

Public Document Pack

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To: Cllr Ian Dunbar (Chairman)

Councillors: Helen Brown, Geoff Collett, David Cox, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Mared Eastwood, Veronica Gay, Ray Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Brian Lloyd and Kevin Rush

7 October 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

NOTICE OF REMOTE MEETING
COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, 13 OCTOBER, 2021 at 10.00 AM

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Robins'.

Robert Robins
Democratic Services Manager

Please note: This will be a remote meeting and 'attendance' will be restricted to Committee Members and those Members of Council who have asked the Head of Democratic Services for an invitation. Such attendees may only speak at the Chair's discretion.

The meeting will be live streamed onto the Council's website. A recording of the meeting will also be available, shortly after the meeting at <https://flintshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact a member of the Democratic Services Team on 01352 702345.

A G E N D A

1 APOLOGIES

Purpose: To receive any apologies.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

Purpose: To receive any Declarations and advise Members accordingly.

3 MINUTES (Pages 5 - 10)

Purpose: To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 16 June, 2021.

4 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING (Pages 11 - 20)

Report of Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator

Purpose: To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Community Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.

5 BUDGET 2022/23 - STAGE 2 (Pages 21 - 26)

Report of Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Housing and Assets), Corporate Finance Manager - Cabinet Member for Housing, Cabinet Member for Finance, Social Value and Procurement

Purpose: That the Committee reviews and comments on the Community, Housing and Assets cost pressures and overall budget strategy, and advises on any areas of cost efficiency it would like to see explored further.

6 FLINTSHIRE HOUSING NEED PROSPECTUS (Pages 27 - 50)

Report of Chief Officer (Housing and Assets) - Cabinet Member for Housing

Purpose: To inform affordable housing delivery, shape the Social Housing Grant (SHG) programme by setting out what Local Authority priorities are and provide a guide about housing type need in what locations.

7 DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT (DFG) POLICY (Pages 51 - 80)

Report of Chief Officer (Housing and Assets) - Cabinet Member for Housing

Purpose: To provide an update on the ongoing work to improve the service.

8 PROGRESS OF EMPTY HOMES SCHEME IN FLINTSHIRE (Pages 81 - 84)

Report of Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) - Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection

Purpose: To provide an overview of the work undertaken by the Empty Homes Service.

9 RAW MATERIAL SUPPLIES

Purpose: To receive a verbal report and provide assurance to the Committee on the highlighted risk identified by the Recovery Committee around raw material shortages which could lead to increase costs, programme delays and increased cases of contractual disputes.

Please note that there may be a 10 minute adjournment of this meeting if it lasts longer than two hours

Procedural Note on the conduct of meetings

The Chair will open the meeting and introduce themselves.

The meeting will be attended by a number of Councillors. Officers will also be in attendance to present reports, with Democratic Services officers acting as hosts of the meeting.

All attendees are asked to ensure their mobile phones are switched off and that any background noise is kept to a minimum.

All microphones are to be kept muted during the meeting and should only be unmuted when invited to speak by the Chair. When invitees have finished speaking they should go back on mute.

To indicate to speak, Councillors will use the chat facility or use the electronic raise hand function. The chat function may also be used for questions, relevant comments and officer advice and updates.

The Chair will call the speakers, with elected Members addressed as 'Councillor' and officers addressed by their job title e.g. Chief Executive' or name. From time to time, the officer advising the Chair will explain procedural points or suggest alternative wording for proposals, to assist the Committee.

If and when a vote is taken, the Chair will explain that only those who oppose the proposal(s), or who wish to abstain will need to indicate, using the chat function. The officer advising the Chair will indicate whether the proposals are carried.

If a more formal vote is needed, this will be by roll call – where each Councillor will be asked in turn (alphabetically) how s/he wishes to vote

At County Council and Planning Committee meetings speaker's times are limited. A bell will be sounded to alert that the speaker has one minute remaining

The meeting will be live streamed onto the Council's website. A recording of the meeting will also be available, shortly after the meeting at <https://flintshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

COMMUNITY HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE **16 JUNE 2021**

Minutes of the meeting of the Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a remote attendance meeting on Wednesday, 16 June 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Dunbar (Chairman)

Councillors: Geoff Collett, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Mared Eastwood, Veronica Gay, Dennis Hutchinson Kevin Rush, Brian Lloyd and Ray Hughes

APOLOGY:

SUBSTITUTE: Councillor David Wisinger (for David Cox)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Patrick Heesom attended as an observer

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Dave Hughes, Cabinet Member for Housing; Councillor Billy Mullin, Deputy Leader of the Council (Governance) & Cabinet Member for Corporate Management & Assets; Chief Officer (Housing & Assets), Housing & Assets Senior Manager, Benefits Manager, Housing Manager and Revenues Manager. Principal Accountant and Strategic Performance Advisor.

IN ATTENDANCE: Community & Education Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Electoral Services Officer

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

The Facilitator advised that it had been confirmed at the Annual Meeting of the County Council that the Chair of the Committee should come from the Labour Group. As Councillor Ian Dunbar had been appointed to this role by the Group, the Committee was asked to endorse the decision.

RESOLVED:

That the appointment of Councillor Ian Dunbar as Chair of the Committee be noted.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Ron Davies nominated Councillor Ray Hughes to be appointed as Vice Chair of the Committee. This was seconded by Councillor David Wisinger.

On being put to the vote Councillor Ray Hughes was appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Ray Hughes be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee.

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

None.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2021, were moved as a correct record by Councillor Ron Davies and seconded by Councillor Kevin Rush.

RESOLVED:

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

5. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING

The Facilitator informed the Committee that the future meeting dates had been added to the forward work programme, following approval at the annual County Council meeting. It was suggested that the Facilitator liaise with the Chairman and Chief Officer (Housing & Assets) to populate the forward work programme, which would be presented to the Committee at its next meeting.

There had been one action arising from the previous meeting. The Facilitator had requested information from the relevant officers and would circulate this information once received.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be noted;
- (b) That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises; and
- (c) That the progress made in completing the outstanding actions be noted.

6. WELFARE REFORM UPDATE

The Benefits Manager introduced an update on the impacts that welfare reforms continued to have on Flintshire residents and the work that was ongoing to mitigate this and support these households. Vulnerable households had also been significantly impacted by the pandemic, and the report also provided information around the range of measures that had been developed to help those affected by the current pandemic and the support provided to residents to help mitigate the negative impacts.

The Benefits Manager spoke of the increased case load to Council Tax reduction and the increased spike from last year which had been recovered from Welsh Government's finance fund, which illustrated the bigger picture of the pandemic and the support packages available.

The Benefits Manager expressed her concern around the end of the Furlough scheme in September, indicating that this would have a negative impact on vulnerable residents. She added that the Pandemic support and isolation payments would remain in place for the £500 payments, but did comment that the number of people that were claiming had diminished. She also added that the next Carers bonus was still in place and the next payment was due to go out again in July.

The Benefits Manager commented that there had been an increase in residents actively seeking support which was positive.

The Chairman congratulated the team on the work they were undertaking. In response to a question around support, the Benefits Manager advised that referrals for support to the Welfare Reform Support Team had significantly increased.

The recommendation outlined within the report was moved by Councillor David Wisinger and seconded by Councillor Geoff Collett.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee support the ongoing work to manage the impacts that Welfare Reforms have and will continue to have upon Flintshire's most vulnerable households.

7. HOUSING RENT INCOME – YEAR END OUTTURN AND LATEST POSITION FOR 2021/22

The Chief Officer (Housing & Assets) introduced the operational update on 2020/21 year end rent income collection for housing, including the 2021/22 latest collection position.

The Revenues Manager advised that the outturn for 2020/21 resulted in rent arrears of £1.854m compared to £1.815m in the previous year – an increase in arrears of £39k. He said that the data generally made for positive reading when contrasted against earlier predictions for rent arrears for the service throughout the last twelve months, particularly at a time when the pandemic had impacted on the ability of some tenants to pay on time.

The Revenues Manager provided a detailed presentation which covered the following areas:-

- Rent Collection: 2020/21 final outturn;
- Rent Collections and Trends over 6 years;
- Arrears Cases (£250+) at March 2021; and
- Rent Collection: 21/22 Latest Position (to week 10)

In response to a question from the Chairman around the deployment of the software, the Revenues Manager added that the software had been successful in targeting those tenants who required support. Unfortunately, tenants who arrears in excess of £5,000 had tended to not engage with the Council, which had resulted in their rent arrears continuing to increase.

Members of the Committee thanked the Revenues Manager for the report. In response to questions around support for residents, their need to access a number of support services and where residents placed on the Housing Register if they were in arrears, the Chief Officer explained that tenants would be placed in Band 4 on the Housing Register until the arrears had been cleared. He also commented on the end of the Furlough scheme as outlined when considering the Welfare Reform update earlier on in the meeting and said that there was concern on the impact this would have on tenants and the support team. He re-confirmed that it was not Flintshire's intention to evict tenants as it was not in the Council interest, but highlighted that there were extreme cases where tenants would not engage and in those cases after much deliberation it was only right that action should and would be taken.

The recommendation outlined within the report was moved by Councillor David Wisinger and seconded by Councillor Dennis Hutchinson.

RESOLVED:

That the £1.854m year-end position for rent arrears in 2020/21, as set out within the report, be noted.

8. WELSH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD (WHQS) UPDATE

The Housing & Assets Senior Manager introduced a report which provided an update on the delivery of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) the Council was delivering through its Capital Investment Programme. The report focussed on the external work elements of the programme along with achievements to date and maintaining the standard moving forward.

The Fencing and Garden improvement programme that commenced in 2015 had been developed into a more extensive programme, following the majority of internal and envelope works being completed to reach WHQS compliance. The programme would focus mainly on the property boundaries ensuring they were safe, secure and suitable and in line with the Council's agreed specification/requirements. Also included within the programme would be paths, gardens and storage allocation. Details of the work streams were outlined within the report.

In response to a question from Councillor Brian Lloyd, the Housing & Assets Senior Manager agreed to discuss with the senior management team the possibility of walkabout sessions with Councillors in their Ward in order for Members to show issues which in their opinion, needed to be addressed.

In response to concerns raised by Councillor Ray Hughes around fencing replaced within his ward, the Housing & Assets Senior Manager agreed to speak to Councillor Hughes following the meeting and arrange a site visit in his ward.

The recommendation outlined within the report was moved by Councillor Ray Hughes and seconded by Councillor Kevin Rush.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee support the Capital Investment Programme in its final year of major investment, as the Council entered into the maintenance phase of the Welsh Housing Quality Standards.

9. COMMUNAL HEATING CHARGES 2021/22

The Chief Officer (Housing & Assets) introduced the proposed heating charges at Council properties with communal heating schemes which would take effect from 2nd August, 2021.

The proposed recharges for 2021/22, as set out in the report, were pending Cabinet approval. In the majority of cases, the recharge to tenants had reduced for 2021/22, which as in other years, would allow Flintshire to recover the projected costs of the heating charges whilst still passing on the benefit of reduced energy costs to tenants.

The recommendation outlined within the report was moved by Councillor Ron Davies and seconded by Councillor Ray Hughes.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee support the changes to the current heating charges at Council properties with communal heating schemes, as outlined within the report.

10. END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Chief Officer (Housing & Assets) presented the end of year monitoring report to review year-end progress against their respective priorities set out in the Council's Reporting Measures 2020/21 under the remit of the Committee. It was reported that 67% of performance indicators had met or exceeded their targets.

The Chief Officer praised the work of all officers within the portfolio, which was evident by the number of 'Green' performance measures shown within the appendix to the report. He provided an update on the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP), explaining that whilst the target had not been achieved for this measure, 149 properties had been delivered, with over half of these being family homes. He also provided an update on the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) target date, which had been now been extended by one additional year due to the pandemic.

The recommendation outlined within the report was moved by Councillor Geoff Collet and seconded by Councillor Mared Eastwood.

RESOLVED:

That the End of Year Performance Monitoring Report be noted.

11. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.32 a.m.)

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Chairman



COMMUNITY HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 13 th October, 2021
Report Subject	Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking
Report Author	Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview & Scrutiny presents a unique opportunity for Members to determine the Forward Work programme of the Committee 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.

The Committee is asked to consider, and amend where necessary, the Forward Work Programme for the Community Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The report also shows actions arising from previous meetings of the Community Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the progress made in completing them. Any outstanding actions will be continued to be reported to the Committee as shown in Appendix 2.

