

**TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

Your Ref /  
Eich Cyf

Our Ref / Ein Cyf <sup>CO</sup>

Date / Dyddiad 10/12/2009

Ask for / Gofynner am Mike Thomas

Direct Dial / Rhif Union 01352 702324

Fax / Ffacs

Dear Sir / Madam,

A **SPECIAL MEETING OF THE FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, MOLD** on **WEDNESDAY, 16 DECEMBER 2009** at **14:00** to consider the following items.

Yours faithfully



Assistant Director (Democratic Services)

**AGENDA**

1. **PRAYERS**

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

4. **MINUTES**

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 24th November, 2009 (copy enclosed).

5. **NOTICE OF MOTION**

The following Notice of Motion has been received from Councillor Q.R.H. Dodd:-

"This Council calls on the Executive to scrap the protocol concerning the

---

County Hall, Mold. CH7 6NA  
Tel. 01352 702400 DX 708591 Mold 4  
[www.flintshire.gov.uk](http://www.flintshire.gov.uk)  
Neuadd y Sir, Yr Wyddgrug. CH7 6NR  
Ffôn 01352 702400 DX 708591 Mold 4  
[www.siryfflint.gov.uk](http://www.siryfflint.gov.uk)

answering of letters and emails and telephone calls to prevent the staff having the satisfaction of not complying with it."

6. **ANNUAL LETTER FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL 2008/09**  
Report of Chief Executive  
Members are asked to bring with them the Annual Letter which was circulated with the papers for the Audit Committee
7. **SHELTERED HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**  
Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services enclosed
8. **EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN - BYELAWS**  
At its meeting on 8 December 2009, the Executive considered the report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, the purpose of which was to recommend to the County Council the making of new byelaws in respect of the employment of children in Flintshire. The Executive agreed to this recommendation and Members are asked to bring with them the report circulated with the Executive agenda
9. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES REVIEW OF ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS - PROGRESS REPORT**  
Report of Chief Executive enclosed

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**TUESDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2009**

Minutes of the meeting of Flintshire County Council held in County Hall, Mold on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

**PRESENT: Councillor C. Legg (Chairman)**  
**Councillor W.O. Thomas (Vice-Chairman)**

Councillors: L.A. Aldridge, Eng. K. Armstrong-Braun, J.B. Attridge, S.R. Baker, D. Barratt, G.H. Bateman, R.C. Bithell, C.S. Carver, J. C. Cattermoul, E.G. Cooke, D.L. Cox, P.J. Curtis, R. Davies, A.J. Davies-Cooke, Q.R.H. Dodd, R. Dolphin, B. Dunn, C.A. Ellis, E.F. Evans, J.E. Falshaw, V. Gay, F. Gillmore, A.M. Halford, R.G. Hampson, G. Hardcastle, P.G. Heesom, C. Hinds, H.T. Howorth, R. Hughes, H.D. Hutchinson, G. James, C.M. Jones, N.M. Jones, R.B. Jones, S. Jones, R.P. Macfarlane, D.I. Mackie, D.L. Mackie, D. McFarlane, H.J. McGuill, A. Minshull, W. Mullin, T. Newhouse, E.W. Owen, M.J. Peers, P.R. Pemberton, N. Phillips, M.A. Reece, H.G. Roberts, I.B. Roberts, A.P. Shotton, N.R. Steele-Mortimer, C.A. Thomas, A. Woolley, and H. Yale.

**APOLOGIES:**

Councillors: C.J. Dolphin, R.J.T. Guest, N. Humphreys, H.T. Isherwood, R. Johnson, N.M. Matthews, L.A. Sharps, D.T. Williams, D.E. Wisinger and M.G. Wright.

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive, Director of Lifelong Learning, Director of Environment, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Head of Finance, Head of ICT and Customer Services, Head of Overview and Scrutiny, Democratic Services Manager and Principal Committee Services Officer..

**93. PRAYERS**

The meeting was opened by Prayers said by Councillor N. Phillips.

**94. FORMER COUNCILLORS G.B. ROBERTS AND D. SCHWARTZ**

The Chairman asked Members to stand in silent tribute in memory of former Councillors G.B. Roberts and D. Schwartz.

**95. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that there were no public questions.

96. **MINUTES**

(a) **30<sup>th</sup> September 2009 – Accuracy**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009, be confirmed as a correct record.

(i) **Matters Arising**

Councillor P.G. Heesom referred to page 5 of the Minutes and a reference to an issue raised at the 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2009 meeting in relation to the subsidy issue and advised that two major reviews were underway.

(b) **27<sup>th</sup> October 2009 – Accuracy**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2007, be confirmed as a correct record.

(i) **Matters Arising**

(i) **Minute No. 83**

Councillor A. Woolley, as Leader of the Council, referred to Minute No. 83 of the Minutes (page 17) in relation to the Boundary Commission and specifically to a document he had received from the Welsh Local Government Association. The Leader expressed his concern as there appeared to be a view against localism.

The Chief Executive brought Members up to date on the issue of the anticipated report from the Boundary Commission. He had been advised that it was due any time but that he had not received confirmation at issue. He clarified and expanded upon the comments of the Leader and the significance of proposed boundary changes in other parts of Wales thus far.

Councillor P.G. Heesom welcomed the comments and he understood that the Minister was very sensitive to the outcome of the discussions on proposed boundary changes.

The Chief Executive indicated that he would advise Group Leaders as soon as he received confirmation over the issue of the draft proposals for Flintshire.

(ii) **Minute No. 84**

Councillor C.S. Carver referred to Minute No. 84 and the reference to Hawarden Registration Office and the subsequent point he made whereby it was a necessity to register the death in the area in which a death occurred and it was confirmed that this was correct. Members agreed that this be recorded.

(c) **3<sup>rd</sup> November 2009**

Accuracy

Councillor A.P. Shotton referred to Minute No. 90 (page 26) and felt that the reference he made to Pay Model 33 could possibly be more expansive and this was accepted by the Members.

The Monitoring Officer suggested the sentence in the fourth paragraph of the preamble of the Minutes be amended after the words “Model 33” and that the following replace the remaining words in that sentence:

*“because it was the fundamental cause of the problem”.*

**RESOLVED:**

That subject to the aforementioned amendment, the Minutes of the meeting be confirmed as a correct record.

**97. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Monitoring Officer advised that in relation to the item on “Clwyd Pension Fund Update”, that Members who were contributors to the scheme would only have to declare a personal interest and not a prejudicial interest and would be allowed to remain in the meeting and vote because only general principles would be discussed.

In this respect, the following Members Declared as such:

Councillors: J.B. Attridge, R.C. Bithell, C. Hinds, S. Jones, A. Minshall: A. Shotton, I. Roberts and D. Barratt

In respect of the item on “Single Status – Appointment of Steering Group and Action Plan”, the Monitoring Officer referred to the dispensations issued by the Standards Committee to enable Members to speak and vote on general issues relating to this item.

In his opinion, the matter under consideration today came within this category and therefore Members who had been granted a dispensation would be entitled to speak and vote. He advised that at this stage, their interests were personal and not prejudicial and they should indicate this.

The following Members declared as such:

Councillors: J.B. Attridge, L.A. Aldridge, D. Barratt,  
P. Macfarlane, N. Phillips, A.P. Shotton, C. Thomas, R. Dolphin and  
H. Yale

With regard to the item on the Agenda in relation to “The Gambling Act 2005 – 3 Year Licensing Policy 2010-2013”, Councillor N.R. Steele-Mortimer indicated that as he was a Licensee he would declare an interest and leave the meeting whilst this item was being discussed.

**98. NOTICES OF MOTION**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services indicated that none had been received.

**99. CHAIRMAN’S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Chairman reported that details of his engagements had been left in the Members’ Library for Members’ to peruse.

Councillor K. Armstrong-Braun congratulated the Chairman on the number of events he had attended and that he had represented the Council so well.

The Chairman indicated that, on previous occasions it had been the practice for the Chairman to host a Christmas lunch for Members of the Council at no cost. He advised Members that, in his opinion, in the current climate that it would not be appropriate to do so. At the same time he did not think it was appropriate to cancel the lunch so he had asked Members to make a donation towards the Chairman’s Charities.

It would also be an opportunity for the Council to hear the Youth Choir perform and this was another reason why he did not wish to cancel the event.

**100. PETITIONS**

Councillor R Hughes submitted a Petition on behalf of Residents of Maxwell Drive, Leeswood who had concerns regarding road safety on Maxwell Drive.

**101. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS ON COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that no questions had been received.

**102. QUESTIONS**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that no questions had been received.

### **103. NORTH WALES REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD – LEADERSHIP STATEMENT**

The Council considered the report of the Chief Executive on the North Wales Regional Partnership Board's vision on collaboration. The Chief Executive also made a powerpoint presentation in support of his report.

The Leader introduced the item and referred to meetings he had attended with Leaders and officers of other North Wales Authorities during which collaboration initiatives had been discussed. However, during the course of those discussions, it became apparent that Leaders had not obtained a formal mandate from Members of their respective Councils on this issue. In this respect he felt it was important to report to Members to seek support for that mandate. He felt that there were two key issues:-

- To ensure Members' involvement in any groupings across North Wales
- Introduce a form of scrutiny because, as yet, it had not been put in the public domain.

The Leader indicated that he made these points as a background to the report that would be presented by the Chief Executive.

The Chief Executive reported that at its meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2009, the Executive agreed that the North Wales Regional Partnership Board's (NWRPB) vision on collaboration be presented to this meeting of the Council. A copy of the Executive report had been attached as an Appendix to the report under consideration.

The North Wales Regional Partnership Board, which comprised Leaders and Chief Executives of all the six North Wales Councils, had been established with the assistance of the Welsh Local Government Association to promote collaboration and share expertise on a regional basis. Its primary role was the selection and delivery of programmes and projects that would lead to authorities potentially merging service delivery operations and realising substantial savings and performance improvement from such collaboration.

The purpose of the vision was to demonstrate to the Councils themselves and the Welsh Assembly Government that there was a case for protecting six democratically elected councils from re-organisation via an ambitious pace of collaboration, both regional and sub-regional. The Chief Executive indicated that the Leadership Statement referred to in the report captured that intent.

In opening his presentation, the Chief Executive referred to the aims and the vision which was to unify the region whilst maintaining localism, demonstrating intent and ambition and protect Councils from a further re-organisation. It was also necessary to make the case for agreeing collaboration and contribute to efficiency planning whilst making best use of the various Councils collective capacity.

The Chief Executive referred to the case for collaboration and the issue of change versus re-organisation. He reiterated that there were risks of another re-organisation together with a financial “meltdown”. He stressed that this issue was not about maps and boundaries but about democracy and service delivery. There had to be a radical approach which could result in beneficial change to some service delivery models. He commented upon the necessity “to equalise” performance and make the best use of resources.

