review is supported by Welsh Government Officials and will consider the impact of Chinese Lanterns on animal welfare, littering and the potential fire risks.

Locally, Flintshire County Council have advised some market traders on issues surrounding the lanterns that has resulted in the traders agreeing not to stock them in future.

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**25 OCTOBER, 2012**

Minutes of the Meeting of Flintshire County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold on Thursday 25 October, 2012

**PRESENT: Councillor A. Minshull (Chair)**

Councillors: J.B. Attridge, G. Banks, G.H. Bateman, M. Bateman, R.C. Bithell, A. Bragg, D. Butler, C.S. Carver, D.L. Cox, P.J. Curtis, A. Davies-Cooke, C.J. Dolphin, I. Dunbar, B. Dunn, C.A. Ellis, D. Evans, E.F. Evans, J.E. Falshaw, V. Gay, A.M. Halford, R.G. Hampson, G. Hardcastle, P.G. Heesom, C. Hinds, R. Hughes, H.D. Hutchinson, H.T. Isherwood, J. Johnson, R. Johnson, C.M. Jones, R.B. Jones, S. Jones, C. Legg, R. Lloyd, M. Lowe, R.P. Macfarlane, D.I. Mackie, H.J. McGuill, W. Mullin, M.J. Peers, N. Phillips, M.A. Reece, H.G. Roberts, I.B. Roberts, A.P. Shotton, P. Shotton, I. Smith, N.R. Steele-Mortimer, C.A. Thomas, W.O. Thomas, D.T. Williams, S. Williams, D.E. Wisinger, A. Woolley and M.G. Wright

**APOLOGIES:**

Councillors: L.A. Aldridge, H. Brown, R. Davies, R. Dolphin, R.J.T. Guest, H.T. Howorth, R.K. Jones, P. Lightfoot, N.M. Matthews and L.A. Sharps

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive, Director of Community Services, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Partnership Manager for Health, Social Care and Wellbeing, Policy Performance and Partnerships Manager and Committee Officers

**76. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor D. Butler declared a person interest in agenda item number 6 – Flintshire County Council’s response to the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) Review as his wife was employed by Betsi Cadwaladr.

Councillors C.M. Jones and H.J. McGuill also declared personal interests in agenda item number 6 - Flintshire County Council’s response to the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) Review as they were both members of the CHC.

**77. COUNCIL MINUTES**

11 September, 2012

Councillor M.J. Peers commented on his proposed amendments outlined at minute number 55 and asked that the third bullet point be amended to reflect that all Town and Community Councils would be notified of the name of the proposed candidate and that comments on the proposed candidate would be sought. Any comments received should be presented to County Council together with the name of the proposed candidate.

**RESOLVED:**

That subject to the amendment listed above, the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

25 September, 2012

Councillor R.C. Bithell said that his initial shown on page 13 of the minutes should be corrected.

Councillor H.T. Isherwood commented on minute number 71 and asked that her request that future Statement of Accounts be in plain English to enable members of the public to easily understand the information be included in the minutes.

Councillor C.S. Carver also commented on minute number 71 and reported that he had received additional information on the breakdown of transactions with Anglesey County Council. He said that he had also received further details on the officer who had been placed in the remuneration band £160,000 - £164,000 and commented that the information differed from the response given by the Head of Finance at the meeting.

The Chair suggested that Councillor Carver take up this matter with the Head of Finance following the meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

That subject to the amendments listed above, the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**78. NOTICE OF MOTION**

The following Notice of motion had been received from Councillor R.C. Bithell:-

“Given the continuing problem being experienced by Flintshire residents with dog fouling and litter, this Council calls upon Officers to consider the employment of an enforcement company to enforce our regulations regarding these issues”.

In speaking to his motion, Councillor Bithell said that all Members received frequent complaints of dog fouling and litter across Flintshire and said that despite the improvements made to reduce dog fouling and littering further improvements were needed. He acknowledged that tackling dog fouling and littering was a difficult task and said that his notice of motion would enable officers to make enquiries on employing an enforcement company to enforce the Council’s regulations and present a report on their findings to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee in due course.

Councillor J.B. Attridge, Cabinet Member for Environment in responding to the notice of motion reported that the Council had looked at the operation of the company recently highlighted on a TV programme and in the process had contacted a number of authorities who had used them and had had informal discussions with the company itself. The majority of their work was focused around the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices for littering which they had been doing very successfully in a number of urban areas. They had recently had enquiries on the enforcement of dog fouling, but recognise the difficulty of issuing tickets in this respect.

In Blaenau Gwent they had two contracts – one for litter which was based on a percentage of the income derived from issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice and one on an hourly rate for enforcing against dog fouling. They would not consider entering into a contract for dog fouling based on a percentage of the Fixed Penalty Notice income, due to the difficulty involved in issuing Fixed Penalty Notices. The company would consider a contract for dog fouling enforcement but only on an hourly rate basis.

They are shortly starting work on a 12 month pilot contract with Denbighshire and Conwy which would cover both dog fouling and litter. We intend to review all the comments before proceeding further with our Enforcement Team. We will closely monitor how this pilot progresses and make recommendations to Members on whether we think it is right for the Council to adopt such an approach in the future.

Councillor N.R. Steele-Mortimer spoke in support of the motion and said that the matter had been a concern for Members for a number of years. He questioned why this matter had been brought to the County Council by a Cabinet Member as this could have been considered by the Cabinet. He gave notice that he would be requesting a recorded vote. In responding to his comments, Councillor A.P. Shotton, Leader of the Council supported the notice of motion being submitted to County Council as the matter affected all residents of Flintshire.

Councillor H.D. Hutchinson spoke in support of the motion and reported that during his time as Executive Member for Public Protection and Leisure he had been pro-active in addressing the matter of dog fouling and littering and that many improvements had been made. Councillor P.G. Heesom paid tribute to the work undertaken by Councillor Hutchinson and asked that Councillor Steele-Mortimer to withdraw his notice of a recorded vote as the motion was in the best interests of all residents of Flintshire.

Councillor W.O. Thomas raised concern around the difficulty of enforcing the Council's regulations on dog fouling and littering as 80% of Flintshire was rural and suggested that members of the public should be allowed to report instances of dog fouling and littering. Councillor C.A. Ellis spoke in support of the motion but raised concern with the suggestion of members of the public taking matters into their own hands when tackling dog fouling.

Councillor M.J. Peers spoke in support of the motion. He reported that the monitoring of the performance of the Enforcement Team sat within the remit of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and questioned whether they were achieving what was expected of them. He said that the motion would give the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to evaluate the Council's own Enforcement Team and report back to County Council in due course. Councillor H.J. McGuill also spoke in support of the motion and the Council's Enforcement Team who she had found to be very helpful.

In summing up, Councillor Bithell said that he had submitted a question to County Council 12 months ago asking for details on how many fines had been imposed and the answer given had been very few. He explained that he had submitted the notice of motion to County Council as the matter concerned all Members. He commented on the good work of the Enforcement Team but said that there was not enough staff to tackle the issue across Flintshire and asked all Members to support the motion.

Councillor Steele-Mortimer requested a record vote but not enough Members stood in support of this.

### **RESOLVED:**

Given the continuing problem being experienced by Flintshire residents with dog fouling and litter, this Council calls upon Officers to consider the employment of an enforcement company to enforce our regulations regarding these issues.

## **79. QUESTIONS**

The following question had been submitted by Councillor N.M. Steele-Mortimer:-

"I understand that a Flintshire Special Needs child is being fostered in Conwy but is being brought by taxi to school in Flint daily and singly.

How much does this cost and which Council is paying for it".

Councillor R.C. Bithell responded that the child concerned had severe learning disabilities and the carers, although residing in Conwy, were Flintshire Carers. An alternative school was considered but in fact the most appropriate alternative school was further away in terms of travel time than the school in Flint. Had they accessed a placement in the Conwy area, Flintshire would be charged for the placement plus any transport costs and this would, no doubt, have been higher than the current arrangements.

Councillor Steele-Mortimer was given the opportunity to ask a supplementary question. He said that he had not been given an answer on how much the transport costs were and asked how many Flintshire carers were residing in other Counties across North Wales.



The Head of Legal and Democratic Services said that a written response would be provided to Councillor Steele-Mortimer following the meeting.

**80. FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE BETSI CADWALADR UNIVERSITY HEALTH BOARD (BCUHB) REVIEW**

The Director of Community Services introduced a suggested formal response to the consultation on proposed health service changes in North Wales with a clear focus on how it would affect Flintshire residents. The suggested formal response was shown at Appendix 1 of the report which had been circulated to all Members before the meeting. The deadline for responses on the consultation document was the 28 October, 2012 and it had been suggested in the report that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, himself, Cabinet Member for Social Services and the Chair of the Social and Health Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee to make any necessary amendment following the meeting.

He commented on the formal response to specific proposals for change in different service areas as detailed in Appendix 1, explaining that Members comments made during the special Social and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19 September, 2012 had been taken on board when formulating the response. He said that these were welcome aspects of the proposals, but that significant concerns about the proposals remained and the draft response detailed these concerns.

Councillor A.P. Shotton, Leader of the Council thanked all Members for their contribution which formed part of the formal response. He said that there had not been sufficient detailed planning on the provision of robust service modelling for the Council to be reassured that the proposals were sustainable and in the best interest of Flintshire residents. He proposed that Appendix 1 be adopted as the formal response from Flintshire County Council to the BCUHB consultation and in moving the response proposed that the Council clearly state its position on the proposals for Community Hospitals and Local Health Services as follows:-

- That the Council was unconvinced by the case for change for Flint Community Hospital. In the absence of any specific proposals for the retention of accessible local services within the town of Flint the Council rejects the proposal to close Flintshire Community Hospital and its minor injuries unit;
- That the minor injuries and x-ray services at Mold Community Hospital be retained on the grounds that Mold services a large and expanding population with established public transport;
- That the Minor Injuries Clinic at Deeside Hospital facility be commissioned and opened as proposed, to provide an accessible service to the communities of Deeside; and
- That the retention of local minor injuries services across the county, and the opening of the facility at Deeside, would prevent minor injuries

self-referrals to District General Hospitals which would make further demands on already stretched Accident and Emergency services.

It was for these reasons that Flintshire County Council would urge the BCUHB to withdraw the current proposals with immediate effect.

In seconding the proposals, Councillor C.M. Jones, Cabinet Member for Social Services spoke in support of the formal response which reflected the concerns of Members, officers and residents of Flintshire.

Members raised a number of concerns around the proposals for the Neonatal Intensive Care Service, the proposals for Mold Community Hospital and Flint Community Hospital, the current shortage of beds at Glan Clwyd Hospital, cross-border issues and dementia care.

Councillor C.A. Ellis commented that residents in Buckley were unaware of the proposed changes to the local health services and proposed an amendment to the proposals that concern on the lack of consultation for residents in Buckley be included in the response. She also commented on Appendix 2 of the report detailing the summary of issues raised during the consultation events, and said that the concerns around current waiting times at A&E had not been adequately reflected.

The Chief Executive said that the formal response would be amended accordingly to provide examples where the consultation process had not been inclusive.

Councillor M.J. Peers welcomed the formal response and proposals put forward by the Leader of the Council. He asked that reference be made to the affect the changes to Mold Community Hospital would have on residents of Buckley. He also asked that the words 'referrals/self-referrals be removed from section 4.4.6 of the formal response and that more emphasis was needed on cross-border issues to ensure that all North East England hospitals were included in the report. He also asked that the word 'Flintshire' shown in section 7.2 of the formal response be amended to read 'Wales'.

The Chief Executive explained that the health services commissioned from England health providers within the NHS would not be affected by the consultation but said that reference could be made to ensuing that cross-border relationships and contractual arrangements continue.

Councillor R.B. Jones asked that the section of the formal response dealing with transport be expanded to reflect the Transport Strategy which had not been taken into account when proposing changes to the local health service. He said that BCUHB should have consulted with transport providers prior to formally submitting their proposals.

Councillor H.T. Isherwood asked the Leader of the Council for an assurance that if the BCUHB did not take on board the concerns of Flintshire County Council that he would meet with the Minister for Health and Social

Services. Councillor I.B. Roberts raised concerns around the proposals to close Flint Community Hospital and commented on the campaign of Flint residents to maintain this service. He thanked all Members of the Council for listening to the concerns of the residents of Flint.

Councillor M. Bateman asked that section 4.4.5 of the formal response be amended to reflect the current x-ray service provided at Mold Community Hospital and also that the Mold League of Friends had also offered to fund any upgrade of necessary equipment at the hospital. She also asked if details on the number of x-rays carried out at Mold Community Hospital could be provided.

In response to a concern on GPs being pressured not to refer patient across the border, the Chief Executive said that it was expected that GPs would make appropriate referrals with the emphasis on individual choice.

Councillor V. Gay raised concerns on cross border issues and said that clarification was needed on how residents in Wales accessing their prescriptions in England would be reimbursed. The Chief Executive said that the formal response could be amended to reflect the day to day issues in cross-border patient movement.

In response to comments on care for dementia patients, the Director of Community Services said that this was a potential pressure and that the formal response would be strengthened to seek clarification on the term informal carers for dementia patients.

In response to a question on discussions over land at Flint for a future health centre, the Chief Executive confirmed that there had been general discussions between the BCUHB and Flintshire County Council on possible land for a new primary health facility but no specific request or offer for land dedication.

Councillor G. Banks suggested that section 3.2 of the formal response be amended to remove reference to the proposals for neonatal intensive care services being understood. The Chief Executive said that the formal response would be amended.

In summing up, Councillor Shotton thanked Members for the comments and suggestions and confirmed that the necessary amendments would be made to the formal response following the meeting. He raised concerns that the proposed changes were a cost saving exercise and gave an assurance that if the BCUHB did not withdraw their proposals he would seek a meeting with the Minister for Health and Social Services to outline Flintshire County Council's concerns.

Councillor I.B. Roberts asked that a copy of the revised formal response be circulated to all Members.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That Appendix 1 be adopted as the formal response from Flintshire County Council to the BCUHB consultation and that the Council clearly state its position on the proposals for Community Hospitals and Local Health Services as follows:-
- That the Council was unconvinced by the case for change for Flint Community Hospital. In the absence of any specific proposals for the retention of accessible local services within the town of Flint the Council rejects the proposal to close Flintshire Community Hospital and its minor injuries unit;
  - That the minor injuries and x-ray services at Mold Community Hospital be retained on the grounds that Mold services a large and expanding population with established public transport;
  - That the Minor Injuries Clinic at Deeside Hospital facility be commissioned and opened as proposed, to provide an accessible service to the communities of Deeside; and
  - That the retention of local minor injuries services across the county, and the opening of the facility at Deeside, would prevent minor injuries self-referrals to District General Hospitals which would make further demands on already stretched Accident and Emergency services.
- (b) That Flintshire County Council urge the BCUHB to withdraw the current proposals with immediate effect;
- (c) That delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive and Director of Community Services following consultation with the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Social Services and Chair of the Social and Health Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee to make amendments to the formal response taking into account Members views and suggestions;
- (d) That subject to the response from the BCUHB, the Leader of the Council meet with the Minister of Health and Social Services to outline the concerns of Flintshire County Council;
- (e) That copies of the formal response be circulated to all Members.

**81. IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2012 – 2017 AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2011/12**

The Chief Executive introduced the Improvement Plan 2012 – 2017 and draft Annual Performance Report 2011/12.

The Improvement Plan built upon the ten Council Priorities and the supporting Directorate priorities presenting them in a single document. The current set of ten Council Improvement Priorities were extensive and were supported by a more detailed set of secondary Improvement priorities as detailed within the Improvement Plan 2012 – 2017. The length of timeframe

for the Plan had been adjusted to a longer period of five years to reflect the period of office of the new Council.

The Annual Performance Report for 2011/12 reviewed the Council's progress against the Improvement Priorities. The report would be available as a web-based document which would be accessed via the Council's website and the supporting documents which provided the more detailed information would be available as 'signposted' documents.

Councillor W. Mullin thanked the Chief Executive, the Policy Performance and Partnerships Manager and her team for their hard work in preparing the reports and proposed that the County Council adopt the Improvement Plan 2012 – 2017, noting the addition of the three additional Improvement Priorities in line with the Leadership's Programme for Change and also endorsed the 2011/12 draft Annual Performance Report for publication.

Councillor S. Jones raised concern on the reporting mechanism of regional partnerships and asked how this could be improved. Councillor R.C. Bithell also shared similar concerns and commented that there was some confusion over some partnership arrangements.

The Chief Executive commented on the complexities of regional partnerships and reported that update reports on performance were submitted to relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet. He said that information on regional partnerships was readily available if Members wished to receive an update. The Council had adopted a three stage reporting protocol for regional collaborative projects.

Councillor P.G. Heesom commented on the complete TAIH work programme and raised concerns that Flintshire had missed out on large investments which had been given to Conwy and asked that this matter be examined further. Councillor M.G. Wright commented on the development of the Deeside Growth Zone and outlined the opportunities available to Flintshire.

Councillor A.P. Shotton, Leader of the Council in response to the concerns on regional partnership said that there was a need for the Community Profile and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny to play an important role in scrutinising regional partnerships. On the Deeside Growth Zone he shared Members concerns and said that the Council would lobby for effective representation. He thanked the Policy Performance and Partnerships Manager and her team for the report and provided further details on each of the additional Improvement Priorities and said that further details on these would be reported back to Cabinet before the end of the calendar year.

Councillor R.B. Jones commented on the Lifelong Learning Directorate priorities as shown in the report and said that the priority to safeguard vulnerable communities had been removed from the report. He also

commented on the importance of the Directorate Plan and Service Plan and asked if these were readily available to Members in order for them to gain a better understanding of Service Plans. On regional partnerships he said that the County Council had previously agreed that any regional partnership should benefit Flintshire County Council and would be reviewed on an on-going basis. He asked the Leader of the Council to investigate how each of the regional partnerships could be reviewed in a proper manner.

The Chief Executive reported that the Directorate Plan and Service Plan were published on the Council's internet. The Policy Performance and Partnerships Manager said that some of the information from the Lifelong Learning Directorate priorities had been removed in error and this part of the report would be amended accordingly prior to publication of the document.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the County Council adopt the Improvement Plan 2012 – 2017, noting the addition of the three additional Improvement Priorities in line with the Leadership's Programme for Change; and
- (b) Endorse the 2011/12 draft Annual Performance Report for publication.

**82. PROTOCOL ON THE PRODUCTION OF COUNCILLOR NEWSLETTERS**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced a protocol on Councillor Newsletters which had been approved by the Standards Committee.

Councillor W. Mullin welcomed the report and proposed that the County Council adopt the protocol as shown at Appendix 2 of the report.

Councillor M.J. Peers suggested that section 3 of the protocol, be amended to read as follows:-

- Members are free to use the computers and other electronic devices provided by the Council available in Members Services and in the group rooms for the purposes of designing and setting up newsletters to their constituents.

In response to concerns raised, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services explained that there had been no indication that current facilities in Members Services had been used for Councillor Newsletters.

Councillor R.B. Jones proposed that an amendment that the County Council agree that Members cannot use any Flintshire IT software to produce Councillor Newsletters. This was seconded by Councillor C.J. Dolphin.

**RESOLVED:**

That the County Council agree that Members cannot use any Flintshire IT software to produce Councillor Newsletters

**83. DURATION OF MEETING**

The meeting commenced at 2.00 p.m. and ended at 4.33 p.m.

**84. ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were three members of the press and three members of the public present.

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**Chair**

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**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**13 NOVEMBER, 2012**

Minutes of the Meeting of Flintshire County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday 13 September, 2012

**PRESENT: Councillor C.A. Thomas (Vice-Chair in the Chair)**

Councillors: L.A. Aldridge, J.B. Attridge, G. Banks, G.H. Bateman, M. Bateman, R.C. Bithell, A. Bragg, H. Brown, C.S. Carver, D.L. Cox, R. Davies, A. Davies-Cooke, C.J. Dolphin, I. Dunbar, B. Dunn, C.A. Ellis, D. Evans, E.F. Evans, J.E. Falshaw, V. Gay, R.J.T. Guest, R.G. Hampson, G. Hardcastle, P.G. Heesom, C. Hinds, H.T. Howorth, R. Hughes, H.D. Hutchinson, J. Johnson, C.M. Jones, R.B. Jones, R.K. Jones, S. Jones, C. Legg, P. Lightfoot, B. Lloyd, R. Lloyd, M. Lowe, R.P. Macfarlane, D.I. Mackie, N.M. Matthews, H.J. McGuill, W. Mullin, M.J. Peers, N. Phillips, M.A. Reece, H.G. Roberts, L.A. Sharps, A.P. Shotton, P. Shotton, I. Smith, N.R. Steele-Mortimer, D.T. Williams, S. Williams, D.E. Wisinger, A. Woolley and M.G. Wright

**APOLOGIES:**

Councillors: D. Butler, P.J. Curtis, R. Dolphin, A.M. Halford, H.T. Isherwood, R. Johnson, A. Minshull, I.B. Roberts and W.O. Thomas

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive, Director of Community Services, Director of Lifelong Learning, Head of Finance, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Member Engagement Manager and Committee Officer

Major Magdalin Miller and Staff Sargeant Ian Brain for minute number 85

**85. THE ARMY ENGAGEMENT GROUP**

The Chair welcomed Major Magdalin Miller and Staff Sargeant Ian Brain who were in attendance to provide a presentation on the Army's role in supporting the Government's Defence Policy.

Major Magdalin Miller and Staff Sargeant Ian Brain gave a detailed presentation on the following areas:-

- Introduction
- Background
- Resources
- Primary responsibilities
- Next steps
- The Army's core values
- Apprentice programme
- Equipment
- Care and Support networks
- Looking to the future

The Chair thanked Major Magdalin Miller and Staff Sargeant Ian Brain for the interesting and informative presentation.

Councillor R.G. Hampson commented on the good work of the Armed Forces and asked what financial incentive was in place to encourage members of the public to become members of the Territorial Army (TAs). Councillor I. Dunbar said that all Members were immensely proud of the Armed Forces and asked for the Officers views on working alongside the TAs as a result of financial cuts to the Armed Forces.

Major Miller responded that members of the TA's received £1,600 a year following completion of all necessary training. Over the past 10 years more than 20,000 reservists had been deployed and had worked very well alongside Armed Service personnel.

A number of questions and comments were raised on redundancies within the Armed Forces and the protection for Armed Forces personnel who had been made redundant. Major Miller provided details on the timescale for redundancies and the level of voluntary redundancies currently being dealt with.

Councillor L.A. Aldridge raised concern on a young person who had recently been made redundant from the Armed Forces but had only scored ten points when applying for Local Authority housing and asked that this case be reviewed.

Councillor A.P. Shotton thanked Councillor Mullin for requesting that the presentation be made to all Members and thanked Major Miller and Staff Sargeant Brain for the interesting presentation. He said that through on-going discussions he hoped that Flintshire would host a North Wales Armed Forces Day in the future and asked if information could be provided at a later date on the value the Armed Forces Covenant had brought across the UK.

Major Miller explained that details on the Armed Forces Covenant could be found on the Armed Forces website and said that she would provide further information following the meeting.

Following the presentation the Chair advised that there would be a 10 minute adjournment. The meeting re-convened at 3.00 p.m.

## **86. PRESENTATION**

The Chair welcomed representatives of the Benefits Team to the meeting. The Team has recently won a Bronze Award at the National Awards Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation 2012 in the Most Improved Team of the Year Category. The Benefits Team were the only Team to be shortlisted in the UK wide event and were awarded Bronze for demonstrating sustainable improvements over a series of local and national performance

indicators. She thanked them for their hard work and for the improvements made to the service which benefited the residents of Flintshire.

The Head of Finance introduced the Team to Members. She thanked them for the improvements made to the service and said that she was pleased that their efforts had been recognised.

Councillor W. Mullin, Cabinet Member for Corporate Management thanked the Benefits Team for their hard work and congratulated them on their achievement. These comments were echoed by a number of Members.

**87. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Chair confirmed that no questions had been received.

**88. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

**89. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATION**

The Chair confirmed that copies of the Chair's Communication had been sent electronically to all Members. She commented on the many notable events which had been attended by Councillor A. Minshull, Chair of Flintshire County Council and the current level of money raised for her charity.

Councillor L.A. Aldridge thanked the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council, Chief Executive and Director of Lifelong Learning for renaming the Flint Leisure Centre in honour of Olympian Jade Jones which had been welcomed by all residents of Flint.

**90. PETITIONS**

No petitions were submitted.

**91. NOTICE OF MOTION**

The Chair confirmed that no Notices of Motion had been received.

**92. QUESTIONS**

The Chair confirmed that no Questions had been received.

**93. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS ON COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The Chair confirmed that no Questions had been received.

Councillor J.B. Attridge commented that some Members had not received Edition 2 of the minute book. The Chair suggested that any Member who had not received the minute book contact Democratic Services and that

any question they had could be submitted to the next ordinary County Council meeting.

#### **94. TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID YEAR UPDATE**

The Head of Finance introduced the recommendations made by the Cabinet at its meeting on the 16 October, 2012 on the Treasury Management Mid Year Report for 2012/13. The key points contained within the Treasury Management Mid Year Report were outlined within the report. On Landsbanki investments, Flintshire received an additional payment in October, 2012 taking the total received to date to £1.7m of the £3.40m original investment. The pattern of future distributions was not yet known.

Arrangements were being made for the annual Member Training Workshop on the 29 January, 2012 which would be hosted by the Audit Committee. All Members were encouraged to attend the Workshop.

Councillor W. Mullin thanked the Clwyd Pension Fund Manager and his team for their work in preparing the report and for managing the investments of Flintshire County Council. He also thanked the Audit Committee for the work undertaken in scrutinising the reports. He proposed that the County Council approve the Treasury Management Mid Year Report 2012/13. This was seconded by Councillor J.B. Attridge.

Councillor M.J. Peers commented on the debt maturity profile and suggested that information on investment rates and penalties for early repayment be included in future reports. He asked for clarification on the figures shown under the interim investment and performance report and the self-imposed restrictions as detailed in the report.

The Head of Finance thanked Councillor Peers for his suggestion on investment information and said that this would be taken on board for future reports. She explained that the financial information shown within the interim investment and performance report differed because one of the figures referred to the position of the Council at the end of August 2012 and the other figure referred to the projected figure for the end of the 2012/13 financial year. She also explained that details of a longer term investment had been included within the report as this deviated from the Council's self-imposed restriction of investing for no longer than 3 months.

In response to a question on the format of the report, the Head of Finance explained that the report submitted to County Council was the final version and that she would take on board Members comments that the word 'draft' should be removed in future.

Councillor R.J.T. Guest asked if the deposits received from Landsbanki included interest on the amount originally invested. The Head of Finance explained that the deposit received was the capital investment and did not include interest.

In response to a question on the transfer of the Treasury Management Function, the Head of Finance explained that as part of the Finance Function Review, responsibility for the managing of the Treasury Management Function was being transferred to the Strategy and Technical Team within Corporate Finance. This would not impact future reporting on Treasury Management.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Treasury Management Mid Year Report 2012/13 be approved.

**95. 2013 REVIEW OF PARLIMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN WALES**

The Chief Executive introduced the revised proposals for the Boundary Commission's 2013 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies in Wales and advised on the process and timetable for submitting representations in response to the revised proposals. A summary of the revised proposals were attached at Appendix 1 of the report with full details being made available in the Member Services Library, each of the Group Rooms and on the Council's website.

The only material change was the name of the Dee Estuary proposed constituency. The Assistant Commissioners recommended that "the name of the county town of the county forming the larger part of the constituency is an appropriate name for the constituency and that therefore the proposed constituency be named Flint". Written representations on the revised proposals were invited during the consultation period between the 24 October and 19 December, 2012. The Commission had asked those who wish to make representations to bear in mind those previously considered and to only submit new representations.

Councillor W. Mullin proposed that the County Council note the report, process and timetable for submitting representations on the revised proposals. This was seconded by Councillor J.B. Attridge.

**RESOLVED:**

That the County Council note the report, process and timetable for submitting representations on the revised proposals.

**96. UPDATING THE CONSTITUTION**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced a report to enable Members to consider updating changes to the Council's Constitution pursuant to recommendations from the Constitution Committee. The proposed changes to Parts 1, 2 and 8 of the Constitution were detailed in the report. Proposed changes to Article 19.02, as agreed by the Constitution Committee were shown at Appendix 1 of the report.

Councillor A.P. Shotton, Leader of the Council proposed that the changes recommended by the Constitution Committee to Parts 1, 2 and 8 of the Council's Constitution be approved. This was seconded by Councillor J.B. Attridge.

**RESOLVED:**

That the changes recommended by the Constitution Committee to Parts 1, 2 and 8 of the Council's Constitution be approved.

**97. REVIEW OF INTERNAL MEMBER FORA**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced a report to enable Members to consider a recommendation from the Constitution Committee as part of the ongoing review of internal Member fora.

Most of the internal Member fora were undertaking or advising upon Executive functions which were the responsibility of Flintshire's Cabinet. In relation to such Member fora any Council decision could only be a recommendation to the Cabinet who had the final decision on whether such Member fora should continue or not. Attached at Appendix 1 of the report was a list of the internal Member fora and the recommendation on whether or not it should continue.

The recommendations of the Group Leaders and Constitution Committee on the following Member fora were detailed within the report:-

- Member Development Working Group
- Development Plans Panel
- Social Services Representation and Complaints Review Panel
- Land Disposal Panel
- Agricultural Panel

Councillor A.P. Shotton, Leader of the Council welcomed the report and proposed that the County Council support the recommendations within the report with an amendment that the arrangements outlined to replace the Land Disposal Panel and Agricultural Panel be amended to reflect that where there was a dispute between the local Member and officers on the disposal of land this would form part of a report to Cabinet. The proposals were seconded by Councillor J.B. Attridge. The Chief Executive added that officers would ensure that a response had been received from a local Member before a decision on the disposal of land was proposed and this should be added to the changed procedure. The proposed changes by the Leader of the Council would be outlined within the future Cabinet report.

Councillor R.J.T. Guest spoke in support of the proposals but raised concern that not all the information requested by the Constitution Committee on the roles and responsibilities of member fora had been supplied. The Chief Executive said that reminders would be sent out to ensure that all the information requested would be available early in the new year for decision.

Councillor H.G. Roberts proposed an amendment that the membership of the Planning Protocol Working Group be increased to allow all Members of the Planning Committee to sit on this Group. The proposed amendment was not seconded.

