

Public Document Pack

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Prif Swyddog (Llywodraethu)



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To: Cllr Helen Brown (Chair)

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

Thursday 13 April, 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

NOTICE OF HYBRID MEETING
COMMUNITY & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, 19 APRIL, 2023 at 10.00 AM

Yours faithfully

Steven Goodrum
Democratic Services Manager

Please note: Attendance at this meeting is either in person in the Lord Barry Jones 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 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING (Pages 5 - 16)

Report of Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator

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

4 VOID MANAGEMENT

Purpose: To provide a verbal update on voids management and delivery.

5 HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER UPDATE REPORT (Pages 17 - 40)

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

Purpose: To provide an update on the work ongoing to mitigate Homelessness and support provided to rough sleepers.

6 DISREPAIR UPDATE (Pages 41 - 50)

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

Purpose: To provide an update on work ongoing to deal with disrepairs.

7 COUNCIL PLAN 2023-28 DEVELOPMENT (Pages 51 - 70)

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

Purpose: To share the Council Plan 2023-28 Part 1 and Part 2 draft content for review/feedback prior to sign off at Cabinet.

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 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 19 th April, 2023
Report Subject	Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking
Report Author	Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

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

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

RECOMMENDATION

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

REPORT DETAILS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

<p>Wednesday 12th July, 2023</p> <p>10am</p>	<p>Welfare Reform Update /Housing Rent Income</p>	<p>To provide an update on the impacts of welfare reforms and the work that is ongoing to mitigate them.</p>	<p>Assurance Monitoring</p>	<p>Service Manager - Revenues and Procurement / Service Manager (Housing Welfare and Communities)</p>
	<p>Estate Management</p>	<p>To consider Estate Management and work being undertaken by the Council and the impact this has on tenants.</p>	<p>Consultation / Assurance Monitoring</p>	<p>Service Manager – Housing, Welfare and communities</p>
	<p>Anti-Social behaviour</p>	<p>To update Members on the Policy and to outline any proposed changes to the Policy.</p>	<p>Assurance Monitoring</p>	<p>Service Manager – Housing, Welfare and communities</p>
	<p>Void Management</p>	<p>To provide a further update on voids management and delivery.</p>	<p>Assurance Monitoring</p>	<p>Service Manager – Housing Assets</p>

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Items to be scheduled

- **Refugees Update** - To provide an update on the settlement of Refugees across Flintshire. This item was on the FWP for November, 2022 but will be moved to an appropriate date in due course.
- **Temporary Accommodation Audit Update** - To provide a progress report on the action plan for service improvement following the audit of the Temporary Accommodation (To be presented in September 2023)
- **NEW Homes** – Report to be presented to a future meeting as agreed at the March 2023 meeting.

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	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

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ACTION TRACKING FOR THE COMMUNITY & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting Date	Agenda item	Action Required	Action Officer(s)	Action taken	Timescale
11.01.2023	5. Housing Rent Income and Welfare Response	As shown at recommendation (c) that a letter be written to the DWP on behalf of the Committee.	Jen Griffiths / Ceri Shotton	Awaiting response from DWP. Letter sent on behalf of the Committee on 20.02.23.	On-going.
08.02.2023	3. Minutes	Cllr Dale Selvester referred to the minutes and said that he had asked for a breakdown between water rate arrears and rent arrears. The Facilitator said that she would pick this up after the meeting.	Ceri Shotton / David Barnes	Information on the breakdown of water rate arrears and rent arrears circulated to the Committee via e-mail on 06.04.23 Information on the number of tenants evicted and re-housed by the Council also circulated via e-mail on 06.04.23	Completed
08.02.2023	4. Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking	Cllr Dave Evans referred to the following actions arising from the last meeting and asked that this information be circulated prior to the next update report in six months' time:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on the number of cases waiting to go back to court; and 	Ceri Shotton / Jen Griffiths	Information on the number of court cases circulated via e-mail to	Completed

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on how many of the 454 households who were subject to a reduction in their housing benefit payment because of the Bedroom Tax were in arrears. 		<p>Committee Members on 06.04.23.</p> <p>Response provided to Committee Members via e-mail on 06.04.23. The systems don't interface so the team are working to try to find a solution. Due to high service demand currently it would not be possible to pull together the information manually.</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p>08.02.2023</p>	<p>5. Housing Support Grant</p>	<p>In response to questions raised by Cllr Bernie Attridge, the following was agreed:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on whether the Terms of Reference around the Membership of the Regional Housing Support Collaborative Group (RHSCG) and Councillors not being involved was guidance or explicit, to be provided following the meeting; Advice would be sought on what level of detail within the 	<p>Martin Cooil</p>	<p>The RHSCG met and discussed this matter at its meeting on 16th March. It was decided that no Members were to be added to the Membership. A copy of the minutes from the meeting will be circulated to the Committee when available.</p> <p>Advice has been received to confirm that</p>	<p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p>

		breakdown of the spend plan 2022/23 categories could be provided to the Committee Members		this information can be circulated to the Committee. The information is being collated and will be sent to the Committee in due course.	
08.03.2023	4. Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking	Cllr Linda Thew referred to the refugee item listed on the FWP and raised concerns around proposals to convert the Northop Hall Country House Hotel into a facility for asylum-seekers and refugees. It was agreed that the comments raised by Members be feedback to the Chief Executive to ensure consultation with local Members and adjoining ward Members.	Ceri Shotton	Feedback provided to the Chief Executive on 08.03.23.	Completed
08.03.2023	5. Void Management	Cllr Rosetta Dolphin how many of the void properties would cost in excess of £10,000 to bring up to standard. Sean O'Donnell agreed to provide this information following the meeting.	Sean O'Donnell		
08.03.2023	5. Void Management	Cllr Dale Selvester asked if information on the impact additional posts were having on bringing void properties back into use could be provided. Sean O'Donnell agreed to provide this in future update reports.	Sean O'Donnell	This information will be included in future reports. The next update report will be presented to the Committee in September 2023.	Will be reviewed prior to the report being submitted in September 2023.

ACTION TRACKING

APPENDIX 2

08.03.2023	6. Dynamic Resource Scheduler (DRS) Update	In response to a question from Cllr Linda Thew on the cost of the automated system, Sean O'Donnell agreed to provide this information following the meeting.	Sean O'Donnell		
08.03.2023	7. Results of the Tenants Survey and Developing our Customer Involvement Strategy	In line with recommendation (b) that a workshop for all Members be arranged to highlight the draft strategy aim and objectives and highlight work needed to improve the current position.	Ceri Shotton	Discussions ongoing to confirm a date for the workshop.	Ongoing
08.03.2023	8. Sheltered Housing Review – Task & Finish Group	It was agreed that the Facilitator e-mail all Members of the Committee to seek nominations to sit on the Task & Finish Group.	Ceri Shotton	E-mail sent to Committee Members seeking nomination on the 17.03.23 and 03.04.23	Completed
08.03.2023	9. North East Wales (NEW) Homes Business Plan 2023/2052	It was suggested that a report on the viability of NEW Homes be presented to the Committee and Cabinet in around 3 months' time.	Ceri Shotton / Paul Calland	Item added to FWP under 'items to be scheduled'.	Completed



COMMUNITY & HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 19 th April 2023
Report Subject	Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Update Report
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Housing & Regeneration
Report Author	Chief Officer (Housing and Communities)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Homelessness is a statutory service that continues to be under significant pressure post pandemic and the further challenges related to the cost-of-living crisis and housing crisis. External factors associated with cost-of-living crisis and housing market conditions are increasing the levels of homelessness place more burden operationally and financially on the Council.

The need to offer accommodation and support to everyone who was homeless and at risk of rough sleeping during the pandemic was challenging. It has, however, provided a unique window of opportunity to engage with a high number of people who historically would not have received the same level of support and may have not achieved positive wellbeing or housing outcomes.

The local private sector housing market is seeing significant challenges with fewer properties available each year and many landlords leaving the market. This creates homelessness as properties are sold, residents asked to leave and the availability of fewer properties resulting in them being increasingly unaffordable.

Changes to the Housing Wales Act 2014 (HWA 2014) and specifically the introduction of an eleventh category of Priority Need for rough sleeping and those at risk of sleeping rough, sees a sustainment of the “no one left out” approach adopted during the Covid pandemic and now firmly establishes the principle on a legal footing and as standard practice in Wales.

As a result, more people and particularly single people, will be owed accommodation duties significantly increasing demands and cost on already stretched homeless accommodation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Community & Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee to note the update report and continue to support the work being undertaken by the Housing and Prevention Service.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE HOMELESSNESS UPDATE REPORT													
1.01	<p>Statutory Homeless Services Local Authorities have duties as outlined in the HWA 2014 Part 2, with regards to the prevention of homelessness and the management of homelessness when it occurs. Within the accessible documents detailed in section 6 of this report there is more information about the duties within this legislation (Helping You Understand Housing Wales Act 2014).</p> <p>The core team activities for the Statutory Homeless Team includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless Case Management under HWA 2014 • Homeless Accommodation Management • Homeless Accommodation Costs 													
1.02	<p>Funding Homeless Services Whilst funding is provided for activity through the Housing Support Grant (HSG) to offer early intervention and homeless prevention activities, statutory services cannot be funded through HSG. Therefore, the Council Fund is the main source of funding for the delivery of these services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless Officers and other staff dealing with Homeless Duties and Assessments • Homeless accommodation costs through lease charges and hotel accommodation expenditure • Staff costs associated with the management of homeless accommodation • Other costs associated with duties around homelessness such as storage costs and removals when people become homeless <p>Budgets in relation to Homelessness service delivery for 2022/2023 are summarised below:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Budget Purpose</th> <th style="text-align: right;">Budget 22/23</th> <th style="text-align: right;">Expenditure 22/23</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Homeless team staffing</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£1,393,218.00</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£1,202,421.80</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rental and lease for homeless accommodation</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£111,175.00</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£233,126.45</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hotel emergency accommodation costs</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£145,000.00</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£1,223,147.40</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Budget Purpose	Budget 22/23	Expenditure 22/23	Homeless team staffing	£1,393,218.00	£1,202,421.80	Rental and lease for homeless accommodation	£111,175.00	£233,126.45	Hotel emergency accommodation costs	£145,000.00	£1,223,147.40
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Hotel emergency accommodation costs	£145,000.00	£1,223,147.40												

To assist with the additional pressures around homelessness, and as the Covid Emergency Funding has now ceased, additional grant funding has been provided during 2022/2023 by Welsh Government to enable advance booking of hotel accommodation for the Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 period.

