

Public Document Pack

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To: Cllr Helen Brown (Chair)

Councillors: Ray Hughes, Linda Thew, Pam Banks, Gillian Brockley, Tina Claydon, Geoff Collett, Rosetta Dolphin, David Evans, Dennis Hutchinson, Kevin Rush and Dale Selvester

21 September 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

NOTICE OF HYBRID MEETING
COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 27TH SEPTEMBER, 2022 at 10.00 AM

Yours faithfully

Steven Goodrum
Democratic Services Manager

Please note: Attendance at this meeting is either in person in the Council Chamber, Flintshire County Council, County Hall, Mold, Flintshire or on a virtual basis.

The meeting will be live streamed onto the Council's website. The live streaming will stop when any confidential items are considered. 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 6 July, 2022.

4 **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING** (Pages 11 - 26)

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 **STRATEGIC HOUSING AND REGENERATION PROGRAMME (SHARP)** (Pages 27 - 50)

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

Purpose: To provide an update on the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP).

6 **VOID MANAGEMENT** (Pages 51 - 62)

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

Purpose: To provide an update to the Committee on Void properties and the work undertaken to bring the properties back into use.

7 **RAPID REHOUSING** (Pages 63 - 80)

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

Purpose: To provide the Committee with information on the Rapid Rehousing approach.

8 DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT (Pages 81 - 112)

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

Purpose: To provide the Committee with an update on the Disabled Facilities Grant Policy.

9 COUNCIL PLAN 2022/23 TIMELINE REVIEW (Pages 113 - 118)

Report of Chief Executive - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure

Purpose: To review timelines for Council Plan 22/23 following request from County Council in July.

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

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COMMUNITY HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6 JULY 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting on Wednesday, 6 July 2022

PRESENT: Councillor Helen Brown (Chair)

Councillors: Pam Banks, Tina Claydon, Geoff Collett, David Evans, Kevin Rush and Dale Selvester

SUBSTITUTIONS: Councillors: Bernie Attridge (for Andy Hughes) and Rob Davies (for Dennis Hutchinson)

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Sean Bibby (Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration); Councillor Dave Hughes (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and the Regional Transport Strategy); Councillor Paul Johnson (Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement); Councillor Billy Mullin (Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources); Chief Executive; Chief Officer (Housing & Communities); Service Manager – Housing & Prevention; Service Manager - Revenues and Procurement; Senior Manager - Housing & Asset Management; Principal Accountant and Strategic Finance Manager (Commercial & Housing)

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

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

Councillors Bernie Attridge, Pam Banks, Helen Brown and Rob Davies declared a personal interest on the Welfare Reform Update/Housing Rent Income (agenda item 7) as they had each received the eligible payment as part of the Cost of Living Support Scheme.

7. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2022 were approved, as moved and seconded by Councillor Geoff Collett and Councillor Kevin Rush.

RESOLVED:

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

8. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the current Forward Work Programme for consideration. She outlined the items that had been added to the Forward Work Programme in consultation with the Chair and relevant officers since the last meeting.

Following a question from Councillor Bernie Attridge, it was agreed that a report on the Tenants Federation would be brought to the Committee at a later date.

It was also agreed that the report on Estate Management and Anti-Social Behaviour, due to be presented to the Committee in December 2022, be split into 2 separate reports as follows: -

- Estate Management – to outline what is being done by the Council and how this would impact positively/negatively on tenants. Councillor Bernie Attridge requested that the report provide information on estate clear ups and walkabouts to ensure consistency across the County.
- Anti-Social Behaviour – to update Members on the Policy and to outline any proposed changes to the Policy.

The recommendations outlined within the report were moved by Councillor Bernie Attridge and seconded by Councillor Dale Selvester.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be noted; and
- (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

9. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented a report on proposed amendments to the Committee's terms of reference to align with changes to portfolio service areas. The proposals were to move the Capital Programme and Assets, together with NEWydd Catering & Cleaning to the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee remit which would provide that Committee with oversight of the complete Community Asset Programme.

Councillor Bernie Attridge asked if Housing Programmes covered private sector homes. The Chief Executive explained that new builds as part of the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP) would be reported to the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator advised that where a matter for consideration by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee fell within the remit of one or more other Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it would be possible for Members of both Committees to take part in consideration of a relevant report.

The recommendation outlined within the report was moved by Councillor Bernie Attridge and seconded by Councillor Dale Selvester.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee support the proposed amendments to its terms of reference as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

10. **COMMUNAL HEATING CHARGES**

The Chief Executive presented a report which provided information on proposed communal heating charges at council properties with communal heating schemes. The proposed recharges for 2022/23 were set out within the report and were pending Cabinet approval. In most cases, the recharge to tenants had reduced for 2022/23, 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.

Tenants were currently benefitting from preferential unit rates due to the Council having secured a fixed rate for fuel until March 2023. It was possible that Communal Heating Charges would increase from 2023/24 when the Council had renegotiated its energy tariff.

Councillor Bernie Attridge expressed concerns around the expected increase from 2023/24 and asked if tenants would be informed in advance of proposed increases and what support would be provided to those tenants who were unable to manage the increase. The Chief Executive agreed that tenants would need to be informed of any increases as soon as possible and outlined the pro-active approach taken by the Council in providing financial support/advice to tenants.

Councillor Dale Selvester commented on his previous experience when working within the Housing Portfolio and the need to update many of the heating systems which in turn would save money and would allow for those savings to be passed on to tenants. The Chief Executive outlined efficiencies and savings that had been made within the service and added that most communal heating schemes had been updated to add heating valves so that tenants could control the temperature themselves.

The recommendation outlined within the report was moved by Councillor Bernie Attridge and seconded by Councillor Dale Selvester.

RESOLVED:

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

11. **WELFARE REFORM UPDATE / HOUSING RENT INCOME**

The Chief Executive 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. He explained that previously the Committee had received reports on Welfare Reform and Housing Rent Income but that in future these updates would be provided in one report.

The Chief Executive gave an update on the benefits cap and the Cost of Living Scheme, advising that currently, 42,023 individual payments of £150 had already been made to eligible households, which equated to a total funding distribution of £6.3m and a take-up rate of 90% for eligible households. He also provided an update on Winter Fuel Support Scheme and explained that during implementation of the scheme the

payments were increased by Welsh Government (WG) to £200.00 which resulted in reviewing payments already made and increasing them by a further £100.00. The scheme would be re-introduced in the Autumn of 2022.

The Service Manager - Revenues and Procurement introduced the operational update for 2021/22 housing rent collection.

The collection of rent during 2021/22 had remained challenging for several reasons – the ban on evictions for much of the year and the need to provide tenants with six months' notice prior to enforcement action being taken, coupled then with delays with the courts in progressing cases. The ongoing impact of the pandemic and the impact rising costs of living for social tenants who were least likely to have sufficient disposable income to cope with inflationary increases also had had a direct impact on the ability of the Housing Service to collect rent on time.

The Service Manager - Revenues and Procurement reported that in appropriate cases, it had been necessary to re-start evictions for a small number of tenancies during 2021/22 where tenants have refused to engage. In some cases, tenants had abandoned the properties.

He added that on a positive note the vast majority of tenants had remained up to date with rent payments, and that between March 2021 and March 2022 figures for rent arrears had stayed the same.

Councillor Geoff Collett asked if the Council were actively identifying abandoned properties. The Chief Executive commented on the legal issues when dealing with abandoned properties but advised that they were being identified through statutory inspections.

Councillor Bernie Attridge commented on the Tenancy Hardship Grant Scheme (THG) and Self Isolation Scheme and raised concerns around the low number of applications granted. The Chief Executive explained that applications for the Self Isolation Scheme continued to be processed. In terms of the THG, it was suggested that a detailed paper on the Scheme, to include information on how the scheme was promoted, the eligibility criteria and why the take up was so low be provided to the Committee.

In response to a question from Councillor Attridge on the impact of the new revenues software, the Service Manager - Revenues and Procurement explained that the software highly automated the system from what used to be in place and was a far better early intervention tool than that of the previous excel spreadsheets. He added that the software was very successful across the council, but the impact was unfortunately being lost at present due to the Covid-19 crisis.

The Revenue Manager also added that they do sometimes try to take rent arrear deductions at source from the Universal Credit with the DWP, but it was hard to keep the stability on the Universal Credit deductions if the tenant had gone back into work. He commented that tenants might also have other deductions being taken which provides further challenges for the council and the tenant.

The recommendations outlined within the report were moved by Councillor Bernie Attridge and seconded by Councillor Dale Selvester.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the latest financial positions for rent collections in 2021/22 as set out in the report be noted; and
- (b) That the Committee support the ongoing work to manage the impacts that welfare reform had and would continue to have upon some of the most vulnerable residents in Flintshire along with implementing support via Welsh Government support measures to mitigate the cost of living crisis.

12. END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Chief Executive presented the monitoring report to review year-end progress against Council Plan priorities identified for 2021/22. Overall, this was a positive report given the challenges from the emergency situation, with 82% of performance indicators (PIs) relevant to the Committee having met or exceeded their targets.

There were two PIs which showed a red RAG status for current performance against target, relevant to the Committee. In relation to the Number of Affordable Homes under construction via NEW Homes, the current financial viability of the development was being reviewed due to some specification changes on the development and this revised review, once completed, would be presented to the NEW Homes Board for consideration. In relation to the Number of Council Homes completed, the difficulties with the supply chain were still present, with a shortfall in labour with increased costs in materials and manpower effecting all developments. These impacting factors along with a sudden resurgence in overall activity and new policies from Natural Resource Wales relating to phosphates had delayed commencement on site.

Councillor Bernie Attridge commented on the difficulties with the supply chain, which he felt was not affecting the private sector in the same manner. He asked whether the problem lay with Wates Group and asked when the contract with them would come to an end. He also said that he had only recently been made aware of Housing First and asked how locations for homeless hubs were identified. He commented on the need for Members to be informed of when locations of homeless hubs were identified, even if they were not directly in their ward but in neighbouring wards.

The Chief Executive explained that Housing First was not a physical entity but rather a process and went on to explain the pockets of funding, and how properties can be purchased when the opportunities arose.

It was agreed that on the customer satisfaction data for the Housing Register Service, The Housing & Prevention Senior Manager said that a report would be presented to the Committee in due course, on the outcome of the survey and how the Service was addressing and better understanding the data.

In response to a question from Councillor Attridge on the houses built at Maes Gwern, the Senior Manager - Housing & Asset Management explained that the development was due to be completed in August/September. He added that 10 properties were of equity shares and explained that if they were not sold, they would go out to the open market.

Councillor Attridge said that he had a number of further questions on the information contained within the report and it was agreed that he submit them to the relevant officers for a response following the meeting.

Councillor Pamela Banks raised concern around Members not being updated on issues within their ward. The Chief Executive advised that if Members were aware of any issues within their ward that they should contact the relevant officer.

The recommendation outlined within the report was moved by Councillor Geoff Collett and seconded by Councillor Bernie Attridge.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

13. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

None.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.45 am)

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Chair



COMMUNITY HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Monday 27 th September, 2022
Report Subject	Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking
Report Author	Community Housing & Assets 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.
1.06	<p>In July 2022 Councillor Helen Brown, as Chair of the Committee, contacted all Members of the Council to give them the opportunity to raise any issues that they thought would be beneficial for the Committee to consider and be placed on future meeting Agenda's.</p> <p>A list of topics suggested by Members is shown at Appendix 3 of the report.</p>
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. Appendix 3 – List of topics suggested by Members of the Council.

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
Wednesday 12th October, 2022 10am Page 15	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.	Assurance Monitoring	Senior Manager - Housing & Asset Management
	Renting Homes Wales Act	To outline changes proposed to the way all landlords in Wales rent their properties to be introduced from 1 December, 2022.	Consultation	Service Manager – Housing, Welfare and communities
	Council Plan Development 2023/24	To contribute to the development of the Council Plan.	Consultation	Strategic Performance Advisor
Wednesday 16th November, 2022 2pm	Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30 Year Financial Business Plan	To consider the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for 2023/24 and the HRA Business Plan	Consultation	Chief Officer (Housing & Communities)
	Dynamic Resource Scheduler (DRS) System Update	To provide an update following implementation of the DRS System	Assurance Monitoring	Senior Manager - Housing & Asset Management

COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

	Refugees Update	To provide an update on the settlement of Refugees across Flintshire	Information sharing	Chief Officer (Housing & Communities)
<p>Wednesday 14th December, 2022</p> <p>10am</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 16</p>	Council Plan 2022-23 Mid-Year Performance Reporting	To review the levels of progress in the achievement of activities and performance levels identified in the Council Plan.	Assurance Monitoring	Chief Officer (Housing & Communities)
	Estate Management	To consider Estate Management and work being undertaken by the Council and the impact this has on tenants.	Consultation / Assurance Monitoring	Service Manager – Housing, Welfare and communities
	Anti-Social behaviour	To update Members on the Policy and to outline any proposed changes to the Policy.	Assurance Monitoring	Service Manager – Housing, Welfare and communities
	Housing Strategy	To provide an update on the Housing Strategy	Assurance Monitoring	Service Manager – Housing & Prevention
	Flintshire Housing Need Prospectus	To provide an update on the Housing Need Prospectus which informs the Social Housing Grant Programme.	Information Sharing	Service Manager – Housing & Prevention
<p>Wednesday 11th January, 2023</p> <p>10am</p>	Welfare Reform Update /Housing Rent Income	To provide an update on the impacts of welfare reforms and the work that is ongoing to mitigate them. To include information on the Tenancy Hardship Grant Scheme (THG).	Assurance Monitoring	Service Manager - Revenues and Procurement / Service Manager (Housing Welfare and Communities)

COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Page 17	Temporary Accommodation Audit Update	To provide a progress report on the action plan for service improvement following the audit of the Temporary Accommodation.	Assurance Monitoring	Service Manager – Housing & Prevention
	Sheltered Housing Review	To provide an update to the Committee following the Sheltered Housing review	Consultation	Strategic Housing & Program Delivery Manager
	Housing Register Service – Customer Satisfaction	To present to the Committee the outcome of the customer satisfaction survey and how the Service was addressing and better understanding the data.	Assurance Monitoring	Service Manager – Housing & Prevention
	Tenant Engagement Strategy	To present to committee the draft tenant engagement strategy and provide information on the tenants federation and other forms of consultation	Consultation	Service Manager – Housing, Welfare and communities
Wednesday 8th February, 2023 10am	NEW Homes Business Plan	To consider the NEW Homes Business Plan	Consultation	Strategic Housing & Program Delivery Manager
	The Common Housing Register	To provide an update on the Common Housing Register	Information Sharing	Service Manager – Housing & Prevention
	Housing Support Grant Update	To provide an update on the Housing Support Grant	Information Sharing	Service Manager – Housing & Prevention

COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

<p>Wednesday 8th March, 2023</p> <p>10am</p>	<p>Stores Contract</p> <p>Homelessness Update inc: Rough Sleepers</p> <p>Standard Tenants and Residents (STAR) Survey Outcomes</p>	<p>To consider the Stores Contract</p> <p>To provide an update on the work ongoing to mitigate Homelessness and support provided to rough sleepers</p> <p>To outline the outcome of the (STAR) Survey</p>	<p>Consultation</p> <p>Assurance Monitoring</p> <p>Consultation</p>	<p>Senior Manager - Housing & Asset Management</p> <p>Service Manager – Housing & Prevention</p> <p>Service Manager – Housing, Welfare and communities</p>
<p>Wednesday 14th April, 2023</p> <p>10am</p> <p>Page 18</p>	<p>Disrepair Update</p> <p>Poverty</p>	<p>To provide an update on work ongoing to deal with disrepairs.</p> <p>To provide information on work being undertaken to mitigate the impacts of Poverty, specifically around food poverty.</p>	<p>Assurance Monitoring</p> <p>Assurance Monitoring</p>	<p>Senior Manager - Housing & Asset Management</p> <p>Service Manager – Housing, Welfare and communities</p>
<p>Wednesday 17th May, 2023</p> <p>10am</p>	<p>Gypsy and Traveller Transit Site</p>	<p>To report to the Committee on a Gypsy and Traveller Transit Site in the County</p>	<p>Consultation</p>	<p>Service Manager – Housing, Welfare and communities</p>
<p>Wednesday 14th June, 2023</p> <p>2pm</p>	<p>Communal Heating Charges 2023/24</p>	<p>To consider the proposed heating charges in council properties with communal heating systems for 2023/24 prior to Cabinet approval.</p>	<p>Consultation</p>	<p>Corporate Finance – Accountant</p>

COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

	Council Plan 2022-23 Year-End Performance	To review the levels of progress in the achievement of activities and performance levels identified in the Council Plan.	Assurance Monitoring	Chief Officer (Housing & Communities)
Wednesday 12th July, 2023 10am	Welfare Reform Update /Housing Rent Income	To provide an update on the impacts of welfare reforms and the work that is ongoing to mitigate them.	Assurance Monitoring	Service Manager - Revenues and Procurement / Service Manager (Housing Welfare and Communities)

COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
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.	Service Manager – Housing, Welfare and communities
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 2020	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)
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
06.07.2022	4. Forward Work Programme	Following a question from Cllr Bernie Attridge, it was agreed that a report on the Tenants Federation would be brought to the Committee at a later date.	Jen Griffiths / Dawn Kent	Report to Scrutiny 11 th January for tenant engagement strategy consultation to include information regarding Tenants Federation.	Completed.
06.07.2022	4. Forward Work Programme	<p>It was agreed that the report on Estate Management and Anti-Social Behaviour due to be presented in December 2022 be split into 2 separate reports as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estate Management – to outline what is being done by the Council and how this would impact positively/negatively on tenants. Cllr Bernie Attridge requested that the report provide information on estate clear ups, walkabouts to ensure consistency across the County. • Anti-Social Behaviour – to update Members on the Policy and to outline any proposed changes to the Policy. 	Jen Griffiths / Dawn Kent	Items amended on FWP to reflect two separate reports.	Completed.

ACTION TRACKING

APPENDIX 2

06.07.2022	7. Welfare Reform Update / Housing Rent Income	Following a question from Cllr Bernie Attridge on the Tenancy Hardship Grant Scheme (THG), it was suggested that a detailed paper on the Scheme, to include information on how the scheme was promoted, the eligibility criteria and why the take up was so low be provided to the Committee.	Jen Griffiths / Ceri Shotton	To be included in the Welfare Reform Update scheduled for 11 th January 2023.	Completed.
06.07.2022	8. End of Year Performance Monitoring Report	In response to a question from Cllr Bernie Attridge on the customer satisfaction data for the Housing Register Service, Martin Cooil said that a report would be presented to the Committee in due course, on the outcome of the survey and how the Service was addressing and better understanding the data.	Martin Cooil / Ceri Shotton	Item added to FWP for 11 th January, 2023 meeting.	Completed.

Items suggested by Members of the Council

Councillor	Item	Reasons for request
Cllr Sam Swash	Scrutinising the Implementation of Affordable Housing Targets	It would be useful if the Committee could scrutinise the effectiveness of Flintshire County Council's enforcement of affordable housing targets on development sites. The Council has 'Housing Market Areas' which allocate the viable percentage of affordable homes on sites in each area (e.g. Connah's Quay, Queensferry & Broughton: 35% / Mold & Buckley: 40% / Flint & coast: 15% etc.). How often are developers actually meeting these targets? How often do developers challenge their commitment to those targets? How often are their challenges successful in reducing the amount of affordable housing from the assessed viable target?
	Housing Strategy: Brownfield housing development	The Flintshire Housing Strategy & Action Plan outlines plans for building homes in the "right location", but the plan is notable in its absence of any mention of the words 'green' and 'brown'. Could the Committee look to assess the availability and quantity of brownfield sites across Flintshire with a view to challenging the continued development of green belt and green barrier land in Flintshire?
Cllr Carol Ellis	Parking at Sheltered Housing	The lack of Residents only parking in Sheltered Housing. The two complexes in Buckley Mountain are well known for parking issues locally yet new tenants are not made aware.
Cllr Jean Davies	Parking at Sheltered Housing	I have pensioners bungalows in Brynford that would benefit from parking spaces in today's car ownership with families extending to some four cars per family they are taking over roads and residents parking. I suspect my ward isn't the only ward to suffer this 20th century problem.

Cllr David Coggins-Cogan	Garage Sites	<p>Could you look into how the demolition of garage sites would affect residents in my ward please?</p> <p>Although there are a few garage sites, there's only one which, if demolished, will cause hardship to my residents. The garages in Gwernymynydd provide parking to houses on Maes y Wern, which is a terrace of housing on the busy Ruthin Road / A494 trunk road. It's a 40mph road and Maes y Wern is on the downhill side, meaning that 40mph is often the minimum speed. We also have the constant, 24hr articulated lorries between the quarry and Padeswood.</p> <p>If the garages are demolished, the residents on Maes y Wern will have nowhere safe to park. They cannot safely park on the A494 as it's too dangerous and we have had fatal accidents there in the past, and recent near-misses.</p> <p>It will mean parking problems are created elsewhere in the estate behind as more cars are forced to park in the same amount of free space.</p> <p>The garages are currently under utilised. There is a waiting list (approximately two years) but most of the garages are empty, awaiting repairs. To me, it seems illogical to prioritise repairs for a building which will be knocked down in a few years, so unless the garage is rented out to a tenant, the repairs are not being done.</p> <p>The garages are in demand, will generate revenue, and will solve a problem. Please investigate if this policy is causing unnecessary hardships.</p>
Cllr Chris Bithell	Inappropriate Lettings	Where the new tenant is more or less set up to fail (e.g., a single very young parent is given the tenancy of a three bedroomed house with a

		<p>large garden. It seems obvious from the start that she/he will not have the time, energy, inclination to maintain it and keep the garden tidy. Again, in some cases the garden inherited is in a total mess with accumulated rubbish dating from the previous tenant(s) and with no attempt to clear it all before the new tenant moves in.</p> <p>Also putting the wrong tenant into sheltered accommodation where most of the neighbours are all elderly (70s, 80's 90's) and vulnerable and thus creating problems for the entire existing community.</p>
	Voids	<p>The time it takes to fill voids is still wholly unacceptable, between six to twelve months not unusual, which results not only in a loss of income for the Council from rents but is also keeping desperate people on the housing waiting list waiting even longer than is necessary before they are housed.</p>
	Voids – Gardens	<p>Also leaving those empty properties where the previous tenant has either died or vacated with the rubbish left by the previous tenant piled high in the garden front and back which is not only a dreadful eyesore for the neighbours and community and creates a very bad impression of the area but also attracts rats and other vermin. This is totally unacceptable and reflects badly on Flintshire as a responsible Housing authority.</p>
Cllr Simon Jones	Electric Car Charge Points	<p>I would like you to consider the right of all tenants to have an electric car charge point installed at their property. Motobility are currently offering EVs as an option to disabled drivers, however currently many are having to turn this option down, due to the inability to charge an EV at home. This results in people being forced into leasing a carbon emitting vehicle instead. Not only would this allow the tenant to make a choice of vehicle that is cheaper to run, but it would also help FCC meet its climate commitments.</p>

		The council should offer an EV charge point to all tenants who request one and have an EV already or who have one on order. This could be done for a small charge, which motobility would then refund to the tenant via the government OLED scheme.
Cllr Dale Selvester	Voids – Gardens	I'm under the impression FCC are sub-contracting work for garden works in void properties. It would be interesting to know what FCC have spent to date if this is the case. In the past Caretakers would undertake this work
	Voids	It would be interesting to see the KPI's for performance management in voids turnaround and letting times. With agile working being promoted I'm interested to know if this has affected the KPI's at all.
Cllr Marion Bateman	Garage Sites	<p>Some years ago, I attended a Housing Workshop where the possibility of removing some garages and using the sites to build new housing stock was debated.</p> <p>We all know the great shortage and the even greater need for bungalows in Flintshire. Can these garage sites be looked at again with a view to, perhaps, easing the shortfall?</p> <p>In my ward there are at least 3 garage plots that are not being used to house vehicles and many are in a state of disrepair.</p>



COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 27 th September, 2022
Report Subject	Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP)
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration
Report Author	Chief Officer (Housing and Communities)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report aims to inform members of the progress of SHARP six years in and to set the strategy for new affordable homes for the next five years. The Council entered into a five year partnership with Wates to help develop new council housing in 2016 and to date have delivered 149 new council homes, 173 NEW Homes properties, the Maes Gwern development and further 77 in the pipeline.

The report updates the situation since last reported in February 2021, outlines progress under the new welsh procurement framework partnership and also the net zero carbon working group, highlights changes in the WG new build priorities, the new funding regime and its implications for Flintshire and NEW Homes. It also suggests an outline programme for further development for the next five years.

The report also covers changes to the criterion for registration with Tai Teg, the regional affordable housing provider.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Community, Housing and Assets, Overview and Scrutiny Committee to note progress with SHARP to date.
2	Community, Housing and Assets, Overview and Scrutiny Committee to note the changes in WG funding for social housing

3	Community, Housing and Assets, Overview and Scrutiny Committee to note the changes to the criterion for registration with Tai Teg for affordable rented housing
4	Community, Housing and Assets, Overview and Scrutiny Committee to note the outline development programme SHARP 2
5	Community, Housing and Assets, Overview and Scrutiny Committee to support the re-allocation of £121K budget for scheme investigation and feasibility works to support new delivery routes.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE STRATEGIC HOUSING AND REGENERATION PROGRAMME (SHARP)
1.01	The Welsh Government's 'Prosperity for All: the national strategy' recognises the central importance of affordable homes, and the role which housing plays in society. In recent times, both the Council and stakeholder partners have stepped in to address the impact of many families struggling to afford food during lockdown the devastation caused by repeat flooding and the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. All of this work has taken place while continuing with the ever-present challenges of delivering social and affordable housing, high quality care and support services and activity to, or regenerate local communities.
1.02	Flintshire was one of the first local authorities in Wales to re-commence building social and affordable housing through its Strategic Housing And Regeneration programme (SHARP) with the aim of delivering up to 500 new Council Social Rented and Affordable Rented properties over a five year period, along with a number of broader economic and regeneration strategic priorities. The Council is working with Wales Construction under a strategic partnership relationship as defined within the Overarching Agreement for SHARP dated 29 th April 2016.
	Welsh Government SHG
1.03	The Welsh Government (WG) have embarked upon an ambitious programme of social housing development for the next 5 years. The aim is to build 20,000 new social rented homes across Wales to zero carbon emissions. A revised Welsh Development Quality Requirement (WDQR) standard has been adopted from October 2021. A Social Housing Grant (SHG) has been implemented with variable grant rates dependent on scheme viability. The funding for new homes has been vastly increased. To illustrate this for Flintshire the allocation of funds has increased from around £4 million in 2020/21 to over "£13 million in 2021/22. Significantly for FCC Social Housing Grant (SHG) is now available to Local Authorities as well as RSL's (Registered Social Landlords).
1.04	Additionally there is an enhanced requirement for LA's administering and developing PDP (Planned Development Programme) and the requirement to produce an annual housing prospectus which summarises the local

	needs and demonstrates how the PDP will meet that need. It is also evident from the new grant framework that additionally subsidy cannot be used in conjunction with SHG. We will need to devise strategies to address the impact of this on both FCC and NEW Homes.																												
1.05	All housing for Wales shall meet the Welsh Government's Development Quality Requirements (DQR). The requirements of the DQR shall take precedent over the general specification provided with the ITT where relevant and shall be considered when pricing works under the framework. Any future schemes must be in line with the DQR or subsequent requirements set by the Welsh Government following its recent consultation process. Fossil fuels should not be used for social housing for all schemes approved hereafter. The guiding principle should be fabric first to produce very high energy efficiency.																												
	Current Position SHARP																												
1.06	The table below summarises the current position with SHARP. <table border="1" data-bbox="320 833 1195 2051"> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="background-color: #d9e1f2;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">SHARP Property Numbers as at May 2022.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Completed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Social Rent</td> <td>149</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Completed NEW Homes (Affordable Rent)</td> <td>93</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Completed Private Sales (Maes Gwern Wates)</td> <td>106</td> </tr> <tr> <td>On-Site Low Cost Home Ownership (Shared Equity) (Maes Gwern Wates)</td> <td>22 (17 sold)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>On-Site Housing Revenue Account (HRA)</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>On-Site NEW Homes (Affordable Rent)</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>On-Site Private Sales as yet unsold (Maes Gwern Wates)</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cabinet Approved</td> <td>41</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Awaiting Cabinet Approval</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>447</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NEW Homes (outside SHARP i.e. gifted, section 106, package deals</td> <td>80</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			SHARP Property Numbers as at May 2022.		Completed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Social Rent	149	Completed NEW Homes (Affordable Rent)	93	Completed Private Sales (Maes Gwern Wates)	106	On-Site Low Cost Home Ownership (Shared Equity) (Maes Gwern Wates)	22 (17 sold)	On-Site Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	30	On-Site NEW Homes (Affordable Rent)	0	On-Site Private Sales as yet unsold (Maes Gwern Wates)	6	Cabinet Approved	41	Awaiting Cabinet Approval	0	Total	447	NEW Homes (outside SHARP i.e. gifted, section 106, package deals	80		
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	GRAND TOTAL	527															
1.07	<p>These schemes will be the final schemes which the existing arrangements allow through the Overarching Agreement with Wates which should have ended in April 2021. However the impact of Covid lockdown and other factors have seen three schemes delayed in their completion. These are: Maes Gwern due to complete around August 2022: Mostyn (30 homes for social rent) now on site and due to complete December 2022/January 2023: Gronant (41 new homes) has not commenced on site following delays in planning discharges, an agreed decision to defer beginning the project in the winter as the build out entailed a massive earth movement at the project commencement. At present we are discussing revised pricing from the contractor.</p>																
	Homes delivered outside of the SHARP																
1.08	<p>In addition to SHARP, the Council and NEW Homes in partnership have delivered a further 148 social (9) and affordable (139) homes. These have been delivered by North East Wales Homes as detailed below.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Non-SHARP Property Numbers as at 21st January 2021 (Completions)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Social Rent "Gifted" properties</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Purchase of Right-to-Buy Properties</td> <td style="text-align: center;">5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Completed NEW Homes (Affordable Rent) Section 106 "Gifted" properties</td> <td style="text-align: center;">61</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Completed NEW Homes (Affordable Rent) Section 106 "Purchase" properties</td> <td style="text-align: center;">15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NEW Homes Board Approved</td> <td style="text-align: center;">63</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td style="text-align: center;">148</td> </tr> </table>			Non-SHARP Property Numbers as at 21st January 2021 (Completions)		Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Social Rent "Gifted" properties	4	Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Purchase of Right-to-Buy Properties	5	Completed NEW Homes (Affordable Rent) Section 106 "Gifted" properties	61	Completed NEW Homes (Affordable Rent) Section 106 "Purchase" properties	15	NEW Homes Board Approved	63	Total	148
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1.09	<p>Appendix 1 lists the schemes delivered thus far. It also sets out a programme of future delivery spread out over the next 3 years SHARP2. Many of the schemes are indicative at this stage. As we own many of the sites listed we will not benefit for grant for the acquisition. It should also be noted that for LA's grant is only payable after work has actually commenced and been invoiced.</p>																
1.10	<p>We need to allow time for the various regulatory steps such as WG technical approval, which is sought before planning is applied for. There are currently issues outside our direct control which may impact on the process such as the new flood maps across Wales (now to be implemented from July 2023) which is affecting the proposed development</p>																