As part of the presentation, the Chief Executive explained what would be required. In the first instance, it would be necessary to look at how to cope and adapt and if the Council could collaborate to share resources and improve thereafter. He explained that this could be any combination of regional or sub-regional or local working.

A second way to look at the challenge, would be for the Council to consider other models of service delivery e.g. private sector partnering models with the public or voluntary sector. The Chief Executive went onto explain how this could be achieved whereby challenges and opportunities could be shared on an agreed basis within frameworks set in close co-operation with lead Members and senior professionals, ambitions could be set for each chosen area, and developed through the project management of change. He stressed the need for local involvement and accountability throughout the process and it was important to promote ambition and not to be undermined by self interest or professional resistance.

Following on about how this could be achieved, the Chief Executive referred to potential methods such as:

- Regional consortia
- Formal collaboration models
- Informal collaboration models
- Sharing of expertise
- Shared posts and centres
- Joint investment
- Partnering with the private/public sectors

The Chief Executive also explained that collaboration already existed and continued to grow. There were a number of successful regional and sub-regional collaborative projects across local authority services and he referred to positive current examples:

- North Wales Residual Waste Treatment project
- Managed Agency Staff Solution (MASS)
- Social Services Emergency Duty Team
- Social Services Community Equipment Integration Service
- Schools Library Service
- Emergency Planning



Within the report which was submitted to the Executive, reference was also made to a number of emerging projects, together with previous collaborative projects that continued to operate and achieve efficiencies.

In concluding his presentation, the Chief Executive identified that the next stages for the Council were to commit to principles, to provide a mandate to explore possibilities and to be ambitious and open-minded. The Leader also indicated that this would be a mandate to explore and not commit.

Councillor R.C. Bithell expressed a view that there was a great deal of common sense in collaboration by way of achieving efficiency, value and sharing expertise. However, he had concerns that there was a danger that if this was forced on Councils it would be a move back to larger regional organisation. He reiterated his opposition to larger authorities and referred to the importance of localism. He acknowledged the work that had already been done on a number of schemes and felt that in the long term the Council could be the victim of its own success.

Councillor K Armstrong Braun said there were some benefits to partnership schemes but he was also concerned about the issues of "infighting". He felt it was important to ensure that there was not just one person in charge of any operation. The Chief Executive by way of example referred to proposals for sharing expertise over minerals and waste planning where mutual benefit had been the primary consideration.

Councillor A.P. Shotton welcomed the debate and concurred with the view that there was a need for democratic accountability. He indicated that this issue had been going on for some time and he referred to the Memorandum of Understanding which had been signed by a former Leader of the Council, the late Councillor Derek Darlington. He concurred that there was a case for efficiencies and not just from a financial viewpoint and in this respect Flintshire had, traditionally, very much taken the lead. He referred to Beecham's report and a target date of 2010 when the Welsh Assembly Government was to consider if sufficient collaboration had taken place.

Councillor Shotton referred specifically to the excellent work undertaken on emergency planning. He reiterated the view regarding democratic accountability that it would be necessary to underpin the larger schemes. He felt it was necessary not to cause unnecessary concern when terms such as "commissioning" were used. He also felt it was necessary to clarify "externalisation" and how far it went, and that it was particularly important that democratic underpinning was in place, particularly in relation to external providers. He added that there were quite clearly efficiencies to be made which would provide a better service to residents.

Councillor P Pemberton felt that collaboration could result in more money being available to the Council. He also sought clarification on the role with both the private and public sectors and if the Council would be seeking privatisation of any service.

Councillor S R Baker commented that co-operation and collaboration should only be pursued where the Council saw an advantage. It would be essential if it could be shown that it was an effective way to deliver the service but if not, it should not be pursued.

The Chief Executive acknowledged the points raised by Councillor A P Shotton relative to the importance of commissioning. He explained that the Beecham report encouraged greater collaboration within an initial five year window of opportunity. With regard to the issue raised by Councillor Pemberton, he felt it was necessary for the Council to look at all options because if it did not, and discounted certain issues, they would be restricted in what they could consider.

He also acknowledged the points raised by Councillor S.R. Baker. By way of example, he referred to the development of a CC TV system which could provide an improved and expanded service.

**RESOLVED:**

That the North Wales Regional Partnerships Board's Leadership Statement, be supported.

**104. SINGLE STATUS – APPOINTMENT OF STEERING GROUP AND ACTION PLAN**

The Chief Executive reported that the Steering Group had met on the previous day and he had prepared a one page update of the actions from that meeting. A copy was circulated to all those present. The Chairman indicated that he had allowed the paper to be circulated because the meeting had only been held the previous day.

The paper was headed Single Status Project Board and read as follows:

**“Single Status Project Board**

**Terms of Reference**

- To oversee the governance and management of the Single Status project
- To be fully involved in and oversee action plans and reporting arrangements for solutions against the nine action points agreed by Council
- To liaise with the Trade Unions on their parallel consultation and decision-making processes
- To be fully involved with and oversee the communications plan and risk management log and plan
- To ensure that the wider membership of the Council is informed and made aware/trained of the complexities of Single Status in advance of further and final decision-making. This will include full provision of

information, as required, on the GLPC JE model and its application and pay and grading model 33

### **Membership**

Leader of the Council

Deputy Leader of the Council

Group Leaders (with Deputy Group Leaders entitled to act as deputies in their absence)

Chief Executive

Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

Head of Finance

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Single Status Project Manager

Regional and Local Representatives of GMB, Unison and Unite

*the above is the standing membership to be supported and advised by others on request*

### **Meeting Frequency**

- meetings at regular intervals according to a work plan to be developed
- first meeting held on 23/11/09
- second meeting due to be held on 30/11/09

### **Reporting, Information and Training**

- regular reports to be made to the Executive and to Overview and Scrutiny
- detailed written and workshop briefings to be arranged for elected members
- Group Leaders to be responsible for briefing their respective groups
- Project Board to act as the point of reference for all requests for further information from members on the basis that all information sought will be accessible to all members “

The Chief Executive gave a brief update on the meeting of the previous day and commented upon its usefulness and noted that there had been a full attendance. He indicated that an updated statement would be going out to the workforce the following day.

The Chief Executive reported that since the meeting of the Council on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2009 a huge amount of work had been undertaken on analysing the issues. Time had been spent on determining what the issues were, the challenges and the solutions.

Councillor K Armstrong-Braun sought clarification in relation to the process for the staff appeals and if this had been clarified as yet. The Chief Executive reported that Single Status was in abeyance and that the Single Status proposed agreement date was not now 1<sup>st</sup> October 2009 but would be moved to a later date in 2010. Therefore until the date had been determined, dates for Appeal submissions could not be finalised. At this time employees did not have to do anything.

He expanded upon the role of the Group Leaders and that they would assist answering specific questions raised by Members.

The Chief Executive also indicated that he, or members of staff involved with the Single Status process would be available to speak to individual Members directly on any issues as before. Regular reports would be submitted to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee to allay any concerns.

Councillor N.R. Steele-Mortimer indicated that he had been impressed by the work undertaken to date and the willingness of all those involved to make progress. However, he wished to clarify the Membership of this whereby in the paper circulated it referred to Deputy Group Leaders being entitled to act as Deputies in the absence of the Group Leader. Councillor N.R. Steele-Mortimer understood that it was to be a Deputy from within the Group to sit on the Board and not necessarily the Deputy Group Leader. Members concurred with the view of the Chief Executive that this was acceptable.

Councillor A.P. Shotton also acknowledged the significant achievement concerning the cross-party work already undertaken. He asked for consideration to be given to the terms of reference of the Board as he had concerns about how they were presented in the paper circulated at the meeting. He said he had commented on the terms of reference in response to an e-mail but his comments had not been incorporated. He had been under the impression that his comments would be incorporated and asked that they be included at the next meeting of the Group. He also felt that specific reference needed to be included on the last bullet point to training issues. He felt it was important for work to be channelled to achieve an outcome within an agreed timescale.

Councillor A.P. Shotton also referred to the issue of an all embracing condition relating to confidentiality. He acknowledged that there were issues of confidentiality but was also concerned that it did not restrict the openness and transparency of the work being undertaken which was one of the main aims of the Council's decision taken on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2009. The Chief Executive explained that the note had been prepared following the previous meeting and that the proposals were open to change as the meetings progressed with the benefit of ongoing experience.

Councillor A. Woolley, as Leader of the Council, acknowledged the point raised in relation to confidentiality and concurred with the view that it could not be all embracing on the basis that it was important that Members were kept informed of the progress.

Councillor Q.R.H. Dodd pursued this point and again commented upon the need for openness but indicated that there were issues of confidentiality and indicated that he would not wish to see such issues reported in the press if it had only been discussed within the Board.

Councillor C.S. Carver referred to the issue of staff voting on any proposals and enquired what percentage of employees were members of a union. He expressed a view that all employees should be granted an opportunity to be balloted.

The Chief Executive was not able to provide the figure on percentage members as this was information held by the unions. However, he indicated that the ballot was undertaken in accordance with collective bargaining legislation and the Council had no discretion in the matter.

Councillor S.R. Baker also commented upon the confidentiality issue and that it was the whole object of the Group Leaders being informed for them to brief their members on what was proceeding.

Councillor S. Jones also commented on this issue and felt there was need for openness and transparency and for the unions to be kept informed on these matters.

Councillor A. Halford enquired whether it was appropriate, at this stage, to seek information about the cost to the Council in recommending that the issue of Single Status be re-visited. She also commented that there appeared to be different union officials involved in the Working Group to those who were present at Council meetings.

The Chief Executive referred to the point made regarding the ballot being open only to union members and advised that union membership was open to all members of staff. The Chief Executive further explained that only union members of the recognised unions vote in a ballot and that this was national collective bargaining law. Regarding the point raised by Councillor A. Halford, the Chief Executive explained that the union representation was made up of local and regional representatives but in the main the same people involved in the negotiations.

Councillor P.J. Curtis referred to the difficulty for union officials if the confidentiality clause was to be too stringent as it was necessary for them to report back to their members.

Councillor P. Pemberton referred to the original review and the anomalies therein and enquired how it was anticipated that the issue would be

resolved. The Chief Executive reported upon the considerable amount of work to be undertaken and the negotiations that would be necessary. He explained that a number of the issues raised would be addressed in the proposed workshops. Councillor C. Ellis reported upon the heavy workload of union representatives.

Councillor H.G. Roberts expressed his agreement for the way matters were proceeding and his confidence in the team to undertake this work. He also commented about the right for only union members to vote but also that non-union members receive the benefits negotiated by their unions.

Councillor P.G. Heesom felt that the report should be noted and that work should proceed as indicated. He acknowledged the work already undertaken by the Group Leaders.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted and the procedures contained therein be approved.