Grant income for 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 to support statutory homeless service delivery is detailed below:

	2022/2023	2023/2024
Advance Booking Fees (Welsh Government provided funding to lock in hotel accommodation for Q1 & Q2 22-23)	£447,850	-----
No One Left Out (Emergency accommodation and security provisions as necessary)	£520,115.72	£381,899.00
Discretionary Homeless Payment (Prevention funding for rent in advance, rent rescue packages, homeless prevention activity, DHP enhancements)	£195,103.20	£195,103.20

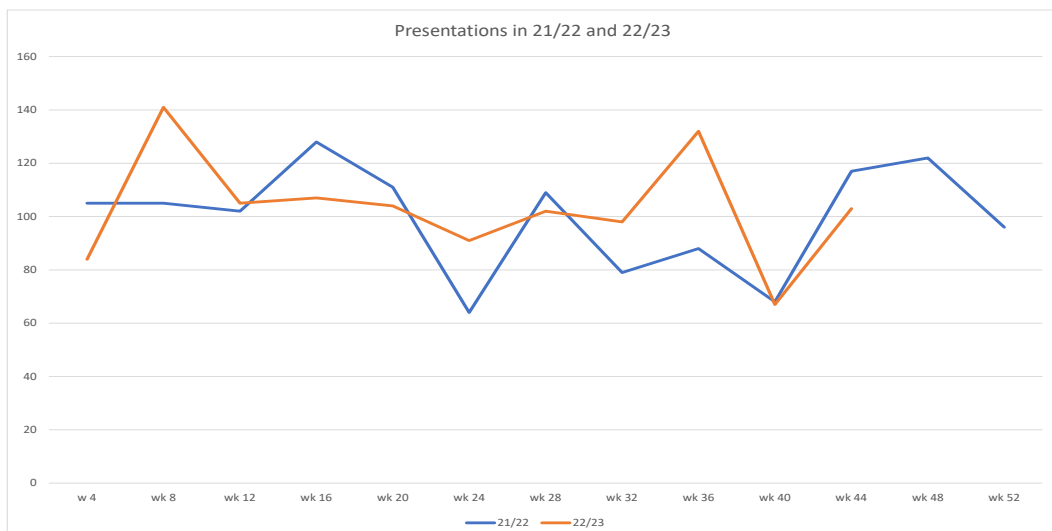
1.03

Demand for Services

Data in the following sections of this report provides an insight into the levels of demand for homeless services. This data is captured through a range of different datasets and is used to monitor service delivery, inform resource planning, and for reporting internally and to Welsh Government.

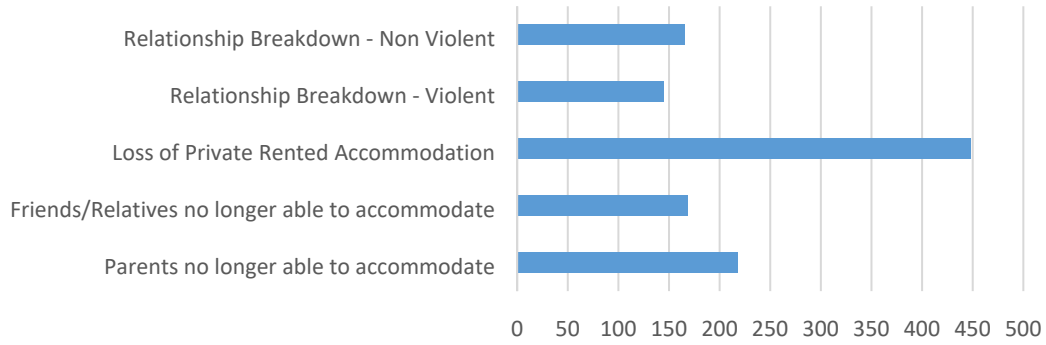
Homelessness Presentations

Numbers of homeless presentations continues to be high. Presentation data for 2021/22 and 2022/23 up to week 48 reporting period shows 1,134 homeless presentations in 2022/23 compared to 1,076 for the same period in 2021/22, a slight increase on the previous year.



The table below outlines the five most common reasons for people approaching the homelessness service for assistance.

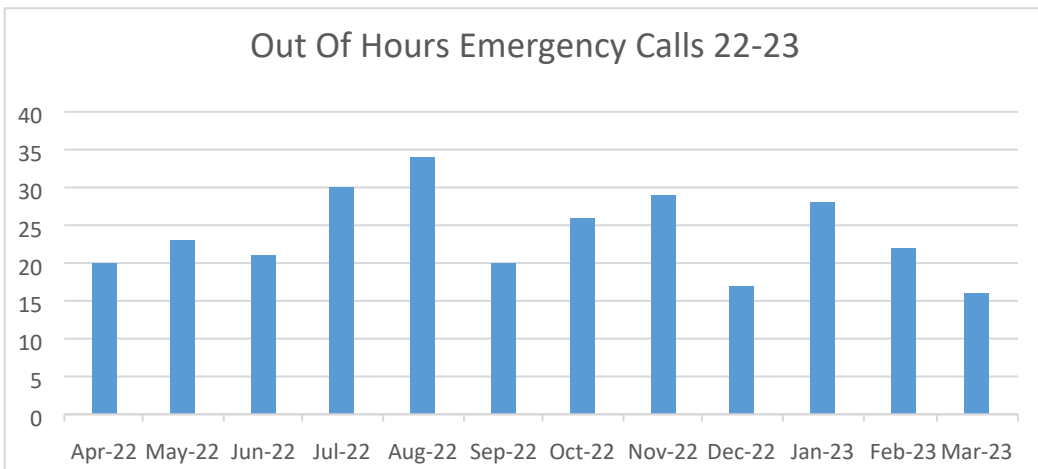
Top 5 Reasons for Homeless Presentation



A further and more detailed breakdown of the reasons for homeless presentations can be found in Appendix 1 (unvalidated data at time of reporting). Changes to the Homeless Case Management System are to be implemented 2023/2024 to streamline data capture processes and improve the recording of reasons for homeless presentations.

Out Of Hours Emergency Response

The Homelessness service operates 24 hours a day, every day of the year as homelessness often occurs outside of normal office hours. Calls are channelled through the Councils Emergency Out of Hours phonenumber and then referred onto Duty Homeless Staff. Detailed below are the number of calls received for emergency homeless response in the last 12 months.



Homeless Accommodation

Emergency and temporary accommodation is limited in Flintshire and a lot of positive work is undertaken to help people sustain their housing to avoid the need to access emergency and temporary housing through prevention. However, in recent months the increases in homelessness and significant barriers to successfully moving people on has resulted in more people requiring homeless accommodation.

Prior to the Covid pandemic there were 11 households placed in homeless accommodation in Flintshire. In February 2021 the numbers had increased to 55 households. The numbers now stand at 169 households. The reasons for the significant increases are referenced within this report. More detail about the breakdown of homeless accommodation placements can be found within Appendix 2.

Rough Sleeper Response

As referenced earlier, accommodation is available to everyone who fulfils the priority need status which now includes rough sleepers, and anyone deemed to be at risk of rough sleeping, following changes to Priority Need Guidance in December 2022.

During the pandemic this also extended to those with no recourse to public funding, the safety net of the public health response means that those with no recourse to public funds can no longer be assisted with accommodation even if rough sleeping.

Rough sleeper outreach activities are usually delivered through our Housing First service who are skilled at dealing with the most complex residents through assertive outreach activities. They provide the initial response during office hours and will respond within a few hours of an alert being received. Alerts come in through a wide range of sources:

- StreetLink Referrals
- Calls into the Homeless Team
- Referrals from partners across FCC and other public services
- Referrals from elected members
- Referrals from the public, Community Groups and Charities

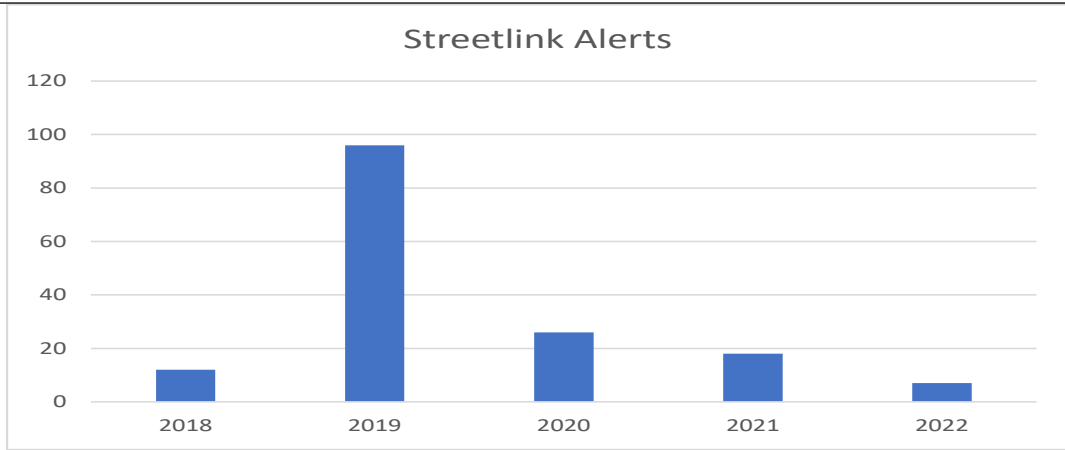
Alerts received outside of office hours are not always responded to immediately but can be channelled through our Out of Hours service on 0300 333 2222. Situations are risk assessed in terms of safety for officers to attend and may be actioned at a later stage.

Rough sleeper outreach activities include:

- Review and risk assessment of information within the alert / referral
- Site visits to the rough sleeper location where safe to do so
- Connection activity to help people access the homeless team
- Welfare checks for those who continue to sleep rough
- Offers of food, clothing and hygiene products as required
- Offers of accommodation where appropriate

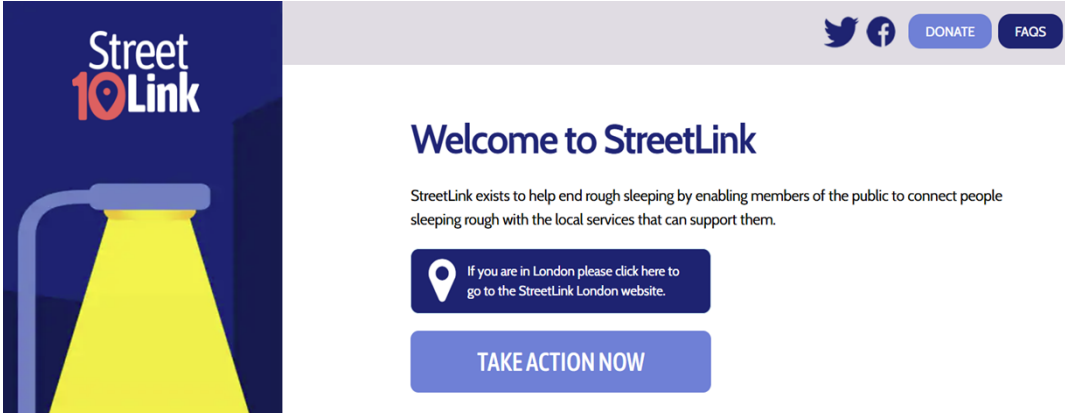
A recent incident of a rough sleeper in Holywell (28/02/23) saw a local charity identify a rough sleeper and connected the male to our Out of Hours Service. Within an hour of contact, he had been supported to access a taxi and taken to emergency housing. The following day a detailed homeless assessment was completed, and further assistance extended. The Councils Homeless Team received positive praise within local press coverage and social media for the excellent response offered.