	of the former Canton depot at Mostyn, or the phosphate issues affecting sites draining into the Alyn/Dee.
1.11	The schedule for the last quarter of 2022/23 is ambitious and is very likely to slip given the processes to be achieved. This will require close monitoring and an open and honest dialogue with WG, as they will need to manage the overall budget, and transfer budgets within LA's, regions and across Wales. However we are very confident that any slippage into next year, and next year's proposed programme can achieve all the necessary regulatory steps in order to take up the allocations in the PDP thereafter. Moreover the strategy should be to prepare as many schemes as possible up to and including planning and Sustainable Drainage Approval Body (SAB) permissions as well as Cabinet and NEW Homes Board approvals in order to not only spend our agreed allocations of SHG, but to have "ready on the shelf" schemes to absorb underspends elsewhere across Wales. "Deliverability" is clearly key to WG.
	Section 106 Gifted
1.12	These properties are transferred to NEW Homes as "unencumbered assets" and have been an important source of growth for the company during its formative years and has helped it reach a total of 159 properties. The positive working relationship which has evolved between the Council, NEW Homes and construction partners through the development of this product has facilitated the rapid delivery of a high quality product in communities where the availability of Affordable Rent properties has enabled local people to remain within their community.
1.13	NEW Homes currently has 61 Section 106 Gifted units and are anticipating to receive a further 12 homes from developers meeting their affordable housing provision obligations through Section 106 Agreements.
	Section 106 Purchase
1.14	NEW Homes has built on the positive relationship it has developed with local contractors by purchasing Section 106 units. These require minimum resource and are bought at a maximum of 70% of the open market value of the properties. To date, 15 units have been purchased using this approach and up to a further 7 are under negotiation with Wates to acquire unsold equity share homes at Maes Gwern.
	Buy Back of Former Right to Buy Properties
1.15	In addition to NEW Homes, the Council's Housing Revenue Account has also purchased five former Right to Buy homes. We are reviewing the options for this approach both for NEW Homes and FCC stock.
	Package Deals with housing associations and private developers
1.16	The NEW Homes Board had approved the delivery of 47 properties to be delivered through package deals although a number have not been able to proceed.

	Delivering Net Zero - Project Summary
1.17	<p><u>Purpose</u> – The project social landlords have come together to develop a standardised specification/pattern book for the next generation of high performing, off-site manufactured, low carbon homes. This specification/pattern book will be used by the member social landlords to help build out their pipeline of new affordable homes. The project will use the aggregated pipeline demand for new zero carbon homes from the member social landlords to agree practical plans to strengthen local supply chains, green skills and resident involvement.</p>
1.18	<p><u>Background</u> - This project builds on the foundational work of Home Grown Homes and Crisp Innovation project funding. It is closely aligned to Welsh Government plans to build 20,000 new net zero affordable homes.</p>
1.19	<p><u>Project Membership</u> - The Delivering Net Zero project membership comprises 17 social landlords. 11 Welsh councils who have retained their council housing (Caerphilly, Cardiff, Carmarthenshire, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Isle of Anglesey, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Swansea, Vale of Glamorgan and Wrexham) and 6 housing associations (Caredig, Cartrefi Conwy, Coastal, Homes, Monmouthshire Homes, Tai Tarian and United Welsh).</p>
1.20	<p><u>Phase 1 Deliverables</u> – To understand the new social housing pipeline requirements of the project members to ensure that the project meets their needs.</p> <p>A supplier will be procured (through an Innovation Partnership) to work with project members and other key stakeholders (including Welsh Government, funders, manufacturers, installers and citizens) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Design a standardised timber fabric solution which can be applied to a number of standard pattern book designs that meets the needs of the member social landlords ○ Test the designs ○ Achieve a system warranty ○ Produce a quality assured manual for the manufacture and assembly of the homes
1.21	<p><u>Phase 2 Deliverables</u> – To support project members to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Let contracts, using the pattern book designs agreed in phase 1, to supply new homes using competent and accredited/qualified Welsh based manufacturers and installers. <p>The precise approach (for example using regional frameworks) will be agreed through dialogue between project members, supply chain and business support stakeholders to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Deliver quality and affordability ○ Strengthen manufacturer and installer SMEs

1.22	<p><u>Support and Funding</u> – The project is wholly funded by contributions from each of the 17 participating social landlords. Powys County Council are holding the project funds on behalf of the steering group. The project is supported by Welsh Government - including previous Collaborative Research and Innovation Support Programme (CRISP) Innovation grant and through hosting the Delivering Net Zero project staff team comprising 1 full time Project Team Lead and 1 part time Technical Team Lead.</p>										
	<p>Current Housing Need in Flintshire</p>										
	<p>SARTH Housing Register</p>										
1.23	<p>Demand is rising significantly. As March 2022, there were 2401 (previous figure 1985) households on the social housing register (SARTH). The highest demand areas are Flint, Mold and Mynydd Isa, Buckley, Connah's Quay, Queensferry and Shotton.</p> <p>The incidence of homelessness is also increasing with over 1300 applications made in the year end March 2022 and over 100 households in emergency and temporary accommodation.</p>										
	<p>Tai Teg Affordable Housing Register</p>										
1.24	<p>Tai Teg advertises properties as they become available for purchase/ rent. Individuals apply for these properties through Tai Teg and are assessed based on eligibility criteria. This attracts interest in the areas where development is identified but not surprisingly it often doesn't generate demand generally. Both FCC and Tai Teg have sought to promote the service through social media etc.</p>										
1.25	<p>There are currently over 600 applicants registered for purchase in Flintshire and over 700 applicants registered for rent. The highest demand areas for rent and purchase are Buckley, Mold and Mynydd Isa, Connah's Quay. The majority of applicants require 2 and 3 bed houses.</p>										
1.26	<p>Tai Teg have recently reviewed its criterion for admission onto the register for affordable housing having had an independent review equalities impact assessment. Previously it had made being in full time employment and affordability a key factor in the criterion and the impact assessment cast doubt over the legality of this approach in respect of rented homes. This obviously impacts on NEW Homes applicants potentially. A copy of the impact assessment is appended to the report.</p>										
1.27	<p>The revised criterion are set out below and are based purely on affordability;</p> <p>Current criteria</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>1 bed</th> <th>2 bed</th> <th>3 bed</th> <th>4bed +</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Income required</td> <td>£16,000 - £20,000</td> <td>£20,500 - £22,500</td> <td>£22,600k - £26,500</td> <td>£27K - £45K</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4bed +	Income required	£16,000 - £20,000	£20,500 - £22,500	£22,600k - £26,500	£27K - £45K
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1.28

Proposal to amend to make it easier for the applicant to understand

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4bed +
Income required	£16,000 - £45,000	£20,500 - £45,000	£22,600k - £45,000	£27,000 - £45,000

- **Age** - you must be over 18 years of age.
- Income threshold of £16K - £45K for Intermediate rent.
- Income being :-
 - Income from Employment
 - Carer’s Allowance – weekly in advance or every four weeks
 - Child Benefit - usually every four weeks or weekly if the claimant is a single parent or they receive certain other benefits
 - Disability Living Allowance – usually every four weeks
 - Personal Independence Payment – usually every four weeks
 - Tax Credits, such as Working Tax Credits – every four weeks or weekly
 - Universal Credit – every month including housing element
 - Child Maintenance – would not require legal confirmation. If the payment is frequent and noted in the bank statements that all agreed that this would be ok.
 - Private Pension – rent ONLY
- **Affordable** - – you are unable to meet the affordability requirements for properties on the open market.
- **Accommodation** - the current home is unsuitable and does not meet your family's needs e.g.
 - due to family size - (evidence of overcrowding)
 - affordability - (current rent is unaffordable)
 - specific needs - (reviewed on a case by case)
 - in need due to relationship breakdown and need to leave the rented property.
- **Local Connection** - you will be required to have a local connection with the area based on the allocation policy of the local authority /Registered Social Landlord e.g. live, work or with close family connections:- Parents, Grandparents, Brother & Sister or Adult Children.

1.29

The new criterion therefore no longer makes being in full time employment an essential requirement. Applicants can also include some benefits within their income calculation. This addresses the potential equality impact

	identified in the report to Tai Teg. However in practice in order to qualify for affordable rented products, the vast majority of applicants will need an income which can only be achieved by being in employment.
	Specialist Housing Register
1.30	<p>There are 44 households on the Specialist Housing register requiring an adapted property e.g. wheelchair accessible/ level access or a larger family house (i.e. 4 bed plus).</p> <p>Housing Strategy is working with social services and housing allocations to enhance collaborative working and improve the housing opportunities within the new build programme for different cohorts of people who have specific housing need e.g. care leavers, people with learning difficulties, adaptations etc.</p>
	Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan
1.31	The Council's HRA business Plan has a prudent target of 50 new social units per year based upon the existing funding regime which is self-financed by the Council. All of the units delivered to date have been delivered without the availability of Welsh Government capital grant. However since SHG became available to local authorities last year, we have modelled our potential schemes to include SHG using the WG standard viability model. (SVM)
1.32	By way of explanation SHG was previously only available to RSL's and had been set at 58% of the eligible scheme costs. From 2021/22 a variable grant has been introduced taking into account the acquisition costs, build costs, running and future repair costs, costs of borrowing netted off against future rents set at social rent levels over 50 years discounted back to a present day value. The difference between the two is the assumed grant. The SVM has itself been adjusted again this year following consultation with LA's and RSL's. FCC has been active in contributing to this debate pointing out some assumptions about interest rates impacting on LA's borrowing negatively and future maintenance assumptions.
1.33	The amount of grant can vary quite significantly depending on the scheme costs and the mix of dwelling types and land acquisition costs (most of our schemes we already own the land). Generally smaller unit sizes will attract less grant. We therefore need to consider this when planning future schemes. Overall the model distributes the resources reasonably well. Rather than expending effort to argue about the minutia of specific schemes the bigger picture is whether the costs of net zero carbon neutral homes without using fossil fuels for heating and hot water can be met from within the current resources across Wales to develop 20,000 social rented and affordable homes.
	Welsh Government Land Release Fund (LRF)
1.34	As reported previously FCC was successful in attracting Welsh Government funding from its Land Release Fund Programme. The purpose of the funding is to help local authorities and Registered Providers bring forward "stalled" sites for residential use (Pre Construction Activity).

	<p>Two Bids totalling £213.5k were submitted for two sites in Connah's Quay at Glynne Street (£48k) and Ffordd Llanarth (£165.5k). The latter will shortly be considered for a bid under the SHG programme for technical approval.</p> <p>The purpose of the funding is to bring together a Project Design Team to oversee the development of two inter-dependent schemes intended to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring forward stalled sites utilising Modern Methods of Construction (MMC); • Develop homes that are certified as Passivhaus and adopt Active Building design principles; • Maximise positive impact on the local economy by using local contractors for example through the North Wales Construction Framework; • Integrate renewable energy generation and storage technologies; • Undertake enhanced energy modelling throughout the design process • Adopt an enhanced data based approach to building monitoring and control • Ensure integration of electric vehicles such as cars, bicycles and buses <p>A further successful bid was made this year totaling £100k plus to demolish the former Pennyffordd school site in preparation for a community open space and new social housing scheme hopefully to come forward for 2023/2024.</p>
	<p>North East Wales Homes Development Strategy</p>
<p>1.35</p>	<p>NEW Homes growth strategy has focused on building 50 units a year through the following streams.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gifted S106 units • Developer S106 purchase • Land and build package deals • Partnership sites with the Council. <p>A number of schemes have unfortunately not transpired as hoped (for example schemes not achieving planning approval, change of land ownership) and the hiatus in the partnership sites with FCC.</p>
<p>1.36</p>	<p>An underlying issue for NEW Homes was always whether it would be able to access SHG. In the absence of any Welsh Government capital subsidy, NEW Homes growth strategy has been partly funded through the availability of commuted sums and shared equity monies which the Council has received through the delivery of new market sales schemes. Whilst approximately £600K has been allocated to future schemes by NEW Homes, there is no guarantee further sums on this scale will be available in the future to maintain the current pace and scale of new developments. The NEW Homes board has reviewed and revised its scheme criterion earlier this year.</p>

1.37	<p>With the advent of SHG for LA's as of last year, we have been in conversation with WG over whether NEW Homes could access SHG also. As wholly owned company with FCC being the sole shareholder we asked whether grant could be given to NEW Homes with FCC effectively the guarantor to WG?</p> <p>WG queried why FCC would wish to continue using NEW Homes as a delivery vehicle for affordable housing as they believed that FCC could under the new legal framework and revised HRA guidance create such tenancies themselves. Our response was that it wasn't clear FCC could do this, and the product being produced (high quality affordable housing at 90% of market rents) was clearly meeting need.</p> <p>The WG response to the request following taking their own legal advice was as follows:</p> <p>SHG was payable to RSL's and LA's only. As NEW Homes was neither WG could not give SHG to NEW Homes. They went on to add it was up to FCC to take legal advice to satisfy itself it had the power and authority so to do. This advice has been shared with the NEW Homes board and the Council. It is ultimately for the Council to determine whether it wishes to pursue this matter and take further advice on powers it has to create and manage other types of tenancy and whether it has the power to use SHG to develop affordable housing products under the banner of its solely owned company.</p> <p>A further report on this issue will be developed for future consideration.</p>
	Self-Build
1.38	<p>Self-Build Wales is delivered on behalf of the Welsh Government by the Development Bank of Wales. WG views self-build as a complementary approach to housebuilding and they would like to see all Local Authorities offer the scheme as it can provide a meaningful contribution to housing supply.</p> <p>Self-Build Wales seeks to encourage individuals, families or communities to build their own homes and provides an alternative route into home ownership. The scheme aims to remove developer profits and provides the opportunity to build a home that is tailored to needs, lifestyle and at a more affordable budget. Homes will be sustainable, high quality and with good design, built using local labour and materials, keeping expenditure in Wales.</p> <p>The financial model is administered by the Development Bank of Wales to help provide a loan to purchase the plot and complete the construction of the house. This is repaid when the house is complete the individual can then mortgage the property.</p> <p>Local Authorities, Housing Associations and private land owners can contribute land to the scheme and provide build ready 'plots' (with services and planning permission in place). The plots are made available for people</p>