**105. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT**

The Council considered the report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, the purpose of which was for the Council to receive the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Function for 2008/09. It was noted that article 6.03(d) of the Council's Constitution provided that "Overview and Scrutiny Committees must report annually to Full Council through the Overview and Scrutiny Co-Ordinating Committee on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amend working methods if appropriate". A draft copy of the Annual Report was considered and approved by the Co-Ordinating Committee at its meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2009 and a copy was attached to the report for this meeting.

The report was presented by Councillor H. McGuill, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-Ordinating Committee. In presenting the report, Councillor McGuill expressed her thanks to all the Members of the Council who had been actively involved in the Overview and Scrutiny function in the proceeding 12 months. Councillor McGuill reported that all involved were there for the benefit of the people of Flintshire. She commented upon a number of specific tasks undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees which had proved most successful and beneficial to the Council. Councillor McGuill also commented upon the positive involvement of Overview and Scrutiny in the decision making process. She also paid tribute to all the officers who had participated in the Overview and Scrutiny function throughout the year and upon the teamwork of all those involved which had proved to be a great success and she commended the report to the Council.

In seconding the proposal, the Leader of the Council, Councillor A. Woolley, advised that everybody appreciated the efforts of those involved in Overview and Scrutiny work and he referred to the initiative of the current ruling group which had taken the decision for many items to go through the Overview

and Scrutiny process before being submitted to the Executive and he felt that this had proved beneficial.

Councillor K. Armstrong-Braun disagreed with the comments and felt that Scrutiny was ineffective and not searching or robust enough. He felt it was necessary for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to be more assertive. In this respect he felt that the powers of the Committee should be extended to operate similarly to a Parliamentary Select Committee. He also expressed concern at the level of involvement of those Members who were not aligned to a political group.

Councillor L.A. Aldridge indicated that it was not his intention to speak on this item but felt he had to respond to the comments made by Councillor K. Armstrong-Braun.

He did not accept his comments in any way and expressed a view on the excellence on the Overview and Scrutiny function. He felt it had worked well and by way of example, paid tribute to Councillor Matt Wright, who was the Chairman of the Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee on which he sat. He indicated that Councillor Wright showed excellent Chairmanship and showed a high degree of equality with no political bias in any of his dealings in that role. Councillor Aldridge referred to the Overview and Scrutiny arrangements which were introduced in line with the Executive system and there was an inherent right for the Overview and Scrutiny function to operate within that system.

Councillor Aldridge also paid tribute to the manner in which Councillor H. McGuill had presented the report to the Council and felt that she should be supported in her comments.

Councillor D. Barratt also took exception to Councillor K. Armstrong-Braun's comments and explained the fact that non-aligned Members had places on Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Councillor C. Thomas also spoke in support of the Overview and Scrutiny function and identified issues which had been successfully addressed. She felt that it gave her a voice in the decision-making process. Councillor D.L. Mackie expressed a similar view in support of the Overview and Scrutiny function.

Councillor B. Dunn advised that he was the Chair of Corporate Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee and found Councillor Armstrong-Braun's comments offensive. He also confirmed that all Members had an opportunity to bring items to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Councillor C. Ellis also expressed her support for the excellent work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny function and referred to the positive comments on how the system operated within Flintshire by Inspectors from the Welsh Assembly Government.

The proposition was put to the meeting and was CARRIED. Councillor H. McGuill noted that the decision was unanimous.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2008/09 municipal year, be received.

**106. APPOINTMENT TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

The Council considered the report of the Monitoring Officer, the purpose of which was to make an appointment to fill an existing vacancy on the Standards Committee. The report detailed the background to its preparation and the circumstances which necessitated filling the vacancy for an Independent Member. The Appointments Panel considered the application on the basis of the published criteria. Following deliberation, the Panel resolved to recommend that the vacancy for an Independent Member be offered to Mr Christopher Bretherton-Watt.

**RESOLVED:**

That Mr Christopher Bretherton-Watt be appointed as Independent Member on the Standards Committee and his term of office be for four years.

**107. CLWYD PENSION FUND UPDATE**

The Council considered the report of the Head of Finance who was Treasurer and Administrator to the Fund. The purpose of the report was to update Members on issues relating to the Clwyd Pension Fund (“the Fund”). The report detailed the background to its preparation and it was noted that the Fund was administered by Flintshire County Council on a “Lead Authority” basis. Flintshire County Council was a member of the Fund along with Wrexham County Borough Council, Denbighshire County Council and a range of other scheduled and admitted bodies. Details of the Pension Fund Panel were detailed in the report and it was noted that Councillor Brian Dunn was the Chairman and that Councillors Ted Evans and Peter Pemberton also represented the Council. It was also noted that the Department of Communities and Local Government required administering authorities to publish an annual report.

The Clwyd Pension Fund Annual Report contained a number of updates and these were detailed in the report. It was noted that copies of the Annual Report were available in the Group Rooms in Member Services and copies were available at the meeting if any Member wished to take a copy with them. It was noted that the Funds Annual Joint Consultative Meeting (AJCM) with employers and employee representatives was held on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2009. Presentations had been received from the Treasurer and Administrator of the Fund, Fund Managers and the Funds Actuary (Mercers). The report detailed the current status of the Fund.



Councillor P.G. Heesom moved acceptance of the report paying tribute to the work undertaken and the efforts of the Council's representatives on the Board.

Councillor B. Dunn, as the Chairman of the Panel, recorded his thanks to the Head of Finance in her capacity as Treasurer and Administration to the Fund and all those involved in the Fund's administration.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

**108. THE GAMBLING ACT 2005 – THREE YEAR LICENSING POLICY 2010-2013**

The Council considered the report of the Director of Environment, the purpose of which was to request that the County Council considers and approves the proposed Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Policy that would cover 2010-2013. The report detailed the background to its preparation and identified the key considerations.

The Licensing Committee, at its meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2009, recommended acceptance of the Policy. In moving the recommendation in his capacity as Chairman of the Licensing Committee, Councillor J.B. Attridge referred to page 78 of the document and advised that the officer referred to in paragraph 1.7 should have read "Director of Community Services" rather than "Director of Lifelong Learning".

**RESOLVED:**

That the Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Policy that would cover the period 2010-2013, be approved, subject to the amendment referred to above.

**109. SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Principal Solicitor be authorised to fix the Common Seal of the County Council between meetings of the County Council.
- (b) that the action of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Principal Solicitor in affixing the Common Seal of the County Council as set out in the Seal Register No. 11027, be noted.

**110. ATTENDANCE BY THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were 2 members of the press and public in attendance.

**111. DURATION OF THE MEETING**

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and ended at 3.45 pm.

.....  
Chairman

**SUMMARY OF DECLARATIONS MADE BY MEMBERS  
IN ACCORDANCE WITH FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S  
CODE OF CONDUCT**

<b>FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL</b>	<b>DATE:</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> November 2009</b>
----------------------------------	--------------	--------------------------------------

<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>MIN. NO. REFERS</b>
Councillors: J.B. Attridge, R.C. Bithell, C. Hinds, S. Jones and A. Minshull	Clwyd Pension Fund	
Councillor N R Steele-Mortimer	The Gambling Act 2003 – 3 year Licensing Policy 2010-2013	
Councillors: J.B. Attridge, L.A. Aldridge, S. Jones, P. Macfarlane, A.P. Shotton, C. Thomas and R. Dolphin.	Single Statement – Appointment of Steering Group and Action Plan	

## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 6

**REPORT TO:** **SPECIAL MEETING OF THE FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**DATE :** **16 DECEMBER 2009**  
**REPORT BY:** **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**  
**SUBJECT :** **ANNUAL LETTER FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL 2008/09**

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To present to the County Council the annual letter of the Appointed Auditor and Relationship Manager, which summarises the work of PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and the Wales Audit Office during 2009.

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

2.01 Under the Code of Audit and Inspection Practice, an annual letter is to be produced summarising the work undertaken by the various regulators. That letter incorporates a summary of the work undertaken by the external auditor (PwC).

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01 The 2008/09 Annual Letter is attached. It is divided into two sections covering the work undertaken by the various regulators during 2009:

- Appointed Auditor's report; refers to finance and performance audit work; and
- Relationship Manager's report; refers to the work of the Wales Audit Office, ESTYN and Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW).

3.02 Both sections of the report are positive overall. The Appointed Auditor concludes that *"The Council has complied with financial and performance improvement reporting requirements"* but recognises that there are significant future challenges.

The Relationship Manager concludes that *"Reviews of corporate arrangements and services indicate that the positive developments identified in the previous Annual Letter are continuing, but would benefit from a clearer identification of, and alignment with, the Council's key ambitions."*

3.03 A proposed formal response to the main issues within the Annual Letter will be prepared by officers and submitted to the Appointed Auditor. This response will be shared with members in the New Year.

---

Date: 10/12/2009

- 3.04 The Annual Letter will also be considered by the Special County Council on 16 December. Representatives from the Wales Audit Office and PricewaterhouseCoopers will be in attendance both at Audit Committee and Special County Council.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.01 That the County Council is requested to note this report.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.01 It is expected that the fees for the 2008-09 work will be as set out in the Regulatory Plan; costing approximately £140,000.

#### **6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

- 6.01 There are no anti poverty implications explicitly stated in this report.

#### **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

- 7.01 There are no environmental implications explicitly stated in this report.

#### **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 8.01 There are no financial implications explicitly stated in this report.

#### **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.01 There are no personnel implications explicitly stated in this report.

#### **10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

- 10.01 Any response from the County Council will be sent to the Wales Audit Office.

#### **11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

- 11.01 The draft report has been considered by Directors and responses made prior to the final report being considered.

#### **12.00 APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Annual Letter for 2008/09 (as circulated with 16 December Audit Committee agenda)

#### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Annual Letter Flintshire County Council 2008/09.

Contact Officer: Chief Executive  
Telephone: 01352 702100  
E-Mail: chief\_executive@flintshire.gov.uk

## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 7

**REPORT TO:** **SPECIAL MEETING OF THE FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**DATE :** **16 DECEMBER 2009**  
**REPORT BY:** **HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**  
**SUBJECT :** **SHELTERED HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.01 To enable the Council to consider a reference to it from the Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee following a call-in meeting which was held on Tuesday 1 December 2009.