Councillor M.J. Peers commented that all Members should be made aware of proposed land disposals in particular adjoining ward Members. He also commented that there would be no mechanism to call-in any decision made on the disposal of land valued at less than £250,000 and asked for clarification on the statutory safeguards in place for the disposal of land.

The Chief Executive explained that where an asset was disposed competitively this would be advertised. Depending on the locality of the land adjoining ward Members could also be consulted on any proposed land disposals and these issues would be addressed within the future Cabinet report. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services commented that currently a decision to dispose of land valued at less than £2m could not be called-in. He also explained that under the Local Government Act 1972 proposed disposal of public open spaces needed to be advertised in the local press.

In summing up, Councillor Shotton thanked Members for their comments and concurred with the concerns raised by Councillor Guest that not all information requested had been supplied and said that this matter would be taken on board to ensure that appropriate decisions could be made on the future of other Member fora.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Member Development Group be discontinued and that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to amend the Constitution accordingly;
- (b) That the recommendations as outlined within sections 3.05 to 3.08 of the report which related to Cabinet functions be noted; and
- (c) That the arrangements outlined to replace the Land Disposal Panel and Agricultural Panel be amended to reflect that where there was a dispute between the local Member and officers on the disposal of land then the matter would need to be decided by Cabinet

**98. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12**

Councillor R.J.T. Guest, Chairman of the Constitution Committee presented the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12 which detailed the work of each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

He thanked the Head of Overview and Scrutiny and his Team for preparing the report and welcomed future engagement through overview and scrutiny on the effectiveness of regional collaboration projects. He proposed

that the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12 be approved. This was seconded by Councillor J. Johnson.

Councillor R.C. Bithell commented on the good work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and concurred with the comments on the scrutiny of regional collaboration projects. He asked if the names of the Members who sat on the various Task and Finish Groups could be added to the updates within the report. The Chair explained that the names of Members who sat on various Task and Finish Groups were shown at Appendix 3 of the report.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12 be approved.

**99. DURATION OF MEETING**

The meeting commenced at 1.00 p.m. and ended at 3.19 p.m.

**100. ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were two members of the press present.

.....  
**Chair**



## **Summary of Energy Switching Scheme in South Lakeland.**

**This project gives residents the opportunity to access cheaper energy tariffs, particularly those without online access . A specialist switching firm (iChoosr of Belgium) was appointed and a registration scheme was opened on August 1st - 17th September and a campaign was carried out to make residents aware of energy switching opportunity. A provider of energy was chosen and awarded a one year fixed rate contract. A second residents registration scheme is to be reopened in January and a provider appointed on or around 26th February, there is now a waiting list in South Lakeland. "The profile of the scheme is currently high in the district and the council have an opportunity to build on its success".**

It is possible that our council may also gain a financial income from this type of project as a percentage of the switching fee.

Bids for funding can be obtained from Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) "Cheaper energy together" schemes, this covers marketing, legal/specialist advice which helps communities, especially vulnerable consumers.

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## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** COUNTY COUNCIL

**DATE:** TUESDAY, 29<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2013

**REPORT BY:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE

**SUBJECT:** FLINTSHIRE COMMUNITY COVENANT

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To agree to the adoption of an Armed Forces Community Covenant between the Council, The Armed Forces in Flintshire and representatives from the Voluntary, Business, Health and Education Sectors.

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

2.01 The Community Covenant Scheme was launched by the Government in 2011. The Scheme was announced by the Prime Minister as part of a wider Armed Forces Covenant package in May 2011 when it was agreed that the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant be written into Law.

2.02 The Armed Forces Act 2011 includes the following principles:

- Recognising the unique nature of Service
- Ensuring that there is no disadvantage e.g. in accessing public services, as a result of Service in the armed Forces;
- Allowing special treatment where justified e.g. in the case of injured personnel

2.03 In November 2011 the Welsh Government published their Package of Support for the Armed Forces Community in Wales. The Welsh Government document should be read in conjunction with and compliments the MOD's Covenant and sets out specific policies that the Welsh Government plans to implement. To date the Welsh Government has:

- contributed to the production of an annual Armed Forces Covenant Report
- appointed an Armed Forces Advocate (June Milligan, Director General Local Government and Communities)
- established an Expert Group on the needs of the Armed Forces Community in Wales which meets bi-annually and is chaired by the Minister for Local Government and

- Communities;
  - improved communications with the Armed Forces Community to ensure they receive information on services and support they are entitled to
  - Welsh regulation, inspection and audit agencies will provide the checks and balances with regard to local authorities, health etc., on how they are operating.
  
- 2.04 Community Covenants are voluntary statements of mutual support between civilian communities and their local Armed Forces community. They are intended to complement, at a local level, the Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the mutual obligations between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces.
  
- 2.05 Community Covenants aim to:
  - Encourage local communities to support the Armed Forces community in their areas
  - Nurture public understanding and awareness of the issues affecting the Armed Forces community
  - Recognise and remember the sacrifices faced by the Armed Forces Community
  - Encourage activities which help to integrate the Armed Forces community into local life
  - Encourage the Armed Forces community to help and support the wider community, whether through participation in events and joint projects, or other forms of engagement.
  
- 2.06 As highlighted above the Welsh Government is encouraging local authorities and their partners to develop Community Covenants. Appendix 1 shows the current position across Wales; 7 local authorities have signed a Covenant, 11 are in the process of signing and 4 have not yet begun.
  
- 2.07 The Ministry of Defence has also made available a Community Covenant Grant Scheme to deliver financial support to projects at the local level, which strengthen the ties or the mutual understanding between members of the Armed Forces Community and the wider community in which they live. £30 million is available from the MOD until 2015 and applications are invited for sums from £100 to £250,000, although it is likely that bids for smaller amounts of funding will be favoured to support local projects that deliver tangible benefits.
  
- 2.08 At its meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2012, the Welsh Local Government Association agreed to the development of a Memorandum of Understanding between Welsh Local Government and the Armed Forces Community in Wales which is in the process of being signed.

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.01 Attached at Appendix 2 to this report is a draft outline of a Flintshire Community Covenant which is based on the 'model' Community Covenant issued by the MOD. Section 4 of the Covenant, "Measures" should outline the role that Flintshire County Council, together with its partner agencies, will actively promote in the development of a Covenant.
- 3.02 The development of a Community Covenant will need to be a multi agency approach and representatives from the health, voluntary, business and educational establishments and the Armed Forces will be crucial to the success of the Covenant. A suggested list of partner agencies is included on page 2 of the appended draft Community Covenant.
- 3.03 Appendix 3 provides a "process map" of the typical steps involved in the development of a Community Covenant that the Council may wish to follow. This is taken from the Royal British Legion "Best Practice Guide to Community Covenants".
- 3.04 Once all the partners are on board and agreement has been reached, a signing ceremony will take place to officially launch the Covenant.
- 3.05 The Leader of the Council, Councillor Aaron Shotton will be the lead member for the Armed Forces Community Covenant.
- 3.06 At its meeting on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> January, Members of the Community Profile and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report and draft Community Covenant. A number of textual changes were suggested and have been incorporated. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee approved, in principle, the adoption of a Covenant.
- 3.07 Group Leaders were also invited to comment on the draft Covenant.
- 3.08 At its meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January, the Cabinet agreed to recommend the adoption of a Community Covenant to County Council as outlined within this report. Cabinet also agreed that the responsibility for the Community Covenant and matters relating to the Armed Forces would sit within the portfolio of the Leader of the Council.
- 3.09 More information about Community Covenants can be found at the following sites:

[www.britishlegion.org.uk](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk)  
[www.mod.uk/covenant](http://www.mod.uk/covenant)

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.01 Members are requested to approve:

- I. the adoption of a Community Covenant for Flintshire, as appended;
- II. approve the signatories as proposed; and
- III. endorse the launch of the Community Covenant.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 None directly associated with this report. However, once a Community Covenant is signed and implemented; access to various funding streams is increased.

#### **6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 None.

#### **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 None.

#### **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 The purpose of the community covenant is to ensure that Members, or veterans, of the Armed Forces and their families are not disadvantaged in accessing public services.

#### **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 None directly associated with this report.

#### **10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 As outlined within the report and Community Covenant with partner agencies.

#### **11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 None.

#### **12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 Appendix 1 – Wales Community Covenant Map  
Appendix 2 – Draft Flintshire Community Covenant  
Appendix 3 – Community Covenant – Practical Steps

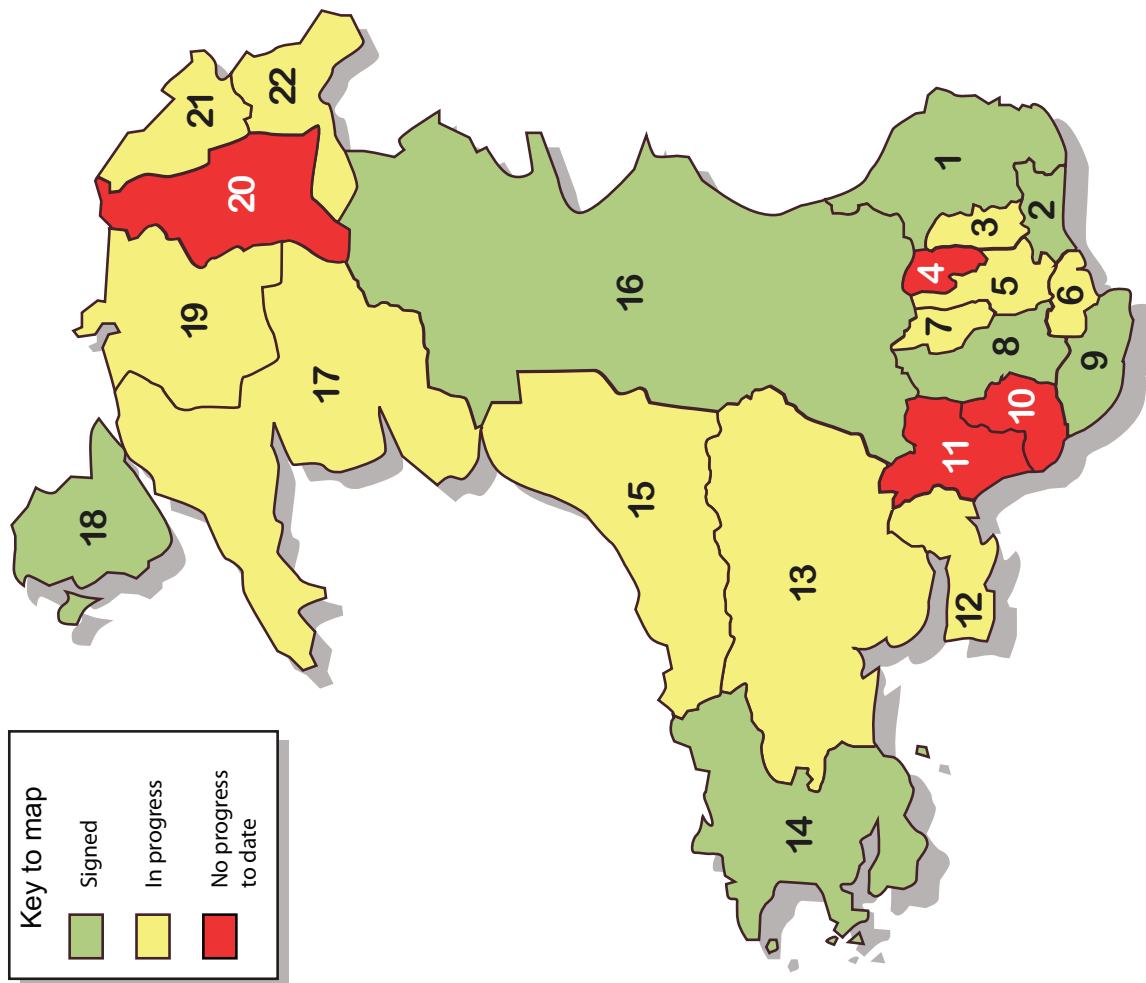
#### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

**Contact Officer:** Sharron Jones, Executive Manager  
**Telephone:** 01352 702107  
**Email:** [sharron.jones@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:sharron.jones@flintshire.gov.uk)

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## Community Covenant in Wales



Ser	Unitary Authority	Military Lead
1	Monmouthshire	1 Rifles, R MON RE
2	Newport	104 RA
3	Torfaen	104 RA
4	Blaenau Gwent	104 RA
5	Caerphilly	203 (W) Fd Hospital
6	Cardiff	HMS Cambria, 3 R Welsh
7	Merthyr Tydfil	3 R Welsh
8	Rhondda Cynon Taff	3 R Welsh
9	Vale of Glamorgan	MOD St Athans
10	Bridgend	Welsh Tpt Regt
11	Neath Port Talbot	Welsh Tpt Regt
12	Swansea	Welsh Tpt Regt
13	Cardiff	Welsh Tpt Regt
14	Pembrokeshire	14 Signal Regt
15	Ceredigion	WUOTC
16	Powys	IBS
17	Gwynedd	RAF Valley JSMTC
18	Isle of Anglesey	RAF Valley
19	Conwy	3 R Welsh
20	Denbighshire	101 Bn REME
21	Flintshire	101 Bn REME
22	Wrexham	101 Bn REME

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## **Community Covenant**

# **An Armed Forces Community Covenant**

Between

**Flintshire County Council**

**Representatives of the Charitable and Voluntary Sectors,  
the public sector, business community, further and higher education  
establishments**

and

**The Armed Forces in Flintshire**

**We, the undersigned, agree to work and act together to  
honour the Armed Forces Community Covenant**

**LIST ALL THE AGENCIES:**

**Suggestions to date:**

*Flintshire County Council*

*Local Communities*

*The Armed Forces:*

*Regional brigades*

*Local regiments*

*Territorial Army*

*Cadet Forces*

*Armed Forces Charities and Organisations including The Royal*

*British Legion*

*Health Care Providers*

*Chamber of Commerce*

*Local Enterprise Partnership*

*Local Service Board (LSB)*

*Business Representatives*

*Local Colleges and Universities*

*Jobcentre Plus*

*Citizens Advice Bureaux*

*Probation Service*

*Drug and Alcohol Services*

## Section 1: Participants

1.1 This Armed Forces Community Covenant is made between:

Flintshire County Council

And

Representatives of the public sector, the charitable and voluntary sectors, health sector, businesses, further and higher education and the civilian community of Flintshire (together “the Civilian Community”)

And

The serving and former members of the Armed Forces and their families working and residing in Flintshire (“the Armed Forces Community”)

## Section 2: Principles of the Armed Forces Community Covenant

2.1 The Armed Forces Community Covenant (“the Community Covenant”) is a voluntary statement of mutual support between the Civilian Community and the local Armed Forces Community.

2.2 The purpose of the Community Covenant is to encourage support for the Armed Forces Community working and residing in Flintshire and to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by members of the Armed Forces Community.

2.3 For Flintshire County Council and the Civilian Community the Community Covenant presents an opportunity to bring their knowledge, experience and expertise to bear on the provision of help and advice to members of the Armed Forces Community.

2.4 For the Armed Forces Community, the Community Covenant encourages the integration of Service life into civilian life and encourages members of the Armed Forces Community to help their local community through voluntary work.

### **2.5 Flintshire’s Principle:**

*“Flintshire County Council recognises the importance of what personnel who have or are serving in Her Majesty’s Armed Forces do for all of us. The commitment made by our Armed Forces community means that we, as a county, should ensure that no serving member or veteran of the Armed Forces whether Regular or Reserve, nor their families, should be disadvantaged in accessing public services; they should receive fair and proper treatment in recognition of their commitment. “*

## **Section 3: Objectives and General Intentions**

3.1 The Community Covenant complements the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant which defines the enduring, general principles that should govern the relationship between the Nation, the Government and the national Armed Forces Community.

3.2 It aims to encourage all within a community to offer support to the local Armed Forces Community and make it easier for Service personnel, families and veterans to access the help and support available from the MOD, from statutory providers and from the Charitable and Voluntary Sector. These organisations already work together in partnership at local level.

3.3 The scheme is intended to be a two-way arrangement and the Armed Forces Community are encouraged to do as much as they can to support their community and promote activity which integrates the Service community into civilian life.

## **Section 4: Measures**

Flintshire County Council will work in partnership with the “Civilian Community” and the “Armed Forces Community” to ensure that the Armed Services personnel, their families and veterans residing in Flintshire are not disadvantaged in accessing public services.

### **Examples of what we will do include:**

4.1 Flintshire County Council will establish an on-line service library of organisations with a remit to provide assistance and support to members of the Armed Forces Community. A designated web page will enable the service library to be accessible for members of the Armed Forces Community to find the assistance they need and will be used by council staff as a signposting resource.

4.2 Flintshire County Council will publicise an established single point of contact via its Flintshire Connects Centres (and other customer reception points until all 6 Connects Centres are live); employees will be trained to provide appropriate advice and support, or provide a “signpost” facility to encourage Members of the Armed Forces to make their status known so that all available help and advice from the council and other organisations can be provided.

4.3 Flintshire County Council will collect data on the range and frequency of services accessed by the Armed Forces Community. The management information derived from this data will be utilised to help improve services offered to the Armed Forces Community.

4.4 Flintshire County Council will engage with its partners in the private, public and voluntary sectors, health and business sectors to identify opportunities to fulfil the objectives of the Community Covenant.

### **Development of the Covenant**

The development of Flintshire’s Community Covenant will be a countywide project – a reflection of the countywide support of the principle behind it.

We can arrange an open day with all the agencies involved to explore what a Community Covenant means for Flintshire and set up a Member/Officer Board to:

Improve the sharing and recording of information where appropriate to support serving and ex-service Armed Forces members whether Regular or Reserve and their families in Flintshire.

Provide strategic direction and approval for any bids made to the Community Grant.

Champion communications to ensure Armed Forces personnel know who to contact for support at a local level.

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## Contact Personnel and Telephone Numbers

### MOD DCDS (Pers&Trg) Covenant Team

Contact Name: Tanya Clancy  
Title: SO3 MCI  
Telephone: 01874613952  
Address: HQ 160 (Wales) Brigade  
The Barracks  
Brecon  
Powys  
LD3 7EA

### In-Service representative

Contact: Captain Neil Turnbull, Military Civil Integration  
Telephone: tbc  
Address: tbc

### Flintshire County Council

Contact: Sharron Jones  
Executive Manager  
Sharron.jones@flintshire.gov.uk  
Telephone: 01352 702017/07752 595239  
Address: Flintshire County Council  
County Hall  
Mold  
Flintshire  
CH7 6NB



**Signatories**

*(Dependant upon who it is agreed that we jointly work with)*

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## **Appendix 3**

### **Community Covenant – Practical Steps**

#### **Process Map**

1. Download resources from MOD website
2. Obtain buy-in from Councillors and Senior Staff
3. Allocate an officer/department to lead community covenant work
4. Engage with the Armed Forces
5. Gain idea of Staff awareness and current provision of services by the council
6. Engage with Local organisation, service providers and voluntary sector
7. Hold an open day/information session with council staff, the Armed Forces and local organisations to identify key issues and gaps in provision via sessions with council staff and Armed Forces personnel
8. Consider setting up sub working groups to develop and lead specific actions
9. Put together an Action Plan in conjunction with Community Covenant
10. Set up working group and approval panel to meet regularly once signed
11. Organise and hold the signing ceremony ensuring that appropriate local groups are invited
12. Ensure the working group and panel meet regularly to develop and implement proposals from the strategy
13. Publicise the Community Covenant Grant Scheme

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## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**DATE:** TUESDAY, 29 JANUARY 2013

**REPORT BY:** HEAD OF FINANCE

**SUBJECT:** ADOPTION OF THE COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT  
SCHEME - APRIL 2013

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.01 The report explains the change from Council Tax Benefit to the Council Tax Reduction scheme, addresses the funding implications and the requirement to adopt the scheme by the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013.

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

- 2.01 The current Council Tax Benefit Scheme is to be replaced from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 with a Council Tax Reduction Scheme; In Wales there will be a national scheme (in contrast to England, where schemes are local to each billing authority).

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.01 The Prescribed Requirement Regulations 2012 requires the Council to adopt a Council Tax Reduction Scheme by the 31<sup>st</sup> January; If the Council fails to make a scheme then a default scheme will apply under the provisions of the Default Scheme Regulations. There were tight timescales between the making of the Prescribed Requirement Regulations and the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013 (when the scheme has to be adopted). Consultation was truncated in Flintshire between the 17<sup>th</sup> December 2012 and 14<sup>th</sup> January 2013. During this period an Equalities Impact Assessment was also commissioned.
- 3.02 The proposed adoption report was presented to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2013 where the proposed adoption of the Prescribed Requirement Regulations 2012 and the proposed discretions were endorsed.
- 3.03 After the scrutiny committee, in the afternoon of the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2013 a written statement was issued by Welsh Government concerning the new scheme. An announcement was made by Carl Sargeant Minister for Local Government & Communities that new regulations were to be laid as a matter of urgency changing the maximum level of support from 90% to 100%. *Appendix 1*

3.04 An adoption report was presented to Cabinet on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2013 *Appendix 2* for consideration. Cabinet endorsed revised recommendations *Appendix 3* that took account of the contemporaneous changes. Cabinet endorsed the Prescribed Scheme, noting the written statement of the Minister for Local Government and Communities on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2013 and endorsed the proposed local discretions; Cabinet recommended the Prescribed scheme to full Council, subject to the inclusion of any change in prescribed limits set by Welsh Government and the consequential detail. *Appendix 3*

3.06 More detail will be given when the regulations have been laid. It is hoped that this will be before 25<sup>th</sup> January 2013. When the new regulations have been laid assessment will be made of their impact and reported.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.01 To note the endorsements of Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2013 & Cabinet on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2013 with regard to the Prescribed Regulations and the Discretions for 2013/14.

4.02 To note the making of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations, (“the Prescribed Requirement Regulations”) by the National Assembly for Wales on the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2012.

4.03 To note the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken by the Council on the introduction of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. As set out in Appendix (3) of the Cabinet report at *Appendix 2*

4.04 To note the written statement by the Minister for Local Government and Communities on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2013 which sets out the intention to increase the maximum level of support from the current 90% to 100%? *Appendix 1*

4.05 That Council adopts Prescribed Requirement scheme as set out in Appendix (1) of the Cabinet report at *Appendix 2*, subject to any changes in prescribed limits set by Welsh Government and the consequential detail.

4.06 Council adopts for 2013/14 the proposed Discretionary Elements as set out in Appendix (2) of the Cabinet report at *Appendix 2*.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 Appendix 2 - Cabinet report 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2013.

5.02 Welsh Governments written statement on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2013 indicates that there will also be £22 million available nationally in support of the regulatory change, Detail on how this will be distributed will be reported when it is known. *Appendix 1*

**6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 Appendix 2 - Cabinet Report 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2013.

**7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 Appendix 2 - Cabinet Report 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2013.

**8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 Appendix 2 - Cabinet Report 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2013 – *Appendix 4*

8.02 A full Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken. Within the assessment there is reference to the maximum liability being 90%. The document is still relevant as it provides invaluable information with regards the demographics of Flintshire which will help with the Wider Welfare Reform Programme.

**9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 Appendix 2 - Cabinet Report 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2013.

**10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 Appendix 2 Cabinet Report 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2013.

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 Appendix 2 Cabinet Report 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2013.

**12.00 APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - Written statement by Welsh Government 17<sup>th</sup> January 2013.

Appendix 2 - Cabinet Report 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2013.

Appendix 3 - Amended Recommendations to Cabinet Report 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2013.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985**  
**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Appendix 2 Cabinet Report 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2013.

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Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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## WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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**TITLE** Council Tax Support Arrangements

**DATE** 17 January 2013

**BY** Carl Sargeant, Minister for Local Government and Communities

The UK Government is implementing a wide ranging and significant programme of reform of the welfare system. As part of this, the Council Tax Benefit system is being brought to an end on 1 April 2013 and funding transferred to Wales so that a new arrangement could be put in place to provide support with council tax bills. The funding transfer included a cut of 10 per cent based on the UK Government's estimate of expenditure 2013-14 budget.

On 19 December 2012, the Assembly passed regulations that would implement new arrangements to support those who will pay council tax in 2013-14. The Regulations (*Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2012* and *Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Default Scheme) (Wales) Regulations 2012*) set out that the maximum level of support that eligible claimants could receive would be 90 per cent. This reflected the shortfall in the transfer of funding from the UK Government.

The Welsh Government has become increasingly concerned about the practical impact of the reduction in support for claimants. This is particularly the case as the impact of other UK Government welfare reforms is becoming clearer, for example, as people are notified of the direct impact of the 'bedroom tax'. The difficulties for some of our most vulnerable have been sharpened further by the decision of the UK Government last week to set a 1 per cent cap on benefit increases. Aside from other reductions as a consequence of the welfare reform programme, this will implement a further real terms cut in income for those groups of people.

Against this background, the Welsh Government has decided to increase the maximum level of support from the current 90 per cent to 100 per cent. That means claimants will receive the full amount of support for their council tax bills to which they are eligible. Unlike the 2012 Regulations, not all claimants receiving support will have to pay a proportion of their bill. The Government will provide an additional £22 million to local authorities to implement the change. It has been possible to identify

these funds as a consequence of the Government's careful financial management and prudent use of reserves and departmental budgets.

In order to implement this change, the existing regulations must be amended. The Government will also use the opportunity to uprate some financial thresholds in the current regulations and to make a small number of other minor adjustments, partly in response to the helpful scrutiny by the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee before Christmas.

Local authorities are subject to a range of deadlines in the run up to issuing council tax bills, including the need to adopt a Council Tax Reduction scheme by 31 January so it is vital that the amendments are made as soon as possible. If it is not possible to make the amended regulations in time, authorities may incur very substantial costs for council tax rebilling.

The Government has laid amending regulations today and will seek with the support of the Presiding Officer and Business Committee to debate them in the Assembly early next week. In view of the timing, this will involve the suspension of Standing Orders. The proposed changes will not affect the Sunset Clause added to the Regulations in December and the amended Regulations will operate for 2013-14 only.

The changes to the Regulations that the Welsh Government is making will significantly improve the financial position for those vulnerable households who would have faced increases in their council tax bills, as well as those who would have had to contribute to their council tax bills for the first time.

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** **CABINET**  
**DATE:** **TUESDAY, 22 JANUARY 2013**  
**REPORT BY:** **HEAD OF FINANCE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE**  
**SUBJECT:** **ADOPTION OF COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME -  
APRIL 2013**

**1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 The report explains the change from Council Tax Benefit to the Council Tax Reduction scheme, addresses the funding implications and the requirement to adopt the scheme by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013.

**2.00 BACKGROUND**

2.01 The current Council Tax Benefit Scheme is to be replaced from 1 April 2013 with a Council Tax Reduction Scheme. In Wales, there will be a national scheme (in contrast to England, where schemes are local to each billing authority.)

2.02 The Council Tax Reduction Scheme in Wales is set by Regulations made under Schedule 1B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as inserted by the Local Government Finance Act 2012). On 19 December 2012, the Welsh Assembly approved two sets of regulations:

- the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Default Schemes) (Wales) Regulations 2012 ("the Default Scheme Regulations");<sup>1</sup> and
- The Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2012 ("the Prescribed Requirements Regulations").<sup>2</sup>

These Regulations prescribe the main features of the Scheme to be adopted by all Councils in Wales.

2.03 Although the Act had given the Welsh Ministers discretion to allow Welsh local authorities to determine the content of their own schemes, the Government took a decision to establish a national framework for the provision of Council Tax Support in Wales. This will avoid what has been termed a "postcode lottery" whereby eligibility for particular groups could be different in different council areas.

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<sup>1</sup> These can be accessed: <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-business-fourth-assembly-laid-docs.htm?act=dis&id=241510&ds=1/2013>

<sup>2</sup> These can be accessed: <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-business-fourth-assembly-laid-docs.htm?act=dis&id=241510&ds=1/2013>

2.04 Although a national scheme has been approved, within the Prescribed Requirements Regulations, there is limited discretion given to the Council to apply additional discretionary elements that are more generous than the national scheme and which provide for additional administrative flexibility. These are:

- The ability to extend the standard period of 4 weeks during which council tax reduction will continue after someone starts work;
- A discretion to increase the amount of War Disablement Pensions and War Widows Pensions which is to be disregarded when calculating the income of the claimant;
- A discretion to permit claims for council tax reduction to be submitted at offices other than County Hall/Flintshire County Council buildings;
- A discretion to enhance the process for notification of decisions above the minimum requirements; and
- The ability to backdate the award of council tax reduction for longer than the new standard period of three months, where a claim has been submitted late.

2.05 The Prescribed Requirements Regulations require the Council to adopt a Council Tax Reduction Scheme by 31 January 2013, regardless of whether it applies any of the discretionary elements. If the Council fails to make a scheme, then a default scheme will apply under the provisions of the Default Scheme Regulations. The Council can only apply discretion if it makes its own scheme under the Prescribed Requirements Regulations.

2.06 Whether or not the Council wished to adopt any of the above discretionary elements it was obliged to carry out consultation on the adoption of a scheme, even though the provisions were set by the Welsh Government. Because of the tight timescales between the making of the Prescribed Requirements Regulations and 31 January 2013 (by which date the scheme has to be adopted), consultation has been truncated in Flintshire County Council between 17<sup>th</sup> December 2012 and 14<sup>th</sup> January 2013. The consultation exercise has been applied by all Welsh Councils and has been based upon the best information available at the time.

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01 The Council's recommended approach to the available discretions is to apply them as outlined in Appendix 2.

3.02 It should be noted that there are no additional monies available from the Welsh Government to fund the discretionary elements. The cost of funding similar discretionary elements under the current council tax benefit scheme is outlined in Appendix 2 .

3.03 The Council continues to have powers to support hardship on an individual basis or in respect of a defined group. Such arrangements cannot, however, form part of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme itself.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.01 To note the making of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations ("the Prescribed Requirements Regulations") by the Welsh Assembly on 19 December 2012.
- 4.02 To note the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken by the Council on the introduction of the Council Tax Support Scheme.
- 4.03 To adopt the Scheme as set out in Appendix [ 1 ].