	<p>to purchase at open market value. Once purchased the individual is supported through the Development Bank to complete the construction process. The Council can define an eligibility criteria for those wishing to purchase e.g. local connection/ key workers etc. Individuals apply for the scheme and plots through the Self Build Wales website.</p> <p>The Council is exploring opportunities to provide a small number of self-build plots within an existing development to trial the scheme.</p> <p>More information can be found at: https://selfbuild.wales/</p>
	<p>Housing Construction North and Mid-Wales Framework Agreement / WPA Welsh Procurement Alliance</p>
1.39	<p>With the partnership with Wates coming to a close the Council has joined the WPA as its main procurement vehicle to promote greater partnership working through local and regional procurement frameworks, to support local supply chains. This has seen the establishment of the Housing Construction North And Mid-Wales Framework Agreement. This framework has been established by the Welsh Procurement Alliance (WPA) who were asked by all North and Mid-Wales local authorities and zoned housing associations across the region for assistance to make the procurement of new-build housing developments more efficient and in compliance with public sector procurement rules.</p>
1.40	<p>A core principle is the need to encourage as many local contractors to bid to be on the framework as possible. The framework needed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure compliance with public sector procurement rules • provide a quick and easy procurement process • allow for early engagement with local contractors • deliver value for money offer measurable community benefits • Maintain the quality of the developments. <p>At the same time the solutions offered by the framework needed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be mindful of energy efficiency and the decarbonisation agenda • take into account the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 201 • provide a collaborative approach with shared expertise and resources
	<p>Framework and Specification</p>
1.41	<p>The framework will be used for the building of all types of housing, including bungalows, flats and apartments, care homes and sheltered and shared accommodation, covering all forms of tenure.</p>
1.42	<p>It also provides for the delivery of associated community buildings to residential developments (such as hubs and sporting facilities e.g. meeting places, health and care centres, recreational facilities and libraries) plus,</p>

	<p>any associated commercial facilities such as car parks and retail units. However, whilst scope for this associated development is included, bidders were not substantively evaluated on this aspect of development, and clients seeking to commission such developments (permissible only as incidental to a residential scheme) will be advised to carry out a mini competition. Capability to compete such developments was also not criteria for selection.</p>
1.43	<p>The framework is divided into four work streams across different geographical areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects of up to 5 units on single or multiple sites • Projects of 6 to 15 units on single or multiple sites • Projects of 16 to 49 units on single or multiple sites • Projects of 50+ units on single or multiple sites.
1.44	<p>The hiatus in development schemes has resulted in only one contract let using this method thus far at the homeless units at Park Lane Holywell and Duke Street Flint. What is clear however from our current partner and feedback from other RSL's is that the sector is facing a very challenging time. Covid, Brexit, and now the conflict in Ukraine have put severe pressure on supply chains, vastly inflated material costs, labour shortages and sub- contractor pricing. More than one partner has seen contractors withdrawing from established contracts because of financial viability issues. This is likely to continue and be a risk factor whilst we seek to ramp up our delivery output.</p>
	<p>Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) Offsite solutions</p>
1.45	<p>The tenderer's contracting package may include an offsite system and works offered shall satisfy the performance requirements set out in the framework specification (Section DD3). Where an Appointed Company proposes to use an offsite system for use in the construction of buildings under the framework, they shall provide full details of the proposed suppliers. The construction of the system shall be in accordance with the relevant manufacturer's instructions using an appropriately trained or qualified workforce.</p>
	<p>Community Benefits</p>
1.46	<p>The tender process, as with the partnership with Wates included evaluation of suppliers in relation to general corporate, social responsibilities, delivery of community benefit projects and social value initiatives. WPA also encourage our clients to include project-specific community benefits initiatives in their call-off contracts. As a not for profit organisation, WPA intends to re-invest any surplus income generated through its procurement activity to support community benefits projects and social value initiatives in the local communities we serve.</p>
	<p>Scheme investigation and feasibility Works</p>

1.47	The Council currently has an annual budget of £121K allocated for scheme investigation and feasibility for schemes in the SHARP. This needs to be maintained for future feasibility assessments and developing projects through the regulatory and procurement phases.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
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2.01	The SHG programme is now around £13 million per year for the next three years, so is a massive enabler for social impact across the county.
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2.02	The revenue direct cost is around £120k per year together with staffing resources charged to HRA capital funding.
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3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
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3.01	<p>The key risks are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not meeting local affordable housing need - The provision of affordable housing ensures that all of the county's residents have a greater opportunity access their own home. If we do not meet this need, homelessness will increase impacting on the Council's budget. 2. Not maximising the impact of commuted sum income in addressing the affordable housing shortage in Flintshire – the Council has its own delivery targets to ensure efficient delivery of affordable housing in areas of greatest need. 3. The environmental impact - This is considered and mitigated during the construction phase. All affordable homes built will meet modern standards for sustainability and energy efficiency and the Flintshire Housing Standard.
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3.02	<p>All housing schemes delivered through the SHARP are considered and approved by Cabinet. Oversight and monitoring of the SHARP is done through the Housing and Regeneration Programme Board.</p> <p>All schemes are financially assessed to ensure they meet agreed financial parameters for additional borrowing in the HRA and NEWH.</p> <p>WG are also working in partnership with all Councils with HRA stock to ensure borrowing prudential indicators are monitored with their business plans to ensure sustainability of borrowing in the HRA.</p>
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3.03	<p>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Long-term</td> <td>Positive - more affordable homes will be provided in the right location.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prevention</td> <td>Preventing - preventing people becoming homeless through ensuring there is</td> </tr> </table>	Long-term	Positive - more affordable homes will be provided in the right location.	Prevention	Preventing - preventing people becoming homeless through ensuring there is
Long-term	Positive - more affordable homes will be provided in the right location.				
Prevention	Preventing - preventing people becoming homeless through ensuring there is				

	relevant services and accommodation available.
Integration	Positive – the delivery of a range of affordable homes will contribute to Integration within communities.
Collaboration	Positive – the proposed financial arrangements will facilitate greater collaboration between the Council and the local communities which it serves.
Involvement	Positive - the Council has consulted extensively with the local community on the proposed scheme.
Well-being Goals Impact	
Prosperous Wales	Providing good quality affordable homes, aiming for low / zero carbon. Also ensuring the homes are in the place that people need them and will meet their housing needs. Maximising local employment and training opportunities for local people.
Resilient Wales	Positive - Developing low / zero carbon homes though adopting modern methods of construction and other relevant technologies.
Healthier Wales	Positive - Ensuring our homes are fit for purpose and will enable people to stay in their home for longer, and ensuring we have homes that meet the needs of all people in our society including those who are most vulnerable supporting their wellbeing.
More equal Wales	Positive - Providing good quality and decent homes for the most vulnerable people in society including temporary, single household, adapted 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 through good communication of housing opportunities and support.

	Globally responsible Wales	Positive - The outcomes of the strategy will contribute to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales.
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4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	None.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 : SHARP completed units and programme 2022-2025 Tai Pawb Equality Assessment Tai Teg Affordable housing.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	The North & Mid Wales framework information is at: https://welshprocurement.cymru/frameworks/housing-construction-north-and-mid-wales/

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Paul Calland, Housing Programmes Manager Telephone: 01352 701436 07825377623 E-mail: Paul.calland@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Strategic Housing And Regeneration Programme (SHARP) – Flintshire County Council House Building Programme</p> <p>Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) - Flintshire County Council will be spending £111 million over six years on a major refurbishment and maintenance programme of works bring its 7,200 Council homes up to the Welsh Government’s Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) new properties across the Council during the next five years.</p> <p>Standard Development Scheme Assumptions - agreed allowances for voids; maintenance costs; rental income levels (including CPI etc.) and will be used to assess all potential future development schemes to determine Scheme feasibility and viability.</p> <p>HRA – Housing Revenue Account</p>

	<p>SVM – Standard Viability Model</p> <p>PDP – Planned Development Programme</p> <p>SHG – Social Housing Grant</p> <p>RSL – Registered Social Landlord or Housing Association</p>
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Appendix 1 – SHARP Cabinet Completed and Approved Schemes

Scheme	Council Social Rented Units	Affordable Rented Units	Affordable Low Cost Home Ownership Units	Private Sales Units	Status
Custom House, Connah's Quay	12	0	0	0	Completed
The Walks, Flint	30	62	0	0	Completed
Redhall, St Mark's Connah's Quay	5	0	0	0	Completed
Heol y Goron, Leeswood	5	0	0	0	Completed
Maes y Meilion, Leeswood	8	0	0	0	Completed
Ysgol Delyn, Mold	16	0	0	0	Completed
Former Dairy, Connah's Quay	6	0	0	0	Completed
Former Melrose Centre, Shotton	9	0	0	0	Completed
Maes Gwern, Mold	8	18	22	112	Due for completion August 2022

Nant y Gro, Gronant	41	0	0	0	Target start date April 2021 but Discharge Planning Conditions delays and a strategic decision to delay a winter start. Now awaiting re-pricing.
Former Council Depot, Dobshell	13 (2 properties remain to be handed over)	9	0	0	Completed
Llys Dewi, Penyffordd, Nr Holywell	23	4	0	0	Completed
St Andrews, Garden City	12	0	0	0	Completed
Ffordd Hiraethog / Ffordd Pandarys	30	0	0	0	Target start on site date May 2021 but delayed for planning discharge and right of access issues.
Sub Total	220	93	22	112	
Total		447			
NEW Homes Non-SHARP		80			
GRAND TOTAL		527			

SHARP 2 Proposed Schemes

Scheme	Council Social Rented Units	Affordable Rented Units	Affordable Low Cost Home Ownership Units	Private Sales Units	Planned Programme subject to approval from Cabinet and Homes Board And Commentary
Ty Mair Mold	26	10	0	0	Quarter 4 2022/3 for planning approval and acquisition
Borough Grove Flint	0	4	0	0	Quarter 4 2022/3 for start on site
Ash Grove Shotton	2	0	0	0	Acquired Quarter 2 2022/3 with WG larger homes grant
Park Lane Holywell and Duke St Flint	6	0	0	0	Started on site March 2022 with WG homeless grant, completion Quarter 3 2022/3 now funded by SHG
High Street (former old music shop) Connah's Quay	6	0	0	0	Package deal for completion Quarter 4 2022/3
Former Hebron Church Mostyn	4	0	0	0	Acquisition subject to planning approval quarter 4 2022/3
Wirral View Hawarden	4	0	0	0	Quarter 4 2022/3 start on site subject to planning permission
Alyn Road Buckley	5	0	0	0	Quarter 4 2022/3 start on site subject to planning permission
Maes Gwern, Mold	0	6		0	Package deal with Wates for 6 unsold equity share homes quarter 2 2022/3

Station Road Queens Ferry	4	0	0	0	Quarter 4 2022/3 subject to planning approval
Pandy Oakenholt	16	?	0	0	Quarter4 2022/3 acquisition subject to planning approval and contract to build out 2023/24
Sub Total 2022/23	73	14	0	0	
Total 2022/23		87			

Future Pipeline subject to Cabinet/New Homes Board Approval subject to planning etc and WG grant approvals

Scheme	Council Social Rented Units	Affordable Rented Units	Affordable Low Cost Home Ownership Units	Private Sales Units	Planned Programme subject to approval from Cabinet and NEW Homes Board And Commentary
Ffordd Llanarth Connah's Quay	14	6			2023/24 Marquee scheme in respect of energy efficiency and meeting the new WG standards
Altami Buckley	14				2023/24
Canton Depot	50?	?	0	0	Site previously scheduled for completion earlier however Natural Resources Wales flood risk designation hampering progress 2023/2024?
Pennyfford School Site	20?	0	0	0	Commitment for part of the site for community use. Land release

					funding agreed for demolition. Extensive consultation required. 2023/24
Sub Total 2023/24	98	6			
Total		104			
Pipeline 2024/25					
Rhydymwyn former school site	20	0	0	0	Rural needs survey planned for 2022 to inform plans for the site. 2024/25
Trelogan former bowls club site	15?	0	0	0	Rural needs survey planned for 2022 to inform plans for the site. 2024/25
Croes Atti	20?	0	0	0	Feasibility work planned for 2023 for submission 2024/25
Bryn Tirion Shotton	10-15?	0	0	0	Feasibility work planned for 2023 for submission 2024/25
Sub Total 2024/25	70		0	0	
Total 2024/25		70			

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COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 27 th September 2022
Report Subject	Void Management
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration
Report Author	Chief Officer (Housing and Communities)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on voids management and delivery.

The Housing and Assets Service housing stock consists of circa 7,300 properties. The service refurbishes an average 550 empty properties annually, with works varying from minor to major general maintenance and repair works.

The Housing and Revenue account is a ring fenced account derived from rental income in the main and Welsh Government funding.

The average age of the Councils housing stock is considered to be some of the oldest in the United Kingdom and they are also considerably older than many nearby Local Housing Associations housing stock. As a result, there are many challenges and obstacles that arise when completing refurbishment and capital investment works to these older properties.

RECOMMENDATIONS

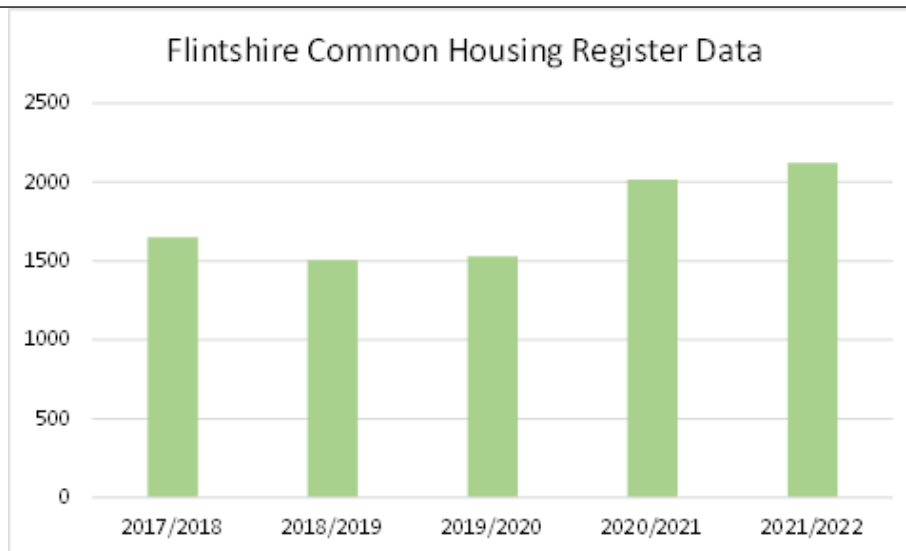
1	Community, Housing and Assets, Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the increasing pressures and challenges impacting on service delivery across the Housing and Communities Portfolio
2	Community, Housing and Assets, Overview and Scrutiny Committee to support the proposals for addressing the challenges identified

REPORT DETAIL

1.00	EXPLAINING VOIDS MANAGEMENT
1.01	<p>Background</p> <p>Empty properties or voids happen when a tenant leaves one of our Council owned housing units. It creates an opportunity to review, modernise and reoccupy and has a number of cross cutting service links through Housing Management, from the receipt of the void by housing management, the refurbishment of the void to prepare it for reoccupation and the re-letting of the property to those on the General Housing Register.</p> <p>The pandemic, Brexit and now the war in Ukraine have created a number of challenges for the Housing Service in how we progress our empty properties, these include the availability of skilled resources, raw materials and linked price increases, all of this impacts negatively on void delivery and turnaround times.</p>
1.02	<p>End to end process</p> <p>The diagram (also attached at appendix 1) outlines the various stages in managing a void property from receipt of the notice to allocation and induction visits for tenants.</p> <p>Each stage can be subject to delays, depending upon complexities surrounding the tenancy (support needs and equipment) and the condition of the asset (outstanding upgrade works or previous access issues).</p>
1.03	<p>Voids Targets</p> <p>To enable us to monitor performance on void refurbishment there are agreed targets and timescales in place. The measures and key performance indicators (KPI's) within the service are also used to benchmark the service and Council performance against neighbouring authorities and through The Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) and HouseMark.</p> <p>The target timescales for the refurbishment of a property classified as a minor void is 20 working days. This classification is for any works associated with minor repairs, decoration, statutory safety checks and servicing.</p>