RECOMMENDATION

1	That the Committee considers the draft Forward Work Programme and approve/amend as necessary.
2	That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises.
3	That the Committee notes the progress made in completing the outstanding actions.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING
1.01	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 Chief Officers. Other possible items are identified from the Cabinet Work Programme and the Improvement Plan.
1.02	<p>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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Will the review contribute to the Council's priorities and/or objectives?2. Is it an area of major change or risk?3. Are there issues of concern in performance?4. Is there new Government guidance of legislation?5. Is it prompted by the work carried out by Regulators/Internal Audit?6. Is the issue of public or Member concern?
1.03	In previous meetings, requests for information, reports or actions have been made. These have been summarised as action points. Following a meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee in July 2018, it was recognised that there was a need to formalise such reporting back to Overview & Scrutiny Committees, as 'Matters Arising' was not an item which can feature on an agenda.
1.04	It was suggested that the 'Action tracking' approach be trialled for the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Following a successful trial, it was agreed to extend the approach to all Overview & Scrutiny Committees.
1.05	The Action Tracking details including an update on progress is attached at Appendix 2.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None as a result of this report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	In some cases, action owners have been contacted to provide an update on their actions.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	None as a result of this report.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Draft Forward Work Programme Appendix 2 – Action Tracking for the Community Housing & Assets OSC.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Minutes of previous meetings of the Committee as identified in Appendix 2. Contact Officer: Ceri Shotton Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator Telephone: 01352 702305 E-mail: ceri.shotton@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Improvement Plan: the document which sets out the annual priorities of the Council. It is a requirement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to set Improvement Objectives and publish an Improvement Plan.

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COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

CURRENT FWP

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report	Scrutiny Focus	Report Author	Submission Deadline
<p>Wednesday 10th November 2021 at 2pm</p>	<p>Mid-year Performance Indicators for Recovery, Portfolio and Public Accountability Measures</p> <p>Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016</p>	<p>To review the levels of progress in the achievement of activities, performance levels and current risk levels as identified in the Council Plan.</p> <p>To provide an update on the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 following it becoming fully enacted.</p>	<p>Assurance Monitoring</p> <p>Information Sharing</p>	<p>Chief Officer (Housing & Assets)</p> <p>Chief Officer (Housing & Assets)</p>	
<p>Wednesday 8th December, 2021</p>	<p>Housing Rent Income – Mid-year outturn and latest position for 2022/23</p> <p>Welfare Reform Update</p>	<p>To provide the Mid-year outturn for 2021/22 and an operational update on rent collection and current arrear levels for 2022/23.</p> <p>To provide an update on the impact of Welfare Reform on Flintshire Residents.</p>	<p>Monitoring Assurance</p> <p>Monitoring Assurance</p>	<p>Revenues Manager</p> <p>Benefits Manager</p>	
<p>Wednesday 12th January, 2022</p>	<p>Housing Revenue Account (HRA)</p>	<p>To consider the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for 2022/23 and the HRA Business Plan.</p>	<p>Consultation</p>	<p>Chief Officer (Housing & Assets)</p>	

COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

	NEW Homes Business Plan	To consider the NEW Homes Business Plan	Consultation	Chief Officer (Housing & Assets)	
Wednesday 9th February, 2022					
Wednesday 9 March 2022					
Tuesday 7 June 2022 at 2pm	Housing Rent Income - Year end outturn and latest position for 2022/23	To provide the Year end outturn for 2021/22 and an operational update on rent collection and current arrear levels for 2022/23.	Monitoring Assurance	Revenues Manager	
Page 16	Welfare Reform Update	To provide an update on the impact of Welfare Reform on Flintshire Residents.	Monitoring Assurance	Benefits Manager	
Wednesday 6 July 2022	Year-end Performance Indicators for Recovery, Portfolio and Public Accountability Measures	To review the levels of progress in the achievement of activities, performance levels and current risk levels as identified in the Council Plan.	Assurance Monitoring	Chief Officer (Housing & Assets)	
	Communal Heating Charges 2022/23	To consider the proposed heating charges in council properties with communal heating systems for 2022/23 prior to Cabinet approval.	Consultation	Corporate Finance - Accountant	

COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Items to be scheduled

- **Sheltered Housing Review** – Reports to be submitted to Committee meetings as appropriate as agreed at the Committee meeting held on 4th November, 2020.
- **Dynamic Resource Scheduler (DRS) System Update** – Update reports to be submitted annually to the Committee starting September 2022 following implementation on the new system, as agreed at the Committee meeting held on 23rd February, 2021
- **De-carbonisation Strategy** – Briefing session to be arranged for Members to enable a better understanding of the De-Carbonisation Strategy, when appropriate.

REGULAR ITEMS

Month	Item	Purpose of Report	Responsible / Contact Officer
Quarterly / Annual	Performance Reporting	To consider performance outturns for improvement targets against directorate indicators.	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)
Six monthly	Welfare Reform Update – including Universal Credit	To update Members on the impact of Welfare Reform and the cost to the Council.	Benefits Manager
Six monthly	Update on North East Wales Homes & Property Management	To update Members on the work of the North East Wales Homes & Property Management	Housing Strategy Manager
Annually – September	WHQS Capital Programme – Delivery review update	To provide an update on progress of the Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS), that the Council is delivering through its Capital Investment Programme. Report to include information around the use of local labour and number of apprentices and school leavers.	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)

COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Month	Item	Purpose of Report	Responsible / Contact Officer
Six monthly	Update on Housing Rent Income	To provide an update on rent collection and current arrear levels	Revenues Manager

ACTION TRACKING FOR THE COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting Date	Agenda item	Action Required	Action Officer(s)	Action taken	Timescale
16.06.2021	9. Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) Update	In response to a question from Cllr Brian Lloyd, Peter McHugh agreed to discuss with the senior management team the possibility of walkabout sessions with Cllrs in their ward in order for Members to show issues which needed to be addressed.	Peter McHugh	Mr. Ross Peter, Trainee Surveyor contacted Cllr Lloyd following the meeting to discuss the Garage Review.	Completed
16.06.2021	9. Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) Update	In response to concerns raised by Cllr Ray Hughes around fencing replaced within his ward, Peter McHugh agreed to speak to Cllr Hughes after the meeting and arrange a site visit in his ward.	Peter McHugh	A site visit had been arranged with Cllr Hughes for 23.06.21	Completed

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COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 13 th October, 2021
Report Subject	Budget 2022/23 – Stage 2
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement and Social Value Cabinet Member for Housing
Report Author	Chief Executive, Chief Officer Housing & Assets, and Corporate Finance Manager
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As in past years the budget for 2022/23 will be built up in stages.

The first stage was concluded in July where we established a robust baseline of cost pressures. The review by Overview and Scrutiny Committees throughout September and October will form stage 2 with Stage 3 being the identification of the funding solutions to ensure a legal and balanced budget.

In July, Cabinet and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee received the updated position on the budget for 2022/23 which showed that we have a minimum additional revenue budget requirement of an estimated £16.750m. The cost pressures identified were referred to the respective Overview and Scrutiny Committees with a request that they all undergo a rigorous review.

The details of the cost pressures for the Housing & Assets portfolio - which fall within the remit of this Committee - are included within this report. The Committee is invited to review these cost pressures and risks, and to advise on any areas of cost efficiency it believes should be explored further and the reasoning behind the request.

A slide presentation will be made at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee reviews and comments on the Housing & Assets Portfolio's cost pressures.
2	That the Committee advises on any areas of cost efficiency it believes should be explored further.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE BUDGET POSITION 2022/23																											
1.01	The first stage for budget setting was concluded in July where we established a robust baseline of cost pressures. The review by Overview and Scrutiny Committees throughout September and October will form stage 2 with Stage 3 being the identification of the funding solutions to reach a legal and balanced budget.																											
1.02	In July, Cabinet and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee received the updated position on the budget for 2022/23 which showed that we have a minimum additional revenue budget requirement of an estimated £16.750m. The cost pressures identified were referred to the respective Overview and Scrutiny Committees with a request that they all undergo a rigorous review.																											
1.03	The purpose of this report is to set out in detail of the cost pressures for Housing & Assets that are included within the minimum budget requirement.																											
1.04	Housing & Assets Portfolio Pressures These are set out in the paragraphs which follow.																											
1.05	<p><u>Table 1: Housing & Assets Portfolio Pressures</u></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Pressure Title</th> <th>£m</th> <th>Note</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td colspan="3">Requiring National Resolution</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Benefits – Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS)</td> <td>0.608</td> <td>1.</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">Strategic Decisions</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Carelink Budget Issue (HSG)</td> <td>0.109</td> <td>2.</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">New Posts</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Homelessness - additional capacity</td> <td>0.090</td> <td>3.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Programme Manager</td> <td>0.014</td> <td>4.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Cost Pressures</td> <td>0.821</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Pressure Title	£m	Note	Requiring National Resolution			• Benefits – Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS)	0.608	1.	Strategic Decisions			• Carelink Budget Issue (HSG)	0.109	2.	New Posts			• Homelessness - additional capacity	0.090	3.	• Programme Manager	0.014	4.	Total Cost Pressures	0.821	
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Benefits - Council Tax Reduction Scheme – This reflects the level of potential pressure on CTRS in 2022/23 taking account of the potential increase in take-up and the inflationary impact of a potential 2022/23 Council Tax increase. 2. Carelink Budget Issue (HSG) – Final element of a phased pressure to reflect the reduction of Housing Support Grant (HSG) allocation to the Carelink budget due to eligibility issues. 3. Homelessness - additional capacity to meet expected additional demands on the service due to potential lasting economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic leading to possible reposessions in owner-occupier sector and evictions in the Registered Social Landlord (RSL) and private rented sectors 4. Programme Manager – additional short term capacity to progress a number of large complex programmes of work across the Housing & Assets portfolio – 70% of the total costs are to be funded by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
1.06	<p>Organisational Capacity</p> <p>The capacity of the organisation has been reduced over a number of years, in some areas of service management and operations, due to the need to reduce budget overheads to achieve our efficiency targets. The experience of managing the pandemic and endemic situation over the past 18 months has led to some increases in workload in certain areas, and the Council has set out some priorities which will require additional capacity in the Council Plan and through the leadership of the Council.</p> <p>The Chief Executive and Chief Officer Team have reviewed these capacity needs in depth. We have prioritised a number of requests for additional posts to supplement operational teams for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees as potential cost pressures for 2022/23 onwards. These requests are all supported by business cases. Our recommendation to Council will be that these requests are supported in order of priority. The extent to which this list of requests can be funded will depend on the financial “headroom” we will have when we are on the verge of setting the annual budget in the new year.</p> <p>From amongst this set of requests a small number have been prioritised for accelerated approval within 2021/22 and in advance of the annual budget setting. This accelerated approval was the subject of a separate report to Cabinet in September.</p>
1.07	<p>Budget Timeline</p> <p>An outline of the local budget timeline at this stage is set out in the table below:</p>

Table 2: Budget Timeline	
Date	Event
September/October	Overview and Scrutiny Committees
20/21 December	WG Draft Budget/Provisional Settlement
14 December	Cabinet
18 January	Cabinet
15 February	Cabinet and Council
1 March	WG Final Budget/Settlement

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
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2.01	<p>Revenue: the revenue implications for the 2022/23 budget are set out in the report.</p> <p>Capital: there are no new implications for the approved capital programme for either the current financial year or for future financial years – the capital programme will be subject to a separate report</p>
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3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
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3.01	<p>Member and Group Leader Briefings June/July 2021 Corporate Resource Overview and Scrutiny Committee Individual Scrutiny Meetings September/October</p>
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4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
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4.01	As set out in the report.
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5.00	APPENDICES
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5.01	No appendices.
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6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
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6.01	<p>MTFS and Budget 2022/23 Cabinet Report 13th July 2021 Presentation to CROSC July 2021 Summary Budget 2022/23 report to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee 16th September 2021</p>
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7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS): a written strategy which gives a forecast of the financial resources which will be available to a Council for a given period, and sets out plans for how best to deploy those resources to meet its priorities, duties and obligations.</p> <p>Revenue: a term used to describe the day to day costs of running Council services and income deriving from those services. It also includes charges for the repayment of debt, including interest, and may include direct financing of capital expenditure.</p> <p>Budget: a statement expressing the Council's policies and service levels in financial terms for a particular financial year. In its broadest sense it includes both the revenue budget and capital programme and any authorised amendments to them.</p> <p>Budget Requirement: The amount of resource required to meet the Councils financial priorities in a financial year.</p> <p>Forecast: An estimate of the level of resource needed in the future based on a set of demands or priorities.</p> <p>Capital: Expenditure on the acquisition of non-current assets or expenditure which extends the useful life of an existing asset.</p> <p>Revenue Support Grant: the annual amount of money the Council receives from Welsh Government to fund what it does alongside the Council Tax and other income the Council raises locally. Councils can decide how to use this grant across services although their freedom to allocate according to local choice can be limited by guidelines set by Government.</p> <p>Specific Grants: An award of funding from a grant provider (e.g. Welsh Government) which must be used for a pre-defined purpose.</p> <p>Welsh Local Government Association: the representative body for unitary councils, fire and rescue authorities and national parks authorities in Wales.</p> <p>Financial Year: the period of 12 months commencing on 1 April.</p> <p>Local Government Funding Formula: The system through which the annual funding needs of each council is assessed at a national level and under which each council's Aggregate External Finance (AEF) is set. The revenue support grant is distributed according to that formula.</p> <p>Aggregate External Finance (AEF): The support for local revenue spending from the Welsh Government and is made up of formula grant including the revenue support grant and the distributable part of non-domestic rates.</p>

Provisional Local Government Settlement: The Provisional Settlement is the draft budget for local government published by the Welsh Government for consultation. The Final Local Government Settlement is set following the consultation.