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

- 2.01 At the meeting of the Executive which was held on 17 November 2009, a report of the Director of Community Services from the portfolio of the Executive Member for Housing Management and Functions on the Sheltered Housing Improvement Project was approved. A copy of the report to the Executive, together with the relevant Record of Decision entry, are attached as Appendices A and B respectively.
- 2.02 Subsequently, five Members of the County Council signed a Notice of Call-In. Those Members were Councillors A P Shotton, J B Attridge, C M Jones, R P Macfarlane, R C Bithell and Mrs A Minshull. Arrangements were made for the call-in to be heard on Tuesday 1 December.
- 2.03 At the meeting, the lead call-in signatory Councillor A P Shotton referred to a Notice of Motion made to County Council on 27 June 2006 which had resulted in a resolution as follows: "*That the Council commits itself to the principle of retaining that resident warden provision where there was a local or personal proven need and incorporate within the service the various latest technological innovations available.*" Councillor Shotton opined that legal advice should be sought on whether an Executive decision could be overridden or reversed by that decision of the County Council.
- 2.04 The Head of Overview & Scrutiny advised the committee that housing issues were an Executive function and that the Council resolution had been guidance to the Executive and not a binding decision. This advice was subsequently borne out by the Monitoring Officer who, following a short adjournment, had been requested to attend the meeting.
- 2.05 At a call-in meeting, one of four options must be identified by the committee in response to the call-in. These are:

- (i) to indicate that the committee is satisfied with the explanations of the decision-makers and that the decision can be implemented;
- (ii) that the committee accepts but does not endorse the explanations given by the decision-makers and that the decision can be implemented;
- (iii) that the decision be referred back to the Executive;
- (iv) that the decision be referred to Council.

2.06 It was explained that in this case, as the decision was an Executive rather than a Council decision, it would not be appropriate to refer the decision to Council because the decision is one on an Executive function.

2.07 The committee duly resolved to refer the decision to Council.

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01 Having regard to the Executive procedure rule 16(g), the Council is advised of its need to consider the decision which has been made by the Executive. If the Council does not object to the decision, then no further action will be necessary and the decision will be effective immediately.

3.02 However, if the Council does object to the decision which is made, the decision to which it objects must be referred back to the decision-making body (the Executive), together with the Council's views on the decision. The Executive must then choose whether to amend the decision or not before reaching a final decision and implementing it. There is a requirement for the Executive to hold a meeting to reconsider the decision within ten working days of the Council's request. Given that the next meeting of the Executive on 5 January 2010 is within ten working days, there is no requirement to hold a special meeting.

### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.01 That the County Council consider the reference to it from the Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee and decides whether or not the issue should be referred back to the Executive.

### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 None arising directly from this report.

### **6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 None arising directly from this report.

### **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 None arising directly from this report.



**8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 None arising directly from this report.

**9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 None arising directly from this report.

**10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 Not applicable.

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 Publication of this report constitutes consultation.

**12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 Appendix A - Report to Executive on 17 November 2009  
Appendix B - Record of Decision

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**  
**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Agenda and reports to the Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 1 December 2009 together with the subsequent minute and the relevant sections of the Council's Constitution

Contact Officer: Robert Robins  
Telephone: 01352 702320  
E-Mail: robert\_robins@flintshire.gov.uk

**REPORT TO:**      **EXECUTIVE**  
**DATE :**            **17 NOVEMBER 2009**  
**REPORT BY:**    **DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**  
**SUBJECT :**        **SHELTERED HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

**1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.01 To update Executive on the work of the Members and Officer Working Group aimed at improving the sheltered housing and warden services.
- 1.02 To seek approval of the Executive for a series of improvement actions recommended by the group.

**2.00 BACKGROUND**

- 2.01 The Member and Officer Working Group was established in May 2009 as a response to the findings of the Sheltered Housing Visioning Day held in November 2008 . The Working Group was tasked to develop and deliver a series of Sheltered Housing Improvement Seminars across the County and then to put forward recommendations for the key service improvements that were agreed at the seminars to be implemented within the Sheltered Housing Service.
- 2.02 Ten Sheltered Housing Improvement Seminars were held during July and August 2009. The Member and Officer Working Group has produced a report on the outcomes from the improvement seminars and this is attached at appendix 1.

**3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.01 The Member and Officer Working Group recommend to the Council's Executive that the following improvement actions be progressed.
  - 3.01.1 **That the Sheltered Housing Warden's role is developed and improved with the principal duties and responsibilities within the role promoting the values of an enabling support service.**

The Working Group propose that a draft of the revised warden's role be presented and discussed at a Sheltered Housing Tenants Conference, which is expected to be held in early 2010, and then, subject to the outcomes of a wider consultation process, the revised role be introduced in the summer of 2010.

**3.01.2 That the practice of contracting resident wardens as service tenants is ended.**

Whilst the Working Group appreciates the formal consultations and contractual variations that will be necessary to achieve this aim, the Group believe, it is reasonable for all the necessary processes to be completed in the early summer of 2010, so the introduction of the revised employment contracts will coincide with the introduction of the revised job descriptions.

**3.01.3 That arrangements are put in place to develop and manage an on-going improvement programme to expand the warden support service.**

The Working Group recommends that the draft service expansion plan is produced by April 2010, and is then subjected to a robust consultation process.

**3.01.4 That the Neighbourhood Housing Managers are tasked to make appropriate recommendations in consultation with Local Members and other interested parties on the future use of any units of sheltered housing within their localities that are deemed to be unsuitable as accommodation for older people.**

The Working Group acknowledges that this will be a long-term process with the recommendations linking in to future capital work programmes.

3.02 The Member Officer Working Group has accepted a revised and extended Terms of Reference which would enable the group to oversee the improvement programme referred to in 3.01.3 above.

3.03 On the 7th October 2009 the Community and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee examined the Sheltered Housing Improvement Seminar Summary report. A majority of the Committee Members agreed, following a lengthy and thorough discussion, to note the content of the report and to support the proposal from the Working Group for a service improvement programme to be commenced within the Sheltered Housing Warden Service.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.01 That Executive approves the recommendations set out in 3.01.1 - 3.01.4 above.

4.02 That Executive supports the continuation of the Member Officer Working Group to oversee the Sheltered Housing Improvement Project.

4.03 That Executive receives a further report on the service expansion plan referred to in 3.01.3 in due course.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 Development of the role of the Warden will enable their support role to be more cost effective within existing resources.

**6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 None directly associated with this report.

**7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 Improvements to sheltered schemes will have a positive impact on local environments over time.

**8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 An expanded Warden service will enable support services to be provided to a wider range of people on a more equitable basis.

**9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 Potential changes to the role of the Warden are the subject of ongoing discussion with staff.

9.02 Where existing and former Wardens are also service tenants, each individual situation will be considered on its merits and personal circumstances taken into account, when considering their future housing needs.

**10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 A Sheltered Housing Tenants Conference is being planned to enable all tenants to have a say in the development of the service.

10.02 Wardens are being consulted over changes to the service which will affect their role.

10.03 Any proposals for scheme - specific to changes or improvements which may arise out of recommendation 3.01.4 will be subject to local consultation as would any service change.

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 Consultation has been undertaken with Ward Members, Wardens and a cross-section of tenants via the Sheltered Housing Improvement Seminars.

**12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 Sheltered Housing Improvement Seminars - Summary Report - October 2009

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**  
**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Report to Community and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee 7th  
January 2009

Report to Community and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
10th February 2009

Report to Community and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1st  
July 2009

Report to Community and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee 7th  
October 2009

Contact Officer: Susan Lewis  
Telephone: 01352 702500  
E-Mail: susan\_lewis@flintshire.gov.uk

# **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

## **SHELTERED HOUSING IMPROVEMENT SEMINARS**

### **SUMMARY REPORT**

**October 2009**

# INTRODUCTION

---

As part of the Council's on-going commitment to introduce improvements to the Sheltered Housing Service a Working Group comprising of Members and Senior Officers was established in May 2009.

The <sup>i</sup>Working Group was tasked to design and deliver a series of locality based Sheltered Housing Improvement Seminars. The improvement seminars would provide tenants, staff, and Members the opportunity to come together and examine, constructively debate and reach conclusions upon sensitive and potentially contentious proposals relating to the introduction of improvements within the Sheltered Housing Service.

Ten <sup>ii</sup>Sheltered Housing Improvement Seminars were held during the period the 17 July to the 07 August 2009. One hundred and fifty eight participants attended the seminars. The participants comprised of twenty-six Members, forty-seven staff from the sheltered housing warden service, and eighty-five tenants.

A place at an improvement seminar could not be offered to all of the one hundred and ninety four tenants who expressed an interest in attending. Thus, the eighty-five tenants who did attend were chosen by random selection. The tenants who were not selected have all been contacted and assured that they will be given the opportunity to participate in future events.

If you would like to discuss any part of this report or the Sheltered Housing Improvement Seminars, please contact: Paul Neave: Project Manager: telephone- 01352 703802; e-mail [paul.neave@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:paul.neave@flintshire.gov.uk).

---

<sup>i</sup> See appendix 1 for the Working Group's Terms of Reference.

<sup>ii</sup> See appendix 2 for the details of the ten seminars.

# THE SEMINAR DISCUSSION GROUPS & THE IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS

---

The participants at each of the ten seminars were divided into three discussion groups. The membership of the discussions groups was structured to make sure that each group included a mixture of tenants, staff, and Members.

A facilitator was assigned to each discussion group. The role of the facilitator was to remain impartial, to answer any questions that the participants within their group had on the improvement proposal under discussion and to record the key points noted by their group whilst they were developing their collective opinion on the improvement proposal.

The discussion groups examined the following <sup>3</sup>four improvement proposals:

**Proposal 1:** Developing and improving the warden's role.

**Proposal 2:** Ending the contractual requirement for a residential warden to be a service tenant.

**Proposal 3:** Increasing access to the Warden Service.

**Proposal 4:** Making the best use of sheltered housing accommodation.

The outcomes from the thirty group discussions has been summarised on the following pages. Please note that this summary is not intended to represent a <sup>4</sup>verbatim record of the comments made by the seminar discussion groups as they examined the four proposals.

---

<sup>3</sup> See appendix 3 for the complete improvement proposals, as presented at the improvement seminars.

<sup>4</sup> See appendix 4 for a selection of verbatim comments made by the groups



## **PROPOSAL 1: DEVELOPING AND IMPROVING THE WARDEN’S ROLE**

When examining the above proposal the groups discussed in detail the principal aim of the improved warden support service, e.g. to provide an enabling support service that helps tenants to do things for themselves and not a service that will simply do things for tenants.

The groups also discussed why the delivery of such an enabling service would require wardens to provide services that are aligned to the assessed support needs of individual tenants and that this would mean wardens adopting a more flexible approach in the undertaking of their duties. For example, offering tenants an assessment visit at different times during the day, or during the evening, or at the weekend and providing services that will fluctuate as a tenant’s need for support increases or decreases.

### **THE OUTCOMES**

The table displays the collated outcomes from the thirty discussion groups on the proposal to develop and improve the role of the Sheltered Housing Warden.

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
21 groups	8 groups	1 group	-	-

As the figures in the table demonstrate, all but one of the thirty discussion groups agreed that the current Sheltered Housing Warden’s role should be developed and improved. The groups concurring with the opinion that wardens should be delivering support services that are designed to encourage tenants to become independent and not deliver services that encourage dependency.

