

Public Document Pack

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Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol a Democraataidd



To: Cllr Ron Hampson (Chairman)

CS/NG

Councillors: Amanda Bragg, David Cox,
Peter Curtis, Ron Davies, Glenys Diskin,
Rosetta Dolphin, Jim Falshaw,
George Hardcastle, Ray Hughes,
Hilary Isherwood, Brian Lloyd, Mike Reece,
Gareth Roberts and Sharon Williams

10 April 2014

Sharon Thomas 01352 702324
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Dear Sir / Madam

A meeting of the **HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** will be held in the **DELYN COMMITTEE ROOM, COUNTY HALL, MOLD CH7 6NA** on **WEDNESDAY, 16TH APRIL, 2014** at **10.00 AM** to consider the following items.

Yours faithfully

Democracy & Governance Manager

AGENDA

- 1 **APOLOGIES**
- 2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**
- 3 **MINUTES** (Pages 1 - 30)
To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 21 January, 28 January (joint meeting) 5 February (joint meeting) and 6 February 2014 [copies enclosed].
- 4 **WELFARE REFORM UPDATE** (Pages 31 - 50)
Report of Director of Community Services enclosed.

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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 **IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING REPORT** (Pages 51 - 88)
Report of Housing and Learning Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator enclosed.
- 6 **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 89 - 94)
Report of Housing and Learning Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator enclosed.

Agenda Item 3

HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE **21 JANUARY 2014**

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 21 January 2014

PRESENT: Councillor Ron Hampson (Chairman)

Councillors: Amanda Bragg, Peter Curtis, Rosetta Dolphin, Jim Falshaw, Alison Halford, George Hardcastle, Mike Reece, Gareth Roberts and Sharon Williams

SUBSTITUTE: Councillor: Haydn Bateman (for Ray Hughes)

APOLOGIES: Councillors: David Cox, Ron Davies, Glenys Diskin and Brian Lloyd

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors: Marion Bateman and Carolyn Thomas

CONTRIBUTORS: Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Cabinet Member for Housing, Chief Executive, Director of Community Services, Head of Finance, Head of Housing, Housing Asset Manager, Finance and Accountancy Manager, Neighbourhood Housing Managers

IN ATTENDANCE: Member Engagement Manager and Committee Officer

49. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

No declarations of interest were made.

50. BUDGET CONSULTATION FOR 2014/15

The Chairman welcomed the contributors to the meeting.

The Director of Community Services introduced the report to set out the consultation arrangements with Overview & Scrutiny for 2014/15. He provided background information and advised that an information pack including background papers had been made available prior to the meeting and that a copy of the report on the Housing Revenue Account 2014/15 and Capital Programme 2014/15 received by Cabinet earlier in the day was appended to the report.

The Head of Housing presented the budget proposals and key service issues for the 2014/15 Revenue and Capital Budget Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The main features of the presentation were:-

- Welsh Government – Draft Financial Determinations
- Housing Revenue Account subsidy system
- Approach to Housing Revenue Account budget setting
- 2014/15 Housing Revenue Account efficiencies

- 2014/15 Housing Revenue Account Service Improvements/ Pressures
- Funding for Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2014/15
- Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2014/15
- Achievements
- Looking forward to 2014/15
- Housing Revenue Account 30 year Business Plan

Commenting on the change to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) subsidy system, the Leader explained that negotiations were still ongoing with the Welsh Government. He opined that the recent, significant, no votes, by tenants who wanted their homes to stay in local authority ownership, which had taken place in Caerphilly and in Flintshire, had prompted a clear policy shift nationally. There had been consistent gains on what Flintshire had been able to project for management and maintenance allowances in the business plan, meaning that the gap was closing. There was now real potential to achieve the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) before the target date of 2020 and without the expensive borrowing which other authorities had incurred.

The comments and questions raised by Members of the Committee on the presentation, together with the responses given, are detailed in Appendix 1 (attached).

Members expressed their thanks to officers for their hard work and achievements in the current financial restraints and the positive proposals put forward.

The Chief Executive reported that the Cabinet had, earlier in the day, approved the HRA budget proposals, which now, with the endorsement of the Committee could be forwarded to Council. He went on to comment that Flintshire's successful approach to WHQS and initiatives within Education had been examples which the County had cited in the submission to the Williams Commission as examples of corporate effectiveness.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the presentation be noted;
- (b) That the Committee endorse the resolutions from Cabinet to Council as follows:
 - i. The proposed HRA budget for 2014/15 as set out in Appendix 1, incorporating the financial assumptions in Appendix 2 and the service Improvements and Efficiencies in Appendix 3;
 - ii. The level of rent and service charges for 2014/15 as set out in paragraphs 3.01 to 3.07;
 - iii. The level of projected balances at 31 March 2015 at 3.20% of total expenditure;

- iv The proposed HRA Capital Programme as set out in Appendix 4;
and
- (c) That the impact of the proposed revenue budget and capital programme on the 30 year Business Plan be noted.

51. **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE**

There were two members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 3.30 pm and ended at 4.30 pm)

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Chairman

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

Housing Revenue Account - Initial Budget Proposals for Revenue and Capital 2014/15

No.	Comments and Questions:	Responses:
1.0	<p><u>Housing Revenue Account (Revenue) - Comments / Issues</u></p>	
	<p><u>General Comments/Issues</u></p>	
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will we get back by exiting the subsidy system? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The working figure is approx.£1m per annum. An exit from the HM Treasury subsidy system will benefit the HRA. It will be during next year financial year that we will be better placed to talk through the figures and report on the amounts as the work to exit the subsidy system progresses. With regards to the borrowing, this is still under review about whether the terms of the exit is fixed term or repayment term as with a mortgage. • The borrowing cap may allow potential building of new homes in the future. • M&M allowance – WG guidelines were always conservative in terms of what could be included within the Council’s Business Plan, but, year on year, the Council has received more than was allowed to be reported in the business plans. The previously reported gap for achieving WHQS by 2020 was £14m now. This has halved to £7m as a result of these budget proposals and it is hoped this will be a future trend.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

Housing Revenue Account - Initial Budget Proposals for Revenue and Capital 2014/15

No.	Comments and Questions:	Responses:
1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does agile working work? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rather than staff being based at a desk in a specific area, they are able to work more flexibly. This reduces mileage and office costs and allows the service to be more flexible with the aim to get better value from staff for customers.
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications was an issue with repairs and maintenance, has it been resolved? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new phone system has been installed and calls are now answered quicker and we also have the facility to monitor all calls.
1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is being done with the old Canton depot? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is being marketed but it is not owned by HRA. Any capital receipt from its sale will be General Fund resource
1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gardening service, will the rate be reduced for disabled tenants? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The gardening service will come into effect on April 1st. There will be a lower rate for disabled tenants claiming benefits.
1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eco energy – what is the criteria on which houses are “cased”, does the Council have any input? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas of deprivation are targeted, although the criteria has just changed. Further details to be sent to Cllr Curtis on the selection process, work to be carried out etc
1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handy person service – can you please clarify? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will involve a multi skilled person and vehicle. Costs are being looked at on whether this is delivered in house or externally. Firm proposals will be presented to members before implementation

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

Housing Revenue Account - Initial Budget Proposals for Revenue and Capital 2014/15

No.	Comments and Questions:	Responses:
2.0	<u>Housing Revenue Account (Capital) - Comments / Issues</u>	
	<u>General Comments/Issues</u>	
2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• UPVC, we would like to see more budget spent on this work due to cold weather, will this happen?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing would like to increase the budget on UPVC. The Repairs Service are receiving more complaints and are aware that there is a problem. £200k was allocated to the budget to carry out repairs until they are replaced. In the new 2016/17 Programme there is significant budget for the replacement of UPVC.
2.2	Potential land receipts, would the money raised from a specific site stay within that area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No. The money that is raised from land receipts is put back into the HRA Capital Programme all HRA properties benefit from the proceeds according to the priorities agreed to address need across the whole Council.

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JOINT HOUSING AND SOCIAL AND HEALTH CARE
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
28 JANUARY 2014

Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Housing and Social and Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 28 January 2014

PRESENT: **Ron Hampson (Chairman)**

Councillors Marion Bateman, David Cox, Adele Davies-Cooke, Rosetta Dolphin, Andy Dunbobbin, Carol Ellis, Jim Falshaw, Veronica Gay, George Hardcastle, Ray Hughes, Brian Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Hilary McGill, Mike Reece, Gareth Roberts, Sharon Williams and David Wisinger

SUBSTITUTES:

Councillors: Robin Guest (for Amanda Bragg) and Clive Carver (for Hilary Isherwood)

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: Peter Curtis, Ron Davies and Alison Halford

ALSO PRESENT:

Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment, Cabinet Member for Housing, Cabinet Member for Social Services and Cabinet Member for Economic Development

Councillors: Dennis Hutchinson, Richard Jones, Mike Peers and Arnold Woolley

CONTRIBUTORS:

Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Chief Executive, Director of Community Services, Head of Finance, Head of Housing, Head of Adult Social Care, Corporate Finance Manager and Finance Manager

IN ATTENDANCE:

Member Engagement Manager and Overview & Scrutiny Support Officer

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Nominations were sought for a Chair for the meeting. A nomination for Councillor Ron Hampson was supported by the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Ron Hampson be appointed as Chairman for the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

No declarations of interest were made.

3. BUDGET CONSULTATION FOR 2014/15

The Chairman welcomed the contributors to the meeting.

The Head of Finance explained that an overview of the budget would be provided for each Overview & Scrutiny Committee with the budget proposals for the specific area covered by each Committee detailed at the meetings. An information pack including background papers had been made available prior to the meeting.

The main features of the presentation were:-

- National Context and Local Impact
- Budget Overview
- How did the budget gap reduce?
- Organisational Redesign & Change
 - Organisational Redesign: Structure and Corporate Operating Model
 - Organisational Redesign: Workforce
- Corporate VFM & Functional VFM
- Detailed proposals for this joint Committee
- Housing Services
 - Inflation
 - Efficiencies
 - Prior Years Decisions
- Social Care
 - Inflation
 - Pressures / Investments
 - Efficiencies
 - Prior Years Decisions
- Ongoing Work to finalise budget
- Next Steps

The comments and questions which were raised by Members of the Committee on the presentations, together with the responses given, are detailed in Appendix 1 (attached).

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

4. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 9.15am and ended at 10.48am)

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Chairman

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
Joint Housing & Social & Health - Initial Budget Proposals 2014/15

No.	Comments and Questions:	Responses:
1.0	<u>Joint Housing & Social & Health Comments / Issues</u>	
1.1	<u>General Comments / Issues</u>	
1.1	Assurance sought about the systems in place to monitor risks particularly around Children’s services. Is the system in place for monitoring these risks robust enough?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the close of the budget setting process, we highlight the risks that may impact in the year ahead and throughout the year, we have systems in place which enables us to address issues as they arise.
1.2	No mention of collaborative ventures within this budget – why and does this mean we cannot make cuts to these?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All collaborative ventures are constantly under review an example of this is the Telecare service.
1.3	Mental Health costs have been discussed at a previous committee where a comparison was made of in house cost v external provision. Why is there no detail of that in the budget?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the future we will continue to look at all options and are doing so. In relation to how we provide and commission services, this will be one of the decisions for Members consideration going forward.
1.4	Investment from Reserves of £3.7m contingency and £3.7m equal pay. Is there a specific purpose for it to be used for? Clarification sought on this.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The contingency reserve is the amount over and above the required base level of reserves and is to meet one off costs including exit costs. The investment strategy is to utilise the equal pay capitalisation as part of a collective approach to total workforce costs. There is also a thorough review underway of all reserves to make sure we have an adequate level of investment to meet one off costs.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
Joint Housing & Social & Health - Initial Budget Proposals 2014/15

No.	Comments and Questions:	Responses:
2.0	<u>Pressures</u>	
2.1	With reference to the pressures for Foster Care and Children's Out of County Placements, are the amounts enough to meet the demand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Foster Care placements figure is based on current demand on the service. A risk based approach has had to be taken on the level of this and the Out of County Placements figure given the demand led nature of these services. ▪ In 13/14 an additional £110k was approved for the Family Placement team to meet the increased costs of Foster Care and increased cost of court orders for residences and special guardianships. Within Children's Out of County Placements, an efficiency of £533k was realised as a result of a decrease in costs from improved procurement practice. ▪ These will be categorised for final budget report.
2.2	What was the increase in 13/14	
2.3	Pressures and Investments is not spit into categories as per previous years budget report – why is this?	
3.0	<u>Efficiencies</u>	
3.1	VFM efficiency of £50k within the Youth Justice Service. If it has an adverse affect on the service, will it be able to be put back?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Members would need to decide if they wanted to put more money into the service. Flintshire are still providing a significant contribution to funding within the Youth Justice Service. The level of efficiency can be met without an impact and nothing can be exempt from the budget review.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
Joint Housing & Social & Health - Initial Budget Proposals 2014/15

