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Pennaeth Dros Dro Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol a



TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

CS/NG

Date Not Specified

Ceri Owen 01352 702350
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Dear Sir / Madam

A meeting of the **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, MOLD CH7 6NA** on **TUESDAY, 27TH MARCH, 2012** at **2.00 PM** to consider the following items.

Yours faithfully

Democracy & Governance Manager

AGENDA

1 PRESENTATION

A presentation will be made to the Flintshire Young Peoples Drug and Alcohol Team who received a Highly Commended 'Where its at' Award in recognition of their good work promoting drug and alcohol education and good citizenship.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

County Hall, Mold. CH7 6NA
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The Council welcomes correspondence in Welsh or English
Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawau gohebiaeth yn y Cymraeg neu'r Saesneg

4 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive any declarations of interests from Members.

5 **COUNCIL MINUTES** (Pages 1 - 16)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 15 and 21 February, 2012 (copies enclosed).

6 **CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS** (Pages 17 - 38)

The Chair has asked that a copy of her communications since her appointment as Chair be circulated to all Members. Please find a copy attached.

7 **PETITIONS**

8 **NOTICE OF MOTION**

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

Dog friendly styles and kissing gates

"Whilst recognising that there is a need for no interference in a farmers ability to contain his livestock, particularly sheep, within his fields, this Council acknowledges that there is a problem for the elderly, infirm and disabled when exercising their dogs. This issue is the inability of the Dog and/or walker to cross some styles. It calls upon the Council to examine the problem and bring forth a policy to alleviate the problem".

9 **QUESTIONS**

To note the answers to any questions submitted in accordance with County Council Standing Order No. 9.4(A).

10 **ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2011 BY THE AUDITOR GENERAL FOR WALES** (Pages 39 - 98)

Report of the Chief Executive enclosed.

Mr. Stephen Martin, Mr. Alan Morris and Ms. Karen Lees from the Wales Audit Office will be in attendance to give a presentation to Members.

11 **RESULT OF THE HOUSING BALLOT** (Pages 99 - 104)

Report of the Chief enclosed.

12 **REVIEW OF THE NEW WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE** (Pages 105 - 144)

Report of the Director of Environment enclosed.

- 13 **BOUNDARY COMMISSION 2013 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN WALES** (Pages 145 - 154)
Report of the Chief Executive enclosed.
- 14 **FLINTSHIRE ARMED FORCES DAY AND THE CREATION OF AN ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT** (Pages 155 - 166)
Report of the Chief Executive enclosed.
- 15 **COMMENCEMENT ORDER FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN** (Pages 167 - 170)
Report of the Director of Environment enclosed.
- 16 **UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE** (Pages 171 - 206)
Report of the Director of Environment enclosed.
- 17 **PAY POLICY STATEMENT** (Pages 207 - 224)
Report of the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development enclosed.
- 18 **SCHOOL MODERNISATION INTERIM REPORT** (Pages 225 - 228)
Joint report of the Chief Executive and Director of Lifelong Learning enclosed.
- 19 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**
- (A) To authorise the Chair and Vice-Chairman, the Interim Head of Legal and Democratic Services Officer and Principal Solicitors to affix the Common Seal of the County Council between meetings of the County Council
 - (B) To note the action of the Chair and Vice-Chairman, the Interim Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Principal Solicitors in affixing the Common Seal of the County Council as set out in the Seal Register No. 13279 – 13329.

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY 15 FEBRUARY, 2012

Minutes of the special meeting of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Wednesday 15 February, 2012

PRESENT: Councillor H.J. McGuill (Chair)

Councillors: Eng. K. Armstrong-Braun, J.B. Attridge, D. Barratt, G.H. Bateman, M. Bateman, R.C. Bithell, H. Brown, C.S. Carver, J.C. Cattermoul, E.G. Cooke, D.L. Cox, R. Davies, A.J. Davies-Cooke, Q.R.H. Dodd, R. Dolphin, B. Dunn, C.A. Ellis, V. Gay, F. Gillmore, R.J.T. Guest, R.G. Hampson, G. Hardcastle, C. Hinds, R. Hughes, G. James, C.M. Jones, N.M. Jones, R.B. Jones, S. Jones, R.P. Macfarlane, D.L. Mackie, N.M. Matthews, D. McFarlane, A. Minshull, W. Mullin, E.W. Owen, M.J. Peers, P.R. Pemberton, N. Phillips, M.A. Reece, H.G. Roberts, L.A. Sharps, A.P. Shotton, C.A. Thomas, W.O. Thomas, D.T. Williams, A. Woolley and M.G. Wright

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: S.R. Baker, P.J. Curtis, C.J. Dolphin, E.F. Evans, A.M. Halford, P.G. Heesom, H.T. Howorth, H.D. Hutchinson, H.T. Isherwood, R. Johnson, C. Legg, D.I. Mackie, N.R. Steele-Mortimer and D.E. Wisinger

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Head of Finance, Head of Housing, Interim Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Democracy and Governance Manager and Committee Officer

Project Director, Mike Gaskell (Legal Advisor, Trowers and Hamblins) and Mark Longhill (Financial Advisor, Sector Group) for minute number 127.

126. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Members declared a personal interest for Agenda item number 4 – Housing Ballot:-

Councillors: D. McFarlane, H.J. McGuill and E.W. Owen.

127. HOUSING BALLOT

The Chief Executive introduced a report which outlined the responses from tenants and leaseholders during the Stage 1 Consultation (Choices Document) and recommended that the Council proceed to issue the Stage 2 Notice and to ballot secure and introductory tenants.

The Council resolved to ballot tenants on the choice of transfer at its meeting on 17 February, 2009. At its meeting on 22 November, 2011 the Council approved the draft Choices Document, Assured Tenancy Agreement and Leaseholder Consultation Document. All secure, introductory tenants (including joint tenants) and leaseholders had been sent a copy of the Council's Choices Document. A total of 252 tenants had responded and the

comments were listed in Appendix 1 of the report. None of the leaseholders had responded and the report indicated that none of the comments received necessitated a change to the Choices Document.

The Stage 2 Consultation process involved a ballot of secure and introductory tenants which would be administered by the Electoral Reform Services (ERS). Details of the ballot process were outlined within the report.

The Chief Executive commented on the recommendations outlined within the report and sought Members approval to proceed to issue the Stage 2 Notice and to ballot secure and introductory tenants and make no changes to the Choices Document as a result of the Stage 1 Consultation. He advised that following the meeting he would be writing to all Members to give protective advice on conduct during the ballot process.

Councillor H. Brown, Executive Member for Housing proposed that the Council support the recommendations outlined within the report. She said that the Council had followed the guidelines set by the Welsh Government (WG) and encouraged all tenants to vote on the future of the Council housing stock. This was seconded by Councillor C.A. Ellis.

Councillor J.C. Cattermoul raised concern on the neutral position of the Council which she did not feel was reflected in the Choices Document and the decision previously taken to demolish the maisonettes at Flint regardless of the outcome of the ballot. She said that she was disappointed with the letter published in the local press from the Project Director in response to a published letter which had not included any positive comments on the option for the Council housing stock to remain with the Council.

Councillor Eng. K. Armstrong-Braun asked what the risks to the continuity of services would be in the event of a 'yes' vote and for clarification on the difference between an Assured Tenancy and Secure Tenancy. He said that local Members would not be able to address the concerns/questions of tenants as pro-actively in the event of a 'yes' vote and asked whether responses had been provided to the tenants who had raised specific questions during the consultation process.

The Chief Executive explained that section 9.01 of the report referred to Corporate Services, for example, IT, Finance and Ground Maintenances which were provided to the Housing Revenue Account by the Council under Service Level Agreements. The specific questions raised by tenants during the consultation process had been answered by the Independent Tenant Advisor. Mike Gaskell (Legal Advisor) explained the difference between a Secure Tenancy and Assured Tenancy. The terms of an existing Secure Tenancy could be changed following consultation, whereas an existing Assured Tenancy could not be changed unless individual tenants agree in writing.

Councillor J.B. Attridge raised concern on the neutrality of the Choices Document and also that responses had not been made in the local press to

comments supporting the transfer of the housing stock. He also asked why the Council could not borrow the money required to bring the Council housing stock up to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) through prudential borrowing.

The Chief Executive explained that in 2009 the Council had presented a business case to the WG which had included projections for prudential borrowing but it had not been affordable to borrow the level of funding required through the Housing Revenue Account. In line with the Council's neutral position the Choices Document had accurately reflected this and had been supported at the County Council meeting held on 22 November, 2011. In line with the WG guidance, during the pre-ballot period, the Council had a duty to challenge misleading or factually inaccurate information.

Councillor R.C. Bithell raised concern on the wording of the ballot papers which he felt did not reflect the Council's neutral position. He asked how many tenants would be entitled to vote during the housing ballot and whether the result of the ballot would be accepted if there was a low return. He also asked, in the event of a 'yes' vote, how the cost to continue to provide the services that would remain with the Council would be met.

The Project Director said that all tenants named on a tenancy agreement, including joint tenancies would be entitled to vote in the housing ballot. This equated to approximately 8,900 tenants. The Chief Executive advised that following consultation with the WG the wording shown on the ballot papers would be amended and would read 'do you want your home to transfer to a new landlord, Dee Housing?'. In line with the WG guidance, a majority result would be acceptable and the result of the housing ballot would be considered by County Council following the 20 March, 2012. Other housing ballots carried out by a number of Welsh Local Authorities had this far seen a majority of tenants voting. In the event of a 'yes' vote the services remaining with the Council would be funded through the Housing General Fund.

Councillor C.A. Thomas read out a statement on behalf of Councillor P.G. Heesom, who had been unable to attend the meeting. The statement criticised the Choices Document as not providing a neutral stance and that it had not been able to be called in by Overview and Scrutiny.

In response, Councillor H. Brown said that the Choices Document had been presented to County Council on 22 November, 2011 and all Members had been given the opportunity to comment on it during the meeting.

Councillor R.P. Macfarlane asked how the pension deficit which would remain with the Council in the event of a 'yes' vote would be met. Councillor C. Hinds asked how much the set up costs would be in the event of a 'yes' vote.

The Head of Finance explained that during the Overview and Scrutiny budget meetings a number of options on how the pension deficit would be met

had been considered. This was estimated to be between £7M and £9M and various options on how this would be met would need to be taken forward with the WG if there was a 'yes' vote. The Chief Executive explained that, in the event of a 'yes' vote, the post ballot costs involving set up costs for Dee Housing, which the Welsh Government expected to be limited to £4M, would need to be funded from 'the Dowry'. These costs had been factored into the Dee Housing business plan.

Councillor M.G. Wright commented that the Council had complied fully with the WG guidelines. He said that during a meeting of the County Council on 5 December, 2007, the Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Housing of the previous Administration had commented that the retention of the Council's housing stock could no longer be supported. He said that the Council needed to progress this matter to allow tenants to have their vote. His comments were supported by Councillor A. Woolley who said that the Council had complied with the WG guidelines.

Councillor A.P. Shotton said that the Labour Group supported the ballot taking place and said that all Members from the Group would be distributing leaflets to all tenants to ensure they had an informed choice. He said that as the previous Leader of the Council, he had, together with a cross party delegation of group leaders or their representative, met with the Deputy Minister for Housing, Jocelyn Davies AM in the WG on 15 November, 2007. He said that he had been seeking flexibility from the WG to increase the projected growth of the Management and Maintenance Allowance from 3% within the Council's business plan but this had not been supported by the WG, even though the average Management and Maintenance Allowance over the previous 10 years had been much higher than 3%. He raised concern that the statement within the Choices Document on the £49M available for the Council to improve the housing stock was misleading as it was based on the Council receiving a Management and Maintenance Allowance of 3%.