	<p>The target timescales for the refurbishment of a property classified as a major void is 45 working days. This classification is for any works associated with major repairs, major plastering works, capital investment works such as component renewals (kitchen / bathroom / heating etc.), safety checks and servicing.</p> <p>Approximately 70% of current void properties are completed within the target period noted above.</p> <p>Average costs for refurbishment of void properties range from £1,500 for a minor void to an average of £9,000 for a major void property.</p> <p>There are void properties that exceed these costs, where properties are subject to major refurbishment works. This can be due to the property reaching a state of disrepair, where the tenant has failed to report any defects or where the Council has experienced access issues, such as when major capital refurbishment works were due to be completed. The cost of refurbishing these properties can increase to £25,000-£45,000.</p> <p>Those void properties, which require more work and expenditure than a typical minor or major void property, impact negatively upon budgets, resources and the ability to manage the overall void refurbishment programme.</p> <p>The recently implemented new housing 'patch' areas will assist with ensuring we are proactively addressing disrepair and refurbishment works before the asset/component deteriorates further through engagement. This will allow Housing Officers to be proactive in identifying and reporting asset concerns and ensuring tenants are reporting property repairs proactively.</p> <p>A large percentage of the costs and time in properties, relates to internal works, such as plastering and external garden works, such as garden clearances and works to footpaths and boundaries.</p> <p>Our void turnover equates to approximately 7.4%, based on an average of 550 void properties refurbished annually, with the average across the United Kingdom ranging from 5%-11%.</p> <p>Equally, our current void backlog equates to 2.9%, based upon a current backlog of 209 void properties as of 9th August 2022. Neighbouring Councils are currently averaging similar void backlog percentages of 3.1%.</p>
1.04	<p>Neighbourhood Housing – Estate Management</p> <p>There is an operational review of the estate management function ongoing. During the last 12 months some significant changes and improvements have been implemented.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) New Customer and Secure tenancy teams were merged creating a generic housing management function. This has led to the officer's having smaller more manageable 'patches' which are aligned to the ward boundaries. This change will enable the teams to build and grow their relationships with the tenants; be more aware of issues at

	<p>an earlier stage to enable early intervention around property condition or tenancy issues.</p> <p>The change will enable the housing officers to visit more properties more often, ensuring welfare and tenancy checks are completed on a regular basis and that any issues or damages are dealt with in a proactive manner. We will also ensure feedback on the service we provide is captured through these visits, with all appointments being recorded on our housing systems.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2) Introduction of two new posts in relation to tenancy sustainment to support tenants and encourage engagement at an early stage so as to avoid escalation to enforcement of the tenancy 3) Specific allocations role introduced and is being piloted with a small team taking overall responsibility for the allocations process, this has proved successful in terms of providing a single point of contact that has an overview of the whole of the void stock profile. The team are able to work with prospective tenants and service areas to ensure that allocations are made as early as possible in order to secure the property for the incoming tenant. The team maintain contact with the incoming tenants during the void periods to update on progress. <p>The teams conduct pre-termination visits on all properties during the notice period, this serves to address any issues that the outgoing tenant needs to address prior to their vacation and also provides early general indication of the level of void work required when it moves to the void works phase.</p> <p>It needs to be noted that we don't always receive notice of a tenancy termination, i.e. when the tenant passes away or the property is abandoned. In cases such as this, the visit is carried out as soon as possible once we receive the keys or gain access to the property.</p>
1.05	<p>Housing Pressures - Housing Need Common Housing Register</p> <p>Social housing is in significant demand. The Common Housing Register captures the information about all those applicants who qualify for social housing. In Flintshire we operate a shared Policy with our Housing Association Partners (Common Allocations Policy) and Flintshire administers the Common Housing Register for the Council and Housing Association Partners.</p> <p>The Common Housing Register can only be accessed by those applicants who are eligible for housing as per the Common Allocations Policy. This Policy ensures that the level of demand for social housing is not inflated by those people who “want” social housing, as opposed to those who “need” social housing. Having a needs based Housing Register gives a truer reflection of need and also ensures the scarce resource that is social housing, goes to the people in greatest need.</p> <p>Detailed below is a chart which evidences a significant increase in the level of housing need and the numbers of applicants accepted onto the Common Housing Register in Flintshire over a 5 year period.</p>



Housing Needs Data Common Housing Register LIVE Apps	
2017/2018	1651
2018/2019	1507
2019/2020	1529
2020/2021	2015
2021/2022	2123

This clearly shows an increase in demand for social housing over a number of years – a 28.59% increase over 5 years. This data reflects all housing need and not just those of people experiencing homeless. As of the end of Q1 2022/2023 the level of demand for the housing register was 2288 and with the cost of living crisis and increasing pressures around homelessness in Wales, it is anticipated the numbers will increase further in the coming months and years.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Staff</p> <p>During the past six months the Voids Team have experienced a turnover of staff and other absences. The existing Voids Team consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations Manager x1 - Oversees Void refurbishment works and overall delivery • Team Leaders x3 - Responsible for managing the refurbishment work element and to monitor the progress of each void property through to completion and handover • Void Inspectors x2 - Responsible for inspecting the void property and undertaking detailed surveys, along with scheduling the required works. <p>The Voids Team continues to experience staff absence, with two of the team leaders currently absent. This is impacting on the ability of the team to manage the number of void properties, void backlog and manage those works allocated to external contractors.</p>

	<p>A number of activities have been undertaken to address the challenges outlined in the report including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Allocations Process - Completed • Securing of additional Grant Funding (£200,000 awarded for the Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme) - Secured • Capital Works Team Leader assigned to Void Delivery - Completed • Capital Works Surveyor allocated a percentage of Major Voids with new Contractor(s) – Competed <p>In addition, the following activities are proposed to further build resilience in void management and to reduce the current backlog:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional posts to address current backlog - Actively Planned • Additional resource allocated to Void Inspections - Actively Planned • Additional training, robust inspection templates and guides - Ongoing • Building in resilience (Assistant posts & Succession Planning) – Ongoing
2.02	<p>Budgets</p> <p>Our budgets are constantly being stretched in terms of labour and materials, the current economic climate is not assisting in this respect. In addition, Welsh Government are in the process of increasing their standards with regards to the Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS) and Decarbonisation, including obligating the Council to undertake some of these works whilst the property is empty, i.e. Floor coverings etc..</p> <p>The age and condition of the stock (Wales has oldest average stock in the UK) is also impacting upon our budgets, increasing the likelihood of the asset requiring more extensive refurbishment i.e. plastering.</p> <p>The impact of Brexit on our supply chain and material availability, has impacted our budgets due the increase in labour and materials. The limited availability of materials and delays receiving them, means the Council are often subject to multiple delivery charges and associated management fees for those deliveries. As a result, materials that would have been previously received in one delivery, are now received over multiple deliveries spanning across multiple days & weeks.</p> <p>We must secure additional funding if we are to meet Welsh Governments new WHQS standards, the decarbonisation agenda and address the backlog of properties that are currently not tenanted.</p> <p>The Council has recently been successful in securing additional funding to assist with accelerating the refurbishment works to some of our void properties, this amounts to over £200k in grant funding.</p> <p>Further grant funding availability is being explored with a view to submitting further bids.</p>
2.03	<p>Contractors</p> <p>The Voids Team are in the process re-tendering to procure additional contactors. The current contract arrangement means we only have access</p>

	<p>to one Contractor. The re-tendering exercise will increase resilience, whilst ensuring newly procured contracts are held accountable to performance targets and robustly managed through our existing Capital Works regimes.</p>
2.04	<p>Materials/ Suppliers</p> <p>There have been multiple material and supply issues over the past 24 months, with delays becoming difficult to manage and track, and additional work involved in monitoring and managing these delays. The service has experienced significant issues compared with the usual timeframes, e.g. windows and glazing being delayed by 15 weeks compared to the previous timescale of 2-3 weeks. To ensure we have remained as efficient as possible these delays have resulted in work being halted and our resource teams reallocated to alternative void properties.</p> <p>As per 2.03 above, the service will be procuring additional suppliers and ensuring existing arrangements are robust to mitigate any future supply issues and provide alternative solutions if needed.</p>
2.05	<p>Procurement - Void Refurbishment Framework</p> <p>The service is in the process of completing the necessary tender documentation and propose to finalise the tender in the next three months.</p> <p>The Council is also in the process of trailing new contractors, in anticipation of new framework going live.</p>
2.06	<p>Stock Condition Surveys & Inspection</p> <p>The service is working towards completing a full stock condition survey along with inspecting the void properties that are within the backlog of properties.</p> <p>This will provide the service with increased stock data and component condition and replacement cycles, and will enable the teams to work more efficiently with regards to programming and scheduling the void property works.</p>
2.07	<p>COVID Pandemic</p> <p>The pandemic has had a major impact upon service delivery and has resulted in the backlog of properties that require refurbishment.</p> <p>During this period, only one trade operative could access and remain in the void property at any time, thus extending the work durations impacting upon work schedules and sequencing etc.</p>
2.08	<p>Energy Supplies - Meters</p> <p>The clearance of debt on any meter supply impacts upon the Councils ability to deliver the refurbishment works and safety checks to each empty property along with the Councils ability to let a property.</p> <p>We are in the process of procuring a new company (Energy Angels) who will assist the Council with engaging with the various Energy Suppliers and debt clearance of energy supplier's meters etc.</p>

2.09	<p>Void Working Group</p> <p>The service has established a void working group. Since January 2022, key teams and officers have been involved in a full review of our standards, processes and specifications. We have implemented solutions and measures which will improve not only the end to end process, but will build resilience within the delivery model and will see increased efficiencies with regards to turn round times and associated costs.</p>
2.10	<p>Performance</p> <p>The performance of the voids delivery framework along with the associated teams (Voids & Housing) are in the process of implementing performance measures which will identify and support the service areas with addressing any issues or delays.</p> <p>The performance will be managed through monthly meetings and reported through our Open Housing system.</p> <p>Following the changes made to the allocation process and also the planned improvements to the void refurbishment process (additional resources and monitoring reports) the Council have forecasted a downward trend over the next 12months (subject to the challenges and external factors as detailed in the main body of this report).</p>
2.11	<p>Update Report</p> <p>A regular update report will be presented to capture progress and to measure the performance of our new contractor framework, quality of works and successful allocations.</p>

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	<p>As paragraphs 2.05 and 2.09, the Council has commenced with a full review of the end to end process and involved all key stakeholders from within the Portfolio and have also liaised with other Councils and RSL's.</p> <p>The Housing & Assets service are in the process of procuring a framework of contractors and suppliers to mitigate risks in terms of contractor resource and material supply and to also provide assurance with regards to associated costs, which impact upon our budgets etc.</p>

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Void Workshops - Internal Stakeholders (Feedback etc.) • Welsh Government • Local Councils • RSL's • Housing Board - Regular Update Report • Discussions have taken place internally and with colleagues from other Local Authorities to shape and inform the proposals within this report.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 - End to End Process.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Housing/Housing-Policies-and-Procedures/Welsh-Housing-Quality-Standard-WHQS.aspx
6.02	https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Housing/Condensation-and-Mould-Advice.aspx
6.03	https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Housing/Housing-Improvements-and-Repairs.aspx

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officers: Sean O'Donnell (Service Manager - Housing Assets) sean.o'donnell@flintshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Jen Griffiths (Service Manager - Housing Management, Benefit Service including Disabled Facilities Grants) Jen.Griffiths@flintshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Martin Cooil (Service Manager - Housing & Prevention) Martin.Cooil@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Capital Programme: The Council's financial plan covering capital schemes and expenditure proposals for the current year and a number of future years. It also includes estimates of the capital resources available to finance the programme.</p> <p>The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS): is a national standard of quality for homes. This is set by the Welsh Government. It means that all tenants in Wales should have the opportunity to live in good quality homes which meet the requirements of that household.</p> <p>Brexit: is an abbreviation of two English words: 'Britain' and 'exit' and refers to the withdrawal process of the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU).</p> <p>Financial Year: the period of 12 months commencing on 1 April.</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.

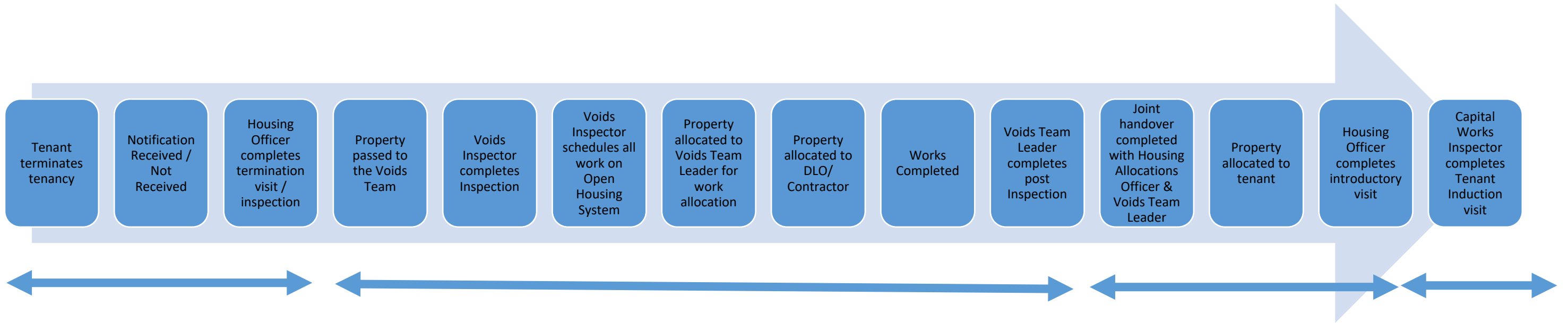
Contract Framework: A Contract Framework is an agreement between one or more contracting authorities and one or more economic operators. These frameworks have Contractors, Consultants and Suppliers that have been successful in joining the specific work categories.

The Council often uses these frameworks to procure works that have already gone through a tender process in line with OJEU and can be utilised to procure works or services.

They are often the most economic advantage in terms of value for money and local training provision.

HRA: The Housing Revenue Account is a ring fenced account derived from rental income and in the main, Welsh Government funding.

Components: A part or element such as an assets amenities (Kitchen Bathroom, Boiler, Roof, Windows, Doors etc.)