No.	Comments and Questions:	Responses:
3.2	Can we guarantee level of efficiencies will not impact adversely on services?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The aim is to protect services but also to improve, where possible, to be more efficient and to improve outcomes for service users.
3.3	In relation to the efficiency from moving Estuary Crafts to be co located with Tri Ffordd, this is a small efficiency of £24k but what about the cost of changing the building, and the transport costs for service users who will now need to go to a new location?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capital investment to refurbish the building has been provided from funding within the service. The move provides a better and more appropriate environment for service users. The £24k is as a result of a reduction in management costs due to the co location. There may be an impact on transport costs but these will only be minor and service users will be supported.
3.4	Agreement that Estuary Crafts needs to be moved, but why Tri Ffordd and not site in Flint near to Castle Connections?	Further information to be provided
3.5	Within the Learning Disability service, there are efficiencies of an unprecedented scale with reduction in Management. Is the efficiency “Structural Management” also to do with Short Term Care?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No
3.6	Will the efficiencies in the Short Term Care service have an impact on the number of service users receiving the service?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, the efficiency is about changes to rotas and the way the service is managed.
3.7	Can we be assured that the efficiency of £822k which is related to transitional services will have no impact on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The efficiency has already been achieved in 2013/14 by doing things differently. Future year’s forecasts for

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
Joint Housing & Social & Health - Initial Budget Proposals 2014/15

No.	Comments and Questions:	Responses:
	individuals moving from Children's to Adult Services?	transition clients are built into the next three years projections
3.8	Why is there no procurement efficiencies listed under Social Care?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Care does make savings on commissioning eg Learning Disability Services and Dementia and Mental Health approaches through the North Wales commissioning hub. In Social Care the main expenditure is on delivering services through the purchase of care.
3.9	Is the efficiency linked to Connahs Quay offices for staffing or building costs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing costs only.
3.10	There are many efficiencies that relate to management cuts with the blithe assumption that this means there is no disruption in service. How can that be the case?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to ensure adequate capacity but the efficiency enable us to gain some cross service benefits. There is a need to look at the spans of control and better use of I.T. to ensure we are being as efficient as possible.
3.11	Need an explanation of "rightsizing".	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This involves a thorough review of outcomes for service users. A balance between ensuring independence for the person involving social workers and specialist nurses and utilising opportunities such as telecare to maintain their safety are taken as part of this process.
3.12	Development and Resources income – Deputyships. Not clear what is being suggested here?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This relates to weekly charging of £5 per week for the service.

HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
5 FEBRUARY 2014

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Wednesday, 5 February 2014

PRESENT: **Councillor Ron Hampson (Chairman)**

Councillors: Amanda Bragg, Ron Davies, Rosetta Dolphin, George Hardcastle, Brian Lloyd, Mike Reece and Gareth Roberts

SUBSTITUTES: Councillors: Ian Dunbar (for Sharon Williams) and Paul Shotton (for Glenys Diskin)

APOLOGIES: Councillors: David Cox, Peter Curtis, Alison Halford and Ray Hughes

CONTRIBUTORS: Cabinet Member for Housing, Director of Community Services, Head of Housing and Community Support Services Manager

Senior Sheltered Housing Officer and Accommodation Support Officers (for minute number 54)

IN ATTENDANCE: Housing & Learning Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Committee Officer

52. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

No declarations of interest were made.

53. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2014 had been circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

54. SHELTERED HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The Director of Community Services introduced the update report on the successful completion of the improvement programme within the Community Based Accommodation Support Service (previously the Sheltered Housing service). Whilst reporting on further elements of the improvement project, he provided explanation on the implementation of the 'needs based' support service to respond to the changing needs of service users and welcomed the achievement of at least 70% of available staff time allocated to this support. Following the relocation of seven of the community-based hubs to alternative accommodation to free up Council stock, plans were being made to relocate the remaining two. Information was given on the establishment of two new referral

routes to the service and progress with implementing the new staffing structure. Feedback from current and past users of the service had indicated an overall positive response.

The Director introduced the Senior Sheltered Housing Officer (Dawn Kent) and invited the two Accommodation Support Officers who were present to share their views on service changes.

Sue Roberts and Carmen Wellings explained that whilst the transition period had initially seemed challenging, the benefits resulting from the improvements to the service had been recognised and welcomed by staff and service users. They felt it was important to recognise the necessity to expand the service to deliver support to a wider range of people with varying needs and that the approach to working as a team rather than as individuals was more professional and rewarding for them. Sue and Carmen spoke of the range of support on offer to equip individuals with the tools to promote their own independence and deal with any crisis arising in their lives, such as information on changes to benefits and signposting to relevant networks for more challenging needs. Discussion at a recent Housing Forum meeting had promoted the services to residents from different areas who had welcomed the range of services on offer. The five staff located at the Ewloe hub were responsible for supporting around 500 service users, each with a support plan in place to identify and respond to their differing needs.

The Chairman said that the improvements to the service had proved to be a great success and welcomed the efficiencies made.

In thanking officers for the positive report, Councillor Paul Shotton asked if the number of current service users not in sheltered accommodation was likely to change from 42, and whether links could be made with partner agencies to provide a befriending service to older people in need. The Director said that there was an expectation for this number to increase and that positive work was ongoing to support those who were lonely with a recognition that the service would need to adapt flexibly to respond to more complex issues.

The Community Support Services Manager gave assurance of monitoring of the number of services users to ensure that appropriate capacity was available and that a reduced need for support would impact on those figures. Sue and Carmen explained that the service was able to provide transport for those wanting to attend activities at local community centres and that links with Age Concern and the Red Cross were used to provide a befriending service to those in need.

Councillor George Hardcastle, who had attended the recent Housing Forum meeting, praised Dawn and her team for the range of work they undertook. In response to a query, the Director said that there were no plans to reduce the number of hubs to below seven.

Councillor Amanda Bragg welcomed the improvements to the service, particularly in view of the ageing population, and asked for clarification on reduced levels of support within the report. The Community Support Services Manager explained that services were gradually reduced to individuals to whom

no further support was deemed necessary. Councillor Bragg went on to remark on valuable assistance from wardens and Streetscene officers at an elderly person's property during a period of severe weather.

In response to a query on contact information, the Community Support Services Manager explained that the 'Practical Assistance line' promoting volunteer assistance was in the early stages of implementation and would be developed further. An informal arrangement was in place whereby Council officers were deployed to provide assistance to those in need during severe weather.

Councillor Rosetta Dolphin spoke of the benefits of the community-based hubs in supporting each other and hoped that the support service could be rolled out further to all residents in need. The Director referred to the two new areas of referrals which would enable the services to be targeted at a wider range of individuals and said that whilst it was intended to develop this further, there was a need to monitor it to ensure that sufficient capacity was in place to respond.

RESOLVED:

That the progress of the Sheltered Housing Improvement Project from February 2013 and successful completion of the Improvement Programme be noted.

55. UPDATE ON THE DELIVERY OF THE CHOICES DOCUMENT

The Head of Housing introduced a report detailing progress in delivering an improved service to Council tenants, in line with the commitment given as part of the Choices Document, following the majority vote by tenants in 2012 for the Council to retain its housing stock. An annual progress report would be received by the Committee.

The Head of Housing explained that proposals for the budget in 2014/15 would include the allocation of funding for the development of a handy person service together with additional posts relating to financial inclusion support. She referred to the commitment given for £49m of investment over five years in the capital programme and for previous expectations to be surpassed, resulting in full achievement of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) by 2020.

The Chairman congratulated Mrs Mavis Crofts (Chair of the Flintshire Tenants' Federation) who had been awarded an MBE for voluntary services in the community and invited her to address the Committee.

Mrs Crofts reflected on the significant progress which had been made since the housing ballot and particularly welcomed the opportunity for involvement by the Tenants' Federation in the process. She thanked the Head of Housing for keeping the Federation informed of progress by sharing accurate up-to-date information and spoke of the improved approach to working on void properties.

In praising the work undertaken, Councillor Paul Shotton hoped that the Welsh Government had recognised the achievements by the Council in exceeding expectations for the delivery of improvements during the previous

year. He welcomed the indication for achievement of the WHQS by 2020, which was many years earlier than originally anticipated.

Councillor Ian Dunbar expressed his appreciation to the Housing team for their assistance and flexibility in carrying out improvements at the properties of elderly tenants in line with their needs.

RESOLVED:

That the progress being made to deliver the promises in the Choices Document be noted.

56. COLLABORATIVE WORKING IN HOUSING

The Head of Housing introduced an update report on current collaborative work across North Wales in Housing services, which was reported regularly to the Committee. She explained that with the emphasis on joint working between Councils, opportunities were explored at regular meetings of the North Wales Heads of Housing group in addition to that already underway as part of the Flintshire Futures programme. A summary of current collaborative activity was appended to the report whilst at a lower level options for a joint approach on other issues, such as workforce training, were being explored to share the cost.

In response to a query from Councillor Rosetta Dolphin on the North Wales gypsy and traveller co-ordination group, the Head of Housing explained that a needs assessment had identified the need for a transient site for gypsies and travellers. Following comments about current site provision in Flintshire, Wrexham and Anglesey, it was noted that Conwy and Denbighshire were identifying potential locations within their areas through the Local Development Plan (LDP) process.

Councillor Ian Dunbar referred to previous discussions on the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) project and sought an update on progress with the housing allocations system. The Head of Housing advised that the policy, which had only recently been approved by Cabinet, would require a phased approach for implementation by December 2014. Development of the Housing Options service would result in individuals having access to a wider range of information to ascertain the most appropriate housing option, thus enabling them to make an informed choice on their housing needs.

Councillor Dolphin spoke about the importance of due consideration of others in the area, such as elderly people, when allocating tenancies to individuals and suggested that local knowledge from the Police could assist. Councillor George Hardcastle referred to the availability of Police resources and spoke of the need for stronger conditions within the tenancy agreement.

The Head of Housing gave assurances of thorough checks and balances prior to allocating tenancies and reminded Members that the Council had a duty to house individuals in the best place for them. Although it was not possible to share tenancy information with Members, any concerns could be raised with Housing officers about vacant properties which were awaiting allocation.

The Cabinet Member for Housing advised that the SARTH policy included provision for improved sharing of information between landlords. The Head of Housing added that a protocol was in place to work with the Police on more serious cases of breach of tenancies.

In response to comments from Councillor Paul Shotton on the Eco scheme, the Head of Housing advised that Wrexham Council was leading on the tendering exercise and that additional funding for energy efficiency schemes had been secured to work with local contractors. She went on to suggest that an update on progress be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

Housing officers noted Councillor Mike Reece's request for the collection of waste at some Council properties following repairs carried out.

RESOLVED:

That the collaborative work undertaken to date and that currently in development be supported.

57. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Housing & Learning Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator introduced a report to enable the Committee to consider the Forward Work Programme.

Following previous discussion at the Committee, items on domestic abuse (with the showing of a DVD suggested by Councillor Peter Curtis) and the Responsible Pet Ownership Policy would be included on the Forward Work Programme, together with an item on Vibrant and Viable Places. The Facilitator would liaise with the Chair and Head of Housing on scheduling these three items for the meetings in March and April 2014.

The Facilitator suggested that the scheduled items on Universal Credit Implementation Update and Welfare Reform be considered together at the meeting on 21 May 2014 and that the energy efficiency item, suggested earlier in the meeting, be included as a future item on the Forward Work Programme.

Councillor George Hardcastle's proposal that the quarterly update on the Sheltered Housing Improvement Project be removed from the Forward Work Programme was supported by the Committee.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that the Member workshops on the review of garage sites had been arranged for 27 and 31 March 2014. The joint meeting with Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee to consider the Housing Supply Task Force would be arranged for a later date.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Work Programme be updated accordingly.

58. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.10 am)

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Chairman

**JOINT HOUSING AND SOCIAL AND HEALTH CARE
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
6 FEBRUARY 2014**

Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Housing and Social and Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at Llys Jasmine, Jasmine Crescent, Mold CH7 1TP on Thursday, 6th February, 2014

PRESENT:

Councillors: Marion Bateman, Amanda Bragg, David Cox, Adele Davies-Cooke, Rosetta Dolphin, Andy Dunbobbin, Carol Ellis, Jim Falshaw, Veronica Gay, Alison Halford, Ron Hampson, Ray Hughes, Hilary Isherwood, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Hilary McGuill, Gareth Roberts, Ian Smith and David Wisinger

APOLOGIES:

Councillor Peter Curtis, Ron Davies, Glenys Diskin, George Hardcastle and Brian Lloyd.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor Haydn Bateman attended as an observer

IN ATTENDANCE:

Cabinet Member for Social Services, Cabinet Member for Housing, Director of Community Services, Head of Housing, Head of Adults Services, Intake and Reablement Service Manager, Community Support Services Manager, Supporting People Manager, Operations Manager and Housing Renewal Manager

5. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

The Housing and Learning Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator sought nominations for a Chairman for the meeting. Councillor David Mackie proposed Councillor Carol Ellis which was duly seconded.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Carol Ellis be Chair for the meeting.

6. ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE CHAIR

The Chair welcomed the opportunity for the Committee to be able to visit Llys Jasmine, which she felt was an excellent facility, and said that there was a need for more facilities in Flintshire.

She also referred to recent a recent press article in which Councillor Arnold Woolley had not been complimentary about Overview and Scrutiny Committees. She said that in her experience on the Social and Health Committee, Members had worked hard to scrutinise issues and she congratulated Members of both the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee for their hard work.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

No declarations of interest were made.

8. EXTRA CARE PROVISION IN FLINTSHIRE

The Director of Community Services introduced a report to provide Members with a brief update regarding:-

- Current Extra Care provision within Flintshire
- Detail regarding the most recent development in Mold at Llys Jasmine
- Potential future developments

There were 61 apartments at Llys Jasmine which included 15 dementia units and the facility had proved popular since it opened in October 2013. The scheme had been nominated for a national UK award for the development of the year and a ceremony was due to be held in April 2014 in London. Llys Jasmine had been developed in partnership with Wales & West Housing Association and lessons had been learnt from the provision of the facility at Llys Eleanor in Shotton. The Director of Community Services explained a mix of needs was catered for and the definition of those needs was reported in appendix 1. It was proposed that two future schemes would be provided in Flint and Holywell but a business case would be required for the proposals due to the schemes costing approximately £7m each with no grant funding being provided. It was proposed that the future developments would include apartments for younger adults with a physical and/or learning disability in addition to provision for older people and older people with a diagnosis of dementia.

Councillor David Mackie suggested that the recommendation be altered to include congratulations to those involved in the scheme and that the thanks of the Committee be passed onto the Cabinet Member, the officers, the partners and the management for their involvement and hard work. Councillor Rosetta Dolphin welcomed the provision of the facility which she felt provided a greater level of care than if residents lived in their own homes. She also asked how the scheme could be extended to provide further provision in the county. Councillor Gareth Roberts suggested sites for the proposed facility in Holywell and referred to Flintshire County Council owned land in the town centre which would become available following the provision of a new high school.

Councillor Hilary McGuill referred to the cost of building the facility. She queried whether there was a waiting list and also asked for information on the costs of the scheme and the resident's costs. The Intake and Reablement Service Manager advised that residents were assessed and offered accommodation based on need and that she would provide details of the numbers on the waiting list to Members. The Director of Community Services confirmed that a one bedroom apartment cost £125 per week with a service charge of £59 and a two bedroom was £140 per week with a service charge of £60. The Intake and Reablement Service Manager explained that these costs included heating and water and one meal per day and that there would also be additional care costs depending on the care package chosen by the resident. She advised that information could be provided and forwarded to Members.

In response to a question from Councillor Hilary Isherwood, the Intake and Reablement Service Manager advised that the majority of residents were from the Mold and Buckley area. The Head of Housing advised that she would provide information on the number of tenancies that had been freed up because the tenants had moved to Llys Eleanor or Llys Jasmine.

Councillor Isherwood welcomed the provision of the facility but felt that it was important to have an infrastructure in place to provide transport, for family members who were unable to drive or did not have a car, to visit their relatives in the facilities.

The Intake and Reablement Service Manager advised that only those over the age of 60 could apply for an apartment but the Director of Community Services indicated that it was anticipated that age limits would be considered more flexibly in the development of future proposals.

Councillor McGuill asked what had been done to ensure that there was not an influx of older patients re-registering with local doctors to allow them greater access to the scheme as had happened when Llys Eleanor opened. The Intake and Reablement Service Manager said that the same issue had not occurred at Llys Jasmine.

The Director of Community Services acknowledged the comments made about the good value of the care provision and the need to provide further developments in the County and said that the Council had a priority to make it happen. It made a difference to people's lives and was an affordable way for the Council to provide the required services.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the progress made in developing further extra care provision in Flintshire be noted;
- (b) That the Cabinet Member, the officers, the partners be congratulated on the excellent development and facilities provided at Llys Jasmine.

9. TELECARE

The Head of Adults Services introduced the report to provide Members with an update regarding the:-

- progress of the regional call monitoring arrangements (Galw Gofal)
- current level and nature of Telecare provision within Flintshire
- regional progress regarding the roll out of telehealth and current partnership working in the context of a call for bids towards national fund monies

He detailed the background to the report and referred to the Telecare roll out at Llwynegrin Lodge in 2006 and the temporary Telecare Officer post which had now become permanent. He provided details on Galw Gofal, which was hosted by Conwy County Borough Council, including the volume of calls for

Flintshire and the numbers of compliments and complaints received. In 2013/14 Galw Gofal had piloted small projects in order for the partnership to consider the benefits of widening the remit from call monitoring. The partnership considered the cost benefit of any more permanent developments and how these linked with the regional priorities of the North Wales Regional Telecare Board. The Head of Adults Services also provided information on the number of telecare installations that had taken place across Flintshire and details of the regional telecare and telehealth working and the work which was ongoing in this area which included bids that were to be submitted.

Councillor Alison Halford asked for details on the cost of the service as this was not reported and comment on the concern raised when the service moved from Flint to Conwy. The Head of Adults Services confirmed that he would circulate information on the costs to Members.

Councillor Rosetta Dolphin said that a family member who used the service and not experienced any disruption and no difference to the service even though it had moved from Flint.

Councillor Hilary McGuill asked who funded the Telecare service for residents in Llys Jasmine and the Intake and Reablement Service Manager responded that it was funded partly by Supporting People and partly by base budget and health funding. Councillor McGuill also referred to the move of the service from Flint and the concerns raised when it initially moved and asked whether an electronic mapping service was used to identify where residents were when they contacted the service. The Intake and Reablement Service Manager said that difficulties had been experienced early in the transfer to Conwy but explained that the service had been exceeding the standards set. The Community Support Services Manager explained that the technology was in place but that she would ensure that it was being used. The Head of Housing said that there had been some initial problems but that she was not aware of any issues in the last 18 months.

In response to a question from Councillor Marion Bateman the Intake and Reablement Service Manager said that family members were contacted in the event of those using the service being deaf or blind. The Chair asked whether a risk assessment was undertaken prior to the telecare equipment being installed in user's homes. The Head of Adults Services confirmed that a risk assessment would be undertaken.

RESOLVED:

That the update of local and regional telecare and telehealth developments be noted.

10. DELIVERING HOME ADAPTATIONS

The Director of Community Services introduced a report to provide Members with an update on the delivery of home adaptations, including Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and minor adaptations and to seek support for the Home Adaptations Action Plan and for a new policy to guide decision making for the provision of major adaptations in family houses and upper floor flats.

He detailed the background to the report and explained that the delivery of disabled adaptations was a challenge for the Council given the scale and complexity of demand. Flintshire's performance at September 2013 for DFGs against the national performance indicator was 207 days. This met the local improvement target and was a significant improvement on the 2012/13 performance for 391 days for all DFGs. However, guidance for the calculation of this performance indicator (PI) had been revised to allow for more accurate national benchmarking. The PI for 12/13 had also been recalculated using the new guidance which provided a figure of 283 days for 2012/13 against the current performance for 2013/14 of 207 days. The Director of Community Services welcomed the improvement of 76 days that could be seen from the last financial year. The waiting time for occupational therapy assessments had also significantly decreased and the figures for Flintshire were lower than the national average wait for an assessment. The Modernisation of Social Services Board, which the Director and Cabinet Member for Social Services were members of, had driven the development of reablement and preventative services and highlighted the need to develop locality teams to ensure that Social Services worked more closely with health colleagues.

The Chair congratulated the Members of both Committees for their work in the workshops in pursuing the issue of DFGs and home adaptations and gave thanks to the officers for their work.

The Housing Renewal Manager said that work had been undertaken to look at the Council's housing stock and identify the best solution to adaptations to properties. A new policy had been developed on the issue of adaptations of family houses and upper floor flats for people living with a disability. Since 1 April 2013, 111 requests for level access showers had been actioned by the in-house adaptations team. These remained the most common adaptation that took place but with the cost at approximately £6k to install the shower within a property, the total spend was £666k so far in 2013/14. Approximately 25% of these level access showers were in family houses and a further £150k was expended annually on stairlifts, with a straight stairlift costing £3.5k and up to £6k for a complex curved stairlift. Over £1m was spent on major adaptations to the Council's own housing stock and the proposals in the policy considered doing the right type of adaptation for the right property for current and successive tenants. Paragraph 3.05 listed the points to consider when assessing the needs of the tenant and whether relocating them to a different property was a better option. The Housing Renewal Manager also referred to the possible use of adapted pods which would reduce the number of major adaptations taking place in Council housing but could increase flexibility due to being able to retrieve and recycle when the pod was no longer required. The capital cost for the pods would not be any different to the costs for major adaptations but would be advantageous due to their flexible nature. The pods would also reduce costs of remedial works too in certain circumstances. The Housing Renewal Manager advised that he would submit reports to future meetings when further evidence on the use of the pods was available.

Councillor Marion Bateman welcomed the suggestion to use pods which would save the Council money in the longer term. She felt that it was an exciting opportunity and queried whether planning permission regulations could be

relaxed to speed up the process to permitting any such applications and asked whether the Planning Strategy Group could consider the suggestion.

Councillor Hilary Isherwood referred to independent living for those with disabilities and suggested that a facility such as Llys Jasmine could provide the assistance to enable those with disabilities to live independently. The Director of Community Services said that the proposals for the further enhanced care schemes would be more flexible to include people with disabilities to support them to live independently but added that there were currently a range of supported living schemes in place for people with disabilities. Councillor Isherwood felt that the cost of such a scheme should be considered as she felt that younger people with disabilities would benefit from a facility such as Llys Jasmine.

Councillor Rosetta Dolphin referred to the adaptations carried out in properties and queried whether all schemes were carried out by in-house teams as she felt that it was important to ensure that the best value for money was achieved. In referring to the in-house teams, the Operations Manager said that a robust interview process had taken place to identify the right people for the right jobs. He added that the work they undertook was outstanding and he had been proud to watch them collect a Team of the Year award. The Head of Housing advised that a report had been considered by the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee on evaluation of the work undertaken and the cost improvements and added that the timescales were reducing and value for money was being achieved. She indicated that she would re-send the information to the Members for their information.

Councillor Alison Halford thanked the officers for the progress made. She referred to the level access showers commented on by the Housing Renewal Manager and asked whether access to the adaptation was easily available to tenants and whether they were more cost effective than the bath/shower combination advertised in newspapers. The Housing Renewal Manager said that the aim of the policy was to try and address the issues identified. An occupational therapy assessment would be undertaken to establish the best solution and once the request for an adaptation had been received, a decision would need to be made about the best option for the tenant and potentially save installation and future removal costs. This may mean offering to move the tenant to an already adapted property instead of adapting their house or flat. The Head of Housing explained that help could be provided for removal costs and could result in a family sized home being freed up for other tenants but she added that each case would be looked at on its own merits to identify the best solution. Councillor Halford suggested that an update be provided to a future meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Hilary McGuill sought assurance that tenants would not be pressurised to move to another property. She also referred to the use of pods which were easy to install and remove and referred to the significant cost saving. The Housing Renewal Manager said that a range of companies nationally produced the pods which were an attractive option which provided flexibility. The Cabinet Member for Housing gave assurance that families would not be forced to move to another property.

In response to a query from Councillor Veronica Gay about lifts to upper levels in properties, the Housing Renewal Manager advised that any lifts would be provided on the inside of a property, not externally.

Councillor McGuill referred to property adaptations for children and young people and Councillor Gareth Roberts spoke of the facility at Llys Edward in Holywell which provided help to youngsters to assist them in independent living. The Cabinet Member for Social Services also referred to supported living schemes near Deeside Hospital and added that there were a number of other shared living facilities in Flintshire. Councillor Amanda Bragg felt that there was a gap locally for children with learning disabilities and referred to Cornerstone which was a project which was trying to fund a purpose built facility to allow children over 16 to live independently. In response to a question from Councillor Bragg about support for the parents of disabled children, the Cabinet Member for Social Services explained that the Transition Team worked closely with families with disabilities.

On the issue of pods, Councillor Marion Bateman suggested that a representative from a manufacturer of the pods provide a presentation to the Committee. The Director of Community Services confirmed that he would arrange for enquiries to be made.

Councillor Isherwood queried why it cost £6k to install the level access showers and then a further £6k to remove them when they were no longer needed. The Housing Renewal Manager explained that the £6k was not just for the shower but also provided a wet room for the tenant which would need to be returned to a normal bathroom when the shower was no longer required. The Head of Housing advised that details on the costs could be circulated to Members following the meeting.

In summing up, the Chair referred Members to the recommendations in the report, the circulation of information on the costs of installing/removing level access showers and the request from Councillor Halford for updates to future meetings on adaptations.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the reduction in waiting times for Occupational Therapy assessment and improved timescales for the delivery of home adaptations be noted;
- (b) That the action plan and the workstreams contained within be supported;
- (c) That the proposed policy regarding the adaptation of family homes and upper floor flats within the Council's housing stock be supported;
- (d) That updates on adaptations be provided to a future meeting of the Committee; and
- (e) That a breakdown on the cost of installing and removing the level access showers be provided to Members.