The Chief Executive said that the information within the Choices Document was not misleading as it was based on the WG formula for projecting forward Management and Maintenance Allowances. He agreed that if this Allowance had been based on an average of previous years this could have provided the Council with greater funding.

In response to questions on the expected salary of the Chief Executive of Dee Housing and whether the Council would incur financial penalties if all housing stock did not meet the WHQS, Mark Longhill explained that the salary of the Chief Executive of Dee Housing would be considered by the Dee Housing Board and would be in line with the salary for a similar position within similar sized housing associations in Wales.

Councillor S. Jones asked what processes were in place for tenants if following a 'yes' vote Dee Housing got into debt. Mike Gaskell said that if Dee Housing got into debt the WG had the power to intervene. The WG had similar powers in the event that Dee Housing did not meet the commitments given to tenants within their business plan.

Councillor Shotton asked if a copy of the Dee Housing business plan could be provided to all Members. The Chief Executive said that the business plan had been shared with the Housing Project Board and would be made available to all Members.

Councillor Shotton, said that in line with the comments/queries from tenants during the consultation process, he proposed an amendment to the proposal that funding available to the Council through the Management and Maintenance Allowance be clarified within the Choices Document, to outline that the £49M available had been formulated through the criteria set by the WG, and was not a true reflection of the money which would be available. This amendment was seconded by Councillor Attridge.

The Chief Executive said that any amendment to the Choices Document would have to be agreed by the WG. He suggested that if the amendment was passed and supported by the WG, that the Council continue to allow to ballot all tenants on the current document as agreed at County Council on 22 November, 2011.

The Democracy and Governance Manager advised the Chair that the amendment could be accepted at her discretion if it related to the comments received on the Choices Document. The Chair did not accept the amendment from Councillor Shotton and therefore the proposal from Councillor Brown was put forward.

Councillor Shotton said that in view of the Chair's decision, the Labour Group could not support the Choices Document in its current format.

A recorded vote was requested and the requisite number of Members stood in support of this. On being put to the vote the proposal was carried.

For the proposal:-

Councillors: G.H. Bateman, M. Bateman, H. Brown, C.S. Carver, A.J. Davies-Cooke, Q.R.H. Dodd, R. Dolphin, B. Dunn, C.A. Ellis, V. Gay, F. Gillmore, G. Hardcastle, G. James, N.M. Jones, R.B. Jones, D.L. Mackie, N.M. Matthews, H.J. McGuill, E.W. Owen, M.J. Peers, N. Phillips, H.G. Roberts, L.A. Sharps, W.O. Thomas, D.T. Williams, A. Woolley and M.G. Wright.

Abstentions:-

Councillors: Eng. K. Armstrong-Braun, J.B. Attridge, D. Barratt, R.C. Bithell, J.C. Cattermoul, E.G. Cooke, D.L. Cox, R. Davies, R.G. Hampson, C. Hinds, R. Hughes, C.M. Jones, S. Jones, R.P. Macfarlane, D. McFarlane, A. Minshull, W. Mullin, P.R. Pemberton, M.A. Reece, A.P. Shotton and C.A. Thomas.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Council proceeds to issue the Stage 2 Notice and to ballot secure and introductory tenants on the options to transfer the Council's housing stock to Dee Housing; and
- (b) That no change be made to the Choices Document as a result of the Stage 1 consultation.

128. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 2.00 p.m. and ended at 3.38 p.m.

130. ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were four members of the press present.

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Chair

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

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL	15 FEBRUARY, 2012
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MEMBER	ITEM	MIN. NO. REFERS
Councillors: D. McFarlane, H.J. McGuill and E.W. Owen	Housing Ballot	127.

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
TUESDAY 21 FEBRUARY, 2012

Minutes of the special meeting of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Tuesday 21 February, 2012

PRESENT: Councillor H.J. McGuill (Chair)

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

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: E.G. Cooke, R. Dolphin, A.M. Halford, P.G. Heesom, C. Hinds, N. Humphreys, R. Johnson, N.M. Jones, N.M. Matthews, A. Minshull, E.W. Owen, I.B. Roberts, L.A. Sharps and D.T. Williams

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Director of Community Services, Director of Lifelong Learning, Head of Finance, Senior Accounting Technician, Democracy and Governance Manager and Committee Officer

131. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Members declared a personal interest in agenda item number 3 – Housing Revenue Account 2012/13 and Capital Programme 2012/13:-

- Councillors: G. James and H.J. McGuill.

The following Members declared a personal interest in agenda item number 4 – Clwyd Pension Fund:-

- Councillors: J.B. Attridge, D. Barratt, R.C. Bithell, B. Dunn, C.A. Ellis, R.G. Hampson, S. Jones, H.J. McGuill, P.R. Pemberton and A.P. Shotton.

The following Members declared a personal interest in agenda item number 6 – School Modernisation Update:-

- Councillors: L.A. Aldridge, Eng. K. Armstrong-Braun, J.B. Attridge, D. Barratt, G.H. Bateman, M. Bateman, H. Brown, J.C. Cattermoul, D.L. Cox, P.J. Curtis, R. Davies, A.J. Davies-Cooke, Q.R.H. Dodd, C.J. Dolphin, B. Dunn, C.A. Ellis, J.E. Falshaw, V. Gay, F. Gillmore, R.J.T.

Guest, R.G. Hampson, G. Hardcastle, H.T. Howorth, R. Hughes, H.D. Hutchinson, H.T. Isherwood, C.M. Jones, R.B. Jones, S. Jones, C. Legg, R.P. Macfarlane, D.I. Mackie, D.L. Mackie, W. Mullin, M.J. Peers, P.R. Pemberton, N. Phillips, M.A. Reece, H.G. Roberts, A.P. Shotton, C.A. Thomas, W.O. Thomas, D.E. Wisinger, A. Woolley and M.G. Wright

132. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2012/13 AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2012/13

The Director of Community Services presented the revenue budget proposals for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), including proposed rent and service charge changes, key areas of income and expenditure, and the level of closing balance at the year end. He also presented the budget proposals for the HRA Capital Programme 2012/13, which was year one of a six year improvement programme. The Council was informed that the Executive had met on 21 February, 2012 and had approved the recommendations outlined within the report. The detailed report presented to Executive was attached at Appendix A of the County Council report.

The Director of Community Services gave a presentation which covered the following areas:-

- Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
- Scrutiny Considerations
- Welsh Government Financial Determinations
- Communal Heating 2012/13
- HRA – 2011 the year that was!
- HRA 2012 – what next?
- Budget Proposals
- Funding for HRA Capital Programme 2012/13
- HRA Capital Programme 2011/12 the year that was!
- HRA Capital Programme 2012/13 – what next?
- HRA Capital Programme 2012/13 the year ahead!

Councillor H. Brown, Executive Member for Housing proposed that the County Council support the recommendations as outlined within the report. She reported that the weekly rent increase for Flintshire for 2012/13 would be £3.09 per week and the weekly garage rent increase would be 0.19p. The proposed changes to current communal heating charges were intended to ensure that each communal heating scheme recovers the full energy cost charged in respect of individual schemes. She also reported that an investment of £3.937M had been included in the 2012/13 Capital Budget which was an increase of £1.152M and the programme details were attached at Appendix 4 of the report. She thanked the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee who had worked hard to improve the Housing Service. The proposal was seconded by Councillor G. Hardcastle.

Councillor Eng. K. Armstrong-Braun spoke in support of the report and thanked the Head of Housing and all staff within the housing service for the improvements made within the service. His comments were shared by a number of Members.

Councillor J.B. Attridge asked if the underspend identified within the HRA would be allocated within the current financial year. The Head of Finance explained that proposals on how this money could be utilised would be presented to the next meeting of the Executive on 27 March, 2012.

Councillor A.P. Shotton welcomed the report and the suspension of the convergence policy as detailed in the report. He thanked the Executive Member for the cross party working of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee and for the inclusion of improvements to bathrooms for Council tenants following his suggestion made during a meeting of this Committee. He also thanked the Executive Member for working with himself and Councillor J.B. Attridge to reduce the communal heating charges for Chapel Court, Connah's Quay. On comments he had made during the County Council meeting held on 15 February, 2012, he referred Members to the Management and Maintenance Allowance which had been increased by 8% which he said supported his argument that the 3% Management and Maintenance Allowance within the Choices Document was not an accurate reflection on the funding available.

The Chief Executive said that the Management and Maintenance Allowance of 3% had been included in line with the Welsh Government formula and was not based on past year averages.

In response to questions on the level of funding for bathroom replacements, Councillor H. Brown explained that this funding was allocated following a suggestion made at a meeting of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee and was the amount available at the moment.

Councillor C.S. Carver welcomed the report. He raised concern on the £20,000 water charge collection and asked whether consideration would be given to changing the process so that water companies collected the charges from tenants themselves.

Councillor H. Brown assured Members that a review of the collection of water charges was being undertaken with the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Senior Accounting Technician reported that the Council received £476,000 from the water companies for collecting this charge on their behalf.

A number of questions were raised on the impact the rent increase would have on the 33% of tenants not on housing benefit and how they would be supported following the introduction of the Welfare Reforms. The Chief Executive said that Flintshire County Council had lobbied the WG to ensure that rent increases were not significantly raised. The decisions around the Welfare Reform were outside the control of the Council but the Council had

invested in the Income Support Team to ensure advice and support was available to tenants.

Councillor D. McFarlane welcomed the report and asked if a further breakdown of £0.076m pressure for a P.A. to the Head of Housing and an increased charge for the Head of Housing following a review of time allocation could be provided. The Chief Executive confirmed that a further breakdown would be provided following the meeting.

In response to comments on the use of alternative forms of heating for tenants in sheltered accommodations, Councillor H. Brown confirmed that this would be considered further.

Councillor R.C. Bithell raised concern on the £0.055m pressure identified for the use of benchmarking and independent tenant satisfaction assessment services and asked if this money would be better spent on investing in the Council's housing stock. The Director of Community Services said that the satisfaction surveys would enable the housing service to benchmark performance against other local authorities on repairs and maintenance and would deliver value for money.

Councillor L.A. Aldridge asked if further details on the discounts for Right to Buy sales, the length of tenancies and the reductions in sales could be provided to all Members. He also asked if a review of Disabled Facilities Grants over the last 4 years could be carried out to ensure that the Council would be able to meet the increased need in the future. The Chief Executive confirmed that further details on Rights to Buy sales would be provided to all Members following the meeting. He also confirmed that a review of a number of demographic processes would be carried out following the County Elections in May, 2012.

Councillor H. Brown thanked Members for their comments and asked all Members to support the recommendations as outlined within the report.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposed HRA budget for 2012/13, as set out in the report, be approved;
- (b) That the proposed level of rent and service charges for 2012/13, including the communal heating proposals, as set out in the report, be approved;
- (c) That the levels of projected balances at 31 March, 2013 of 3.25% of total expenditure be approved; and
- (d) That the proposed HRA Capital Programme, as set out in the report, be approved.

133. CLWYD PENSION FUND UPDATE

The Head of Finance introduced a report to update Members on issues relating to the Clwyd Pension Fund. Since 31 March, 2011 the market value of the Fund had marginally reduced from £1,051bn to £1.041bn as at 31 December, 2011, as volatility in global financial markets continued.

Following a review of public sector pension provision, the Government, employers and unions were involved in on-going negotiations on potential changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme. The Society of Welsh Treasurers (Pension Sub-Group) had commissioned work to look at collaboration opportunities across the eight Funds in Wales and it was planned that an Outline Business Case would be completed by October, 2012.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) had published a new Code of Practice, The CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Framework. This had been adopted by the Fund and would be used by Members and officers to identify any knowledge or skills gaps so that appropriate training could be arranged. The Head of Finance thanked Members of the Clwyd Pension Fund Panel for their involvement and hard work.