Housing Officer Team - Tenancy Terminations

- Termination Notice (those received and those not)
- Property Inspection
- Recharges etc.
- Meter Readings - Debt and Activations
- Pictures & Video etc. - Evidence
- Handover to Housing Assets
- Offer of Allocation to proposed tenant

Voids Team - Inspection/ Refurbishment & Investment Works/ Handover

- Notice from Housing Officer Team
- Inspection of full property (internally and externally)
- Arrange internal clean and possible fumigation.
- Arrange Asbestos Survey and Asbestos Removal
- Arrange various other surveys (Kitchen Design/ DPC Survey).
- Schedule of works - Standards
- Refurbishment & Investment Works - DLO/Contractor
- Post Inspection
- Pictures (Evidence)
- Handover

Allocations Team - Joint Handover & Allocation

- Joint Handover
- Pictures & Video etc. - Advertisement (YouTube)
- Allocation

Capital Works Team - Tenant Induction

- Asset Maintenance
- Guidance & Supporting Documentation /Advice
- Central Heating Controls & Ventilation
- Controlling Mould & Condensation in your home
- Loft Access and Storage
- Reporting of Repairs and Request for Service
- Tenant Improvement works - Permissions
- Recharges

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COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 27 th September 2022
Report Subject	Rapid Rehousing
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration
Report Author	Chief Officer, Housing and Communities
Type of Report	Strategic


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

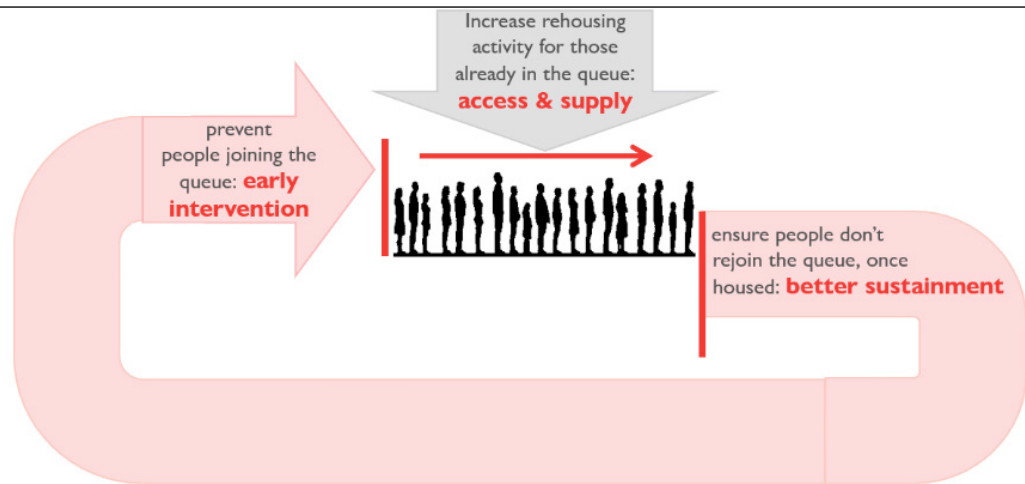
This report provides an introduction and overview of principles of Rapid Rehousing. Local Authorities are required to develop Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans in order to demonstrate how they will move towards a new approach to prevention and relieving homelessness. The paper also identifies a number of priority areas that have been identified whilst developing the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan that Flintshire County Council and its partners will need to overcome as it seeks to deliver a transformation in homeless prevention and statutory homelessness services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Community, Housing and Assets, Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the report and the principles of Rapid Rehousing and provide any comments or observations.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	<h3>EXPLAINING RAPID REHOUSING</h3>
1.01	<p>Background to Rapid Rehousing The Welsh Government has recently published its Ending Homelessness Action Plan, which commits to making homelessness rare, brief and non-repeated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rare: People are prevented from becoming homeless in the first place • Brief: People get a quick and effective response if they become homeless • Non-repeated: People do not experience multiple episodes of homelessness <p>When delivering on plans for preventing homelessness for as many people in Wales as possible, Welsh Government expect Rapid Rehousing to become the default approach when people do become homeless.</p> <p>Detailed below are illustrations which highlight the potential opportunities of moving to a Rapid Rehousing Model</p>  <p>With an increased focus on 1) Early Prevention 2) Access and Supply 3) Better Sustainment, Rapid Rehousing will over time reduce demand on homelessness statutory services and reduce the need for access to temporary housing. When access to temporary housing is required it should be high quality accommodation and for short periods of time. Increasing supply and access to more affordable housing options will enable timely move on from temporary housing for those who do experience homelessness. More support in tenancy will help to avoid repeat homelessness.</p>



All Councils in Wales are required to develop Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans and Flintshire's is in its development. This paper seeks to outline the principles of Rapid Rehousing along with the vision and priorities that will be captured within Flintshire's Rapid Rehousing Transitions Plan.

The housing crisis has been in the making for decades, therefore the process of change to enable a move to a Rapid Rehousing Model and a clear commitment to ending homelessness needs to be set of solid foundations. The changes needed to deliver on Rapid Rehousing requires significant public sector transformation and will likely take more than 10-15 years to truly have impact. Local Authorities are however required to develop a 5 year plan for 2022-2027.

The first iteration of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan which will be taken through the Political process in early Q3 2022-2023 and seeks to lay the foundations needed to embrace the Rapid Rehousing Model and creating the infrastructure and shared approaches required across multiple service areas to make this a truly integrated public services transformation.

1.02

The principles of Rapid Rehousing in Wales

What is Rapid Rehousing?

Rapid Rehousing is an internationally recognised approach which ensures that people experiencing homelessness can move into a settled home as quickly as possible, rather than staying in temporary accommodation for long periods of time.

Key elements of Rapid Rehousing

- Everyone is assumed to be 'housing ready' with the right support.
- People spend as little time as possible in temporary accommodation.
- When people do need temporary accommodation, it is of a high standard.
- People are able to access the right home in the right place for them.
- For most people, an independent, mainstream home will be the default approach, but others may choose supported accommodation.
- People are able to access high quality, multi-agency support, tailored to individual needs, where this is required.

	<p>Who can benefit from Rapid Rehousing? Everyone experiencing or at risk of homelessness should benefit from rapid rehousing and be helped to find a settled home as quickly as possible. However, different people will require different levels of support to maintain their tenancy. Some people will need no additional support, others might need short-term support, and a small proportion will need higher intensity, multi-agency support (such as Housing First).</p> <p>What is needed to make Rapid Rehousing a reality in Wales?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased affordable housing – both social housing and private rented housing • A good understanding of the support needs of people experiencing homelessness • Improved access to multi-agency support (such as mental health or substance misuse services) for people who need it <p>What are the benefits of rapid rehousing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces rough sleeping • Reduces repeat homelessness • Reduces public spending on expensive temporary accommodation • Reduces the destabilising and marginalising effects of prolonged homelessness or prolonged stays in emergency or temporary settings • Improves people’s quality of life and health outcomes, resulting in savings for public services
1.03	<p>The vision for Rapid Rehousing in Flintshire As with any programme of change, a clear vision is required to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the direction of travel. Outlined below is the suggested Vision for Flintshire.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Working with our partners to transform prevention activity, housing support and homelessness services, to achieve a co-ordinated and significant shift in service delivery to a rapid rehousing model, which ensures homelessness is rare, brief and unrepeated”</i></p> <p>This vision builds upon the work undertaken when developing the Housing Support Programme Strategy and re-enforces a commitment to ensuring homelessness is rare brief and un-repeated in keeping with Welsh Governments Ending Homelessness High Level Action Plan and policy direction for the housing support and homelessness agenda.</p>
1.04	<p>Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan Priorities When developing the draft Transition Plan a number of priority areas have emerged. These areas present initially as challenges and over time the Transition Plan will overcome and seek to address these challenges through a process of change management and public service transformation.</p> <p>The challenges and priority areas demonstrate very clearly that homelessness is not exclusively an issue for housing and homeless services to address and will require significant partnership working alongside increases in housing supply and changes to existing practices.</p>

PRIORITY 1 - Tackling homelessness through robust and effective partnership working

The challenges associated with delivering on this are:

- Public and 3rd sector services are stretched and struggling with frontline service capacity for early intervention – recruitment and retention challenges
- A lack of understanding within some partners around the limitations of the local housing market and pressures on local homelessness services
- We do not have the partnership structures or work streams to join up service delivery and ensure effective partnership working is developed and captured
- Positive partnership working is not consistent across all agencies or at all levels of organisations
- Lack of documented positive practice – partnership working needs to be recorded through formal protocols and joint working arrangements

PRIORITY 2 - Remodelling our approaches to data, systems, policies and service delivery

The challenges associated with delivering on this are:

- Our ability to extract data and use it to inform and monitor service delivery is limited and our IT systems require significant review and enhancement
- Insufficient staff capacity for policy, performance and improvement activities within the Housing & Prevention Service as the workforce is focussed on front line service delivery pressures
- Policies and procedures require a significant review to ensure they align with the move to Rapid Rehousing and staff will require training and support as practices change
- We do not have the necessary infrastructure for delivering co-ordinated activity with our partners and we are collectively unable to ensure data drives delivery

PRIORITY 3 - Ensuring the right type of support is available to everyone who needs it

The challenges associated with delivering on this are:

- People often don't engage with support early enough so opportunities to help are missed leading to more significant problems
- More people need support and people needs are presenting as more complex and significant

- Managing expectations - people who need our services don't understand the limitations of social housing and housing and support options available
- Services need to work more collaboratively to build support plans that bring together a wide range of support services

PRIORITY 4 - Transforming our temporary housing offer

The challenges associated with delivering on this are:

- Our current temporary housing portfolio is heavily reliant on substandard models of housing such as 1) shared housing 2) Porta-kabins 3) hotels
- The shared housing we have is not en-suite as standard, requires investment or disposal and is too densely populated which presents management issues
- Porta-kabins have served a purpose during covid but we aspire to much higher standards of accommodation for people accessing our Homeless Hub services
- Our hotel accommodation is often "out of county" causing disruption to people accessing it and operational challenges for support activity and partner agencies
- Our Temporary Accommodation management requirements improvement and additional capacity with current numbers and likely short term increase in demand

PRIORITY 5 - Increasing the supply of affordable housing and removing barriers to people accessing affordable housing promptly

The challenges associated with delivering on this are:

- Limited land availability to build more homes within areas of high demand for social housing
- Increasing environmental challenges and specifically issues around levels of phosphates locally
- Existing social housing is not aligned to the levels of demand within the homeless cohort – lack of 1 bed general needs housing and over supply of lower demand older persons housing
- Other housing pressures and housing needs other than homelessness which the Local Authority also has a duty to assist with
- An increasingly unaffordable private sector and evidence of landlords leaving the sector

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p><u>Developing the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan</u> The development of the Strategy is driven through the Housing & Prevention Service and this has been a significant challenge due to ever increasing demands around housing and homelessness post covid with all indications that homelessness will increase with the cost of living crisis.</p> <p>The need to balance planning service transformation and sustaining front line services is an on-going concern, but investing time to plan will help ease pressures and deliver the changes needed to improve services over time.</p>
2.02	<p><u>Delivering on the Rapid Rehousing Agenda</u> Detailed below are the resource implications associated with the delivery of Rapid Rehousing. Further scoping and detail in relation to resource implications will be captured within the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan:</p> <p>Revenue: Housing Support Grant is the primary source of funding for the delivery of housing related support services. Additional funding has been made available in recent years, but the Grant was underspent last year due to challenges with recruitment and service mobilisation. The Council Fund is used for statutory services such as the Homeless Case management work within Housing Wales Act 2014, including costs associated with temporary housing.</p> <p>Capital: There are implications for Capital expenditure with the need to build more homes requiring significant investment. This is enabled through the Social Housing Grant programme which Welsh Government have enhanced in order to enable new build and development of social housing at scale and pace.</p> <p>Human Resources: Additional funding from Welsh Government provides an opportunity to increase staff capacity across a range of services and some of this additional capacity will be focussed on development of further work to deliver Rapid Rehousing. There is however a shortage of appropriately skilled people within the local labour market so recruitment is an on-going challenge.</p>

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	<p>The following risks and mitigations have been identified by way of control measures:</p> <p>Risk: Failure to deliver the changes needed to ensure homelessness is a shared challenge across a wide range of public services and not solely the job of Homelessness Services</p> <p>Mitigation: Capture the change needed through the Transition Plan and ensure there is robust engagement strategy linked to the delivery of Rapid</p>

	<p>Rehousing and shared responsibilities identified and clear commitments from internal and external partners as to how they assist</p> <p>Risk: Fail to gain political or partner support around the principles of Rapid Rehousing and the direction of travel for housing support and homelessness services</p> <p>Mitigation: Engage members through reports to appropriate Scrutiny Committees and Workshops and partners through a range of engagement events around housing need and homelessness</p> <p>Risk: Failure to have enough homes for people who need them when they experience homelessness and in order to exit it in a timely manner</p> <p>Mitigations: Deliver the Social Housing Grant Programme and priority actions outlined within the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan linked to increasing the supply of affordable housing and removing barriers to people accessing affordable housing promptly through Policy changes linked to Social Housing Allocations</p>														
3.02	<p>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="320 943 1385 1666"> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 943 743 1088">Long-term</td> <td data-bbox="743 943 1385 1088">Positive – Increase in targeted support and alternative delivery methods to ensure services are inclusive for all</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1088 743 1274">Prevention</td> <td data-bbox="743 1088 1385 1274">Prevention - Preventing homelessness through ensuring there is adequate support and accommodation to cater for a range of peoples' needs</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1274 743 1386">Integration</td> <td data-bbox="743 1274 1385 1386">Positive – Increased integration between services and partner organisations</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1386 743 1525">Collaboration</td> <td data-bbox="743 1386 1385 1525">Positive – Increased collaboration between services, partner organisations and service users</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1525 743 1666">Involvement</td> <td data-bbox="743 1525 1385 1666">Positive – Service user involvement to help shape effective services so that support is timely and person centred</td> </tr> </table> <p>Well-being Goals Impact</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="320 1778 1385 2069"> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1778 743 1964">Prosperous Wales</td> <td data-bbox="743 1778 1385 1964">Positive – More jobs will be created to deliver housing related support and prevention activities on a greater scale within Flintshire.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1964 743 2069">Resilient Wales</td> <td data-bbox="743 1964 1385 2069">Positive – Creating services that are prevention focused and build resilience to avoid households becoming homeless and</td> </tr> </table>	Long-term	Positive – Increase in targeted support and alternative delivery methods to ensure services are inclusive for all	Prevention	Prevention - Preventing homelessness through ensuring there is adequate support and accommodation to cater for a range of peoples' needs	Integration	Positive – Increased integration between services and partner organisations	Collaboration	Positive – Increased collaboration between services, partner organisations and service users	Involvement	Positive – Service user involvement to help shape effective services so that support is timely and person centred	Prosperous Wales	Positive – More jobs will be created to deliver housing related support and prevention activities on a greater scale within Flintshire.	Resilient Wales	Positive – Creating services that are prevention focused and build resilience to avoid households becoming homeless and
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		helping people exit homelessness promptly, with support to reduce risks of repeat homelessness.
	Healthier Wales	Positive – Reduction in rough sleeping, less homelessness and shorter stays in temporary housing when homelessness does occur help with overcoming health inequalities associated with homelessness (physical health and mental health and wellbeing outcomes)
	More equal Wales	Positive – Services are delivered in a way that are inclusive for all. Consideration has been given to local and regional gaps in provision for often marginalised communities who experience homelessness.
	Cohesive Wales	No Impact
	Vibrant Wales	No impact
	Globally responsible Wales	No impact

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	<p><u>Service User Engagement</u> A standardised consultation activity including questionnaire has been used across North Wales Local Authorities to inform the Housing Support Programme Strategy and ensure service user's insight informs strategic priorities. This insight will inform the local Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.</p> <p>Further work will be done to engage service users as the work associated with service change develops to ensure that people who use and rely on our services are at the heart of the process and policies we develop to respond to Rapid Rehousing.</p>
4.02	<p><u>Service Provider Feedback</u> Again the engagement undertaken to inform the development of the Housing Support Programme is being used to inform the development of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.</p> <p>Further work will be done to engage service provider as the work associated with service change develops to ensure that partners can help inform the process of change associated with the move to Rapid Rehousing.</p>

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1: Rapid Rehousing in Wales FAQs

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Flintshire’s Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022-2027 Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022-26 (flintshire.gov.uk)</p> <p>Welsh Government Programme for government https://gov.wales/programme-for-government-2021-to-2026-hml</p> <p>Housing Support Grant Guidance https://gov.wales/housing-support-grant-practice-guidance</p>

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Martin Cooil – Housing & Prevention Service Manager Telephone: 07880 423234 E-mail: martin.cooil@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Housing Support Programme Strategy - the single strategic document on housing support and homelessness prevention.</p> <p>Rapid Rehousing - Rapid rehousing is about taking a housing-led approach for rehousing people that have experienced homelessness, making sure they reach a settled housing option as quickly as possible rather than staying in temporary accommodation for too long.</p> <p>Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan – the document that will outline how Flintshire and its partners will deliver on the Rapid Rehousing Agenda and lay the foundations for service transformation in regards to housing support and homeless prevention.</p> <p>Housing First – is a housing and support approach which gives people who have experienced homelessness and chronic health and social care needs a stable home from which to rebuild their lives. Provides intensive, person-centred, holistic support that is open-ended. Places no conditions on individuals; however, they should desire to have a tenancy.</p>

Rapid Rehousing Frequently Asked Questions for Key Stakeholders

The Welsh Government has recently published its [Ending Homelessness Action Plan](#), which commits to making homelessness rare, brief and non-repeated:

- **Rare:** People are prevented from becoming homeless in the first place
- **Brief:** People get a quick and effective response if they become homeless
- **Non-repeated:** People do not experience multiple episodes of homelessness

While the priority is preventing homelessness for as many people as possible, we want Rapid Rehousing to become the default approach when people do become homeless.