11. SUPPORTING PEOPLE

The Community Support Services Manager introduced a report to update the Committee on the Supporting People Programme in Flintshire and seek support for the Local Commissioning Plan.

It was reported that the Local Authority was required to develop a three year Commissioning Strategy that would inform the priorities within the Regional Commissioning Strategy. However, Local Authorities in North Wales had developed 12 month Commissioning Plans to cover the transition period and allow time for reviewing of existing services, new developments and appropriate targeting of reductions. Welsh Government had been supportive of this approach, recognising that the level of reductions in North Wales made longer term planning at this stage more of a challenge. The Programme was facing significant reductions in funding year on year and it had been indicated that funding would reduce by approximately 5% in 2014/15 and 2015/16. An approach was being considered of how to respond to the reduction in funding which could include remodelling projects or working with providers on leaner processes but it was important not to apply a blanket cut approach to services. The Community Support Services Manager advised that the Flintshire Supporting People Team had led on a number of successful local and sub regional developments over the last twelve months which included Flintshire 'Nightstop' Service, Body Positive and the Support Gateway and she provided further details on the schemes/projects. It was also reported that there were opportunities for some short term developments to make best use of funding that was available now but could not be committed long term which included a two year mental health low level floating support service and one year additional funding to Age Connects. Reductions from the service were also reported and included a reduction of £98,280 from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) Learning Disability Services which were not eligible to be funding by Supporting People Programme Grant.

In response to a question from Councillor Carol Ellis about the total amount of the grant, the Supporting People Manager said that it had been indicated that the grant would be approximately £6.8m for 2013/14, £6.4m for 2014/15 and £6.1m for 2015/16. She also confirmed that the six North Wales authorities were also seeing reductions in their funding but that some Councils, including those in South Wales, would be receiving an increase in the grant.

Councillor Alison Halford referred to the opportunity for a two year mental health low level floating support service and said that as mental health could affect anyone whether they be young or old, that funding be treated as a priority. Following a question from Councillor Rosetta Dolphin about whether funding was being withdrawn from the Acquired Brain Injury project in Greenfield, the Community Support Services Manager advised that funding had been realigned but that this would not have an impact on the project. In referring to mental health issues, Councillor Hilary Isherwood said that mental health was the 'cinderella' of the health care service. She added that it was crucial that funding was provided and referred to rural locations which could be affected by transport issues and said that it was important to ensure that those in rural locations were not forgotten.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services indicated that she was the Mental Health Champion for Flintshire County Council and that the Strategy and team that were in place would ensure that Mental Health was taken seriously. The Chair referred to the significant challenge facing the service due to the Flintshire Community Mental Health Teams reporting a 70% increase in the number of referrals from Care Coordinators requesting floating support for service users. The Chair also highlighted the two year pilot project which was being developed which would provide low-level floating support to those people who were not eligible for statutory mental health services, and/or those who were ready to move-on from statutory services and required some level of on-going support within the community.

Councillor Halford referred to the Cabinet Member for Social Services role as Mental Health Champion and asked for further information. The Director of Community Services responded that the Mental Health Commissioning Strategy had been considered by the Social and Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee and had been approved by Cabinet; he indicated that he would share this with the Members of the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee. He also acknowledged the work of the Social and Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the issue of Double Click and the proposals for it to become a social enterprise. He also referred to a report which had been submitted to Cabinet on the 'Time to Change' campaign in Wales about challenging mental health services and the provision of a Mental Health champion; the Director of Community Services indicated he would also share the report with the Committee.

Councillor Marion Bateman referred to section in the report on new investment where it was reported that BCUHB were withdrawing funding from a service from April 2014. She said that this would put additional pressure on the local authority and that it should be noted that this appeared to be a continuing and worrying trend by BCUHB.

Councillor Hilary McGuill raised concern about looked after children and asked what was in place for looked after children when they were moved out of foster care and moved on as the current system did not appear to be working. She said that there was concern that they would become homeless before being re-housed and could be put into a form of sheltered accommodation. Councillor McGuill also queried how the Support Gateway could be accessed by clients and requested further details on the project. In response, the Head of Housing spoke of the work undertaken by officers with people in care but said that there had been a gap in communication. The Community Support Services Manager said that meetings were set up with Housing Support and Housing Options officers at a very early stage to establish a plan and obtain a result that was suitable for the young person. The Supporting People Manager advised that she could circulate the policy on the Support Gateway to Members. She also commented on referrals and advised that if a young person presented as homeless, officers would be able to identify quickly where vacancies were depending on the needs of the young person to ensure the best outcome.

Councillor Veronica Gay asked whether stakeholders in England were consulted due to possible cross border issues as she was concerned that people may 'fall through the gap'. The Community Support Services Manager

responded that they were not consulted and that Flintshire County Council's stakeholders were on an accredited partner list. The Supporting People Manager also spoke of work with hospitals in England and Wales which had been undertaken as part of the Body Positive project and said that lessons on consultation could be taken forward when developing future projects. The Director of Community Services acknowledged the comments and asked that Members notify him of any specific issues that they were aware of and that were causing them concern.

The Chair asked that figures be provided about the 5% reduction in funding each year and that the recommendation be amended to include regular updates to Members on the progress of the grant and the progression of the draft Flintshire Local Commissioning Plan to the final document.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the reductions to the Supporting People Grant be noted and the proposed approach to managing reductions be supported;
- (b) That the progress of the Supporting People team in the last twelve months be noted;
- (c) That the Draft Flintshire Local Commissioning Plan be supported;
- (d) That regular updates on the progress of the grant be reported to Committee; and
- (e) That progression of the draft Flintshire Local Commissioning Plan to the final document be reported to Committee.

12. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press or public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 4.08 pm)

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Chair

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

DATE: **WEDNESDAY, 16 APRIL 2014**

REPORT BY: **DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**

SUBJECT: **WELFARE REFORM UPDATE**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To update members on the latest position regarding Welfare Reform.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 When the Welfare Reform Board agreed in July 2013 that its objectives to oversee the development and successful implementation of the Welfare Reform Strategy had been completed, it was agreed that alternative arrangements were needed to report on the operational aspects of managing Welfare Reform.

2.02 As a result, it was agreed that for Council Members this would be through reporting to Cabinet and Scrutiny and for partner organisations through the Local Service Board (LSB) and Advice Management Board (AMB).

2.03 The Welfare Reform update for members in the autumn was provided through the Member Workshop held on 8th November 2013. This report begins a cycle of quarterly reporting which is aligned to the Council's performance reporting cycle. This report was provided to Cabinet in March and Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny in April.

2.04 This report identifies affected areas and the Council's response. Updates are provided on a regular basis to the LSB and AMB.

3.01 Benefit Cap

As of the 31 December 2013, 42 Flintshire households were subject to the Benefit Cap and have had their housing benefit reduced accordingly. The total reduction in housing benefit amongst the Flintshire households is £4,695 pw.

The Benefit Cap is an ongoing process with the Department for Work and Pensions advising Flintshire Housing Benefit department of new cases to be capped or removed from capping on a monthly basis.

The Welfare Reform Response Team directly targeted the households subject to the Benefit Cap. To date, seventeen households have engaged with a response worker and started to identify and implement solutions to the financial problems that have been generated by having their weekly welfare benefit income reduced.

Through the interventions of the Welfare Reform Response Team, six households have been assisted to become exempted from the Benefit Cap and a further three households are awaiting decisions on disability benefit claims, which if they are successful, will exempt these households too. All seventeen households have been provided with personal budgeting support to help them to be more adept at managing their household income

3.02 **Maximum Rent Social Sector (MRRS)**

The introduction of MRSS (also known as Bedroom Tax or spare room subsidy) in April 2013 resulted in a reduction of housing benefit (HB) payable in instances where social housing tenants under occupied a property based on the number of bedrooms in the property. HB is reduced by 14% for households under occupying by 1 bedroom and 25% for those household under occupying by 2 or more bedrooms.

A loophole within the administration of the MRRS was identified in January 2014. This loophole relied on the fact that the transitional protection on how the HB eligible rent is calculated for claimants with a social landlord, who had been continuously in receipt of HB and living in the same dwelling since at least 1 January 1996, was not revoked when the MRRS was introduced in April 2013.

This technical failure to amend the pre-1996 housing benefit regulations has resulted in 104 Flintshire County Council tenants HB claims being exempt from MRRS. However, on the 3 March 2014, the government legislated to close the loophole and the HB claims identified as being exempt from the MRRS will again be subject to the 14% or 25% reduction from this date.

3.03 **Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

The Regulations have now been laid by Welsh Government and a scheme was adopted by Flintshire at the end of January for the 2014/15 financial year, with the availability of 100% reduction in eligible cases.

In December 2013, the Welsh Government launched a consultation on the future of its Council Tax Reduction Scheme. The consultation recognises that the cost of maintaining entitlement to CTRS will increase year on year, making it more and more difficult to sustain this protection, and, as a result they are reviewing the options for the

medium and long term future of council tax support. This was reported to Cabinet and Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny in February and the Council's response was submitted to Welsh Government by the required date of 5th March 2014.

3.04 **Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF)**

The DAF is being managed by Northgate Public Services who are working in partnership with The Family Fund and Wrexham County Borough Council.

The DAF became operational across Wales from 2 April 2013 and has replaced elements of the DWP Social Fund. The purpose of DAF is to offer grant payments to help and support people where there is an identified need to safeguard their, or a member of their households, health and well-being and the applicant has no other means of meeting the immediate cost of living. Two grant payments are available; i) Individual Assistance Payment, and, ii) Emergency Assistance Payment.

The DAF is a cash limited fund which will initially run until March 2015. During the period April 2013 – October 2013, across Wales 18,320 applications were made to the DAF with support being given to 12,192 people. During the same period, Flintshire residents submitted 728 applications to the DAF with 428 of these applications (59%) being successful.

In its first six months of operation, the Discretionary Assistance Fund has spent just over £2.7 million of its annual budget of £10.2 million. This level of expenditure is significantly lower than projected. A recently published report from a Welsh Government Task and Finish Group included a series of formal recommendations to the DAF on how the scheme could be changed to offer assistance to more vulnerable households. A Flintshire County Council officer was a member of this group which was established by Welsh Government to consider the effects of changes to the welfare system on the social rented sector.

3.05 **Personal Independence Payments**

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have acknowledged that there are unacceptable delays in processing personal independence payment applications. Statistics released in January 2014 by the DWP, demonstrate that decisions had been made on less than one in five new personal independence payment claims submitted in the period June to December 2013. Of particular concern was the delay in processing claims from applicants with a terminal illness. The DWP have now introduced new processes to ensure that such personal independence claims are fast tracked.

In a report published in March 2014 the Work and Pensions Select Committee stated that the current service to personal independence payment (PIP) claimants is 'unacceptable'. The Committee highlighted that some claims for PIP are taking six months or more to process and called for urgent action to improve the current 'unacceptable' service to claimants. The Select Committee make several recommendations within their report, including that the DWP clear the existing backlog of PIP claims before reassessment of existing disability living allowance claimants is extended

The reassessment process for current disability living allowance claimants aged 16 – 64 years old (on the 8th April 2013) commenced on the 28th October 2013. The DWP project that 20% of current disability living allowance claimants will not meet the stricter eligibility criteria for personal independence payments. The first groups of Disability living allowance claimants being reassessed are:-

- Children reaching 16,
- Claimants with fixed term awards that end after the 17th March 2014, and
- Claimants who report a change in their circumstances, i.e., their health has deteriorated and their care and mobility needs have increased.

The Government remain confident that the large scale reassessment of disability living allowance claimants, who have an indefinite award of disability living, (including over 32 Flintshire residents) under the PIP eligibility criteria will commence in October 2015

3.06 **Universal Credit**

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have recently released statistics on the take-up of universal credit across the United Kingdom. The statistics demonstrate that between April 2013 and the 31 December 2013, a total of 4,280 people started on universal credit, i.e., completed the claim process, attended an interview with a work coach, and received at least one payment. Of these, around seven out of ten claims were made by people aged under 25. At present there are 3,780 live universal credit claims and only 10% of the live claims include housing costs (rent).

On the 3rd February 2014, a Statutory Instrument was laid before Parliament confirming that universal credit would be implemented within Flintshire from the 7th April 2014. Initially, only single unemployed claimants served by Shotton Jobcentre who live within postcode districts; CH5 1; CH5 2; CH5 3; CH5 4 & CH5 9, will be able to claim universal credit.

During the first few months, the take-up of universal credit in Flintshire amongst single claimants will be low, with the DWP projecting an average of 50 claims per month. However, the Secretary of State has given a commitment that during 2014 access to universal credit will be extended to include more claimant groups. It is understood that Shotton Jobcentre will begin to accept universal credit claims from claimant couples in September 2014. The proposal to extend access to universal credit to unemployed claimants with children is not expected to begin anywhere within the United Kingdom until 2015.