Councillor B. Dunn proposed that the report be noted and complimented the work of the Clwyd Pension Fund Panel which worked very well as a team. This proposal was seconded by Councillor A. Woolley.

In response to comments on the assets as a percentage of liabilities which had fallen to 59% as at December, 2011 and how it would be proposed to achieve 100%, the Head of Finance said that pension officers and advisers were currently researching methods of further reducing funding risk. Pension Fund Panel Members had received training in the concept of a 'flight-path' back to 100% funding. Further information on the 'flight-path' would be provided to all Members following the Clwyd Pension Fund Panel meeting scheduled for 24 February, 2012.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

134. A COMPACT FOR CHANGE BETWEEN THE WELSH GOVERNMENT AND WELSH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Chief Executive introduced a report to recommend the adoption of the Compact between the Welsh Government (WG) and Welsh Local Government for referral to and adoption by Council.

Flintshire had committed to working in collaboration on a number of projects and service areas, not only with local authorities but across all public sector organisations. The Chief Executive commented on a number of

significant collaboration programmes which were already underway, as detailed in the report.

An earlier version of this report had been considered by the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 19 January, 2012. In inviting the Committee to consider the Compact, the potential risks and benefits for Flintshire were explored. The resolution of the Committee was detailed in section 2.08 of the report.

Following assurances sought by Overview and Scrutiny and Audit Committee to address the governance of collaboration and performance monitoring arrangements to protect the interest of Flintshire, the protocol outlined within section 3.01 of the report was proposed to strengthen the Compact.

Councillor A. Woolley, Leader of the Council proposed that the County Council support the recommendations as outlined within the report. This proposal was seconded by Councillor Eng. K. Armstrong-Braun.

Councillor R.B. Jones proposed an amendment to the proposal that the word 'local' be added before the word 'services' within recommendation 4.02. Councillor A. Woolley supported the amendment to his proposal.

Councillor B. Dunn spoke in support of the report which he felt would give Members greater input around the review of local authority pension funds in Wales. He thanked the Chief Executive and Head of Finance who he said had provided the Members of the Clwyd Pension Fund with more information than had been provided in other local authorities.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Council become a signatory to the Compact subject to sufficient governance arrangements being in place as detailed below:-
- **For new collaborations** – the appropriate Overview & Scrutiny Committee will have a full report at the three stages of inception, outline business case (OBC) and final business case (FBC) for major projects and that Committee's full input will be presented to Executive as part of the formal decision-making process;
 - **Post-implementation of new collaborations** – the appropriate Overview & Scrutiny will receive regular post-implementation performance reports (at intervals to be agreed, for example, quarterly) for the first 12 months following implementation and thereafter main-streamed reporting in our local performance reporting;
 - **Members information on service changes** – bearing in mind the recent lessons learnt, the protocol for transition discussed at the Audit Committee meeting on 30 January, 2012 will include the above and prior detailed notice to all Members over operation changes (e.g. contacts, performance standards, service failure remedy routes etc; and

- **Regional scrutiny post implementation** – arrangements will be considered over and above the local arrangements on key collaborations e.g. school improvement. This could have the shape, for example, and using the same example, of the six local respective scrutiny chairs meeting to oversee implementation and to ensure thorough and timely reporting to their constituent authorities.
- (b) That the Council reaffirm its commitment to collaborate with other local authorities and public bodies whenever this can either provide existing services more efficiently and/or provide better local services at no additional cost, as long as a business case is provided and local sovereignty is protected through appropriate levels of democratic input and scrutiny.

135. SCHOOL MODERNISATION UPDATE

The Chief Executive provided an update on the School Modernisation consultation process. He provided the dates and times for the consultation meetings and said that hard copies of the dates and times would be placed in all Members "pigeon holes" following the meeting. Area Schools Review Booklets were being distributed this week and a hard copy would be provided to all Members before the end of the week. Consultation would also be undertaken with school staff, school governors and young people. If Members required any further information he asked that they contact the Director of Lifelong Learning or the Head of Development and Resource.

Councillor A.P. Shotton thanked the Chief Executive for the update. He asked how the consultation events would be run, as concern had been raised that the previous events had lacked co-ordination with many parents not being given the opportunity to speak to officers on a one to one basis.

The Chief Executive said that a presentation will be given at each of the consultation meetings. There would be the opportunity to raise questions before the presentation, and these could be grouped together and responded too following the presentation. The Director of Lifelong Learning said that the Executive Member for Education was scheduled to attend the consultation meetings and there would be an opportunity to speak to officers and Members on a one to one basis during the meetings. Interested persons would be encouraged to write or telephone the Council following the meetings if they had any questions/issues to raise.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

136. COUNTY COUNCIL DIARY OF MEETINGS 2012/13

The Chief Executive introduced the proposed diary of meetings for 2012/13 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

Following a decision of County Council in March, 2010, the diary of meetings was based on a 10 week cycle. In addition to the County Council meeting in the 10 weekly cycle there were additional meetings scheduled for the Statement of Accounts, the Budget and the Annual meeting. Overview and Scrutiny Committees were scheduled to meet approximately twice in the 10 week cycle which would enable more timely reporting for budget and performance reports, with performance reporting dates being identified throughout the diary.

Following a question from Councillor Q.R.H. Dodd, the Chief Executive said that he would provide Councillor Dodd with details on whether the portrait of Herbert Lewis had been fully restored and where this would be placed in the future.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed diary of meetings 2012/13 be approved.

137. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 2.00 p.m. and ended at 3.18 p.m.

138. ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There was one member of the public and three members of the press present.

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Chair

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

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL	21 FEBRUARY, 2012
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MEMBER	ITEM	MIN. NO. REFERS
Councillors: G. James and H.J. McGuill	Housing Revenue Account 2012/13 and Capital Programme 2012/13	132.
Councillors: J.B. Attridge, D. Barratt, R.C. Bithell, B. Dunn, C.A. Ellis, R.G. Hampson, S. Jones, H.J. McGuill, P.R. Pemberton and A.P. Shotton	Clwyd Pension Fund update	133.
Councillors: L.A. Aldridge, Eng. K. Armstrong-Braun, J.B. Attridge, D. Barratt, G.H. Bateman, M. Bateman, H. Brown, J.C. Cattermoul, D.L. Cox, P.J. Curtis, R. Davies, A.J. Davies-Cooke, Q.R.H. Dodd, C.J. Dolphin, B. Dunn, C.A. Ellis, J.E. Falshaw, V. Gay, F. Gillmore, R.J.T. Guest, R.G. Hampson, G. Hardcastle, H.T. Howorth, R. Hughes, H.D. Hutchinson, H.T. Isherwood, C.M. Jones, R.B. Jones, S. Jones, C. Legg, R.P. Macfarlane, D.I. Mackie, D.L. Mackie, H.J. McGuill, W. Mullin, M.J. Peers, P.R. Pemberton, N. Phillips, M.A. Reece, H.G. Roberts, A.P. Shotton, C.A. Thomas, W.O. Thomas, D.E. Wisinger, A. Woolley and M.G. Wright	School Modernisation update	135.

CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

Thursday 12th May - morning

Early in the morning I attended Sheriff of Chester's Charity Breakfast in the Assembly Room, Chester Town Hall – over £1000 was raised for charity.

In the evening it was the Flintshire County Music School 'Celebration of Youth Music' Intermediate & Senior Ensembles' – A wonderful evening, so many talented young people in Flintshire, a delight to have been invited.

Friday 13th May - evening

This evening I was delighted to attend another Flintshire County Music School 'Celebration of Youth Music' event for Junior & Senior Ensembles.

Monday 16th May – afternoon

I very much enjoyed attending the Film Fest Mini Oscars at the Clwyd Theatre – what a delight to see all these very young film makers and stars of the future and to share in their enthusiasm.

Friday 20th May – morning

On this morning, I attended the Launch Event of Flintshire Business Week Magazine 2011 at Chester Football Club, Sealand.

Sunday 22nd May – afternoon

I was delighted to attend The Lord Mayor of Chester, Councillor Eleanor Johnson's Annual Civic Service which was held at Chester Cathedral.

Friday 27th May – morning

On this morning I was invited to the Flintshire Healthy Schools Scheme Celebration of Achievements at Ysgol Gwynedd, Flint – a great delight to be asked to this event and to see the confidence of these young people especially over our MC'S.

Tuesday 7th June – morning

This day was the Opening of the Fourth Assembly at the Senedd, Cardiff Bay – amazing experience to be invited to this event and to meet her Majesty and Prince Philip and to be part of history.

Wednesday 8th June

In the morning I visited the Mental Health Centre, Growing Places and Double Click in Shotton.

In the afternoon I visited Ambrose Lloyd Centre, Social Links and Next Steps, Mold and the Intensive Support Team in Flint – to see and talk to our service users and our front line staff is a privilege. I never fail to be impressed by the hard work and commitment our staff give to make other people's lives better.

Thursday 9th June

This morning I visited Croes Atti Residential Care Home & Day Centre in Flint – very welcoming. In the afternoon I visited Marleyfield Day Centre &

Residential Home in Buckley – lots going on for service users and Llys Gwenffrwd Residential Home in Holywell – nice atmosphere, residents all help in caring for the pets.

Friday 10th June - morning

I visited the Melrose Day Centre in Shotton on this morning – well used facility with lots of activities going on.

Friday 11th June

The Denbighshire County Council Freedom of the County to the Royal Welsh was held on this day – despite the rain which held off for the parade a very proud day.

Sunday 12th June

This was the day of my Civic Service at Emmanuel Bistre Church, Buckley. Thanks to all who made it happen, those who did the behind the scenes work and those who participated - Great day!!!

Monday 13th June

First thing in the morning I visited the Early Years Centre, Rural North Flintshire Family Centre at Gronant – a great facility for the village, well used by all ages.

During the day I visited several Schools in Flintshire, Gronant CP, Trelogan, Bryn Garth (Penyffordd), Bryn Pennants (Mostyn), Mornant (Gwespyr).

Tuesday 14th June – morning

I attended the morning service at Trelawnyd C of E County Primary School accompanied by Councillor Nigel Steele-Mortimer.

In the afternoon it was the Children from Chernobyl's visit to County Hall – a fantastic day, we went to Theatr Clwyd for a back stage visit with Pat Nelder. The children sang on stage!

Thursday 16th June – afternoon

Citizenship Ceremony – I met so many really nice people including two who had lived in this Country for over 50 years.

In the evening I attended a Performance of “The Spirit of the Mimosa” at Theatr Clwyd – a play about the colonization of Patagonia by the Welsh – an excellent production!

Friday 17th June

In the morning I visited Llanfynydd School and then onto Abermorddu CP School – so impressed by their co-operative, the children even supply lettuce to Caffi Florence at Loggerheads.

In the afternoon I met with David Jones, Principal and Robert Walford, Head of Operations at Deeside College followed by a tour of the College – how big this has grown in just a few years. What a fantastic place for Flintshire and overseas students to learn. Great link with industry!

Saturday 18th June

Shotton Community Association's 25th Celebration - I was delighted to meet so many of the centre's users, Lord Barry Jones and the Mayor of Shotton, Ann Minshull.

Sunday 19th June

I was delighted to attend The Town Mayor of Buckley, Cllr Mike Peers' Civic Service in the morning held at Pentrobin Methodist Church, Drury – a very memorable day. I hope Mike really enjoys his time as Mayor!

The Wrexham Church Civic Service was held in the afternoon – so lovely to see such a good turn out of young people.

Monday 20th June

On this day I visited Halkyn, Buckley, Flint and the new Alltami depot to thank staff for all the hard work they do to keep our roads open and our streets clean. I was very impressed by our recycling facility in Flint, first class and so clean.