Funding Floor: a guaranteed level of funding for councils who come under the all-Wales average change in the annual Settlement. A floor has been a feature of the Settlement for many years.



COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 13 October 2021
Report Subject	Flintshire Housing Need Prospectus
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Housing
Report Author	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To provide an overview of the Welsh Government requirement for Local Authorities to produce a Housing Need Prospectus that will inform the Social Housing Grant Programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Scrutiny note the content of the Flintshire Housing Need Prospectus and provide any feedback or comments for consideration.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE HOUSING NEED PROSPECTUS
1.01	This year the Welsh Government (WG) have requested that each Local Authority (LA) develops a Housing Need Prospectus.
1.02	The aim of the prospectus is to inform affordable housing delivery, shape the Social Housing Grant (SHG) programme by setting out what the LA priorities are and provide a guide about what type of housing is needed and in what locations.
1.03	The WG allocates SHG to the LA based on a pro-rata amount of the all Wales allocation. For 2021/ 22, WG has advised that the Flintshire County

	Council (FCC) allocation is £10,236,642, a substantial increase on the 2020/ 21 allocation (£5.2m allocated last year).
1.04	WG is currently setting budgets for the next four years. However, the WG Housing Funding Team is anticipating a similar allocation of SHG for 2022/23.
1.05	To access SHG, housing providers (e.g. Registered Social Landlords/ FCC) apply to FCC's Housing Strategy team and WG to request support for funding.
1.06	It is intended that housing providers will refer to the prospectus when they are progressing new affordable housing development sites so they can plan to deliver schemes that better meet the LA priorities and the housing need for the area.
1.07	WG will refer to the prospectus when they are scrutinising SHG applications.
1.08	The draft Flintshire Housing Need Prospectus has been written in collaboration with Social Services, the Homelessness team and Planning and reflects the Council's current demands on services and the ambitions set out in the Flintshire Housing Strategy 2019-24.
1.09	It is intended the prospectus will be refreshed annually and will be an evolving document that can flex as the Council's housing priorities and needs change.
1.10	WG required the prospectus to be submitted by 6 th August and the draft Flintshire prospectus was provided to meet this deadline subject to internal approval by COT/ Informal Cabinet.
1.11	A previous version of the draft prospectus was circulated to Chief Officers via email on 11 th August 2021 and the prospectus has been amended to reflect comments that were made.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The Flintshire Housing Need Prospectus is a guidance document. There are no revenue, capital or human resource implications.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	Key Risks are: 1. The requirement for LA's to develop a Housing Need Prospectus has been imposed by WG. If the LA does not submit this document,

	future affordable housing schemes that receive SHG support may not meet LA priorities or housing need.	
3.02	Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact	
	Long-term	Positive - more affordable homes will be provided in the right location.
	Prevention	Preventing - preventing people becoming homeless by developing accommodation to meet Local Authority priorities.
	Integration	Positive – the delivery of a range of affordable homes will contribute to integration within communities
	Collaboration	Positive – the SHG programme is delivered in partnership with RSLs and WG.
	Involvement	Positive - the SHG programme involves a range of stakeholders to enable its delivery.
	Well-being Goals Impact	
	Prosperous Wales	Positive - ensuring the right homes are built and in the right places.
	Resilient Wales	Positive - new homes are built to a good quality and built to high environmental standards as required by WG as part of the SHG process.
	Healthier Wales	Positive - Ensuring homes meet the needs of all people in our society including those who are most vulnerable supporting their well-being.
	More equal Wales	Positive - Providing good quality and decent homes for vulnerable people including homeless accommodation, single household, specially adapted homes etc.
	Cohesive Wales	Positive - Contributing to attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities through promoting good design and collaborative delivery.

	Vibrant Wales	Positive - Ensuring our communities are diverse by developing a range of property types and tenures based on housing need and LA priorities.
	Globally responsible Wales	Positive – The prospectus will inform newbuild developments that will contribute to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	The prospectus has been circulated within FCC as advised in 1.08 and 1.11.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Proposed Flintshire Housing Need Prospectus Appendix 2 – Local Authority Prospectus – Welsh Government guidance

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Integrated Impact Assessment

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Sarah Faire, Housing Strategy Manager Telephone: 07788389661 E-mail: : sarah.faire@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	Social Housing Grant – Welsh Government funding that may be available to housing associations and developing Local Authorities. It is to help fund new affordable housing e.g. for social rent. To qualify for grant homes must comply with Welsh Government Development Quality Requirements (WDQR) .



Draft Flintshire County Council Prospectus

July 2021

Summary of LA Priorities

- General needs for social rent and intermediate affordable housing based on the local areas need as demonstrated via SARTH and Tai Teg
- 1 bedroom accommodation
- Specialist housing provision (wheelchair adapted/ larger properties/ special needs) to be included within all housing schemes where the development site is deemed as suitable and appropriate subject to feasibility and financial viability
- Extra Care scheme in Buckley
- Supported housing for specific client groups (e.g. learning/ physical disabilities/ complex needs/ mental health) and suitable model, progressed in partnership with Social Services and Housing Strategy
- 16-24yrs supported housing and hub
- Homeless temporary accommodation hub

Section 1 – Strategic Housing Priorities

The [Flintshire Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2024](#) sets out the Council's ambition to provide affordable housing across Flintshire. The Strategy identifies three strategic priorities:

Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location.

The Housing Strategy has an accompanying action plan and provides the following outputs:

- To meet the annual shortfall of 238 affordable housing as identified in the Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) 2019 by delivering the following tenures:
 - (i) To increase the number of new social rent properties (RSL or Council) by 86 per annum
 - (ii) To increase the number of intermediate rent properties (NEW Homes or RSLs) by 57 per annum

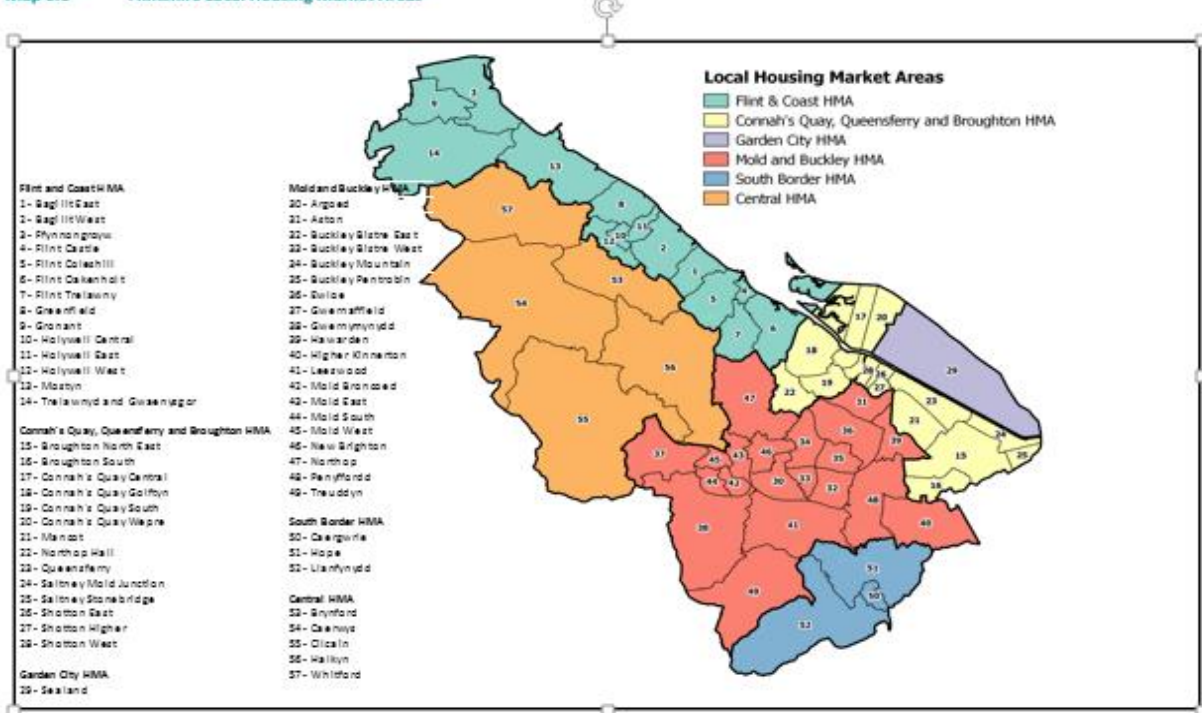
(iii) To increase the number of intermediate ownership properties (through s106 provision or RSLs) by 95 per annum.

- Deliver 5% (10) new build properties per annum to meet demand for specialist provision.
- Increase the percentage of one bedroom social rented properties by 20% (16) per year of all new build social rented properties.

Section 2 – Housing Need, Demand and Priorities

The [Local Housing Market Assessment \(February 2020\)](#) defines six Housing Market Areas, shown in the map below and detailing Council Ward's.

Map 3.1 Flintshire Local Housing Market Areas



The LHMA identifies an annual shortfall of 238 affordable units. The assessment recommends a need for the following property types:

- 1/ 2 bedroom (45.6%)
- 3 bedroom (28.3%)
- 4+ bedroom (12%)
- Older persons' stock (14.1%)

The LHMA suggests the tenure split as:

- Social rented (30%),
- Intermediate rent (30%) – where rent levels are usually based on a Local Housing Allowance or 80% of the open market rents
- Affordable ownership (40%)

This tenure split is sought on private developments and secured as planning obligations. However, a different tenure mix will be developed on RSL or Local Authority led schemes where a higher number of social rented homes can be achieved. Instead, tenure mix will be determined on a site specific basis taking into account housing need, size of development, local area, and overall scheme viability.

It is anticipated the LHMA will be updated towards the end of 2022

Summary of social housing stock

There are 9,919 social rent dwellings in Flintshire. The table below shows the property types for the social housing stock (figures includes FCC and RSL stock, 2021 data).

Property Types	Stock numbers	Approx. Percentage
Studio	23	0.2%
1 bed flat	640	6.4%
2 bed flat	538	5.4%
3 bed flat	21	0.2%
1 bed bungalow	332	3.3%
2 bed bungalow	159	1.6%
3 bed bungalow	12	0.1%
4 bed bungalow	2	0.02%
1 bed house	25	0.2%
2 bed house	1435	14.4%
3 bed house	4028	40.6%
4 bed house	183	1.8%
5+ bed house	12	0.1%
Over 55/ sheltered studio	90	0.9%
Over 55/ sheltered 1 bed	1422	14.3%
Over 55/ sheltered 2 bed	969	9.7%
Over 55/ sheltered 3 bed	28	0.2%
Total	9919	

Three bedroom houses make up the highest proportion of housing stock at nearly 41% and 25% of all social housing is for the over 55's or sheltered housing.

There are very few larger homes with 4 or more bedrooms or larger bungalows with 3 or more bedrooms. The number of 1 bedroom flats is low in comparison to the number of people who need this size of home.

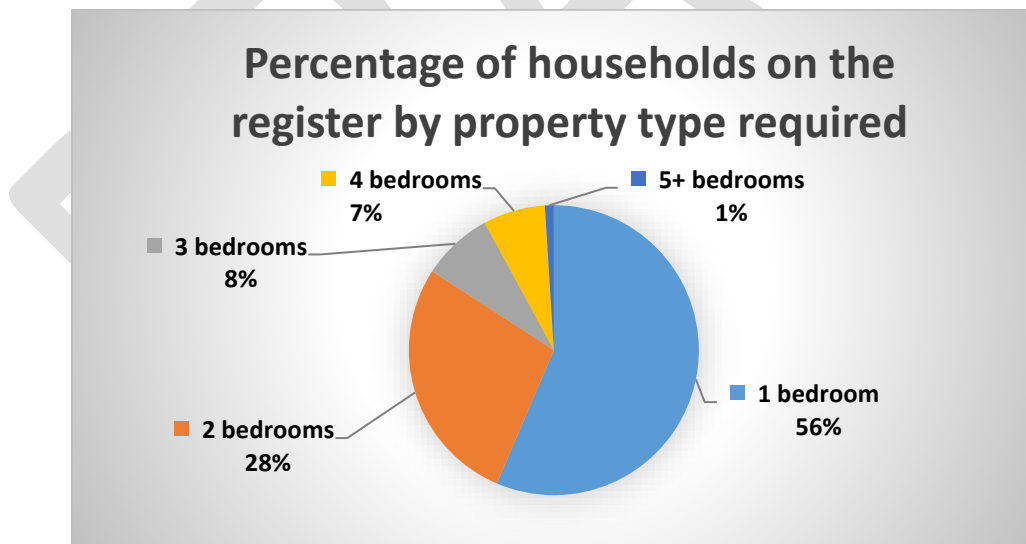
Housing Need and Demand

At a more granular level, housing need is identified through the social housing register, known as SARTH (Single Access Route to Housing) and through the Tai Teg register which holds applicants who wish to apply for intermediate rent or purchase properties. There are 59 different housing areas that people may choose when they apply to the SARTH or the Tai Teg register.