Flintshire has negotiated a DWP funded partnership agreement with the DWP. This will ensure there is a coordinated network of support provision available to assist vulnerable claimants to make and sustain their universal credit claim, and that measures are developed to provide DWP decision makers with direct access to technical advice and support from the Flintshire County Council Housing Benefit Service on universal credit claims that include housing costs.

The recommendations within a report on the implementation of universal credit within Flintshire, which outlines the Delivery Partnership Agreement between the Council and the DWP, were agreed by the Cabinet at their meeting held on 18 March 2014.

3.07 **Discretionary Housing Payments(DHP)**

The DWP have increased DHP funding to assist claimants who have been affected by welfare reform, this assistance is based on need and is viewed by DWP as temporary assistance until a claimant is able to adapt to the changes. The Council also provides funding within its base budget for DHP payments and this was re-profiled in the 2014/15 budget to take account of the level of DWP funding and levels of demand.

FCC Benefits Department have established protocols to ensure DHP is available to support affected claimants with an application process to ensure that help is provided in accordance with DWP guidelines.

As at February 2013, DHP totalling £245,811 has been paid to 584 claimants.

A review of applications in quarter 3 shows that 72.6% of applications were approved with landlord sector approval of :-

Flintshire	79.1%
RSL	78.9%
Private	61.8%

The Council's successful proactive work with claimants (see 3.10) has been effective in reducing the cost of DHP to levels lower than had been anticipated but, importantly, all eligible claimants have received support through DHP.

3.08 **Welfare Reform Training and Development Programme**

The programme continues to be delivered to front line advice and support staff from a range of internal and external services.

In December 2013, four training courses, providing an overview of universal credit and the personal independence payment, were delivered to 60 Flintshire County Council front line staff. Arrangements were made for these two courses to be cascaded to external advice and support services in March 2014. During January to March 2014, Flintshire County Council and the Department for Work and Pensions have also delivered universal credit presentations to the Flintshire's Private Landlord Forum, Support Providers Forum and Advisor Network.

3.09 **Welfare Reform Response Team (WRRT)**

The team was established in May 2013 to directly target advice and support at vulnerable households throughout Flintshire who are at most risk of losing household income and may face an increased risk of homelessness. The team has used data provided by the FCC Housing Benefit Service to predominately target their support services at households impacted by the spare room subsidy and the Benefit Cap.

At the 31st January 2014, the team had targeted over 175 households with 131 households accepting the offer of support and engaging with a response officer.

The WRRT interventions with these households have produced numerous successful outcomes, which have helped households to better manage the financial changes imposed upon them by the welfare reforms.

The successful outcomes include the following:

- 16 households were assisted to enter employment or to access training/education in order to enhance employment prospects
- 88 households were helped to gain extra weekly income, totalling £85,000pa
- 39 households were helped to avoid the risk of becoming homeless
- 20 households were helped to access more affordable accommodation

- 49 households received support to better manage their household budgets
- 29 households were helped to claim a discretionary housing payment award (Note: 41 households did not need to submit an application for a discretionary housing payment as the WRRT helped them to identify alternative means of meeting the shortfall in their housing benefit award.)

It is pleasing to report that the Welfare Reform Response Team has been commended in the 2014 Flintshire County Council Excellence Awards.

3.10 **Flintshire County Council tenants impacts**

A briefing note detailing the impacts of the welfare reforms upon council tenants and how these impacts are being managed is included at appendix 1, with information on allocations attached at appendix 2.

4.00 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.01 That Members note the report and the positive measures being implemented by the Housing Service, as outlined in Appendix 1, to mitigate the full extent of impacts from the welfare reforms from falling upon council tenants and to protect, as far as practical, the Housing Revenue Account income stream.

5.00 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.01 None directly as a result of this report.

6.00 **ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

- 6.01 There will be an impact of reducing benefits payable to residents who must be considered as our most financially vulnerable as that they had previously qualified for means tested benefits.
- 6.02 The work streams, which are being managed within Flintshire's response to the welfare reform agenda, aim to protect, as much as possible, the most vulnerable members of our communities from being adversely affected by the ongoing transformation of the social security system.

7.00 **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

- 7.01 None.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 As a Legislative decision the impacts have been assessed by Department for Work and Pensions, Welsh Government, Welsh Local Government Authority and at an Authority level impacts have been recognised.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 As the transformation of the social security system continues there will be an increased demand on staff resource to explain the changes to residents and to provide advice and support to help residents manage any resultant reduction in their household income.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 None.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 None.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1: Managing the impacts of welfare reform upon FCC tenants

Appendix 2: FCC Allocation Statistics – April 2013 to February 2014

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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Appendix 1

Title MANAGING THE IMPACTS OF WELFARE REFORM UPON FCC
TENANTS HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE: 16 APRIL 2014
REPORT BY: CLARE BUDDEN – HEAD OF HOUSING SERVICES

1.00 Introduction

1.01 This briefing note updates Committee Members on the actions being taken by Flintshire's Neighbourhood Housing Service to manage the impacts created by the most fundamental reform of the United Kingdom's social security system since the modern system was developed in the 1940's.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The Housing Service recognised that the on-going transformation of the social security system would affect social housing tenants more than other sectors of society with many tenants facing several changes to their social security entitlements over the next three years.

2.02 To help mitigate the full extent of the negative impact, which these changes will bring for tenants and to protect, as far as practical, the Housing Revenue Account income stream, the Housing Service identified that it would need to put measures in place to support tenants and amend its housing allocation and rent arrears policies.

3.00 Supporting Tenants

3.01 Introduced in April 2013, the spare room subsidy (commonly known as the bedroom tax) is perhaps the most contentious of the welfare reforms so far implemented. It has also been the subject of numerous reports and the impact of the spare room subsidy upon social housing tenants and social housing providers is currently being examined by two large-scale studies, one by the Wales Audit Officeⁱ and the other by the Department for Work and Pensionsⁱⁱ. The conclusions from these

ⁱ Wales Audit Office – Oct 2013 – is undertaking a national study considering how well placed councils are to effectively manage the impact of welfare reform on social housing in Wales. For further information please contact, Nick Selwyn - nick.selwyn@wao.gov.uk

ⁱⁱ Department for Work & Pensions – Oct 2013 - have commissioned the Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research to undertake an evaluation of the impact of housing benefit reforms on social landlords in Britain.

Appendix 1

two studies will be circulated to Committee Members when they are published.

- 3.02 According to statistics from the Department for Work and Pensions, the spare room subsidy has affected 46% of working-age housing benefit claimants in the social rented sector in Wales, the highest proportion out of all regions in Great Britain. In January 2014, 909 Flintshire County Council tenants were having their housing benefit entitlement reduced because, according to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) size criteria, they are deemed to have more bedrooms than their household requires. The total reduction in housing benefit payments for these 909 tenants is £12,000pw (£624,000pa).
- 3.03 At the onset of the implementation of the spare room subsidy in April 2013 there were 1,147 Council tenants impacted. The reduction in the numbers has been the result of a number of factors, for example, tenant's circumstances changing, i.e. their child reaching the age of 10 or 16 years old and no longer being affected by the spare room subsidy. It is also important to note that some tenants, whose reduction in their housing benefit was greater than their housing benefit award, are still affected by the loss of income they have suffered because of the bedroom tax. However, as they are no longer receiving benefit they will not be identified on the updated lists of housing benefit claimants who are impacted.
- 3.04 Prior to the implementation of the spare room subsidy, the Housing Service provided comprehensive information on the housing benefit changes to all of the under occupying tenants. Tenants were also offered an opportunity to meet with the Housing Service to identify how they may overcome the problems that the reduction in their housing benefit award would create. Almost 80% of the tenants took up this offer and drew up a housing support plan, noting their preferred long-term housing option and identifying the on-going support, which they would need to attain and sustain this option.
- 3.05 The task of engaging with over 800 tenants was a significant one in terms of both the time and the resources required. However, the benefits derived from profiling tenants and understanding their support needs has proven invaluable in enabling the Housing Service and Welfare Reform Response Team to target their service resources and help tenants to cope with the problems the reduction in their housing

Appendix 1

benefit generated. For example, helping tenants to manage their financial commitments; improve their budgeting skills; maximise their household income; secure alternative accommodation; and improve prospects of obtaining employment; etc. The implementation of the Supporting People Housing Support Gateway has proven an invaluable resource to the Housing Service and, since the middle of January 2014, has enabled 80 tenants to be seamlessly referred to a service provider for specialist advice and support.

3.06 Providing support to the tenants affected by the spare room subsidy has played a significant role in mitigating the full impact of the reduction in housing benefit payments from falling upon the Council's Housing Revenue Account. For example, at the end of December 2013, the total amount of rent arrears amongst the Council's tenants affected by the spare room subsidy stood at approximately £273,000. Given the reduction in housing benefit payments, due to the spare room subsidy, during the same period (April 2013 – December 2013) totals £468,000 (£12,000pw x 39) the Housing Service has during this period secured rental income from under-occupying tenants of £195,000 (equates to £5,000pw).

3.07 This income secured is a combination of tenants making their own payments and awards of discretionary housing payments (DHP). During the period 01 April 2013 to 31 December 2013, the amount of DHP paid to the rent accounts of Council tenants totalled £118,000. Thus, after taking into account the DHP figure, the tenants impacted by the spare room subsidy have made payments to their rent accounts totalling £77,000 (£1,974 per week).

3.08 Whilst, it is obvious tenants are still experiencing difficulties generated by the spare room subsidy the proactive responses they have received from the Housing Service, alongside the support from the Council's DHP scheme, has helped tenants to manage, as best as possible, the problems created by the reduction in their housing benefit awards.

4.00 **Amending Housing Policies**

4.01 Along with the need to support tenants the Housing Service recognised that its allocation and rent arrears policies required slight changes to enable them to respond to the specific challenges generated by the spare room subsidy. For example, to help tenants impacted by the

Appendix 1

spare room subsidy to transfer to smaller accommodation and to ensure the enforcement action, within the rent arrears policy was proportionate and sympathetic for tenants who have accrued rent arrears wholly due to the spare room subsidy. In January 2013, all Flintshire County Council Members were consulted upon the required changes to both policies and fully supported the proposed amendments.

- 4.02 At the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in January 2013, Members strongly recommended that the allocation of the Council's housing stock should continue to be based upon an applicant's housing need, even when allocating a property to the applicant in most need would conflict with the Department for Work and Pensions size criteria and the applicant would be under occupying the property.
- 4.03 Comprehensive data on the allocations made across Flintshire in the period April 2013 to February 2014 is attached for information at appendix 2. The Housing Service has attempted to maintain, as far as practical, the policy of allocating properties based on the applicants housing need even where the applicant will be under occupying the property that they have qualified for and do need to claim housing benefit to help them pay their contractual rent. For example, during the period April 2013 to February 2014, the Housing Service allocated a total of 534 properties with 86 of these properties allocated to applicants who, according to Department for Work and Pensions size criteria, would be under occupying the property.
- 4.04 The Housing Service has adopted a proactive, supportive and sensible approach with these 86 applicants to try to ensure they are not being set up to fail in their tenancy. For example, the Housing Service undertakes pre-tenancy work with such applicants helping them to understand their income and expenditure and as appropriate, links them with appropriate support services, etc. An analysis of the rent accounts of 43 of these tenants has demonstrated though that 30 (70%) have accrued rent arrears, 10 (23%) are in credit with their rent payments and 3 (7%) have clear rent accounts. The Housing Service is continuing to support the 30 tenants who have accrued rent arrears due to being allocated a property that is, according to the DWP size criteria, too large for their household needs.

Appendix 1

- 4.05 To increase the likelihood of a tenant affected by the spare room subsidy being at the top of the allocations register for a transfer to smaller accommodation, the allocation policy was amended to increase the number of points awarded to such tenants. All tenants affected by the bedroom tax who have requested a transfer receive 100 allocation points and those tenants who are under occupying by two or more bedrooms received an additional 50 management points. To date the increased points have resulted in 48 tenants affected by the spare room subsidy successfully transferring to smaller accommodation. In addition 15 tenants have, through the Home Swapper scheme, mutually exchanged properties.
- 4.06 Whilst a number of mutual exchanges and transfers have taken place the Housing Service has identified that there are tenants with 'lower' housing need, who, if transferred, would free up a property for those affected by the spare room subsidy. However, the current allocation points system simply ranks people in respect of their housing need. For example, a working couple with two young daughters in a two bedroom house. Ideally they would like a three bedroom house to give their daughters some extra space as they grow, but they are deemed to be adequately housed at the moment, therefore their points would not be sufficient for them to ordinarily be allocated a three bedroom house. Likewise a couple with one child, affected by the spare room subsidy, may be in a three bedroom house, and requiring a two bedroom property. A solution could be facilitated by either a direct mutual exchange, or by applying for management points to facilitate a resolution, allowing all parties to be housed in accommodation that meets their requirements.
- 4.07 The Neighbourhood Housing Service has recruited a Neighbourhood Housing Officer (Welfare Reform) on a fixed term secondment. This officer will give the service additional capacity to identify and implement creative solutions to address housing requirements. The member of staff who has been recruited to the role brings with them a wealth of experience in supporting people with a wide range of issues including housing, benefits and income. The service is confident that having this additional member of staff will positively impact on both the quality of life for our customers, whilst mitigating some of the risk to the Housing Service brought about by welfare reform.