Detailed below is data relating to Rough Sleeper Alerts received via StreetLink over the last five years. Numbers are relatively low in recent years as people have been picked up and supported through the “no one left out approach” and rough sleeping is significantly reduced across the county.



In 2019 there were high levels of rough sleeping with much of this concentrated within the Deeside area and a significant number of referrals were received as a result. There are currently believed to be two rough sleepers out in Flintshire at the time of reporting. Appropriate advice and assistance continue to be extended to the two people concerned.

StreetLink services are available via phone, via a downloadable App, accessed via the usual App Stores, and via their website. More information and a weblink to the StreetLink service can be found in the Accessible Documents section of this report.



1.04 Positive Homeless Outcomes

When managing homelessness under the HWA 2014, the primary aim is to prevent homelessness, and when it does occur, ensure it is rare, brief and non-repeated. Positive outcomes can be achieved through prevention activities and detailed below are some examples of the tools or interventions accessed to prevent homelessness.

- Rent arrears repayment planning
- Rent rescue payments
- Rent tops ups through Discretionary Housing Payments and other grant funding
- Budgeting support and income maximisation
- Repairs and property maintenance support
- Time critical interventions such as tenancy support
- Mediation and negotiation between tenant (now contract holder) and landlord

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for family's around managing relationships with young people <p>As referenced in the Housing Support Grant Report to Communities and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February 2023, funding is available to support the prevention of homelessness through Housing Support Grant (HSG) which enables a wide range of additional services and support. HSG does not, however, fund statutory homelessness service delivery.</p> <p>Prevention activities within the Homeless Team when residents are at risk of homelessness within 56 days (linked to s.66 Prevention Duty HWA 2014) are crisis interventions. The most effective and sustainable prevention activities are achieved through much earlier interventions and can be achieved across a wide range of services, to avoid people needing to access statutory homelessness services.</p> <p><u>Social Housing Allocations</u></p> <p>The 50% nominations process for the Covid cohort has been adopted across Conwy, Denbighshire and Flintshire SARTH housing partners since Summer 2020. This approach is intended to prevent significant blockages and increased expenditure on homeless accommodation.</p> <p>A breakdown of all social housing lettings including the 50% Homeless Direct Lets can be found in Appendix 1.</p> <p>Although the adoption of Homeless Direct Lets has been an incredibly positive intervention and appears to be in keeping with the Ministers intended direction of travel for housing allocations policy for Wales, the lack of 1 bed general needs housing is a significant and ongoing concern. This point is covered further within Section 1.09 of this report.</p> <p><u>Private Rental Outcomes</u></p> <p>Although the private rented sector is increasingly unaffordable for many households, there are opportunities to save tenancies and there are some successes through moving people into private rented accommodation. Opportunities for prevention work are limited however where landlords are selling properties and with rents increasing beyond levels that many low-income households can afford. Those residents in receipt of enhanced benefits and those with their main source of income through work, will often have the greatest chance of securing a home in the private rented sector.</p>
1.05	<p>National Policy – Homelessness</p> <p>In October 2019 Welsh Government published a Policy Statement, outlining a Strategy for Preventing and Ending Homelessness. This statement acknowledges the importance of partnership working, adopting early interventions and support for those in crisis. The Policy Statement clearly sets out a vision for:</p> <p><i>”A Wales where everyone has a safe home that meets their needs and supports a healthy, successful and prosperous life. A Wales where we work together to prevent homelessness and where it cannot be prevented ensure it is rare, brief and unrepeated.”</i></p>

	<p>Homelessness prevention requires a holistic response, grounded in partnership working. Preventative action will happen at different stages, but will follow along a continuum, allowing a range of public services and service providers opportunities to assist, depending on the situation. This is illustrated by following four prevention elements, outlined in the Strategy, which reflect the scope and intensity of partnership working:</p> <p>Primary Prevention - Preventing or minimising the risk of problems arising, usually through universal policies e.g., education; health promotion; good housing management and tenancy support.</p> <p>Secondary Prevention - Targeting individuals or groups at high risk or showing early signs of a particular problem to try to stop it occurring e.g., early referral to family or youth support services.</p> <p>Tertiary Prevention - Intervening once there is a problem to stop it getting worse and to redress the situation e.g., writing off rent arrears to avoid eviction.</p> <p>Acute Spending - Spending to manage the impact of a strongly negative situation - does little or nothing to prevent problems recurring in future e.g. cost of temporary housing when made homeless; long term cost of supporting children who have suffered Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) as a result of loss of home.</p> <p>Over time the move to Rapid Rehousing will shift the focus from acute spending on homelessness to more effective prevention and relief of homelessness activities. Flintshire's priorities for Rapid Rehousing as supported by Members in 2022 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopting Early Intervention and Targeted Prevention Activities • Strengthening Person Centered Approaches and Responding to Complex Needs • Developing the TrACE Agenda • Supporting Workforce Development and Resilience • Reviewing and improving Flintshire's Housing Offer <p>Welsh Government have ambitious plans to build 20,000 more social housing properties during the current Senedd term. It is anticipated that changes to allocations guidance may further strengthen the links between homelessness and social housing as a mechanism for prevention and relief of homelessness.</p>
1.06	<p>Priority Need – Rough Sleepers</p> <p>In December 2022 amendments to legislation on “Priority Need”, which is a significant part of the HWA 2014. Whether or not a person or household has a qualifying priority need affects the duties the local authority will have in relation to that person or household. For the duty to provide homeless accommodation to apply, the local authority must have reason to believe the person or household has priority need. The main homelessness duties in section 75 of HWA 2014 apply only to applicants who have a priority need for accommodation.</p>

Welsh Government have now included rough sleeping into the established Priority Need categories.

- a) a pregnant woman;
- b) a person with whom a dependent child resides;
- c) someone vulnerable as a result of old age, mental illness or handicap, physical disability, or other special reason;
- d) homeless as a result of an emergency such as flood, fire or other disaster;
- e) someone who is homeless as a result of domestic abuse;
- f) 16 and 17 year olds;
- g) 18-21 year olds who are at particular risk of sexual or financial exploitation;
- h) 18-21 year olds who are care leavers;
- i) ex-service men or women;
- j) a person who has a local connection with the area and is vulnerable as a result of being an ex-prisoner;
- k) a person who is street homeless (within the meaning of section 71(2)).

Welsh Government do not expect people to have to rough sleep for them to be assessed as fulfilling to Priority Need status. If the Council believes the person to be at risk of rough sleeping as they have no access to any safe accommodation, they will trigger the Priority Need for rough sleeping. More information about Priority need can be found within the Accessible Resources section.

1.07 **Use of Homeless Accommodation**

Appendix 2 as referenced earlier in the report provides a breakdown of the types and the numbers of households currently accommodated as at 31/03//2023. Summary of the accommodation types used to house people who experience homelessness is detailed below:

Council Properties - Council owned homes currently being used at homeless accommodation.

Private Sector Leased Properties - Portfolio of properties secured on long term lease from local landlords

Homeless Hub - Kabins within the grounds of the Glanrafon Homeless Hub in Queensferry and three rooms within the main building

Hotel Accommodation - Hotels and B&Bs rooms across Flintshire and out of county

Refuges - Accommodation secured for people who have fled domestic abuse.

Other - Accommodation sourced through non-traditional means such as AirBnB and through caravan sites.

1.08	<p>Improving the Homeless Accommodation Offer</p> <p>Within the Flintshire Housing Support Programme Strategy Priority 5 is “Reviewing and improving Flintshire’s housing offer”. This will focus on making the best use of social housing and increasing its supply, and also to review and improve the current homeless accommodation offer.</p> <p>In recent years the Council has purchased and refurbished a block of 6 flats in Connahs Quay (4 x 2 bed flats and 2 x bedsits at The Swan) and has also built a further 6 flats (2 x 1 bed in Duke Street, Flint and 4 x 1 bed in Park Lane, Holywell) which are due for completion May 2023. These properties are Housing Revenue Account Assets used as homeless accommodation and were part funded Grant Funding from Welsh Government.</p> <p>Further plans are in place to develop a purpose-built Homeless Hub as a replacement to the existing Glanrafon Homeless Hub which has temporary planning permission until 16th July 2026. A potential site has been identified for the next Homeless Hub and initial designs and feasibility work is underway, as are discussions with Welsh Government in regard to potential for grant funding for this development. Plans will be shared with local ward members in the coming weeks.</p>
1.09	<p>Challenging Housing Market Conditions</p> <p>The housing market nationally and locally is increasingly challenging. Housing Needs recorded on the Flintshire Housing Register (not just homelessness) are increasing and the availability of social housing is limited. Members received a report on the Common Housing Register which outlined the current pressures in February 2023. The private rented sector should be an option for people to consider but again demand is greater than supply and this drives up prices, meaning renting privately is not an easily accessible housing option for many residents within Flintshire.</p> <p><u>Difficult Private Rented Sector (PRS)</u></p> <p>The private rented sector is increasingly unaffordable for many low-income households. A recent report into the Housing Crisis in Wales identified that there were no private sector properties available for letting at the Local Housing Allowance rate in Flintshire in the month of February 2023 out of a total of 59 advertised on the open market. A link to the full report by the Bevan Foundation can be found in the Accessible Documents section.</p> <p>A report into the local PRS commissioned by the Council in late 2022, established that availability of Private Rentals is down approx. 50% in the last four years across Flintshire. There is anecdotal evidence that landlords are selling up and leaving the market and over time national data sets will support this (national data is captured through Rentsmart Wales). This is in part due to high property values of properties for sale. Some landlords have also referenced their perception that recent Welsh Government legislative changes are “pro-tenant” and “anti-landlord” with the introduction of Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 often referenced.</p> <p>Those landlords who remain in the market have an abundance of prospective contract holders (previously tenants) to choose from and many residents face significant barriers to securing a home. Whilst some of these are financial barriers as evidenced through the lack of affordable</p>

housing, some are also social barriers. More information about barriers to housing are noted later in this report. Many private landlords now request working guarantors or 6+ months rent in advance.

Social Housing Supply

There are significant shortages of social housing when it comes to the homeless cohort. Whilst any household can experience homelessness, a significant proportion of homeless household are single people of working age who require one bed homes (83.4% currently accommodated). There is very little affordable housing for single people available each year. A recent snapshot report of Council void properties identified only 10 general needs flats (not sheltered housing) out of a total of 269 void Council properties. It is clear there is a significant disconnect between homeless needs and social housing supply. When social housing is available delays on void works can have an impact on homeless prevention and the timely relief of homelessness.