Tuesday 21st June

Today I was delighted to be invited to Abbey Metals and Castle Connections, such dedication by all the staff at these work opportunities.

Wednesday 22nd June

In the afternoon I attend the AGM of Flintshire Disabilities Forum in Shotton.

Thursday 23rd June

This morning I visited Westbridge furniture factory in Greenfield with Cllr Sharps, then sadly attended the funeral of John Hughes Parry, the husband of former county councillor Valmai Parry in Nannerch. In the evening I was privileged to attend the students awards ceremony at Deeside College.

Friday 24th June

In the morning I visited Tri Ffordd and Glanrafon Centre. Both centres are such a credit to Flintshire, warm and friendly. In the afternoon I was asked to open Enterprise House in Flint, The old Courtaulds headquarters, which is now a fantastic facility of reasonable priced office space for start up businesses with great potential to expand.

CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

Saturday 25th June – evening

I attended the 40th Anniversary Service for the North East Wales Deaf Children's Society held at Mold Parish Church – very inspiring event.

Sunday 26th June - afternoon

On this afternoon I was delighted to attend the High Sheriff of Clwyd's Hog Roast – lovely day!

Wednesday 29th June – morning

Mr. John Saunders, who was recently awarded an MBE, and his wife visited me at County Hall. Mr. & Mrs. Saunders are two very dedicated people who have worked so hard for Holywell Hospital. It has to be a first for Flintshire – 2 MBE's in one home!

Thursday 30th June

Queensferry Library Re-launch Week – This afternoon I attended the "Learning how to research your Family Tree" event – good IT program for researching your family tree.

Friday 1st July

In the morning I visited Early Years Flying Start in Greenfield and Flint – good parenting is a skill and that is what these centres are trying to impress.

I then went on to Gwynedd Primary and Ysgol Pen Coch schools in Flint – very welcoming and excited children.

In the afternoon I visited the Brookhill Landfill Site. This now redundant landfill was an extremely interesting visit. I was shown how methane is extracted and how it produces electricity which feeds back into the grid and when sold makes £1million for Flintshire.

Monday 4th July

Several school visits today: Penarlag Primary School – Children so welcoming. Hawarden High School – impressed by the knowledge of the head boys and girls who showed me around the school. Rector Drew Juniors followed by Hawarden Infants – lovely lesson in the woods!

In the afternoon I was delighted to be invited to a special school assembly held at Drury Primary School to Celebrate 50 years of Public Service for Mr. Kenneth Iball.

Wednesday 6th July - evening

I was delighted to have been invited to the Chairman of Denbighshire's Sponsored Concert at the International Musical Eisteddfod, Llangollen. Fulfilled one of my dreams today when I met Terry Waite and what a really nice genuine person he is.

Thursday 7th July.

Several school visits today.

First one being Croft Nursery & Early Years Centre in Aston – one of the best stocked nursery centres I have seen! Then on to St. Etherwold's Church School, Shotton Infants, Taliesin Junior & Venerable Edward Morgan School – very friendly and welcoming. I had a lesson in poultry rearing at Venerable Edward Morgan School.

In the evening I was invited to the 20th Anniversary of Bengal Dynasty Restaurant, Shotton – excellent evening.

Friday 8th July

On this morning I visited Westwood Early Years Centre in Buckley – good parenting starts here, and then on to Westwood Primary School – friendly children who made me welcome.

I was invited to attend the official opening of the Materials Recycling Centre at UPM – excellent energy from waste facility – this company is keeping ahead of the game!

Saturday 9th July

Llangollen Eisteddfod - I was delighted to have been asked to present the prize to the winners of a Ladies Barbershop group who were magnificent.

Sunday 10th July

In the morning was Cllr David Cox, Mayor of Flint's, Civic Service Ceremony – nice service, rain did not stop the procession. Wish David Cox a really enjoyable year as Mayor.

In the afternoon was Cllr Gwilym Jones, Chairman of Anglesey County Council's Civic Service – glorious afternoon, really important to forge links with Anglesey now we are going into partnership with them!

In the evening I attended the Royal British Legion Grand 90th Anniversary Celebration VIP Reception hosted by Venue Cymru – fantastic day when lots of money was raised for the British Legion.

Monday 11th July

During the day I visited several schools in Flint:

Richard Gwyn High School – very impressed by Art work the students have displayed throughout the school.

St. Mary's Primary School Visit – Very welcoming.

Maes Edwin, Flint Mountain – our smallest school but full of characters!

Flint High School and Ysgol Maes Hyfryd – made very welcome at Flint High School and I just loved the new laser cutter. Staff and pupils in Maes Hyfryd so friendly.

In the evening was the Llwynegrin Singers AGM held at the Plas Hafod Hotel. They made me very welcome here and have offered to participate in a fundraising concert for me later in the year.

Wednesday 13th July

Bev Jones visited me at County Hall on this morning. Bev is a champion at disability Shot Putt and also broke the European Discus record. This young lady is a real example to **ALL** people, she thinks what she can do and how to get there, very uplifting person to be with.

Thursday 14th July

This evening I was invited to attend the Wrexham Science Festival 2011 Launch Reception at Glyndŵr University. Very good facility and really interesting programme.

Saturday 16th July

Cllr Matt Wright invited me to open the Brynford Summer Fete on this day. Despite the rain, the warm welcome made it a really enjoyable day.

Sunday 17th July

On this morning I attended The Mayor & Mayoress of Holywell, Cllr Peter York and Mrs. Sheena Wallbanks' Civic Service at St. Winefrid's Catholic Church, Holywell – nice service and very welcoming.

Monday 18th July

Royal Welsh show, Builth Wells – really lovely day. Met lots of local farmers showing some really spectacular animals and produce. It makes you so proud to be part of it and very proud to be Welsh.

Wednesday 20th July – morning

Flintshire Excellence Award – this morning I was invited to present a School Achievement Award with Ray Dickson to Matthew Wilson. Matthew attends Ysgol Bron Dyfryn and came to the Chairman's Room in County Hall with his parents to receive his award – very nice young man who thoroughly deserved his award.

Also today I had Tom Blackwell, a young man who is in our care system, work shadow me. We had a very informative meeting with Mr. Neil Ayling, Director of Community Services, as seen from a users point of view.

Saturday 23rd July

In the morning was the Family Fun Day, Bonc Park, Mynydd Isa – lovely day, lovely facility and a credit to those who work so hard for the community.

Later in the afternoon I was delighted to attend a garden party hosted by Bill & Hilda Humphreys for Llwynegrin Singers – very enjoyable and hope they raised lots of money for the group.

Sunday 24th July

In the afternoon, I attended Cllr Barry Thomas, Chairman of Powys County Council's Civic Service – very nice service and a lovely day. Building stronger links with Powys will be an advantage to the County.

Monday 25th July

Today I was invited to officially open the launch of Danger Point to Public Visitors at Talacre. This facility is now open to the public at a small fee. Well worth a visit for parents and children alike.

This evening I attended the launch of the Dug-Out Canoe at Connah's Quay Docks with artist Clinton Challoner. After much teasing about myself being IN the canoe, I left that task to four very able rangers, whilst I got to name and launch it using good Welsh whiskey. Perfect evening, they paddled up the Dee into the sunset. It is many years since a new vessel has been built and launched from Connah's Quay Docks. A great privilege for me to be asked to do this!

Tuesday 26th July

This morning I was invited as a member of Social & Health O&S Committee to the Parenting Strategy Group meeting at Westwood Centre, Buckley. Positive parenting is the most important job we can have. If we do it well then the next generation and all others that follow will benefit. This is about starting that process for those who are less fortunate at the start of theirs!

Friday 29th July

I was delighted to be invited to a Reception at The Maes, National Eisteddfod, Wrexham, by Lloyd Fitzhugh, High Sheriff of Clwyd. Really enjoyable evening, the 3 Tenors were magnificent!

Saturday 30th July

Today, I attended a Buffet Lunch at the Eisteddfod, Maes Wrexham – again met lots of prominent Welsh speakers and non Welsh speakers from all over Wales but especially Flintshire.

Tuesday 2nd August

Today I visited play schemes operated by Flintshire throughout the County with Janet Roberts, 13 in total. A really worthwhile scheme enjoyed by hundreds and hundreds of children. Water slides, tepees, tents, face painting, outdoor den building, tight rope walking, swing building, cooking, bracelet making, in fact anything the children wanted to do, they are encouraged to try to do. Not sure who enjoys it the most, the children or the workers, see some of the pictures!

Wednesday 3rd August

National Play Day – again visited 12 play schemes today with Janet Roberts. I launched my 'Recycle your cycle' campaign at Gronant. Had burgers and sausages cooked outside at the children's playing field. Lots of very happy very muddy children!

Friday 5th August

This evening I was delighted to attend the Deeside Junior Ice Hockey Club Presentation Evening held at Corus Club, Shotton. Great turn out of young people aged 4-16. Very proud of their achievements beating Sheffield to gain the N.W.I.H. Cup.

Tuesday, 9th August

A wonderful day was spent at the Anglesey Show – a really traditional Show second only to the Royal Welsh. The Leader of Anglesey Council, Councillor Brian Jones, made me so welcome.

Wednesday, 10th August

This morning I visited Pen Coch Special School Playscheme and Ysgol Maes Hyfryd Special School Playscheme, both in Flint – a most enjoyable visit to these very successful Playschemes, well run and well used.

Thursday, 11th August

A Citizenship Ceremony was held in Llwynegryn Hall, Mold and again I had the opportunity to meet with many people, both adults and children, who have chosen Flintshire as their new homeland.

Monday, 15th August

Today I had the opportunity to meet some of our looked after children and celebrate their successes and have one of them “work shadow” me.

Wednesday, 17th August

Flintshire County Council’s Learner of the Year Award Winner, John Thomas, visited today to give his presentation, of which we are so proud.

Thursday, 18th August

Once again I had the honour of judging the Trade Stands at the Denbighshire & Flintshire Show. I was delighted to work so closely with Denbighshire.

Wednesday, 24th August

Today I attended the funeral of John Hartley of Kinnerton, who sadly passed away at the remarkable age of 102 years and was ex postman of the village.

Saturday, 27th August

Despite the weather the Gwyl Gobaith Music Festival was a great success, well supported by businesses and the public at large. A very enjoyable evening.

Tuesday, 30th August

UsUnltd held a sponsored Bike Ride across Wales and I was delighted to greet the youngsters on their arrival back. Hopefully they raised lots of money to purchase the shop and accommodation in Flint so they can set up a “getaway”.

CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

Saturday, 3rd September

I was delighted to attend the 'Grand Day Out' 2011 Vision Support Carnival – a very deserving charity who work with local people to make their quality of life better.

Wednesday, 7th September

Today was the official opening of Ty Banc Cerrig in New Brighton, a housing scheme for young people with learning disabilities. The 3 young people were so thrilled to be moving into **THEIR** new home, the atmosphere was infectious.

Friday, 9th September

Early this morning was the Flintshire Business Week Launch – my thanks to all the Team who work so hard to bring businesses in Flintshire together.

Sunday, 11th September

This afternoon I attended the Conwy Chairman's Civic Service at St. Mary & All Saints Church, Conwy.

Monday, 12th September - morning

I was invited to attend a tour of UPM Shotton Papermill. Many thanks to Mr. David Ingham, General Manager who along with others were sponsors of Flintshire Business Week.

Wednesday, 14th September

This evening was the Pride of Flintshire Awards held at the Springfield Hotel, nr. Holywell. This has to be the highlight of any Flintshire Chairman's year! I shall never forget the rap the young man sang. It really brought home what some of our young people have been through.