Appendix 1

4.08 Whilst it has been necessary to promote and prioritise the transfer of tenants affected by the spare room subsidy to smaller and more affordable accommodation, Members recognised that it was also important to balance the requirement to allocate Council accommodation to other applicants on the housing register who are in urgent housing need. For example, applicants who are homeless or need to move for medical reasons. Therefore, an allocation quota system was introduced in April 2013 with proposed targets of 50% of allocations to go to applicants from the mainstream housing register, 30% to homeless applicants, and 20% to applicants affected by the spare room subsidy.

4.09 A snapshot of allocations made during the third quarter (September 13 to December 13) of the current financial year demonstrates that percentage of allocations to these different groups is as follows: (i) Mainstream Housing Register = 64%; (ii) Homeless Applicants = 27 %; (iii) Spare Room Subsidy = 9%. (A recent survey looking at the impact of the spare room subsidy across 300 social housing providers throughout the UK has concluded that, on average, only 6% of affected tenants have moved to smaller accommodation.)

4.10 The consultation received from Members related to the Housing Service's rent arrears policy, recommended that tenants, whose rent arrears had been created wholly by the housing benefit reforms, are dealt with in a sensitive manner and provided with appropriate support. Members agreed that enforcement action to evict a tenant for failing to maintain their contractual rent payments, due to the reduction in their housing benefit entitlement, should only be considered when a tenant has refused to engage with the Housing Service and refused to implement solutions that would assist them to better manage the loss of their benefit income. The Housing Service is able to confirm that no tenant with rent arrears, wholly created by the introduction of the spare room subsidy, has been evicted. (For information, during the period April 2013 to March 2014, thirty-one Flintshire County Council tenants were evicted.)

5.00 **Conclusion**

5.01 Managing the impacts of the spare room subsidy has required proactive engagement with many tenants on aspects of their day-to-day lives, which, unless they had rent arrears, were not usually focused

Appendix 1

upon. The Housing Service has recognised the importance of continuing such engagement with tenants in order to help them to prepare for the next tranche of welfare reforms, such as introduction of universal credit. For example, the Housing Service is planning to profile all working age tenants and identifying those who may gain from initiatives that promote digital and financial inclusion, etc.

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NORTH AREA

Overall Summary - April 2013 to February 2014

- 194 properties allocated
- 17 tenants have transferred due to the spare room subsidy.
- Of all the allocations made, 34 were to applicants in housing need but who are affected by spare room subsidy.

One-bed properties

- 38 one-bed properties allocated (general need and sheltered).
- 6 of the allocations were tenants who have transferred due to the spare room subsidy.

Elderly Couple	Elderly Single	Single + 1 Child	Single
1	22	1	14

Two-bed properties

- 87 two-bed properties allocated (general need and sheltered).
- 10 of the allocations were tenants who have transferred due to the spare room subsidy.
- 15 of the allocations were applicants in housing need but who are affected by spare room subsidy.

Couple	Couple + 1 Child	Pregnant Couple	Elderly Couple	Elderly Single	Single + 1 Child	Single + 2 Children	Single
6	3	1	16	27	17	1	16

Three-bed properties

- 67 three-bed properties allocated (general need).
- 1 of the allocations was a tenant who transferred due to the spare room subsidy.
- 19 of the allocations were applicants in housing need but who are affected by spare room subsidy.

Couple	Couple + 1 Child	Couple + 2 Children	Couple + 3 Children	Couple + 4+ Children	Single + 1 Child	Single + 2 Children	Single	Pregnant Couple	Single + 3+ Children
1	8	15	4	1	12	14	3	1	5

Appendix 2: FCC Allocation Statistics – April 2013 to February 2014

Four-bed properties

- 2 four-bed properties allocated (general need).

Couple + 3 Children	Couple + 4+ Children
1	1

SOUTH AREA

Overall Summary - April 2013 to February 2014

- 188 properties allocated.
- 21 tenants have transferred due to the spare room subsidy.
- Of all the allocations made, 37 were to applicants in housing need but who are affected by spare room subsidy.

One-bed properties

- 64 one-bed properties allocated (general need and sheltered).
- 14 of the allocations were tenants who have transferred due to the spare room subsidy.

Elderly Couple	Elderly Single	Single	Single + 2 Children	Couple
12	32	16	1	3

Two-bed properties

- 37 two-bed properties allocated (general need and sheltered).
- 6 of the allocations were tenants who have transferred due to the spare room subsidy.
- 9 of the allocations were applicants in housing need but who are affected by spare room subsidy.

Couple	Couple + 1 Child	Pregnant Couple	Elderly Couple	Elderly Single	Single + 1 Child	Single + 2 Children	Single	Single Pregnant
2	4	4	2	4	9	4	7	1

Appendix 2: FCC Allocation Statistics – April 2013 to February 2014

Three-bed properties

- 81 three-bed properties allocated (general need).
- 1 of the allocations was a tenant who transferred due to the spare room subsidy.
- 28 of the allocations were applicants in housing need but who are affected by spare room subsidy.

Couple	Couple + 1 Child	Couple + 2 Children	Couple + 3 Children	Couple + 4+ Children	Single + 1 Child	Single + 2 Children	Single	Single + 3+ Children
3	17	8	6	1	17	16	3	10

Four-bed properties

- There have been five four bed properties allocated.

Couple + 4+ Children	Couple + 3 Children	Couple + 2 Children	Couple + 1 Child
1	1	1	2

Five-bed properties

- There has been one five bed property allocated.

Single + 4+ Children
1

EAST AREA

Overall Summary - April 2013 to February 2014

- 152 properties allocated.
- 10 tenants have transferred due to the spare room subsidy.
- Of all the allocations made, 15 were to applicants in housing need but who are affected by spare room subsidy.

Appendix 2: FCC Allocation Statistics – April 2013 to February 2014

One-bed properties

- 75 one-bed properties allocated (general need and sheltered).
- 4 of the allocations were tenants who have transferred due to the spare room subsidy.

Elderly Couple	Elderly Single	Single					
12	36	27					

Two-bed properties

- 37 two-bed properties allocated (general need and sheltered).
- 6 of the allocations were tenants who have transferred due to the spare room subsidy.

Couple	Couple + 1 Child	Pregnant Couple	Elderly Couple	Elderly Single	Single + 1 Child	Single + 2 Children	Single	
		1	2	4	16	1	4	

Three-bed properties

- 39 three-bed properties allocated (general need).
- none of the allocations were tenants transferring due to the spare room subsidy.
- 15 of the allocations were applicants in housing need but who are affected by spare room subsidy.

Couple	Couple + 1 Child	Couple + 2 Children	Couple + 3 Children	Couple + 4+ Children	Single + 1 Child	Single + 2 Children	Single	Pregnant Couple	Single + 3+ Children
		7	1	4	5	9			13

Four-bed properties

- There has been one four bed properties allocated.

	Couple + 4+ Children
	1

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

DATE: **WEDNESDAY 16TH APRIL, 2014**

REPORT BY: **HOUSING & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FACILITATOR**

SUBJECT: **IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING REPORT**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To note and consider elements of the 2013/14 Mid Year Improvement Plan Monitoring Report relevant to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The report covers the period October – December 2013.

1.02 To note the following:-

- The levels of progress and confidence in meeting the Council's Improvement Priorities and their impacts including the milestones achieved.
- The measures which evidence achievement and the baseline data, and targets.
- The baseline risk assessment for the strategic risks identified in the Improvement Plan and the arrangements to control them.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The new style Improvement Plan adopted by Council in June 2013 which is aligned to the new three year Outcome Agreement, focuses on the priorities which are expected to have the most impact during 2013/14.

2.02 In addition to the Improvement Plan Monitoring Report, bi-annually performance highlight reports will be presented from the Heads of Service. These will be similar to those previously produced for quarterly reporting.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The Improvement Plan Monitoring Report gives an explanation of the progress being made towards delivery of the impacts set out in the Improvement Plan. The narrative is supported by measures and/or milestones which evidence achievement. In addition, there is an assessment of the strategic risks and the level to which they are being controlled.

3.02 For Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee the following Improvement Plan sub-priority reports are attached at Appendix 1 – 5:-

- Extra Care Housing
- Modern, Efficient and Adapted Homes
- Achieve the Wales Housing Quality Standard
- Welfare Reform
- Fuel Poverty

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That the Committee consider the 2013/14 Mid Year Improvement Plan Monitoring Report, highlight concerns and feedback details of any challenge to the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee who are responsible for the overview and monitoring of performance.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 There are no specific financial implications for this report; however the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan is aligned to resource the priorities of the Improvement Plan.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 There are no specific anti poverty implications for this report, however poverty is a priority within the Improvement Plan 2013/14.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 There are no specific environmental implications for this report; however the environment is a priority within the Improvement Plan 2013/14.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 There are no equalities implications for this report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 There are no personnel implications for this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 Publication of this report constitutes consultation.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Corporate Management Team and the Performance Leads from across the Authority have contributed to help shape the new approach to reporting.

12.00 APPENDICES

- 12.01 Appendix 1 – Extra Care Housing
Appendix 2 – Modern, Efficient and Adapted Homes
Appendix 3 – Achieve the Wales Housing Quality Standard
Appendix 4 – Welfare Reform
Appendix 5 – Fuel Poverty

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.

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APPENDIX 1

Priority: Housing
Sub-Priority: Extra Care Housing
Impact: Helping more people to live independently and well at home

We said in 2013/14 that we would:

1. Extend our extra care supported living service from 1 to 2 schemes increasing provision from 50 housing units to 113 housing units by opening Llys Jasmine in Mold to follow Llys Eleanor in Shotton.

Progress Status	Progress RAG	G	Outcome RAG	G
------------------------	---------------------	----------	--------------------	----------

Llys Jasmine opened on a phased basis in the first week in October, after a slight delay on the build. Apartments were fully subscribed and have now all been occupied. There is now a waiting list for places. Tenants meetings originally planned for January are subject to a slight delay in line with the build programme and are being held in February; a tenant satisfaction scheme is under development and feedback will be reported in Quarter 4. A further two extra care schemes are currently under consideration.

Achievement will be Measured through:

- Scale and take-up of provision to meet demand
- Tenant feedback

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans: (Lead officers – Director of Community Services, Head of Housing, Head of Adult Social Services)

Open Llys Jasmine – September 2013

Develop a tenant satisfaction scheme by January 2014

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2012/13 Baseline Data	2013/14 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	Current Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
Full occupation: i) Llys Jasmine – 63 units ii)Llys Eleanor – 50 units	Director of Community Services / Head of Housing / Head of Adult Social Services	i) N/A ii)100%	i) 100% ii) 100%	i)100% ii)100%	i) 100% ii) 100%	G	G
Tenant feedback: >90% rate of tenant satisfaction (Annual measure)	Head of Housing / Head of Adult Social Services	N/A	90%	90%	To be reported at Year End	N/A	G

2. Develop a new and sustainable business model for more schemes, now there is no longer Welsh Government capital funding available, with plans for further schemes in the Flint and Holywell catchments.

Progress Status	Progress RAG	A	Outcome RAG	G
------------------------	---------------------	----------	--------------------	----------

There is a proposal to utilise WG Intermediate Care Funding to support the capital requirement of developing two further Extra Care Housing developments in Flint and Holywell. Further work is required with social landlords to ensure that a robust business plan can be developed on this basis. The Director of Community Services is in discussion with housing partners and working closely with legal and procurement to agree a way forward. Plans for the new Extra Care schemes include the consideration of revenue streams to support the transition from more traditional to new housing and care services.

Achievement will be Measured through:

- development of a new business model
- development of agreed plans for new schemes

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans: (Lead Officer – Director of Community Services)

- Appoint partner – November 2013
- Develop new business model – December 2013
- Develop agreed plans for new schemes – February 2014

Page 57

Risks to Manage

1. How we can fund the building of new schemes with local partners and using local assets without national capital grant.
2. How we can switch revenue resources from more traditional to new housing and care services.
3. Keeping up with demand for alternative housing models from an ageing population.
4. Keeping up with specialist demand such as meeting the specific needs of those with dementia.

Page 58

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)			(L)	(I)	(LxI)	
H	H	R	Council is progressing appointment of a Social Housing Partner to support developments in Flint & Holywell. It was expected a partner would be appointed by the end of October 2013 but this process is taking longer than anticipated. Actions will be identified and listed against these risks following this appointment.	M	M	A	The appointment of a partner is progressing through the legal and procurement process. There is no risk to the outcome; the risk status relates to the planned timescales being met, and is reducing as negotiations progress. An update on the timescale for this will be reported at Year End.	Head of Assets & Transportation	↓	L	L	G

APPENDIX 2

Priority: Housing
Sub-Priority: Modern, Efficient and Adapted Homes
Impact: Improving the choice and quality of local housing

We said in 2013/14 that we would:

1. Agree a new model of private finance to deliver an increased number of affordable homes.

Progress Status	Progress RAG	A	Outcome RAG	G
------------------------	---------------------	----------	--------------------	----------

There have been delays in getting the models agreed, approval has now been given for a new housing company which will start trading in April 2014. The formation of the new company will enable the adoption and use of a wider range of models to deliver affordable housing.