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.01 The Council needs to manage the cost of Council Tax Support within its budget. The amount of government support is limited to £8,772,518 and is provided on a fixed basis rather than the demand-led basis of support to council tax benefit. The Council needs to recognise also that as well as receiving a reduced amount of government support, it is anticipated that there will be an increase in non-collection rates as a result of the increased burden on claimants.
- 5.02 The Council has a duty to recover all outstanding Council Tax balances so that debts owed to the Council are kept to a minimum. With this in mind, the recent introduction of a Corporate Debt Policy should help to minimise the impact of non collection. The policy will ensure fairness for all in that every debtor will have an obligation to repay their debt owed so that future services do not suffer.
- 5.03 Critically, the policy will also ensure the Council and partner organisations will treat all debtors fairly and, where possible we will promote free debt advice services. Where appropriate, payment agreements will be put in place to assist debtors in adverse financial circumstances. Where a customer makes contact to discuss payment difficulties their circumstances will be considered fairly and objectively with a view to agreeing a reasonable payment arrangement, minimising recovery action and avoiding potential additional costs.
- 5.04 The decision to agree a repayment timetable will be influenced by the willingness of the customer to take advantage of the debt advice. Proportionate measures will be deployed to develop a culture of payment and early intervention while encouraging those in need of help to get in touch with the Council at an early stage.

#### **6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

- 6.01 Wales has been argued to be the most deprived country in the UK. It has also been highlighted that the deprivation present in Wales is comparable to only parts of England, in which a similar "post –industrial setting is found". It may be regarded that Wales faces more significant impacts as a result of changes to the systems of welfare which begin in earnest next year.

- 6.02 The Welfare Reform Programme has recognised the need for proactive work and support to try and mitigate as much as possible the effects on vulnerable residents in Flintshire. Residents may not only be affected by changes to Council Tax Support but may also be affected by other changes to other welfare benefits which are happening at the same time.

## **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

- 7.01 None specifically associated with the content of this report.

## **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 8.01 The replacement of Council Tax Benefit with the national support scheme will impact upon many of our low income residents including those in vulnerable groups.

The Council has undertaken a consultation exercise in the limited time available. The consultation assists the Council in satisfying the public sector equality duty in the Equality Act.

The Welsh Government has compiled an equalities impact assessment following its consultation<sup>3</sup>. A local equalities impact assessment has been carried out by the Council and a summary is contained in Appendix 4.

## **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.01 None specifically associated with the content of this report.

## **10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

- 10.01 Yes

## **11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

- 11.01 The Welsh Government undertook consultation on Providing Support for Council Tax between February and April 2012. A technical consultation was carried out between 21 September and 19 October on the draft Default Scheme Regulations. No specific consultation has been carried out nationally on the Prescribed Requirement Regulations. An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and was submitted to the Minister for Local Government and Communities for consideration alongside the draft regulations.

- 11.02 Local consultation has taken place between 17<sup>th</sup> December 2012 and 14<sup>th</sup> January 2013. A summary of the consultation results is contained at Appendix 3.

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<sup>3</sup> This may be accessed through the following link (Page 16 Appendix A): <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-business-fourth-assembly-laid-docs.htm?act=dis&id=241515&ds=1/2013>

## **12.00 APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Summary of the Scheme

Appendix 2 – The Discretionary Elements

Appendix 3 - Summary of Public Consultation

Appendix 4 - Equalities Impact Assessment

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985**

#### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Schedule 1B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 ( as inserted by the Local Government Finance Act 2012

Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Default Schemes) (Wales) Regulations 2012 (“Default Scheme Regulations”)

Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2012 (“Prescribed Requirement Regulations)

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## **Appendix 1 – Cabinet report**

### **Summary of the Scheme**

The Council Tax Reduction Scheme takes all its principal elements from the Council Tax Benefit scheme it replaces. It is a “means tested reduction” but it exists outside the legal framework for other Social Security benefits.

As such the new scheme compares an applicant’s “needs” with regard to age, disability and responsibility for a partner, children, or as a carer to their assessable income and capital. There are disregards from earned income and of some disability benefits, and the capital limit is £16, 000

Applicants with an income in excess of their needs will have their maximum Council Tax Reduction withdrawn at the rate of 20%.

The principal difference to CTB is that the maximum Council Tax Reduction available is limited to 90%, meaning that all applicants, even those on the lowest of income will have to pay at least 10% of their Council Tax bill.



## **Appendix 2 – Cabinet report**

### **The Discretionary Elements**

There are five distinct areas of discretion within the new Regulations and Flintshire County Council proposes to exercise these as follows;

1. Not to increase the “extended reduction period” to more than four weeks when an applicant starts work. This rule currently acts as a good work incentive measure under CTB, and it makes sense to maintain it in line with the Housing Benefit (HB) Extended Payment, which will continue at four weeks. FCC paid Council Tax Benefit (CTB) Extended Payments to the value of £19, 223 in 2011/2012
2. To continue to disregard all War Disablement and War Widows Pensions as income. This measure resulted in £30,297 of CTB expenditure in 2011/2012 and to continue this discretion would follow a long precedent and maintain the link with the Authority’s treatment of this income for HB purposes
3. Not to “designate” non Local Authority offices for the receipt of CTRS forms, as it is thought that this would not improve the service with regard to the security and speed of processing and it may prove difficult to guarantee Welsh language assistance to applicants
4. To maintain the current, extensive provision of information contained in notifications of awards
5. To maintain the standard three month backdating provisions for pensioners (in line with current CTB and HB arrangements) and to use the discretion to increase the period for which working age peoples claims can be backdated from 3 to 6 months when a good reason for failing to claim is shown. This reflects the current position with regard to CTB and HB, and in 2011/2012 FCC awarded backdated CTB claims to the value of £33, 078.

## Appendix 3 – Cabinet report

### Summary of Public Consultation

1. Consultation took place between 17<sup>th</sup> December 2012 to 14<sup>th</sup> January 2013. The consultation took the form of a consultation document and survey (in English & Welsh). It was available on the Councils website. It was also distributed to AMs, MPs, Members and Town & Community Councils. Posters were printed and distributed. There was some face to face meeting with some disability groups and other forums. All 13000+ current Council Tax Benefit customers were written to and informed of the consultation and proposed changes.
2. FCC received telephone 300+ calls from the public following the start of the consultation period and the despatch of the letters.
3. 20 residents asked for the documentation in hard format.
4. FCC received 18 survey documents regarding the consultation survey. 16 “online” and 2 in paper format. Only one was from an organisation and the others from individuals. All were in the medium of English.
5. A number of individual “letters” have been received and concerns are being addressed,
6. A number of general comments were made;

“Benefits exist as people can’t afford a decent standard of living. A reduction is a disgrace and shows how uncaring the government is. Tax the bankers”

“According to the paper can’t touch OAPs. Awful that the poorest are targeted so they have nothing to live on”

“Councils in England and Wales are protecting OAPs, Scotland no change”

“This is fair in the circumstances”

“Low income families depend on Benefits – higher fuel bills – many in Deeside are struggling”

“Unfair on pensioners who have limited income – sounds like you are blaming the UK government for a decision to limit to 90%”

“States 10% this year but what happens next year 20% then 30%.”

“It is intended that the poor in our society is to be squeezed”

“Benefit claimants are on a limited income, budget 10% will impact – people are in fuel poverty...”

“I am diabetic and disabled and need a special diet – 10% will have gone on fuel and food, I will have to go in to hospital and that will cost more”

“I am a single parent with a 2year old with cerebral palsy – I receive DLA highest rate for him so I can’t work”

“As Benefit is already means tested where does the extra income come from?”

“If payments are made to individuals and not landlords – what will be the safety net?”

“HELP! I am struggling to put food on the table and heat my home. Disabled and getting DLA. Every penny counts”

“I think this is crazy – people are already struggling – more depression for low income families”

“Where I am supposed to find the 10% - can I claim this back on my pension credit?”

7. Not many comments were made on the areas of discretion. The Royal British Legion commented that the status quo should be kept for the treatment of War Widows, Disablement Pensions and payments. There was one comment about designated offices that this should be considered. There were 3 comments about extended payments and consideration should be given to 6 weeks, 8 weeks and 6 months respectively. Backdated claims should be 6 months for all.

**Flintshire County Council:**

**The Council Tax Reduction Scheme in Wales:  
The Impact Assessment for Flintshire**

**Draft Version 1.0**

**January 2013**

## Contents

Executive Summary .....	13
1 Introduction and Overview .....	14
1.1 Background .....	14
1.2 The Protected Characteristics .....	14
1.3 This Report .....	14
2 The Council Tax Reduction Scheme .....	16
2.1 Overview .....	16
2.2 The Council Tax Reduction Scheme .....	16
2.3 Other Changes in Welfare from 2013 .....	18
2.4 Context to the Impacts: A Brief Reminder on National Welfare Reforms ..	18
3 The Options Summary .....	20
3.1 Overview .....	20
3.2 Key Decisions and Responsibilities .....	20
3.3 The Wales Scheme .....	20
3.4 Underpinning Evidence and Impact Assessment for Wales .....	21
3.5 The Financial Envelope .....	21
3.6 The Impacts by Options within the proposed Scheme .....	22
3.7 Local schemes: The Impact of allowances for War Widows .....	23
4 Overall Impact Assessment .....	24
4.1 Overview .....	24
4.2 Relationship between Impact Assessments .....	24
4.3 Approach to data .....	24
4.4 Data Sources: Wales and Local Council Analysis .....	25
4.5 Summary of Impacts by Household Type .....	26
4.6 Summary of the Overall Value of claims by Protected Characteristic .....	27
4.7 Analysis of protected characteristic: Age, Working and Pensioner Age .....	28
4.8 Analysis of protected characteristic: Age, Households with Children .....	30

4.9	Analysis of protected characteristic: Disability.....	31
4.10	Analysis of protected characteristic: Gender, Single Parents .....	33
4.11	Analysis of protected characteristic: Race.....	34
4.12	The Impacts of the proposed changes: All Households.....	35
4.13	Adverse impacts and mitigating actions .....	36
4.14	Clusters of potential common impact .....	37
4.15	Interim Conclusions .....	37
5	The Local context: Trend Analysis.....	39
5.1	Summary of section .....	39
5.2	Overall Approach .....	39
5.3	Increase in claims, All England and Wales.....	39
5.4	Council Tax Benefit: The Wales Perspective .....	41
5.5	Welsh Language Skills.....	42
6	Mitigation.....	44
6.1	Overview.....	44
6.2	Matters to be considered .....	44
7	Conclusions.....	45
	Appendix 1: Management of the Impacts from April 2013 .....	47

## **Executive Summary**

The UK government is now undertaking some of the most substantial changes to national welfare benefits in more than 30 years. One of the key elements of these changes, and which is amongst the first to be implemented, is the replacement of Council Tax Benefit from April 2013.

Under Government rules, Council Tax Benefit is repealed, and is replaced by Council Tax Reduction. The changes to this benefit have two critical elements: firstly that responsibility for the determination of local schemes is delegated to a local level; and secondly that a funding cut of 10% of the cost of awards is applied. The funding cut, for the whole of Wales is in the region of £24m for 2013/14.

Wales has been argued to be the most deprived country in the UK. It has been argued that the deprivation present in Wales is comparable to only parts of England, in which a similar "post-industrial" setting is found. Accordingly, there are high levels of household dependency upon welfare benefits, and it may be argued that Wales faces more significant impacts as a result of changes to systems of welfare which begin from next year.

In Wales, the Welsh Government has determined to introduce a common scheme for Council Tax Reduction which will apply throughout the country. Under the scheme proposed, the funding cut of 10% will be passed to those in receipt of Council Tax Reduction, through the use of a 90% maximum amount of Council Tax Reduction rather than the 100% maximum which has been possible under Council Tax Benefit.

All of the Welsh Authorities have co-operated on this Impact Analysis, and there is as a direct consequence a strong opportunity to make comparisons with the Impact Analysis which has already been completed in respect of Wales by the Welsh Government. Throughout Wales, it has been possible to reach some conclusions on the same protected characteristics as within the whole Wales assessment. However with access to each Council's data, it is also possible to examine the potential impacts on those Characteristics at an individual Council level.

While for the whole of Wales the conclusions are similar to those of the Welsh Government, there are variations at a local level. For the Council, the key variations from the whole Wales findings are in terms of Age, Disability, Race and Gender. The specific findings in support of these overarching conclusions are explored in section 4 following.

The purpose of this report is to consider the effect on different groups who are protected under the Equality Act by discussing the potential effects of the proposed changes on such groups, and to ensure that the Council meets its public sector equality duty.

**January 2013**

# 1 Introduction and Overview

## 1.1 Background

The Government is committed to implementing the most significant changes to national welfare systems that have been seen in more than thirty years. The change programme begins in earnest from next year, and the changes to Council Tax Benefit will take effect from 2013. The implementation timetable is extremely demanding.

## 1.2 The Protected Characteristics

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities will consider the potential impact of proposed policy changes with regard to the following statutory Protected Characteristics:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage and civil partnership;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race
- Religion or belief;
- Sexual orientation.

## 1.3 This Report

This report is constructed to enable an informed decision making process, and with reference to the following sections:

- **At section 2:** A summary of the statutory changes which must be implemented from April 2013, and under which Council Tax Benefit is repealed, and replaced by Council Tax Reduction;
- **At section 3:** A summary of the relationship between each Council's Impact Analysis, and the scheme which is proposed for the whole of Wales, and the consequent Impact Analysis of the Welsh Government;
- **At section 4:** A summary of the equality impacts of those options within the Council;
- **At section 5:** A summary of analysis of the overall trends within the Council's Council Tax systems, and to begin planning and forecasting for the cost of the Council Tax Reduction scheme;



- **At section 6:** A summary of the mitigating steps which may be considered as appropriate; and
- **At section 7:** Overall conclusions and recommendations.

## 2 The Council Tax Reduction Scheme

### 2.1 Overview

This section explains the key points about the Council Tax Reduction scheme which must be implemented from April 2013, within the context of what is currently known about the changes underway within the national welfare benefits system. It is to be stressed that the Government is attempting the most significant changes to welfare that have been seen for at least 30 years. Indeed the Institute for Fiscal Studies have argued in their study for the options for Wales that the changes to be faced are the greatest in 40 years.

While the broad scale of change is not disputed, some of the detail of proposed change is not yet known. An additional complicating factor is the speed with which the change programme is being attempted. There is an extent to which, therefore, the changes to Council Tax operate within a context of wider welfare reform that is very much still under development.

In summary, the key changes to welfare may be considered as follows:

- From **April 2013**, Wales will implement the replacement scheme for Council Tax Benefit;
- From **April 2013**, new approaches will also apply for welfare support, under which one-off payments for specific purposes are managed, including some currently managed by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) which is currently responsible for the administration of Crisis Loans and Social Fund payments. In Wales, a common national scheme will apply, administered by a partnership of Northgate Public Services, Family Fund trading & Wrexham County Borough Council;
- From **October 2013**, the Government's flagship changes to national welfare payments under Universal Credit begin in earnest.

It is anticipated that as the above implementations proceed, and as the necessary policy changes to "fine tune" systems are identified, that further changes may be applied by the Government.

As a consequence of the volatile change environment which is described here, the Welsh Government has determined to implement a scheme of Council Tax Reduction which will initially apply for only one year from April 2013.

### 2.2 The Council Tax Reduction Scheme

#### Overview

The UK Government currently administers the appropriate provisions for reductions in Council Tax payments through two different Departments, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The DCLG have driven the programme for the reform of Council Tax Benefit.

Currently, Government grant for Council Tax Benefit is designed to largely match actual expenditure, and is claimed at the end of the year through the Council Tax Benefits Subsidy system. Grant for the Council Tax Reduction scheme will be cash limited, and is intended to cost the Government 10% less than the current scheme. Local schemes are therefore expected to be less generous than the current scheme.

Although the UK Parliament enacted primary legislation for these changes in November, much of the detail of the schemes is provided via Regulations, which could not be laid until the overarching primary legislation was passed. In Wales, the National Assembly for Wales was recalled on the 19<sup>th</sup> December to determine the main scheme regulations.

### **Overall Financial Impact**

Under current arrangements, which have applied since 1993, the lowest income households identified by a statutory means test are entitled to a maximum of 100% benefit award against Council Tax Liability.

The UK Government has decided to make savings in the cost of awards for Council Tax Benefit, and has calculated a 10% cut **in the overall cost of Council Tax Benefit** which will be applied to each Council.

Under the scheme for Wales, the 10% cut will be passed across to those receiving Council Tax Reduction from April 2013 by applying a 90% maximum eligible amount of Council Tax. The key impacts of this approach on customers may be summarised:

- All of those households currently receiving Council Tax Benefit will be required to contribute something towards the cost of their Council Tax, including those households currently receiving 100% relief;
- Some households, currently receiving smaller awards of reduction because of earned income will receive no relief at all under the 90% maximum eligible amount of Council Tax award policy;
- Pensioners will not receive automatic protection from the Scheme in Wales, and will be applicable to the Wales scheme in the same way as Working Age households.

### **Overall Financial Impact: Claim Groups**

The overall value of claims for the Council is summarised as follows:

**Table 1: Claims distribution, Working and Pension Age:**

<b>Claim type</b>	<b>Value (£)</b>	<b>%</b>
Working Age	4,788,348	50.5%
Pension Age	4,705,263	49.5%
Total	9,493,611	

The overall value of claims, as at December 2012 is £9.5m, of which £4.78m is paid in respect of Working Age claims and £4.71m in respect of Pensioner claims.

### **2.3 Other Changes in Welfare from 2013**

From October 2013, the DWP's proposed changes to national welfare payments under the Universal Credit system begin in earnest.

Under current government plans, transitional arrangements to the new Universal Credit system will begin from October 2013, with a phased implementation by claim type. New claimants from October 2013 will be the first to go through the new system, with other claim groups including existing claimants of working and of pensionable age coming later. Under current government proposals, Universal Credit will be a single payment to successful claimants for all living costs, including for rent where applicable.

### **2.4 Context to the Impacts: A Brief Reminder on National Welfare Reforms**

Council Tax Reduction is only a part of wider changes to welfare reform which are being completed by the Government. As the Council considers the potentially significant impacts of proposed changes to local welfare which must be considered, a brief reminder of that national context is summarised:

- The UK Government is committed to the most significant review of welfare that has been seen, possibly for 30 years and arguably since national systems of welfare were originally conceived after the Second World War. While the CTR is implemented from April 2013, this is not the only change in welfare which is underway;
- All the changes which are to be made to national welfare systems cannot yet be fully assessed, and indeed some of the details are not yet known. However it might be argued that some broad principles are emerging, as follows:
  - The UK Government appears to be positioning future policy to apply more cuts to the welfare budget;

- Some independent policy specialists have indicated that a prolonged period of reductions in Government spending may well now apply until 2020<sup>4</sup>;
- Whoever follows the coalition, it is now difficult to see how further cuts cannot be envisaged. The policy choice is simply where they will be applied;
- Current Government policy appears, in particular to be targeting cuts to households which are larger households; are longer term recipients of Welfare; are younger; or are otherwise in receipt of larger value awards;
- Recent policy announcements from the Government appear to be significantly strengthening the position which is proposed for welfare for families in longer term receipt of welfare and for those families making life choices while on welfare. Such "life choices" may include decisions which currently have the effect of increasing welfare payments, for example having additional children.

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<sup>4</sup> Tony Travers, Director, Greater London Group, London School of Economics. Conference paper to the Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation October 2012.

## **3 The Options Summary**

### **3.1 Overview**

This section summarises the relationship between the approach taken for the Council, and the adoption of the whole Wales scheme.

### **3.2 Key Decisions and Responsibilities**

The pattern of changes to welfare reform which begins from April covers a series of measures for which different parties have responsibility. As regards the Council Tax Reduction Scheme the key responsibilities and relevant parties may be summarised as follows:

- The UK **Department for Communities** have determined to repeal rules for the administration of Council Tax Benefit, and replace those systems of welfare with Council Tax Reduction from April 2013;
- The **Welsh Government** have implemented an overall scheme of Council Tax Reduction which applies for the whole of Wales, and which will apply a scheme with a maximum eligible Council Tax set at 90%; and
- **Billing Authorities**, including the Council must implement and administer the local schemes.

### **3.3 The Wales Scheme**

The Welsh Government has determined to implement a scheme for the whole of Wales, and which will apply as follows:

- That the maximum eligible amount of Council Tax Reduction which will apply is 90%;
- That no Second Adult Rebate will apply; and
- That the scheme will apply for one year only from April 2013.

In addition, the Scheme allows for the determination of some elements of the scheme by the local Billing Authority, and as follows:

- The approach to extended payment;
- The rules for backdating of awards
- The rules for the treatment as income of specified payments in respect of War Widows or Armed forces compensation; and
- The approach in respect of notifications of awards.

### **3.4 Underpinning Evidence and Impact Assessment for Wales**

The Welsh Scheme as developed and implemented by the Welsh Government is supported by separate analysis and published supporting evidence, which should be considered together with the Impact Analysis of the Council. That underpinning evidence for the whole Wales scheme includes:

- The report of the Institute of Fiscal Studies completed for the Welsh Government and the Economic and Social Research Council, "Reforming Council Tax Benefit, Options for Wales"; and
- The Impact Analysis completed by the Welsh Government and published October 2012 for the Impact Assessment of the proposed changes.

### **3.5 The Financial Envelope**

The Government is imposing a reduction in the funding of Council Tax Reduction at the same time as localising decision making for the scheme of awards. The reduction proposed is significant, and if the Council chooses not to pass on the cost of the cut, then that money must be found from other sources.

Although the systems must be implemented very soon now, we still do not yet have final funding figures from the DCLG. The draft methodology which the DCLG and Welsh Government have together applied is summarised:

1. Take the overall estimated cost of Council Tax Benefit which the DWP have calculated for 2013/14;
2. Take the actual awards of Council Tax Benefit made by Billing Authorities during 2011/12, as calculated by DWP;
3. Share the 2013/14 budget out in the proportions of spend for 2011/12;
4. Apply the whole Wales scheme reduced maximum amount of Council Tax Reduction of 90%.

While the calculation removes 10% of the estimated cost at a national level, the impact locally is expected to be very different. This is for the following reasons:

The proposed approach takes no account of:

- Any increase in tax which may be applied in 2013/14;
- The increase in the costs of awards under the scheme, and as claimants increase, or as claimants become eligible for more help (and to the extent that the experience in the Council differs from the national assumptions made by the OBR, DWP and DCLG); and

- Provision for bad debt which should be calculated for this part of the Council Tax, and which is likely to be at a much higher percentage than for Council Tax Payers generally.

The trend analysis which begins to inform how this budget may behave from next year is commenced at section 5 below.

### **3.6 The Impacts by Options within the proposed Scheme**

Under the Welsh scheme, local discretions are enabled in four areas, briefly described in the following table with reference to any potential links with protected characteristics.

**Table 2: Impacts of options within draft scheme:**

<b>Element of proposed Local Scheme</b>	<b>No. Claims Affected</b>	<b>Equality Issue for consideration</b>	<b>Protected Characteristic of those affected</b>
1. Backdating	TBA	It may be argued that people with no familiarity with UK benefits systems are more likely to require backdating.	Race
2. Extended payments	TBA	None identified	None identified
3: War Widows allowances	TBA	None identified	None identified
4. Notification letters	TBA	None identified	None identified



### 3.7 Local schemes: The Impact of allowances for War Widows

The incidence of allowances in respect of War Widows pensions and so on in the claims population suggests the following value of claims:

**Table 3: The Value of claims and War Widows allowances**

	<b>No.</b>	<b>Value</b>
War Widows Pension, pre 1973	5	3,884
War Widows Pension	7	5,008
War Widows Disablement pension		
War Pensions Mobility Supplement	3	3,022
War Widows supplementary pension		
War disablement pension	50	43,244
Payments under Armed Forces Compensation scheme	1	697
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>55,855</b>

## **4 Overall Impact Assessment**

### **4.1 Overview**

This section attempts to summarise the key impacts which may arise from the Council's proposed Local Scheme of support. The approach attempts to consider those impacts, where it is possible, with reference to the "Protected Characteristics" which the Council has a duty to consider.

The remainder of this section is organised as follows:

- At para 4.2- 4.4 below, a brief explanation of the relationship with the Wales Impact Assessment, and of the approach to the analysis;
- At paras 4.5- 4.10 below a discussion of the potential incidence of the Protected Characteristics within the claim population;
- At paras 4.12- 4.15 overall interim conclusions are introduced.

### **4.2 Relationship between Impact Assessments**

Although the data sources utilised are different, there is significant common ground over the extent which data can be gathered to reach conclusions in respect of Protected Characteristics. Both the Welsh Government's Impact Analysis, and the impact analysis of the Council have been able to capture and analyse data which has enabled the determination of possible impacts in relation to the following Protected Characteristics:

- Age;
- Disability
- Race; and
- Gender.

Insufficient information has been determined to enable initial conclusions in respect of gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; religion or belief; and sexual orientation. While the changes proposed under the Council Tax Reduction scheme are not designed or intended to militate against people within any protected characteristic, the Council does not, as regards these protected characteristics have sufficient information to reach any conclusions about the way in which the proposed changes may impact upon them.<sup>5</sup>

### **4.3 Approach to data**

There are two main sources of data which have been used to complete this initial assessment, as follows:

- For a detailed analysis of the individual Council records which underpin Benefits administration currently, the Datatank analytical

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<sup>5</sup> Welsh Government Equality Impact Assessment for the Council Tax Reduction, December 2012

product which has been procured for Wales has been used to complete that assessment. This provides an analysis of “real time” data, which is accurate at December 2012, and which is an analysis of all Council records of claims in payment at that date; and

- In some instances, it has been possible to use published sources of nationally available information, and to support the Impact Analysis in aspects of the data which are not otherwise available from individual Council records. In particular, it has been possible to use:
  - published data from the DWP to enable profiling of Council Tax Benefit costs per authority, and profiling of the increase in the cost of awards over recent years; and
  - separately information from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) which has enabled higher level information regarding ethnic background of the population of Wales, as well as to provide information explaining the incidence of Welsh Language skills.

In all regards, it to be stressed that, insofar as this initial data analysis is concerned:

- The change to Council Tax Reduction from next year, including particularly the change in funding which passes a significant part of the cost of awards to the local authorities means that for the first time, Billing Authorities are responsible for, and bear the cost of part of the awards;
- There a very significant extent to which local Councils now bear a part of the risk of any increase in costs which occurs; and
- For the first time, planning for and managing the profile of claims under Council Tax Reduction will impact directly upon the costbase of Billing Authorities. It is therefore highly likely that Councils will have a significant interest in monitoring and managing forecasting of the cost of awards.

#### **4.4 Data Sources: Wales and Local Council Analysis**

The analysis which has been completed for the Welsh Authorities shows many similarities with the analysis which has also been completed for the whole of Wales by the Welsh Government. Although some of the actual percentages calculated vary, the broad conclusions of which protected characteristics may be subject to the calculation of an impact; and in which regard the incidence of such characteristics is present within the population is common.

It is suggested that there are two key reasons which are likely to account for differences in some values:

- The extent to which the data used within the Council analysis represents live data analysed at December 2012, as opposed to survey data from 2007-2010 and modelled for the whole of Wales;

- The extent to which, as the IFS and the Wales Impact assessment already conclude, that the Family Resources Survey contains a limited sample of Welsh data; and
- Natural differences which will occur over the time between some of the earliest data which has been used within the Whole Wales Impact Analysis at 2007 and 2012.

#### 4.5 Summary of Impacts by Household Type

Within the following table, we summarise the impacts which may be considered in relation to segments of the local population eligible to receive Council Tax Benefit and Council Tax Reduction. There are some impacts of the overall scheme which are likely to be common to all people receiving Council Tax Reduction under the Council's Local Scheme from April 2013, and those are shown below.

The Council's summary of impacts shown in this section is underpinned by a variety of data sources, including:

- The research which has been completed by the Council to support the preparation of the Impact Analysis of the Council Tax Reduction scheme;
- Other sources of appropriate external and internal research which are where referenced specifically explained with footnotes or otherwise.

**Table 4: Impacts by Household Type:**

No.	Household Type	Equality Issue for consideration	Protected Characteristic of those affected	No.
<b>Pensioner Age Claimant Households</b>				
1.	Pensioner Claims (All)	Under the national Wales scheme, pensioner households will be liable for increases in tax in the same way as Working Age claimants	Age	6,340
<b>People with responsibility for young children</b>				
2.	Households with children	People with responsibility for children under five years  People with responsibility for children under 16	Age	1,581  3,466
<b>Disabled Households</b>				
3.	Working Age , people with	The whole working Age population bears the proposed impacts of the scheme equally. However some	Disability	1,543

No.	Household Type	Equality Issue for consideration	Protected Characteristic of those affected	No.
	disability	groups with protected characteristics face the greatest barriers to work and as such are disproportionately represented within the claims population. This includes people with disabilities.		
4.	Pensioner Age, people with disability		Disability, Age	1,650
<b>Single parents</b>				
5.	Working Age, Single Parent, female	Single parent families have higher numbers of claimants who are female. Women who are single parents and receiving CTR may therefore disproportionately receive the impacts of payment of the tax, and of enforcement actions taken to recover unpaid tax. <sup>6</sup> 93% of single parents within the Council's claim population are female	Gender	2,316

There are additional protected characteristics under the Equality Act which could also be dis-proportionally represented within the claims population because of barriers they are likely to experience to work, but for which the Council currently does not have sufficient data within Revenues and Benefits records to reach any conclusions. These include gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; religion or belief and sexual orientation.

#### **4.6 Summary of the Overall Value of claims by Protected Characteristic**

The following table summarises, in addition to the number of households which may be present within the claims population with protected Characteristics, the value of such claims:

**Table 5: Summary of claims value and Protected Characteristic:**

<sup>6</sup> Warwick Business School and Coventry Women's Voices, 2012

	<b>No.</b>	<b>Value</b>
Age: a) Pensioner Claims	6,340	4,705,263
b) Working Age claims	6,761	4,788,348
c) All claims	13,101	9,493,611
Age: young children, a) Under 5:	1,581	1,158,811
b) Under 16:	3,466	2,587,816
Disability: working age households in which specified benefits in payment	1,543	1,143,739
Disability: Pensioner households in which specified benefits in payment	1,650	1,246,809
Gender: Single Parents, a) female	2,316	
b) male	128	

#### **4.7 Analysis of protected characteristic: Age, Working and Pensioner Age**

The table below shows the distribution of working and pension Age claims for the Council, together with the anonymised details of the other participating Councils in Wales.