The aim of the improved warden service to become an enabling service that encourages tenants to do things for themselves was the subject of several debates. It was contended that a number of tenants would need support that included their warden ‘doing things for them’ and that this fact needed to be recognised in the essential duties within the warden’s (improved) job description. However, it was accepted that this type of ‘doing for support’ would only be necessary for a limited period, for example, if the tenant was temporarily incapacitated or was regaining confidence in their ability to undertake day-to-day activities.

There was a consensus of opinion from the discussion groups that for the warden support service to achieve the aim of becoming an enabling service, wardens would be required to provide flexible and responsive support services that are based, as far as practical, on the individual support needs of tenants. Comments were often made that the warden support service has always provided a supporting and enabling service. However, it was acknowledged that the principal accountabilities, as stated within the existing warden's job description; do not reflect this kind of service delivery.

The professional image of a Sheltered Housing Warden and the awareness of the preventive nature of the services they provide was also a regular discussion at the improvement seminars. The predominant conclusion from these discussions was that the Sheltered Housing Warden role is perceived neither as a professional role, nor as a preventive role. It was agreed though that these misinterpretations of the value of the warden's role could be addressed during the redesign of the role.

The group who concluded their discussions with an opinion of being 'undecided' explained that in their view, it would be problematic to change the current culture within the warden service and also they had concerns that the traditional warden's role would cease if the role was to be developed in the manner proposed.

---

## **PROPOSAL 2: ENDING THE CONTRACTUAL REQUIREMENT FOR A RESIDENTIAL WARDEN TO BE A SERVICE TENANT**

When examining the above proposal the groups discussed in detail the operational benefits to the Sheltered Housing Service (and to the Council as a whole) of contracting staff to be 'service tenants' who, due to current employment legislation, cannot work during the day and provide an on-call service during the night.

The discussion groups also considered the implications for existing Residential Wardens that the introduction of this proposal would produce. For example, will wardens be eligible to remain in their accommodation when they left the service and the need to vary their contracts of employment.

Finally, the discussion groups debated the sensitive subject of whether the implementation of this proposal would have an effect on the tenants within sheltered housing schemes. For example, would a tenant's sense of security be adversely affected if their warden no longer lived amongst them, or (as has happened on a number of schemes) would tenants experience no undue consequences?

## **THE OUTCOMES**

The table displays the collated outcomes from the thirty groups on the proposal to cease the contractual requirement for a Residential Sheltered Housing Warden to be a service tenant.

<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>UNDECIDED</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>
17 groups	8 groups	5 groups	-	-

As the figures in the table demonstrate, twenty-five of the thirty discussion groups supported the ending of this contractual practice. The discussion groups agreed that due to employment legislation there is no longer any operational benefit to the Sheltered Housing Service from contracting wardens to be service tenants.

There was agreement from the discussion groups that the warden support service could be efficiently provided from an office base within the scheme or in the community. In addition, by adopting this approach the discussion groups recognised the potential for other services to be delivered from the same office base, with the warden becoming part of a larger community support team.

The discussion groups also noted that the ending of the contractual requirement to be a service tenant would remove a potential barrier that might hinder the future recruitment of wardens. The discussion groups also recognised the negative impacts upon a warden's private life that resulted from them living at their place of employment.

The five groups who remained undecided on this proposal (along with some groups who offered their support for the proposal), expressed apprehensions over how this proposal would affect the long-term housing situation of existing Residential Wardens. However, it was acknowledged that Residential Wardens have, for numerous years, experienced a sense of uncertainty over their rights to housing when they were considering leaving the service and examples were provided of clear inconsistencies in past decisions on whether an ex-warden remains in, or leaves their old service accommodation. It was therefore agreed the implementation of this proposal would bring transparency to the decisions on a wardens rights to housing when they left the service.

The issue of how tenants would react to the loss of their Residential Warden was the subject of comprehensive debates at all of the seminars. Whilst the groups acknowledged that since January 2006, a Residential Warden has not

been able to provide any services in their off-duty hours, they concluded that the presence of a warden (during their off-duty hours) provides the tenants within the scheme with reassurance and with a sense of additional security. It was therefore stressed that should this proposal be implemented these perceptions held by the tenants will need to be handled with sensitivity.

Some discussion groups debated the issue of whether the community focus of the Warden Support Service would be diminished if a warden did not reside within the community in which they worked. These groups concluded that it would be important for the Sheltered Housing Service to demonstrate how the continuation of the warden’s community role would be ensured if the proposal were implemented.

### **PROPOSAL 3: INCREASING ACCESS TO THE WARDEN SERVICE**

When examining the above proposal the groups discussed in detail the potential benefits (for Flintshire residents and for the Council) that would be gained if the warden support service were accessible to all older and vulnerable people within Flintshire’s diverse communities.

The discussion groups also debated the potential for the proposed service expansion to be achieved within current resources. Finally, the groups considered the proposal that a model of an expanded warden service should be developed and piloted so that the outcomes from an expanded service could be objectively analysed in terms of the benefits to service users and to the Council.

#### **THE OUTCOMES**

The table displays the collated outcomes from the thirty groups on the proposal to increase access to the warden support service.

<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>UNDECIDED</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>
22 groups	7 groups	1 group	-	-

As the figures in the table demonstrate, all but one of the thirty groups agreed that access to the improved warden support service must be based upon the principle of equality and that older or vulnerable people should not be denied the right to benefit from the improved warden service simply because of their tenure type.

In reaching their conclusions, the discussion groups clearly recognised the positive benefits that would be obtained from an expanded warden support service and that these benefits made this proposal a worthwhile goal to be attained. For example, the service would improve the quality of life of an increased number of older or vulnerable people and the service would provide support to the Council's aim of helping people to remain living within their own homes for as long as practical.

The group who remained undecided on this proposal (along with some groups who supported the proposal), expressed concerns over how an expanded service would be resourced. It was questioned whether the current service resources would be sufficient to permit the warden support service to be able to expand into the wider community. It was stressed that the Sheltered Housing Service would need to provide reassurances that existing service provision would not be reduced to facilitate any proposed service expansion. However, it was accepted that through the effective assessment of the support needs of tenants and the adoption of smarter working practices additional service capacity might be created.

The developing and piloting of a model of the expanded service was supported by the majority of the discussion groups as being a sensible means of ensuring that the service does not raise the expectations of older or vulnerable people throughout the wider community, which cannot then be fulfilled. The issue of who will pay for the expanded service, i.e., the Council or the service user was also raised as a pertinent point that would need addressing if the service expansion model is developed.

---

#### **PROPOSAL 4: MAKING THE BEST USE OF SHELTERED HOUSING ACCOMMODATION**

When examining the above proposal the groups discussed the very sensitive issue of whether they agreed that in order to reduce void levels {and in doing so increase the money that the council collects as rent}, sheltered housing accommodation that is 'hard-to-let' should be redesignated and used to provide homes for other applicants on the Council's housing waiting list.

The groups also considered the various reasons why there are sheltered housing schemes with empty properties when there are a high number of older people on the housing waiting list. Finally, the groups discussed how sheltered housing schemes / accommodation could be made a more attractive housing option for older people.

## **THE OUTCOMES**

The table displays the collated outcomes from the thirty groups on the proposal to make the best use of sheltered housing accommodation.

<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>UNDECIDED</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>
13 groups	12 groups	4 groups	-	1 group

As the figures in the table demonstrate, twenty-five discussion groups supported the proposal that hard-to-let sheltered housing accommodation should be redesignated if it was not practical to upgrade the accommodation and there still would be sufficient older person housing provision within the locality. However, sixteen of these twenty-five groups stipulated that their support for this proposal was 'conditional' on the redesignation being of a whole block. The concept of redesignating a few units of accommodation and integrating vulnerable 'younger tenants' (even through sensitive allocations) into a sheltered housing scheme was deemed by these groups to be fraught with difficulties that could result in the proposal being unworkable.

The nine groups who supported the proposal and agreed to the integration of younger tenants within sheltered housing schemes stated that their support was based upon the development of a 'sensitive allocations policy' and upon control measures being in place if the allocation failed.

Examples were also provided of tenants being allocated sheltered housing accommodation whose support needs far exceeded the level of support that could be reasonably provided within such accommodation. It was suggested that closer working links between Housing Officers and Social Workers are needed in order to manage such allocations.

There was a unanimous agreement from the discussion groups on the unsuitability of 'bed-sit accommodation' as sheltered housing accommodation. It was recommended that this type of accommodation should be converted into self-contained flats or, if such a conversion was not feasible, then the bed-sit accommodation should be used to accommodate other applicants from the housing waiting list.

The group who strongly disagreed with the proposal to redesignate sheltered housing accommodation argued that when a sheltered housing scheme could not be improved it should be demolished and replaced with accommodation that is suitable for older tenants. The group suggested that the cost of undertaking such a course of action should be considered alongside the rent loss already incurred and the potential rental income that would be generated.

## **SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS**

The seminar discussion groups presented numerous ideas on how sheltered housing accommodation could be made in to a more attractive housing option for older people. The more frequent suggestions included; ensuring accommodation is accessible both inside and outside. For example, doorways and passageways being wheelchair accessible, raised plug sockets, bottom opening windows, lever taps, ramps, dropped kerbs, and (when possible) lifts should be installed, etc. The need for the exterior and communal interior areas of schemes to be redesigned and redecorated to make them more welcoming was also a regular improvement suggestion.

The provision of adequate car parking facilities was another common improvement suggestion alongside the provision of storage/recharging facilities for mobility scooters. The issue of garden maintenance, particularly grass cuttings not being collected, was consistently raised as a further problem area where improvements were needed.

The provision of communal facilities was identified as a crucial factor that would make sheltered housing accommodation a more attractive housing option for older people. The groups recommended that all schemes have either their own communal facilities or easy access to the facilities within another scheme, as the provision of communal facilities would encourage tenants to engage in social activities and reduce their social isolation.

It was also recommended that the Housing Service should embark upon an innovative and proactive marketing strategy to promote the positives of living in sheltered housing accommodation and that the name of the accommodation should be changed from Sheltered Housing to Retirement Accommodation and Supported Housing.

## **PROPOSED JOB TITLE**

Whilst discussing the four improvement proposals the seminar participants were asked to put forward suggestions of a new job title to replace the title of Sheltered Housing Warden.

The more popular suggestions included the phrases 'Community Support' or 'Housing Support' followed by the prefix of Officer, Worker, or Visitor. Less frequent (but perhaps more novel) suggestions included Easy Living Facilitator and Community Angel. Several suggested job titles ended with the word 'Angel' perhaps an example of the respect that the warden service is held within, particularly by the tenants. All the job titles suggested at the ten improvement seminars are attached for information at appendix 5.

# CONCLUSIONS

---

The improvement seminars proved to be an extremely successful method of enabling groups of tenants, staff, and Members to constructively analyse the four improvement proposals. The independent conclusions reached by these groups on the merits of the improvement proposals, together with the numerous perceptive caveats that accompanied the conclusions, will be used to direct the on-going service improvement programme within the Sheltered Housing Service.