Barriers to securing housing

Many clients have additional needs presenting additional complexities and barriers to helping people secure suitable housing:

- Young people with no independent living skills
- People with pets
- People with issues around substance misuse
- People with significant mental health issues
- People with complex physical disabilities
- People with criminal offending history including sexual offences
- People requiring accommodation in specific locations

With a lack of housing, and with many people experiencing significant barriers when seeking to secure housing, many more people are being trapped in homeless accommodation. Current housing market conditions mean there are minimal opportunities to move people on and to support them to exit homelessness.

The numbers of people and households becoming homeless is completely out of sync with the supply and availability of affordable housing that is required to prevent and relieve homelessness. This is a national housing crisis and not unique to Flintshire.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Detailed below are the cost implications associated with the delivery of Homelessness and Rough Sleeper activity in Flintshire:</p> <p>Revenue: Statutory Homeless Services are funded through Council Fund. Additional duties placed on Councils and the current demands on services and homeless accommodation results in additional expenditure and budget pressures. Whilst some grant is available for 2023-2024 for emergency housing and other discretionary funding for crisis interventions, this is not sufficient to cover the full scale of the financial risk.</p>

	<p>Capital: Creating a new Homeless Hub and additional social housing will require significant capital investment and has been flagged early within the Councils Capital Programme. The Flintshire Housing Prospectus has been approved by Council and shared with our Housing Partners and Social Housing Grant (SHG) supports ambitious plans to increase housing supply at scale and pace.</p> <p>Human Resources: The Homeless Team has seen a significant amount of turnover in staff over the last three years. Recruitment in the last six months has been positive but officers new to the role require significant training and development.</p>
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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: Insufficient turnover and move on from homeless accommodation creates blockages within the system due to insufficient levels of affordable housing, creating significant financial pressures through the use of costly hotel accommodation.</p> <p>Mitigations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support the 50% nominations process to support move on from homeless accommodation into social housing. • Continue to maximise discretionary homeless funding and spend to save budgets for support rent in advance and deposits to help people secure private rental accommodation • Build more social housing to increase the supply of affordable homes at scale and pace <p>Risk: Failure to recruit or retain enough people within statutory homeless services and in HSG funded services to fulfil the aspirations outlined in the Housing Support Programme Strategy.</p> <p>Mitigations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise communications and engagement opportunities for all recruitment activities • Ensure packages of training and development opportunities to attract, develop and retain a high skilled workforce. • Ensure officers internally and through commissioned services are paid a good wage and feel valued for the services they deliver. <p>Risk: Failure to utilise all available grants including “no one left out”, Discretionary Homeless Payment, and Housing Support Grant</p> <p>Mitigations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise and monitor spend against grant eligibility criteria • A robust delivery plan aligned to the Housing Support Programme and Needs Assessments

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prompt commissioning and varying of services as required to meet local needs within budget <p>Risk: Reduction in grants in future years because of budget cuts at Welsh Government</p> <p>Mitigations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal mitigations and this is part of services delivery being in receipt of grant funding • Lobby Welsh Government on the importance of existing grants whilst we are managing a significant period of change and demand for homelessness services 										
3.02	<p>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="320 685 1385 1240"> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 685 746 792">Long-term</td> <td data-bbox="746 685 1385 792">Positive – Increase in targeted support and alternative delivery methods to ensure services are inclusive for all</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 792 746 943">Prevention</td> <td data-bbox="746 792 1385 943">Prevention - Preventing homelessness through ensuring there is adequate support and accommodation to cater for a range of people’s needs</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 943 746 1016">Integration</td> <td data-bbox="746 943 1385 1016">Positive – Increased integration between services and partner organisations</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1016 746 1128">Collaboration</td> <td data-bbox="746 1016 1385 1128">Positive – Increased collaboration between services, partner organisations and service users</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1128 746 1240">Involvement</td> <td data-bbox="746 1128 1385 1240">Positive – Service user involvement to help shape effective services so that support is timely, and person centred</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 people’s 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
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3.03	<p>Well-being Goals Impact</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="320 1384 1385 2085"> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1384 746 1675">Prosperous Wales</td> <td data-bbox="746 1384 1385 1675">Positive – With additional funding more jobs will be created to deliver housing related support on a greater scale within Flintshire. Opportunities to support the labour market through training and development opportunities are being considered in conjunction with colleagues from Communities for Work.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1675 746 1787">Resilient Wales</td> <td data-bbox="746 1675 1385 1787">Positive – Creating services that are prevention focused and build resilience to avoid households becoming homeless</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1787 746 2011">Healthier Wales</td> <td data-bbox="746 1787 1385 2011">Positive – Reduction in rough sleeping, overcoming health inequalities associated with homelessness and poor housing conditions and investment to increase targeted support for people with housing issues and mental ill-health</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 2011 746 2085">More equal Wales</td> <td data-bbox="746 2011 1385 2085">Positive – Services are delivered in a way that are inclusive for all. Consideration</td> </tr> </table>	Prosperous Wales	Positive – With additional funding more jobs will be created to deliver housing related support on a greater scale within Flintshire. Opportunities to support the labour market through training and development opportunities are being considered in conjunction with colleagues from Communities for Work.	Resilient Wales	Positive – Creating services that are prevention focused and build resilience to avoid households becoming homeless	Healthier Wales	Positive – Reduction in rough sleeping, overcoming health inequalities associated with homelessness and poor housing conditions and investment to increase targeted support for people with housing issues and mental ill-health	More equal Wales	Positive – Services are delivered in a way that are inclusive for all. Consideration		
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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 such as the homeless, those with mental health or substances issues and the LGBTQ+ community.
	Cohesive Wales	No Impact
	Vibrant Wales	No impact
	Globally responsible Wales	No impact

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Consultation with Housing Associations and Local Authority partners, via the SARTH Steering Group, ensures there is a consistent approach being adopted across all three counties for social housing allocations and confirms ongoing commitment to the 50% Homeless Direct Let's approach.
4.02	Officers from the Housing & Prevention Service have attended a number of workshops and consultation events led by Welsh government in relation to recent changes in housing and homelessness legislation.
4.03	Feedback from residents who access our services is important so we can learn from issues of poor performance and celebrate successes. During the delivery of this report 2 case studies will be shared from 2 residents who have accessed Homeless Services in Flintshire and these experiences will be presented on Video.
4.04	Service user feedback is not currently captured on a routine basis; however plans are in place for 2023-2024 onwards to gather feedback from people accessing our services to enable service improvement and action planning activities.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	<p>Appendix 1: SARTH Lettings Data including Homeless Direct Lets 2019-2023.</p> <p>Appendix 2: Homeless Presentation Data for 2022-2023 (year end data still to be validated).</p> <p>Appendix 3: Homeless Households Accommodated at 31.03.2023.</p>

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Strategy for Preventing and Ending Homelessness – Policy Statement Ending Homelessness in Wales; A High Level Action Plan Helping You Understand Housing Wales Act 2014 Part 2 Welsh Government Draft Budget 2023-2024 Flintshire’s HSP Strategy 2022-2026 Priority Need Categories – Shelter Cymru Website Wales Housing Crisis Winter 2023 – Bevan Foundation StreetLink Website

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

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Rough Sleeper A person who is homeless and who sleeps without adequate shelter, typically on the streets of a town or city. Includes people living in sheds, outbuildings etc.</p> <p>Housing Support Grant (HSG) This is an early intervention housing related support programme targeted at people in housing need and at increased risk of homelessness. The HSG programme brings the historic funding streams for Supporting People, Homelessness Prevention and Rent Smart Wales grants into 1 single funding stream.</p> <p>Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) A Single Access Route to Housing, operates in Flintshire and ensures that people are offered a wide range of housing options. Those people with a clearly evidenced housing need, will be accepted onto Flintshire’s Common Housing Register.</p> <p>Rapid Rehousing Rapid rehousing is an approach for people whose first and most important need is to access housing; with a lack of it often the main reason why they are homeless. Rapid rehousing helps people settle quickly back with family</p>

or friends, into private rented, social housing or other affordable and safe long-term housing options.

Priority Need

Categories of people who are protected the most when assisting people under the Housing Wales Act 2014 homeless legislation. Those in Priority Need are owed accommodation duties and when homelessness is not prevented or relieved within 56 days, they will be owed full homeless duties.

Housing Support Programme Strategy

The Housing Support Programme (HSP) Strategy incorporates the reviewed and updated 2018-2022 Homelessness Strategy produced as of part the local authority's statutory duty under Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, and the strategic plans for use of the Housing Support Grant.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's)

ACE's are stressful experiences occurring during childhood that directly harm a child (e.g. sexual or physical abuse) or affect the environment in which they live (e.g. growing up in a house with domestic violence).

Housing Wales Act 2014

The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 (HWA 2014) received Royal Assent on 17 September 2014. Part 2 of the Act provides legislation on homelessness. It replaced Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 and reforms existing homelessness law in Wales by placing new or wider duties on local housing authorities.

Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016

The Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 is new legislation that came in 2st December 2022 and aims to simplify the process of renting a home in Wales and to provide parties with more information about their rights and responsibilities.