**Table 6: Working and Pension Age Claims**

Council	Working Age		Pensioner Age		Total	
	No	Value	No	Value	No	Value
Council A	17,602	12,992,508	12,241	9,196,939	29,843	22,189,447
Council B	11,771	7,809,146	8,778	5,708,226	20,549	13,517,372
Council C	3,153	2,427,071	2,776	2,324,741	5,929	4,751,812
Council D	6,180	4,362,377	5,843	4,471,071	12,023	8,833,448
Council E	5,859	4,821,670	5,120	4,488,446	10,979	9,310,116
Council F	5,428	4,108,392	5,811	4,795,451	11,239	8,903,843
Council G	9,862	6,183,513	6,089	3,921,379	15,951	10,104,892
Council H	6,545	5,030,079	4,579	3,727,459	11,124	8,757,538
Council I	11,338	9,069,057	7,956	6,565,470	19,294	15,634,527
Council J	5,230	3,873,948	5,198	4,191,063	10,428	8,065,011
Council K	7,948	5,504,081	6,111	4,563,464	14,059	10,067,545
Council L	3,585	2,549,773	3,375	2,561,145	6,960	5,110,918
Council M	6,359	4,978,157	4,292	3,282,446	10,651	8,260,603
Council N	9,431	7,539,136	6,298	5,103,729	15,729	12,642,865
Council O	10,103	7,491,693	8,649	6,709,762	18,752	14,201,455
Council P	4,860	3,611,677	3,020	2,251,146	7,880	5,862,823
Council Q	6,265	3,652,971	5,392	3,470,388	11,657	7,123,359
Council R	15,867	10,707,329	11,205	8,196,356	27,072	18,903,685
Council S	3,519	3,098,553	3,277	2,951,343	6,796	6,049,896
Council T	6,485	4,681,756	4,643	3,336,680	11,128	8,018,436
<b>Flintshire</b>	<b>6,761</b>	<b>4,788,348</b>	<b>6,340</b>	<b>4,705,263</b>	<b>13,101</b>	<b>9,493,611</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>164,151</b>	<b>119,281,235</b>	<b>126,993</b>	<b>96,521,967</b>	<b>291,144</b>	<b>215,803,202</b>

**Interim Conclusions:**

- The Council's overall value of claims is towards the average cost of claims in Wales. The Councils with the larger caseloads may be argued to bear a consequently larger share of the financial risk which is being delegated to local government under the changes in funding for Council Tax reduction, and in the event that claims costs increase but funding does not;
- The Council has a total of 13,101 customers currently receiving Council Tax Benefits, which have been calculated under current rules with reference to the 100% maximum eligibility. Under the changes from this April adopted by the Welsh Government, the maximum eligible Council Tax for the calculation of Council Tax Reduction for all of these customers will be 90%;
- 6,761 of these customers are Working Age, and 6,340 are pensioner households.

**Table 7: Percentage of Working and Pension Age Claims, by value**

Council	Working	Pensioner
	% Value	% Value
Council A	58.55%	41.45%
Council B	57.77%	42.23%
Council C	51.08%	48.92%
Council D	49.38%	50.62%
Council E	51.79%	48.21%
Council F	46.14%	53.86%
Council G	61.19%	38.81%
Council H	57.44%	42.56%
Council I	58.01%	41.99%
Council J	48.03%	51.97%
Council K	54.67%	45.33%
Council L	49.89%	50.11%
Council M	60.26%	39.74%
Council N	59.63%	40.37%
Council O	52.75%	47.25%
Council P	61.60%	38.40%
Council Q	51.28%	48.72%
Council R	56.64%	43.36%
Council S	51.22%	48.78%
Council T	58.39%	41.61%
<b>Flintshire</b>	<b>50.44%</b>	<b>49.56%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>55.27%</b>	<b>44.73%</b>

**Interim conclusions:**

- The Council has a lower than average incidence of Working Age claims, at 50.44%; and
- Consequently, a higher than average incidence of pensioner claims at 49.56%;
- The Council’s overall share of pension age claims is towards the highest in Wales.

**4.8 Analysis of protected characteristic: Age, Households with Children**

The table below shows the distribution of working and pension Age claims for the Council, together with the anonymised details of the other participating Councils in Wales.



**Table 8 Age: Households with responsibility for Children**

Council	Households with children under 16			
	Total No.	Value	Total Claims	%
Council A	8044	6,081,093	22,189,447	27.41%
Council B	5478	3,745,059	13,517,372	27.71%
Council C	1219	998,430	4,751,812	21.01%
Council D	2780	2,062,746	8,833,448	23.35%
Council E	2736	2,377,108	9,310,116	25.53%
Council F	2424	1,888,087	8,903,843	21.21%
Council G	4740	3,134,123	10,104,892	31.02%
Council H	3274	2,589,722	8,757,538	29.57%
Council I	4846	3,981,814	15,634,527	25.47%
Council J	2063	1,598,718	8,065,011	19.82%
Council K	3841	2,697,193	10,067,545	26.79%
Council L	1522	1,119,147	5,110,918	21.90%
Council M	2562	2,092,947	8,260,603	25.34%
Council N	4269	3,522,202	12,642,865	27.86%
Council O	4428	3,433,616	14,201,455	24.18%
Council P	2142	1,588,766	5,862,823	27.10%
Council Q	2812	1,710,783	7,123,359	24.02%
Council R	6508	4,497,720	18,903,685	23.79%
Council S	1536	1,410,278	6,049,896	23.31%
Council T	2852	2,130,786	8,018,436	26.57%
<b>Flintshire</b>	<b>3466</b>	<b>2,587,816</b>	<b>9,493,611</b>	<b>27.26%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>73542</b>	<b>55,248,154</b>	<b>215,803,202</b>	<b>25.60%</b>

**Interim Conclusions:**

- The Council has a higher than average number of households with responsibility for children aged under 16 years of age, when considered with reference to the percentage of households in which there are children under 16.

**4.9 Analysis of protected characteristic: Disability**

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) have published, as part of the 2011 Census, data confirming the high incidence in Wales of people with a long term health problem or with disabilities. Data published in 2012 by the ONS confirms that 23% of residents in Wales have indicated a long term illness or disability, which is the highest percentage of any region in England and Wales.

The barriers which are faced to work by people with disabilities are likely to mean that there will be higher numbers of people with disabilities within the claims population. Using a test of counting people with a "qualifying benefit" to understand the numbers of people with disabilities

which may be present within the claims population allows an estimate to be made of the incidence within the claims population of people with disabilities. In the following table, the qualifying benefit which has been counted are:

- Care component of a Disability Living Allowance (Low, Middle or High);
- Attendance Allowance;
- Support component of Employment Support Allowance; and
- Incapacity Benefit.

**Table 9: Households in which specified disability payments received**

	Disability		Total Claim	%
	No.	Value	Value	
Council A	13001	10329380	22189447	46.55%
Council B	8018	5567858	13517372	41.19%
Council C	2058	1732476	4751812	36.46%
Council D	3304	2575758	8833448	29.16%
Council E	3854	3558183	9310116	38.22%
Council F	3317	2799832	8903843	31.45%
Council G	4783	3253867	10104892	32.20%
Council H	4523	3841233	8757538	43.86%
Council I	9532	8304653	15634527	53.12%
Council J	4125	3407069	8065011	42.25%
Council K	3980	3073613	10067545	30.53%
Council L	2556	2006129	5110918	39.25%
Council M	4103	3344756	8260603	40.49%
Council N	4588	3823057	12642865	30.24%
Council O	8236	6622953	14201455	46.64%
Council P	3546	2818764	5862823	48.08%
Council Q	4442	3004952	7123359	42.18%
Council R	11981	8937245	18903685	47.28%
Council S	2148	2056256	6049896	33.99%
Council T	4028	3098773	8018436	38.65%
<b>Flintshire</b>	<b>3193</b>	<b>2390548</b>	<b>9493611</b>	<b>25.18%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>109316</b>	<b>86547355</b>	<b>215803202</b>	<b>40.10%</b>

**Interim Conclusions:**

- There are a number of approaches which could be taken to evaluating the scale of incidence of people with disabilities within the claims population, and each has their own advantages and disadvantages;
- The above approach has been taken to both provide a degree of clarity in the test applied, through a qualifying benefit, and to attempt to mitigate against the risk of double counting;

- Nonetheless, this is likely to be an area of the evaluation which the Council will wish to keep under review, and amend as necessary; however
- Wales, however is found by the ONS within the 2011 Census to have the highest incidence of people with disabilities or with a long term illness in England and Wales, so it is to be expected that there will be a higher incidence of People with disabilities within the claims population.
- The Council has the lowest incidence in Wales of People with disabilities, when considered by the above qualifying benefits.

#### 4.10 Analysis of protected characteristic: Gender, Single Parents

The table below shows the distribution of single parent claims for the Council, together with the anonymised details of the other participating Councils in Wales.

**Table 10: Single Parents Households**

Council	Single Parents			Total Claims	% Single Female	% of whole claim
	Male	Female	total			
Council A	309	5377	5686	29843	94.57%	18.02%
Council B	197	3435	3632	20549	94.58%	16.72%
Council C	74	675	749	5929	90.12%	11.38%
Council D	125	1704	1829	12023	93.17%	14.17%
Council E	125	1663	1788	10979	93.01%	15.15%
Council F	114	1519	1633	11239	93.02%	13.52%
Council G	182	3176	3358	15951	94.58%	19.91%
Council H	121	2256	2377	11124	94.91%	20.28%
Council I	195	3191	3386	19294	94.24%	16.54%
Council J	112	1269	1381	10428	91.89%	12.17%
Council K	138	2470	2608	14059	94.71%	17.57%
Council L	75	923	998	6960	92.48%	13.26%
Council M	101	1628	1729	10651	94.16%	15.28%
Council N	165	2868	3033	15729	94.56%	18.23%
Council O	172	2518	2690	18752	93.61%	13.43%
Council P	77	1484	1561	7880	95.07%	18.83%
Council Q	105	1655	1760	11657	94.03%	14.20%
Council R	268	4478	4746	27072	94.35%	16.54%
Council S	64	963	1027	6796	93.77%	14.17%
Council T	111	1823	1934	11128	94.26%	16.38%
<b>Flintshire</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>2316</b>	<b>2444</b>	<b>13101</b>	<b>94.76%</b>	<b>17.68%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2958</b>	<b>47391</b>	<b>50349</b>	<b>291144</b>	<b>94.13%</b>	<b>16.28%</b>

## Interim Conclusions:

- The Council has higher than average numbers of single parents than the whole of Wales average;
- There remain very high numbers of single parents who are female;
- There is a very high consistency within the analysis of single parents for the overall findings with the whole Wales analysis.

### 4.11 Analysis of protected characteristic: Race

During December 2012, the Office for National Statistics published data from the 2011 census which showed the ethnicity of the population at the Census date of March 2011. The data shows the profile both at the level of each country in the UK, and as well as for each local authority. The whole Wales summary is as follows:

**Table 11: Ethnic Background in Wales**

	Percentage of population, by Ethnic Background						
	Total Population	White British	White other	Mixed heritage	Asian (All)	Black (All)	Other (All)
<b>Wales</b>	3,063,456	93.2	2.4	1.0	2.2	0.6	0.5
Isle of Anglesey	69,751	96.6	1.7	0.8	0.7	0.1	0.3
Gwynedd	121,874	94.4	2.1	0.8	1.7	0.3	0.7
Conwy	115,228	95.4	2.3	0.8	1.1	0.1	0.3
Denbighshire	93,734	95.6	1.8	0.9	1.6	0.1	0.1
<b>Flintshire</b>	<b>152,506</b>	<b>95.9</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.1</b>
Wrexham	134,844	93.1	3.9	0.7	1.7	0.4	0.2
Powys	132,976	96.1	2.3	0.6	0.9	0.1	0.1
Ceredigion	75,922	93.1	3.6	1.0	1.4	0.3	0.5
Pembrokeshire	122,439	95.6	2.5	0.6	1.1	0.1	0.1
Carmarthenshire	183,777	95.5	2.6	0.6	1.1	0.2	0.2
Swansea	239,023	91.5	2.5	0.8	3.2	0.8	1
Neath Port Talbot	139,812	96.9	1.1	0.7	1.0	0.2	0.1
Bridgend	139,178	96.0	1.7	0.7	1.1	0.2	0.2
Vale of Glamorgan	126,336	94.4	2.1	1.3	1.6	0.4	0.2
Cardiff	346,090	80.3	4.4	2.9	8.0	2.4	2
Rhondda Cynon Taf	234,410	96.3	1.0	0.6	1.3	0.5	0.2
Merthyr Tydfil	58,802	94.6	3.0	0.9	1.2	0.2	0.2
Caerphilly	178,806	97.3	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.2	0.1
Blaenau Gwent	69,814	97.3	1.1	0.6	0.7	0.1	0.1
Torfaen	91,075	96.9	1.1	0.7	1.1	0.2	0.1
Monmouthshire	91,323	96.1	1.9	0.8	1.0	0.1	0.2
Newport	145,736	87.0	2.9	1.9	5.4	1.7	1

### **Interim conclusions:**

- The Office for National Statistics data summarised above is publicly available data. It is therefore possible to analyse that data for both the whole of Wales, and to show each Council's data;
- The Office for national statistics confirm, in the overarching analysis of this data table, that while London is the UK's most diverse city, the country of Wales is the least diverse region in England and Wales;
- The Council is consistent with the overall findings for Wales, and has a very high incidence of White British population, with very low incidence of diversity;
- To assist with the analysis of the data, and as overall Wales has the lowest incidence of diversity in England and Wales, the analysis of ethnicity has been taken up to a higher level, to group, for example, all types of Asian, Black, Mixed Heritage and Other backgrounds;
- It is to be noted that within the Census survey, the ONS report that the box for "White British" was labelled "White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British";
- Against a national average of 80.5% for England and Wales of "White English" the Wales scores are accordingly much higher throughout Wales, extending to 96.9% in both Torfaen and Neath Port Talbot Councils.

### **4.12 The Impacts of the proposed changes: All Households**

The proposed Local Scheme seeks not to disadvantage any particular group. However, as a simple product of the profile of the overall population currently receiving Council Tax Benefit or entitled to Council Tax Reduction from April 2013, some groups with protected characteristics will be disproportionately represented within the claims population because they face greater barriers to finding work. People facing Council Tax liabilities under the changes will experience negative impacts because of the requirement that they contribute towards Council Tax. Pensioner claimants; People with disabilities; people with responsibility for young children (which includes greater numbers of women as the primary carer); and people who are very recent migrants to the UK and who may have little knowledge of English, all face greater barriers to the workplace.

Nonetheless the principle impacts which are faced by all claimants under the Council's proposed scheme may be summarised as follows:

- Under the Council's proposed scheme, all of those in receipt of Council Tax Reduction will be required to pay something towards their Council Tax. Under current Government proposals, claimants facing such changes will not receive any additional payments. There

will therefore be the issue of **how those households receiving Council Tax Reduction pay their Council Tax;**

- The proposed Wales scheme will not provide protection for pensioners. The scheme provided will neither provide local discretion for the determination of Vulnerable People.
- All of the households affected by the changes will be low income households. This is an inevitable impact of Government changes to national welfare systems. As a consequence there may be **issues of debt management, and how households avoid further debt burdens or additional costs through non-payment;**
- When Council Tax which becomes due under the Council's scheme is not paid, the Council will be obliged to collect and recover that tax. **The impacts of those enforcement measures may be disproportionately felt by people in the claims population with disabilities, people with responsibility for young children, women, and pensioner claimants.** This observation arises as a simple consequence of the fact that the claims population has higher numbers of people within it who face the greatest barriers to work. It is contended that, for different reasons, people with disabilities, people with responsibility for young children, and people who may struggle with English all face greater barriers to work;
- The Government's reforms intend that people in work should always be better off than people in receipt of welfare. There is a presumption that, over time, greater numbers of working age claimants who are workless will enter the paid employment workplace. However it is suggested that when the UK begins to exit the recession, the recovery will most likely be centred on London and the South East. **The location of the recovery is most likely to be centered on London, and the nature of jobs which are created may not be accessible to the Council's residents, because of that location;**
- While, therefore, some parts of the UK may receive local economic benefits from the national recovery from the recession, most likely located in London and the South East, the Council is less likely to do so. As a consequence, the expansion of the number of local jobs will be more dependent on local co-ordinated efforts to stimulate regeneration and economic development.

#### **4.13 Adverse impacts and mitigating actions**

This section has set out the likely equality issues for the range of households affected by these Council Tax changes, and the protected characteristics most affected.

Within the defined scope of the Council Tax Scheme there are no mitigating actions that can be taken that would reduce or remove the adverse equality impacts identified above. However, there are mitigating actions that the Council and its partners could take to mitigate the extent

of equality impacts predicted as a result of the implementation of the Council Tax Scheme. These are briefly summarised in section 6 of the report.

#### **4.14 Clusters of potential common impact**

The analysis of the Wales authorities has been completed on behalf of all the Welsh Authorities.

The use of a common approach, including common data handling and the same data extraction and interrogation routines enable the determination of some possible areas of common impact, which may be considered as the implementation of the Council Tax Reduction is taken forward.

[Drafting Note: To be written, and as we proceed through individual Council sign-off during January. Subject to Council comments throughout the month, there are emerging some common themes which it is important to write down, even if some of this will inevitably be “work in progress”, as the scheme becomes live and as lessons are learnt. Initial observations are:

- While the overall findings from this review are broadly consistent with the whole Wales Impact Assessment, within Wales, the individual authorities are not, I think homogenous;
- It may be possible to identify a series of “clusters” of like authorities in which there are emerging some possible similar themes, for example:
  - The extent to which there are higher numbers of single parents, and of People with disabilities within the south Wales valleys, and extending to the “old industrial” boroughs towards some of the coast;
  - By contrast, higher concentrations of pensioner claimants are seen in the more rural boroughs of Wales, and towards the north, this is coupled much higher incidence of Welsh Language skills; and
  - The main significant incidence of diversity in Wales is seen in the 3 southern coastal cities- Newport, Cardiff and Swansea.]

#### **4.15 Interim Conclusions**

The interim conclusions from the Impact Analysis of the proposed Local Scheme may be summarised as follows:

- The Government’s policy to “Localise” decision making in local welfare relief on Council Tax is proposed at the same time as a cut in funding.;
- As a consequence of the way that the UK welfare systems have operated to date, the profile of people currently receiving Council Tax Benefits contains higher numbers of households in which there is no work, or in which there is low income.

- People facing the greatest barriers to work are represented in higher numbers in the claims population. That includes people with disabilities; people with responsibility for young children; and women;
- In some parts of Wales in which there are more diverse communities, people who may struggle with English may also face those barriers to work;
- It may therefore be argued that the implication of the proposed scheme may be borne disproportionately by these groups, simply as a product of their higher representation within the claims population;
- Under the scheme for Wales, all Working Age and pensioner households currently receiving Council Tax Benefit and transferring to Council Tax Reduction will be required to pay towards their Council Tax. This will include those households in which there is currently payment of 100% relief. It is likely that all households, whether those over represented in the claim population or not, will face similar impacts;
- Those impacts include how the tax will be paid; the risks of and dealing with debt; the impacts of enforcement action taken for unpaid tax; and the extent to which it will be harder for people in Wales to get back into work than it may be for people in other cities or in London;



## **5 The Local context: Trend Analysis**

### **5.1 Summary of section**

This section brings together contextual analysis which is designed to demonstrate the potential impacts of the proposed local scheme for Council Tax Reduction.

### **5.2 Overall Approach**

The overall approach which has been taken to the analysis is summarised as follows:

- At para 5.3 and 5.4 the Council explains the overall trend analysis of Council Tax Benefit and Council Tax Reduction costs, with reference to datasets made available by the DWP and DCLG;
- At para 5.5 the Council profiles the likely weekly costs for households under proposed schemes; and
- At para 5.6 the Council explores the incidence of Welsh Language skills in Wales with reference to recently available ONS data.

### **5.3 Increase in claims, All England and Wales**

Government statistics demonstrate that the national value of awards under Council Tax Benefit has been increasing. Between 1997 and 2011, the total value of awards for Council Tax Benefit more than doubled from £2,014 to £4,299m. Within the following table, and using the Government's data, we summarise the growth in claims since 2005.<sup>7</sup> It must be stressed that the figures provided by the DWP and DCLG summarise simply the overall increase in Council Tax Benefit payments, which includes increases both in claimant numbers as well as the increasing cost of Council Tax.

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<sup>7</sup> DWP Research published May 2012 by DCLG within "Council Tax Reduction Funding Consultation"

**Table 13: Overall Council Tax Benefit Spend, England and Wales**

	Total Council Tax Benefit Spend	
	England	
	£m	%
2005-06	3,230	6
2006-07	3,385	5
2007-08	3,471	3
2008-09	3,672	6
2009-10	4,095	12
2010-11	4,299	5

**Table14 Overall increase in spend, Wales:**

Year	CTB Award, £M	Increase, Percent
2000/01	119	
2001/02	123.7	3.9
2002/03	131	5.9
2003/04	141.9	8.3
2004/05	160.5	13.1
2005/06	176.5	9.9
2006/07	184	4.2
2007/08	189	2.7
2008/09	199.6	5.6
2009/10	222.7	11.6
2010/11	237.9	6.8
2011/12	246.1	3.4
<b>Average</b>		<b>6.85</b>

**Interim conclusions:**

- While DWP projections claim that the value of awards paid for Council Tax will fall from 2013, the national trend since 1997 has been that the value of awards has increased;
- The rate of increase throughout Wales over the period since 2000 has averaged 6.85% whereas in England and Wales the average rate of increase has been closer to 6%;
- If the rate of increase continues to increase, or continues to be greater than for the whole of England and Wales, and the “fixed grant” approach of the DCLG continues to apply for future years, then there will be a financial risk to the Welsh authorities.

## 5.4 Council Tax Benefit: The Wales Perspective

There are 22 Councils in Wales with the responsibility to administer benefit payments for Council Tax. Data published by the DWP confirms the following value of subsidised amounts of Council Tax benefit for the year 2011/12

**Table 15: DWP Subsidised Awards, 2011/12, All Wales**

<b>Council</b>	<b>Subsidised Council Tax Benefit 2011/12 £m</b>
Isle of Anglesey	5.03
Gwynedd	8.89
Conwy	8.65
Denbighshire	9.05
Flintshire	9.90
Wrexham	9.87
Powys	7.93
Ceredigion	4.70
Pembrokeshire	7.04
Carmarthenshire	14.26
Swansea	19.11
Neath Port Talbot	15.67
Bridgend	12.45
The Vale of Glamorgan	8.65
Cardiff	27.82
Rhondda Cynon Taff	21.69
Merthyr Tydfil	5.72
Caerphilly	13.66
Blaenau Gwent	8.15
Torfaen	7.86
Monmouthshire	6.10
Newport	9.79
<b>Total</b>	<b>242.0</b>

### **Table 16: Illustrative Weekly Payments**

The impact of the change in Council Tax Benefit will be applied to all claimants. For the first time since 1993, there will cease to be entitlement to 100% relief from the Council Tax. Unlike the changes introduced under the Poll Tax, no additional funding is proposed to assist claimants with their household budgeting for this payment.

Many households facing this change will, in practice, budget for essential costs on a weekly basis. The following summary table therefore explains the illustrative weekly costs of the Welsh national scheme, assuming a household previously entitled to 100% reduction which now receives only 90%, and using the costs of Council Tax at Band D for 2012/13 including allowances for the Police and for Communities.

<b>Band</b>	<b>Charge</b>	<b>Max Ben</b>	<b>Due</b>	<b>per week</b>
A, DPR	611.11	550.00	61.11	1.18
A	733.33	660.00	73.33	1.41
B	855.56	770.00	85.56	1.65
C	977.78	880.00	97.78	1.88
D	1100.00	990.00	110.00	2.12
E	1344.44	1210.00	134.44	2.59
F	1588.89	1430.00	158.89	3.06
G	1833.33	1650.00	183.33	3.53
H	2200.00	1980.00	220.00	4.23
I	2566.67	2310.00	256.67	4.94

Source: Flintshire Council

### **Interim Conclusions:**

- The weekly financial impact of the 90% maximum amount is shown in the above table, and to indicate the illustrative weekly cost of Council Tax, for those households which budget on a weekly basis;
- The Council has already begun to examine ways in which approaches to financial management and money advice may assist households with the budgeting which lays ahead.

### **5.5 Welsh Language Skills**

The following table is drawn from data published by the ONS from the 2011 Census in December 2012. The table shows Welsh Language speaking skills for all Welsh authorities, and in respect of all people aged 3 years and over.

<b>Welsh Language Speaking Skills</b>				
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Anglesey	38,568	28,835	67,403	57.22%
Blaenau Gwent	5,284	62,064	67,348	7.85%
Bridgend	13,103	121,442	134,545	9.74%
Caerphilly	19,251	152,721	171,972	11.19%
Cardiff	36,735	295,538	332,273	11.06%
Carmarthenshire	78,048	99,594	177,642	43.94%
Ceredigion	34,964	38,883	73,847	47.35%
Conwy	30,600	81,124	111,724	27.39%
Denbighshire	22,236	68,291	90,527	24.56%
<b>Flintshire</b>	<b>19,343</b>	<b>127,597</b>	<b>146,940</b>	<b>13.16%</b>
Gwynedd	77,000	40,789	117,789	65.37%
Merthyr Tydfil	5,028	51,595	56,623	8.88%
Monmouthshire	8,780	79,829	88,609	9.91%
Neath Port Talbot	20,698	114,580	135,278	15.30%
Newport	13,002	126,847	139,849	9.30%
Pembrokeshire	22,786	95,606	118,392	19.25%
Powys	23,990	105,093	139,083	17.25%
Rhondda	27,779	197,776	225,555	12.32%
Swansea	26,332	204,823	231,155	11.39%
Torfaen	8,641	79,203	87,844	9.84%
Vale of Glamorgan	13,189	108,829	122,018	10.81%
<b>Wrexham</b>	<b>16,659</b>	<b>112,766</b>	<b>129,425</b>	<b>12.87%</b>
Wales	562,016	2,393,825	2,955,841	19.01%

### **Interim Conclusions:**

- While the overall average for Wales is 19%, the variation in different parts of the Country is significant;
- The concentration of high numbers of people with Welsh speaking skills is most clearly seen in the north of the Country, and with high concentrations in Gwynedd, Anglesey, and Ceredigion;
- In the south of Wales, Carmarthenshire also shows a high percentage of Welsh speaking skills;
- Welsh skills are at the lowest in the eastern valley Councils of Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil.

## **6 Mitigation**

### **6.1 Overview**

This section summarises key steps which it is suggested must also be taken forward to enable the completion not just of a meaningful Council Tax Reduction scheme, but also that collection and enforcement policies which apply from next April are consistent with the collection requirements of this client group.

Many of the poorest households affected by this change will not be used to paying Council Tax. The last time that the UK managed a system under which the maximum local tax benefit was less than 100% was under the Community Charge, and many claimant households will not have been within the welfare systems at that time.

The key argument which applies here is that because of the disproportionate financial burden which falls on the in-scope working age population, this group may not have the means to pay in the same way as the rest of the Council Tax population, and different arrangements must be planned for.

However, the Council must also ensure that the necessary steps are taken to collect and recover sums due under the new arrangements, and using the full range of enforcement tools which are available.

### **6.2 Matters to be considered**

As the Council moves from the phase in which a local scheme in Wales has been designed to the collection and administration of the tax due, the following matters may be considered for to review, at the appropriate time:

- The approaches to collection actions which may be appropriate, with regard to the observations made at section 4 above regarding protected characteristics;
- The approaches to enforcement actions which may be appropriate, with regard to the observations made at section 4 above regarding protected characteristics;
- The practices which may and may not apply to the application of costs and charges for those households responsible for new liabilities;

## **7 Conclusions**

The changes to welfare benefits which begin from this April are very significant. While the introduction of the Council Tax Reduction is amongst the first of those changes to become live from April 2013, it will not be the last.

Considered together, the cumulative impact of the changes which begin from this April is considered likely to be significant. The changes will be particularly keenly felt in those parts of the UK in which there are both increased levels of deprivation or household reliance upon welfare payments, and those parts of the UK in which it will be most difficult to create and sustain local jobs. Both arguments may be made in respect of Wales.

The Council must nonetheless implement the local scheme of Council Tax Reduction which is designed for Wales.

Both the Council's assessment, and that of the Welsh Government have been able to reach some conclusions about the potential impact upon some in the claims caseload with protected characteristics. It has been possible within both studies to reach conclusions in relation to the protected characteristics of Age, Disability, Gender, and to an extent, Race. The Council does not conclude that the remaining protected characteristics are unaffected by these changes, rather that there is insufficient data to reach conclusions.

In the Council's case, it has been possible to reach some initial data based conclusions in respect of the protected characteristics of Age, Disability, Gender, and Race. There is an incidence of households with these protected characteristics within the claims population, because of the barriers to work which are faced. With regard to the remaining protected characteristics, these may well be represented within the claims population, but at the current time, the Council has insufficient evidence available to reach conclusions.

The mitigating steps that the Council may consider may include the approaches to customer management which are deemed appropriate; the approaches to collection and recovery actions which are deemed appropriate; and the approaches to support effective budgeting and household financial management which are deemed appropriate.

The planned local scheme for Council Tax reduction does not plan to militate against the interests of those with protected characteristics within the claim population, and it is considered likely that all of those within the claims population will face common impacts as a consequence of the implementation of the changes to Council Tax Benefits. However, some of those with protected characteristics face the greatest barriers to work, which includes People with disabilities, women, those with responsibility for children, and people with limited access to or knowledge of English or Welsh language. Additionally, people of pensioner Age are not within the working population any longer.

The groups may therefore be disproportionately represented within the claims population as a consequence of these barriers.



**Appendix 1: Management of the Impacts from April 2013**

Within the following table, the Council suggests some of the management actions that may be considered, on a quarter by quarter basis, and as the Council Tax Reduction scheme goes live from April 2013.