The Member and Officer Working Group will be making a series of recommendations to the Council's Executive for various improvement actions to be implemented. The proposed improvement actions are set out below.

1. A new job description for Sheltered Housing Wardens (and a new job title) will be developed. The principal duties and responsibilities within the job description will promote the values of the desired enabling support service and, as far as practical; they will reflect the collective views of the seminar discussion groups. The revised job description will be presented to the Sheltered Housing Tenants conference being held in early 2010, and then, subject to the outcomes of a wider consultation process, will be introduced in the early summer of 2010.
2. The Sheltered Housing Service will begin the processes that, upon their completion, will result in the ending of the practice of contracting Resident Wardens as service tenants. (It is important to understand that this process will not result in the loss of the warden support service. It simply means that the Sheltered Housing Service will no longer have the legal right to determine where a warden lives during their off-duty hours). As the necessary processes to achieve this aim are progressed, all of the concerns noted by the seminar discussion groups will be meticulously addressed. It is planned that the process will be completed in the early summer of 2010, to coincide with the introduction of the improved job description.
3. Arrangements are put in place to develop and manage an on-going improvement programme to expand the warden support service. The Working Group recommends that the draft service expansion plan is produced by April 2010, and then subjected to a robust consultation process.
4. The Neighborhood Housing Managers will, on an issue by issue basis, make appropriate recommendations (in consultation with local Members



and other interested parties} on the future use of any units of sheltered housing within their localities that are deemed to be unsuitable as accommodation for older people. This is envisaged to be a long-term process with recommendations linking in to future capital work programmes, etc.

**AND FINALLY....**

The Member and Officer Working Group hope that all the seminar participants found their attendance at the improvement seminars to be a thought provoking and a positive experience and that they will remain actively engaged in the on-going development of an improved Sheltered Housing Service.

The Member and Officer Working Group would also like to take this opportunity to express their sincere thanks to the numerous officers, through whose hard work and commitment, the delivery of the ten improvement seminars was made possible.

**Member and Officer Task & Finish Group**

**Terms of Reference**

**1. Aim:**

The aim of the Working Group is to develop, initiate, and champion a series of Sheltered Housing Improvement Seminars. The outcomes from the improvement seminars will contribute to the development of a community focused Specialist Housing Support Service that will provide accommodation related support services, which will enable older or vulnerable people to live as independently as possible within their own home.

**2. Objectives:**

The responsibilities of the Working Group will include:

- a. Agreeing the subject areas that the improvement seminars will need to examine in order for service improvements within the Sheltered Housing Warden Service to be attained.
- b. Designing and implementing a communication strategy that ensures the improvement seminars are accessible to all participants, promotes their involvement, and encourages open and constructive discussion of the agreed subject areas.
- c. Developing and managing the processes involved with the effective delivery of the improvement seminars.
- d. Developing an understanding of the concerns that some sheltered housing schemes face around their long-term suitability as accommodation for older or vulnerable people.
- e. Producing appropriate reports on the improvement seminars and ensuring as far as practical that the key improvements identified by the seminars are implemented within the Sheltered Housing Warden and Carelink Services.

**3. Group Membership:**

The Working Group will consist of the following Elected Members and Senior Officers.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>
1. Cllr Peter Curtis	Member - Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny
2. Cllr Carol Ellis	Executive Member - Social Services
3. Cllr George Hardcastle	Vice Chair - Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny
4. Cllr Ron Hampson	Chair - Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny
5. Cllr Eric Owen	Supporting People - Champion
6. Cllr Helen Yale	Executive Member - Estate Management (Housing, Industrial, Commercial & Agricultural)
7. Gill Conway	Housing Options Manager
8. Katie Davis	Supporting People Manager
9. Dawn Evans	Senior Sheltered Housing Officer
10. Maureen Harkin	Head of Strategy and Housing Services
11. Susan Lewis	Director of Community Services
12. Paul Neave	Project Manager - Sheltered Housing Improvement Project

**4. Frequency of Meetings:**

The first meeting of the Working Group will determine the frequency/ number of meetings that will be necessary in order for the aim of the Working Group to be attained.

Thursday, 30 April 2009

**Appendix 2**  
**Sheltered Housing Improvement Seminars**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>VENUE</b>	<b>LOCALITIES</b>
17 JULY 2009,	ACACIA CLOSE, MOLD,	GWERNAFFIELD; MOLD; LEESWOOD; NEW BRIGHTON; NORTHOP HALL; NORTHOP
22 JULY 2009	LLWYN BEUNO, HOLYWELL	CAERWYS; BRYNFORD; LIXWM; RHYDYMWYN; GWERNYMYNYDD; NERCWYS; PENTRE HALKYN; RHOSMOR
24 JULY 2009	WOODSIDE CLOSE COMMUNITY CENTRE, EWLOE	EWLOE; MANCOT; ASTON; QUEENSFERRY; HAWARDEN
28 JULY 2009	BURNTWOOD COURT, BUCKLEY	BUCKLEY & ARGOED
30 JULY 2009	HEULWEN CLOSE COMMUNITY CENTRE, HOPE	TREUDDYN; HOPE; PENYFFORDD; CAERGWRLE; HIGHER KINERTON; LLANFYNYDD
31 JULY 2009	DEE COTTAGES, FLINT	FLINT & BAGILLT
03 AUGUST 2009	COMMUNITY CENTRE, MOSTYN	BERTHENGAM; PENYFFORDD; TRELAWYNYD; GRONANT; FFYNNONGROYW; WHITFORD; MOSTYN
05 AUGUST 2009	ELMWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE, SHOTTON	SHOTTON; SEALAND; GARDEN CITY; BROUGHTON ; SALTNEY
06 AUGUST 2009	GLAN Y MORFA COMMUNITY LOUNGE, CONNAH'S QUAY	CONNAH'S QUAY
07 AUGUST 2009	LLWYN ALED, HOLYWELL	HOLYWELL & GREENFIELD

**PROPOSAL 1 Developing and Improving the Wardens Role.**

We propose that the aim of the improved warden’s role is to provide support services that help tenants to develop, or to maintain, the skills and confidence that they need in order to live independently and safely within their own home.

The principal responsibilities and duties within an improved warden’s role will include:

- helping tenants to maintain their general wellbeing {the main purpose of the assessment visit},
- helping tenants to develop, or maintain their ability to manage daily living activities, {this will not include any personal care tasks},
- helping tenants to reduce their sense of social isolation and/or become involved with their local community;

The improved warden’s role will be based upon the principle of providing support that is aligned, as far as practical, to the assessed needs of tenants. This will require the warden’s duties and responsibilities to become more flexible, for example, the improved service needs to offer tenants an assessment visit at different times during the day, or during the evening, or at the weekend. The improved service will also need to provide services that can fluctuate as a tenant’s need for support increases or decreases.

1. What does your group think of the proposal to develop the warden’s role into an enabling support service that helps tenants to do things for themselves, {and not a service that ‘does things for them’} and which provides support that is based upon the assessed needs of tenants? Please tick one of the boxes below and give reasons for your choice.
2. What essential duties and responsibilities would your group like to see in the improved warden’s role?

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
-----------------------	--------------	------------------	-----------------	--------------------------

**PROPOSAL 2 - Ending the Contractual Requirement for a Warden to be a Service Tenant.**

The Residential Sheltered Housing Warden’s contract of employment requires that they are the service tenant of a property within, or close by the scheme that they manage. However, due to employment legislation a Residential Warden cannot work during the day and provide an on-call service during the night. Thus, there is no longer any operational benefit of contracting staff to be service tenants. We therefore propose, as part of the improvements being made to the warden’s role, that this contractual practice is ended.

The implementation of this proposal will involve formal consultations with staff and the Unions over several issues including;

- the varying of employment contracts to reflect the fact that the provision of accommodation is no longer included in the warden’s overall salary package;
- determining what happens when wardens leave the service, e.g., will they remain in the accommodation or not;

We will also need to consider the impact upon current tenants that the implementation of this proposal may have. For example, if their warden no longer lives ‘amongst’ them will this affect the tenant’s sense of security? {Though, this has already happened on a number of schemes without any undue problems.} We will also need to consider the impact upon ‘in-coming tenants’. For example, how will the implementation of this proposal affect their rights to a concessionary TV licence, etc?

However, none of the issues that will be generated by implementing this proposal is insurmountable. Furthermore, by ending the requirement to become a service tenant, we believe the warden’s role will become more attractive to people who possess the relevant skills and experience to undertake the role, but who have no desire to move from their own home in order to take up such an employment opportunity.

1. What does your group think of the proposal to end the requirement for wardens to be service tenants? Please tick one of the boxes below and give reasons for your choice.

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
-----------------------	--------------	------------------	-----------------	--------------------------

**PROPOSAL 3 - Increasing Access to the Warden Service.**

The Residential and Relief Warden Service is only accessible to tenants who live within designated sheltered housing accommodation. Obviously, the council has the right to provide whatever services it so chooses to its own tenants and this is not being questioned. However, the question of whether an improved warden service could play an enhanced role in helping the council to meet its commitment to help all Flintshire residents to live as independently as possible, does merit further consideration.

We propose that when the improved warden’s job description is redrafted, it does not contain any directive that will prevent the service from being accessed by older or vulnerable people living within Flintshire simply because of their tenure status. We want the improved service to be accessible to older and vulnerable people within all of Flintshire’s diverse communities who would derive a benefit from the type of help that the improved warden service will be providing.

We also propose, following the introduction of the improved warden’s role, that a model of an expanded warden service is developed and piloted. Through this pilot, the service model can be robustly tested and the outcomes from the service can be objectively analysed in terms of the benefits to service users and to the council. The conclusions from the pilot will allow the council to make informed decisions on the feasibility of an expanded service being introduced Countywide.

1. What does your group think of the proposal to make the warden support service accessible to more older and vulnerable people within Flintshire? Please tick one of the boxes below and give reasons for your choice.

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
-----------------------	--------------	-----------------	-----------------	--------------------------

**Proposal 4: Making the best use of sheltered housing accommodation.**

Of the total council's housing stock of 7,539 units, 2,627 units (35%) is designated as sheltered housing accommodation and these properties can only be allocated to applicants who meet the appropriate criteria for accessing sheltered housing. The stock designated as sheltered accommodation also includes over 100 bedsits.

In some localities within Flintshire, there are sheltered housing schemes with a high number of empty properties {voids}, whilst at the same time there are a high number of older people on the council's housing waiting list who are requesting one/two bedroom accommodation in the same localities. Clearly, there are reasons for this. For example, some designated sheltered housing accommodation is not wholly accessible to older people with physical frailties and other sheltered housing accommodation is of a type that is no longer seen as an attractive housing option for older people.