Appendix 1

Social Housing Lettings for All Housing Partners by letting type

Allocations by Landlord and Category of Offer (Flintshire Register)

Tenancies Started Between 01/04/2019 and 31/03/2020

By Category Offer Code	Landlord	Number	Percentage
SARTH Banding Offer	Clwyd Alyn Housing Association	79	10.62%
	Flintshire CC	497	66.80%
	Grwp Cynefin Housing Association	28	3.76%
	Wales And West Housing Association	67	9.01%
	Total	671	90.19%
SARTH Management Offer	Clwyd Alyn Housing Association	10	1.34%
	Flintshire CC	48	6.45%
	Grwp Cynefin Housing Association	2	0.27%
	Wales And West Housing Association	13	1.75%
	Total	73	9.81%
Total		744	

Allocations by Landlord and Category of Offer (Flintshire Register)

Tenancies Started Between 01/04/2020 and 31/03/2021

By Category Offer Code	Landlord	Number	Percentage
SARTH Banding Offer	Clwyd Alyn Housing Association	72	11.08%
	Flintshire CC	381	58.62%
	Grwp Cynefin Housing Association	3	0.46%
	Wales And West Housing Association	34	5.23%
	Total	490	75.38%
SARTH Management Offer	Clwyd Alyn Housing Association	28	4.31%
	Flintshire CC	71	10.92%
	Wales And West Housing Association	13	2.00%
	Total	112	17.23%
SARTH Homeless Direct Let	Clwyd Alyn Housing Association	11	1.69%
	Flintshire CC	22	3.38%
	Grwp Cynefin Housing Association	1	0.15%
	Wales And West Housing Association	14	2.15%
	Total	48	7.38%
Total		650	

Allocations by Landlord and Category of Offer (Flintshire Register)

Tenancies Started Between 01/04/2021 and 31/03/2022

By Category Offer Code	Landlord	Number	Percentage
SARTH Banding Offer	Adra	2	0.32%
	Clwyd Alyn Housing Association	62	9.92%
	Flintshire CC	333	53.28%
	Grwp Cynefin Housing Association	7	1.12%
	Wales And West Housing Association	61	9.76%
	Total		465
SARTH Management Offer	Clwyd Alyn Housing Association	24	3.84%
	Flintshire CC	54	8.64%
	Wales And West Housing Association	17	2.72%
	Total		95
SARTH Homeless Direct Let	Clwyd Alyn Housing Association	15	2.40%
	Flintshire CC	39	6.24%
	Grwp Cynefin Housing Association	1	0.16%
	Wales And West Housing Association	10	1.60%
	Total		65
Total		625	

Allocations by Landlord and Category of Offer (Flintshire Register)

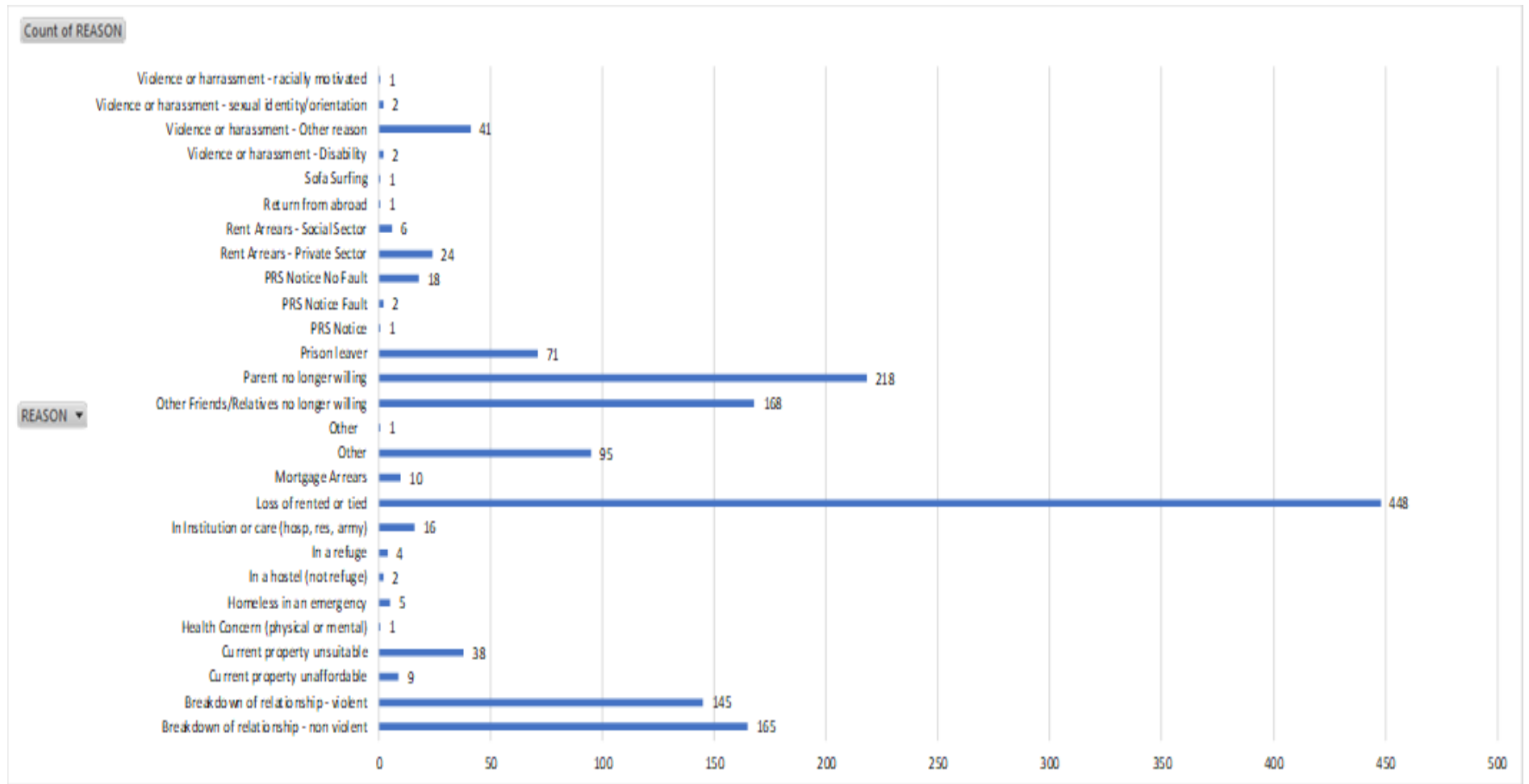
Tenancies Started Between 01/04/2022 and 31/12/2022

By Category Offer Code	Landlord	Number	Percentage
SARTH Banding Offer	Adra	4	1.00%
	Clwyd Alyn Housing Association	23	5.74%
	Flintshire CC	198	49.38%
	Grwp Cynefin Housing Association	3	0.75%
	Wales And West Housing Association	48	11.97%
	Total		276
SARTH Management Offer	Clwyd Alyn Housing Association	5	1.25%
	Flintshire CC	27	6.73%
	Wales And West Housing Association	17	4.24%
	Total		49
SARTH Relationship Breakdown-Direct Let	Flintshire CC	3	0.75%
	Total		3
SARTH Homeless Direct Let	Clwyd Alyn Housing Association	10	2.49%
	Flintshire CC	53	13.22%
	Grwp Cynefin Housing Association	1	0.25%
	Wales And West Housing Association	8	2.00%
	Total		72
SARTH Hard To Let Property (Direct Let)	Flintshire CC	1	0.25%
	Total		1
Total		401	

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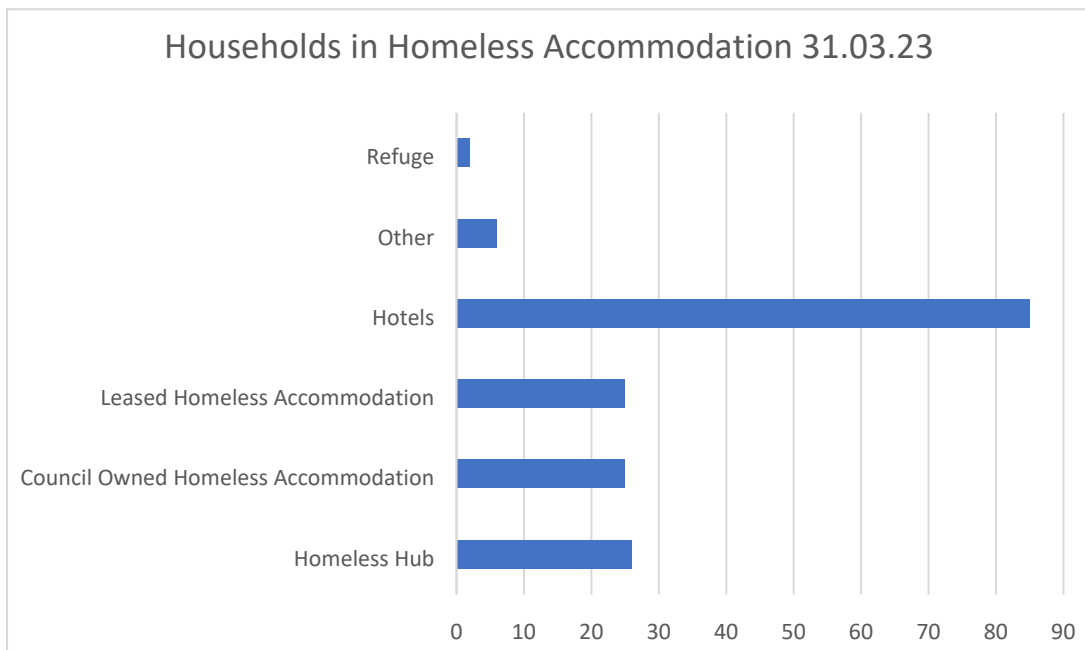
Reasons for Homeless Presentation 2022/2023

Row Labels	Count of REASON
Breakdown of relationship - non violent	165
Breakdown of relationship - violent	145
Current property unaffordable	9
Current property unsuitable	38
Health Concern (physical or mental)	1
Homeless in an emergency	5
In a hostel (not refuge)	2
In a refuge	4
In Institution or care (hosp, res, army)	16
Loss of rented or tied	448
Mortgage Arrears	10
Other	95
Other	1
Other Friends/Relatives no longer willing	168
Parent no longer willing	218
Prison leaver	71
PRS Notice	1
PRS Notice Fault	2
PRS Notice No Fault	18
Rent Arrears - Private Sector	24
Rent Arrears - Social Sector	6
Return from abroad	1
Sofa Surfing	1
Violence or harassment - Disability	2
Violence or harassment - Other reason	41
Violence or harassment - sexual identity/orientation	2
Violence or harassment - racially motivated	1
Grand Total	1495



APPENDIX 2: Homeless Households Accommodated as at 31.03.23

Forms of Emergency Housing	Households	Singles	Couples	Families
Homeless Hub	26	26	0	0
Council Owned Homeless Accommodation	25	17	2	6
Leased Homeless Accommodation	25	25	0	0
Hotels	85	70	5	10
Other	6	2	0	4
Refuge	2	1	0	1
TOTAL	169	141	7	21



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COMMUNITY & HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 19 th April 2023
Report Subject	Disrepair Update
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 the Council's current position relating to disrepair and the number of disrepair claims received, settled and successfully defended.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Community & Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee to note the contents of the report and to support the Housing Assets service to continue to manage the Housing Disrepair (HDR) protocol on behalf of the Council, ensuring the obligations placed upon the Council are met.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND
1.01	<p>The Housing Assets Service is responsible for ensuring all Housing revenue Account (HRA) stock is compliant with the various housing standards and regulations. The Council must ensure all properties are free from disrepair and that any repairs are dealt with as quickly as possible.</p> <p>This report provides an update on the measures the Council has in place to ensure all repairs are completed in a timely manner and that the work associated with any disrepair claims the Council may receive are completed effectively and efficiently.</p> <p>All tenants in Wales should have the opportunity to live in good quality homes, which meet the requirements of each household. The Housing Assets Service is responsible for ensuring the Council meet these standards along with the Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS).</p> <p>To assist our wider understanding of stock condition, we have recently procured software and begun to pilot in-house Stock Condition Surveys. This will mean we will be able to update our housing asset components remotely and update our future investment plans.</p> <p>This will involve surveys of all HRA council owned properties both internally and externally, to confirm the asset data we currently hold. This information is on a property-by-property basis and will assist in determining the condition of our assets.</p> <p>There are occasions when the Council receives a disrepair claim from a solicitor appointed by a tenant, where the tenant believes their property is subject to disrepair.</p> <p>This is a legal process and subject to the Housing Disrepair (HDR) protocol. The Council must fully investigate all claims and ensure that all outstanding repairs within the claim are dealt with in a timely manner and the claim is defended fairly and robustly.</p>
1.02	<p>The Housing Assets Service is responsible for managing all housing disrepair claims and works closely with other Council services, for example, Housing Management and Legal Services to respond to claims.</p> <p>We have appointed an external legal defence company (Hugh James Solicitors) to assist the Council in managing any claims received.</p> <p>On receipt of the disrepair claim, our in-house Inspection & Surveying Teams are allocated key pieces of field work to assess if the claim is valid, alongside collating evidence relating to the claim. This evidence will include any requests for service/ repair logged and recorded within our housing record systems (Open Housing). We must ensure that the Council have met their obligations in terms of actively dealing with any reported repairs or concerns relating to the asset the tenant may have,</p>

along with ensuring that any repairs or remedial works are raised and actioned accordingly.