<b>2013, Quarter</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Quarter 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fast – track referral arrangements with CAB have been arranged for customers to assist with Debt Management issues and CTRS queries.</li> <li>• Take-up Team will provide basic money advice and advice on other welfare benefits to maximise income, referred from Council Tax Teams and Contact Centre.</li> <li>• Take-up team will continue with initiatives to support BME communities.</li> <li>• Determine initial reactions from new taxpayers to issue of bills and reminders;</li> <li>• Consideration to proposed enforcement actions for unpaid CTRS debts;</li> <li>• Determine lessons learnt from first completed recovery cycle at end of quarter 1.</li> </ul>
Quarter 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revisions to collection and enforcement actions as appropriate;</li> <li>• Review number of cases referred to CAB.</li> <li>• Review number of cases handled by Take-up team.</li> <li>• Profile initial collection performance and review</li> </ul>
Quarter 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine funding implications from first year of operation</li> <li>• Feed into financial planning</li> </ul>

	cycle for 2014/15
Quarter 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finalise arrangements for CTR from 2014</li></ul>

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**Flintshire County Council**

**Cabinet  
22<sup>nd</sup> January 2013**

**Item 3: Adoption of Council Tax Support Scheme – April 2013**

**Revised Recommendations**

- 4.01 To note the making of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations (“the Prescribed Requirement Regulations” ) by the Welsh Assembly on 19 December 2012
- 4.02 To note the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken by the Council on the introduction of the Council Tax Support Scheme
- 4.03 To note the written statement by the Minister for Local Government and Communities on 17<sup>th</sup> January, which sets out the intention to increase the maximum level of support from the current 90 per cent to 100 per cent.
- 4.04 Cabinet to recommend the scheme as set out in Appendix [1] to full Council, subject to the inclusion of any change in prescribed limits set by Welsh Government and the consequential detail
- 4.05 Cabinet support the proposed Discretionary Elements as set out in Appendix [2] and recommend these to full Council.

KAF  
22.01.13

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## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
**DATE:** TUESDAY, 29 JANUARY 2013  
**REPORT BY:** DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES  
**SUBJECT:** FLINTSHIRE LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2012 -  
2017

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To adopt the Local Housing Strategy.

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

- 2.01 This strategy is based on evidence from a number of sources including research commissioned by the Council comprising Flintshire's 2012 Housing Market Needs update.
- 2.02 Extensive consultation has been undertaken in developing this strategy and details of consultations undertaken are included in Section 11 of this report.
- 2.03 This strategy was jointly written with Wrexham County Borough Council, which has a similar housing profile and demographic trends to Flintshire. This partnership shared resources and highlighted opportunities for joint working in line with the Welsh Government's 'Making the Connections' principles and the Housing White Paper's promotion of effective regional collaboration.
- 2.04 Effective delivery of the strategy is dependent on responding to and complimenting other local and national policies. Locally, the strategy compliments the Flintshire Community Strategy 2009-2019 and the Flintshire Regeneration Strategy 2009-2020 where housing is seen as playing a crucial role in delivering these objectives.
- 2.05 The Welsh National Housing Strategy 2010: Improving Lives and Communities – Homes in Wales has three objectives and Flintshire's strategy has adopted these as its own. These are:  
Provide more housing, more choice  
Improve homes and communities  
Improve housing-related services and support

The Welsh Government's Housing White Paper reinforces the national strategy.

- 2.06 As the national strategy sets the housing framework for the Flintshire Local Housing Strategy, the Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) frames the strategy in planning guidance. The UDP will specifically provide for the housing needs of the county through the provision of 7400 new dwellings over the plan period of 2000-2015. This provision will comprise a range of housing including affordable and special needs.
- 2.07 The 2008 credit crunch, subsequent global financial crisis and UK recession have created a very uncertain economic environment. This can be seen in a fall in private investment in housing coupled to reductions in mortgage finance, public subsidy and reducing public sector capital grants. Year on year reductions in Social Housing Grant will mean that the council and its housing association partners will need to find innovative ways to fund and build new affordable housing.
- 2.08 Although house prices have fallen since 2007, buying a house for the average first time buyer is not more affordable. Local wages, in the public and private sector, have seen small rises or have been frozen. As a result, an increasing number of people on 'reasonable' incomes cannot access the housing market due to limited mortgage products for first time buyers with most lenders requiring a 20% deposit. While it is difficult to get a mortgage due to stricter lending criteria and larger deposits, home ownership can still be more affordable than open market rent. There is consequently a need to carry out more research to assess the changes in aspirations and attitudes of Flintshire households to home ownership.
- 2.09 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 came into force on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2012 and introduces significant reforms to the social security system. The act will change the way Flintshire and other local organisations provide services to low income and vulnerable people.
- 2.10 Flintshire is developing a comprehensive and long-term Welfare Reform Strategy which will link to the Housing Strategy in areas where the impact of the Act may lead to increases in: homelessness; demand for housing related support, welfare benefit and budgeting advice; evictions in both private and social sectors; demand for smaller accommodation; numbers of Houses in Multiple Occupation; and, pressure on the private rented sector as well as social rented housing.

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **Flintshire's Strategy – A Quality Home for Everyone Objective 1 Provide more housing, more choice**

- 3.01 Flintshire's ambition is to increase the supply and variety of affordable homes by at least 740 new homes over the next five years. It will



increase the number of affordable homes for purchase or rent and give more choice by broadening the range of homes and tenancy options to suit people at different stages of their lives, income levels and circumstances. This will also include increasing the supply of supported housing. Extra Care housing gives older people more choices, compliments existing sheltered housing and increases flexibility in approaches to supporting older people at home. Research shows that approximately 300 further units of Extra Care accommodation are currently needed and this is expected to increase by a further 10% by 2033.

- 3.02 Flintshire's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) requires 7400 new homes, 30% of which should be affordable. Flintshire's local planning guidance note LPGN9 further requires, the developer to consider affordable home types in the following preference order:-

1<sup>st</sup> Social Rented – through RSL

2<sup>nd</sup> Shared Ownership – through an RSL or other bona fide management organisation

3<sup>rd</sup> Subsidised Market Homes – provided as low cost discounted housing for sale

4<sup>th</sup> Private Rented – provided as low cost rented accommodation.

- 3.03 Flintshire offers a range of affordable housing options with developers and other partners. These are Social and Affordable Rental, Rent to Save, Shared Equity, First Time Buyer Loans, Homebuy and homes built as gifted units or using commuted sums. These continue to be developed in partnership with developers and Registered Social Landlords.

- 3.04 Flintshire will continue to explore new approaches to provide more affordable homes, designed to overcome the current financial barriers to accessing the housing market. These will be linked to investment with partners in renewal and regeneration schemes such as Flint Town Centre, the Deeside Housing Renewal Area and the Deeside Growth Zone.

- 3.05 In line with the Housing White Paper we will investigate alternative affordable housing options for people to meet their needs. This will include community land trusts, cooperative housing tenure and self-build.

- 3.06 Flintshire's current Social Housing Grant (SHG) programme, 2011-2014, amounts to £5.142 million and will build 102 new social rented homes. Uncertainty remains on future SHG funding levels beyond 2014.

## **Objective 2**

### **Improve homes and communities**

- 3.07 Improving the quality of the housing stock in Flintshire is at the core of ensuring the suitability and sustainability of its communities. The investment required in order to achieve the WHQS in the council's housing stock is well documented and following the completion of a private sector house condition survey in 2010 the level of investment required in private property is much clearer.
- 3.08 It is Flintshire's ambition to invest at least £49m in its own properties on WHQS improvements over the five years from 2013 to 2018. This investment will be prioritised on:
- Renewing 4880 kitchens
  - Upgrading and renewing 3550 central heating systems
  - Renewing 1300 bathrooms
  - Up grading 4667 smoke detectors
  - Investing £1m per year on disabled adaptation
- This investment will generate 100 jobs and 10 apprenticeships through the use of local contractors helping to ensure that as much as possible of the investment remains within the local economy.
- 3.09 The Choices Document produced by the Council for tenant ballot held earlier this year on the future of the Council housing stock and landlord service demonstrated the scale of the challenge to achieve the WQHS in a timescale acceptable to Welsh Government, under the current housing revenue account funding system, and without access to new investment capital. The council is inviting Welsh Government to reform the national housing finance regime to enable the Council to access capital to achieve an acceptable physical housing standard alongside the Council optimising its resources to invest in housing improvement through CERA. Optimising the resources available to the Council under the current system will only give a part solution to the challenge of improving the housing stock.
- 3.10 Flintshire's Housing Association partners are working towards delivering WHQS across all their homes. The three housing associations in Flintshire would achieve the standard for 100% of their properties as follows:
- Pennaf by 2014/2015
  - Tai Clwyd by 2014/2015
  - Wales & West 2012/2013
- 3.11 It is Flintshire's ambition to improve the quality and standard of all existing houses and rented accommodation, including their energy efficiency. Everyone has the right to live in a home, which is in good repair, has ready access to all necessary amenities, and is free from physical hazards.
- 3.12 The Flintshire Private Sector House Condition Survey carried out in 2010 found that 32% of private property failed the Decent Homes Standard and over 24% had at least one Category 1 hazard. The

council does not have sufficient funding to tackle the backlog of repair and renovation so its Private Sector Renewal and Improvement Policy, adopted in 2012, has prioritised and targeted action to support the strategy in achieving its objectives by:

- targeting action to vulnerable households living in non-decent homes, in line with Private Sector Stock Condition Survey findings
- increasing the proportion of homes that meet the decent homes standard by working with all stakeholders and service providers
- providing equity and low cost loans to vulnerable and lower income homeowners to make their homes decent
- reducing the health effects of poor housing conditions through a combination of advice, financial assistance, and appropriate enforcement action, ensuring that residents live in safe, warm and comfortable homes
- promoting the take up of a range of energy saving measures provided by a range of agencies to improve home energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty
- promoting improvement and conversion of empty residential properties and obsolete commercial buildings to bring back in to use and increase the supply of affordable homes
- achieving a well maintained and managed private rented sector through the All Wales Landlord Accreditation Scheme by encouraging the professional development of landlords, through incentives, education, and advice

- 3.13 In the private sector Flintshire will offer a wide range of advice, loans and grants to owner occupiers and landlords to eliminate the most serious hazards, bring empty properties back into use and increase energy efficiency. The planned investment programme will be aligned with available funding from CESP, Arbed, Green Deal and other energy efficiency initiatives. Flintshire, with Denbighshire and Wrexham, is considering a fuel brokerage scheme to reduce the cost of heating oil to its tenants.
- 3.14 The Council will continue to regenerate Flintshire's existing homes through the Connah's Quay, Shotton and Queensferry Renewal Area and the Townscape Heritage Initiative.
- 3.15 Flintshire will review the capacity and location of the enforcement team within the organisation; raising the profile of landlord accreditation to professionalise the sector; review activity on illegal evictions; introduce additional licensing of HMOs; and, introduce fee earning services to support increased capacity within housing enforcement.
- 3.16 The Council will establish effective partnerships with landlords and corporate investors to increase provision of housing. The council will protect the health, safety and welfare of private tenants through advice, negotiation, agreement and appropriate incentives.

Enforcement action will be taken, if these methods have been exhausted, as a last resort.

### **Objective 3**

#### **Improve housing-related services and support**

- 3.17 It is a national strategic priority to provide better services to make it easier for people to find suitable accommodation, particularly people from minority groups.
- 3.18 It is Flintshire's ambition to provide better services to improve people's lives through: collaboration and innovation to improve access to a suitable home; offer the best advice and support to sustain people in their home, whatever the tenure; and, promote independent living generally and specifically for an aging population by developing additional extra care schemes.
- 3.19 Good quality, local housing advice helps people make informed decisions on suitable housing provision. The establishment of a common access point for all North Wales aims to remove the barrier of multiple waiting lists and allocation policies. The Housing White Paper promotes further development of accessible housing registers. Flintshire is part of the North Wales Single Access Routes to Housing Project (SARTH). It is working with three other North Wales' councils and five housing associations to create a common access route to housing, bringing benefits to residents, local authorities and housing associations. The pilots for this project are expected to start in late 2013.
- 3.20 Flintshire will be examining options for the establishment of a social lettings agency as part of our strategy to increase the size of the private rental sector. A Lettings Agency involves letting property to a chosen tenant on behalf of the owner and dealing with all aspects of the let from then on, including the acceptance of any legal and financial liabilities. The difference between a Social Lettings Agency and a high street agency is that the target client base are people who are homeless, or may become homeless. Through this route Flintshire intends to help private landlords rent to target groups, such as young people, at affordable local housing allowance rates.
- 3.21 Flintshire is the most significant provider of Gypsy Traveller pitches in North Wales with 58% of authorised pitches. This is 15% of the total for Wales. The North Wales Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment found that demand for sites occurred along the main travelling routes through North Wales in Rhyl, Bangor, Colwyn Bay and Holyhead. No new locations were requested in Flintshire.

Flintshire will however continue to develop Gypsy Traveller services by:

Managing Riverside Caravan Site

### Managing unauthorised encampments

#### Coordinating support & welfare services to the community

Consider the expansion of the current site at Riverside, Queensferry to increase the number of residential pitches and provide short-stay transit pitches.

- 3.22 The Housing White Paper promotes effective regional collaboration on housing functions and services, including the Supporting People programme. From April 2012 Supporting People funding will be allocated regionally, with shared planning and commissioning of joint projects. The new North Wales regime will merge 2 funding streams, the Supporting People Grant and the Supporting People Programme Grant and be run by a new governance framework. As with other subsidies, Supporting People funding will reduce in the future.
- 3.23 In view of these changes, Flintshire aims to critically examine current Supporting People provision and articulate how local need will be met in the future. Over the next 12 months, Flintshire will:
- plan a number of short term pilot projects to make the best use of available funding and avoid decommissioning needed services. These will provide individual support and inform the strategic direction of its homeless prevention services
  - collaborate with providers and stakeholders on a range of innovative support approaches and options to maximise much needed support from the available resources for as many vulnerable people as possible
  - undertake a strategic review of accommodation based and floating support, including an assessment of need, supply and support pathways, to inform the future direction of housing support services
- 3.24 The overarching priorities for accommodation and services for vulnerable people are set out in the Flintshire County Council Supporting People Strategy 2010-2013. These are:
- To provide a range of support and accommodation models across all vulnerable groups and increase provision in rural areas;
  - Ensure existing services are high quality and deliver positive outcomes;
  - Link with the Social Housing Grant programme to facilitate new development;
  - Improve access to services; and,
  - Provide a mix of generic and more targeted services.
- 3.25 It is a national strategic priority to do as much as possible to prevent homelessness, but where it occurs Flintshire will provide efficient and effective services to help people find accommodation. The provision of housing-related advice, guidance and support to help people stay in their homes and to help them make best use of their income is essential to achieving this.

- 3.26 The Housing White Paper contains a proposal aimed at placing a statutory duty on local authorities to prevent homelessness, ensure even better help is available for those who do become homeless and to end family homelessness by 2019.
- 3.27 Given the impact of the Welfare Reform Act and the proposals contained within the Housing White Paper it is an objective of the Flintshire Welfare Reform Strategy to review the Flintshire Homelessness Strategy to promote effective partnership working with internal and external providers, ensuring that the authority fulfils its statutory duties efficiently and cost effectively.
- 3.28 The Council will assist residents affected by the Act, to avoid it becoming a barrier to services and housing:
- It will work with other local authorities, using Welsh Government funding to proactively work with private landlords and their tenants who are at most risk of homelessness following reductions in their local housing allowance.
  - Flintshire's Income Maximisation (Welfare Rights) Service will offer specialist advice and representation to an increasing number of residents who are seeking assistance on appealing adverse decisions on their welfare benefit entitlement. Particularly, residents whose incapacity benefit claim has migrated over to employment and support allowance.
  - Flintshire's Housing Benefit Service is identifying tenants in the private rented sectors who will be affected by housing benefit reforms. Vulnerable households, for example where an adult receives a sickness benefit or children reside within the household, are offered advice and support ahead of their local housing allowance being reduced.
  - Plan to increase the number of units of temporary accommodation to house the anticipated increased homeless
  - Profiling of working age LA tenants who claim housing benefit is being carried out to assess those who would be affected by the 'bedroom tax'. Tenants will receive appropriate advice and support to overcome difficulties they may have in maintaining their contractual housing costs
  - Run awareness raising campaigns and provide training for tenants, landlords, members and officers on the Welfare Reform changes and the impact they may have upon residents, local communities and the local authority
- 3.29 The country is at a period where life expectancy is increasing. Consequently all strategies need to reflect locally the national priority of responding to the needs of an aging population. Flintshire has already shown its commitment to helping vulnerable and older people to live independently and safely in their own homes through the Community Based Accommodation Support Service, which commenced in July 2012. Carrying out adaptations to people's homes

to help people live independently will remain a priority, and the Disabled Facilities Grant programme will continue to be a key activity in the council's housing capital programme

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.01 That the Draft Local Housing Strategy be adopted.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 There are no financial implication other than those noted within the body of the report

#### **6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 The Strategy is designed to compliment the Council's current and emerging plans and strategies aimed at mitigating the effects of the Welfare Reform Act and current on-going anti-poverty activities

#### **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 There are no direct environmental implications within the Strategy. The Strategy does however seek to compliment broader energy conservation initiatives and support sustainable housing development.

#### **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 The draft Strategy has been subject to the council's equalities impact assessment process

#### **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 There are no direct personnel implications from this report.

#### **10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 Ongoing consultation will be undertaken as the strategy is implemented

#### **11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 Two major stakeholder consultation events were hosted jointly with Wrexham County Borough Council. The emerging strategy has been presented to the Health Social Care and Well-Being Partnership and the Children and Young Persons partnership. In addition several meetings with individual groups and representative bodies were held during 2012. Copies of the consultation draft have been circulated to many cross-sector organisations across Flintshire in addition to those operating across North Wales and North West England

**12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 Flintshire Local Housing Strategy 2012-2017

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985**  
**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

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# Flintshire Local Housing Strategy 2012 – 2017

## *A Quality Home for Everyone*

### Council

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Foreword	2
Introduction	3
Local & National Policy	4
Housing, the Economy and the Welfare Reform Act	6
Objective 1 – More Housing More Choice	9
Objective 2 – Improving Homes & Communities	13
Objective 3 – Better Services to Improve People's Lives	18
Monitoring and Evaluation to Reflect the Needs of the Users	23
Flintshire Facts and Figures	24
Delivery Plans	28

## Foreword

I have great pleasure in presenting Flintshire County Council's Local Housing Strategy 2012 - 2017.

The Housing Strategy sets out our vision for the direction and co-ordination of housing-related activities in Flintshire. The strategy spans a number of themes from the provision of new affordable housing, making best use of the existing housing in the county, improving the quality of homes, through to how the council envisages helping the more vulnerable members of our community.

Flintshire's communities are at the cornerstone of our approach to housing because I understand the vital role that good housing offers to improve life opportunities, educational attainment and access to employment. Housing is literally the foundation to a thriving community and it is our intention to work with a range of partners to ensure that good housing standards are maintained and Flintshire remains an area that people aspire to live and invest in. This ambition applies equally to both our urban and rural communities.

This Housing Strategy has been adopted during a period of major change following the election of the coalition government in May 2010. Whether it is Welfare Reform, new funding regimes for affordable housing or a number of statutory or regulatory changes contained within the Welsh Government's Housing White Paper, the challenge for those involved in housing is considerable. With that in mind we have sought to ensure this Housing Strategy remains flexible enough to respond to change whilst anticipating regular annual refreshing.

Even so, the Housing Strategy has unambiguous themes and direction. Our ambitions for housing in Flintshire are set out within the following three themes:

1. More Housing, More Choice;
2. Improving Homes and Communities;
3. Better Services to Improve People's Lives

Read in conjunction with other key plans and strategies (Unitary Development Plan, Regeneration Strategy etc.) we see the Housing Strategy as enabling us, the local housing authority, to partner with a range of organisations in order to deliver economic prosperity for the whole of Flintshire.

The Council cannot achieve all of the priorities contained in this Strategy without working in partnership with other statutory and voluntary organisations, including elected Members and a broad range of stakeholders and partners. (A list of our partners can be found at web address.)

I would like to extend my thanks to those who have helped develop this strategy and I look forward to working with you to realise our ambitions.

Councillor Helen Brown  
Cabinet Member for Housing

## Introduction

1. Housing is central to people's lives. Quality housing contributes directly and positively to neighbourhood sustainability and to people's health and well-being. Flintshire County Council's strategic housing role, over the next five years, is to be the catalyst for sustainable communities that are:
  - well designed and built
  - not dominated by a single type of housing or tenure
  - well connected
  - environmentally sensitive
  - well-run
  - well served
  - fair for everyone
  - active, inclusive and safe
  - thriving
2. The Flintshire Local Housing Strategy aims to be:
  - community groups, tenants, residents, the vulnerable and the excluded for the whole community – public, private and voluntary stakeholders, for the whole County – rural, urban, coastal, town and village;
  - in support of sustainable development, social, economic and environmental
  - in support of economic growth
  - that innovates, for example links jobs and training with housing investment
  - value for money, making effective use of public and private resources and set clear priorities for investment and action
  - flexible, regularly reviewing progress and continually improving to meet future changes

### **Delivering the Strategy**

3. The responsibility for housing and housing services falls on many organisations and individuals. Nationally, the UK and the Welsh Government lead, setting housing, planning and welfare policy, backed up by funding, subsidy and grants.
4. Locally, councils, housing associations, banks, building societies, voluntary sector organisations, charities, businesses and professionals all have an important part to play, to make housing and related services available and accessible.
5. Most housing is built by private developers, usually for sale, with no public funding involved. Their role is critical to the supply of quality new homes. They can contribute to housing challenges such as climate change and an ageing population, while creating jobs and supporting local businesses.

6. Individuals, whether they own their home, rent, or rent out a house, have a responsibility to keep the property in good repair. Flintshire's response to climate change relies heavily on individual owner occupiers or private landlords making their homes more energy and carbon efficient.
7. Delivery plans for the Strategy are lean, flexible and focus on those things that will make the most difference and summarised on page 27.
8. This Strategy was jointly written with neighbouring Wrexham, which has a similar housing profile and demographic trends to Flintshire. This partnership shared resources and highlights opportunities for joint working, in line with the Welsh Government's '**Making the Connections**'<sup>1</sup> principles and Housing White Paper's<sup>2</sup> promotion of effective regional collaboration.
9. It is based on evidence from a number of sources including research commissioned by the Council such as the Flintshire's 2012 Housing Market Needs Update. This evidence is summarised in the Flintshire Facts and Figures section on page 23.
10. Delivering the strategy both responds to and compliments other local and national policies.

#### **Local and National Policy**

11. The **Flintshire Community Strategy 2009 - 2019** has developed a county vision of Flintshire as a place where there is:
  - economic prosperity
  - health improvement
  - learning and skills for life
  - living sustainably
  - safe and supportive communities
12. It wants Flintshire to be "where people want to live, work and visit now and in the future" and a "county built on fairness and respect, where people feel confident in all aspects of their diversity regardless of age, disability, gender, language, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation."
13. Flintshire's **Diversity and Equality Policy 2012 – 2017's** and this strategy shares the National Equalities Review 2007's belief that, "an equal society recognises people's different needs, situations and goals, and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and can be."
14. The **Community Strategy** promotes *laith Pawb*, the Welsh Assembly Government's national action plan to create a 'truly bilingual nation... a country where people can choose to live their lives through the medium of Welsh or English'.

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<sup>1</sup> Making the Connections Action Plan, Cabinet Statement 14 June 2005 Sue Essex

<sup>2</sup> Housing White Paper, May 2012, Huw Lewis, Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage

15. The **Welsh Language Strategy 2012–17, A Living Language: A Language For Living** says “language renewal must go hand in hand with the work of improving the social and economic infrastructure ... to help ensure that better employment opportunities and more affordable housing become available, so that people can remain in their communities”.
16. The **Flintshire Regeneration Strategy 2009 – 2020’s** mission is that Flintshire will have a “sustainable, world class, modern economy, based on business enterprise and a highly motivated, well-trained workforce, supported by cutting-edge technology which maximises the area’s physical and human assets.” It sees housing playing a crucial role in delivering its objectives. It notes “an adequate supply of quality homes is essential to the economic success of Flintshire, whilst investing in new and upgraded housing is likely to remain a major contributor to improvement in the physical environment of Flintshire.”
17. The **Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan 2012** outlines the Welsh Government strategic priorities and includes housing investment to generate jobs and growth. These are:
  18. increasing the supply of social housing and improving existing housing stock
    - Arbed and Nest energy efficiency schemes.
    - initiatives such as the proposed mortgage guarantee scheme
    - the Housing Bond
    - Enterprise Zones e.g. Deeside Growth Zone
19. The **Wales National Housing Strategy 2010 - Improving Lives and Communities - Homes in Wales (WNHS)** has three objectives and Flintshire’s Strategy has adopted these as its own. They are:
  1. provide more housing, more choice
  2. improve homes and communities
  3. improve housing-related services and support
20. The **Welsh Government’s Housing White Paper**<sup>3</sup> reinforces the **WNHS** and outlines new legislation, for a Bill in autumn 2013. It says “we want to provide more affordable housing, better quality and improved services”
21. As the **WNHS** sets the housing framework for Flintshire’s Local Housing Strategy, the **Council’s Unitary Development Plan (UDP)** frames the strategy with planning guidance. The UDP aims to “help shape Flintshire’s future in a physical and environmental sense, as well as influencing it in economic and social terms”, from 2000 to 2015. Adopted in October 2011, its **Policy STR4 Housing** addresses Flintshire’s housing need, through:

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<sup>3</sup> Home for Wales, A White Paper for Better Lives and Communities, May 2012, Hew Lewis, Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage

- the provision of 7400 new dwellings over the Plan period 2000 to 2015
  - distributing new housing across the County based on a settlement hierarchy comprising category A (urban centres), B (semi urban / main villages) and C (rural/small villages) and on the capacity of each settlement to accommodate further growth
  - a range of type and size of housing sites
  - a range of housing including affordable and special needs housing
  - making the most efficient and effective use of housing sites and existing housing stock and facilitating, where appropriate, the residential conversion of existing buildings
22. Flintshire uses its **Local Planning Guidance Notes** and the **All Wales Residential Design Guide** to give guidance on design for new build. All new dwellings are required to meet code level 3 in the Welsh Government's **Code for Sustainable Homes**. The UDP further promotes sustainable homes by:
- resisting unnecessary development along open country on the A55
  - using a sequential approach to identifying land, to prioritise derelict and redundant land and buildings
  - using higher densities on land, on locations close to existing services and public transport
  - conserving areas of outstanding beauty and biodiversity
23. The **UDP's Policy STR9** aims to promote and support a diverse local culture including the protection and development of the Welsh language. Further Welsh Government guidance **TAN 20** notes councils should plan "the broad distribution and phasing of housing development taking into account the ability of different areas and communities to accommodate that development without eroding the position of the Welsh language."
24. Flintshire is preparing its **Local Development Plan** to replace the **UDP**. This will be informed by the current **Housing Market Needs Update**<sup>4</sup> and a further full housing needs assessment in 2014.

### **Housing, the Economy and the Welfare Reform Act**

25. The **2008 Credit Crunch**, subsequent global financial crisis and UK recessions have created an uncertain economic environment. The impact in Flintshire has been:
- A fall in private investment in housing
  - A fall in private house building
  - A fall in loans and an increase in deposits for house purchase
  - A general reduction in public subsidy
  - Falling public sector capital receipts with fewer asset sales

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<sup>4</sup> See page 24 for detail

26. The impact of the **UK Government Comprehensive Spending Review 2010** means that year on year **Social Housing Grant** is set to decrease. Flintshire and Housing Associations will need to find innovative ways to fund and build new affordable homes.
27. Although house prices have fallen since 2007, buying a house for the average first time buyer is not more affordable. Local wages, particularly in the public sector, have seen small rises or have been frozen. Household incomes vary through the County:
- lower household income bands are in and around the major settlements and along the northern edge of Deeside
  - higher income bands are predominantly in the west of the County, along the Wrexham border, and in the settlements inland from the A55 corridor<sup>5</sup>
28. The 2011 **Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation** reflects this income distribution, with the most deprived areas in the East of the County, bordering the Dee<sup>6</sup>.
29. An increasing number of people on 'reasonable' incomes, cannot access the housing market due to:
- Limited mortgage products for first time buyers with most lenders requiring a 20% deposit on Loan to Value
  - Shared Ownership products are limited and attract a high interest rate and can be unaffordable because people have to pay mortgage and rent
30. The average age of a first time buyer is now 37 years. This means the anticipated term of the mortgage may have to be shorter to pay it off before retirement, which means monthly repayments will be higher.
31. Expectations for the private rented sector should be realistic. While it is difficult to get a mortgage due to stricter lending criteria and larger deposits, for those who can, home ownership can still be a more affordable than open market rent. Generally, people in the UK aspire to own their home rather than rent. Since the economic downturn in 2008 and uncertainty in both the housing and jobs market, more people consider renting. The **Housing Market Needs Update**<sup>7</sup> recommends more research to assess the change in aspirations and attitudes of County households to home ownership.
32. Research from uSwitch.com<sup>8</sup> shows **fuel poverty** varies across the UK. Wales has the highest household percentage in fuel poverty with 32%, double

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<sup>5</sup> Source Data Unit Wales & Glyndŵr University, Median Household Incomes 2010

<sup>6</sup> Source Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2011

<sup>7</sup> Update of Housing Need, Demand and Affordability in the Local Housing Market Areas of Flintshire, Glyndwr University Wrexham 2012

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.myfinances.co.uk/cut-your-bills/2011/12/02/wales-tops-fuel-poverty-league>

the lowest, London. Wales also has some of the highest energy costs in the UK. In 2010, 15% of the homes and 8,200 households in Flintshire were shown by the Stock Condition Survey<sup>9</sup> to be in fuel poverty.