Achievement will be Measured through:

- Gaining formal approval for a new model
- Approval for the Flint Town Centre regeneration plan

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans: (Lead Officer – Head of Housing)

Gain approval for new funding model – completed

Gain approval for Flint Town regeneration plan – **Housing design brief agreed but master plan delayed due to ongoing discussions with other public sector partners about town centre use**

Risks to Manage

Ensuring that we prevent delays in planning approvals for affordable housing developments for affordable housing developments.

Page 60

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)
M	M	A	Preplanning meetings are now in place with planning and the affordable housing officer to help assist applications to progress smoothly through the planning process.	L	M	G		Head of Housing	↔	L	M	G

Risks to Manage

Ensure the availability of private finance for development of affordable homes.

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)			(L)	(I)	(LxI)	
M	H	R	New company effectively mitigates risk by allowing a wider range of finance options and leverage of assets.	L	H	G	N/A	Head of Housing	↓	L	H	G

Risks to Manage

Encouraging developers to build a range of affordable housing in the current economic climate

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)
H	H	R	Preplanning meetings are now in place with planning and the affordable housing officer to help assist applications to progress smoothly through the planning process.	M	H	R	New housing company will give a wider range of options for developers to meet S106 obligations.	Head of Housing	↔	L	M	G

Page 62

2. Develop a strategy to grow and sustain the private rented sector

Progress Status	Progress RAG	A	Outcome RAG	A
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Development of a strategy has been delayed in order to take into consideration consultation undertaken in late 2013. The Private Rented Sector improvement plan is in place and elements are being implemented.

Draft proposals to grow the Private Rented Sector considered by Scrutiny Committee in 2013. Firm proposals now developed for delivery by North East Wales Homes as part of its approved business plan.

- Achievement will be Measured through:**
- Formal approval for a strategy to grow and sustain the private rented sector approved by the end of 2013
 - Bringing of 30 empty homes back into use for residential living

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans: (Lead Officer – Head of Housing)
Develop and implement a Private Rented Sector improvement strategy and associated action plan – September 2013

Page 63

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2012/13 Baseline Data	2013/14 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	Current Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
Number of empty homes brought back into use.	Head of Housing	32	30	30 (120 cumulative)	29	G	G

Risks to Manage

Maximising our joint resources with our partners

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood (L)	Impact (I)	Gross Score (LxI)		Likelihood (L)	Impact (I)	Gross Score (LxI)				Likelihood (L)	Impact (I)	Gross Score (LxI)
H	H	R	The review of joint and collaborative working in the PRS with neighbouring authorities is scheduled for completion by Dec 2013.	H	H	R	Establish a corporate private rented sector working group to develop corporate service standards, policies and processes in relation to the sector. Review joint and collaborative working in the private rented sector with neighbouring local authorities.	Head of Housing	↔	M	M	A

Page 64

3. Develop a regional housing register and common allocations policy with partners			
Progress Status	Progress RAG	Outcome RAG	
	A	G	
<p>The SARTH Policy was completed and approved by Cabinet in January 2014. A phased implementation has been agreed which will see operational implementation of the housing solutions approach and revised medical panel policy in quarter 4. The IT development and review and cleanse of the register will carry on alongside this work. The project plan projects a go live date in Autumn 2014.</p>			
<p>Achievement will be Measured through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A regional housing register and common allocations policy agreed and in place by Autumn 2013 <p>Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans: (Lead Officer – Head of Housing)</p> <p>Regional register and common allocations policy agreed – November 2013</p> <p>Regional register and common allocations policy implemented – February 2014</p>			

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APPENDIX 3

Priority: Housing
Sub-Priority: Achieve the Welsh Housing Quality Standard
Impact: Improving quality of life for our tenants through improved housing

We said in 2013/14 that we would:

1. Agree a revised business plan with Welsh Government to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)

Progress Status	Progress RAG	G	Outcome RAG	G
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Flintshire County Council has agreed a revised business plan with Welsh Government to achieve the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by 2020. A number of surveys are to be procured to validate figures provided in the business plan and to inform a revised 7 year work programme for achievement of WHQS. These include: -

- Revised Stock Condition Survey – **Surveys are now in progress first draft expected Feb 2014**
- Asbestos Consultancy and Surveying – **Surveying progress for communal areas**
- Communal Heating – Due to go out to tender

The revised business plan will commit to circa £103m over the next 7 years to achieve WHQS. As per the current work streams the initial focus will be on the internal components of the properties with the external and environmental programmes to begin following the completion of the internal work schemes.

The agreed business plan highlights a number of alternative funding streams and efficiency and income generation targets to contribute towards achieving outcomes contained within the business plan i.e. ECO Funding, service charges.

Previous risk identified – Understanding what our options are should Welsh Government not agree Flintshire’s revised Business Plan – The risks have been revised on the basis that the business plan submitted has been agreed by Welsh Government.

Achievement will be Measured through:

- Agreement of a revised business plan with Welsh Government – **Achieved**

Next steps:

Pursue options to secure additional funding to maximise investment capacity in the housing stock – Funding gap reduced from 14M to 7M through additional efficiencies and income maximisation in 2014/15 budget - **Met**

Risks to Manage:

1. Outcomes of Stock Condition Survey
2. Securing additional funding such as ECO finance
3. Realising efficiencies and income generation targets identified in the business plan

Page 68

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)			(L)	(I)	(LxI)	
H	H	R	1. Gaining political approval for efficiency and income generation proposals.	L	M	G	1. Options for prudential borrowing. 2. Revise business plan following outcomes of Stock Condition Survey	Head of Housing	↓	L	L	G

2. Deliver the capital programme ensuring value for money

Progress Status

Progress RAG

G

Outcome RAG

G

During the financial year 2012 / 2013, a number of capital works targets were met within budget and market conditions enabled FCC to exceed our target numbers for the same value: -

- Heating upgrades - 600 homes planned - 1100 delivered
- Kitchen replacements - 922 planned - 1100 delivered
- Smoke detectors - 884 planned - 2400 delivered
- Bathroom replacements - 56 planned - 62 delivered

In 2013/14 the expectation is that the original commitments will again be exceeded: -

- Heating upgrades - 600 homes promised - 1000 in programme
- Kitchen replacements – 922 promised - 1000 in programme
- Smoke detectors - 884 promised - 1000 in programme
- Bathrooms – 0 promised – 60 in programme

Programme expenditure 2013/14 is currently in accordance with initial forecasts. Against a budget of £12m for the financial year actual spend at **December 2013 is £8m**. A number of work streams were profiled to commence later in the financial year and these also remain on target.

As part of the Housing Asset Management service review a Tenant Liaison Officer was appointed in July 2013.

Progress on the key milestones is as follows: -

- The asbestos consultancy and surveying is in progress.
- To ensure performance of the works programme, monitoring is in place for contract progress and budget management. Monthly project meetings are held with each contractor to review progress and performance against KPI's. Delivery targets are set and progress against these targets is monitored by the project managers.
- The revised Stock Condition Survey is currently in progress. The survey will verify previous Stock Condition Data, survey a further 10% of the internal condition of the properties and focus on the external aspects of the stock in order to inform the environmental work streams that will form part of the revised works plan to meet WHQS by 2020.
- Following the return and review of the updated Stock Condition Data a revised 7 year programme will be developed to meet the WHQS by 2020.
- An Asbestos Management Strategy has been developed together with an operational plan for implementation.

Achievement will be Measured through:

- Performance management of our works programme

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2012/13 Baseline Data	2013/14 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	Current Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
Capital Programme expenditure on improvement work streams	Housing	N/A	£12m	N/A	£4m	G	G

Risks to Manage:

Ensuring Contractors perform effectively.
Meeting customer expectations

Page 71

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)
M	M	A	1. Effective budget monitoring and management 2. Robust management of contractors for programme delivery. 3. Ensuring effective arrangements and resource for customer liaison. Tenant Liaison Officer appointed in July 2013.	L	L	G	1. Review resource requirements in line with revised 7 year works programme.	Head of Assets & Transportation	↓	L	L	G

3. Develop a Housing Asset Management Strategy by January 2014.

Progress Status

Progress RAG

G

Outcome RAG

G

A revised Asset Management Strategy has been developed alongside the completion of an updated Stock Condition Survey. The outcomes of the Stock Condition Survey together with the information gathered for the Asset Management Strategy will then inform a revised 7 year Capital Investment Programme to achieve WHQS by 2020.

The Stock Condition Survey is currently in progress.

A new risk has also been identified in terms of welfare reform and the need to identify measures within the Asset Management Strategy to mitigate the potential impact. A small budget has identified in 14/15 capital programme to adapt properties that may become difficult to let due to the size (and threat of bedroom tax) for large properties where there is no demand.

Achievement will be Measured through:

- An effective strategy to maintain and improve the housing stock

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans: (Lead Officer – Head of Housing)

Asset management strategy including options for energy funding, WHQS, regulation and compliance etc. – January 2014

Risks to Manage

Ensuring that the Council finds the resources required to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by 2020
Ability to address the impact and change in demand due to Welfare Reform

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)			(L)	(I)	(LxI)	
H	H	R	1. Ensuring other services i.e. Housing Management input to the Asset Management Strategy to plan for the impact of Welfare Reform and other regeneration issues.	L	M	G	1. Revisit and revise business plan to address future impacts of Welfare Reform i.e. re-modelling of existing accommodation. 2. Options for prudential borrowing	Head of Housing	↓	L	L	G

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APPENDIX 4

Priority: Poverty
Sub-Priority: Welfare Reform
Impact: Protecting people from poverty

We said in 2013/14 that we would:

1. Help prevent people from becoming homeless

Progress Status	Progress RAG	G	Outcome RAG	G
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With forthcoming changes to homeless legislation being introduced by the Housing Bill 2015, work has begun on merging the Housing Register Team responsible for managing the social housing register with the Housing Options Team. By integrating this team, the service will be able to provide a more realistic housing options approach for more people who require assistance in securing accommodation.

Existing accommodation support resources funded by Supporting People have been targeted to focus on homeless prevention.

Achievement will be Measured through:

- The percentage of all potentially homeless households for whom homelessness was prevented for at least 6 months

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2012/13 Baseline Data	2013/14 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	Current Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
Homeless Prevention for 6 months (HHA/013)	Head of Housing	83.41%	90%	90%	N/A (annual)	N/A	N/A

Risks to Manage

1. Meeting the growing costs of homeless prevention
2. Rent arrears rising if tenants are unable to afford to pay their rent
(these risks are combined and therefore both covered below, if tenants are able to afford rent, this lessens the demand and therefore cost of providing homelessness prevention and use of B&B's)

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score
a(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)
H	H	R	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Staff across the service have had HomeSwapper training to help assist tenants to downsize. 1,2 Work undertaken with Revenues & Benefits to identify affected customers whose arrears are increasing at the most rapid rate and staff have been making regular contact with those people. 2 A new system to ensure that those requesting re-housing as a result of welfare reform receive an equal quota of allocations has been introduced. 1, 2 Advice and assistance is being targeted to households throughout Flintshire whom are at most risk of losing household income and become at an increased risk of homelessness. 1,2 	M	M	A	<p>The implementation of the following actions will support the on-going mitigation of the impacts upon tenants created by the transformation of the social security system.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Development of the Flintshire Delivery Partnership Agreement in readiness for progressive implementation of Universal Credit 1,2 Introduce measures to improve financial capability & access to affordable credit within households impacted by welfare reforms. 1,2 	Head of Housing	↔	M	M	A

2. Provide advice and support services to help people protect their income

Progress Status	Progress RAG	G	Outcome RAG	A
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The Welfare Rights Team has assisted residents to claim additional welfare benefit income totalling £1.9 million during the period April 2013 – December 2013, boosting household income and spending power within the local economy. Demand from residents requesting specialist advice to challenge adverse decisions on their benefit entitlement remains high. Compared to the same period in the previous year the demand has increased by over 50%.