Our tenants must ensure they have also complied with their conditions of tenancy, ensuring all repair requests have been raised with the Council and allowing the Council access to complete any repairs, maintenance works or investment works.

From the receipt of the claim, the Council will be able to ascertain if the claim is valid or if the claim has been raised incorrectly.

Our appointed legal teams will advise if there is any risk to the Council in terms of compensation, where we have failed to act or deal with a repair request, such as incorrect assessment or remedial works; or if the claim should be settled or defended.

Unfortunately, there are many opportunistic claim solicitors, who on occasion impose themselves on our tenants with the promise of compensation and a 'No Win, No Fee' guarantee.

However, what is not communicated to the tenant is the potential for a landlord to recover their legal costs against the tenant if they are unsuccessful. The claimant's solicitors will not cover these costs and a landlord can recover all defence costs and staff time associated with the claim.

There has been a recent claim submitted against social landlord where the claimant (tenant) lost their claim due to the tenant not complying with their tenancy conditions correctly. The costs of the social landlord's legal defence were over £20,000, and these were sent directly to their tenant as a rechargeable cost.

A recent case in August 2022 resulted in a tenant receiving an order to pay costs of over £3,000 in court fees, after being encouraged by a legal firm to pursue a claim of disrepair, a claim that failed once the courts decided it had no merit. The tenant, who had 21 days to pay the costs, was claiming for up to £10,000 in damages. The judge determined that the evidence suggested there is no merit to the claim, and that it was a waste of time. The claimant had not met the burden of proof; the claim failed and was therefore dismissed.

The Council have a very good track record with successfully defending disrepair claims, however we find often our tenants are encouraged to pursue a claim which has no merit, compensation being promised and that all repairs will be actioned immediately. This is not the case, and it may result in our tenants becoming liable for costs that have not been conveyed by their appointed 'No Win, No Fee' solicitor.

In addition to court costs, there are other financial risks for tenants. Once the claim has been initiated and the solicitor's documentation has been signed, the solicitor may not let the tenant change their mind and stop the claim. They often advise tenants that if they stop the claim, they will be liable for the cost of the survey arranged, often up to £1,000, and credit

	<p>agreement charges of over £500 for “No win, No fee” to cover legal cost insurance.</p> <p>The Council have had many “No win, No fee” legal companies attempt to access our tenants homes, advising our tenants that they have been sent by the Council to inspect their homes for repairs and to organise the works.</p> <p>Once they have gained access, they have advised the tenant to commence with a claim against the Council.</p> <p>We have contacted Trading Standards and our appointed Legal teams over a recent case where a company accessed tenant’s homes without proper consent. The company has been written to in response.</p> <p>Disrepair claims can take up to two years to resolve and cause further inconvenience to tenants, as the solicitor ‘acting’ on their behalf may advise them not to allow the Council into their homes and to carry out any repairs while the claim is ongoing. By following their advice to not allow the Council access to complete repairs, tenants are in breach of their tenancy agreement/ conditions, and this can result in claims being invalid and the tenant being responsible for all associated costs.</p> <p>Disrepair claims companies use a legal scheme that was introduced to protect tenants from landlords who do not compete repairs to their home in a timely manner.</p> <p>They encourage tenants to take legal action based on the promise of winning easy compensation.</p> <p>The Council works hard to keep our homes in a good state of repair. In 2021/2022 the Council completed over 30,000 housing repairs not including any planned investment, works to empty properties or regular maintenance works.</p> <p>The Council also invested over £25m into its housing stock as part of its Capital Investment Programme, relating to WHQS associated works.</p>
1.03	<p>Disrepair Statistical data</p> <p>During 2022-23:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 55 disrepair claims were received by the Council • 23 of the claims were withdrawn - as a result of Council advice / potential invalid claim • 6 claims are currently dormant - no action • 10 claims were settled <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ £765 average compensation to claimant ○ £1600 for claimant’s legal fees • 11 claims are currently being defended successfully • 5 claims are at pre-issue stage
1.04	<p>The Housing Assets service teams have weekly meetings relating to active disrepair claims and hold monthly management meetings to report on</p>

	<p>progress and discuss any trends or concerns that may have been identified.</p> <p>Each claim is tracked from receipt to conclusion. The teams discuss the number of claims received, the contents of the claim and work category. The various teams review not only the claim, but also the area of the county it relates to, the claimant’s solicitors and their methods of accessing our tenant’s homes. We work proactively to engage quickly and to support our tenants where feasible, along with identifying any works required to their home. It is important to track progress but to also review each case independently to ensure we capture any learning in and areas for improvement.</p> <p>Ongoing improvement to our processes and procedures is critical, targeting those areas identified including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holding cross departmental awareness meetings • Advising where likely claims will be submitted based upon area or stock type (i.e., sheltered properties) • Ensuring our stock condition surveys are robust and up to date • Holding training seminars for our Customer Contact Teams and Housing Officers • Proactively communicating with our tenants (see Appendix 1 - News Letter) • Producing condensation and mould briefing papers for our members • Producing a condensation and mould guide for our tenants.
1.05	<p>Conclusion</p> <p>It is important we encourage our tenants to work with the Council. The majority of our resources (staff time and staff costs) committed to defending all disrepair claims are in-house, with only the appointed solicitors external to the Council.</p> <p>These in-house resources could be better utilised to undertake more housing inspections and more housing repairs.</p> <p>The Council work to limited budgets and resources, and each claim submitted takes a considerable amount of officer time to correctly manage and progress accordingly.</p> <p>The Council have a high success rate when dealing with disrepair claims, however as stated, it could utilise all associated resources and costs more effectively.</p> <p>To claim disrepair against the Council, our tenant must report the defect directly to the Council, have evidence that we have failed to deal with the work and have not resolved it in a reasonable timescale.</p> <p>If any tenants have any concerns with the condition of their property, the most effective way of resolving the issue is to call the Council’s Customer Services Department on 01352 701660 and report the repair to us immediately.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Staff - There are concerns about staff retention within the Housing Assets Service. The construction industry is an ever-changing sector, staff may seek opportunities elsewhere i.e., new build, private sector etc.</p> <p>The Housing Assets Service has made changes to the team's structure to incorporate a degree of resilience, succession planning and robustness to the delivery model and departments risk register.</p> <p>This is critical when dealing with disrepair claims in house.</p>
2.02	<p>Budgets - It is important to provide regular updates with regards to all costs incurred by the Council as a result of all received disrepair claims.</p> <p>All costs associated with these claims, such as legal fees and staff costs, must be correctly reported to ensure future budget allowances are available to successfully defend all claims received.</p> <p>Further works have been undertaken with colleagues in Finance and we have begun forecasting our budget requirements for the next financial year.</p>

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	<p>The Council has commenced with a full review of the end-to-end process relating to disrepair and have involved all key stakeholders from within the portfolio. We have also liaised with other Councils and RSL's.</p> <p>The Housing Asset service are in the process of procuring a framework of contractors and suppliers to mitigate risks relating to any delays in completing repairs in a timely manner, 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	The Council undertakes various consultations through the release of Housing Newsletters and updates to our Tenants Federation.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 - Housing Disrepair Leaflet to tenants.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	N/A.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Sean O'Donnell, Service Manager - Housing Assets Telephone: 01352 701642 E-mail: Sean.O'Donnell@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Housing Disrepair (HDR): Housing Disrepair is when a property deteriorates or requires repairs so that it is safe and suitable to live in.</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>Financial Year: the period of 12 months commencing on 1 April</p> <p>Budget: a statement expressing the Council's policies and service levels in financial terms for a particular financial year. In its broadest sense it includes both the revenue budget and capital programme and any authorised amendments to them.</p> <p>HRA: The Housing Revenue Account.</p> <p>Open Housing System: An electronic database system which is used by the Housing Assets Team where its assets are recorded along with tenant details, components, works tickets and tenant requests for works or inspections and other services.</p> <p>Components: A part or element such as an asset's amenities (Kitchen Bathroom, Boiler, Roof, Windows, Doors etc.).</p>

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Housing Disrepair

You may be aware of stories in the press recently, about No Win/No Fee companies targeting social housing tenants, encouraging them to claim compensation for disrepair against their Landlord.

In a number of cases, significant costs have been accumulated by these No Win/No Fee companies and; despite the promise of No Win/No Fee, the tenant has been left liable for the costs if they close their case or decide not to pursue their claim because they do not want to go to court.

This could put you in a really difficult position and may lead to hidden additional costs. If your claim fails, the Council can seek to recover any associated legal costs from you, the tenant, and not your appointed Solicitor.

To claim Disrepair, you must have reported the defect to us before and have evidence that we have failed to deal with the work and to have resolved it in a reasonable timescale. If you have any concerns with the condition of your property, the fastest and most risk free thing to do is to call the Council's Customer Services Department on 01352 701660 and report the repair to us immediately.

We will then ensure your repairs are carried out as quickly as possible.

If you have already reported a repair or have requested an Inspection and have not been satisfied with the level of service the Council has provided, as a tenant you are entitled to raise an enquiry or complaint and it will be investigated further by our Customer Complaints Department.

Please contact Flintshire County Council to report any repairs or maintenance concerns first!

If you have already signed up with a No win/No fee claim company and are worried or concerned about it, we suggest that you contact Citizens Advice (CAB) on 0344 477 2020 or Shelter Cymru on 08000 495495



Diffyg Atgyweirio

Efallai eich bod chi wedi gweld straeon yn y wasg yn ddiweddar am gwmnïau Dim Buddugoliaeth / Dim Ffi yn targedu tenantiaid tai cymdeithasol i'w hannog nhw i hawlio iawndal gan eu landlord am ddiffyg atgyweirio.