Friday, 16th September

Very early this morning I joined Mike Taylor and his team for the 'D Day' River Dee clean up – the dedication of Mike Taylor and his team of volunteers in their efforts to keep our river banks clean is fantastic. Year after year they turn up to litter pick and it is so rewarding to see the place looking so fantastic and litter free!

In the evening, with the Judges, I jointly presented the Best Kept Communities Awards. A very joyous occasion and a chance to meet people from all walks of life who take **PRIDE** in where they live.

Saturday, 17th September – Evening

I was delighted to have been invited to the Royal Marines Association Concert in Prestatyn. A humbling experience meeting Mark Ormond, triple amputee, who has embarked on a new career, inspiring others to do the same and to look forward to what you can do, not what you can't.

Sunday, 18th September

This morning I attended the Chairman of Shotton Town Council, Councillor Ann Minshull's Civic Service – nice service and warm welcome by Councillor Minshull.

Monday, 19th September

This morning I visited two schools:

Elfed High School – first time for many years I have visited Elfed, really pleased to have a chance to speak to the new head boy and girl.

Buckley Mount Lane Primary School – What a buzzing, vibrant school. Thanks have to go to all who made it such an enjoyable visit.

Wednesday, 21st September

Several school visits this morning:

Ysgol Terrig, Treuddyn – this school and Parc y Llan seem to work well on the same site, Welsh and English Primary schools together.

Ysgol Derwenfa, Leeswood – again a school full of happy faces.

Nercwys VCP School – one of our smaller schools who may have a chance to expand.

In the evening again attended the Pride of Flintshire Awards held at the Springfield Hotel. Once again the Children's Minister was asked to attend these awards. He was duly impressed by the talents of our youngsters and how well Flintshire work towards making a positive difference to their lives.

Thursday, 22nd September

I visited more schools today,

Ysgol Estyn CP, Hope – lovely school with positive staff.

Ysgol Derwen, Higher Kinnerton – a happy school where children love to go.

Abbots Lane Infant School, Penyffordd and Penyffordd Junior School – lovely staff and children alike.

Ewloe Green CP School – very active school changed beyond all recognition for this 'old pupil'.

Friday, 23rd September

This morning I visited Pentre-robin St John the Baptist VA School – vibrant, Mr. Byrne the head teacher actively encourages learning through the medium of sport, Rugby World Cup to be precise!

This evening was my Charity Casino Night at the Beaufort Park Hotel. Fantastic night, thanks go to the hotel but mostly to Karen and Lesley for making it such a great fundraiser, almost £1000 raised.

Saturday, 24th September

Mold Food Festival – great event for Mold and so very well attended!

Tuesday, 27th September

Today a group of children from Abbots Lane School, Penyffordd visited County Hall – lovely children who I enjoyed entertaining.

Wednesday, 28th September

In the afternoon I was delighted to attend the Recognition of Awards Photo Shoot – great pleasure in being able to personally thank these teams who have won national awards on behalf of Flintshire County Council.

Thursday, 29th September

In the afternoon, I visited Cornist CP School, Flint – what nice staff and again happy children. What more can you ask for.

After the school visit, I attended the launch of ‘Cauldrons and Furnaces’ – Flint Castle. Great chance to be at this event. Next June it will be an amazing spectacular performance by Flintshire people to celebrate the 2012 Cultural Olympiad.

Sunday, 2nd October

In the evening, I attended the Annual Charity Show of Superkids at Theatr Clwyd. This was a fantastic evening, one of the best evenings ever. Hopefully they raised lots of money for the children.

Monday, 3rd October

In the morning, I visited Southdown Primary School at Buckley to meet the children. I was very impressed by the children and the great atmosphere at the school.

At lunchtime I attended the official opening of the Redrow show homes at Northop. It was lovely to see local people building new homes again.

Tuesday 4th October

In the evening I was invited to the Country Spice Dinner to welcome an MP from Bangladesh. This was a great opportunity to meet with local and national government officials from another Country.

Thursday 6th October

In the evening I attended the Town Hall at Chester for the Lord Mayor of Chester, Councillor Eleanor Johnson at Home event. This was a lovely evening and I met lots of interesting people.

Saturday 8th October

In the morning I visited RAF Valley on Anglesey for the re-enactment of the Freedom of Anglesey to the Royal Air Force, Valley. Despite the inclement weather this was an excellent day.

In the afternoon I attended the opening of Gladstone’s Library’s Islamic Reading Room at Gladstone Library in Hawarden. It was very interesting listening to the Islamic speaker.

Sunday 9th October

In the morning I attended Mold Sports Centre for the Flintshire 10K run. This was a great event, very well supported.

Monday 10th October

In the morning I visited the new amalgamated Broughton Infant and Junior School for the opening and cutting of the ribbon. It was very nice to see the schools become one.

Tuesday 11th October

In the morning I visited United Paper Mill for the Renewables Day as part of Flintshire Business week. I was very impressed by this forward thinking company.

Wednesday 12th October

In the morning I attend an Exhibition Theme "The Chain" at Convatec, part of Flintshire Business Week. This was a great venue with great hosts and a great change for businesses to network.

At 11.30 I met Officers from Flintshire to say a few words of welcome and open the Flintshire Open for Business Exhibition.

Thursday 13th October

In the morning I attended Convatec for the Exhibition of 'The Supply Chain' as part of Flintshire Business Week. A very positive company where employees' views are valued.

In the afternoon I visited Airbus for the opening of the North Factory which was attended by the Prime Minister. This is such an impressive facility that will hopefully secure jobs for Flintshire people far in the future.

In the evening I attended Glyndwr University for the Glyndwr University Inaugural & Professional Lecture Series 2011/11 which included Shakespeare, Owain Glyndwr and the future of the University Lecture. A university on our doorstep that is really going places.

Friday 14th October

Early in the morning I attended Deeside College for a MP breakfast question time. Thanks to all who took part in this.

In the evening I attended Soughton Hall for the Flintshire Business Awards Evening. It makes you so proud to see the successful businesses in Flintshire.

Sunday 16th October

In the evening I attended the Beaufort Park Hotel for the Hawarden Rotary Club Charity Celebrity Auction. A very successful event raising well over £1,000.

Monday 17th October

At midday as part of Flintshire Business Week, I visited the Days Inn for Lunch. This was a very interesting day, the guest speaker was a top economist!

Tuesday 18th October

In the morning it was a pleasure to welcome the School Council from Penarlag School to County Hall, the pupils were lovely.

At midday I visited the Springfield Hotel on the A55 as part of the Flintshire Business Week for the Bank of England Seminar. Again impressive event with a very interesting speaker.

In the evening I attended the Grosvenor Museum, Chester for the Samaritans of Chester & District Annual General Meeting. It was very nice to support this local Group.

Wednesday 19th October

As part of Business Week, in the evening I attended a reception at the Houses of Parliament, Westminster – my thanks to David Hanson and our business week staff for all the hard work they put in to making this such a successful event.

Friday 21st October

This evening I was delighted to be invited to the Mayor of Wrexham's Charity Dinner Dance - such a wonderful evening.

Sunday 23rd October

This morning I attended the Chairman of Denbighshire County Council, Cllr Bill Cowie's Civic Service at St. Asaph Cathedral. A really moving service in very pleasant surroundings.

In the afternoon I attended the Mayor of Caerwys Civic Service. So nice that the local boys choir were asked to sing.

Friday 28th October

This evening I was invited to the Chair of Connah's Quay Town Council Charity Night – a fun charity night where hopefully lots of money was raised.

Saturday 29th October

In the evening I was invited to open the Countryside Rangers and Friends of Pen y Maes Woods Halloween Event at Holywell – What a great idea! Long may it continue.

I then went on to the High Sheriff's Charity Concert at St. Asaph Cathedral – beautiful music and surroundings, what more could you ask for and all for a good cause.

Monday 31st October

This morning I visited Kingspan along with the Chief Executive and Councillor Tony Sharp. Here is a local company who is moving forward at such a pace. Good luck to them!

Wednesday 2nd November

First thing this morning a group of children from Trelogan School Council visited County Hall, lovely children who asked lots of questions.

Wednesday 2nd November cont'd

Later on in the morning I was delighted to attend the Apprentices Competition 2011 held at the Beaufort Park Hotel & Conference Centre. Great to see so many girls up for the awards. Very deservedly won by a young man from Newport.

Thursday 3rd November

This afternoon, I opened the Schools Exhibitions at Clwyd Theatr Cymru – beautiful workmanship by the school children.

Friday 4th November

Today, I visited the following schools in Mold.

Ysgol Bryn Gwalia CP - school with a nice ethos.

Bryn Coch CP - our longest primary school in Flintshire, well behaved children.

St. David's Catholic School - a cheerful school where children want to learn.

Ysgol Maes Garmon – excellent facilities and a great flagship for Welsh Medium education.

Mold Alun High School – our longest 6th form with great facilities and a can do attitude.

Tuesday 8th November

This morning I was delighted to welcome a group of children from Sealand C.P. School Council to County Hall. Beautiful children, a credit to their school.

CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

Wednesday 9th November

This evening I was delighted to have been invited to the 100th Birthday Party of Sarah Tweedly at the Talacre Community Centre – what a lovely lady with a real zest for life, only stopped driving her car 6 months ago!

Thursday 10th November

Today I attended the official opening of the new offices for Revolymer Ltd on the Deeside Industrial Estate – a revolutionary company who have produced a non stick chewing gum. They are a credit to Flintshire.

Friday 11th November

In the morning I visited the following schools:

Ysgol Y Llan Church in Wales Voluntary Aided in Whitford - lovely school, lovely setting, lovely pupils.

Ysgol Bro Carmel - friendly happy school.

Ysgol Maesglas, Greenfield – Modern outlook, lovely ethos.

In the afternoon I attended the official opening of the Airbus new Visitors Reception – any visit to Airbus is an honour, so proud to say they are based here in Flintshire.

Saturday 12th November

This morning I was invited to the Flintshire Record Office Open Day in Hawarden – so very welcoming, a fantastic facility for family history research. I then went on to visit Bertha Evans at Croes Atti Residential Home, Flint who was celebrating her 100th birthday – a lovely lady and her family.

Sunday 13th November

Remembrance Service at Hawarden Memorial – a great honour to have been asked to lay the wreath on behalf of Flintshire.

Monday 14th November

Today, I visited several schools in Connah's Quay and Queensferry:

Golftyn CP School – lovely school.

Wepre CP School – nice atmosphere.

Dee Road School – happy school.

Custom House School – happy children.

Bryn Deva School – happy children.

Queensferry CP School – same campus as JS High – nice school.

John Summers High School – good school with a head who loves his job.

Tuesday 15th November

School visits this morning – Ysgol Myndd Isa, newly amalgamated with the Junior school. Lovely atmosphere and happy children.

Argoed High School – very forward looking school, good results, striving all the time for excellence, happy inclusive school.

Wednesday 16th November

In the morning I visited schools in Saltney.

St. Anthony's Catholic Primary School where two lovely children showed me around the school, they were a real credit to it!
Saltney Ferry CP School – happy children in a friendly school.
Wood Memorial CP School – lots of good things going on here to enrich the pupil's experience.

In the afternoon I hosted afternoon tea in the Chair's room at County Hall for my guests who were all lovely ladies of 100 years and more. What fun we all had and what a brilliant attitude these ladies had to life. Total age was 306, as they were leaving all said 'see you next year'!

Thursday 17th November

This morning I was invited to the opening of the Wales Coastal Path, Greenfield Dock, this will be a great asset to Wales when complete.

I then attended the official opening of Mynydd Awel at Mold Business Park – great supporters of Flintshire Business Week, a pleasure to see them expanding.