SARTH

Property Types

There are around 2088 households registered for social housing on the SARTH register (July 2021). As demonstrated in the table below, the majority of these households require 1 bedroom accommodation. The next highest demand property type is 2 bedroom houses and there is a growing need for larger property types 4+ bedrooms.



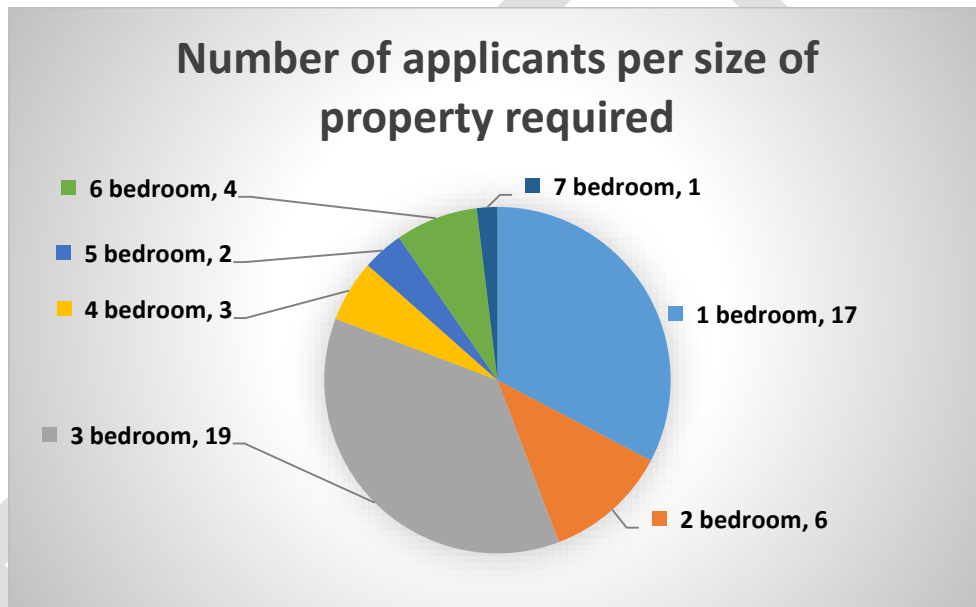
Demand Areas

The areas with the most significant demand are Mold and Mynydd Isa, Connah's Quay, Shotton, Flint, Buckley and Queensferry.

A breakdown of demand for each property type is available by SARTH housing area and can be provided on request.

Specialist Housing Register

The Specialist Housing Register consists of households who have applied to SARTH and who cannot be easily rehoused within the existing housing stock. There are 52 people on the specialist housing register requiring a fully wheelchair adapted home or a larger property (5 or more bedrooms). The greatest need is for 1 and 3 bedroom properties and the preferred property type is a bungalow. There is demand in most areas of Flintshire.



Homelessness

In 2020/21, 723 households presented to the Council as homeless and were owed duties under the Housing Wales Act. Single person households account for 60% of those who were eligible for homelessness assistance.

As at 31/03/21 there were 44 people in emergency temporary accommodation. This was made up of 37 single people, 1 couple, and 6 families.

During 2020/21 there were 323 presentations from young people (age 16-25 years) and as of July 2021, there were 21 young people occupying emergency/ temporary accommodation.

Due to the shortage of suitable homes, the move on from temporary accommodation is challenging and can take a long time. The Council aims to ensure that everyone that has been provided with temporary accommodation will be supported into long-term housing.

To assist with the Council's aspirations for rapid rehousing; greater provision of 1 bedroom homes (with tenancy support) is required to help people move to settled, secure and suitable homes as quickly as possible. The rapid rehousing transformation plan is due to be submitted to Welsh Government in March 2022.

Tai Teg Register

On the affordable housing register there are 148 households registered for affordable rent and 146 households for affordable ownership (Tai Teg data (figures are for people who have been approved and ready to apply for properties), July 2021).

The highest demand areas for intermediate rent are Mold and Mynydd Isa, Buckley, Connah's Quay, Flint, Hawarden, Ewloe and Shotton.

The highest demand areas for intermediate purchase are Mold and Mynydd Isa, Buckley, Connah's Quay, Flint, Penyffordd (Chester), Hawarden and Ewloe.

For either tenure, most applicants on the Tai Teg register require a two or three bedroom house. However, there is some demand for two bedroom flats (for intermediate rent) and four bedroom houses (both intermediate rent and purchase).

A breakdown of demand for each property type/ tenure is available for individual housing areas and can be provided on request.

Extra Care Housing

Across Wales, all local authorities are projected to see an increase in people aged 65 or over, with large increases projected for people aged 75 or over. In Flintshire, it is projected that the number of people aged 65+ will increase from 32,652 in 2018 to 42,297 by 2043 (Office for National Statistics 2018-based national population projections/ StatsWales). The number of people aged 65+ and living with dementia is projected to increase from 2,374 people in 2020 to 3,817 people in 2040 (Social Care Wales Population Projections Platform, www.daffodilcymru.org.uk).

The development of an additional Extra Care scheme is a priority in the Flintshire Local Housing Strategy. Extra Care provides independent living with the benefit of including care and support for older people and those living with dementia, and can provide an alternative to residential care.

There are currently Extra Care schemes in Flint, Mold, Holywell and Shotton. The Flintshire model of Extra Care, provides high quality units, in-house home care provision and 24h hour support. The model has proven successful with no long term vacancies and high levels of resident satisfaction.

The existing Extra Care schemes are detailed in the table below. Each scheme holds a waiting list of people who have expressed an interest for accommodation and provides an indication of demand levels.

Extra Care Scheme	No. of Properties at Scheme	Number of Applicants on Waiting List
Llys Raddington, Flint	73	39 (8 approved)
Llys Jasmine, Mold	61	33
Plas Yr Ywen, Holywell	55	50
Llys Eleanor, Shotton	50	46 (16 approved)

Following the development of one further Extra Care scheme, there would be approx. 300 homes, and within this figure Flintshire Social Services estimate they would support approx. 550 people at any one time. This is believed to be a reasonable level of provision for the known and anticipated level of demand, and this is confirmed by applications.

When considering the geographical spread of existing Extra Care schemes that can support the local community, there is a gap in provision in the Buckley area.

Supported Housing – Learning Disabilities, Mental Health and Complex Needs

There is a shortfall of suitable housing for people with learning disabilities, mental health and complex needs and some individuals may also require physical adaptations and some people are currently living in out of County placements. One of the key priority areas of the Regional Partnership Board is to enable people to return to their own communities or at least closer to home.

The Flintshire Social Services Accommodation Panel has identified the following housing need (July 2021):

- There are currently 47 people waiting for supported housing for learning disabilities.
- There are 69 adults with a learning disability who currently live with their older parents/family/ carer and may need accommodation in the future.
- There are 65 people accommodated in out of County placements, Flintshire County Council aims to reduce this number.

- It is expected there may be 121 young adults/ school leavers who may need supported accommodation in the near future (2020-2025).
- There are currently 15 people with mental health problems requiring accommodation and this is reflective of the ongoing need.

Due to diverse needs, the model of support and type of accommodation required will vary depending on an individual's assessed need and this may include the group living setting e.g. shared house, or self-contained accommodation within a wider housing development. However, it is preferred that schemes have good access to local services and facilities and the preferred locations for schemes are Mold, Flint and Connah's Quay.

Supported Housing – Young persons (16-24 years) and community hub

The Flintshire Housing Strategy provides an aspiration to develop a youth homeless hub, providing emergency provision and consisting of 6-8 self-contained units with onsite staff support. It may provide a facility where advice, education, training facilities and other support services are available for the young people in residence as well as the wider community. It is important that this facility can integrate within the local area, be easily accessible and having shops and amenities close by. Preferred locations are Mold and the Deeside area.

Supported Housing –Temporary accommodation for single homeless people

Flintshire County Council currently operates a Homeless Hub providing 23 units of self-contained portacabin style accommodation which was established as part of the emergency covid response. The Council recognises that this is not a suitable long term option.

As an alternative provision, the Council would like to develop approx. 18 self-contained units that can be used as temporary accommodation with on-site staff support. This may be provided as one larger facility or in smaller sized blocks of flats. The preferred location would be the Deeside area.

Section 3 – Programme Development Plan (PDP) Schemes

Schemes should be progressed in collaboration with Housing Strategy and early discussions are welcomed so that schemes can be developed and informed by the housing need demonstrated via SARTH and the Tai Teg register. To achieve mixed communities and to take into account ongoing housing management practicalities it is

acknowledged that a flexible approach may be necessary for the given location and some property types/ tenures will not be suitable.

RSLs should submit schemes to Housing Strategy using the Welsh Government template form.

Schemes will be prioritised for inclusion within the main programme PDP that –

- Are in areas with higher housing need (social and intermediate)
- Provide 1-bed homes
- Provide specialist housing (wheelchair/ larger property)
- Provide supported housing for identified client group
- Schemes over 25 units should be mixed tenure
- Planning permission will be in place/ submitted and well advanced

Schemes will not be included in the PDP that have known planning objections which cannot be overcome or significant challenges which cannot be addressed. Pre-application planning advice should be sought for schemes that are intended for inclusion on the main programme PDP and where available copy of the positive pre-application response included with any submission.

Section 4 – Monitoring and Governance

A summary of the PDP for 2021/22 is provided at appendix 1 and details the property types and tenures it is expected to deliver.

The PDP will be monitored by Flintshire Housing Strategy Team in partnership with Welsh Government and RSL partners via:

- Flintshire Strategic Housing Board – quarterly meeting attended by Chief Executives/ Senior Officers from partner RSLs, Flintshire Housing Strategy Team and Homelessness Team.
- Flintshire Development Partners Meeting – attended by RSL Development Teams, Flintshire Housing Strategy, Welsh Government Funding Team. Meetings will monitor the PDP, encourage open communication, identify challenges and share information. The 2021/ 22 dates have been set to coincide ahead of PDP quarterly submissions. The meeting dates are:
10/8/21 @ 10am
2/11/21 @ 10am
18/1/22 @ 10am

- Quarterly individual meetings between Flintshire County Council Housing Strategy and each RSL Development Team to discuss schemes in more detail and new opportunities. Additional meetings held as deemed necessary.

The prospectus will be refreshed on an annual basis.