What is Rapid Rehousing?

Rapid Rehousing is an internationally recognised approach which ensures that anyone experiencing homelessness can move into a settled home as quickly as possible, rather than staying in temporary accommodation for long periods of time.

What are the key elements of Rapid Rehousing?

- Everyone is assumed to be 'housing ready' with the right support;
- People spend as little time as possible in temporary accommodation;
- When people do need temporary accommodation, it is of a high standard;
- People are able to access the right home in the right place for them;
- For most people, an independent, mainstream home will be the default approach, but others may choose supported accommodation;
- People are able to access high quality, multi-agency support, tailored to individual needs, where this is required.

Who can benefit from Rapid Rehousing?

Everyone experiencing or at risk of homelessness should benefit from rapid rehousing and be helped to find a settled home as quickly as possible. Each person will require different levels of support to maintain their tenancy. This includes people with special support needs, for example victims of domestic violence, young people etc. Some people will need no additional support, others might need short-term support, and a small proportion will need higher intensity, multi-agency support (such as Housing First).

What do we mean by a 'settled home'?

This means accommodation in both the social and private sectors that is expected to last at least six months, but has the potential to be available for as long as the tenant wishes.

What is the role of supported accommodation within Rapid Rehousing?

For most people, an independent, mainstream home will be the default approach, but others may choose supported accommodation on a medium or long-term basis. Where supported accommodation is used on a transitional or medium-term basis, this should be kept under continual review and should not be considered settled housing. The move to rapid rehousing may result in less reliance on supported accommodation in the future but Welsh Government is working with stakeholders to consider the impact and develop this policy position.

What about people who don't choose to live independently?

Rapid Rehousing is an approach that works for everyone. In this context, it will just mean that they will be moved into the appropriate supported housing as quickly as possible, but a focus remains on independent living in the future.

Why are we introducing the approach in Wales?

Homelessness is untenable and a symptom of a dysfunctional housing market. [Ending Homelessness in Wales: A high level action plan 2021-2026](#) outlines that to achieve our goal of ending homelessness in Wales, we must make a radical shift.

The pandemic has enabled us to gain a much more [accurate picture](#) of the true scale of homelessness across Wales. Whilst the emergency response has helped many individuals to engage with services for the first time, it has demonstrated the level of hidden need that the housing, health and wider support system is not ordinarily addressing and the need to respond to these over the longer term.

The Welsh Government is clear that those who have been supported into temporary accommodation have not had their homelessness resolved. Rapid Rehousing provides a solution to this challenge. The evidence is clear that the vast majority of people who have experienced homelessness, even those who have been severely marginalised and homeless for a long time, are able to maintain their tenancies in self-contained housing, with the right level of support where they need it.

Our approach is evidence based and builds on the reports and recommendations of the expert [Homelessness Action Group](#), which has worked with the sector, service providers and, most importantly, with service users.

Rapid Rehousing has a number of benefits:

- Reduces rough sleeping
- Reduces repeat homelessness
- Reduces public spending on expensive temporary accommodation

- Reduces the destabilising and marginalising effects of prolonged homelessness or prolonged stays in emergency or temporary settings
- Improves people's quality of life and health outcomes, resulting in savings for public services

What's the evidence for Rapid Rehousing?

- Chapter 7 of Crisis' 50th anniversary report: [Everybody In: How to End Homelessness in Great Britain \(2018\)](#) contains a summary of the evidence for Rapid Rehousing.
- Perth and Kinross Council in Scotland have been implementing Rapid Rehousing for a number of years. Their [2019-2024 Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan](#) details their successes in delivering savings, reducing the amount of temporary accommodation needed, reducing the average time spent in temporary accommodation and the reduction in the number of days spent waiting for an offer of settled housing.

What are the timescales for Rapid Rehousing?

Welsh Government recognises that the transition to Rapid Rehousing will not be straightforward and is dependent upon several important factors, particularly increasing the supply of housing, which is in turn dependent on other factors such as availability of materials, labour, land and wider environmental issues.

We therefore recommend a 5-year timescale for the transformation to Rapid Rehousing.

What are the key steps to moving towards a system of Rapid Rehousing?

The [Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan guidance](#) lays out the key steps to take for the local authority and partners to move from the current position to the future vision. This will be different for each local authority and depend on what the key challenges are.

Some of the key elements to have are:

- An understanding of the level housing and support needs, including how many households are moving or waiting to move into temporary settings; how much and what type of housing is required to permanently house people; and who needs support, and at what level, to maintain their tenancy.
- A coordinated and strategic approach to identify sources of housing from local authorities, Registered Social Landlords and within the Private Rented Sector;
- House-building programmes that factor in housing need, for example through Local Housing Market Assessments;
- Landlord and local authority allocation policies that prioritise households with no permanent home;

- A multi-agency commitment to providing support, particularly by mental health and substance misuse services;
- A comprehensive range of prevention activities, such as mediation and advice services;
- People with lived experience of homelessness having a role in informing and co-producing plans and services within the transition to RRH.

It is fundamentally important that public services and housing organisations take all opportunities to prevent homelessness. If rapid rehousing is done effectively, with the right support, then we will prevent future repeated homelessness.

How is this going to be resourced?

A significant amount of funding has already been made available to local authorities, and landlords for both housing and homelessness support:

- In 2022-23, £60m has been made available to Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords to rapidly increase permanent accommodation capacity across Wales as part of the Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme;
- In 2021-22, £50m was allocated to begin the transformation of services and create over 500 units of new long-term sustainable housing;
- In 2021-22, the Housing Support Grant received an increase of £40m (30%), taking total funding to £166.763m. This increase will be sustained up until at least 2025;
- In 2021-22, a record £250m was invested in social housing, with the figure increasing to £310m in 2022-23;
- Core revenue funding for local government has increased by 9.4% in 2022-23 which is for local authorities to prioritise where it will be allocated;
- Between 2021 and 2024, local authorities will be able to use 2% (up to a maximum of £100,000) of their Housing Support Grant allocation to fund short term project management and/or strategic planning resource to support the delivery of Rapid Rehousing.
- In 2021-22, £1 million funding was provided via Area Planning Boards to support individuals with complex needs, delivered through substance misuse, mental health and housing services. Additional funding has been allocated for 2022-23.

How are we going to ensure there are enough homes for everyone?

There are a number of urgent actions that we are taking and need to take in the future to ensure that housing supply matches housing demand:

- The Welsh Government has committed to developing 20,000 new low carbon homes for rent in the social sector between 2021-2026;
- Housing development teams and planners need to work with homelessness teams so that housing needs are reflected in the Local Housing Market

Assessment. These needs should be reflected in local authorities' housing Prospectuses and Programme Development Plans;

- The Private Rented Sector Leasing Scheme Wales is a Welsh Government-backed scheme launched in 2021 which offers incentives for property owners who lease their properties to the local authority. Tenants housed under the scheme will have longer term, secure and affordable accommodation as well as access to a high-level of support to help maintain their tenancy.
- A review of homelessness and housing allocation legislation to ensure we do not exclude people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness by ensuring 'reasonable preference' for people in this situation.
- Innovative solutions such as seeking out opportunities to work with the growing number of institutional landlords such as pension funds and investment trusts or promoting models to share existing multiple room housing.

Who are our partners in this work?

Homelessness is not simply a housing issue and requires a degree of political and corporate ownership and oversight. Rapid Rehousing will not succeed unless there is full operational alignment between an authority's strategic housing function, capital build programme, Housing Support Grant commissioning and the statutory homelessness services. It will also require strategic and operational support from a range of different partners including primary care, mental health, substance misuse, criminal justice and social care services.

Third sector homelessness and housing support providers will be critical partners during the transition to rapid rehousing. Their ability to build trusting relationships with people who have previously received a negative experience, perhaps even been failed by the system, will be vital to service delivery, and their experience and expertise should be utilised when making decisions about adapting services.

In addition to the key local partners, partnership groups should include front line workers as well as people with a lived experience.

What is the role for local authorities?

Local authorities are responsible for drafting and implementing the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans. It is critical that this initial Transition Plan is developed as a corporate document. In addition to ensuring that the other authority statutory functions, such as social care are involved, there must be co-operation between the strategy team, Social Housing Grant and Housing Support Grant teams and homelessness services in order to deliver a plan that meet the aims of the Rapid Rehousing transformation.

What is the role for local government?

Local government is a key player in ensuring the right housing is built in the right place and that local needs are met through capital programmes. Elected members will be vital in showing leadership to address the needs of their local communities

who do not have access to a safe and secure home. Other departments such as social services and early intervention services will also play important roles in supporting some people.

What is the role for housing associations and local authorities with housing stock?

Social landlords have a key role to play in terms of building more social homes and working with homelessness teams to allocate housing to those who are homeless. This may require changes to allocations policies. Housing associations will also be vital in ensuring that there are no evictions from social housing into homelessness.

What is the role for the private rented sector?

The private rented sector is another key player in terms of providing individuals with affordable housing. The Leasing Scheme Wales will improve access to affordable and good quality homes for those people who are at risk of homelessness and are in receipt of benefits, including universal credit.

What is the role for homelessness and housing support providers?

The success of rapid rehousing depends on the right support being in place at the right time. Homelessness and housing support providers will be crucial in delivering services such as floating support, assertive outreach, critical time interventions and Housing First. This is vital in helping individuals build confidence and a connection within a community. This support will be essential in supporting people to exit homelessness, but will also be critical to helping people to sustain their tenancies and avoid repeat homelessness.

What is the role for other services such as mental health and substance misuse support?

For any homelessness service to be effective, many homeless people will require robust assessment and pathways into appropriate support from a range of different partners including primary care, mental health, substance misuse and social care services. For rapid rehousing to be a success, there needs to be a strategic commitment from mental health and substance misuse services to provide timely access to support that enables people to exit homelessness and avoid repeat homelessness in the future.

Will a move to Rapid Rehousing impact on other people in the housing system?

Wherever possible, we want to avoid households and individuals seeing homelessness as a route into housing. We are working to ensure there is an appropriate supply of housing in Wales to meet the needs of the population, and, when a household is in housing need they can approach their local authority who will support them to resolve their housing problems. For some people this will include assistance to access social or private rented sector housing.

If we get Rapid Rehousing right in Wales, we will be preventing repeat episodes of homelessness in the future, whether for people who are currently adults or for future generations who will be protected from experiencing homelessness at a young age.

Ultimately, homelessness should not be tolerated. The Welsh Government is committed to bringing it to an end. This means that we have to change our approach to working with households who are homeless or face homelessness.

Can we use shared housing as an option?

The default position should be to aim for an independent settled option. However, this should not discount the option of shared housing given the right circumstances and where this is the choice of the person. This may include instances where friendships have formed while homeless or where shared housing is a stated choice of the individual.

What are the standards for temporary accommodation/ settled homes?

The pandemic has highlighted the need to ensure people are able to access to suitable accommodation of a standard that maintains a sense of dignity and respect. Welsh Government has been clear that temporary accommodation is self-contained and as a minimum has en-suite facilities. Floor space will continue to not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Chapter 19 of the [Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness](#) provides detailed guidance regarding what is considered suitable in relation to accommodation provided / sourced for the purposes of the prevention / interim / help to secure / duty to secure duties.

External Reference Material

Crisis (2020) [RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLANS: A SCOTTISH OVERVIEW; With practice examples and ideas to share](#)

[Aberdeenshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan \(RRTP\) Update \(2020\)](#)

[Perth and Kinross; Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan](#)

[Scotland's transition to rapid rehousing; Guidance](#)

[Rapid rehousing transition plans: guidance for local authorities and partners \(gov.wales\)](#)

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COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 27 th September 2022
Report Subject	Disabled Facilities Grant
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration
Report Author	Chief Officer (Housing & Communities)
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 (DFG). The grant is available for adapting or providing facilities for a disabled person in a dwelling.

Due to the current climate since Brexit and Covid19, there has been an increase in costs in the construction industry. Although a new Discretionary Policy was developed last year it has been recognised that a review of the policy is required to ensure we are still meeting the needs of the customer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Community, Housing and Assets, Overview and Scrutiny Committee to support the updated DFG policy and note the ongoing work to improve the service.
2	Community, Housing and Assets, Overview and Scrutiny Committee to note the amendment to Appendix 2 in the policy for removal of the means test for medium sized adaptations.
3	Community, Housing and Assets, Overview and Scrutiny Committee to note the changes to Land Charges, whereby they now only apply to large adaptations in-line with Welsh Government Revised Housing Standards, previously they applied to any adaptation over £20,000.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT
1.01	Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 places a mandatory duty on Local Authorities to provide disabled facilities grants (DFGs). The grant is available for adapting or providing facilities for a disabled person in a dwelling.
1.02	A DFG is a capital grant which is utilised 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.
1.03	<p>The statutory limit for any DFG is set by the Welsh Assembly Government and is currently £36,000 per application within a five year period.</p> <p>However, further applications can be made within this period if the customer's medical condition has changed. This case would then be reviewed with the Occupational Therapist upon application.</p>
1.04	A DFG is available to owner occupiers, private tenants and local authority tenants. For persons living in social housing with a registered social landlord, the tenant is required to request any adaptations directly with their landlord.
1.05	<p>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.</p> <p>DFGs for Local Authority tenants are not means tested.</p>
1.06	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
1.07	<p>The Welsh Government Housing Adaptations Service Standards (revised March 2021) provides all Local Authorities DFG teams with the guidance on the level of service expected including adaptation categories, timeframes and performance measures to ensure consistency in approach.</p> <p>As such the applicant must own the property or be a tenant and intend to live at the address during the grant period (currently 10 years).</p> <p>In the case of private tenants the landlord may apply for the grant if they have a tenant who is disabled.</p>

1.08	<p>The council must satisfy itself that the work is necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled person; that it is reasonable; and can be done – the age and condition of the property must also be taken into account.</p> <p>In order to do this, the property is assessed by a surveyor and an occupational therapist and appropriate considerations will determine the best option for the individual taking into account their needs and the most cost effective solution.</p>
1.09	<p>The council must ensure that any adaptation works will provide the most effective long-term solution to meet the needs of the disabled person.</p>
1.10	<p>The current policy has an agreed limit of £10,000 for non means testing of medium sized adaptations. This discretionary grant was created to meet the request of Welsh Government in the revised Housing Adaptations Service Standards.</p> <p>However, due to the current climate and rise in costs in the construction industry, this now seems unreasonable as we cannot deliver the majority of medium adaptations, especially when there are a combination of medium adaptations, within this cost limit.</p> <p>Therefore, to fully remove the means test for all medium sized adaptations would not only meet Welsh Government guidelines, but would also be more equitable and consistent.</p> <p>As this is a Discretionary Grant it will still be at the discretion of the DFG Manager to determine whether to means test a case or not particularly if the works are complex in nature resulting in a combination of medium adaptations which are comparable to the cost of large scale works around £20,000 or above.</p>
1.11	<p>There may be instances where the disabled person's existing home is not suitable for adaptation, and with the agreement of all parties, the council may decide to assist the household to move into more suitable accommodation.</p> <p>For owner occupiers and private tenants the Council can offer a Relocation Grant up to the value of £20,000 to assist with the moving and legal costs. This can be considered even if the alternative accommodation needs some minor adaptations to make it fully suitable.</p>
	<p>Private Sector DFG Delivery & Performance</p>
1.12	<p>The following table shows the numbers of medium and large adaptations delivered by the Private Sector DFG team over the past 6 years:</p>

	Number Completed	Total Cost	Days to deliver (average) Target 209
2016/17	105	£1,044,440	209
2017/18	61	£ 817,372	234
2018/19	40	£ 386,978	220
2019/20	45	£ 354,035	185
2020/21	41	£ 477,000	231
2021/22	89	£ 1,175,000	278

1.13 Please see below a review of each year to explain the increases and decreases in the figures above;

2017/18 – Work on DFGs was ceased during late Autumn which meant that applications and works were delayed until April 2018 due to budget constraints in the service at that time.