33. The **Welfare Reform Act 2012** came into force on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2012 and introduces significant reforms to the social security system. The aim of the reforms is to make the benefits and tax credits systems fairer and simpler by:
  - creating the right incentives to get more people into work by ensuring work always pays
  - protecting the most vulnerable
  - delivering fairness to those claiming benefit and to the taxpayer
34. The Act will change the way Flintshire and other local organisations provide services to low income and vulnerable people. Housing providers may need to adjust their allocation policies to change occupancy rates and consider whether to build smaller or shared accommodation for social rent.
35. Flintshire is developing a comprehensive and long-term **Welfare Reform Strategy**, comprising of four multifaceted projects that collectively aim to mitigate the full negative impacts and enhance the positives of the welfare reforms upon residents, local communities, the council and partner organisations. It has carried out its own corporate work on the Act's impact and has identified that the following might increase:
  - homelessness
  - demand for housing related support, welfare benefit and budgeting advice
  - evictions in both private and social sector
  - demand for smaller accommodation
  - the number of Houses in Multiple Occupation
  - pressure on the Private Rented Sector as well as Social Rented Housing

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<sup>9</sup> Private Sector House Condition Survey 2010 cpc May 2011



## Objective 1 - More Housing More Choice

36. **Flintshire's ambition** is to increase the supply and variety of affordable homes, by at least 740 new properties, over the next 5 years. It will:
- offer innovative affordable options designed to overcome the current financial barriers to accessing the housing market
  - invest with partners in regeneration schemes such as the **Flint Town Centre Regeneration Project** and the **Deeside Growth Zone**
37. It is a **WNHS** priority to:
- Increase the number of affordable homes for purchase or rent, in the right location and specifically in rural areas.
  - Give more choice by broadening the range of homes and tenancy arrangements to suit people at different stages of their lives, different income levels and circumstances
  - Improve the standard of new homes to make them more energy efficient and sustainable.
38. Flintshire's **UDP** requires 7400 new homes, 30% of which should be affordable. Flintshire's local planning guidance note LPGN9 further requires, the developer to consider affordable home types in the following preference order:-
- Social Rented - through an RSL.
  - Shared Ownership - through an RSL or other bona fide management organisation.
  - Subsidised Market Homes - provided as low cost discounted housing for sale.
  - Private Rented - provided as low cost rented accommodation.
39. Flintshire's **Rural Housing Enabler** produces local profiles to inform these planning decisions.
40. The **Housing White Paper** proposes more action to increase the supply of new homes, including the use of a range of innovative funding mechanisms. Flintshire's **Housing Market Assessment Update**<sup>10</sup> recommends a 37% starting point when negotiating affordable homes on any new development. This does not take into account economic circumstances, site conditions, viability and deliverability factors. If supported by the findings of a further full housing needs assessment to be commissioned in 2014, it will inform the review of affordable policy as part of the LDP process.
41. Flintshire offers a range of **affordable housing options** with developers and other partners. These are Social and Affordable Rental, Rent to Save, Shared

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<sup>10</sup> Update of Housing Need, Demand and Affordability in the Local Housing Market Areas of Flintshire, Glyndwr University Wrexham 2012

Equity, First Time Buyer Loans, Homebuy and homes built as Gifted Units or using Commuted Sums.

42. Flintshire's current **Social Housing Grant Programme**, 2011 to 2014, is £5.142 million and will build 102 new social rented homes.
43. Some homes bought under the **Right-to-Buy** scheme are subject to **rural restrictions**. If the property is in Flintshire's designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty a condition of sale is that it may only be resold to someone who has been living or working in the area for 3 years.
44. All applicants for the following affordable schemes must register on the **Affordable Housing Register** managed by Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd. They conduct a financial assessment on each application.
45. **Affordable Rental** properties are available to employed applicants, on a relatively good annual income, who either cannot afford or do not wish to consider home ownership. The rent is higher than social rented properties from the local authority or housing association, where applicants are normally assessed on 'need' basis. It is usually about 80% of a local market rent. In some instances a tenant may rent the property initially, and at a later date purchase the property. 7 Affordable Rental Properties have been provided by the Welsh Housing Partnership during 2011/2012 which is administered by Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd.
46. Flintshire's **Rent to Save Scheme** is a version of **Rent First**<sup>11</sup>. It is being developed for people who do not have a deposit, by giving them an opportunity to rent a new home and save for a deposit. The rent will be subject to an annual review to keep it inline with market values. 30% of the rent will be retained as savings towards a deposit. The deposit saved over the five year term will then assist them to purchase a shared equity home or a home on the open market. Priority will be given to those who have a local connection. It is proposed to use homes built as Gifted Units, described later in this section on page 10, for this scheme.
47. The **Shared Ownership/Shared Equity** option is usually offered by a housing association that will hold part of the equity in the property. Lenders usually accept a 5% deposit. Research<sup>12</sup> estimates 80 % of households in the County have an average household income above the threshold needed to afford a 50% Shared Ownership option. So this option will attract households where at least one partner is working.
48. Flintshire offers its Shared Equity option, with 70% of the property market price mortgaged and rent payable on the remaining share. When the property is sold the council receive their 30% share back. Occupiers can buy the council's share if they wish, so the buyer can 'staircase up' to owning all of the property as their income grows. Currently 40 homes have been built for

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<sup>11</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/desh/consultation/100310housingrentfirsten.doc>

<sup>12</sup> Update of Housing Need, Demand and Affordability in the Local Housing market Areas of Flintshire, Glyndwr University Wrexham 2012

the Shared Equity Scheme in 2012/13 and 100 more are planned for 2013/14. Flintshire's share of the equity will represent an asset of around £5.4 million.

49. **Discounted for Sale/Low Cost Homeownership** homes are sold by developers at less than the open market value, generally between 50% and 80% of the open market value. Currently, lenders are asking for a 20% deposit on this type of housing. So in practice, very few households can purchase a home this way. As a result, Flintshire offers shared equity rather than discounted sale.
50. For a **First Time Buyers Loan** applicants need a minimum annual household income of £26,000. The loan is only for existing homes within Flintshire and does not apply to new build properties. Flintshire's model for its First Time Buyer loan is:
  - 1st. An approved applicant obtains a mortgage for the maximum of 80% of the purchase price
  - 2nd. Flintshire assists with an equity loan of up to a 20% of the purchase price
51. The loan can be paid back at any time and has to be repaid in full at the end of 25 years. The loan repayment will reflect the current market value of the property. Flintshire has set aside £100,000 for this scheme in 2012/13.
52. Flintshire promotes the Welsh Government **Homebuy** scheme to give a loan of 30-50% of the market value of the property depending on location. The full 50% is only available in designated rural areas. The buyer will have to finance the remaining percentage. The loan amount can vary depending on the buyer's financial circumstances and the property's purchase price. There are no repayments or interest on the loan. When the property is sold, the owner then re-pays the same percentage of the property's new market value. Applicants must satisfy Welsh Government eligibility requirements and is subject to available funding.
53. The **Housing White Paper** highlights increasing land supply as key to building more affordable homes. It proposes a **database of publicly owned surplus land**. Flintshire will continue to identify surplus public land and buildings for potential development. Its valuation for sale will be based on a predominantly affordable scheme.
54. In line with the **Housing White Paper**, Flintshire will investigate alternative affordable housing options for people to meet their needs through **Community Land Trusts, Co-operative Housing Tenure and Self Build**. This may be an appropriate approach for small village sites identified by the **Rural Housing Enabler**.
55. The **Gifted Unit** option means a developer builds property for Flintshire CC, to the value of the affordable contribution. The advantages are:
  - The homes remain wholly in the ownership of the Council as an asset and an income stream

- The risk of units being sold for full price on the open market if they cannot be sold under affordable schemes is avoided
  - Local people can be housed in spite of limited financial circumstances
56. This option was runner up for a **CIH Cymru Good Practice Award** in 2011. It is expected to provide 26 new homes to the council with an estimated value of £4 million between 2011 and 2013.
57. If a site is not viable for affordable housing, Flintshire has and will continue to negotiate **Commuted Sums** in lieu of affordable properties. Commuted Sums are expected to raise £0.6 million from 2011 to 2013.
58. The Commuted Sums will then be used to deliver affordable homes by:
- Funding First Time Buyer Deposits to assist the purchase of existing homes
  - Purchasing existing property for applicants on the Affordable Housing Register
  - Match funding Social Housing Grant
  - Acquiring and refurbishing empty homes
  - Funding local mortgage rescue
59. It is a **WNHS** priority to make “the best use of investment in housing and other regeneration activity to create more jobs and training opportunities, and to improve the look and feel of communities, and the services and facilities available to local people” and to increase the level of private sector investment in housing.
60. The **Flint Town Centre Regeneration Project** will be funded and delivered by a partnership of private developers, RSLs and the Council over 5 years. After comprehensive consultation and supported by a tenant majority, the Council decided to demolish 214 maisonettes in the Flint Town Centre. They will make way for a mixed development of 170 new homes for sale or rent, enhanced public services and additional retail units. The Council will have nomination rights for any new homes, to ensure that local housing need is met. Any tenants displaced during the regeneration will be offered alternative housing from Flintshire’s own stock. Detailed work is currently being undertaken to identify innovative funding streams for the capital investment required as sources such as Social Housing Grant are limited.
61. The **Deeside Growth Zone** was announced in 2012 as part of the **Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan 2012**. It is proposed to build up to 1,000 new homes designed to attract business and personnel to the Zone. This development will be designed to compliment the regeneration in **Connah’s Quay, Shotton and Queensferry Renewal Area**.

## Objective 2 - Improving homes and communities

62. An independent survey<sup>13</sup> for the **Housing Asset Management Strategy 2012 – 2018** estimated that £166 million was needed to bring all of the council homes up to WHQS by March 2018. The **Private Sector House Condition Survey 2010**<sup>14</sup> found that 32% of private property failed the Decent Homes Standard and over 24% had at least one Category 1 Hazard costing an estimated £120 million and £67million respectively to repair.
63. **Flintshire's ambition** is to:
- invest £49 million in its own properties on **WHQS** improvements
  - offer the widest range of advice, loans and grants to owner occupiers and landlords to **eliminate Category 1 Hazards**, bring empty properties back into use and increase energy efficiency
  - regenerate Flintshire's existing homes through the **Connah's Quay, Shotton and Queensferry Renewal Area** and the **Townscape Heritage Initiative**
64. The **Housing White Paper** encourages more action to achieve the **Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)**. **The Council** does not have the £166 million to do all the work required by the WHQS, so it will spend its **capital programme** of £49 million on the following priority improvements over the 5 years from 2013 to 2018:-
- Renewing 4880 kitchens where required
  - Upgrading and renewing 3550 central heating systems where required
  - Renewing 1300 bathrooms where required
  - Upgrading 4667 smoke detectors where required
  - £1 million per year on disabled adaptations
65. It has budgeted £2.5 million over the 5 years for urgent replacements and health and safety works.
66. Flintshire aims to use this investment to generate 100 **jobs** and 10 **apprenticeships**, through the use of local contractors.
67. The planned investment programme will be aligned with available funding from **CESP**, **Arbed** and other **energy efficiency initiatives**. Flintshire, with Denbighshire and Wrexham, is considering a group **Fuel Brokerage Scheme** to reduce the cost of heating to its tenants.
68. The council has 591 non-traditional homes, mainly Airey, Easiform and Timber Frame homes, high-rise flats and maisonettes. Flint's 3 high-rise blocks require external as well as internal repairs to bring all the flats to WHQS. External repairs estimated to cost £4 million include:

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<sup>13</sup> Comprehensive stock condition survey completed in 2007 and updated in 2011 by Savills UK.

<sup>14</sup> See page 26 for detail

- Comprehensive concrete repair programme
  - Renewal of the mastic in the panel joints and roof finishes
  - New insulated roof system
  - Application of an over-cladding system to improve thermal performance and provide weather proofing
69. A further £7 million is required to complete WHQS work on the high rise flats. The 113 Airey, Easiform and Timber Frame homes need funding of £2.8 to bring them up to the WHQS. The Council will pursue options to secure additional funding from Welsh Government, Prudential borrowing and investigate collaborative procurement options with neighbouring councils to achieve WHQS on these and all its other properties.
70. Flintshire's **Housing Association partners** are working towards delivering WHQS across all their homes. The 3 Housing Associations in Flintshire would achieve the standard for 100% of their properties as follows:
- Pennaf by 2014/2015
  - Tai Clwyd by 2014/2015
  - Wales & West by 2012/2013
71. It is a **WNHS** priority is to improve the quality and standard of all existing houses and rented accommodation, including their energy efficiency. Flintshire County Council believes everyone has the right to live in a home, which is in good repair, has ready access to all necessary amenities, and is free from physical hazards. The Council has not sufficient funding to tackle the backlog of repair and renovation. So its **Private Sector Renewal & Improvement Policy 2012 -2015's** priorities are to:
- target action to **vulnerable households** living in non-decent homes, in line with Private Sector Stock Condition Survey findings
  - increase the proportion of homes that meet the **decent homes standard** by working with all stakeholders and service providers
  - provide **equity and low cost loans** to vulnerable and lower income homeowners to make their homes decent
  - reduce the **health effects** of poor housing conditions through a combination of advice, financial assistance, and appropriate enforcement action, ensuring that residents live in safe, warm and comfortable homes
  - promote the take up of a range of **energy saving measures** provided by a range of agencies to improve home energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty
  - promote improvement and conversion of **empty residential properties** and obsolete commercial buildings to bring back in to use and increase the supply of affordable homes
  - achieve a well maintained and managed private rented sector through the **All Wales Landlord Accreditation Scheme** by encouraging the

professional development of landlords, through incentives, education, and advice

72. The Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal Team, has three approaches to these priorities:
- 1st. advice and advocacy
  - 2nd. provision of financial assistance
  - 3rd. enforcement of housing standards
73. Advice and advocacy is also given by **Flintshire Care & Repair**, the local Home Improvement Agency and supported with:
- information on Flintshire's website
  - leaflets and promotional events in areas, which fall within the 20% of the Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD)
  - regular Landlord Forums for private landlords
  - landlord training events
  - membership of the All Wales Landlord Accreditation Scheme
74. Financial Assistance is given, where appropriate, to those who are unable to pay for their own improvements. Flintshire supports the **Housing White Paper's** ambition to create a nationally branded, locally delivered, **Property Improvement Loans** scheme. Home owners will be helped, to release equity available in their homes on an 'equity share' basis. The owner and the Council will share the benefit from any increase in property value. Since the Council is not primarily a lending institution, it does not impose loan terms which would 'guarantee' its profit or investment and therefore potentially discourage applicants.
75. An eligible applicant, to the Council, will be considered for the following hierarchy of loan types:
- 1st. a **Repayment Loan**
  - 2nd. a **Property Appreciation Loan**
  - 3rd. a **Flintshire Interest Free Loan**
76. The first loan to meet the applicant's need, in the above hierarchy, will be offered. Funding is made available to support **vulnerable householders** across the County to tackle **category 1 hazards**. To ensure the future sustainability and maximise this fund, the Council has a range of loans schemes and is phasing out grants. There will be an expansion of this approach over the next few years.
77. Flintshire will prepare for increased numbers of private rented sector properties and the **Housing White Paper's** proposal to introduce a mandatory registration and accreditation scheme for private sector landlords to regulate the practices of landlords, lettings agents and managing agents, by:

- reviewing the capacity and location of the enforcement team within the organisation
  - raising profile and membership of Landlord Accreditation to professionalise the sector
  - reviewing activity on illegal evictions
  - additional licensing of HMOs
  - introducing fee earning services to support increased capacity within housing enforcement
78. Partnerships will be made with landlords and corporate investors to improve provision. The Council will protect the health, safety and welfare of private tenants through advice, negotiation, agreement and appropriate incentives. Enforcement action will be taken if these methods have been exhausted, as a last resort.
79. It is a **WNHS** priority to make the best use of homes that are unoccupied. The **Housing White Paper** proposes legislation to tackle the waste and blight of **empty properties** by giving local authorities discretionary power to increase council tax on properties empty for longer than one year. It also promotes an increased focus on tackling empty homes through the national “**Houses into Homes**” programme and other programmes.
80. In April 2012, the Welsh Government announced £10 million for the ‘**House to Homes**’ loan fund. Flintshire will be using this fund in conjunction with its own **Empty Homes Scheme** and other initiatives such as the **Flint Townscape Heritage Initiative** to offer the best incentive to empty property owners. Flintshire’s 2012 Private Sector Renewal & Improvement Policy targets empty properties with a range of measures:
- an **Empty Property Grant**, up to a maximum of 20K in the Renewal Area. The owner gives the council nomination rights for 5 years
  - an **Empty Property Interest Free Loan**, up to a maximum of £10K, which was available countywide. The owner gives the council nomination rights until the loan is repaid. This is repayable on sale or transfer or sooner at the discretion of the property owner
  - a Flintshire **Empty Property Repayment Loan** is up to a maximum of £15K, payable monthly at 4% interest over an agreed period between 1 and 7 years. This is a top up loan for in cases where the £10K interest free loan is insufficient to carry out the required works
  - The **Welsh Government Houses to Homes Initiative, Interest Free Loan**, can be up to a maximum of £150K per applicant and must be repaid within 3 years. £25K is the maximum cost of repair work per home. Flintshire has been allocated £482K to manage this scheme in 2012/15 which will bring 20 properties back into use
  - A loan from housing association partner, **OFFA Ltd** up to a maximum of £5K, available countywide. In return the property must be managed by OFFA and repayment of the interest free loan is through the rent.
  - consider the discretionary power proposed in the **Housing White Paper** to increase council tax on properties empty for longer than one year, if this becomes law



81. It is expected that at least 40 properties will be brought back into use in 2012/13.
82. Town centres face a challenging future and need to adapt to changing consumer patterns. Flintshire County Council has successfully obtained nearly £1.6 million of public assistance for a **Townscape Heritage Initiative** (THI) in Flint town centre. The aim is to revitalise Flint as a place to live, shop, visit and do business whilst preserving and enhancing the town's unique historic and architectural heritage. The Flint THI will offer grant assistance to owners or leaseholders of selected buildings in Flint. It is intended where possible to link this funding to Flintshire's work to reduce empty properties.
83. In February 2010 Flintshire County Council approved the declaration of the **Connah's Quay, Shotton and Queensferry Renewal Area**. It covers approximately 5,790 properties and has concentrations of households which are some of the most deprived in Wales. A priority is to make best use of potential sites for high quality housing development and remove vacant or poor quality properties.
84. The **Renewal Area** has 3 main programmes
- **Group Repair** for up to 900 homes
  - **Environmental Improvements**
  - **Energy Efficiency** measures for up to 500 homes
85. Running alongside these three themes, Flintshire is using the Renewal Area status and funding to bring the benefits of local jobs and training to this deprived area. Along with other capital public funds, Renewal Area funding is being reduced year on year, and so some of the initial Renewal Area plans will need to be re-evaluated.
86. It is a **WNHS** priority to improve the energy efficiency of all existing property. The Welsh Government's energy performance programme **Arbed**, has seen £66 million being invested to boost the green economy and improve the energy efficiency of 7500 homes. The recently launched second phase of Arbed will see the Welsh Government investing £45m to reduce fuel bills for 4800 homes in deprived areas of Wales. Flintshire will be continuing its work to insulate as many properties as possible, using a number of different funding streams, **ECO, Arbed, Green Deal** and **interest free loans**. Flintshire has bid through its RSL partners to upgrade 600 homes in Mostyn and Holywell.

### Objective 3 - Better Services to Improve People's Lives

87. **Flintshire's ambition** is to collaborate and innovate to:
- improve access to a suitable home
  - offer the best advice and support to sustain people in their home, whatever their tenure
  - promote independent living generally and specifically for its aging population by investing in new **Extra Care Schemes**
  - ensure community safety
88. Social housing is a scarce resource and is allocated mainly to people in housing need. It is a **WNHS** priority to make it easier for people to find suitable accommodation, particularly people from minority groups.
89. The Flintshire **Diversity and Equality Policy 2012 – 2017's** aim is for every aspect of Flintshire's activities to provide appropriate, accessible and effective services and facilities to meet the diverse needs of our community.
90. The **Housing White Paper** promotes further development of accessible housing registers. Flintshire is part of **North Wales Single Access Routes to Housing Project (SARTH)**. It is working with three other North Wales' councils and five housing associations to create a common access route to housing, bringing benefits to residents, local authorities and housing associations.
91. Good quality, local housing advice helps people make informed decisions on suitable housing provision. This common access point for all North Wales aims to remove the barrier of multiple waiting lists and allocation policies, to streamline an applicant's path to the best housing solution for them. It will make best use of stock in terms of size and type by improving the match with applicants. The pilots for this project are expected to start in late 2013.
92. Flintshire is reviewing its **Incentive Scheme** to see if changes can be made to reduce over or under occupancy especially bearing in mind the impact of the Welfare Reform Act.
93. Flintshire is examining options for a **Social Lettings Agency** to increase the number of privately owned properties available. It is intended to help private landlords rent to target groups such as the young at LHA rates.
94. The **Housing White Paper** proposes ensuring that **Gypsy and Traveller Communities** are provided with new pitches by local authorities where there is clear evidence of need. North Wales is on a popular principle travelling route for them.
95. The **January 2012 Caravan Count** showed that Flintshire is the most significant provider in North Wales with 58% of authorised pitches. This is 15% of the total for Wales. The **North West Wales Gypsy Traveller**

**Accommodation Assessment**<sup>15</sup> asked where new pitches should be located. It found a demand for sites along the main travelling route through North Wales. No new locations were requested in Flintshire. Flintshire will continue to develop Gypsy and Traveller services:

- Managing Riverside Caravan Site
  - Managing Unauthorised Encampments
  - Coordinating Support & Welfare Services to Gypsy and Traveller community
  - Consider the expansion of the current site at Riverside, Queensferry to increase the number of residential pitches and provide short-stay transit pitches
96. The **Housing White Paper** promotes effective regional collaboration on housing functions and services, including the **Supporting People** programme. From April 2012 Supporting People funding will be allocated regionally, with shared planning and commissioning of joint projects. The new North Wales regime will merge 2 funding streams, the **Supporting People Grant** and the **Supporting People Revenue Grant** into **Supporting People Programme Grant** and be run by a new governance framework. As with other subsidies, Supporting People funding will reduce in the future.
97. In view of these changes, Flintshire aims to critically examine current Supporting People provision and articulate how local need will be met in the future. Over the next 12 months, Flintshire will:
- plan a number of short term pilot projects to make the best use of available funding and avoid decommissioning needed services. These will provide individual support and inform the strategic direction of its homeless prevention services
  - collaborate with providers and stakeholders on a range of innovative support approaches and options to maximise much needed support from the available resources for as many vulnerable people as possible
  - undertake a strategic review of accommodation based and floating support, including an assessment of need, supply and support pathways, to inform the future direction of housing support services
98. The current **Flintshire County Council Supporting People Strategy 2010 – 2013** sets out overarching priorities for accommodation and services for vulnerable people:
- To provide a range of support and accommodation models across all vulnerable groups, and increase provision in rural areas
  - Ensure existing services are high quality and delivering positive outcomes
  - Link with the Social Housing Grant (SHG) programme to facilitate new development

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<sup>15</sup> North West Wales Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment, Dr D Hirst, Teresa Crew, Bangor University

- Improve access to services, to ensure that services are flexible and able to respond to a wider range of needs, are tenure neutral and where appropriate – cross authority
- Provide a mix of generic and more targeted services

Current Flintshire Supporting People (SP) Funding	Partners	Timescale	Funds £000s/yr
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funds appropriate housing related support services. Their commissioning objectives are:</li> <li>• Community Care</li> <li>• Community Safety</li> <li>• Homeless and Homeless Prevention</li> </ul>	FCC, Betsi Cadwaldr University Health Board	2012/13	7,109
		2013/14	6,825
		2014/15	6,484

99. Local authorities and their Health Board partners are required to work together to establish **Integrated Family Support Services (IFSS)**. It is a programme unique to Wales. It focuses on families where parents have substance misuse problems that affect the welfare of their children. IFSS will roll out in Flintshire from April 2013.
100. It is a **WNHS** priority to:
- do as much as possible to prevent homelessness but where it occurs provide efficient services to help people to find accommodation
  - provide housing-related advice, guidance and support, including financial and debt management advice, to help people to stay in their homes and to help them to make best use of their income
101. The **Housing White Paper** proposes:
- a statutory duty on local authorities to prevent homelessness, and ensure even better help available for those who do become homeless
  - ending family homelessness in Wales by 2019
102. The **Flintshire Homelessness Strategy, 2009 to 2015**, currently involves a wide range of partner organisations and has four key strategic aims, to:
- focus upon a corporate approach to homelessness prevention through improved strategic and operational working arrangements within the Council and partner organisations in the planning and delivery of social welfare advice and support services
  - provide integrated housing support services for vulnerable groups that prevent homelessness and promote the health and well-being of vulnerable adults and families
  - improve access to temporary and settled accommodation
  - improve performance management arrangements for all aspects of the homelessness service provided by the Council
103. Given the impact of the **Welfare Reform Act** and the **Housing White Paper's** proposal to give councils a statutory duty to prevent homelessness,

ensure even better help is available for those who do become homeless and to end family homelessness in Wales by 2019, it is an objective of **Flintshire's Welfare Reform Strategy** is to review Flintshire's Homelessness Strategy. It will then implement a corporate Homeless Prevention Strategy that promotes effective partnership working with internal and external providers, ensuring the authority fulfills its statutory duties efficiently and cost effectively.

104. The Council will assist residents affected by the Act, to avoid it becoming a barrier to services and housing:
- It will work with other local authorities, using Welsh Government funding to proactively work with private landlords and their tenants who are at most risk of homelessness following reductions in their **local housing allowance**.
  - Flintshire's **Income Maximisation (Welfare Rights) Service** will offer specialist advice and representation to an increasing number of residents who are seeking assistance on appealing adverse decisions on their welfare benefit entitlement. Particularly, residents whose incapacity benefit claim has migrated over to employment and support allowance.
  - Flintshire's **Housing Benefit Service** is identifying tenants in the private rented sectors who will be affected by housing benefit reforms. Vulnerable households, for example, where an adult receives a sickness benefit or children reside within the household, are offered advice and support ahead of their local housing allowance being reduced.
  - plan to increase the number of units of temporary accommodation to house the anticipated increased homeless
  - **Profiling of working age LA tenants** who claim housing benefit is being carried out to assess those who would be affected by the 'bedroom tax'. Tenants will receive appropriate advice and support to overcome difficulties they may have in maintaining their contractual housing costs
  - Run **awareness raising campaigns** and provide training for tenants, landlords, members and officers on the Welfare Reform changes and the impact they may have upon residents, local communities and the local authority
105. It is a **WNHS** priority to respond to the needs of an **ageing population**. Flintshire's **Community Based Accommodation Support Service** will help vulnerable and older people to live independently and safely in their own homes. Following extensive consultation FCC's sheltered housing warden service has changed into a community based accommodation support service.
106. The service individuals receive from the Accommodation Support Officer is based on an assessment of their support needs and is designed to be flexible and responsive, changing as needs change. Two pilots were successfully run in Shotton and Ewloe. A phased roll-out of the new service across the County began in July 2012.

107. The **Housing White Paper** promotes continued investment in housing adaptations to help people live independently in their own homes. The **Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's)** programme is a key activity in the Flintshire Housing Capital Programme promoting independent living. In 2011, 429 referrals for DFGs were received. 307 jobs were completed at a cost of £2,290,000. This work included 184 wet rooms/showers, 46 stair lifts, 46 ramp/hard standings and 10 extensions. Flintshire will spend in 2012/3 £2.3 million on aids and adaptations for both council tenants and owner occupiers.
108. **Extra Care** housing gives older people more choices, complements existing sheltered housing and increasing the flexible approach to supporting older people at home. North East Flintshire is already served by Llys Eleanor Extra Care scheme in Shotton, run by Clwyd Alyn with 50 apartments. In partnership with Wales and West, £9.3 million is being invested in Flintshire's second purpose built scheme, Llys Jasmine in Mold, with 61 apartments and 2 bungalows. 15 of these are specifically designed for people living with dementia.
109. Research<sup>16</sup> shows that approximately 300 further units are needed and this is expected to increase by 10% by 2033. The highest unmet need is in North West Flintshire where there are no extra care apartments and additional schemes are being considered.
110. Crime, fear of crime and anti social behaviour can blight a neighbourhood and could undermine this strategy's plans for sustainable communities. Flintshire & Wrexham Community Safety Partnerships are made up of public and voluntary agencies. They have made progress. The total number of crimes in Flintshire & Wrexham fell by 12% and anti-social behaviour incidents reported to the police fell by 10% in 2010.
111. The partnerships collaborated on a joint Flintshire and Wrexham Community Safety Partnership Plan for 2011 to 2014. Although there have been crime reduction successes to date, fear of crime and concern over levels of anti-social behaviour continue to be of priority for local people.

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<sup>16</sup> Extra Care Housing Strategy Briefing Note July 2012

## Monitoring and Evaluation to reflect the Needs of the Users

112. It is a **WNHS** priority to:

- Ensure services reflect the needs of those who use them not the needs of organisations that deliver them.
- Give tenants a clear voice in decisions that affect them and ways of taking action if dissatisfied with services.

113. The aim of Flintshire's **Housing Services Customer Involvement Strategy & Action Plan 2012-2015** is to develop effective and efficient housing services through the involvement of tenants, leaseholders, staff, the wider community and other stakeholders.

114. In line with the **Housing White Paper's** aim to create more opportunities for tenants and service users to influence the delivery of services, Flintshire will:

<b>Flintshire's Priority Projects/Programmes</b>	<b>Service Area, Partners</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Consult with <b>Tenant Federation</b> and <b>Flintshire Housing Partnership</b> on the monitoring and evaluation of the strategy and its further development	Housing Strategy, N'hood Housing,	2012/2017	Increased Tenant, Resident ownership of strategy
Review FLHS progress annually with <b>Resident Involvement Monitoring Group</b> and <b>Flintshire Housing Partnership</b>	Housing Strategy, N'hood Housing,	2013/2017	

## Flintshire Facts and Figures

### Flintshire the Place

115. Flintshire, in North-East Wales, borders Denbighshire, Wrexham, the English counties of Merseyside, across the River Dee and Cheshire. It includes urban, rural and coastal landscapes.
116. The county has exceptional natural assets on its borders. The Clwydian Range is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Dee Estuary is one of the most important wildlife sites in Europe, a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a designated Ramsar Convention wetland of international importance.
117. Its location is strategic, offering the main thoroughfare between North Wales, the motorway network of North West England and beyond. It is close to Liverpool and Manchester airports and has direct rail connections to Cardiff and London.
118. Flintshire has emerged as one of Wales's, most important business and manufacturing locations, built on its strengths in industrial processes, advanced manufacturing, aerospace, food and environmental technologies.

### Flintshire's People

119. Flintshire's population is projected to grow, from a current population of 150,637, to 153,210 by 2026<sup>17</sup>. The figures include net migration. Flintshire has a history of in-migration due to its border location, relative economic prosperity and attractive environment.
120. The number of projected households will grow by 4.4%, from 65,880 in 2011, to 68,807 households by 2016<sup>18</sup>. In detail projections are:
  - single person households will grow the most and are set to increase by 34.4% or 6,986 households
  - 1 adult and 1 child, and 1 adult and 2 child households see the next highest rise at 29% or by 631 and 474 households respectively
121. Flintshire's population is ageing:
  - almost half the residents of Flintshire are now over the age of 45
  - by 2026, the number of people aged 65 and over is expected to rise 40% by 10,635, and make up about 25% of the population<sup>19</sup>
  - in the next 10 years, the number of people aged over 85 is set to increase by 110%

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<sup>17</sup> Source StatsWales 2008-based Population Projections.