Obviously, we want to introduce measures that will make sheltered housing accommodation more accessible and/or more attractive to older people. However, this course of action will not always be possible and decisions will have to be made on whether some 'hard-to-let' sheltered housing accommodation should be used to provide homes for a different group of tenants.

1. Does your group agree that in order to reduce void levels {and in doing so increase the money that the council collects as rent}, hard-to-let sheltered housing accommodation, through sensitive allocations, should be brought back into tenanted use by allocating it to other applicants on the council's housing waiting list? Please tick one of the boxes below and give reasons for your choice.
  
2. Does your group have any 'innovative' suggestions on how we could make the sheltered housing accommodation within your localities more accessible and/or attractive to older people?

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
-----------------------	--------------	------------------	-----------------	--------------------------



**PROPOSAL 1: Developing and Improving the Wardens Role.**

- Important that tenants keep their independence. Detrimental if warden does everything.
- Should not be a fixed rigid Monday to Friday service. Service needs flexibility, and visits increased by need.
- It is essential that assessment is done to establish the level of support needs and visits required/flexible.
- Would like to see warden at weekend. Maybe wardens should work on shift pattern.
- Assessing needs would help to identify level of services a tenant needed, and release staff time to support more tenants.
- Warden's role is not just a good neighbour – already an enabling role, promoting independence and preventing crisis. At present, this is not reflected in their job description.
- Must not be over-protective of residents. People still 'young' at 70.
- Continuity - same person visiting notices any changes. Important for continuity that relief wardens cover small areas or clusters.
- Agree with enabling, but sceptical about 'not doing for'. If a person needs help, the warden should be able to do it.
- Wardens do not have enough time to visit everyone – wardens need more time to see tenants.
- Some wardens doing more than others, experience of inconsistency with regard to level of service received.
- Poor communication with wardens is a big problem.
- Residents and warden should have clear written instructions of '*What your Warden can do for you*', also '*What we can't do*'. Need for re-launch of warden handbook.

**PROPOSAL 2: Ending the Contractual Requirement for a Warden to be a Service Tenant.**

- Carelink provides for security 24 hours a day and community's wardens help to promote safety/security.
- No operational benefit to living on-site. Mini scheme tenants do not have a warden on site. It works ok.
- Maybe an office closes by schemes where wardens can respond. Other professionals have office like nurses/doctors/police/ambulance.
- People object to change, but it needs to change and people adjust.
- One stop shop during day and night. Mini response team, e.g. Neighbourhood Wardens, Support Workers, Care Worker.
- Priority is to have a good warden. No need to live in a certain house to be one.
- More likely to recruit new staff to the work e.g. great skills for the work but do not wish to move from their own home.
- Wardens have a long history of the communities where they live and work. Need to demonstrate 'community role' of warden.
- Warden should be 'local' – three-mile radius – recommendations.
- When recruiting for warden, able to attract people with relevant skills not just wanting house.
- Concerns about change for existing tenants who receive support from resident warden. Perceived security by tenants.
- People have enjoyed the feeling of security of having a residential warden, but realise that this is not fair on the warden, and may reduce the chance of recruitment.
- Group feel strongly that if we introduced this proposal, the current warden should not be thrown out of their home. Need to reflect loyalty of wardens' service.

**PROPOSAL 3 - Increasing Access to the Warden Service.**

- All elderly people should receive this service irrespective of where they live. Access to the service should be based on equality.
- People who do not live in sheltered housing should not be 'penalised' and not have access to warden service.
- Initial referral and assessment critical. Right people, right service, right time.
- Great concept but difficult. Critical analysis required.
- Would improve people's lives – especially social isolation in more rural areas.
- Important for people to stay in their own homes as they have built up networks.
- Anything to improve someone's quality of life is worth doing (and worth paying for!).
- Time could be freed up with accurate assessments.
- Need to ensure we don't raise expectations we can't meet – thought needs to be given as to target group (and cost). Pilot needed to manage this.
- Need to ensure sufficient capacity exists for wardens if the service is broadened. Need to ensure existing warden services are not affected.
- What do we mean by vulnerable? Need clarification in relation to role of wardens.
- Phased implementation based on identified need within existing resources/capacity.
- Important not to duplicate Social Services' role not to replace warden housing management function.
- Mix of client groups is very difficult. Could be increasing problems.

**Proposal 4: Making the best use of sheltered housing accommodation.**

- Voids should not exist – waste of public money. Also, waiting list high.
- Where properties are not suitable for up-grading, those should be returned to general stock.
- Mini-schemes- look on an individual basis. Look at waiting list to see what demand is and make sensitive allocations.
- Flats - not a good idea to mix different groups as life styles not compatible.
- As a whole unit – would be ok, but definitely not with mixing families, children, etc with older people.
- Bed sits should only be used as a temporary stop gap. Ideal for other groups, e.g. ex-offenders, young people.
- Before re-designating stock, need to ensure adequate provision exists – need to plan carefully.
- Local lettings criteria needs to be reviewed to reflect community support, to avoid ‘back door’ perception (people from outside Flintshire getting housing priority).
- Cost of making fit for purpose v benefit of rental 5 years. - If we cannot change it/rebuild fit for purpose.
- All blocks should have controlled access (sense of security important).
- Improve marketing of FCC sheltered accommodation. Show properties in good decorative condition.
- Accessible, ramps, showers, wider doors, future-proof things like kitchens anti-scald valves/lever taps, not enough sockets, bathrooms, walk-in showers.
- Parking is a huge issue, especially for tenants with mobility cars. Investigate use of ‘Astroturf’ & Criss-cross plastic matting.
- Grass cuttings left around - slippery – collect grass; recycle for compost, sell and put back money to grass cutting and collection.
- All sheltered schemes should have community room/lounge to encourage social inclusion.

**Appendix 5**  
**Suggested Job Titles**

<b>17.07.2009</b>	<b>22.07.2009</b>	<b>24.07.2009</b>	<b>28.07.2009</b>
Housing Support Officer	Community Helper	Assistant Carelink Supervisor	Community Supporter
Housing Support Worker	Community Support Officer	Care Supporter	Community Officer
Support Officer	Community Support Worker	Caring Support Officer	Community Support
Community Support Officer	Good Neighbour	Community Care Advisor	Community Support Worker
Community Support Worker	Neighbourhood Support	Community Support Care Advisor	Co-ordinator
Resident Support Service	Response Team	Community Support	Easy Living Facilitator
Support Person	Scheme Co-ordinator	Community Support Worker	Housing Support Officer
Community Angels	Scheme Manager	Guardian	Manager
Community Agent	Support Officer	Guardian Angels	Social Support Officer
Community Link Officer	Supporter	Home Support Angels	Warden
Accommodation Support Officer		Home Support Carer	Warden Support
		Home Support Facilitator	
		Home Support Worker	
		Neighbourhood Carers	
		People Supporter	
		People's Friend	
		People's Guardian	
		Senior Carelink Facilitator	
		Supporting People	

**Appendix 5**  
**Suggested Job Titles**

<b>30.07.2009</b>	<b>31.07.2009</b>	<b>03.08.09</b>	<b>05.08.09</b>
Community Housing Support Assistant Community Housing Support Worker Community Support Worker Dawn's Angels 50s Supporting Officers Flintshire Angels Friendly Caller Housing Support Visitor Housing Support Worker Support Warden The Visitor Trouble-shooters	Community Angels Community Support Worker Independent Living Supporter Helping Hands Home Support Agent/Advisor Support and Advisory Service Definitely not 'Warden'	Community Facilitator Community Liaison Officer Housing Support Officer Mobile Support Officers Senior Citizens' Assistants Support Carer/Coordinator Support Worker	Senior Citizen Community Support Officer Community Support Worker Dawn's Angels Enabling Support Officer Resident's Advisor Resident's Guardian Our First Contact
<b>06.08.09</b>	<b>07.08.09</b>		
Community People Supporter Community Support Team Housing Warden Support Officer	Care Support Worker Community Angel Community Stars Community Support Assistant Community Support Officer Community Support Worker Support Enablement Officer		

**RECORD NO. 2073**

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE RECORD OF DECISION**

**DATE OF MEETING:** **17<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2009** **AGENDA ITEM NO. 16**

**REPORT OF:** **DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**SUBJECT:** **SHELTERED HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

- RECOMMENDATIONS OF REPORT:**
- (a) That Executive approves the recommendations set out in 3.01.1 – 3.01.4 of the report.
  - (b) That Executive supports the continuation of the Member Officer Working Group to oversee the Sheltered Housing Improvement Project.
  - (c) That Executive receives a further report on the service expansion plan referred to in 3.01.3 in due course.

**DECISION:** That the recommendations be agreed.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** The reasons were set out in the report.

- CONSULTATION REQUIRED:**
- (a) A Sheltered Housing Tenants Conference is being planned to enable all tenants to have a say in the development of the service.
  - (b) Wardens are being consulted over changes to the service which will affect their role.
  - (c) Any proposals for scheme – specific changes or improvements which may arise out of recommendation 3.01.4 will be subject to local consultation as would any service change.

**CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN:**

Consultation has been undertaken with Ward Members, Wardens and a cross-section of tenants via the Sheltered Housing Improvement Seminars.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Development of the role of the Warden will enable their support role to be more cost effective within existing resources.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

None.

**DISPENSATIONS:**

None.

**DATE PUBLISHED:**

19<sup>th</sup> November 2009

**SIGNED:** \_\_\_\_\_ **(Proper Officer)**



## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 9

**REPORT TO:** **SPECIAL MEETING OF THE FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**DATE :** **16 DECEMBER 2009**  
**REPORT BY:** **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**  
**SUBJECT :** **LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR  
WALES REVIEW OF ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS -  
PROGRESS REPORT**

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To advise the Council of the progress of the review of Electoral Arrangements in the County being conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales.

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

- 2.01 The Commission has produced a first set of draft proposals for the electoral arrangements in Denbighshire, Neath Port Talbot and Newport for consultation.
- 2.02 There has been a strong reaction to the Boundary Commission's first set of proposals and Dr Gibbons, Minister for Social Justice and Local Government is in discussion with the Commissioners and has urged concerned Councillors to write in to the Commission to make their views known.
- 2.03 The collective concerns of Local Government are the geographical size of some of the new wards proposed, failure to reflect local conditions and communities, and the reduction in single member wards and ratios.
- 2.04 Due to the extent of local consultation and the weight of local submissions at the first stage of the process a decision on Flintshire has been delayed. The Council's Chief Executive Officer has been in contact with the Chief Executive Officer of the Local Government Boundary Commission and has established that the work on Flintshire's review is complete and the proposals drafted but given the national discussions between the Minister and the Commissioners, the Commission are not able to release these proposals and we have no knowledge of the content.

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01 The WLGA has discussed this issue at both its Council and Co-ordinating Committee meetings and whilst remaining fully respectful of the independence and integrity of the Commission has felt duty bound to reflect the significant concerns of elected members. Appended to this report is a copy of the WLGA Council report which is self explanatory.