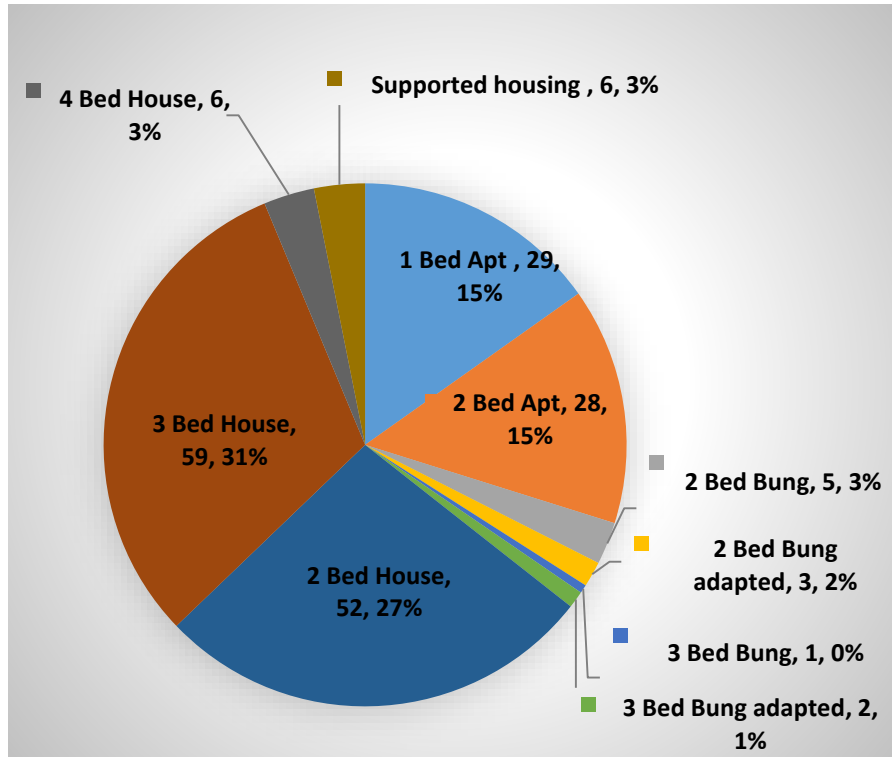
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Appendix 1

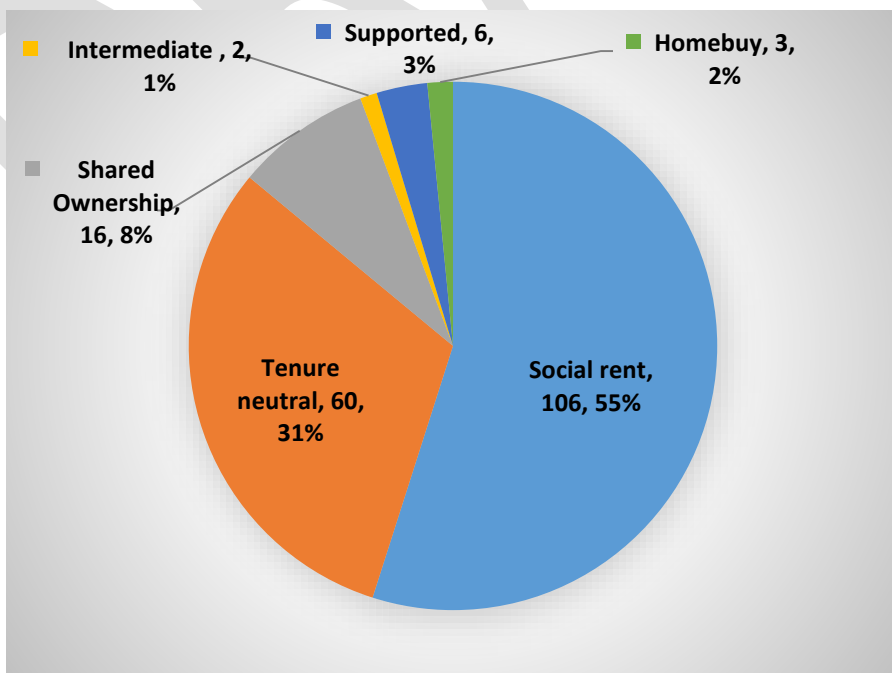
Summary of Programme Development Plan 2021/ 2022 (to be agreed by Welsh Government)

Main Programme 20/21											Tenure						
Provider	Site	1 Bed Apt	2 Bed Apt	2 Bed Bung adapted	3 Bed Bung	3 Bed Bung adapted	2 Bed House	3 Bed House	4 Bed House	Supported housing	Social rent	Tenure neutral	Rent to Own	Shared Ownership	Intermediate	Supported	Homebuy
Clwyd Alyn	66a Mold Road, Mynydd Isa	4				1	24	25			17	39					
	Princess Avenue, Buckley	8	2				2				12						
	Northern Gateway Strategic Site Deeside	6	18	2			20	24	6		42	21		16			
	Homebuy - Englefield Crescent, Mynydd Isa				1												1
First Choice	FCHA 2036 - 9 Taylors View, Shotton, CH5 1PN									3						3	
	FCHA 1127 - Complex Health & Learning Disability Scheme									3						3	
	FCHA 2120 – 3 Ash Grove, Bedol, Flintshire. CH5 3RX			1							1						
	FCHA 2109 - Property to be identified					1					1						
Adra	Pen Y Coed, Drury							8			8						
Wales and West	Land at Brunswick Road, Buckley	7	2								9						
Grwp Cynefin	Rhewl Fawr, Penyffordd Holywell						6	2			6				2		
	Homebuy x2 (property type tbc)																2
Flintshire	Ffordd Hiraethog, Mostyn	4	6								10						
Total		29	28	3	1	2	52	59	6	6	6	60	0	16	2	6	3

Property Types Expected To Be Delivered From Main Programme Schemes 21/22



Expected Tenure of Properties Delivered Through Main Programme Schemes 21/22



PDP - Reserve/ Potential Schemes			
Provider		Site	Estimated No. of units
Reserve	Flintshire / NEW Homes	Airfields, Northern Gateway (intermediate NEW Homes)	10
		Ffordd Llanarth, Connah's Quay (Social)	10
		Ffordd Llanarth, Connah's Quay (intermediate NEW Homes)	9
		Alyn Road, Buckley	5
		Canton Depot, Bagillt	51
	Clwyd Alyn	Extra Care Buckley	65
		LD bungalows Buckley (extra care site)	12
		Well Street, Buckley	56
	Adra	Northop Road, Flint - Phase 1	36
	Potential	Wales and West	Ewloe Social Club, Old Mold Road, Ewloe, CH5 3AU
Land at Vounog Hill, Penyffordd			20
First Choice		FCHA 2114 Flintshire Learning Disability scheme	8
Cartrefi Conwy		Mill Lane, Buckley	12
		Woodfield Avenue, Flint	22
		Packet House, Mostyn Road, Greenfield	12
North Wales Housing Association		Innisfree, Nant Mawr Road, Buckley	8
Flintshire		Wirral View, Hawarden	4
Total			367

Schemes in the Reserve/ Potential list will be in the early stages of development and may be prior to planning application submissions. Should schemes receive negative pre-planning application advice or refused planning they will be withdrawn from the PDP list.

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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Local Authority Prospectus

Welsh Government Guidance

Issued: May 2021

Local Authority Prospectus

Guidance from Welsh Government

Background

There will be challenging targets in the next few years for the delivery of affordable housing. We recognise that we need to develop tools to make the process as effective as possible and that starts with making sure we have identified what type of housing is needed and where.

As part of the new grant framework, Local authorities (LAs) will be required to identify their priorities for Social Housing Grant. The Prospectus will be the first step in presenting a summary of strategic housing priorities clearly and consistently across all local authorities in Wales, while accepting that no one authority is the same and each will have different requirements.

Purpose of the Prospectus

- Welsh Government are asking for a brief document which provides a clear and concise summary of the housing need and demand in your area and which succinctly identifies your housing priorities.
- Your prospectus should explain the type of provision that you plan to deliver with Welsh Government Social Housing Grant in order to meet your housing priorities.
- Your prospectus will be published by Welsh Government within the new Social Housing Grant Framework guidance.

Who will use it and why?

- **RSLs and LAs** – it will provide an accessible and transparent summary of housing need and strategic priorities to enable the right type of affordable housing development to be delivered in the right places.
- **Welsh Government** – it will provide evidence to allow final decisions to be made about schemes which will be included in your programme (both Main and Reserve programmes)

What are Welsh Government looking for in the Prospectus?

- The Prospectus should provide the information that your partners need to bring forward affordable housing schemes which meet the local needs and priorities of the authority.
- The prospectus should be clear, concise and no more than 4-6 pages in a word or pdf document.
- It should be easy to read, and easily understandable.
- You should discuss your Prospectus with your delivery partners.
- As a minimum, the Prospectus should be signed off by the Head of Housing
- Please use the Prospectus template on page 4.

Transitional Arrangements

- The Review of the Quarter 1 PDP (2021-22) will primarily focus on the Main Programme for this financial year.
- The New Grant Framework Guidance will be issued in September and will detail how the Social Housing Grant Programme will operate from 2022-23 onwards.
- As part of the new Grant Framework, Welsh Government will use the Quarter 3 PDP (due on November 15) to approve and sign off the programme for 2022-23 onwards.
- In approving the PDP, Welsh Government will use your Prospectus to ensure that schemes are meeting your identified need and priorities.

Submission Details

Please submit your prospectus to the Social Housing Grant Programme mailbox – socialhousinggrantprogramme@gov.wales by 6th August 2021.

WG contact details

If you have any queries about the guidance or your Prospectus, please contact Helga Warren using the Social Housing Grant Programme Mailbox shown above.

Prospectus Template

Section 1 – Strategic Housing Priorities

This section should state your key strategic housing priorities for delivering social/affordable housing in your area and should focus on no more than 4 or 5 key bullet points.

Section 2 – Housing Need, Demand and Priorities

- This section should provide:
 - a brief description of your area by local housing market area, community council or ward (including maps or tables if helpful)
 - a summary of the current social housing stock in your area
 - a description of the housing need and demand in your area
 - an assessment of the gap in provision of affordable housing by location, size of property, tenure and specific need (i.e. who the housing is intended for and number of homes required).

- The prospectus should clearly outline the types of provision required from the list below by property size and geographical area and also give an indication of the relative priorities.
 - General needs
 - Older persons
 - Extracare
 - Disabled
 - Homelessness Provision (Temporary accommodation)
 - Supported Housing/Specialist Provision
 - Learning Disabilities
 - Mental Health Difficulties
 - Domestic Violence
 - Ex-offenders
 - Drug & Substance Misuse
 - Young Vulnerable
 - Empty Properties
 - Existing Dwellings
 - Rural Housing
 - Homebuy
 - Mortgage Rescue
 - Regeneration of Town Centres
 - Other (e.g. cultural requirements)

Section 3 - Programme Development Plan Schemes

- The purpose of this section is for you to provide information on how schemes are prioritised in your PDP for approval and sign off by Welsh Government.
- This section should explain how schemes obtain LA support to get into the PDP and how all partners are expected to work together.

- This section should also explain how you will ensure any adhoc requests for specific/specialist accommodation will be considered in your programme.
- It is essential the above processes are discussed with both RSL partners and authorities' internal departments and clearly documented so that the process is fully open and transparent.

Section 4 – Monitoring and Governance

The purpose of this section is to confirm how your Social Housing Programme will be monitored in terms of meetings and information requirements. This will include the timing of:

- Individual RSL/stock retaining LA meetings
- Joint RSL/LA/WG PDP meetings
- Submission of PDP information
- Communication and information sharing

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COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 13 October 2021
Report Subject	Disabled Facilities Grant Policy
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Housing
Report Author	Chief Officer (Housing & Assets)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 places a mandatory duty on Local Authorities to provide disabled facilities grants. The grant is available for adapting or providing facilities for a disabled persons in a dwelling.

As part of the Internal Audit review of the Disabled Facilities Grant service in June 2018, it was identified that the current policy required a review in order to make the process and detail clearer and easier to understand.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee notes the report and provide any observations on the revised policy and new discretionary grant.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT POLICY
1.01	A Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) is a mandatory grant to help individuals living with a disability with financial support towards the cost of adapting their homes to enable them to continue living at their home with the maximum amount of independence.

	The administration of DFG is carried out within the Housing and Asset portfolio following a referral from an Occupational Therapist once the appropriate considerations have determined that the best option for the individual is to have an adaptation to the property they live in.
1.02	A DFG is available to owner occupiers, private tenants, Local Authority tenants and for tenants in social housing with registered social landlords. In these cases the tenant is required to request any adaptations directly with their landlord.
1.03	The maximum amount of grant available in Wales is £36,000 per application within a 5 year period. However, applications can be made within this period if the customers condition has changed, this case would then be reviewed with the Occupational Therapist upon application.
1.04	Where the application is for a child, or the applicant is in receipt of certain qualifying benefits, there is no means test and the cost of the adaptation up to the maximum grant will generally be awarded.
1.05	Where the application is for an adaptation under £10,000, these medium sized cases will no longer require a means test in line with the revised Welsh Government Housing Adaptations Service Standards.
1.06	For other applications the amount of the grant will vary from zero to the maximum grant depending on the cost of the approved works and the financial circumstances of the applicant. A means test will be carried out to establish, based on the financial circumstances of the applicant, whether the applicant will be required to make a financial contribution to the adaptation costs.
1.07	The Welsh Government Housing Adaptations Service Standards (revised March 2021) provides all Local Authorities with the guidance on the level of service expected including adaptation categories, timeframes and performance measures.
1.08	The policy was last reviewed and approved in October 2019; however it has since been identified that current practices in operation within the service are not aligned to the current policy and adherence would further delay the delivery of the required adaptations to our customers.
1.09	Work has been ongoing since then to identify and implement process improvements to further expedite delivery and recommendations for a policy exemption were put forward and approved in September 2020. The approved changes have been incorporated into the revised policy and they include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilisation of Local Land Charges as opposed to Legal Charges to be utilised for all Discretionary Top up Grants. • Discretionary Top up Grant amount increased from £20,000 to £26,000. • Remove the need, for the equity to be available as part of the criteria for the Discretionary Top up Grant Loan.