In the afternoon I was invited to the 20th Anniversary Celebrations and Launch of our Plas Power Environmental Education facilities in Wrexham – great facility.

Friday 18th November

In the morning I visited Connah's Quay High School – a good school with a good headteacher and good ideas. I then went on to Holywell High School – again the pupils shone here. Despite the buildings shortcoming, the pupils achieved and were a delight to be with.

In the evening I presented the 'Flintshire Business Woman of the Year' award at the Network She Awards, Venue Cymru, Llandudno. So very honoured to be able to present the award to a Flintshire Company, Wagtail and to see Clare Budden receive her award.

Tuesday 22nd November

This morning a group of children from Ysgol y Llan, Whitford visited County Hall – lovely children who really knew how to question me.

In the evening I attended the Film Blast Screening at Theatre Clwyd. This was a film made across the ages and abilities from pre-school to care home – very enjoyable.

Wednesday 23rd November – several School visits this morning

Sandycroft C. P. – lovely school, pleasant happy children.

Sealand C.P. – caring school with lots going on.

Northop Ysgol Owen Jones – nice school with a family atmosphere.

Northop Hall C.P. School – lovely school with happy pupils.

Thursday 24th November - morning

Early this morning I attended the Bloodhound Experience Wrexham Business Breakfast at Glyndwr University. A great opportunity to meet the Roadster

who has built this land speed record vehicle for the attempt upon the land speed record next year.

I then went on to visit two schools.

Ysgol Rhos Helyg in Rhosesmor – rosy cheeks on all the children, a very happy environment.

Rhesycae VCP School in Holywell – Flintshire's smallest school, only 5 pupils when I was there but all were happy.

In the afternoon I was delighted to be invited to the Opening of Schools Exhibit at Clwyd Theatre Cymru - lovely chance for children to work with artists to create this.

Tuesday, 29th November

Today I visited the following schools in Holywell, Brynford & Lixm.

St. Winefride's Catholic Primary School – lovely friendly school.

Ysgol Gwenffrwd – good Welsh medium school with a nice atmosphere.

Ysgol Perth y Terfyn Infants – happy experience for the children but the building is old.

Ysgol y Fron Junior – an old school with a good atmosphere. Fantastic Christmas grotto thanks to the staff.

Brynford Primary School – happy active school.

Lixm C.P. School – lovely children, happy school.

Wednesday, 30th November

This evening I was invited to the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the Civic Hall, Connah's Quay, which was a very pleasant evening.

Thursday, 1st December

In the morning, Jessica Ireland and Patrick Carney from Ysgol Myndydd Isa Infants School came into County Hall where I presented them with a certificate for winner and runner up designers of my Christmas Card. Many thanks to these children for their lovely art work.

This afternoon it was an honour to welcome three new citizens of Flintshire at the Citizenship Ceremony, Llwynegrin Hall.

Saltney Town Council Christmas Parade – a ride on the top of an open bus, lots of people and above all great entertainment from the children.

In the evening I was invited to Clwyd Theatr Cymru Theatre for the Young People 'Humbug' performance by Tim Baker – a really enjoyable play.

Thursday 2nd December

This morning was the official opening of Age Concern new Handy Van Service at the Daniel Owen Precinct. What an excellent service for the elderly. Now they can be confident when they need to let a workman into their home.

In the evening I attended the CFFWI Carol Festival at Bethesda Chapel, Mold. The rafters rang with the beautiful singing, a truly great Christmas concert.

Wednesday 7th December

This evening I was delighted to have been invited to the Lord Mayor of Chester's Christmas Concert & Soiree at Eaton Park, Chester – a beautiful setting and an excellent concert.

Thursday 8th December

This morning I visited Freshfields in Greenfield, our work experience placement for learning difficulty clients, so very welcoming.

Friday 9th December

This evening I attended the Flintshire Music Service Annual Christmas Concert at St. Mary's Parish Church. Excellent! How proud our young musicians made me feel.

Sunday 11th December

This morning was the Mayor of Saltney's Civic Service held at St. Marks Church, Saltney. Beautiful service!

This evening I was pleased to attend the 'Light up a Life' Service in support of Nightingale House Hospice – excellent to hear our children's band.

Monday 12th December

Visited Halkyn, Alltami & Queensferry Depots which I found all very informative.

I also visited, Marleyfield Day Centre in Buckley, a great facility, Wepre Visitors Centre, an excellent park, very well used and Connah's Quay Housing Office, good to see how the system works.

Tuesday, 13th December – morning visits

Catherine Gladstone House in Mancot - good example of joint working albeit in small rooms.

Llwyn Onn Pupil Referral Unit - was made to feel very welcome by staff and pupils alike.

Members Christmas Lunch at County Hall – once again thanks to our pupils who turned up to help make the lunch a very festive affair, thanks to all staff who both cooked and served lunch.

Wednesday 14th December

County Library HQ - met with Lawrence Rawsthorne for a tour of County Library HQ – a great facility!

Greenfield Heritage Park – met with volunteers and trustees, well run and I look forward to the Easter schools programme.

Melrose Day Centre – such a well organised run facility.

Thursday 15th December

Several visits today:

The Learning Centre-Pupil Referral Unit, Shotton – made to feel welcome here by both staff and pupils.

Bryn Tirion Unit, Shotton – surprisingly spacious facility.

Hawarden House-Links – very interesting meeting the staff and the two pupils.

Croes Atti Care Home, Flint – lovely to see so many happy friendly faces.

Holywell Housing Office – made very welcome by the staff, got a good understanding of some of their problems.

Llys Gwenfrwdd – again so nice to visit the residents and staff as they prepared for Christmas.

In the evening I was invited to ‘Save the Nativity Family Nativity’, heart warming to see so many turn out to support the charity.

Monday, 19th December – evening

Japanese Youth Exchange Raffle Draw held at County Hall – so nice to meet the students and thank them all personally for raising the amount they did to help the Tsunami victims.

Thursday, 5th January 2012 - evening

Delighted to attend the Hawarden High School Governor’s Presentation Evening at St. David’s Hotel, Ewloe. Very well attended, nice to see pupils getting awards for all different things other than academic achievements.

Friday, 6th January 2012 – evening

The Chairman of Powys Civic Head’s Dinner was held at Caer Beris Manor, Builth Wells – fantastic venue, so delighted that the engagement of the Chairman and his Consort was announced.

Sunday 8th January – evening

This evening I was invited to the Country Spice Restaurant in Hope to attend a dinner in honour of Mr. Ali, Chairman of the local council in Bangladesh. Yet again a chance to cement relations with the Bangladesh Community.

Monday 9th January – afternoon

Visit to Gwernymynydd CP School, a small school with a big heart. Ysgol Y Waun, Gwernaffield, nice ethos in the school.

Thursday 12th January

Citizenship Ceremony, Llewnegrin Hall – a great pleasure to bestow citizenship on people who have chosen Flintshire as their home.

Monday 16th January – Thursday 19th January

School visits during this period.

Friday 20th January

This evening I attended ‘Allo Allo’ Llwynegrin Singers Social Evening at the Masonic Hall in Hawarden. A fantastic evening, everyone embraced the French theme and they raised £1500 for Plas Blennin.

Saturday 21st January

This afternoon I was so pleased to be asked to receive the Big Dee Canoe into the Wepre Park Visitors Centre having been there at the launch in July.

Monday 23rd January

This afternoon I was delighted to visit Mrs. Winifred Cropper at the Willow Dale Residential Home in Buckley. A fantastic lady and such an honour to have been invited to help her celebrate her 100th Birthday.

CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

Wednesday 25th January

This morning I visited Ysgol Glan Aber in Bagillt, an excellent school with a lovely atmosphere.

Friday 27th January

In the evening I was invited to attend Holocaust Memorial Day 2012 'Speak Up, Speak Out' young people's plan and poetry slam. I was so moved, as was everyone present, by the way the young people portrayed their understanding of Holocaust and their commitment to eradicating it from ever happening again.

Wednesday 1st February - morning

I attended the Artfest 12 Press Launch at Llwenegrin Hall – what an exciting program again this year, something for everyone.

Thursday 2nd February

This morning I visited Castell Alun High School – another excellent high school, what a delight to see.

Wednesday 8th February

In the morning I received a visit from several children from Ysgol Croes Atti at County Hall. This school council is a credit to their school, bright and full of questions.

In the evening I attended the County Forum Launch in the Alyn & Deeside Meeting Room. An historic event and a great honour to sign this on behalf of Flintshire County Council.

Friday 10th February

I was delighted to attend the Mayor of Buckley's Charity Ball and Dinner. An excellent night which raised a considerable amount of money for Cllr Mike Peers' charity. Both John and myself really enjoyed the evening.

Wednesday 15th February - morning

It gave me great pleasure to invite Mrs. Lynne Hughes to the Chamber to celebrate her MBE award with her. A very deserving person.

Friday 17th February

Early this morning I was invited to the Glyndwr Open Breakfast Meeting. Very interesting morning; hopefully Glyndwr will go from strength to strength.

Monday 20th February

This afternoon was the official opening of the Skate Park at Maes Bodlonfa Recreational Ground in Mold. A great facility for young people, long overdue!

Wednesday 22nd February

This morning I welcomed the Argoed School Council to County Hall. What delightful students - a credit to their school. So enthusiastic!

Thursday 23rd February - afternoon

I met with Mr. Ken Houghton and several guests from 'Miffy' in the Chair's Room at County Hall. It was a delight to honour these people who have done so much for their community.

Friday 24th February

In the morning the Flintshire Regeneration Conference 2012 was held at Clwyd Theatr Cymru. Excellent conference, the second we have run which was very well attended.

This evening I was invited to the Denbighshire Chairman's Charity Dinner at the Oriel House in St. Asaph. A delightful evening, excellent food, excellent speaker and excellent company!

Sunday 26th February

I was delighted to attend the Chairman of Leeswood's Civic Service at the Wesley Methodist Church, Leeswood. A really lovely day, excellent service.

Monday 27th February

This morning it was my pleasure to welcome the Children from Chernobyl visiting County Hall. Once again a delight to see these children and the organisers who work so hard to bring them here.

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

DATE: **27 MARCH 2012**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

SUBJECT: **ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2011 BY THE AUDITOR GENERAL FOR WALES**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To advise Members of the Council's Annual Improvement Report 2011 published by the Auditor General for Wales.

1.02 Members to note the report and receive the Council's response.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The Auditor General is required by the Local Government (Wales) Measure to undertake an Annual Improvement Assessment and to publish an Annual Improvement Report for each authority in Wales. This covers local councils, national parks and fire and rescue authorities.

2.02 This is the second Annual Improvement Report for Flintshire and it also contains the Appointed Auditor's Annual Audit Letter as previously reported to Audit Committee in December 2011 .

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The Annual Improvement Report is publicised by the Wales Audit Office (WAO) on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales. It brings together, with the co-ordination of other inspectorates such as Estyn and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) a picture of what the Council is trying to achieve and how it is going about it.

3.02 The full report is attached at Appendix 1.

3.03 The report builds on the findings of the Improvement Assessment undertaken by the WAO, plus a retrospective assessment of whether the Council has achieved its planned improvements and a summary on the Council's self assessment of performance as reported in the Council's Annual Performance Report 2010/11. The overall finding is "Despite progress in many service areas, certain corporate

weaknesses continue to hinder current performance and future prospects."

Other key statements within the report are:

- The Council has a strong commitment to partnership working to support improvement; however progress in achieving the Council's objectives is being held back by weaknesses in priority setting, governance, financial planning and people management.
- There is good progress in some priority areas but elsewhere progress is mixed and some services are not yet delivering provision at the expected levels.
- The Council is continuing to develop its performance monitoring arrangements but weaknesses remain in outcome measures, reliability of information and in some aspects of reporting and evaluation.