Mewn sawl achos mae'r cwmnïau Dim Buddugoliaeth / Dim Ffi yma wedi dod i gostau sylweddol, ac er eu bod nhw'n addo Dim Buddugoliaeth / Dim Ffi mae rhai tenantiaid wedi bod atebol am y costau hyn gan eu bod wedi penderfynu cau'r achos neu beidio â bwrw ymlaen â'r hawliad oherwydd y posibilrwydd o orfod mynd i'r llys.

Fe all hyn eich rhoi chi mewn sefyllfa anodd dros ben ac fe all arwain at gostau ychwanegol cudd. Os ydi'ch hawliad yn aflwyddiannus gall y Cyngor geisio adennill y costau cyfreithiol cysylltiedig gennych chi, fel tenant, ac nid eich cyfreithiwr.

I hawlio iawndal Diffyg Atgyweirio mae'n rhaid eich bod chi wedi rhoi gwybod i ni am y gwaith atgyweirio ac mae'n rhaid i chi feddu ar dystiolaeth sy'n dangos ein bod ni wedi methu delio â'r gwaith a datrys y broblem o fewn graddfa amser resymol. Os oes gennych chi unrhyw bryder ynghylch cyflwr eich eiddo, y peth gorau a'r mwyaf diogel i chi ei wneud ydi ffonio Adran Gwasanaethau Cwsmeriaid y Cyngor ar 01352 701660 a rhoi gwybod i ni am y broblem ar unwaith.

Byddwn wedyn yn sicrhau bod y gwaith atgyweirio yn cael ei wneud cyn gynted â phosibl.

Os ydych chi eisoes wedi rhoi gwybod i ni am waith atgyweirio sydd ei angen neu wedi gofyn am archwiliad a heb dderbyn gwasanaeth boddhaol gan y Cyngor, fel tenant mae gennych chi hawl cyflwyno ymholiad neu g yn a fydd yn cael sylw pellach gan ein Hadran Gwasanaethau Cwsmeriaid.

Cyn gwneud unrhyw beth arall, cysylltwch â Chyngor Sir y Fflint i roi gwybod am unrhyw bryder atgyweirio neu gynnal a chadw sydd gennych chi!!

Os ydych chi eisoes wedi cofrestru gyda chwmni Dim Buddugoliaeth / Dim Ffi ac yn poeni amdano, rydym ni'n awgrymu eich bod chi'n cysylltu â Chyngor ar Bopeth ar 0344 477 2020 neu Shelter Cymru ar 08000 495495.





COMMUNITY & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 19 th April, 2023
Report Subject	Council Plan 2023-28
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Housing & Regeneration
Report Author	Chief Officer (Housing & Communities)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council Plan for 2023-28 has been reviewed and refreshed to reflect the key priorities of the Council for the five-year term of the new administration.

The 'super-structure' of the Plan comprises of seven priorities and relevant sub-priorities. The seven priorities take a long-term view of recovery, projects and ambitions over the next five years.

The Council Plan 2023-28 will be published in a similar format to previous years, identifying actions aimed at achieving the Well-being objectives, priorities and sub-priorities. National and regional issues/risks which could impact on the achievement of these priorities will be identified and monitored.

Part 2 of the Council Plan will be considered by the respective Overview and Scrutiny committees to ensure full coverage of Part 1 of the Council Plan 2023-28 and its respective measures and their targets.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1. | To support the Council Plan 2023-28 Part 1 and Part 2 documents that outline the actions, measures and risks that underpin the Priorities, Sub-Priorities and Well-being objectives of the Council Plan 2023-28. |
|----|--|

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	COUNCIL PLAN 2023-28
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>A full review has been undertaken to ensure the appropriateness and relevance of the well-being objectives, priorities, and sub-priorities going forward. This includes a review of the current Council Plan 2022-23 to determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • priority actions that continue from 2023 onwards for sustained attention • priority actions which could be removed as they have been completed or become operational (business as usual); and • emerging new priority areas, actions and measures for 2023-28
1.03	<p>The high-level structure of the Council Plan 2023-28 was agreed in October 2022, and consists of seven priorities, well-being objectives, and a number of sub-priorities. The priorities relevant to the Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee are detailed below:</p> <p>Priority: Poverty Well-being Objective: Protecting our communities and people from poverty by supporting them to meet their basic needs and to be resilient Sub-priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Income Poverty - Food Poverty <p>Priority: Affordable and Accessible Housing Well-being Objective: Housing in Flintshire meeting the needs of our residents and supporting safer communities Sub-priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing Support and Homeless Prevention - Housing Needs and Housing Options - Social Housing - Private Rented Sector
1.04	A lot of work has taken place within each of the portfolios to identify the actions, measures and risks that sit beneath each of the sub priorities and underpin the Council Plan. A lot of work has taken place within each of the portfolios to identify the actions, measures and risks that sit beneath each of the sub priorities and underpin the Council Plan. The actions, measures and risks for the sub-priorities relevant to the Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee are detailed within the Council Plan Part 2 document attached at Appendix 2.
1.05	Following adoption by County Council, the Council Plan 2023-28 will be available as a web-based document published on the Flintshire County Council website.

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	To date, all Members have had the opportunity to consider and review the draft Well-being objectives, priorities and sub-priorities before these were agreed in October 2022.
3.02	All Members will have the opportunity to review the Council Plan Part 2 document and scrutinise any actions, measures and/or targets set for 2023-28.

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 2023-28 continues to be aligned to the Sustainable Development Principles across all of their working. A high-level Integrated Impact Assessment will be undertaken on the Council Plan 2023-28. This will be supported with an overview of the Integrated Impact Assessments that will be carried out to support the actions identified within the Council Plan 2023-28.</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> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Prosperous Wales</td> <td rowspan="7">The Council Plan 2023-28 continues to provide evidence of alignment with the Well-being Goals. Specific strategic and policy reports include impact and risk assessments.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Resilient Wales</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Healthier Wales</td> </tr> <tr> <td>More equal Wales</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cohesive Wales</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vibrant Wales</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Globally responsible Wales</td> </tr> </table> <p>Council's Well-being Objectives The Council's Well-being objectives have been reviewed as part of this exercise. The refreshed set Well-being objectives is found within this report in section 1.03.</p>	Long-term	The Council Plan 2023-28 continues to be aligned to the Sustainable Development Principles across all of their working. A high-level Integrated Impact Assessment will be undertaken on the Council Plan 2023-28. This will be supported with an overview of the Integrated Impact Assessments that will be carried out to support the actions identified within the Council Plan 2023-28.	Prevention	Integration	Collaboration	Involvement	Prosperous Wales	The Council Plan 2023-28 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
Long-term	The Council Plan 2023-28 continues to be aligned to the Sustainable Development Principles across all of their working. A high-level Integrated Impact Assessment will be undertaken on the Council Plan 2023-28. This will be supported with an overview of the Integrated Impact Assessments that will be carried out to support the actions identified within the Council Plan 2023-28.														
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Integration															
Collaboration															
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Healthier Wales															
More equal Wales															
Cohesive Wales															
Vibrant Wales															
Globally responsible Wales															

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	<p>Appendix 1 - Council Plan 2023-28 Part 1: An overview of the Well-being Objectives, Priorities, Sub priorities and their definitions</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Council Plan 2023-28 Part 2: How achievements will be measured - Supporting Actions, Measures and Risks</p>

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Sam Perry, Performance and Risk Management Support Officer</p> <p>Telephone: 01352 701476</p> <p>E-mail: Sam.perry@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.
8.03	Council Plan Part 2: The document which underpins the Council Plan, which captures the Actions, Measures, and Risks set out within each priority.

Council Plan 2023/28 – Part 1

Priority Name	Poverty
Description/ Well-being Objective	Protecting our communities and people from poverty by supporting them to meet their basic needs and to be resilient
<p>Income Poverty</p> <p>Definition: People on low income who are unable to meet day to day living costs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing free access to swimming lessons (subject to WG funding), children's outdoor play areas, resources, and information via library services – by March 2024 • Providing free activities and sports sessions during all school holidays within communities across Flintshire (subject to external grant funding) – by March 2024 • Further develop our community hub approach giving access to a range of programmes, services, and agencies together in one place – by March 2024 • Explore development of support schemes to mitigate in work poverty – by March 2024 • Delivering Welsh Government support schemes linked to the cost-of-living crisis – by March 2024 • Maximising the number of people signposted for support to facilitate longer term change – by March 2024 • Ensuring that take-up to benefit entitlement is maximised in a timely way by processing claims efficiently – by March 2028 • Maximising the take up of the Discretionary Housing Payments scheme and other financial support – by March 2028
<p>Food Poverty</p> <p>Definition: People who are not able to access food that meets their daily nutritional needs and requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to develop delivery of a “Hospital to Home” meals service – by March 2024 • Further develop of the warm spaces initiative in partnership with organisations and third sector – by March 2024 • Providing free access to Fit, Fed and Read sessions during summer holidays providing activities, sport, reading, crafts, and meals (subject to external grant funding) – by March 2024 • Continue to roll out a transported and delivered food service “Mobile Meals” to those who are vulnerable – by March 2026 • Introduce and develop a “Well Fed at Home Service” – by March 2026

Priority Name	Affordable and Accessible Housing
Description/ Well-being Objective	Housing in Flintshire meeting the needs of our residents and supporting safer communities
Housing Support and Homeless Prevention Definition: Offering support to people to retain their housing and live well and ensuring homelessness is rare, brief, and unrepeated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify site for a young person’s homeless hub offering accommodation and support services – by June 2023 • Ensuring a multi-agency partnership approach to homeless prevention and develop a culture where homelessness is “everyone’s business” – by March 2024 • Ensuring when homelessness does occur it is rare, brief, and non-recurring – by March 2024 • Progress build project for the new homeless hub accommodation – by December 2024 • Delivering our Rapid Rehousing transition plan – by March 2025 • Promoting housing support and homeless prevention services with our residents and partners – by March 2028 • Commissioning a wide range of housing related support that meets the needs of the people of Flintshire – by March 2028
Housing Needs and Housing Options Definition: Helping people to explore their housing options so they can access the right homes to meet their needs Linked to Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Single point of access service for Housing help and advice – by March 2024 • Developing self-service approaches that enable people to identify their own housing options through online support – by March 2024
Social Housing Definition: Working with housing partners to develop and invest in affordable housing and social housing - with modern methods of construction, improving the quality of Council homes, and a commitment towards carbon neutral Linked to Poverty Linked to Green and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise the plan 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 - by September 2023 • Working with residents to ensure our communities are well managed, safe, and sustainable places to live - by March 2024 • In partnership with Denbighshire CC, creating a new Dynamic Procurement System to ensure CPRs are met and provide a wider opportunity for tendering Disabled Adaptation projects – by December 2024 • Supporting our tenants to access technology and create sustainable digital communities - by March 2025 • Increasing the Council’s housing portfolio by building social housing properties and affordable properties for North-East Wales (NEW) Homes – by March 2028 • Working with housing association partners to build new social housing properties and additional affordable properties – by March 2028

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that any new social housing stock meets DQR standard energy efficiency A rating – by March 2028 • Maximising Welsh Government Funding to increase stock capacity – by March 2028 • Ensuring increase in stock capacity meets the identified needs and demands – by March 2028 • Ensuring that the Council’s housing stock maintains the current Welsh Housing Quality Standards – by March 2028 • Implementation of the initial recommendations of the sheltered housing review to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of current and prospective tenants – by March 2028
<p>Private Rented Sector</p> <p>Definition: Supporting the private sector to raise standards in the management and condition of housing and promote tenancy sustainment in our communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a Private Sector Housing Support Team - by March 2024 • Engaging with private sector tenants, giving them a voice, and responding to their needs – by March 2028 • Working in partnership with landlords and private sector agents to better understand their needs – by March 2028

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Council Plan 2023/28

PART 2

How achievements will be measured - Supporting actions, tasks, and measures

Version 5 - 22 February 2023

Performance Achievements 2023/28

Actions, tasks and measures have been set to monitor progress against an activity or plan. Actions are dated according to the target month for achievement. Performance will be monitored by percentage progress against the actions with supporting commentary.