1.10	A significant amount of work has also been carried out to ensure that our customers, and the professionals who support them, have all the relevant information at the earliest opportunity. This work is now reflected in the revised policy and related appendices that are appended to this report.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None as a direct result of this report.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT																
3.01	<p>Under the five delivery principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act the revised Disabled Facilities Grant Policy can have the following impacts:</p> <p>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Long-term</td> <td>Positive impact on longer term solutions to enable people living with disabilities to remain in their own home for longer.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prevention</td> <td>Positive - Enabling the grant will have a significant positive preventative impacts for people.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Integration</td> <td>Positive- The Grants policy and the wider best practice group that reviews and aligns best practice is a positive example of integration across sectors.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Collaboration</td> <td>Positive - As above.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Involvement</td> <td>Positive - The policy has been through a consultation process and user/customer satisfaction will be built into processes to ensure user involvement in shaping improvements to service.</td> </tr> </table> <p>Well-being Goals Impact</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Prosperous Wales</td> <td>No Impact</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Resilient Wales</td> <td>No Impact</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Healthier Wales</td> <td>Positive - The Disabled Facilities Grants are there to support people living with disabilities to be in a position to live safely</td> </tr> </table>	Long-term	Positive impact on longer term solutions to enable people living with disabilities to remain in their own home for longer.	Prevention	Positive - Enabling the grant will have a significant positive preventative impacts for people.	Integration	Positive- The Grants policy and the wider best practice group that reviews and aligns best practice is a positive example of integration across sectors.	Collaboration	Positive - As above.	Involvement	Positive - The policy has been through a consultation process and user/customer satisfaction will be built into processes to ensure user involvement in shaping improvements to service.	Prosperous Wales	No Impact	Resilient Wales	No Impact	Healthier Wales	Positive - The Disabled Facilities Grants are there to support people living with disabilities to be in a position to live safely
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Prosperous Wales	No Impact																
Resilient Wales	No Impact																
Healthier Wales	Positive - The Disabled Facilities Grants are there to support people living with disabilities to be in a position to live safely																

		and more comfortably in their own home for longer. The revised policy sets out the process for disabled facilities grant in a clear and easy to understand way.
	More equal Wales	Positive - By supporting people living with disabilities to live more comfortably and safely in their own homes will also contribute to enabling them to fulfil their potential no matter what their background.
	Cohesive Wales	No Impact
	Vibrant Wales	No Impact
	Globally responsible Wales	No Impact
<p>The revision of the Disabled Facilities Grants Policy, when implemented will contribute to the Council's Well-being objective of 'Caring Council' through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of appropriate interventions (i.e. support or adaptations) to assist people to remain in their homes wherever possible 		

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Review and initial consultation with an Officer Working Group undertaken to review and revise the previous policy.
4.02	The Policy was presented to the Community and Housing Assets Overview and Scrutiny Committee, who were supportive of the revised policy.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Revised Disabled Facilities Grant Policy
5.02	Appendix 2 – Revised Housing Standards

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Integrated Impact Assessment

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Jen Griffiths, Benefits Manager Telephone: 01352 702929 E-mail: jen.griffiths@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) – A statutory grant of up to £36,000 to help individuals living with a disability with the cost of adapting their homes to enable them to continue living at their residence with the maximum amount of independence.

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PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING

DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS POLICY

2021 – 2023

Version Number	Author	Purpose/Change	Reviewer	Date
1.0	Robin Davies	Revised Mandatory Grant conditions. Implemented Discretionary Grant. Revised Discretionary Grant Conditions and Amount.	Neal Cockerton	22/09/21

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1. Introduction

Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide grants to assist with the delivery of adaptations

for a disabled person in a dwelling. An applicant is entitled to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant if they are a homeowner, a tenant renting from a private landlord, a resident of a park home or living on a houseboat. Discretionary assistance for adaptations in addition to, or instead of, a mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant may be awarded in exceptional circumstances.

For the purpose of the grant, a person is considered disabled if one of the following applies:

- Sight, hearing, or speech is substantially impaired;
- Having a mental disorder, or impairment of any kind;
- Are substantially physically disabled by illness, injury, impairment present since birth, or otherwise;
- Are registered (or could be registered) disabled with the Social Services Department.

Resource implications

Generally, the Council will resource the Policy through a combination of the following: -

- Capital allocations received from the Council's Capital Programme.
- Specific complementary funding made available by Welsh Government from the Enable support for independent living fund.
- Support to deliver smaller adaptations through the Care and Repair charity, utilising their resources to provide a whole house approach to care and support.

Review and revision

This Policy shall remain in force until it is required to be reviewed and revised accordingly in-line with any Welsh Government review of Housing Adaptations Service Standards..

The Council will advise members of the public of any amendments to this Policy, for example due to minor legislative changes, via press releases and our website as appropriate.

Equality and diversity

This Policy produces significant positive outcomes for vulnerable groups and those with disabilities. It reduces inequalities experienced by those groups in respect of health, housing and income.

We aim to continuously improve the quality of our services for our customers and are committed to giving an equal service to all members of the public regardless of age, disability, race, religion or belief, gender or sexual orientation.

Appeals and applications for assistance falling outside the Policy

Although this Policy will be the primary consideration in determining applications for assistance, all such applications shall be dealt with on an individual basis, based on the merits of each particular case. The Council will not refuse to consider an application that falls outside this Policy.

It is recognised that there will always be exceptional circumstances. Exceptional cases will be considered for Welsh government provided Enable funds by the Disabled Facilities Manager, and the Service Manager in conjunction with representatives from Social Services and the Lead Occupational Therapist.

2. Alternative Assistance

The Council works in partnership with Care and Repair North East Wales, which is a Community Benefit Society with charitable status that provides advice and support on adaptations and delivers minor adaptations to properties.

Care and Repair can carry out a provisional test of resources if requested, to see if an applicant is eligible for a grant or provide alternative solutions if the applicant is not eligible. They can assist with completing application forms and obtaining evidence required for the means test.

Care and Repair have a wholly owned subsidiary company called For You Property Services Ltd which provides property repairs, maintenance and adaptations service if required.

Care and Repair can be contacted:

- Via telephone on 01352 758700 or 03001113333 or online on www.careandrepairnew.co.uk
- Via email at enquiries@careandrepairnew.co.uk or by post at Care and Repair North East Wales, Place for You, Rowley's Drive, Shotton, Flintshire, CH5 1PY

It has been agreed until further notice that when a customer requires modular ramping, this will be processed by Care & Repair to utilise their recycled stock, this is more environmentally friendly and cost effective.

3. General conditions

All forms of assistance referred to in this Policy document are subject to a number of general conditions.

We provide every customer with confirmation of our terms and conditions, the following list is not exhaustive;

- All applications for assistance must be made on the Council's official adaptation request forms.
- All applicants will be required to have their property registered with HM Land Registry.
- The payment or part payment of grants is conditional on the eligible works being carried out to the satisfaction of the Council and the receipt of an acceptable invoice for the works and any ancillary or professional fees.
- One application can only be made within a 5 year period, unless the customer's condition has changed, this would be reviewed with the OT upon application.

Unless stated otherwise, any additional funding utilising a grant will be secured as a local land charge against the property where breach of a condition would require repayment of all or part of the financial assistance. This charge will not be removed until either the conditions expire or until the financial assistance is repaid.

No grant assistance will be awarded for works that have commenced prior to the date of formal notification of grant approval.

- Where it is ascertained that an application for assistance has been determined on the basis of inaccurate or incomplete information, the Council can withhold or demand repayment of monies from the applicant.

- If an applicant knowingly makes a false statement, in respect of any information they provide as part of an application for financial assistance or payment, including details of income and savings, the Council may refer the matter to the Police with a view to prosecution.
- In exceptional cases, where the property must be vacated in order for works to be carried out, the Council may be able to assist in finding temporary accommodation. Applicants must be unable to arrange temporary accommodation privately e.g. with family or friends and will be liable for the cost of any rent, removals or furniture storage costs incurred. However, if the applicant would suffer undue hardship, the Council may be able to provide discretionary assistance.

Exceptions to repayment conditions

It is recognised that there will be certain situations where it would be inappropriate or unreasonable for a disabled person to be required to repay the grant on disposal of their dwelling. A written request for a repayment waiver must be made to the Council, explaining the circumstances of the case and the reasons why repayment of grant would cause undue hardship. The particulars of each individual case will be considered on their own merits and the applicant will be notified of the outcome in writing.

Where a property is vested in another individual's name under a will or intestacy, the death of the owner will trigger repayment, unless the property was the inheriting person's main residence at the time of application. In this case the condition to repay the loan or grant assistance and occupy the property will transfer to the new owner.

Revisions after grant approval

Where, owing to circumstances beyond the control of the applicant, the eligible works cannot be completed for the estimated costs submitted with the application, the Council will continue with the work without considering any additional charge to the client.

Adaptations falling outside grant assistance

In the event the cost of the adaptation is in excess of the total assistance available by the Council, the applicant may choose to relocate or be placed on the Council's Specialist Housing Register.

4. Legislation

The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 is the legislative framework governing the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants. Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide grant aid to assist with the delivery of adaptations for a disabled person in a dwelling. In July 2002 the Government made significant changes to housing grant legislation, introducing Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002. This order allows local authorities to formulate their own flexible financial assistance policies to their funding to address specific local needs and priorities.

In April 2021 Government amended the Housing Service Standards to remove mandatory means testing for all medium adaptations and transferring powers to local authorities under the Regulatory Reform Order to be able to create their own discretionary policies.

Consequently, it is incumbent upon Local Authorities to ensure that their financial assistance policy is updated to reflect the terms of this scheme and any other assistance offered.

In addition, the Local Government Act 2000 created a discretionary power referred to as 'the well-being power' which enables Local Authorities to do anything that they consider is likely to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area and/or persons in it, provided that they are not restricted from doing so by other legislation.

Section 25, Local Government Act 1988, states that consent from the Secretary of State or Minister is required for provision of financial assistance, unless the assistance or benefit is provided in exercise of any power conferred by Article 3 of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002.

Consequently, the broad nature of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002 and the general 'well-being' powers contained in the Local Government Act 2000, means that Local Authorities will be able to provide financial assistance through the provision of discretionary grants and loan schemes to the full range of applicants and can attach such conditions or terms that they consider appropriate in the circumstances.

5. Purpose of Grant

Prior to a Disabled Facilities Grant being approved, Flintshire Council needs to be satisfied that the works are necessary and appropriate to meet the long term needs of the disabled customer, and that it is reasonable and practicable to carry out the works having regard to the age and/or the condition of the building. To establish this, the Disabled Facilities Team will assess the application in consultation with the Occupational Therapy Team.

The property is inspected to assess the proposed works are technically feasible, that there are no other reasonable alternative solutions, and there are no health and safety issues.

Based on the above inspection, a decision will be made in consultation with the applicant as to whether to proceed to a Disabled Facilities Grant, a Disability Relocation Grant, or to explore alternative housing solutions.

In order for a Disabled Facilities Grant to be made available, one or more of the following reasons must be established:

- Help a disabled occupant with access to and from their premises (such as widening doors or installing ramps);
- To allow access to internal rooms, specifically a main living room, bathroom, bedroom or kitchen facilities (such as by providing a stair lift);
- To have easier access and movement around the home to enable the disabled person to care for someone dependent on them, who also lives there (such as a child, husband, wife or partner);
- To make the building safe for the disabled occupant or other people living with the disabled occupant;
- To improve any heating system in a dwelling to meet the specific specialist needs of the disabled occupant. In the event a heating system is not in place or is not suitable, to provide a suitable heating system;
- To allow access to and from a garden by a disabled occupant or making a garden safe for a disabled occupant.

The relevant works are limited to, or include, such works as is believed to be necessary to achieve the purposes stated above.

6. Grants Application Process

To make an enquiry or an application for a Disabled Facilities Grant, an individual should contact the Single Point of Access team, the Social Services Duty Team, Social Services on 01352 702642. The Social Services Duty Team will be able to advise whether an applicant meets the criteria for assessment by an Occupational Therapist.

In the event an assessment has been completed and it is deemed an adaptation is required, the Occupational Therapist will complete an Adaptation Recommendation Form and will advise the client of the process which will be followed. Disabled Facilities Grants are subject to a 'means test' unless the application relates to a child. Applicants will be asked to provide financial information to help calculate whether they are eligible for a grant and whether they are required to make a contribution towards the cost of the work.

A Building Surveyor and the Occupational Therapist will discuss the recommendations to ensure the work can be reasonably and practicably carried out. There may be a requirement to inspect the property to facilitate this assessment.

