

# Flintshire Local Housing Strategy 2012 – 2017

## *A Quality Home for Everyone*

### Council

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

## Foreword

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Councillor Helen Brown  
Cabinet Member for Housing

## Introduction

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

### **Delivering the Strategy**

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

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



## Objective 1 - More Housing More Choice

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

---

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

## Objective 2 - Improving homes and communities

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Flintshire Facts and Figures

### Flintshire the Place

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

### Flintshire's People

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

---

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

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

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



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

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

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

### **Flintshire Rural Housing Enabler**

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

132. Other key findings were:

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

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

---

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

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

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

### **Gypsy and Traveller Community**

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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