---

Date: 10/12/2009

3.02 Flintshire County Council, via the Leadership and the Chief Executive Officer, has been party to the representations made by the WLGA.

3.03 The Council may wish to consider making formal representations to the Electoral Commission prior to receiving Flintshire's own results at this stage.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.01 The Council is asked to note the update and agree whether any formal response should be made.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 None.

#### **6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 None.

#### **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 None.

#### **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 None.

#### **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 None.

#### **10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 None at this stage.

#### **11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 First stage consultation undertaken with all elected members and all Town and Community Councils in the County.

#### **12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 Appendix 1 - WLGA Council report 27th November 2009.  
Appendix 2 - Annex 1 - letter from WLGA to Brian Gibbons AM  
Appendix 3 - Annex 2 - Letter from WAG to Commission for Wales

#### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

## **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

All background documents can be obtained from Sharron Jones, ext. 2107.

Contact Officer: Chief Executive  
Telephone: 01352 702101  
E-Mail: chief\_executive@flintshire.gov.uk

27<sup>th</sup> November 2009

---

## **Electoral Review Update**

### **Purpose**

1. To update Council on the Local Government Boundary Commission's first 3 Electoral Review Reports covering Denbighshire, Neath Port Talbot and Newport.

### **Background**

2. Initial reaction, notably from some members from the three authorities, has been one of concern particularly around the proposals to merge existing electoral divisions into 'artificial' communities.
3. WLGA Coordinating Committee received an update report on the first 3 Electoral Review Reports in October. Members expressed concern about some of the proposals and instructed the Chief Executive to write to the Minister outlining concerns and seeking assurances that the Commission would consider and respond to the informed local feedback as part of the consultation process (Annex 1).
4. Local councillors and local authorities involved in the first three reviews will be best placed to provide informed and persuasive evidence on the Commission's proposals regarding local communities' identities, appropriate boundaries for communities and therefore electoral divisions.
5. The Welsh Assembly Government has also expressed concern about the first three proposed Reports and has written to the Boundary Commission seeking further clarification and explanation regarding the recommendations (Annex 2).
6. The Boundary Commission's proposals include the reconfiguration of a number of electoral divisions in each of the three authorities, a reduction of the number of members in all three and councillor: elector ratios increasing in each authority above the 1:1,750 ratio:

<b>Council</b>	<b>Current No. of councillors</b>	<b>Proposed No. of councillors</b>	<b>% Reduction</b>	<b>Current Ratio</b>	<b>Proposed New Ratio</b>
Denbighshire	47	40	15	1580	1856
Neath Port Talbot	64	58	9	1733	1912
Newport	50	45	10	2055	2282

7. The proposals for Denbighshire would see a reduction from the current 30 electoral divisions to 18. This process would see only 1 existing electoral division retained in its current form and would see the number of single-member wards reduced from 16 to 4.
8. The proposals for Neath Port Talbot would see a reduction from the current 42 electoral divisions to 19 divisions. This process would see only 2 existing divisions retained in their current form, and would see the number of single-member wards reduced from 27 to 2.
9. The proposals for Newport are to reduce the number of electoral divisions from 20 to 12, a process which would see all but 2 existing divisions affected and would see the loss of the council's only 2 single member wards.
10. The Boundary Commission's draft proposals in full can be accessed at [http://www.lgbc-wales.gov.uk/news\\_e.htm](http://www.lgbc-wales.gov.uk/news_e.htm)

## **Recommendation**

- 11. Members are asked to note the contents of the report.**
- 

**Author:** Steve Thomas  
**Tel:** 029 2046 8610  
**E-mail:** [steve.thomas@wlga.gov.uk](mailto:steve.thomas@wlga.gov.uk)

## ANNEX 1

Date/Dyddiad: 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2009  
Please ask for/Gofynnwch am: Steve Thomas  
Direct line/Llinell uniongyrchol: 029 20468610  
Email/Ebost: [steve.thomas@wlg.gov.uk](mailto:steve.thomas@wlg.gov.uk)



Brian Gibbons AM  
Minister for Social Justice and Local Government  
Welsh Assembly Government  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Dear Minister,

### Electoral Reviews

I write regarding the Boundary Commission's recently published Reports on Electoral Reviews in Denbighshire, Neath Port Talbot and Newport.

A summary of the Reports' proposals was discussed by leaders at WLGA Coordinating Committee on 23<sup>rd</sup> October. I have also been contacted by a number of members from the three authorities, many of whom have expressed concern and confusion around some aspects of the proposals.

Coordinating Committee recognised the challenging agenda the Commission has been tasked which is made all the more difficult within the constraints of the timetable to conclude by mid 2011. Members also welcomed Paul Woods' candid contribution to the WLGA Council in September and recognise that change will be inevitable given the terms of your Directions to the Boundary Commission and population changes during recent years.

It appears however that the Commission's desire to equalise the 'value of the vote' across a local authority area has distorted the conclusions in the first three Reviews. A number of the proposals have caused concern regarding the geographical size of some new wards, the merger of rural wards with urban wards, the reduction of single member wards and the overall reduction in members with the consequent increase in councillor: electorate ratios, notably in Newport and Neath Port Talbot which were already over the ratio as specified in your Directions.

Particular concern has been expressed around how some proposals for new electoral divisions do not reflect the cultural, historical or locally identified geographical boundaries of existing communities. Such tensions around proposals were of course inevitable, and I know

Steve Thomas  
Chief Executive  
Prif Weithredwr

Welsh Local Government  
Association  
Local Government House  
Drake Walk  
CARDIFF CF10 4LG  
Tel: 029 2046 8600  
Fax: 029 2046 8601

Cymdeithas Llywodraeth  
Leol Cymru  
Tŷ Llywodraeth Leol  
Rhodfa Drake  
CAERDYDD CF10 4LG  
Ffôn: 029 2046 8600  
Ffacs: 029 2046 8601

[www.wlga.gov.uk](http://www.wlga.gov.uk)

you have previously written to the Boundary Commission to remind them of the need to reflect such local views. However, it appears from the representations I have received that continuity of community identity has not been achieved in many areas.

Inevitably, with any national review of any local arrangements, despite the best intentions and constructive engagement and evidence gathering, there is always the risk that conclusions may not fully take account of local experience and expertise. Those local councillors and local authorities involved in the first three reviews will of course be best placed to provide informed and persuasive evidence on the Commission's proposals regarding local communities' identities, appropriate boundaries for communities and therefore electoral divisions.

Coordinating Committee also expressed concern that only 6 of the existing 45 single member wards in the first 3 Reviews would remain. Members have previously debated the relative merits of single member versus multi-member wards and whilst there are some differing opinions, there is broad consensus that a balance is appropriate, particularly in relation to rural wards.

There are also concerns around some of the proposals for 'mergers' of rural electoral divisions, with the creation of very large geographical wards in their place. A number of these proposed new rural wards would have a large number of distinct communities and constituent community and town councils. Notwithstanding local views around the appropriateness and community 'identity' of the proposed new ward, it does raise salient questions around logistics and the capacity of councillors to represent such a large local area and maintain effective relations with a large number of community and town councils and separate communities. Similarly, there are concerns around proposals for some rural wards or parts of rural wards to be merged with 'urban' wards and the consequent loss of voice for the rural population.

I recognise that these first three Reports are draft proposals and the Commission is currently consulting on the proposals, I trust that the Commission's final deliberations will fully consider and reflect the evidence, experience and expertise of local knowledge.

Yours sincerely,



**Steve Thomas**  
**Chief Executive, Welsh Local Government Association**

cc Leaders and Chief Executives, County and County Borough Councils



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/qA736135  
Ein cyf/  
Edward Lewis  
Secretary  
Local Government Boundary  
Commission for Wales  
Caradog House  
1-6 St Andrews Place  
Cardiff

2 November 2009

Dear Edward

I am writing to let you know that the Commission's draft reports for the electoral arrangements in Denbighshire, Neath Port Talbot and Newport have given me significant cause for concern which I understand is shared in the local authorities concerned and the local government community more widely. I, and others, find it difficult to understand the Commission's proposals in the context of the direction and primary legislation; and how the Commission has balanced the range of criteria in coming to its conclusions.

At first glance, it appears that the Commission has given precedence to the aim of equalisation at the expense of the other issues to which they are to have regard when conducting reviews. It is reasonable that the Commission addressed the need to try and equalise the importance of each vote. However, the results appear to have had major and negative consequences for the voters and councillors in the areas by creating vast electoral divisions eg Cwm Nedd in Neath port Talbot and Gorllewin Clwyd in Denbighshire. The proposals seem to have disregarded the rules which stipulate that boundaries should be easily identifiable and local community ties should not be broken.

At their meeting with the Minister last year, the Commissioners indicated that they would prefer the direction not to be prescriptive about single/multi member divisions as they would rather come to a view on the matter in consultation with principal councils and local people. The direction was, therefore, drafted to provide the Commission with the flexibility it required. I am surprised that the option of multi member divisions, traditionally used for representation in densely populated urban areas, has been applied in an unwieldy and inappropriate fashion to large rural and semi rural areas. This does not seem to fit with a reasonable understanding of effective and convenient local government for voters and citizens

I am also concerned that the proposals for Denbighshire, Neath Port Talbot and Newport reduce the number of councillors in these areas. The letter from the Minister dated 12 May

Ffôn \* Tel 029 2082 5980  
Ffacs \* Fax 029 205346  
Welsh Assembly Government  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ



2009 emphasised that the target ratio was an aim to be worked towards and not, (as in the case of Denbighshire) to be achieved instantly. I fail to understand the reasoning behind reducing the number of councillors in Neath Port Talbot or Newport either as the existing ratio is already comparable with the terms of the direction. This works directly against the notion of increasing the effectiveness of local democratic representation.

As the draft proposals appear to deviate from the terms of the direction and in some instances a reasonable interpretation of the legislation, in my view, it will be very difficult for the Minister to make an Order to implement such proposals. It seems that the Commissioners have adopted a radical approach to their task which is out of step with the view of the Minister, an interpretation of the legislation and the directions and certainly the views of the local authorities. I am concerned that these proposals have created a difficult set of circumstances for the Commission, and worse still, will undermine its considerable credibility and authority built up over the years. Thus, I would be grateful for a detailed explanation of the rationale behind these proposals along with an assessment of how they comply with the statutory basis and Ministerial directions on which they are prepared.

I urge you to consider these issues very carefully before proceeding with issuing the next batch of reports as it is extremely difficult to see how they meet your Chair's stated aim of "...achieving a better democratic balance within each council area".

The issue needs to be discussed a matter of urgency. Arrangements have been made for us to meet on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> November.

Yours sincerely

Reg Kilpatrick  
Deputy Director Local Government Policy Division

CC Mr S Thomas,  
CEO, WLGA