Information leaflets are provided to client which provide a summary of the types of assistance available, including details on eligibility criteria, levels of assistance and any conditions that apply. This information is also available on the Council's website www.flintshire.gov.uk under the Housing Grants section.

Utilisation of Own Contractors

On occasion, applicants may request to utilise their own contractors. In order for this to be facilitated, the contractors will need to join the Council's Tendering System. This will ensure the contractors are bona-fide, have all the appropriate insurances, and are financially stable. This will also facilitate the payment for the works completed directly to the contractors.

Payments

Grant payments will be made directly to the main contractors, subject to the work being completed to a satisfactory standard and supported by an accurate invoice. Interim payments can be made on the larger works, subject to conditions.

Upon notification of completion of the works, a full inspection will be undertaken. The final payment will only be released when all works have been completed satisfactorily and all relevant invoices, guarantees and certificates have been received and conditions met. In cases of dispute between the applicant and the contractor over the satisfactory completion of grant works, the Council reserve the right to adjudicate and release payment to the contractor if deemed appropriate, however, the contractual arrangement for quality and warranties is between the client and the contractor.

7. Financial Assistance

In terms of assessing potential contributory funding to the property adaptations, eligible applicants may be means tested, unless they are in receipt of one or more of the following passported benefits: -

- Income Support
- Housing Benefit

- Council Tax Benefit (excluding single persons discount)
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Working Families Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Pension Credit Guarantee
- Universal Credit
- Income Related Employment Support Allowance

In some circumstances the Council facilitates the lending of money to home owners in exchange for a share in the value of the property. There are no regular repayments or interest added to the grant. The Council recovers its money either when the property is next sold or transferred to a new owner within a set period of time. This is completed through the placement of local land charges. The charges are removed after the set period of time has elapsed and the property has not been sold or transferred. No monies are due to be repaid at this time.

8. Disabled Facilities Assistance

The council has a duty to consider all applications for Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) which are administered under Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (HGC&RA). The council also provides discretionary assistance in the form of a fast track grant for smaller adaptations. Other products for disabled facilities assistance are also provided on a discretionary basis. All applications for assistance will be subject to an assessment by the Social Services Occupational Therapy Team.

This policy provides criteria to ensure grants are awarded fairly and consistently. The council's intention is to meet performance targets and service standards as set out by Welsh Government for the delivery of disabled facilities assistance.

MINOR ADAPTATIONS	
Purpose	Minor adaptations are classed as those which cost less than £1,000 and these are dealt with directly by Care and Repair North East Wales in-line with the Service Level Agreement.
Eligibility Criteria	Referral to Care & Repair by Occupational Therapist confirming that works are necessary and appropriate.
Conditions	None
Amount	Less than £1000

Purpose	DFG's are available to adapt a property to suit the particular needs of a disabled person who resides at the property.
Eligibility Criteria	<p>Referral by Occupational Therapist confirming that works are necessary and appropriate. Adaptation is the most satisfactory course of action subject to a reasonable and practicable assessment.</p> <p>Available to homeowners, tenants renting from a private landlord, a resident of a park home or living on a houseboat.</p> <p>Amount of Disabled Facilities Grant depends on the income and savings of the disabled person and his or her partner, even if the disabled person is not the applicant for the grant (such as when an application is made by a landlord with a disabled tenant).</p> <p>If the income and savings are below the test limits (£6,000), a contribution will not be required.</p> <p>If the income and savings are greater than the test limits, a contribution will be required towards the cost of the works.</p> <p>There is no requirement for a means test for all Children's Disabled Facilities Grants (under the age of 19).</p> <p>There is no requirement for a means test if an applicant is in receipt of any of the following passported benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income Support • Income-based Employment and Support • Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance • Guarantee Pension Credit • Housing Benefit • Council Tax Reduction • Universal Credit • Working Tax Credit and/or Child Tax Credit provided that the annual income for the purposes of assessing entitlement to the tax credit is less than £15,050
Conditions	<p>Any grant over £10,000 requires a Means Test. (except children/passported benefits)</p> <p>Any grant over £20,000 requires a Local Land Charge.</p> <p>As set out in the Housing, Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, the grant will only be paid when the Council are satisfied that the work is being completed to their satisfaction and in accordance with the grant approval.</p> <p>Repayment of any grant above £20,000 requires a maximum repayment amount of £10,000 in accordance with HGC&RA1996 General Consent Conditions 2008, if the applicant chooses to move within 10 years of the completion date. The amount of repayment will be placed as a local</p>

	<p>land charge against the property.</p> <p>Where a property is vested in another individual's name under a will or intestacy, the death of the owner will trigger repayment, unless the property was the inheriting person's main residence at the time of application. In this case the condition to repay the loan or grant assistance and occupy the property will transfer to the new owner.</p> <p>Adaptations made at a property for a private tenant will require the approval of the private landlord prior to a decision on the adaptation being made.</p>
Amount	<p>Maximum of £36,000.</p> <p>If the Council is managing the adaptation construction works on behalf of the client then any unforeseen costs that cause the cost of the work to exceed the grant maximum of £36,000 will be met by the Council. This will not apply where the client is managing the works themselves or where the extra costs arise from additional items requested by the client which did not form part of the original grant agreement with the Council.</p>

DISCRETIONARY ADAPTATIONS	
Purpose	<p>The eligible works of a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant are extensive, however it is considered prudent that monies be set aside to enable, enhance, or provide more cost effective solutions, where it is reasonable and practicable to do so, to a particular disabled persons assessed needs. For example; The provision of smaller scale adaptations with a less bureaucratic process. The Welsh Government review of adaptations supports this and the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002 allows Local Authorities to implement it.</p>
Eligibility Criteria	<p>Eligibility for a Discretionary Adaptation Grant is the same as eligibility for a DFG, without the requirement for a means test.</p>
Conditions	<p>None</p>
Amount	<p>Maximum of £10,000.</p> <p>Where appropriate, adaptations above £10,000 may be considered as eligible for a discretionary grant.</p>

DISCRETIONARY TOP UP < £3K	
Purpose	<p>If the work is likely to be in excess of the current statutory limit (currently</p>

	£36,000) then a discretionary top up maybe offered, or there may be a need for the applicant to provide contributory funding.
Eligibility Criteria	Applicant eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant which requires a top up. Applicant has an owner's interest in the property.
Conditions	The grant will only be paid when the Council are satisfied that the work is being completed to their satisfaction and in accordance with the grant approval. A local land charge will be placed against the property for a period of 10 years.
Amount	Maximum of £3,000.

DISCRETIONARY TOP UP GRANT > £3K	
Purpose	This grant will be considered in instances where the required expenditure to provide the disabled adaptation is above the statutory limit (currently £36,000) and above £39,000. It will only be provided to owner occupiers and the grant amount will be registered as a local land charge against the property.
Eligibility Criteria	Applicant eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant which requires a top up. Applicant has an owner's interest. An Assessment Panel comprising of senior officers from Social Services and Housing will determine whether a Top-Up can be issued. Subject to means testing. The grant is discretionary and the availability is dependent upon the detail of each individual case.
Conditions	Property must be occupied by the applicant or a family member (in the case of a child) as their main residence until the grant is released. If the property has a mortgage, it is the responsibility of the owner to advise the mortgage lender a charge will be placed against the property. Repayment of the grant is required if the applicant chooses to move within 10 years of the completion date. Where a property is vested in another individual's name under a will or intestacy, the death of the owner will trigger repayment, unless the property

	<p>was the inheriting person's main residence at the time of application. In this case the condition to repay the grant assistance and occupy the property will transfer to the new owner.</p> <p>Voluntary early repayment may be made at any time and the charges will be removed.</p>
Amount	Maximum of £26,000.

RELOCATION GRANT	
Purpose	A Relocation Grant or the exploration of alternative housing solutions will be considered in the event the adaptation is not feasible, reasonable, practical, or cost effective.
Eligibility Criteria	<p>Current property is unsuitable for adaptation, does not meet the long term needs of the applicant or it is more cost effective to move rather than adapt. The Council must be satisfied that the new property can be more easily and cost effectively adapted to meet the long term needs of the disabled occupant.</p> <p>Referral by Occupational Therapist confirming the adaptation works are necessary and appropriate.</p> <p>Applicant has an owner's interest in the property. Subject to means testing.</p>
Conditions	<p>Repayment of grant will be required if applicant chooses to move within 10 years of the completion date, up to a maximum repayment of £10,000. Subject to means testing.</p> <p>The grant is discretionary and the availability is dependent upon the detail of each individual case.</p>
Amount	<p>Maximum of £20,000 available to help bridge the affordability gap between the value of the applicants existing home and the purchase price of the new property.</p> <p>Maximum of £2,000 available for removal expenses.</p>

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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh Government

Housing Adaptations Service Standards

Date of issue: [Revised March 2021](#) ~~April 2019~~

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

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1. Aim

The Welsh Government recognises the essential role housing adaptations play in supporting disabled and older people to live safely and independently, improving the health and wellbeing of the individual, their families, carers and reducing pressures on frontline services such as health and social care.

The preventative work which housing adaptations offer is very much in line with the principles of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, Social Services and Wellbeing Act and the approach set out in Prosperity for All and Healthier Wales. Housing Adaptations should also be considered within the wider context of Equalities Act 2010 and the UN Principles for Older Persons and service providers should pay due regard to them in providing support to service users.

The provision of support for housing adaptations in Wales is complex and is a reflection of the multiple partners involved in the care and support arrangements of disabled and older people.

The aim of the standards is to set out the level of service expected for the delivery and installation of a **housing adaptation** that service users, regardless of their geographic location and tenure, can expect. The service Standards should ensure service providers deliver **housing adaptations** in a more consistent manner and inform service users on the level of service to expect when they seek support for a housing adaptation.

The service standards should be viewed as a planning and delivery tool by service providers to align their procedures and systems with the standards as much as possible and to coordinate and integrate their work with other relevant service providers that operate within their region.

2. Key Issues

Recent independent reviews have highlighted the complexity of the different ways in which housing adaptations are provided. Examples of reports include:

- A review of Independent Living Adaptations: Welsh Government (2015) ¹
- Housing Adaptations: Wales Audit Office (2018) ²
- Housing and Disabled People: Equalities and Human Rights Commission (2018) ³
- Housing Adaptations: Report of the Public Accounts Committee (2018)⁴

Each report has identified issues of funding complexity and the challenging arrangements for accessing services across Wales. The multiple funding programmes in place for providing adaptations in Wales has resulted in service

¹ <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/review-independent-living-adaptations/?lang=en>

² <https://www.audit.wales/system/files/publications/housing-adaptations-2018-english.pdf>

³ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/housing-and-disabled-people-wales-hidden-crisis.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld11703/cr-ld11703-e.pdf>

users receiving different levels of service dependent upon their tenure and where they live.

3. Scope

These standards will be applied to all housing adaptations, and will be relevant to:

- Local Authorities
- Care and Repair Agencies
- Registered Social Landlords
- Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) organisations
- Occupational Therapists
- Service Users or their representatives

In addition to the above, the service standards will be relevant for Healthcare and Social Service Professionals e.g. community nurses and social workers.

The Welsh Government will keep the standards under review, and may publish amended standards as appropriate.

Legislation requirements for the delivery of specific types of adaptation overrides any services standards outlined in this document, and service providers should seek their own legal advice where needed.

4. Service Standards for the delivery of Housing Adaptations

The service standards set the expected levels of service for the installation of a Housing Adaptation and can be seen at **Figure 1**. There is a responsibility on both the service user (or their representative) and provider to work constructively and collaboratively together towards agreed outcomes, with neither party acting unreasonable which could result in unnecessary delays or an unsatisfactory outcome.

Setting service levels will help to ensure housing adaptations are delivered in a consistent manner, regardless of a service user's location and tenure, whilst giving flexibility to service providers to determine the best way to utilise their own resources to meet the standards. In meeting the needs of a service user, it should be noted that in some situations it may be more appropriate that other measures are considered and explored before a housing adaptation is considered e.g. re-ablement or re-housing to more suitable accommodation where this is an option.

Due to the complexity of delivering some housing adaptations, especially larger sized adaptations, the process can result in a number of steps that may involve input from wider stakeholders such as the planning department, building control teams and utility companies. These steps have to be taken to ensure that the adaptation will provide the help and assistance needed for the service user and meets broader legislative requirements. As a result, the timeframes for delivering a housing

adaptation can vary. The 'Expected Timeframes' service standard in **Figure 1** has been split to reflect the following key phases that can be involved in deciding if a Housing Adaptation should be provided:



- **First Point of Contact** - The time it takes from a service user making first contact with a relevant service provider (this could be a Local Authority, Care and Repair Agency, Housing Association or from their health or social services contacts) to being assessed by a competent person (such as an Occupational Therapist or Trusted Assessor) and;
- **Housing Adaptation confirmed as necessary** - The timescale for an Occupational Therapist (or another suitably competent person) report/referral/recommendation being provided to the service provider outlining the adaptation works required.
- **Installation of Housing Adaptation** - The date of referral (or decision, recommendation, report) made by the competent person when the adaptation is confirmed as needed to installation. This is to ensure that alternative forms of assistance (e.g. re-ablement) are considered before deciding a housing adaptation is needed.