Achievement will be Measured through:

- Number of Flintshire residents assisted by Flintshire County Council’s Welfare Rights Unit to claim additional Social Security and Tax Credits
- Number of residents supported to successfully challenge adverse benefit decisions
- Number of residents accessing money management training
- Number of residents helped to move to more affordable accommodation
- Amount of additional Social Security and Tax Credits paid to Flintshire Residents as a result of the work undertaken by Flintshire County Council
- Amount of debt managed as a result of advice provided by the Flintshire Money Advice Service

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2012/13 Baseline Data	2013/14 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	Current Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
Amount of additional Social Security and Tax Credits paid to Flintshire residents as a result of the work undertaken by FCC (WEL/001)	Head of Housing	£2,000,000	£2,200,000	£3,500,000	£1,900,000	G	G
The following indicators are provided for information and monitoring only and are not suitable for target setting and performance RAGs							
Number of Flintshire residents assisted by FCC to claim Additional Social Security and Tax Credits	Head of Housing	1,200	N/A	N/A	1,005	N/A	N/A
Number of residents supported to successfully challenge adverse benefit decisions	Head of Housing	110	N/A	N/A	140	N/A	N/A
Number of residents accessing money management training	Head of Housing	N/A	N/A	N/A	49	N/A	N/A
Number of residents helped to move to more affordable accommodation	Head of Housing	N/A	N/A	N/A	39	N/A	N/A
Amount of debt managed as a result of advice provided by the Flintshire Welfare Rights and Money Advice Service	Head of Housing	£3,500,000	N/A	N/A	£5,746,954	N/A	N/A

Risks to Manage

1. The Welfare Rights and Money Advice Service being able to meet demand
2. Local neighbourhood services may suffer as residents have less income to spend
(these risks are combined and therefore covered below)

Page 79

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)			(L)	(I)	(LxI)	
H	H	R	1. At the end of Dec 13, the Welfare Reform Response Team had supported 118 households to better manage the financial changes imposed upon them by the welfare reforms. 2. FCC is working in partnership with the DWP to ensure there is a coordinated network of support provision available to assist vulnerable claimants to make and sustain their universal credit claim and to be better prepared to obtain	M	M	A	1. Implement the Flintshire Delivery Partnership Agreement to ensure first tranche of universal credit claimants receive appropriate support. 2. Empower front line service providers through the provision of a training/coaching. 3. Forecast the impact of the on-going changes to social security legislation upon residents, service users, service providers, the local authority, local businesses, etc 4. Implement and manage a communication strategy ensuring information on the	Head of Housing	↔	M	M	A

APPENDIX 5

Priority: Poverty
Sub-Priority: Fuel Poverty
Impact: Protecting people from poverty

We said in 2013/14 that we would:

1. Develop a regional ECO scheme with key partners.			
Progress Comment	Progress RAG	G	Outcome RAG
<p>A regional Energy Company Obligation (ECO) framework, initially focussed on social housing external wall insulation works, was developed in partnership with Wrexham, Denbighshire and Conwy councils and procured by Wrexham Council. The framework was established in August 2013 and we await documentation being sent to our legal and procurement teams to confirm the process of participation in this. Achievements will be measured as part of the other activities in this improvement plan, in terms of measures installed, and carbon and heating bills reduced.</p>			
<p>Achievement will be measured through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of a regional ECO scheme - Achieved Aug 2013 			

Page 81

Risks to Manage - We could be unsuccessful in establishing an ECO partnership.

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)			(L)	(I)	(LxI)	
H	H	R	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with Wrexham and other partners to develop ECO framework. 2. The overall cost of establishing the framework is split so that the most active partners contribute a larger proportion of the cost. This is to encourage involvement of less active partners. 3. There is limited obligation on partners to commit to using the framework. Partners are not forced to use the framework. 4. The framework has been tendered based on volume coming from social stock. This allows the Councils to control the volume of work put through the framework. 	L	L	G	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There may be a need to develop further ECO Frameworks or bespoke contracts, depending upon the performance of the 4 successful contractors and the types of work packages required. 2. Until the first mini-tenders are run it is unknown whether the framework will allow the Council to benefit from more specialist/ targeted investment. Any adjustment in strategy is easily achieved through a revision to the Private Sector Renewal & Improvement Policy. 3. ECO funding levels may fluctuate as funds diminish or as further opportunities become available. The Council will need to monitor this risk and adapt as appropriate. 	Gavin Griffith	↓	L	L	G

2. Help residents in the private sector to access funding support to improve the thermal efficiency of their homes.

Progress Comment

Progress RAG

G

Outcome RAG

G

The team has exceeded targets this year as a result of the availability of grant funding in Q1 and Q2 but this grant funding has greatly reduced in Q3.

The contract with A&M Energy Solutions for the provision of external wall insulation is progressing well across Connah's Quay and Greenfield with expected completion in Q3. 43 jobs have been created or sustained through the programme with all 90 scheduled properties (including 6 council) complete. Anticipated annual heating bill savings currently stand at circa £44,550.

The scheme to support local installers until the new Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding emerged has delivered positive results with over 104 owner occupied or private rented homes receiving insulation or heating works through six local small or medium sized enterprises. Anticipated annual savings of over £27,000 have been created from a Council investment of £44,000.

The gas infill scheme in Sealand Manor was also completed in quarter one with 22 owner occupied or private rented homes having their oil, LPG, electric, and solid fuel heating systems replaced with gas boilers. This resulted in annual heating bill savings of £6,600 anticipated.

To date 353 properties (266 private and 87 council) have received insulation or heating improvement measures. Anticipated annual heating bill savings of £113,620 have been secured and 10,456 tonnes of carbon saved. This has exceeded the team's targets for 2013/14 due to careful management of risks and the ability to act on the availability of grant funding as it has become available.

In Q4 plans are in place to deliver a partnership pilot programme that will make available grant funding to help reduce and prevent the number of Flintshire households in or at risk from fuel poverty (currently estimated at 20,000 based on NEA figures). Up to 110 solid wall properties will receive insulation in a pilot programme testing the ability of the team to develop the local supply chain whilst the team prepares for the major gas infill works planned for 2014/15.

It is anticipated that over 450 properties will receive improvement measures in 2013/14 (anticipated annual heating bill savings of over £100k) with a total project spend of well over £1million.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Number of households accessing Eco and other energy efficiency funding

Measure / Milestone	Responsible Officer	2012/13 Baseline Data	2013/14 Target	Aspirational Target	Current YTD Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
£75,000 anticipated annual energy bill savings secured	Gavin Griffith	£270,245	£75,000	£75,000 per year	£113,620	G	G
Lifetime carbon emission reduction of 5,000 tonnes	Gavin Griffith / Will Pierce	17,412 tonnes	5,000 tonnes	5,000 tonnes per year	10,456 tonnes	G	G
Total number of measures installed through ECO and other energy efficiency funding	Gavin Griffith	920 measures	200 measures	200 measures per year	353 measures	G	G

3. Deliver energy efficiency measures to Council homes.

Progress Comment

Progress RAG

G

Outcome RAG

G

87 council properties have been improved so far through the programme, including 16 solid wall insulation, 70 lofts and 1 cavity wall. The Council is on track to deliver the aspirational target of 200 homes receiving measures by end of financial year 2016/17.

In line with the comments for activity 2 the team are accelerating the work programme with the intention of bringing additional value to the Welsh Housing Quality Programme as a response to the risk posed by the current and predicted volatility of grant funding on which the team depends.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Number of Council homes receiving energy efficiency measures

Measure / Milestone	Responsible Officer	2012/13 Baseline Data	2013/14 Target	Aspirational Target	Current YTD Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
Number of Council homes receiving energy efficiency measures	Gavin Griffith	363 homes	77 homes	200 by March 2017	87 homes	G	G

Risks to Manage - Residents may not take up the energy efficiency measures available as we hope (links to activities 2 & 3)

Page 86

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)
H	H	R	1. The Council has evaluated previous programmes and identified the most cost effective measures based on capital cost and potential savings. These measures form the basis of the 2013/14 service delivery strategy.	L	L	G	1. Continue to evaluate performance and undertake customer research to identify the measures that will benefit residents most and that are most desirable.	↓		L	L	G

Risks to Manage - Available funding might fall short of public demand (links to activities 2 & 3)

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)
H	H	R	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A robust 3 year business plan has been developed to ensure that the service can be sustained. The business plan is based on meeting the Councils spend to save ration of £1 spent for every £5 saved or secured through external funding. Discussions with stakeholders have taken place to emphasise the benefit of continuing investment in domestic energy efficiency. 	L	L	G	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficiently skilled staff need to be retained / developed to ensure there is the capacity to continue to identify and secure funding opportunities and to ensure that delivery of programmes meets the standards of the Council, service users and funding providers. Progress needs to be evaluated against the business plan to determine whether the model is working or not. Public demand needs to be evaluated regularly to ensure appropriate investments are made. The service needs to maintain a 	Gavin Griffith	↓	L	L	G

							strong communications plan to provide transparency to existing and potential service users. This may include referrals to other services/fund providers including local contractors with access to ECO funding. With good communication it may also be possible to manage the Public's expectations.						
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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

DATE: **WEDNESDAY 16TH APRIL, 2014**

REPORT BY: **HOUSING AND LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FACILITATOR**

SUBJECT: **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 Items feed into a Committee's Forward Work Programme from a number of sources. Members can suggest topics for review by Overview & Scrutiny Committees, members of the public can suggest topics, items can be referred by the Cabinet for consultation purposes, or by County Council or Directors. Other possible items are identified from the Cabinet Work Programme and the Strategic Assessment of Risks & Challenges.

2.02 In identifying topics for future consideration, it is useful for a 'test of significance' to be applied. This can be achieved by asking a range of questions as follows:

1. Will the review contribute to the Council's priorities and/or objectives?
2. Are there issues of weak or poor performance?
3. How, where and why were the issues identified?
4. Do local communities think the issues are important and is there any evidence of this? Is there evidence of public dissatisfaction?
5. Is there new Government guidance or legislation?
6. Have inspections been carried out?
7. Is this area already the subject of an ongoing review?

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 Overview & Scrutiny presents a unique opportunity for Members to determine the Forward Work Programme of the Committees of which they are Members. By reviewing and prioritising the Forward Work Programme Members are able to ensure it is Member-led and includes the right issues. A copy of the Forward Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration which has been updated following the last meeting.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That the Committee considers the draft Forward Work Programme attached as Appendix 1 and approve/amend as necessary.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 None as a result of this report.

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 N/A.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Publication of this report constitutes consultation.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1 – Forward Work Programme

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

None.

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CURRENT FWP

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report	Scrutiny Focus	Responsible / Contact Officer	Submission Deadline
28 April, 2014 at 2pm Joint meeting with the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Private Sector Housing Renewal Tackling Long Term Vacant Private Homes	To consider progress on the delivery of Flintshire's first Renewal Area, general service developments and county wide projects. The purpose of the report is to inform Members of the approaches available to tackle long term vacant homes and to introduce a proposed enforced sales policy to gain support for its use in Flintshire.	Performance Monitoring Service Delivery	Head of Housing Head of Housing	17 April 2014
30 April, 2014 at 2pm	Joint Workshop with the Planning & Development Control Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Supply Task Force Report • Planning for Legislative Change – Planning Bill and Housing Bill 				
21 May 2014	Update on the Repairs and Maintenance Service	To monitor the approach and effectiveness of repairs and improvements to the Council's housing stock, to include void management.	Service Delivery	Head of Housing	13 May 2014

	Responsible Pet Ownership Policy	To consider the draft Responsible Pet Policy.	Service Planning	Head of Housing	
	Domestic Abuse	To receive the promotional DVD available through Women's Aid with highlights the effects of domestic abuse.	Information	Head of Housing	
10 June 2014	Quarterly Performance Reporting	To consider Q4/Year End performance outturns for improvement targets	Performance Monitoring	Director of Community Services	3 June, 2014

Items to be scheduled

- Update on the implementation of SARTH (September, 2014)
- Update on Gas Servicing
- Anti-Social Behaviour and Neighbourhood Management (September, 2014)
- Energy Efficiency
- Review of Garage Sites

REGULAR ITEMS

Month	Item	Purpose of Report	Responsible / Contact Officer
Quarterly / Annual	Performance Reporting	To consider performance outturns for improvement targets against directorate indicators.	Director of Community
Six monthly	Update on Repairs and Improvements	To enable Members to monitor the approach and effectiveness of repairs and improvements to the Council's housing stock, to include void management.	Head of Housing
Six monthly	Private Sector Housing Renewal	To consider progress on the delivery of Flintshire's first Renewal Area, general service development and county wide projects.	Head of Housing
Quarterly	Collaborative Working within Housing Services	To receive and consider current and future collaborative initiatives.	Head of Housing
Six monthly	Anti-Social Behaviour and Neighbourhood Management	To consider progress in delivering the revised Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy	Head of Housing
Annually	Update on Delivery of Choices Document	To receive an update report on the delivery of the Choices Document.	Head of Housing

STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT OF RISKS AND CHALLENGES
TOPICS ALLOCATED TO OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

SECTION 1 - COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Category	Risk Reference	Title	Committee
Strategic Partnerships	CL04	Affordable Housing	Housing

SECTION 2 - COUNCIL DELIVERY

Category	Risk Reference	Title	Committee
Environment	CD08	Shotton and Deeside Renewal Area	Housing
Housing	CD12a	Housing Strategy	C&H
	CD12b	Housing Management	C&H
	CD12c	Housing Repairs & Maintenance	C&H
	CD12d	Homelessness	C&H
	CD12e	Sheltered Housing	Housing
	CD14	Housing Ballot	C&H
	CD19	Gypsies and Travellers	C&H
Social Care	CD26	Disabled Facilities Grants	S&H and Housing (joint meetings)