2018/19 - There was a reduction in the numbers of applications received for an adaptation and some resource issues around staffing levels.

2019/20 – Due to resource issues it was decided with certain types of adaptations previously delivered via DFG were to be delivered via Care & Repair.

2020/21 – Covid19 meant all jobs were stopped in March 2020 apart from priority cases, most of these were small adaptations which increased due to hospital admissions/returning home. Work restarted late 2020, but a lot of clients were still unhappy to restart works due to some clients still self-isolating or being in the high risk category.

2021/22 – All jobs restarted and most that were previously on hold are now completed or have commenced. However, due to the Covid delay and some jobs being outstanding prior to the pandemic, there has been an adverse impact on the average number of days to complete the work. There was also an issue whereby many of our contractors were extremely busy after Covid19 and therefore we had a number of jobs with delayed start dates.

1.14 Care and Repair currently deliver all of the small adaptations for the private sector. Please see below information on the number completed and the total costs. These have not previously been recorded and this year we intend to include number of days to complete.

	Number Completed	Total Cost
2020/21	349	£ 78,000.00
2021/22	531	£ 185,000.00

Service Improvements

1.15 The team previously consisted of temporary/agency staff which did not provide any stability or resilience. New permanent team members have now been recruited.

Implementation of new Procurement system and contract management is currently being processed, with an expected start date early 2023.

Performance reporting is now being monitored more closely to ensure targets are being met.

Service delivery should start to improve, Covid19 caused a delay for all works, however the 58 cases that were on hold in 2020 have now been completed except 2 cases which are due to commence imminently. There were 78 cases that had been received since April 2021, of these there are still 8 cases outstanding, however all but one has either now commenced or is due to commence. The one case pending is currently with the Planning Service.

Recycling of equipment – new processes have been created to ensure we recycle as many stair lifts and ceiling track hoists as possible.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Capital: The removal of means testing for medium sized adaptations should not have huge implications for the approved capital programme for the current year or for future financial years.</p> <p>It has been calculated that we only had a few cases that were means tested and were not entitled to any assistance. These jobs equated to around £60,000, therefore going forward these cases would be approved, but would not have an adverse effect on the capital budget limit.</p> <p>I have included some figures below for last year's spend and this years projected budgeted spend which includes providing the Discretionary grant;</p>

	Budget	Spent	Projected Spend
2020/21	£1,898,000	£1,561,609	
2021/22	£1,898,000	£581,406 (up to 01/08/2022)	1,743,000

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 disabled people 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 is built into the process 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 disabled people 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.</td> </tr> </table>	Long-term	Positive impact on longer term solutions to enable disabled people 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 is built into the process 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 disabled people 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.
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	More equal Wales	Positive - By supporting disabled people 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	None.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Draft Policy
5.02	Appendix 2 – Revised Housing Standards

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Jen Griffiths, Service Manager, Housing, welfare and communities Telephone: 01352 702929 E-mail: jen.griffiths@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

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.
8.02	<p>Small Adaptations - anything which is not classed as medium or large. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grab Rails • Small Ramps • Stair/Mop stick Rails • Key Safes • Additional electrical sockets or accessible taps, etc
8.03	<p>Medium Adaptations - anything which is not classed as small or large. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level Access Showers • Stair lifts • Ceiling Track Hoists • Large ramps • Or a combination of these adaptations installed as one job
8.04	<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. Examples include:</p> <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

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING

DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS POLICY

August 2022

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
2.0	Robin Davies	Revised Discretionary Grant conditions to remove means test.		01/08/22

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1. Introduction

Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide grant aid to assist with the delivery of adaptations for a disabled person in a dwelling. An applicant is required 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 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.
- Where applicable the grant may require repayment if the applicant disposes of the property whether by sale or transfer within 10 years of the certified date. See conditions in Appendix 1-6 below.

Unless stated otherwise, any additional funding utilising a grant will be secured as a local land charge against the property where breach of the conditions 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 may be subject to a 'means test', see conditions below. 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.

9. Appendix 1

MINOR ADAPTATIONS	
Purpose	Minor adaptations as classed in the Welsh Government Housing Adaptations Service Standards, 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	Usually less than £1000

10. Appendix 2

MANDATORY DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT	
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, 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 classed as a large adaptation will require a Local Land Charge to be placed against the property.</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 for a large adaptation requires a maximum repayment amount of £10,000 in accordance with HGC&RA1996 General Consent Conditions 2008, if the applicant chooses to dispose of the property whether by sale or transfer within 10 years of the certified date. The potential repayment amount will be placed as a local 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>

11. Appendix 3

DISCRETIONARY ADAPTATIONS	
Purpose	The eligible works of a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant are extensive, however it is considered prudent that monies be set aside to enable,

	<p>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.</p> <p>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	Same eligibility criteria as Mandatory DFG, without the requirement for a means test.
Conditions	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.
Amount	No set limit, any medium sized adaptation may be given discretion to not means test, however a combination of medium adaptations may still be subject to a means test.

12. Appendix 4

DISCRETIONARY TOP UP < £3K	
Purpose	If the work is likely to cost in excess of the current statutory limit (currently £36,000) then a discretionary top up maybe offered.
Eligibility Criteria	<p>Applicant eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant which requires a top up.</p> <p>Applicant has an owner's interest in the property.</p>
Conditions	<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 Top up Grant requires repayment in accordance with HGC&RA1996 General Consent Conditions 2008, if the applicant chooses to dispose of the property whether by sale or transfer within 10 years of the certified date. The potential repayment amount will be placed as a local land charge against the property.</p>
Amount	Maximum of £3,000.

13. Appendix 5

DISCRETIONARY TOP UP GRANT > £3K	
Purpose	<p>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.</p> <p>It will only be provided to owner occupiers and the grant amount will be registered as a local land charge against the property.</p>
Eligibility Criteria	<p>Applicant eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant which requires a top up. Applicant has an owner's interest.</p> <p>An Assessment Panel comprising of senior officers from Social Services and Housing will determine whether a Top-Up can be issued.</p> <p>Subject to means testing.</p> <p>The grant is discretionary and the availability is dependent upon the detail of each individual case. It is important to ensure we protect the public purse.</p> <p>A contribution towards the cost of works may be requested from the customer dependent upon their financial circumstances, all minutes of the Top Up Panels are recorded to show the decision making process.</p>
Conditions	<p>Property must be occupied by the applicant or a family member (in the case of a child) as their main residence.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Repayment of any Top up Grant requires repayment in accordance with HGC&RA1996 General Consent Conditions 2008, if the applicant chooses to dispose of the property whether by sale or transfer within 10 years of the certified date. The potential repayment amount will be placed as a local 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 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.

14. Appendix 6

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 and does not meet the long term needs of the applicant or it is more cost effective to move rather than adapt.</p> <p>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>Report by Occupational Therapist and DFG Surveyor confirming the adaptation works are necessary, appropriate and confirmation that the new property meets the long term needs with a requirement for some adaptations, but these must not be extensive and are more cost effective than adapting the current property.</p> <p>Applicant has an owner's interest in the property.</p> <p>Subject to means testing.</p>
Conditions	<p>Repayment of any Relocation Grant requires repayment in accordance with HGC&RA1996 General Consent Conditions 2008, if the applicant chooses to dispose of the property whether by sale or transfer within 10 years of the certified date. The potential repayment amount will be placed as a local land charge against the property.</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>



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 & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 27 th September 2022
Report Subject	Council Plan 2022-23 Timeline Review
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Report Author	Chief Executive
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council Plan for 2022-23 was adopted by County Council in July. The Plan was reviewed and refreshed for content following on from our response to the pandemic and our Recovery Strategy. The themes and priorities remain the same to 2021/22 however there are some developments with sub-priorities.

The outline of the Council Plan for 2022/23 including the six themes, their priorities and actions is appended (as Part 1).

At County Council in July, it was requested Overview and scrutiny Committee's review; (1) action timelines; and (2) some of the definitions be reviewed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To agree Council Plan Part 1 reviewed and updated timelines for completion
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	COUNCIL PLAN 2022/23
1.01	It is a requirement of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 for organisations to 'set out any actions to increase the extent to which the council is meeting the performance requirements.' Plans for organisations should be robust; be clear on where it wants to go; and how it will get there.
1.02	<p>In July, County Council requested a review of timelines due to several target completion dates being set as March 2023. This review has been carried out for each of the actions of the Council Plan and is appended for reference. The dates have been reviewed by officers to ensure accurate targets are now identified. The document contains the updated target dates and rationale for the changes or no changes. The three categories of rationale are:</p> <p>Core Business – activity is ongoing; Project – activity has clear start and end dates; and New Initiative – activity has clear start date which may develop in the future</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Resource implications have been considered during preparation of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme and will continue to be monitored during the regular budget monitoring and financial review arrangements.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	All Members have had the opportunity to consider and review the content of the draft Plan themes and priorities. Overview and Scrutiny Committees have reviewed and discussed the overall content of the Plan throughout January and February 2022.

4.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT						
4.01	<p>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Long-term</td> <td rowspan="5">The Council Plan 2022/23 continues to be aligned to the Sustainable Development Principles across all their working. Assessment against these will be made at the end of year Annual Performance Report.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prevention</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Integration</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Collaboration</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Involvement</td> </tr> </table> <p>Well-being Goals Impact</p>	Long-term	The Council Plan 2022/23 continues to be aligned to the Sustainable Development Principles across all their working. Assessment against these will be made at the end of year Annual Performance Report.	Prevention	Integration	Collaboration	Involvement
Long-term	The Council Plan 2022/23 continues to be aligned to the Sustainable Development Principles across all their working. Assessment against these will be made at the end of year Annual Performance Report.						
Prevention							
Integration							
Collaboration							
Involvement							

	Prosperous Wales	Council Plan 2022/23 continues to provide evidence of alignment with the Well-being Goals. Specific strategic and policy reports include impact and risk assessments.
	Resilient Wales	
	Healthier Wales	
	More equal Wales	
	Cohesive Wales	
	Vibrant Wales	
	Globally responsible Wales	
	<p>Risk Management Risks have been captured and added for information within Part 2 Council Plan 2022/23.</p>	

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1: Council Plan (Part 1) 2022-23 Timeline Review.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Jay Davies, Strategic Performance Advisor Telephone: 01352 702744 E-mail: jay.davies@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	Council Plan: the document which sets out the annual priorities of the Council.
8.02	Medium Term Financial Strategy: 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.

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Portfolio	Task Description	Task Estimated Completion Date	New Estimated Completion Date	Rationale
Housing and Assets	Maximising the number of people signposted for support to facilitate longer term change	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Housing and Assets	Ensuring that take-up to benefit entitlement is maximised in a timely way by processing claims efficiently	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Housing and Assets	Maximising take up of the Discretionary Housing Payments scheme and other financial support	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Housing and Assets	Continuing to offer our community hub (Contact Centres) approach giving access to a range of programmes, services and agencies together in one place	31/03/2023	31/03/2023	New Initiative
Housing and Assets	Developing a "Well Fed at Home service"	31/12/2022	31/12/2022	New Initiative
Housing and Assets	Continuing to develop delivery of a "Hospital to Home" meals service	31/03/2023	31/03/2023	New Initiative
Housing and Assets	Introducing a transported and delivered food service "Mobile Meals" to those who are vulnerable	31/03/2023	31/03/2023	New Initiative
Housing and Assets	Promoting housing support and homeless prevention services with our residents and partners	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Housing and Assets	Commissioning a wide range of housing related support that meets the needs of the people of Flintshire	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Housing and Assets	Ensuring a multi-agency partnership approach to homeless prevention and develop a culture where homelessness is "everyone's business"	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Housing and Assets	Ensuring when homelessness does occur it is rare, brief and non-recurring	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Housing and Assets	Developing and extending our Housing First and Rapid Rehousing approaches for those who do experience homelessness	31/03/2023	No Change	New Initiative
Housing and Assets	Remodelling the "emergency beds" Homeless Hub accommodation offer and service delivery	31/03/2023	No Change	New Initiative
Housing and Assets	Exploring opportunities to develop a young person's homeless hub offering accommodation and support services	31/03/2023	No Change	New Initiative
Housing and Assets	Promoting the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH), Common Housing Register, Affordable Housing Register and Housing Support Gateway within the community and with professionals	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Housing and Assets	Developing self-service approaches that enable people to identify their own housing options through online support	31/03/2023	No Change	New Initiative
Housing and Assets	Piloting a risk assessment process to identify pre tenancy support needs to reduce risk of tenancy failure	31/03/2023	No Change	Project
Housing and Assets	Reviewing our sheltered housing stock to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of current and prospective tenants	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Housing and Assets	Working with housing association partners to build new social housing properties and additional affordable properties	31/03/2023	31/03/2023	Core Business
Housing and Assets	Increasing the Council's housing portfolio by building social housing properties and affordable properties for North East Wales (NEW) Homes	31/03/2023	31/03/2023	Core Business
Housing and Assets	Ensuring that the Council's housing stock meets the Welsh Housing Quality Standard and achieves a minimum SAP energy efficiency rating of 65	31/12/2022	31/03/2023	Project
Housing and Assets	Developing plans for the de-carbonisation of Council homes in line with Welsh Government guidance to ensure their thermal efficiency is optimised and the cost of heating homes are minimised	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Housing and Assets	Working with residents to ensure our communities are well managed, safe, and sustainable places to live	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Housing and Assets	Supporting our tenants to access technology and create sustainable digital communities	31/03/2023	No Change	New Initiative

Portfolio	Task Description	Task Estimated Completion Date	New Estimated Completion Date	Rationale
Housing and Assets	Listening to our tenants and working with them to improve our services, homes and communities	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Housing and Assets	In partnership with Denbighshire CC, creating a new Dynamic Procurement System in order to ensure CPR's are met and provide a wider opportunity for tendering Disabled Adaptation projects	31/03/2023	30/03/2023	New Initiative
Housing and Assets	Creation of a new amalgamated Disabled Adaptations Team consisting of Privately rented/Owned properties and Council Housing stock	31/03/2023	31/12/2022	Core Business
Housing and Assets	Engaging with private sector tenants, giving them a voice and responding to their needs	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Housing and Assets	Working in partnership with landlords and private sector agents to better understand their needs	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Housing and Assets	Developing a "landlord offer" that encourages landlords to work with the Council to raise standards of property management and condition of homes where needed	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business
Housing and Assets	Improving access to private sector properties for those who are homeless, at risk of homeless and in housing need	31/03/2023	No Change	Core Business