The Welsh Government expect service providers to work in collaboration with Occupational Therapists (or other competent persons who can advise and identify the required adaptation) as well as service users to determine the best possible outcome is achieved, while still reflecting the principles of all work being **necessary** and **appropriate, reasonable** and **practicable**.

Definitions of the different types of housing adaptations (Small, Medium or Large) are listed in **Figure 2**. These are included to provide a guide for service providers to determine how to record the most appropriate type of adaptation (Small, Medium or Large). For situations that are considered urgent e.g. to facilitate a hospital discharge, support a palliative care package, or prevent admission to hospital or a care home, these instances should be prioritised and delivered as soon as practicable.

The definitions in **Figure 2** also aims to help service users understand the different types of adaptations and what they can expect in how they are delivered by the service provider.

The Welsh Government recognises there may be situations or individual cases which do not fit within the categories of **Figure 2** for a variety of reasons. In these cases, **service providers should use their professional judgement to decide the most appropriate category to use based on sound judgement and evidence.**

5. Monitoring and enforcement of Service Standards

Performance monitoring data will be submitted to the Welsh Government using the data collection methodology for 'Housing Adaptations Data Monitoring', which will help evidence progress on delivery of the service standards. The data collected through this process will be published on an annual basis. The Welsh Government has revised the terms of conditions for a number of grants it provides for housing adaptations for service providers to work in line with the service standards.

6. Complaints and concerns

If a service user is not satisfied with the level of service received, they have the right to make a complaint. Any complaints should be directed to the service provider and handled in accordance with their organisational complaints procedure.

Figure 1 - Housing Adaptations Service Standards

Service Standard	Level of Service Expected
<p>Standard 1: Purpose</p>	<p>The purpose of a housing adaptation can provide a number of benefits, but is primarily to help disabled and/or older people and support their carers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to remove barriers that can lead to people being disabled by their environment and not by their impairments (social model of disability); • to remain or become more independent within their own home; • to facilitate an earlier hospital discharge; and • to prevent any further falls. <p>The adaptation provided should be necessary and appropriate, as well as reasonable and practicable.</p>
<p>Standard 2: Equality and Diversity</p>	<p>Disabled and/or older people can expect that they will be treated fairly and respectfully. Service providers will ensure they have equality and diversity policies in place to ensure this and that staff have undertaken the appropriate disability awareness training.</p>
<p>Standard 3: Communication</p>	<p>Communication should be a two way process between the service provider and service user (or their representative), and based on the principles of coproduction and the ‘what matters’ conversation as endorsed in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and Social Services and Wellbeing Act. Information and communication will be in a format which most effectively meets a service users’ needs, such as Welsh and English, and accessible formats including braille, large fonts, audio versions and other languages. At the start of the process the service user (or their representative) will be informed of the key steps to install an adaptation. The service user should be meaningfully included in the decision making process on the design and delivery of an adaptation where practicable. They will also be informed of the expected timeframes, be regularly updated on progress and invited to provide feedback during and at the end of installation.</p>

Standard 4: Quality of Service	<p>The work will be completed by a suitably competent person, either an employee of the service provider or someone from their approved contractors list which is regularly monitored by the service provider and subject to clear selection, retention and quality assurance procedures. If a service user decides to use their own contractor to carry out the work it will be the service user's responsibility to deal with and resolve any issues and will need the appropriate consent and permissions from their landlord where this is appropriate. Service users can also be signposted to other organisations or given initial advice to find the support they may need.</p>
Standard 5: Quality of Equipment	<p>Any equipment installed will be compliant with relevant health and safety requirements, technical specifications and be appropriate for the purpose which they were intended. Service user should also be informed and made aware of; warranty information, service charges and maintenance requirements where it is appropriate to do so.</p>
Standard 6: Expected Timeframes	<p>For Small Adaptations: The solution will usually (i.e. for 90% of cases) be installed within 3 weeks (if urgent) or 4 weeks (if non urgent) from date of first contact with the service provider who have deemed it necessary for the adaptation to be installed.</p> <p>For Medium Adaptations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From first point of contact with the service provider, the service user can expect to be assessed within 2 months by a competent person e.g. an Occupational Therapist, or Trusted Assessor. - If the adaptation is confirmed as necessary the Occupational Therapist or Trusted Assessor will provide a report/referral/recommendation to the service provider within 2 weeks of the decision. - Solution usually installed within 4 months (or in line with legislative requirements) from date of referral/recommendation from a competent person. <p>For Large Adaptations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From first point of contact with the service provider, the service user can expect to be assessed within 2 months by a competent person e.g. an Occupational Therapist. - Once the adaptation is confirmed as necessary the Occupational Therapist will provide a report/referral/recommendation to the service provider within 2 weeks of the decision. - Solution usually installed within 15 months (or in line with legislative requirements) from date of referral from a competent person, to reflect steps taken in some cases, e.g. planning permission.

Standard 7: Eligibility Checks	For Small Adaptations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Means Test is not required. - Occupational Therapist assessment not required. - Trusted Assessor assessment may be required.
	For Medium Adaptations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Means Test <u>is not</u> may be required (only in relation to a Disabled Facilities Grant). - Occupational Therapist Assessment may be required. If not, a Trusted Assessor will be required.
	For Large Adaptations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Means Test may be required (only in relation to a Disabled Facilities Grant). - Occupational Therapist Assessment will be required. - Trusted Assessor assessment would not be appropriate in these cases.

Figure 2 – Definitions of different types of Housing Adaptations

Category	Nature of Work Required	Example of Work	Funding Source
<p>Small Adaptions adaptations are inexpensive items, which can be provided very quickly. It would generally fit into the description of 'immediate falls prevention' or 'urgent for hospital discharge' and can be assessed and installed within days or the same day if urgent. It can be identified by a number of health/ social services/ other appropriately trained staff e.g. RSL staff, Care and Repair Staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor home modification required • Not a specialised solution • No building/planning approval required • Adjustable / Flexible • Simple & Intuitive • Minimal maintenance and/or servicing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grab rails • Stair rails • Small ramps • Accessible taps • Key safes • Mop stick hand rails • Outdoor rails • External / staircase lights • Additional electrical sockets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENABLE • RRAP • RSL Funds • LA own funds • Self funded
<p>Medium Adaptations anything which is not classed as small or large.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major home modification may be required, but building/planning approval not required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk in shower • Stair lifts • Large ramps • A combination of adaptations installed as one job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENABLE • RSL Funds • LA own funds • Physical Adaptation Grants (PAG) • Disabled Facility Grant (DFG)s • Self funded
<p>Large Adaptations these are works which will require specialist assessments, statutory approvals and major adaptations to a property such as extensions and through floor lifts. An Occupational Therapists assessment will be required and planning permission may be needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major home modification / structural change required • Specialised / Innovative solutions required • Building / planning approval required • Fixed / permanent / long term • Complex / unfamiliar / requires training & supervision • Solution requires expertise for installation and maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building an extension to provide a downstairs bedroom and/or bathroom • Through floor lift • Significant internal structural modifications e.g. relocate bathroom or kitchen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled Facilities Grant • Physical Adaptations Grants • RSL Funds • LA own funds • Self funded



COMMUNITY HOUSING AND ASSETS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	13 th October 2021
Report Subject	Progress of Empty Homes Scheme in Flintshire
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection
Report Author	Chief Officer – Planning, Environment & Economy
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Welsh Government launched the Houses into Homes scheme in April 2012 to help tackle the substantial numbers of empty homes in Wales. The scheme is supported by a Wales-wide £20million recyclable loan fund which provides loans to bring empty houses or commercial buildings back into use as homes for sale or rent.

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an insight of how this scheme works in Flintshire, and outline the work undertaken since January 2019 when Community and Business Protection Service began to manage the scheme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To note and support the contents of the report.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND TO EMPTY HOMES AND THE 'HOUSES INTO HOMES' SCHEME
1.01	Welsh Government launched the Houses into Homes scheme in April 2012 to help tackle the substantial numbers of empty homes in Wales. The

	scheme is supported by a Wales-wide £20million recyclable loan fund which provides loans to bring empty houses or commercial buildings back into use as homes for sale or rent.
1.02	The loans are interest free and are available to individuals, charities, companies and businesses. A maximum loan of £35,000 is available per property and this has to be paid back within two or five years, depending on whether the property is sold or let. The scheme is operated by individual local authorities though they work together in regional groups to ensure a consistent approach.
1.03	In 2016 a joint Steering Group was established by Welsh Government to monitor and review the Houses into Homes Scheme and Home Improvement Loans Scheme. The group meets on a quarterly basis with membership from the WLGA, Welsh Government and Welsh local authorities.
2.00	OVERVIEW OF THE FLINTSHIRE SCHEME
2.01	<p>Since early 2019 the scheme has been managed and administered by the Empty Homes Development Officer, who is based within the Community and Business Protection Services. His role entails:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining the register for the Empty Home Loans; • Assessing the eligibility of applications, including eligibility of the property; • Liaising with Legal Services to ensure awards of loans are legally binding; • Monitoring the work undertaken by applicants; • Signing off works undertaken by the property owner; • Collaborating with other portfolios and services including Planning and Building Control; • Identifying suitable properties through research; • If capacity allows, project management of property improvement ; • Enforcement action, if appropriate
2.02	Due to the increasing demands on the Empty Homes Development Officer, in September 2021 a Contracts Inspector was appointed on a fixed term basis for twelve months. The focus of this new post is primarily to undertake monitoring and compliance checks of schemes that have commenced. The postholder also investigates properties that have been identified through the Council Tax Register as being empty.
2.03	The benefits of this scheme to Flintshire are significant. The outcomes supported by this service is consistent with the aspirations of key strategies such as the Housing Strategy and the Council Plan. 'Affordable and Accessible Housing' is a theme that is featured in the Council Plan, with 'Empty Properties' being an in-year priority area. Bringing properties back into use reduces the housing deficit for the county.
2.04	Flintshire has approximately 400 long term empty properties. This number has been calculated based on Council Tax records.

2.05	The Empty Property Loan is provided to help owners bring empty properties back in to use. It is an interest free loan product to cover works which bring the property up to the Decent Homes Standard. An example would be, works to remedy serious disrepair, provide modern kitchen and bathroom facilities, improve heating systems and insulation, and to remove any serious hazards which could affect the well-being of the occupier, such as dampness, dangerous stairs or electrical wiring. The maximum amount is £35,000 per unit of accommodation (£250,000 per applicant maximum).
2.06	To be eligible for a loan an applicant must have sufficient equity within their property to cover the loan amount/or offer a different property with sufficient equity for security. In addition the property must have been vacant for over six months. On completion of the works, the property must be habitable and of a lettable standard (no category 1 hazards, as defined by the Housing Act 2004).
2.07	In terms of performance since April 2019, the following has been achieved by the Service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £930,000 has been provided in loans • This has created 38 units of accommodation, from 21 applications <p>In addition, through the work of the Empty Homes Development Officer two additional properties have gone through the enforced sales procedure (the first in September 2020, and the second in July 2021).</p> <p>Currently there are three further applications that are being evaluated, which could represent a further £117,000 in loans.</p>
2.08	The Welsh Government have made an additional £15m available for local authorities to tackle complex, long term, empty properties. To support this work, Welsh Government has commissioned specialist consultants to work with authorities to provide bespoke advice. In July 2021 a number of officers from a range of portfolios participated in training provided by the aforementioned consultants.
2.09	At present the Empty Homes Development Officer is reviewing each application as they come to his attention. The appointment of a Contracts Inspector has freed up greater capacity.
	If Members are concerned about an empty property in their ward please send details to: emptyhomes@flintshire.gov.uk .

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None as a result of this report.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	Impact assessment is not required as this is a report on progress and is for information only, and is not a strategic report.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
4.01	None as a result of this report.

5.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
5.01	None as a result of this report although each application is assessed on its own merits.

6.00	APPENDICES
6.01	The refreshed Council Plan for 2021-23 can be found using the following link: https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Council-and-Democracy/Council-Plan.aspx

7.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
7.01	Contact Officer: Sian Jones, Community and Business Protection Manager Telephone: 01352 702132 E-mail: sian-jones@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	CATERGORY 1 HAZARDS Category 1 Hazards are defined by the Housing Act 2004. These are the hazards that are the most serious, and could potentially lead to serious harm or death. The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is the method by which hazards are identified.