

Appendix 1 to the Minutes of Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting 22/01/13

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

Housing Revenue Account - Initial Budget Proposals for Revenue and Capital 2013/14

No.	Comments and Questions:	Responses:
1.0	<p><u>Housing Revenue Account (Revenue) - Comments / Issues</u></p>	
	<p><u>General Comments/Issues</u></p>	
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the Rent arrears team working properly, as the position is likely to get worse with the impact of Welfare reform ? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, the team is working properly. There have been improvements in the level of rent arrears compared with the same point in 2011/12, but we can't be complacent and are looking for new ways of supporting our tenants.
1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why have the increases in charges for communal heating been deferred ? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is to ensure that the charges are based on the actual position at the end of the quarter as opposed to estimated costs. The increase is likely to be implemented in July.
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the impact of Flintshire having to pay a proportion of rent income to the Treasury ? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The annual impact for 2013/14 is estimated at £6.1m. At a political level, Members are urged to lobby for this requirement to cease.
1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern was expressed at the proposed increases in garage rents. Will this result in garages being handed back with a resultant loss of income to the HRA ? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some of the Council's garage sites are considered to be unfit for purpose. Garage rent levels have been much lower than our neighbouring authorities and the proposed increase will bring Flintshire into line with them. The proposal will generate an additional £0.100m of revenue.

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1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A suggestion was made that the age limit for provision of an assisted garden maintenance service be increased to age 70 and over. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is currently under consideration as part of garden services for the elderly.
2.0	<p><u>Housing Revenue Account (Capital) - Comments / Issues</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work is currently underway to look into this, and it is hoped to bring more information to Members in due course. The current economic climate has resulted in tenders coming in lower than anticipated which will enable capital allocations to go further in terms of work to be delivered.
2.1	<p><u>General Comments/Issues</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the need for more houses, can we now start building more housing stock ? 	
2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How has it been possible to achieve such an increase in the provision of heating and kitchen improvements etc.? 	