3.04 The Auditor General has made two formal recommendations which are:

- R1 - The Council should report more fully and regularly to the Executive Board on progress in delivering the Human Resources (HR) Strategy and *Single Status Agreement* and ensure capacity and capability are available to achieve intended outcomes and timetables.
- R2 - The Council needs to complete its work in quantifying the financial benefits of its programme of efficiencies and organisational change by mid 2012/13, to determine the remaining funding gap (shortfall or surplus) and then establish clear plans to identify further savings and/or redirect resources to priorities.

3.05 The Council is required to make a formal public response to these recommendations within 30 days of receipt of the report. This response, including a response to an additional four proposals for improvement is included at Appendix 2. The Annual Improvement Report was received and this response endorsed at Executive on 21 February meeting the required timescale.

3.06 This Annual Improvement Report has been developed and improved with significant input from senior officers at the Council to ensure accuracy, fairness and validity. Broad agreement has been reached on the contents and it should be noted that the formal recommendations and proposals for improvement have been identified by senior officers and are already being responded to.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 To advise Members of the Council's Annual Improvement Report 2011 published by the Auditor General for Wales.

4.02 Members to note the report and receive the Council's response.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 This report refers to the financial resourcing of the council's priorities.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 This report refers to how the council is helping to reduce poverty.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 This report refers to how the council is improving the environment.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 Safe and supportive communities are referred to within the report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 The People Strategy is referred to in the report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 None required at this stage.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Senior officers have had input into this report. The Annual Audit Letter was presented to the council's Audit Committee in December 2011.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1: The Auditor General's Annual Improvement Report 2011
Appendix 2: WAO Annual Improvement Report response to recommendations.

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

None

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WALES AUDIT OFFICE
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

Annual Improvement Report

Flintshire County Council

Issued: January 2012
Document reference: 112A2012

About the Auditor General for Wales

The Auditor General is independent of government and is appointed by Her Majesty the Queen. He leads the Wales Audit Office and is held accountable by the Public Accounts Committee of the National Assembly for the Wales Audit Office's work.

The Auditor General is the external auditor of the Welsh Government and its sponsored and related public bodies, the Assembly Commission and National Health Service bodies in Wales. He also appoints the external auditors of Welsh local government bodies, including unitary authorities, police, probation, fire and rescue authorities, national parks and community councils. The Auditor General's appointed auditors are responsible for the annual audit of the majority of public money spent in Wales, including the £15 billion of funds that are voted to Wales annually by the Westminster Parliament. Nearly £5.5 billion of this funding is passed by the Welsh Government to local government in the form of general and specific grants. Local government, in turn, raises a further £2.1 billion through council tax and business rates.

As well as carrying out financial audit, the Auditor General's role is to examine how public bodies manage and spend public money, including achieving value in the delivery of public services. The Wales Audit Office aims to make public money count, by promoting improvement, so that people in Wales benefit from accountable, well-managed public services that offer the best possible value for money. It is also committed to identifying and spreading good practice across the Welsh public sector.

Huw Vaughan Thomas, Auditor General for Wales, was supported by Stephen Martin, Karen Lees and colleagues under the direction of Alan Morris in conducting the Improvement Assessment and producing this report.

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Summary report

- 1 Each year, the Auditor General must report on how well Welsh councils, fire and rescue authorities, and national parks are planning for improvement and delivering their services. Drawing on the work of the Wales Audit Office and that of the relevant Welsh inspectorates, this report presents a picture of improvement over the last year. The report is in three main sections, which cover the planning, delivery and evaluation of improvement by Flintshire County Council (the Council).
- 2 In addition to its statutory duties, the Council set itself improvement objectives which include making communities safe, protecting the local economy and providing high-quality social care, housing and learning opportunities as well as improving collaboration, efficiency and arrangements for management of staff.
- 3 Overall the Auditor General has concluded that, despite progress in many service areas, certain corporate weaknesses continue to hinder current performance and future prospects.
- 4 We found that the Council has a strong commitment to partnership working to support improvement; however progress in achieving the Council's objectives is being held back by weaknesses in priority setting, governance, financial planning and people management.
- 5 We also found that there is good progress in some priority areas but elsewhere progress is mixed and some services are not yet delivering provision at the expected levels. We based this conclusion on the following:
 - There is mixed progress in achieving improved support for people in need but significant developments are underway in adult social care and housing services.
 - The performance of pupils is below the expected levels in some aspects of education whilst standards and prospects for 14 to 19 year olds are good. Significant developments are taking place in leisure and play services but risks remain.
 - The Council is addressing challenges and delivering improvements to help create and maintain a safe, prosperous and pleasant county.
- 6 Finally, the report sets out our views on the Council's own assessment of its performance and arrangements. We concluded that the Council is continuing to develop its performance monitoring arrangements but weaknesses remain in outcome measures, reliability of information and in some aspects of reporting and evaluation.

Recommendations and proposals for improvement

- 7 The Auditor General has determined that he will not recommend any intervention by Welsh Ministers nor undertake a special inspection. However, two formal recommendations and other proposals for improvement are made. The Auditor General also proposes to undertake a full corporate assessment during 2012-13. Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales, also made recommendations following its inspections of local authority education services and its area inspection of provision for 14 to 19 year olds (see [paragraphs 133 and 137](#)).

Recommendations

- R1** The Council should report more fully and regularly to the Executive Board on progress in delivering the Human Resources (HR) strategy and *Single Status Agreement* and ensure capacity and capability are available to achieve intended outcomes and timetables.*
- R2** The Council needs to complete its work in quantifying the financial benefits of its programme of efficiencies and organisational change by mid 2012-13, to determine the remaining funding gap (shortfall or surplus) and then establish clear plans to identify further savings and/or redirect resources to priorities.*

*These recommendations follow from proposals for improvement made in August 2010 and August 2011.

Proposals for improvement

To support further improvement, the Council should:

- P1** Complete the work in progress to set clear success measures for all improvement objectives and ensure regular, clear reporting.*
- P2** Develop and agree a detailed business plan for improving customer access showing how success measures will be achieved and offer value for money.
- P3** Ensure its Annual Performance Report is published by 31 October in line with statutory requirements and more fully reflects Welsh Government guidance.
- P4** Improve quality assurance arrangements to ensure that data used to support performance management and monitoring is accurate and robust.

*This proposal for improvement was first made to the Council in January 2011.

Detailed report



Introduction

- 8 This report was prepared by the Wales Audit Office on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales. On [page 2](#) you can find a brief explanation of what the Auditor General does.
- 9 Under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure), the Auditor General must report each year on how well Welsh councils, fire and rescue authorities, and national parks are planning for improvement and delivering their services. [Appendix 1](#) provides more information about the Auditor General's powers and duties under the Measure. With help from Welsh inspectorates, Estyn (for education) and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW), we have brought together a picture of what each council or authority in Wales is trying to achieve and how it is going about it. This report also sets out the progress the Council has made since the Auditor General published his last *Annual Improvement Report*, drawing on the Council's own self-assessment.
- 10 Throughout the report, we set out what the Council needs to do to improve its services. Given the wide range of services provided and the challenges facing the Council it would be unusual if we did not find things that can be improved. The Auditor General is able to:
- recommend to Ministers of the Welsh Government that they intervene in some way;
 - conduct a special inspection and publish the report with detailed recommendations;
 - make formal recommendations for improvement – if a formal recommendation is made the Council must respond to that recommendation publicly within 30 days; and
 - make proposals for improvement – if we make proposals to the Council we would expect it to do something about them and we will follow up what happens.
- 11 We want to find out if this report gives you the information you need and whether it is easy to understand. You can let us know your views by e-mailing us at info@wao.gov.uk or writing to us at 24 Cathedral Road, Cardiff CF11 9LJ.

Despite progress in many service areas, certain corporate weaknesses continue to hinder current performance and future prospects

- 12 The Council's Executive Board adopted 40 priorities in May 2010. These priorities support the five themes of the County Vision, previously endorsed by the Flintshire Local Service Board (the Local Service Board). The set of priorities comprised 10 corporate governance and performance priorities and 30 service priorities. The 40 priorities were subsequently grouped under 10 improvement objectives and included in the Council's *Improvement Plan 2011-12*. The full set of priorities and improvement objectives is in [Appendix 4](#).
- 13 This report sets out an assessment of the performance of the Council in discharging its statutory duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement. We do not undertake a comprehensive annual review of all council arrangements or services. Our work has been focused on the main objectives the Council has set itself and some other key issues. The Council has now grouped the initial 40 priorities under 10 improvement objectives and we report mainly at the level of the improvement objectives. The report builds upon earlier feedback and reports issued to the Council, and the conclusions are based on our cumulative and shared knowledge and findings from work undertaken this year.
- 14 It is important for councils to have a good self-understanding of how effective they are, and the extent of progress and improvement they are making. The Auditor General, other inspectorates, the Welsh Government and councils are developing a common understanding of effective self-evaluation and this will assist future assessment. We have made some initial comments on self-evaluation at the Council later in this report. We found that the Council is making progress in developing its arrangements for self-assessment and reporting on its improvement objectives, and we commend it for this, but weaknesses remain. Throughout this report we refer to the Council's own information and assessments where available. To contribute to its self-understanding, the Council invited the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) to undertake a *Financial Peer Review* and this was carried out in January 2011. We refer to the review findings in the relevant sections.

The Council has a strong commitment to partnership working to support improvement; however progress in achieving the Council's objectives is being held back by weaknesses in priority setting, governance, financial planning and people management

15 This section comments on the Council's planning and arrangements for delivering improvement. It includes the Council's corporate governance and objectives. This section covers:

- previous findings by the Auditor General on the arrangements for improvement and progress on proposals for improvement;
- governance including decision making and scrutiny arrangements;
- the framework of improvement objectives and priorities;
- HR and workforce planning;
- arrangements for collaboration and partnership working with other councils and bodies;
- the use of resources and arrangements to address the financial challenges faced by all councils;
- the Council's arrangements to meet the requirements of the *Equality Act 2010* and to support the Welsh language; and
- how the Council engages with the public and local communities.

16 The Council's corporate governance and performance improvement objectives are:

- 'to be a modern, efficient and cost-effective public organisation through our four resource strategies – the *Medium Term Financial Strategy*, the *People Strategy*, the asset management strategy and the *ICT Strategy* – whilst ensuring our local taxes and fees and charges are fair and affordable;

- to achieve the greatest possible cost efficiencies through regional collaboration to reinvest in local public services;
- to be a modern, caring and flexible employer with fair and equal pay and terms and conditions of employment under a *Single Status Agreement*; and
- to achieve the highest standards of customer service and care through our customer services strategy.'

In August 2011, the Auditor General reported that Flintshire County Council is continuing to actively promote improvement but some arrangements are not fully developed and are likely to hinder the Council in achieving its objectives

17 The Auditor General issued a *Corporate Assessment Update* letter to the Council in August 2011. He said he was satisfied that the Council is discharging its duties under the Measure, and that the Council is likely to comply with its minimum requirements during this financial year. Nonetheless, the Council faces significant challenges to deliver the very extensive programme of change and improvement that it has set itself. The letter said that the Council is continuing to actively promote improvement but some arrangements are not fully developed and are likely to hinder the Council in achieving its objectives. This assessment was based on our findings that:

- Some progress has been made on most of the areas for improvement identified in the previous *Preliminary Corporate Assessment* and *Annual Improvement Report*.

- Managing the financial challenge through savings programmes and transformation projects whilst being able to deliver its improvement objectives represents a testing agenda for the Council. It will need to continue to strengthen its arrangements and plans if it is to deliver this agenda.
- Whilst there are some positive examples of consultation, the Council's approach to engaging with the public does not follow a coherent methodology. The Council is not consistently using evaluation from consultation to improve the effectiveness of service delivery.
- The Council is actively developing opportunities to extend collaboration with partners as a means of further improving services.