Priority: Poverty

Well-being Objective: Protecting our communities and people from poverty by supporting them to meet their basic needs and to be resilient

What we will do:

Sub-Priority	Definition	Lead Officer (s)
Income Poverty	People on low income who are unable to meet day to day living costs	Chief Officer Housing and Communities AURA

Achievement Actions:

- Providing free access to swimming lessons (subject to WG funding), children's outdoor play areas, resources and information via library services – by March 2024
- Providing free activities and sports sessions during all school holidays within communities across Flintshire (subject to external grant funding) – by March 2024
- Further develop our community hub approach giving access to a range of programmes, services and agencies together in one place – by March 2024
- Explore development of support schemes to mitigate in work poverty – by March 2024
- Delivering Welsh Government support schemes linked to the cost-of-living crisis – by March 2024
- Maximising the number of people signposted for support to facilitate longer term change – by March 2028
- Ensuring that take-up to benefit entitlement is maximised in a timely way by processing claims efficiently – by March 2028
- Maximising the take up of the Discretionary Housing Payments scheme and other financial support – by March 2028

Associated Risks:

- HA04 - Increased financial risk due to business failures and ability to anticipate Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS)
- HA27 - Increasing service demands to respond to HA04

Achievement Measures	Baseline Data (2021/22)	2023/24 Target
Average number of calendar days to process new claims for housing benefit and council tax reduction	17	20
Average number of calendar days to process change in circumstances for housing benefit and council tax reduction	3	8
Total spend of Discretionary Housing Payments (%)	130	100
Number of children enrolled in free swimming lessons	N/A – New Measure	TBC

Number of free to access outdoor play areas available to children across the county	195	195
Number of items loaned (physical and digital)	176,184	245,000

Priority: Poverty

Well-being Objective: Protecting our communities and people from poverty by supporting them to meet their basic needs and to be resilient

What we will do:

Sub-Priority	Definition	Lead Officer (s)
Food Poverty	People who are not able to access food that meets their daily nutritional needs and requirements	Chief Officer Housing and Communities AURA

Achievement Actions:

- Continuing to develop delivery of a “Hospital to Home” meals service – by March 2024
- Further develop of the warm spaces initiative in partnership with organisations and third sector – by March 2024
- Providing free access to Fit, Fed and Read sessions during summer holidays providing activities, sport, reading, crafts and meals (subject to external grant funding) – by March 2024
- Continue to roll out a transported and delivered food service “Mobile Meals” to those who are vulnerable – by March 2026
- Introduce and develop a “Well Fed at Home Service” – by March 2026

Associated Risks:

- Funding discontinues
- Reduced take up from residents

Achievement Measures	Baseline Data (2021/22)	2023/24 Target
Numbers of residents enrolled in the “Mobile Meals” service	N/A – New Measure	40
Number of residents supported by the “Hospital to Home” meals service	N/A – New Measure	150
Number of children attending Fit, Fed and Read sessions during school holidays	N/A	5,000

Priority: Affordable and Accessible Housing

Well-being Objective: Housing in Flintshire meeting the needs of our residents and supporting safer communities

What we will do:

Sub-Priority	Definition	Lead Officer (s)
Housing Support and Homeless Prevention	Offering support to people to retain their housing and live well and ensuring homelessness is rare, brief, and unrepeated	Chief Officer Housing and Communities

Achievement Actions:

- Identify site for a young person's homeless hub offering accommodation and support services – June 2023
- Ensuring a multi-agency partnership approach to homeless prevention and develop a culture where homelessness is “everyone’s business” – by March 2024
- Ensuring when homelessness does occur it is rare, brief, and non-recurring – by March 2024
- Progress build project for the new homeless hub accommodation – by December 2024
- Delivering our Rapid Rehousing transition plan – by March 2025
- Promoting housing support and homeless prevention services with our residents and partners – by March 2028
- Commissioning a wide range of housing related support that meets the needs of the people of Flintshire – by March 2028

Associated Risks:

- RA09 – Homelessness continues to increase significantly, and the council is unable to meet demand through staffing, budgetary and accommodation related challenges

Achievement Measures	Baseline Data (2021/22)	2023/24 Target
Number of presentations to the homeless service	1,372	1,400
Percentage of successful prevention outcomes for homelessness under Housing Wales Act 2014	63	70
Percentage of successful relief outcomes for homelessness under Housing Wales Act 2014	57	45
Number of households accommodated by the Council under Housing Wales act 2014 homeless duties	101	150
Average length of stay (days) for those households in interim homeless accommodation under Housing Wales Act 2014	117	130
Number of referrals received through the Housing Support Gateway	1,328	1,400

Priority: Affordable and Accessible Housing

Well-being Objective: Housing in Flintshire meeting the needs of our residents and supporting safer communities

What we will do:

Sub-Priority	Definition	Lead Officer (s)
Housing Needs and Housing Options	Helping people to explore their housing options so they can access the right homes to meet their needs	Chief Officer Housing and Communities

Achievement Actions:

- Create a Single point of access service for Housing help and advice – by March 2024
- Developing self-service approaches that enable people to identify their own housing options through online support – by March 2024

Associated Risks:

- Demand and need for housing increases, as evidenced by common housing register and levels of homelessness and current housing market unable to meet demand

Achievement Measures	Baseline Data (2021/22)	2023/24 Target
Number of applicants on the Common Housing Register	2,401	2,400
Customer satisfaction data for the Housing Register Service (%)	32	40
Number of applicants rehoused via SARTH by All Housing Partners	619	610
Number of applicants rehoused via SARTH by Flintshire County Council	441	440
Number of households rehoused with significant adaptations requirements	10	10

Priority: Affordable and Accessible Housing

Well-being Objective: Housing in Flintshire meeting the needs of our residents and supporting safer communities

What we will do:

Sub-Priority	Definition	Lead Officer (s)
Social Housing	Working with housing partners to develop and invest in affordable housing and social housing - with modern methods of construction, improving the quality of Council homes, and a commitment towards carbon neutral	Chief Officer Housing and Communities

Achievement Actions:

- Finalise the plan 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 - by September 2023 [Linked to Green and Environment](#), [Linked to Poverty](#)
- Working with residents to ensure our communities are well managed, safe, and sustainable places to live - by March 2024 [Linked to Green and Environment](#)
- 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 – by December 2024
- Supporting our tenants to access technology and create sustainable digital communities - by March 2025 [Linked to Poverty](#)
- Increasing the Council's housing portfolio by building social housing properties and affordable properties for North-East Wales (NEW) Homes – by March 2028
- Working with housing association partners to build new social housing properties and additional affordable properties – by March 2028
- Ensuring that any new social housing stock meets Development Quality Requirements (DQR) standard energy efficiency A rating – by March 2028
- Maximising Welsh Government Funding to increase stock capacity – by March 2028
- Ensuring increase in stock capacity meets the identified needs and demands – by March 2028
- Ensuring that the Council's housing stock maintains the current Welsh Housing Quality Standards – by March 2028
- Implementation of the initial recommendations of the sheltered housing review to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of current and prospective tenants – by March 2028

Associated Risks:

- Delays in pre-construction process due to planning and sustainable drainage approval body (SABS) applications
- Delays to the construction phase caused by current economic turbulence related supply chain issues and costs of living
- Unavailability of a wide range of contractors and supplies to deliver the Adaptations

Achievement Measures	Baseline Data (2021/22)	2023/24 Target
Number of Council Homes under construction	77	85
Number of Council Homes completed	0	22
Number of Affordable Homes under construction via NEW Homes	0	0
Number of Affordable Homes completed via NEW Homes	4	30
Number of Residential social landlords (RSL's) homes under construction	47	96
Number of Residential social landlords (RSL's) homes completed	66	33
100% spend of Welsh Government funding for the PDP	74	100
Increase in stock capacity correlates with demand profile	N/A – New Measure	100
Maintain the Welsh Housing Quality Standard to all Flintshire County Council stock (%)	100	100
Total number of Small Disabled Adaptations completed	531 (Higher than normal due to covid 20/21 – 349)	320
Average number of days to complete a Small Disabled adaptation	N/A - New Measure	28
Total number of Discretionary Medium Disabled Adaptations completed	32	40
Total number of Mandatory or Discretionary Medium Disabled adaptations	78	60
Average number of days to complete a Mandatory Medium Disabled adaptation	89	122
Total number of Mandatory Large Disabled Adaptations completed	11	8
Average number of days to complete a Mandatory Large Disabled adaptation	469	456

Total number of Disabled Adaptations completed	652	428
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Priority: Affordable and Accessible Housing

Well-being Objective: Housing in Flintshire meeting the needs of our residents and supporting safer communities

What we will do:

Sub-Priority	Definition	Lead Officer (s)
Private Rented Sector	Supporting the private sector to raise standards in the management and condition of housing and promote tenancy sustainment in our communities	Chief Officer Housing and Communities

Achievement Actions:

- Creating a Private Sector Housing Support Team - by March 2024
- Engaging with private sector tenants, giving them a voice, and responding to their needs – by March 2028
- Working in partnership with landlords and private sector agents to better understand their needs – by March 2028

Associated Risks:

- Demand and need for housing increases, as evidenced by common housing register and levels of homelessness and current housing market unable to meet demand

Achievement Measures	Baseline Data (2021/22)	2023/24 Target
Landlords engaged through Flintshire Landlord Forum	40	40

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