<sup>18</sup> Source StatsWales 2008-based Population Projections.

<sup>19</sup> Source 2008-based Population Projections for Flintshire © Statistical Directorate, WAG.



122. Within ten years it is estimated that over 80% of people, aged over 60, will be homeowners. Many will be asset rich and cash poor, unable to repair and heat their homes.
123. Flintshire has the smallest BME community in Wales at 1.9%<sup>20</sup>
124. The January 2012 Gypsy Traveller Caravan count showed Flintshire has 58% of authorised pitches in North Wales. 15% of the total in Wales

### **The Flintshire's 2012 Housing Market Needs Update**

125. The Update<sup>21</sup> examined estimates and projections of housing need, demand and affordability for the County. The Update proposes its recommendations are a starting point, in line with Planning Policy Wales 2011, for decisions to be negotiated on a site by site basis and local staff knowledge should be valued over the reports statistical analysis. It makes recommendations for new build homes as follows:
- a target of 37% should be affordable
  - 19 – 27% should be designed to meet older or disabled residents needs
  - they should be detached or semi detached
  - they should be 2 bed to meet demographic trends & shortages of this property size
  - consider the effect of welfare reform in relation the supply of appropriately bedroomed property
126. The Update will be used to inform the development of Flintshire's Local Development Plan.

### **Flintshire Rural Housing Enabler**

127. Flintshire's Rural Housing Enabler (RHE) is creating detailed local profiling to ensure that the right type, quantity, price and size of homes are built. These will indicate demand for different types of accommodation, social rented, shared ownership, subsidised marked homes and intermediate rent in specific rural locations.

### **Flintshire's Waiting Lists**

128. Flintshire's waiting lists reflect demand housing and services.
- There are 173 applicants on the Affordable Housing Register
  - Flintshire has a waiting list for its rented homes of 3985. This includes 597 applicants existing tenants who want to transfer to another Flintshire home
  - Flintshire's Housing Options Team assisted 966 households with housing related issues in the financial year 2010/11, and 1153 households in

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<sup>20</sup> Populations Estimates by Ethnic Group 2001 – 2009, WG 2011

<sup>21</sup> Update of Housing Need, Demand and Affordability in the Local Housing market Areas of Flintshire, Glyndwr University Wrexham 2012

2011/12 a 19% increase. The number of homeless applications during the same period rose by 51% from 105 to 159, due to the impact of the recession and Welfare Reform Act.

- Aids and adaptations allow people to stay in their own home, promote independent living and increase quality of life. In 2011, 429 referrals for Disabled Facilities Grants were received. 307 jobs were completed at a cost of £2,290,000. This work included 184 wet rooms/showers, 46 stair lifts, 46 ramp/hard standings and 10 extensions.

### **Flintshire Council and RSL Homes and the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)**

129. The Welsh Government expected all social landlords in Wales, to adopt the WHQS standard, to devise realistic programmes for all their homes to achieve and maintain it by the end of 2012. The Welsh Government commissioned a report "Social landlords Performance in Achieving the WHQS"<sup>22</sup> to measure progress. It found for the 3 Flintshire Housing Associations would achieve the standard for 100% of their properties as follows:

- Pennaf by 2014/2015
- Tai Clwyd by 2014/2015
- Wales & West by 2012/2013

130. An independent survey estimated that £166 million was needed to bring all of the council homes up to WHQS by March 2018 and maintain the standard for 30 years. The council can raise £49 million, over the next 5 years, falling short of the £116 million needed.

### **Private Tenure and the Private Sector House Condition Survey 2010**

131. The age profile of the private housing in Flintshire differs to the average for Wales. There were significantly fewer properties built pre-1919 and again between 1945 and 1964, then more were built from 1965 onwards.

132. Other key findings were:

- 76% of homes are in owner occupation
- 9% of homes are privately rented
- the estimated number of Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) is 310 or 0.6% of the stock
- there are 8 known mandatory licensable HMOs
- 31% of households are headed by a person over the age of 65
- 31% of households are in receipt of a means tested benefit and are economically vulnerable

133. The Flintshire Private Sector House Condition Survey 2010<sup>23</sup> found that:

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<sup>22</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/desh/publications/110330housingwhqsen.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Private Sector House Condition Survey 2010 cpc May 2011

- 32% of all dwellings are non decent (16,104 dwellings)
  - 8.3% of all dwellings exhibit the single failure of disrepair under the Decent Homes Standard, against a national average of 6.5%.
  - 38% of vulnerable households (5,980) live in non decent homes.
  - The cost to address non decent homes across the County is £120 million, averaging £6,940 per property
  - Highest levels of non decency are found in the Council's renewal area and areas within the top 20% of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.
  - Pre 1919 housing stock, converted flats and the private rented sector had the highest failure rates
  - 15% of households (8,200) are in fuel poverty
  - 12,980 (24.1%) homes were estimated to have at least one Category 1 Hazard.
  - the most common hazard was excess cold
  - a correlation between Category 1 hazards and households where there was a person, with a disability or in receipt of a benefit
  - the estimated cost to remedy all Category 1 Hazards, in Flintshire, was £66.8m, an average cost of £5,100 per home
134. The Survey also found there were approximately 1,350 vacant dwellings representing 2.5% of the private housing stock. A data review in 2012 found Flintshire had 531 properties that had been vacant six months or longer.

### **Gypsy and Traveller Community**

135. The January 2012 Caravan count showed Flintshire is the most significant provider in North Wales with 58% of authorised pitches, 15% of the total in Wales. The North West Wales Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)<sup>24</sup> asked where new pitches should be located. It found a demand for sites along the main travelling route through North Wales, in Rhyl, Bangor, Colwyn Bay and Holyhead. No new locations were requested in Flintshire. This supports rebalancing the current inequitable provision highlighted by the Council and the GTAA, which is of concern to the Welsh Government.

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<sup>24</sup> North West Wales Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment, Dr D Hirst, Teresa Crew, Bangor University

## Objective 1 - More Housing, More Choice, Projects and Programmes

<b>Affordable Housing Options</b>				
<b>Flintshire's Priority Projects/Programmes</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Resources, Funds £000s/yr</b>
<b>Social Housing Grant</b> allocation, Welsh Government's (WG) 3 year national programme for Flintshire to build affordable homes	Housing Strategy, RSLs, WG	2011/2014		5142
	Clwyd Alyn, Wales & West, Tai Clwyd	2011/2012	19 homes	1826
	Clwyd Alyn, Wales & West	2012/2013	20 homes	1758
	Clwyd, Wales & Wales	2013/2014	63 homes	1557
<b>Flintshire's Priority Projects/Programmes</b>	<b>Service Area, Partners</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Resources, Funds £000s/yr</b>
The <b>Rent to Save</b> scheme assists applicants to save a deposit, for open market purchase, shared equity or shared ownership in the future.	Housing Strategy, RSL, Developers	2012/2017		26 Gifted Units
Build <b>Shared Equity Homes</b> for applicants on <b>Affordable Homeownership Register</b>	Housing Strategy, Tai Clwyd, Developers	2012/2013	140 homes	5460
Introduce <b>First Time Buyer Loans</b> to help people who have lived, worked in Flintshire for over 3 yrs and on the <b>Affordable Housing Register</b> finance to buy a home	Housing Strategy, FCC	2012/2013	5 homes	100 (from Council Fund)
Develop more projects for CIH Cymru Good Practice <b>Gifted Units</b>	Housing Strategy, Developers	2011/2013	26 homes	4000
The <b>214 Maisonettes</b> in Flint Town Centre will be demolished as part of the <b>Flint Town Centre Regeneration Project</b> to create new homes for rent and sale	FCC, tenants, RSLs, Developers	2012/2017	170 homes for sale or rent	To be agreed
<b>Deeside Enterprise Zone (EZ)</b> Develop most appropriate housing to attract businesses and workers to the EZ.	Housing Strategy, WG, Developers	2012/2022	1000 homes	To be agreed

## Objective 2 - Improving homes and communities projects and programmes

Flintshire's Priority Projects/Programmes	Service Area, Partners	Timescale	Outcome	Resources, Funds £000s/yr
The Council's <b>Capital Programme</b> , works towards achieving <b>WHQS</b> for council's stock of 7443 homes, includes new kitchens, bathrooms, boiler systems, smoke detectors and DFGs	Asset Management	2013/2018	Progress towards WHQS	49,000
Develop <b>Apprenticeships</b> with contractor partners	Asset Management, Contractors	2012/2017	10 Apprenticeships	Capital Programme
Improve the <b>energy efficiency of targeted FCC stock</b> through such measures as solar panels, ground source heat pump and wall insulation.	Asset Management Energy Unit Housing Renewal	2012/2017	Subject to Funding Bids to Arbed, ECO and Green Deal for start of new schemes at the end of 2012	
Develop a group <b>Fuel Brokerage Scheme</b> to reduce the cost of heating for council tenants initially	Neighbourhood Housing, Denbighshire CC, Wrexham BC	2012/2017	Subject to agreement between Councils, tenants and Energy Providers	
RSLs work towards <b>WHQS</b>	Pennaf, Tai Clwyd, Wales and West	2012/2015	Achieve and maintain WHQS	RSL funds

Flintshire's Priority Projects/Programmes	Service Area, Partners	Timescale	Outcome	Resources, Funds £000s/yr
<b>County Wide Home Improvements</b> , interest free loans to improve single properties for work below £3K	Private Sector Housing, FCC	2011/2012	104 Homes	Up to 300
Introduction of <b>Property Appreciation and Subsidised Repayment Loans</b> for vulnerable householders, private landlords and owners of empty property to carry out larger renovation and repair work.	Private Sector Housing, Street UK	2012/2013	50 homes	300
<b>Flintshire Care &amp; Repair</b> – continue to financially support the Property Repair Fund for small scale home repairs	Flintshire Care & Repair	2011/2012	79 Homes (small scale works)	50

Flintshire's Priority Projects/Programmes	Service Area, Partners	Timescale	Outcome	Resources, Funds £000s/yr
Bring <b>Empty properties</b> back into use. Empty property data base identifies approx 500. Works up to £25K, as a repayment loan, the first £10K interest free, the remainder with interest.	Private Sector, WG, Townscape Heritage Initiative	2012/2013	20 Homes	300 (FCC) 241 (WG)
Welsh Government ' <b>House to Homes</b> ' interest free loan fund scheme. A fixed term loan of up to £25,000 is offered to turn the property back into a home either for rent or sale.	North Wales Region	2012/2015	20 Homes	482
<b>Renewal Area.</b> Renovation & repair and environmental improvements to 1000 homes in a Renewal Area covering 5790 properties at Connah's Quay, Shotton and Queensferry over 10 years 2010/20	Housing Renewal	2011/2012	Group repair to 300 homes. HHSRS Surveys and repair of 20 homes.	1.200
<b>CESP programmes</b> targets 1200 homes across Greenfield and Connah's Quay to lower energy use in an area of lowest ranking average UK income and save carbon emissions of 100,000 tonnes	Private Sector Housing, Npower	2011/2012	1200 homes & save 100,000 tonnes of carbon	3.300
<b>ARBED</b> Projects – <b>Mostyn</b> and <b>Holywell Central</b> , bids submitted with RSL partners. Outcome awaited. Contractors managed directly by WG.	Private Sector Housing Energy Unit WG & ERDF	2011/2013	600 homes	Outcome of bid awaited
<b>North Wales Energy Efficiency partnership (Green Deal)</b> – explore the opportunities for a collaborative approach to housing improvement across all tenures in North Wales	Private Sector Housing Energy Unit, Energy Providers	2012/2017	Subject to agreement with Energy Providers and agreement on prudential borrowing	
Review capacity and structure of the Enforcement Team to promote delivery of White Paper	Private Sector Housing,	2012/2013	New Structure Agreed	Within current budget
Introduce a <b>mandatory registration and accreditation scheme</b> for private sector landlords	Private Sector Housing,	2012/2014	Subject to White Paper proposals becoming law	

### Objective 3 - Better Services to Improve People's Lives

<b>WNHS priority to make it easier for people to find suitable accommodation</b>				
<b>Flintshire's Priority Projects/Programmes</b>	<b>Service Area, Partners</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Resources, Funds £000s/yr</b>
Work on a <b>common approach to housing access</b> through the North Wales Access to Housing Group's, <b>SARTH Project</b> (Single Access Route to Housing).	Neighbour'd Housing, DCC, FCC, Conway and Wrexham	2012/2015	Single housing register for all North Wales	
Review <b>incentive scheme</b> to reduce under or over occupation in response to Welfare Reform Act	Neighbour'd Housing, NE Wales councils	End of 2012	Revised incentive scheme	
Consider <b>Social Lettings Agency</b> options to increase accommodation available by using properties in the <b>private sector</b> & work with <b>Landlords</b> to house more <b>younger people</b> , especially at LHA rates	Housing Options	2012/2017	Options Appraisal funded by a Private Sector Improvement Support Project grant will report mid 2013	
Develop <b>Gypsy and Traveller</b> provision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage <b>Riverside Caravan Site</b></li> <li>• Manage <b>Unauthorised Encampments</b></li> <li>• Coordinate <b>Support &amp; Welfare</b> Services to G &amp; T community</li> <li>• Consider the <b>expansion of the current Gypsy Traveller site provision at Riverside, Queensferry</b> to increase the number of residential pitches and provide short-stay transit pitches</li> </ul>	Housing Strategy & Options, SP, NW Police, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	2012/2017	Gypsy & Traveller Strategy 2012  Co-ordinated Gypsy Traveller response service	Gypsy & Traveller Liaison Officer  Capital Grant Bid to WAG

Flintshire's Priority Projects/Programmes	Service Area, Partners	Timescale	Outcome	Resources, Funds £000s/yr
<b>Advice, Support and Prevention for Priority Youth Homeless</b>				
Improve <b>prevention</b> work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement an integrated young person team, joint assessments and deliver enhanced prevention work with young people at risk of homelessness.</li> </ul>	Housing, Children's Services, SP, External providers	2012/2013	Reduced youth homeless	
<b>SP Homeless and Homeless Prevention</b> objective accommodation projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop options for safe and suitable short stay/emergency accommodation</li> </ul>	SP, Housing Options, RSLs	2012/2013	Young people access safe and appropriate housing	
<b>Advice, Support and Prevention for Priority Single Homeless</b>				
Increase <b>Move-On accommodation</b> for single people with statutory obligations	FCC	2012/2017	Designated Unit	
Investigate possibilities of <b>shared housing for single people under 35</b>	FCC, Clwyd Alyn, Private Sector Housing	2012/2017	Pilot scheme will be evaluated March 2013 and further schemes will be developed to meet demand	
<b>SP Homeless and Homeless Prevention</b> objective projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a strategic review of accommodation based and floating support provision</li> </ul>	SP, Housing Options, RSLs	2012/2013	Life & Tenancy Skills for tenants	
<b>Advice, Support and Prevention for Homeless with Complex Needs</b>				
<b>Flintshire Housing First pilot</b> gives all agency coordinated support to the most challenged homeless with the highest demands on health, social and criminal justice services	Community Support Services, SP, Housing 1 <sup>st</sup> Steering Group	2012/2013	10 individuals supported	Housing First Coordinator
<b>Advice, Support for those fleeing Domestic Violence</b>				
<b>SP Community Safety:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch pilot <b>dispersed refuge</b> service, for larger families, large families with children over 16 or pets</li> </ul>	SP, DASU, Hafan Cymru, BAWSO, FCC Housing, CAHA	2012/2013	6 dispersed properties Life & Tenancy Skills for tenants	



<b>Independent Living and Housing for Older People</b>				
<b>Flintshire's Priority Projects/Programmes</b>	<b>Service Area, Partners</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Resources, Funds £000s/yr</b>
<b>Community Based Accommodation Support Service (Warden)</b> service users have a <b>comprehensive support plan</b> to tailor appropriate level of support to their needs & promote and sustain their independent living.	Community Support Services	2012/13	Two pilots in Shotton and Ewloe - outcomes evaluated July 2012. Phased roll-out of the revised service across County.	Accommodation Support Officers
<b>DFG</b> programme	FCC, Housing Renewal	2011/2012	178 <b>owner occupiers</b>	1500
		2012/2013		1500
		2011/2012	188 <b>council tenants</b>	1000
		2012/2013		800
Complete development of <b>Mold Extra Care Scheme</b>	Housing Strategy Adult Care Service, Wales & West	2013	61 Flats and 2 Bungalows. 15 designed for people living with dementia	9300
Develop additional <b>Extra Care Schemes</b>	Adult Care Service	2017/2020	Further schemes following consultation	To be agreed

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## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**DATE:** TUESDAY, 29 JANUARY 2013

**REPORT BY:** DEMOCRACY & GOVERNANCE MANAGER

**SUBJECT:** ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2013/14 OF THE  
INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR  
WALES

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To inform County Council of the annual report issued by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) for 2013/14.

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

2.01 At its meeting on the 11 September 2012 County Council determined its response to consultation by the IRPW on its draft annual report for 2013/14. Those views were communicated to the IRPW on the 25 September and are attached as appendix 1 to this report.

2.02 On the 19 December 2012 the IRPW issued the final version of its annual report for 2013/14. Copies of that report, together with the covering letter from the chair of the IRPW have been placed in Member Services and in the political group rooms. Councils must implement the report from the date of their annual meetings.

2.03 The covering letter explains that the final version of the report reflects the outcome of careful consideration given to the representations received on the draft report which has resulted in a number of changes to proposals that were in that draft report. The most obvious example of change is not to implement a proposal in the draft report that if a Council makes a senior salary available to the chair of an Overview & Scrutiny Committee it must do so for all such chairs.

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01 The Panel has decided that the amounts of what it refers to as “basic salaries” and “senior salaries” will remain the same for 2013/14. When consulted on the draft report the Council recognised that in the current economic climate it was not appropriate to increase these amounts. The report requires that a senior salary of £21,910 be paid to the Leader of the largest opposition group provided that group comprises at least 10% of the Council membership. As this figure includes the basic salary of £13,175 in effect the Leader of the largest

opposition group will in future receive a special responsibility allowance of £8,735. This proposal was in the draft report and in response to consultation the Council believed that if this was imposed then the limit on the number of senior salaries should be increased from the current limit of 18. There has however, been no change to this limit in the final version of the report. As the Council currently pays 18 senior salaries, at its annual meeting it will have to decide which posts no longer receive such a payment so as to enable the required payment to the Leader of the largest opposition group.

- 3.02 The Council currently pays a mileage rate of 40p per mile (up to 10,000 miles a year) to Members and co-opted members when using their own vehicle to travel to meetings and on other approved duties. The annual report withdraws the ability for Councils to pay less than 45p per mile and at the annual meeting the Council's schedule of member remuneration will have to be amended to increase this rate to 45p per mile.
- 3.03 The annual report has recognised that there is a developing pattern of joint scrutiny and other collaborative arrangements and it will keep this under review in relation to the implications for the remuneration framework. The annual report does however determine that where a Council enters into such joint arrangements the senior salary (if paid) to the chair of such a joint committee should be paid by the Council of which the chair is a member. As this will count against that Council's maximum in practice this is likely to lead to few such payments being made as most Councils, like Flintshire, will have utilised to the maximum their senior salaries.
- 3.04 In relation to co-opted members the annual report makes two changes to the current arrangements. Firstly, it is now recognised that time spent on attending authorised training events, conferences and pre-meetings with officers qualify for payment to a co-optee of the co-optees' allowance. At present co-optees allowance can only be paid for attendance at committee meetings. This change is to be welcomed and is one that the Council suggested when responding to consultation on the draft report. Secondly, the annual report removes the limit of 10 days which currently is the maximum number of days for which a co-opted member may be paid in any one year. Instead from the annual meeting the Council may decide on the maximum number of days for which a co-opted member should receive payment in any one year.
- 3.05 The annual report contains a chapter relating to payments to members of Town & Community Councils. The IRPW has determined that such Councils should be free to make various types of payment to their members if they wish to do so. The County Council welcomed this proposal when responding to the draft report.

**4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.01 To note the contents of the annual report and the decisions that will need to be made at the Council's annual meeting.

**5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 It is estimated these could be £6,000 p.a.

**6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 None as a result of this report.

**7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 None as a result of this report.

**8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 None as a result of this report.

**9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 None as a result of this report.

**10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 None as a result of this report.

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 None as a result of this report.

**12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 Appendix 1 – The Council's response to consultation.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985  
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Annual report for 2013/14 of the IRPW

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**Draft Response to Consultation by the  
Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales**

Flintshire County Council makes the following comments on the draft annual report issued by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRPW) for consultation.

**Page 5**

1. The council recognises and agrees with the IRPW that in the current economic climate it is not appropriate to increase the amount that is paid to individual members or co-opted members of the council.

**Pages 5, 6 & 18**

2. The council believes that there should be an increase in the maximum percentage of members that are eligible to receive what the IRPW calls senior salaries. Flintshire has 70 members and the current cap limits senior salaries to less than 25% of the membership. Flintshire obtained specific approval from the IRPW to pay what was then a special responsibility allowance to the Chair of the Clwyd Pension Fund, yet this is not taken into account in capping the number of members that can receive such payments.

**Page 6**

3. Flintshire does not agree with the withdrawal of local choice arising from paragraphs 3.9 and 3.10 of the draft report. Each council's circumstances are different. Flintshire, for example, has a relatively large number of Overview & Scrutiny Committees at six. It does not have one large opposition group but a number of smaller groups. The largest group without a seat on the council's Cabinet is the Independent Alliance Group of 9 members. If not withstanding the representations the council makes the Panel decides to implement paragraphs 3.9 and 3.10 then it should at least increase the cap on the proportion of members eligible to receive so called senior salaries.
4. The council believes that the IRPW should revert to making annual payments to co-optees rather than payments according to meetings attended. The council responded to initial consultation pointing out that the change would generate extra administrative and bureaucratic work and experience has shown this to be the case. If the IRPW is not prepared to revert to the previous annual payments, it should at least amend eligibility so that attendance at training and briefing meetings, qualify for payments.

## **Pages 7 – 9**

5. The council welcomes the proposals in chapter 4 and in particular, leaving it to the local choice of town and community councils as to whether or not to implement the payments to its members.

## **Page 13**

6. The council disagrees with the proposal in paragraph 6.1 on page 13 that implementation of the report will be effective from the date of the annual meeting of each relevant authority. The council believes that implementation should be from the same date for each authority as has been the practice to-date. Ideally the same date should be the 1 April 2013. Whilst an item relating to members' allowances can always be put on the annual meeting agenda, it can not be guaranteed that the meeting will take a decision on it.

## **Page 19**

7. The council disagrees with the proposal in paragraph (viii), third bullet point that the annual public declarations of payments to members should include payments from all public service appointments held by elected members. This paragraph is prejudging the separate consultation by the Welsh Government on this issue. The council agrees with the need for transparency but believes this is best done by the individual public bodies themselves publicising the payments they make. For county councils to do so it generates additional work which delays the publication of the annual figures. It also confuses the public who believe that such payments are being made by the county council rather than by the separate public body. If notwithstanding the council's representations this is to proceed then county councils need to be given the powers to require the prompt provision of such information from all public service bodies.
8. In relation to the fourth bullet point under paragraph (viii) on page 19, the council reiterates its previous representation that it is not in a position to negotiate such block tax dispensations for its councillors and any such negotiations should be undertaken on an all Wales level rather than by the individual authorities.

## **Page 20**

9. In relation to reimbursement of mileage expenses, the draft report is ambiguous. Page 20, paragraph i) starts by saying that the Panel has decided there will be no change in 2013/14 to mileage rates that can be claimed for travel but then goes on to state that all authorities may only reimburse travel expenses for their members and co-opted members at current HMRC rates. At present Flintshire pays its members and co-opted members 40p per mile (up to 10,000 miles in the year) and would wish to retain its local choice whether to continue such payments or increase them to the HMRC rate of 45p per mile. In an e-mail of the 9 August 2012 it has



been indicated that the Panel intends to address the ambiguity on page 20 of its report by requiring mileage claims to be paid at the full HMRC rate rather than a lesser rate. The council believes there should be no change to the existing arrangements and that HMRC rates should just be the maxima that can be paid.

**Page 23**

10. Annex 2, paragraph 1 (b) is inaccurate as the definition in (a) is for the regulations in annex 2. The regulations in annex 2 differ from those that came into force on the 1 April 2012. If the IRPW is going to change the regulations each year then paragraph 1 needs to have separate definitions for each year's regulations.

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## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
**DATE:** 29<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2013  
**REPORT BY:** DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT  
**SUBJECT:** BUILDINGS OF LOCAL INTEREST PROCEDURE

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

**1.01** To seek approval from Members for the adoption of a procedure for designating and protecting Buildings of Local Interest (BLIs).

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

- 2.01** The adopted Unitary Development Plan contains a policy on Buildings of Local Interest (HE4). The policy is designed to protect buildings or structures which are not currently listed, but which are nevertheless considered worthy of retention because of the significant contribution that they make to the local environment and history of the area. These buildings might include buildings formerly listed at Grade 3, buildings associated with important local historical events, people or activities, and buildings contributing to the setting of Listed Buildings. Buildings of historic interest which were not worthy of the grades 1, 2\* or 2 but nonetheless had historic interest formerly constituted Grade 3 buildings. This category was removed during the 1990s and former Grade 3 buildings were used to form a Buildings of Local Interest register by the Council.
- 2.02** Appendix 1 contains the draft procedural guidance for Members to consider and it is also intended to publish an information leaflet which will be sent to owners and other interested parties which explains why a building is identified as a BLI and what this means to them.
- 2.03** The Council currently holds a list of Buildings of Local Interest (BLIs) which contains 211 properties and will need updating should the procedure has been adopted. An up to date list will then be available from the Built Conservation Team and will be amended as necessary. The designation of buildings as BLIs is a positive way of recognising important elements of the County's historic built environment, which although not nationally important, are of significance at a local level.
- 2.04** The need to publish and formalise our procedure for designating BLIs arises from a case at Gelli Farm, Whitford where a BLI was made on a

property that was the subject of a planning application. The applicant sought to challenge the BLI via the courts, and whilst not successful, the judge criticised the Council for not having a published procedure.

**3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

**3.01** The designation of BLIs is common practice by local authorities across Wales as an appropriate way of providing protection to buildings which are considered important to the historic environment and which help form the character of local urban and rural landscapes. This is important not just for residents, but also for the tourist industry and because an attractive environment can help to attract inward investment. It is therefore beneficial to the County as a whole to ensure that the appropriate protection is in place.

**3.02** The policy does not mean that the building has to be preserved exactly as it is, but that any alterations should be carried out in a sympathetic manner. Owners will be able to ask for assistance on how best to alter or extend their buildings and it is important that a more transparent and defensible process is in place in order to achieve this and to protect the historic environment and character of Flintshire’s individual buildings and settlements.

**3.03** The age of the BLIs currently on the list is broken down as follows:

<b>Date</b>	<b>No. of BLI’s</b>
16 <sup>th</sup> Century	3
17 <sup>th</sup> Century	66
18 <sup>th</sup> Century	85
19 <sup>th</sup> Century	35
20 <sup>th</sup> Century	4
No date	18

**3.04** It is important that the Council has adopted guidance, with an up to date list of BLIs, which can be used for providing guidance to owners and for the Council’s Development Management team to use in assessing planning applications. This guidance has been drawn up taking into account current best practice relating to BLIs.

**3.05** When a new BLI is proposed, in order to determine the historic and / or architectural features that should be preserved, background research will be undertaken and a site visit carried out. Requests to add a building to the local list can be made by anyone. This can include Council Officers, members of the public, County Councillors, Town and Community Councils, local community groups, historic societies etc. who are concerned that historic local buildings are going to be lost or inappropriately altered because of proposed demolition /

development. Based on the information gathered, members of the Built Conservation Team will then prepare a report with a recommendation and this will be taken to the BLI Advisory Panel. The Panel will then assess the proposal and make a decision on whether the building should become a BLI.

- 3.06** The BLI Panel, as outlined in the procedure, will need to be set up to consider proposals for the designation of new BLIs and to review the current list. It is expected that a review of the existing list will provide in the region of 211 BLIs for the panel to consider. Once this review has been carried out, it is expected that the Panel will only convene once every six months unless an urgent case needs consideration.
- 3.07** It is proposed that the Panel will consist of 5 core members who have a high level of expertise in relevant subjects, along with 3 members of local history and civic groups, and 2 County Councillors. It is proposed that the 2 County Councillors are the Cabinet Members for Environment and Regeneration. Letters have been sent to relevant groups and interested people to ascertain whether they would like to form part of the Panel. In addition to the Panel members, the local Member(s), community and town councils will be consulted for their views when sites within their areas are being considered.
- 3.08** A number of national and local historical and civic societies have been contacted to ascertain whether they would like to form part of the BLI advisory panel. These were: The Ancient Monuments Society, Bagillt History Club, Capel, Civic Trust Wales, Mold and District Civic Society, Flintshire Historical Society, The Georgian Group, SAVE Britain's Heritage, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) and the Victorian Society. Some of these groups have put forward the names of people who would like to sit on the panel and others are in the process of contacting their local members. At present the Ancient Monuments Society, Mold and District Civic Society, the Flintshire Historical Society, and SAVE Britain's Heritage have put forward people to sit on the panel. The Georgian Group, the Victorian Society and SPAB are in the process of contacting their local members and at present their final responses are still being awaited. Capel have yet to respond.
- 3.09** Training will be given to all members of the Panel prior to the inaugural meeting. Further advice and guidance will also be provided at a later stage if required.
- 3.10** Initial work has already started on gathering information on proposed BLIs and surveying those already on the list. It is expected that once the procedure is adopted by Council, the first Panel meeting can be held within three months of adoption. The process will be carried out as set out in the guidance note to ensure a consistent and transparent

approach is taken.

**4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.01** That Members approve the BLI procedure note (in Appendix 1), including the establishment of the BLI Advisory Panel.
- 4.02** That Members support the review of the current list of BLI's.
- 4.03** That Members give the Director of Environment delegated authority following consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment to format (and where necessary typographically correct) the wording of the procedure note into the appropriate house style for publication.

**5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None

**6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

None

**7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

None

**8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

None

**9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

None

**10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

None

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

None

**12.00 APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Buildings of Local Interest Procedure Note

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985  
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

**Contact Officer:** Eleanor Carpenter  
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**PROCEDURE FOR DESIGNATING  
BUILDINGS OF LOCAL INTEREST**

## BACKGROUND

The Council recognises the quality of Flintshire's built heritage and the importance of protecting this for future generations, together with its contribution to the landscape and built environment of Flintshire. Throughout the county there are buildings and structures which although not necessarily of listable quality, nonetheless add to the richness of the local built environment and local distinctiveness.

Cadw are responsible for designating Listed Buildings in Wales and they fall within categories I, II\* and II. There are currently approximately 1000 designated listed buildings throughout Flintshire, but this is only a small number in relation to the total number of historic buildings in the county. Buildings of historic interest which were not worthy of the grades 1, 2\* or 2 but nonetheless had historic interest formerly constituted Grade 3 buildings. This category was removed during the 1990s and former Grade 3 buildings were used to form a Buildings of Local Interest register by the Local Authority. Conservation Areas also give some protection to buildings with historic features but without Article 4 (2) directions this protection can be limited.

To help preserve unlisted but locally distinctive and important buildings from demolition or inappropriate alterations the Council has developed and maintains a list of buildings designated as Buildings of Local Interest (BLI). The Council has also formulated a policy for their protection (HE4) in the adopted Unitary Development Plan and this guidance document supports the implementation of the UDP policy.

When buildings are locally listed, the Council will seek their protection. The procedure contained in this guidance will help preserve these buildings before any historic architectural features or buildings as a whole are lost, and will hopefully bring to the owners' attention the mutual role and responsibility they have in preserving Flintshire's important built heritage. The list is continually updated as buildings are identified, or are deleted from the list if they become listed. Where works have been carried out without consent, when consent is required, and have removed the architectural and historic features the Council will seek reparation to bring them back to their former condition. Most BLIs date from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century (30% and 40% respectively). There are currently 211 on the list and 22 which have been put forward to be added to the list.

Buildings are added to the list to ensure they are respected and protected because they have good examples of historic and / or architectural details, or are good local examples of a certain type of building that needs to be preserved. Where there is a threat to a building the Council will consider seeking Article 4 directions or spot listing to protect it.





A good example of a restored BLI - St. Winefride's School, Holywell now converted to flats and called Plas Gwenfrewi (carried out using Townscape Heritage Initiative grant money)

## **PURPOSE OF THE GUIDANCE**

The purpose of the guidance is to:

- aid the Council in its decision making process when considering proposals
- raise awareness of the County's historic environment and its importance to local distinctiveness
- inform the public, Council officers and Members about which buildings are locally important and should be retained and protected, bearing in mind that other traditional buildings also contribute to the historic and environment and local distinctiveness
- promote further research and recording of locally important buildings, architects, occupiers and local events
- provide guidance and advice to owners to help protect the character and setting of their buildings
- allow consideration of a building's special character when applying Building Regulations to alterations, extensions and proposed changes of use etc.
- ensure a transparent and consistent approach is taken

A separate document has been produced to accompany this procedural guidance which lists the BLIs and for each BLI provides a brief description and explanation as to why it is significant. Please note that the description doesn't necessarily mention all interesting or important features.

**This guidance may be taken into account as a material planning consideration when dealing with an application for the alteration or demolition of a BLI.**

## **POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

The following have been taken into account in drawing up this procedure and are a relevant consideration when a building is put forward for designation as a BLI. They are will be used in support of a process when the designation of a building is challenged or when planning applications for demolition, alterations and development are considered.

### **1. Conservation Principles for the sustainable management of the historic environment in Wales, Cadw 2011**

This sets out the 6 conservation principles which inform Cadw's approach to the protection and management of the historic environment as a whole. These six principles are:

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Principle 1 | Historic assets will be managed to sustain their values                     |
| Principle 2 | Understanding the significance of historic assets is vital                  |
| Principle 3 | The historic environment is a shared resource                               |
| Principle 4 | Everyone will be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment |
| Principle 5 | Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent       |
| Principle 6 | Documenting and learning from decisions is essential                        |

### **2. Welsh Office Circular 61/96 - Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas – Part 3 Listings and Listed Building Controls**

Identification of Buildings for Listing (para 48) *"...But many buildings which are valued for their contribution to the local scene, or for local historical associations, will not merit listing. Such buildings will often be protected by conservation area designation (see Part 2.) It is also open to planning authorities to draw up lists of locally important buildings, and to formulate policies for their protection through development control procedures. Policies should make clear that such buildings do not enjoy the full protection of statutory listing..."*

From this a building can be considered worthy of BLI status if it contributes to the local scene, but is not of sufficient architectural or historical interest to warrant statutory listing.

### **3. Adopted Unitary Development Plan September 2011 Policy HE4**

The demolition or alteration of any building or structure that is included on the list of Buildings of Local Interest will only be permitted where the following criteria apply:

- a. in the case of demolition that the building is structurally unsound, it cannot be made safe without extensive alteration or rebuilding and is incapable of refurbishment at a cost which is reasonable in relation to its degree of interest. The design of the replacement building should match or exceed that which has been demolished; or

- b. in the case of alteration and extension that the works do not adversely affect the architectural or historic character of the building.

The full policy and reasoned justification can be found in Appendix 2.

## DESIGNATION CRITERIA

Flintshire's designation of buildings is based on Cadw's methodology for listing but with different requirements in relation to architectural interest, style and materials. (The detailed criteria are set out below.)

Based on this, buildings and structures that possess special architectural or historical interest of local relevance but which are currently not listed or do not merit listing may be considered suitable for designating as BLIs. This gives them the recognition they deserve and shows owners, prospective purchasers and decision makers that they are of value to the local area, its character and history. They should satisfy at least one of the criteria below, with these criteria falling into four categories. The scope of what could potentially be a candidate for BLI designation does not just include buildings traditionally recognised as 'buildings', but also includes structures such as boundaries, bridges and landmarks. It could also include archaeological sites and parks, gardens and cemeteries. For ease, they are all referred to as 'buildings' throughout this document. A checklist of the designation criteria can be found in Appendix 3.



BLI structure - Pistyll in Caergwrle

The criteria used to assess designation are grouped under four themes as follows:

### Historical Interest

- Buildings associated with well known personalities or events
- Good examples of buildings or other assets that illustrate social or economic history
- Buildings, landscapes, sites and spaces which illustrate part of Flintshire's cultural history, e.g. schools, churches, commercial and public buildings

- The use of building materials of local interest
- The work of architects or designers of local or national significance
- Intact historical structures
- Archaeological interest may be an appropriate reason to designate a locally significant asset if the evidence base is sufficient and if a distinct area can be defined



Bryn Coch Hall

### **Architectural and Vernacular Interest**

- Buildings that are part of a planned layout that has remained substantially intact e.g. a terrace or square
- A group of buildings that together are a good surviving example of an historic architectural style
- Good examples of a particular technological innovation in building type and technique
- Buildings which have received national awards or recognitions
- Examples of a particular local building type, style, craftsmanship, architectural quality or detailing
- Examples of good quality architecture (including modern architecture)

### **Environmental Significance**

- Buildings which contribute to the streetscene, landscape or locality
- Buildings with a 'group' value or part of a group of buildings that provide local distinctiveness and interest
- Structures such as street furniture that contribute positively to the local area
- Buildings that contribute positively to the setting or group value of Listed Buildings
- Significant landmark buildings or structures which can have striking aesthetic value within the local scene

## Age and Rarity

- The earliest or unusual examples of a particular type of building
- Buildings built before the start of the Victorian period (1837) where the style, form and construction is easily identifiable and restorable
- Buildings built between 1837 and 1918 which retain original features and are of good quality and are restorable
- Buildings built between 1918 and 1939 which are exceptional examples of the style of the period
- Buildings built between 1939 and 1945 which are rare examples of wartime structures
- Buildings built from 1946 onwards which are of exceptional quality and design

In some instances it is sufficient for one criterion only to be met to warrant a building being put on the list as a BLI. It should be noted that although the date of 1837 is used to identify pre-Victorian buildings, buildings built after this date during the first part of the Victorian era are also considered to be of considerable architectural historical importance due to their age.



## ADDING BUILDINGS TO THE LIST

Requests to add a building to the local list can be made by anyone.

This can include:

- Council Officers who become aware of the building following either survey work, enquiries for development or applications for development and are concerned that historic local buildings are going to be lost or inappropriately altered because of proposed demolition/development. Buildings are sometimes identified when site visits are carried out and historic features are identified on adjacent buildings,
- members of the public who want to see buildings preserved,

- County Councillors
- Town and Community Councils
- local community groups, historic societies etc.

It is also envisaged that a visual survey will be carried out in collaboration with Community and Town Councils who will be asked to identify buildings for consideration. There will also be consultation with relevant organisations and local interest groups.

It would help if requests for adding buildings to the list include the following:

- The address and/or location map
- The reasons why it should be added to the list
- Photographs of the main elevations
- Name and contact details of the owner

## **DESIGNATION AND RECORDING PROCEDURE**

1. The Council's Built Conservation Section is informed that a building may warrant protection because it has historic or architectural features that need to be preserved but is not worthy of listing by Cadw. Cadw will be contacted to see if they have previously surveyed the building, and it may be appropriate in some instances to put forward a building for consideration to be statutorily listed.
2. Site visit to inspect the building externally and internally with photographs taken to ascertain if there is enough historic architectural interest in the building to add to the local list
3. Historic maps are looked at to trace the development of the building over time to find out when extensions and features were added.
4. Additional information can also be obtained from the County Record Office in Hawarden who have historic photographs, tithe maps etc.
5. Consult Landmap, which is the national information system, devised by the Countryside Council for Wales, for taking landscape into account in decision-making in relation to the historic / cultural layers and context.
6. Members of the Built Conservation Section study the information and prepare a report, based on the proforma in Appendix 4, with a recommendation as to whether the building should be added to the BLI list and to take to the relevant panel.
7. A panel is convened to assess proposals on a regular basis (although it can also be convened at any time in urgent cases as required). The panel will consist of 5 core members who have a high level of expertise in relevant subjects, along with 3 members of local history and civic groups, and 2 County Councillors. In addition to the panel members, the local Member(s) and community and town councils will be consulted for their views when sites within their areas are being considered.

If at the Panel it is decided to add a building to the BLI list the following process is then undertaken:

1. A form is completed with details of the building location, name of owner and/or agent, description of the historic features,

2. The building details are then added to the BLI database
3. A file is opened and all information/photographs are added
4. The GIS manager is requested to add the building to the mapping constraint layer on Infomap so that when officers are searching for conservation constraints the BLI will be shown outlined in green
5. GIS manager confirms that the building has been added to mapping layer and confirms date added
6. A letter is sent to the owner/occupier of the property, together with a copy of the report, informing them that the building has been designated as a BLI on Flintshire's local list and why, and a contact name and number is given for further information. Notification will also be given to relevant heritage and local groups (which may include local history societies, civic societies, town and community councils and the AONB committee) and to the local Council Member(s). All owners and occupiers will receive an explanatory leaflet which outlines the importance of the designation and explains how it affects them, their responsibilities towards the building, and also shows who to contact for help and advice.
7. An up to date list of Buildings of Local Interest, together with those proposed for adding or deleting from the list will be published and available on the website and from the Conservation Section.

## **OBJECTIONS**

If the Council chooses not to include on the BLI list a building which has been put forward by an outside group or individual, the proposer will be notified of the Council's reason. The Council will not re-open a case for local listing unless new information comes to light which in the opinion of the Planning Strategy Manager would be likely to alter the outcome of second assessment.

For new BLIs, owner's will usually be given advance notification of the designation and the implications of the designation will be explained. However where buildings are considered to be under immediate threat, advance notification will not always be possible, as to do so might occasionally result in pre-emptive demolition or alterations, and in these instances protection measures will be instigated as soon as possible. There is no formal or statutory right of appeal against a building being placed on the list. However following the inclusion of a building on the list and within three months of notification to the owner, the Council will consider objections to a building's inclusion on the list. Objectors will need to challenge the reasons for inclusion of a building on the list bearing in mind that it is the building's architectural or historic interest that is the reason for its inclusion on the list. Grounds for objection will therefore be restricted to the fact that the building does not meet the criteria of the Policy and guidance, or that existing valid planning permissions, or other permissions, are in existence which allow demolition or alteration. For both of these, relevant evidence should be provided. Personal circumstances or other factors will not normally be taken into account. Any such representations received will be taken to the North Wales Conservation Officers' meeting for consideration. This assessment will be final.

## **REVIEW**

The local list will be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that the information it contains remains relevant. The review will coincide with the nomination of new BLIs in order to make the best use of resources. At other times new information, such as an

updated conservation area appraisal, may trigger a review. A regular 2-3 year monitoring inspection of each BLI will be undertaken and any changes recorded.

## **WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF INCLUSION ON THE BLI LIST?**

### **Development and alteration of buildings**

UDP policy HE4 states that the demolition or alteration of any building or structure on the List of Buildings of Local Interest will only be permitted subject to two criteria being met.

The Policy does not mean that the building has to be preserved exactly as it is, but that any alterations should be carried out in a sympathetic manner. Many developments including some external alterations, extensions and changes of use require planning permission. Generally internal alterations and some minor types of external alterations do not need planning permission but owners are encouraged to undertake these in line with the guidance in this document. Where planning permission is required for any proposals which involve the demolition or alteration and extension of buildings on the list, applications will be judged against this Policy, together with other relevant policies. It should be noted that planning permission is now required to demolish any dwelling.

An applicant wishing to demolish a Building of Local Interest will have to show that they have thoroughly investigated all possible means of retention and/or reuse before the Council will consider the merits of a proposed replacement building. When developing schemes for alterations and extensions, applicants should ensure that they that they respect the particular character and interest of the building and proposals show a good understanding of what gives the building its special interest. Planning permission will normally only be granted for alterations and extensions that would preserve the character and appearance of a BLI. In some cases it will appropriate to serve an Article 4(1) Direction on a BLI which removes the Permitted Development Rights (including demolition) granted under the General Permitted Development Order 1995.

Some works may not require planning permission but they should still be carefully considered. The removal of historic features or details not only harms the special interest of the locally listed building but can also reduce its value. Research has shown that buildings which retain their historic features in good condition hold their value better than those which have been unsympathetically altered.

Designation of a building as a BLI provides some benefits to owners and/or occupiers. Help and advice is freely available from the Conservation team to those wishing to carry out alterations and repairs and in some instances there may be a relaxation of Building Regulations.





Old Butcher's Shop, Northop BLI before restoration



Old Butcher's Shop, Northop BLI after restoration

## Building Regulations

Guidance on historic buildings and Building Regulations can be found in the document Energy Conservation and Historic Buildings - application of Part L of the Building Regulations to historic and traditionally constructed buildings (published by English Heritage). This guidance has been produced to help prevent conflicts between the energy efficiency requirements in Part L of the Building Regulations and the conservation of historic and traditionally constructed buildings. The advice acts as 'second tier' supporting guidance in the interpretation of Approved Documents L1B and L2B that should be taken into account when determining appropriate energy performance standards for works to historic and traditionally constructed buildings. It covers the following areas:

- the background to the legislation and the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- an interpretation of the regulations themselves as applied to historic and traditionally constructed buildings
- guidance on understanding the building before carrying out upgrading works,

- meeting the requirements of Part L and the thermal upgrading of various building elements

As with Listed Buildings, owners are expected to maintain a building in good condition to preserve its historic interest. 'Maintenance Matters' published by Cadw is a good initial source of information in relation to this. Regular maintenance avoids the need for more costly repairs in the future.

## **GUIDANCE FOR OWNERS**

The issues which need to be taken into account in developing schemes for extensions and alterations, and those that will be taken into account in assessing proposals against Policy HE4 are as follows:

- Historic features should be conserved or restored. Where possible the historic fabric of the BLI should be retained or repaired and traditional materials and methods should be used.
- Extensions should be well designed and preserve the scale, character and setting of the BLI and can be done either by adopting an historic approach or in some cases, a contemporary one may be appropriate. Attention to historic detailing, materials and methods is important. Whether the approach is historical or contemporary in style, the scale, bulk and massing must relate well to the original building and the extension should always remain subordinate to it. The quality of materials and design, design detailing and context will be important in ensuring that extensions integrate well with the often fine quality, craftsmanship, traditional materials and careful detailing of a traditional building.
- The setting of the BLI is important in terms of its character. Proposals for alterations, extensions or even new buildings nearby should take into account the quality and nature of the setting of the building.
- Landscaping, boundaries and external materials e.g. driveways are also important to the setting of a BLI and their positioning, layout and design should preserve or enhance the setting of the BLI.
- New development or extensions should respect, and where appropriate, contribute to traditional building groupings, such as farm courtyards and enhance and protect views into, from and through the site; traditional boundaries; and other minor features of interest using landscape features to screen or enhance buildings as appropriate.
- The demolition of a BLI will only be permitted where the criteria of policy HE4 are met. All proposals for demolition need to be accompanied by a statement and evidence showing that these criteria have been met. In the exceptional circumstance that demolition is allowed, the Council will require that provision is made by the developer to accurately record the original building for archive purposes prior to the commencement of works. A copy of this record shall be provided to the Council. There are four main levels of building recording, along with a photographic recording. The level of building recording required is normally specified by an archaeological curator, as set out in the English Heritage Guidance on Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Practice (2006). The Development Control Archaeologist of the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust can provide assistance in relation to this. Appendix 6 contains further information on building recording.

- The Council will not grant permission for demolition in the absence of a planning application for a suitable replacement scheme.

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

Balancing greater energy efficiency and the production of renewable energy can present particular challenges in relation to historic buildings, for example in the adaptation of historic buildings and placing renewable energy generating equipment within historic landscapes and on historic buildings.

As stated above, the design and materials used and the detailing are important factors in maintaining the character of historic and traditional buildings. These buildings have single glazed wooden framed windows which are not as energy efficient as newer double glazed ones. However, replacing these traditional windows with Upvc or double glazing can detrimentally affect a building. Owners are therefore encouraged to consider other options when replacing windows and doors, such as secondary glazing or retrofitting draft proofing seals to old windows.

It is important to remember that older houses are different to newer ones and perform very differently. The fabric of traditional buildings usually needs to 'breathe' i.e. to release and absorb moisture. Moisture is able to move through traditional permeable building materials such as lime render and lime plaster until it evaporates, internally and externally. Modern impermeable materials such as concrete render obstruct this process and can cause damp internally.

English Heritage lists five relevant factors to consider before undertaking any energy conservation measures and these are:

- The building's construction
- The importance of moisture movement in historic buildings
- Minimising disturbance to the existing fabric
- Reversing and changes without causing further damage
- Whether the building is of such a quality that it should not be altered

All works should include the use of sustainably sourced materials and owners should consider using traditional natural materials such as sheep's wool and hemp fibre insulation. When extensions are being considered, the design should maximise the energy efficiency potential e.g. larger windows should be on the southern side to maximise passive solar gain.

Cadw has produced guidance on renewable energy technologies in the document 'Renewable Energy and your historic building - Installing micro-generation systems: A Guide to Best Practice'. The Peak District National Park has produced guidance on sustainability and historic buildings and English Heritage has also produced a number of relevant documents. References to these can be found in Appendix 6.

**For further information relating to this guidance please contact:**

**Development Management**

Development Management Section.

Environment Directorate,

County Hall,

Mold.

CH7 6NF

01352 703234

**Planning Policy**

Planning Policy Section,

Environment Directorate,

County Hall,

Mold

CH7 6NF

01352 703212

**Conservation**

Conservation Section,

Environment Directorate,

County Hall,

Mold

CH7 6NF

01352 703215

## **GLOSSARY**

Article 4 Direction – a planning tool which removes permitted development rights from buildings/areas (to ensure the retention of traditional details), subject to the consent of the Welsh Government

CADW - Cadw is the historic environment service of the Welsh Government

Conservation Area – an area designated for its special architectural or historic interest

Listed Building – a building or structure, or any other structure within its curtilage, of special architectural or historic interest which is protected by law against unauthorised works. Consent is required for works affecting listed buildings or their settings regardless of the need for planning permission

Permitted Development Rights – development that does not require planning permission as set out in the General Permitted Development Order

#### **HE4 Buildings of Local Interest**

The demolition or alteration of any building or structure that is included on the List of Buildings of Local Interest will only be permitted where the following criteria apply:

- a. in the case of demolition that the building is structurally unsound, it cannot be made safe without extensive alteration or rebuilding and is incapable of refurbishment at a cost which is reasonable in relation to its degree of interest. The design of the replacement building should match or exceed that which has been demolished; or
- b. in the case of alteration and extension that the works do not adversely affect the architectural or historic character of the building.

9.33 This policy is designed to protect buildings or structures which are not currently listed, but which are nevertheless considered worthy of retention because of the significant contribution that they make to the local environment. These might include: buildings or groups of buildings formerly listed at Grade 3 (which afforded no statutory protection); buildings associated with important local historical events, people or activities; and buildings contributing to the setting of a listed building.

9.34 The County Council maintains a list of all such "buildings of local interest", giving reasons for their inclusion. Their demolition will be allowed only if the cost of repair would significantly outweigh their historic or architectural value. The Council will require that the replacement building is of a matching or higher standard and quality of design.

9.35 Where consent is required and alterations are subsequently permitted, care will be taken to ensure that these are not detrimental to the historic character of the building. In particular, attention will be given to ensuring that any features of architectural or historic interest are preserved and that all new work is in keeping with the character of the original building and its setting in terms of design, scale and materials.

9.36 In the exceptional circumstance that demolition is allowed, detailed records must be taken of the building prior to the commencement of works.

NB Please see Appendix 5 for further details on building recording.

## Appendix 3

**Property Address:**

	<b>Designation Criteria</b>	<b>Tick as appropriate</b>
<b>Historical Interest</b>	Buildings associated with well known personalities or events	
	Good examples of buildings or other assets that illustrate social or economic history	
	Buildings, landscapes, sites and spaces which illustrate part of Flintshire's cultural history e.g. schools, churches, or public buildings	
	The use of building materials of local interest	
	The work of local architects or designers of national significance	
	Intact historical structures	
	Archaeological interest may be an appropriate reason to designate a locally significant asset if the evidence base is sufficient and if a distinct area can be defined	
<b>Architectural and Vernacular</b>	Buildings that are part of a planned layout that has remained substantially intact e.g. a terrace or square	
	A group of buildings that together are a good surviving example of an historic architectural type	
	Good examples of a particular technological innovation in building type and technique	
	Buildings which have received national awards or recognitions	
	Examples of a particular local buildings type, style, craftsmanship, architectural quality or detailing	
	Examples of good quality modern architecture (including modern architecture)	
<b>Environmental Significance</b>	Buildings which contribute to the streetscene, landscape or locality	
	Buildings with a 'group' value or part of a group of buildings that provide local distinctiveness and interest	
	Structures such as street furniture that contribute positively to the local area	
	Buildings that contribute positively to the setting or group value of Listed Buildings	
	Significant landmark buildings or structures which can have a striking aesthetic value within the local scene	
<b>Age and Rarity</b>	The earliest or unusual examples of a particular type of building	
	Buildings built before the start of the Victorian period (1837) where the style, form and construction is easily identifiable and restorable	
	Buildings built between 1837 and 1918 which retain original features, are of good quality and are restorable	
	Buildings built between 1918 and 1939 which are exceptional examples of the style of the period	
	Buildings built between 1939 and 1945 which are rare examples of wartime structures	
	Buildings built from 1946 onwards which are of exceptional quality and design	

**PROFORMA TEMPLATE FOR THE BLI ASSESSMENT REPORT****PROPERTY ADDRESS:**

For each of the designation criteria which apply provide a short statement relating to their significance (see Appendix 3 for the designation criteria)

Community	
Grid reference	
File reference	
Brief Description	
<b>Designation criteria:</b>	
Historical Significance	
Age and rarity	
Architectural or vernacular interest	
Environmental significance	
Site visits (dates, who, why)	
Consultation dates and who is consulted	
Responses received	
Recommendation with reasons	



Appendix 4

Panel decision (including date)	
Owner notified (date)	
Appeal	
Owner	
Agent	
Proposer (if external)	
Any other comments	
Request to GIS for mapping (date)	
Photos	

## BUILDING RECORDING

As stated in bullet point 6 of the section ‘Guidance for Owners’ above, there are different levels of building recording which can be carried out. Once it has been established that the relevant information does not already exist, and/or assessing information which is already available, it is necessary to ascertain which level of building recording is required and when it should be carried out.

The English Heritage Guidance: Understanding Historic Buildings – A Guide to Good Recording Practice (2006) contains detailed information on the background to building recording and the methodology that should be used. In summary however, there are four main recording levels, along with a photographic survey. Section 5 of the English Heritage Guidance provides a description of the recording levels which are as follows:

- Level 1 – a basic visual survey
- Level 2 – a descriptive record
- Level 3 – an analytical record
- Level 4 – a comprehensive analytical record
- Photographic survey

It is important to note that the guidance states ‘*No record is ever complete. While the levels specified above cover most eventualities when a building is recorded for historical purposes, there will be circumstances in which more detailed records are desirable...The purpose of the record must always determine its nature and content*’.

The guidance also contains the table below which summarises several circumstances, the principle need for the record, the likely level of record and the form the record should take. Although each building should be considered on its own merits, the table provides a useful guide.

<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Principal need</b>	<b>Level of record</b>	<b>Form of record</b>
Strategic heritage planning at national, regional or local level; studies of landscapes, common building types, areas and larger settlements; pilot projects.	Information of distribution, variation, significance and survival of large building populations defined geographically, typologically or chronologically, and an understanding of their evolution, to inform national or local policy initiatives, to underpin heritage-management decisions or as a contribution to academic knowledge.	Generally low-level record. Building-specific information may be highly selective or variable (typically Level 1 or 2, but in some cases 3 or 4).	May make extensive use of external photography, supplemented by written accounts of individual buildings and/or synthetic text, providing background or context. Drawn element may be omitted, simplified, limited to maps or restricted to key examples.
Management planning for property portfolios and for individual buildings or sites.	Baseline information on the nature and significance of buildings, providing a foundation for long-term decision-making and identifying where further	For portfolios, a medium-level record (2 or 3), which may vary with the perceived significance of the building; for single buildings or sites the level may be higher (3	Measured drawings may form an important and cost-effective component, meeting a range of non-historical as well as historical needs. Where

## Appendix 5

	information is required.	or 4).	buildings for a tight geographical group, or belong to an historic estate, more extensive research may be practicable.
Proposed alterations to a significant building	An understanding of the fabric at risk within the context of the buildings as a whole, and an assessment of its significance, allowing proposals to be formulated and evaluated, and loss minimised; also a record of what is to be lost, where significant.	Variable, depending on the significance of the fabric at risk and both the complexity and current understanding of the building as a whole and of the class to which it belongs (Level 2-4).	An account of the building as a whole (summary for minor alterations, more detailed for a major intervention), with detailed discussion of affected areas. Measured drawings are more likely to be required for major alterations.
Extensive repairs or alterations to a significant building with complex stratigraphy.	In addition to the above, detailed information on the nature and development of the building's fabric, in the context of its significance and that of its various parts.	Medium to high (Level 3 or 4)	The drawn record may be more detailed than the norm, to inform step-by-step decision-making.
Catastrophic damage to a significant building (a major fire, for example).	Where not a prelude to demolition (see below). An understanding of the nature and development of the building's fabric, in the context of its significance and that of its various parts.	Variable, depending on the significance of the building, the extent of loss and safety considerations.	Attention will focus initially on areas most vulnerable to loss (debris, charred timber, water-damaged plaster etc), which may be recorded in greater detail than normal to assist reconstruction.
Dismantling prior to re-erection	Detailed understanding of the fabric of the building, and of the craft processes which shaped it.	Medium to high (Level 3 or 4).	The drawn and photographic record is likely to be extensive and will be made both prior to, and during, dismantling. Any proposed reconstruction, including departures from traditional practices and materials, may also be documented. In special circumstances and where resources permit, it may be appropriate to undertake additional recording (including the application of excavation-derived 'finds' techniques).during dismantling, or to elucidate the site's context or earlier history through excavation.
Proposed demolition.	Assessment of the significance of the building and a record of what is to be lost.	Variable, depending on the significance of the building. Other things being equal, the level will be higher than for buildings of comparable significance which are not similarly at risk.	

Source: English Heritage Guidance: Understanding Historic Buildings – A Guide to Good Recording Practice (2006)

**Further reading:**

- English Heritage, **Enabling Development and the Conservation of Heritage Assets**, 1999
- English Heritage, **Energy Conservation and Historic Buildings - Application of Part L of the Building Regulations to Historic and Traditionally Constructed Buildings**,
- Cadw, **Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales**, 2011
- Cadw, **Maintenance Matters**
- Peak District National Park, **Sustainability and Historic Buildings**
- Changeworks, **A Guide to Improving Energy Efficiency in Traditional and Historic Homes**
- English Heritage, **Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings**, 2008
- English Heritage, **Research into the Thermal Performance of Traditional Windows: Sash Windows**, 2009
- English Heritage, **Energy Efficiency in Historic Buildings: draught proofing and secondary glazing**
- English Heritage, **Energy Efficiency in Historic Buildings: draught proofing windows and doors**
- English Heritage, **Micro-generation in the Historic Environment**, 2008
- Energy Saving Trust, **Energy Efficient Historic Homes – case studies**, (CE138)

## Appendix 7

### Contacts

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<p><b>Flintshire Records Office</b></p> <p>The Old Rectory Rectory Lane Hawarden Flintshire CH5 3NR Tel: 01244 532364 Fax: 01244 538344 Email: archives@flintshire.gov.uk</p>	<p><b>Flintshire Historical Society</b></p> <p>Mrs Norma P Parker (Secretary) 69 Pen y Maes Avenue Rhyl LL18 4ED</p>
<p><b>The Georgian Group</b></p> <p>6 Fitzroy Square London W1T 5DX Tel: 020 7529 8920 Fax: 020 7529 8939 Email: office@georgiangroup.org.uk</p>	<p><b>Mold and District Civic Society</b></p> <p>Tel: 01352 759 047 Email: david@davidrowe.co.uk</p>

Appendix 7

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<p><b>The Victorian Society</b></p> <p>1 Priory Gardens London W4 1TT Tel: 020 8994 1019 Email: admin@victoriansociety.org.uk</p>	