There has been significant progress in developing the improvement planning framework, but not all objectives have clear outcome-based success measures

- 18 The Council has adopted a clear set of improvement objectives. As noted above, the 40 priorities of the administration were adopted in May 2010, and in June 2011, the Council approved its *Improvement Plan 2011-12*. This plan includes 10 improvement objectives and priorities for directorates and corporate services. The objectives and the improvement plan meet the proposal that the Council should 'review and formally adopt the priorities of the Council' made by the Auditor General in the previous *Annual Improvement Report*. The objectives and plan fulfil the Council's duties for these under the Measure.
- 19 The Council has strengthened and improved its framework for improvement:
- the improvement plan sets out the overall council objectives and actions designed to meet the objectives;
 - the Council also has a set of performance improvement targets for indicators which are important to the Council and where there is a need for better performance; and
 - there has also been some work to allocate accountability for the improvement objectives.
- 20 The Council still has further work to complete the response to the Auditor General's proposal that the Council should 'establish that there are clear leadership and accountability arrangements, success measures, and reporting processes for progress against all of its priorities'. This further work includes:
- Defining clear outcome measures, rather than actions and process measures, for some of the objectives.
 - Embedding reporting arrangements on progress with the Improvement Plan as, without this, councillors and officers are not fully aware of progress with delivering the plan. The first progress report has been provided to councillors in January 2012.
 - Completing the accountability arrangements at director and councillor levels.

21 It is for the Council to determine its priorities. However, as the Council's chosen priorities cover most of its activities, they may not help to guide decisions about the use of resources. In developing its improvement objectives for 2012 onwards, the Council should consider whether it needs to identify a smaller group of the key priorities. It should also engage more widely in discussions with councillors, partners and communities during the development of the future objectives, as noted in the Auditor General's *Corporate Assessment Update* letter.

While much Council business is conducted appropriately, political fragility, mistrust, and some inappropriate behaviour continue to affect the governance and leadership arrangements

22 Much day-to-day council business is conducted in a cordial and appropriate manner with positive relationships between councillors and with officers. We found some good scrutiny work and evidence of positive leadership by the Executive and senior officers.

23 Whilst much business is conducted satisfactorily we also found that the effective governance of the Council is affected by the political fragility of the multi-party administration. We found a degree of mistrust between officers and councillors, and between Executive and Scrutiny. This mistrust has contributed to slower progress than intended on some key council priorities.

24 The tensions are related to the political fragility of the Council, and the continuing delay in resolving a case referred to the Adjudication Panel for Wales by the Local Government Ombudsman. We found continuing concern by some councillors and some officers about inappropriate behaviour by a small number of councillors.

25 We found that workshops were being used effectively to inform councillors about sometimes contentious issues, ranging from options for school reorganisation to budget planning. However, the use of such meetings is extensive, and in some cases can seem as being used to replace the policy development role of overview and scrutiny committees. Holding workshops that are not in the official council diary adds to the already high number of meetings, and councillors who are working or have other responsibilities may be less likely to be able to attend than for scheduled meetings. We would expect the use of workshops to reduce in the future.

26 The relatively weak position of the leadership of the multi-party administration sometimes requires the Chief Executive and senior officers to carry out additional leadership activities particularly to support the delivery of important council priorities. Senior officers may then be seen as having too much influence in decisions that should be the responsibility of councillors. Officers may then be held to account by overview and scrutiny committees for matters that result from political decisions and for which the political leadership should take responsibility.

- 27 The political fragility of the Council, combined with the challenging agenda for change, leads to the need for a high level of strategic and corporate leadership. The need to increase leadership capacity and capability was recognised in the Council's response to the WLGA *Financial Peer Review*. This is an ongoing risk for the Council, and therefore progress in this area will be considered in the Auditor General's next Corporate Assessment.
- 28 The political fragility places a responsibility on all councillors who are entitled and expected to engage in appropriate political debate. But, they also have a duty, set out in their code of conduct, to treat fellow councillors and officers with respect and to not unduly bring the Council into disrespect. There is also a particular responsibility on political group leaders to assist by helping ensure their group members follow the code of conduct. Officers can also contribute by ensuring that information is available for committees on time and contains necessary information for councillors to carry out their roles.

Whilst there has been some progress in aspects of the people strategy, the expected completion of a Single Status Agreement has been delayed, there is no expected date for completion of a corporate workforce plan and there are some other important human resources weaknesses

- 29 The Council assessed its performance in 2010-11 against the priority 'to be a modern, caring and flexible employer with fair and equal pay and terms and conditions of employment under a *Single Status Agreement*' as adequate. The Council's Annual Performance Review notes that the individual activities that contribute to this objective and to the people strategy element of its objective to be a modern, efficient and cost-effective organisation, are mainly 'amber'. The amber status denotes that work is currently in progress but is expected to be completed behind schedule, and this status has continued in quarterly reports during 2011-12.
- 30 The Council is making progress in many areas of its programme of people management. It is seeking to implement major changes in its HR arrangements and has a very challenging agenda. Examples of progress include:
- continuing work to remove inaccuracies from HR information systems and to achieve a more accurate assessment of the number of posts and staff working for the Council;
 - improving arrangements for managing the taking on and the cost of agency workers and consultants;

- establishment of an occupational health partnership with Wrexham County Borough Council;
 - updating several key council HR policies;
 - the completion of the roll-out of Employee Self-Service to staff with computer access, so that staff can update their personal information directly onto the HR system;
 - work is well underway to introduce a similar Managers' Self-Service system during November 2011 to February 2012, so that they can enter information quickly; and
 - continued development and provision of extensive corporate development programmes.
- 31 Whilst progress is being made in these areas, the overall progress with delivery of the people management strategy has been slower than expected in many of the most important areas including:
- Establishing accurate information about the numbers of posts and staff working for the Council. This information is essential for much of the Council's ongoing and future plans, yet this is still compromised by inaccurate data, despite improvement over the last year.
 - Little progress is being made on developing corporate workforce planning and there is no clear timetable for achieving a council-wide workforce plan and development strategy.
 - The completion of work on job evaluation, Single Status and terms and conditions.
- The Council has been reviewing the structure of the HR service since 2009. The scope of the work has been changed on several occasions, and the completion date extended. The Council now plans to implement the service changes in May 2012. It is intended that the new structure will include a dedicated resource for organisational development, to support effective change management and workforce planning.
- 32 In his *Corporate Assessment Update* letter in August 2011, the Auditor General noted the progress in many areas but that the overall pace of delivery is behind schedule, with regard to people management. To support improvement in this area, he proposed that by the end of October 2011, the Council should complete a review of overall progress with the *People Strategy 2009-12*, prioritise outstanding actions and the resources necessary to achieve them, and report on this to councillors.
- 33 The review was carried out and reported to the Executive Board in November 2011. The report and revised plan to support the strategy identified four top priorities, although the timetable for these was reviewed and in some cases completion was put back. The top priorities the Council identified are:
- Single Status and Equal Pay;
 - negotiations of revised terms and conditions;
 - the organisation design change project; and
 - phase II of HR management information system (Employee and Manager Self-Service).

- 34 Other areas of work have been delayed or deferred. These include:
- the development of a graduate recruitment programme;
 - regional workforce planning; and
 - rolling out the Council's competency framework.
- 35 The review report noted that in some cases, a 'more proportionate/measured approach has been taken to deliver actions, for example, a low-key approach to introducing internal workforce planning'.
- 36 The revised plan identified that additional resources would be required for eight areas of work, and these had been secured. However, councillors were given no information about what the resources were and from where they had been secured.
- 37 In common with about half of councils in Wales, the Council has not completed a legal, acceptable and affordable *Single Status Agreement*. This process is dependent on the completion of job evaluation arrangements and is also linked to plans to negotiate reduced costs of employment through changes to employee terms and conditions. Initial work on job evaluation began in 2003. A proposed *Single Status Agreement* was withdrawn in late 2009 and a revised process started. A consultant was appointed as Project Manager and a Single Status Project Board of councillors, senior officers and trades union representatives was established in 2010 to help develop the revised agreement.
- 38 The board was initially active but the frequency of meetings has reduced, and it didn't meet between July and December 2011. The timetable for the project has slipped on a number of occasions and further delays were reported to the Executive Board and the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November and December 2011. The Council now plans to complete the work on the agreement by November 2012. The report to the Executive Board in November 2011 noted that meeting this timetable is 'wholly dependent on the full commitment and ownership of the Corporate Management Team and Senior Management, councillors across all political parties and the Joint Trade Unions as well as the appropriate resources being secured for delivery of the project'.
- 39 The Council tells us that senior officers and councillors and the trade unions now have more confidence that the Single Status project will be delivered this year. This follows the acceptance in December 2011, by the Project Board, of a new high-level plan and the later completion date. This work has led to the Council amending the level of risk it has assigned to this work, from red to amber. The amber rating means the Council recognises that the project has 'some delay in scheduled activity, but is broadly 'on-track' with 'an uncertain level of confidence in the achievement of the outcomes'.
- 40 The Auditor General will undertake additional work in early 2012 to assess the effectiveness of the Single Status project management arrangements and whether the necessary commitment, capacity and capability is in place to achieve the revised timetable.

Progress is being made but the Council has not completed work to establish a clear medium-term financial plan that fully incorporates the financial implications of its efficiencies and savings programmes in order to determine the projected shortfalls (or surplus) for future annual budgets and to put plans in place to meet them and to allocate resources to priorities

- 41 The medium-term financial plan and the asset management strategy are two of the resource strategies that contribute to the Council achieving its objective ‘to be a modern, efficient and cost-effective public organisation...whilst ensuring local taxes, fees, and charges are fair and affordable’. The Council assessed its performance on this objective as ‘adequate’, whilst progress on the elements of developing its *Medium Term Financial Strategy*, financial management, and buildings management were assessed as ‘amber’ (meaning expected to be completed but behind schedule). Progress on elements of the objective related to delivering efficiencies and managing within budget, and for collection of council tax and non-domestic rates, was rated as ‘green’ (meaning completed or expected to be completed ahead of schedule).
- 42 In September 2011, the auditor appointed by the Auditor General issued an unqualified audit opinion on the 2010-11 accounting statements, confirming that they present a true and fair view of the Council’s and Clwyd Pension Fund’s (the Pension Fund) financial position and transactions. Whilst the opinion was unqualified, an emphasis of matter was included to draw attention to the nature and

value of private equity investments held by the Pension Fund. A number of matters arising from the audit of financial statements were reported to members and are summarised in the *Appointed Auditor’s Annual Audit Letter*, included as [Appendix 3](#).

- 43 In January 2012, based on month 7 figures, the Council forecast that it is likely to end the financial year with an underspend of £0.6 million. This is made up of a net overspend on services of £0.2 million, which is offset by a contribution of £0.8 million from central and corporate budgets. The 2011-12 budget contains £8.9 million of specific efficiencies and projections indicate that £7.7 million will be achieved.
- 44 The Council adopted its *Medium Term Financial Strategy* and initial medium-term financial plan in June 2011. This followed recognition within the Council of the need to strengthen its strategic financial planning which was reinforced by recommendations from auditors, both internal and external, and the *WGLA Financial Peer Review*. In August 2011, the Auditor General’s *Corporate Assessment Update* letter said that ‘by the end of 2011, the Council should complete the development of its medium-term financial plan so as to allow informed decisions on how funding pressures will be addressed and resources allocated to achieve improvement objectives’.
- 45 Since June 2011, the Council has focused its efforts on building its medium-term financial plan to provide robust estimates of the Council’s financial position over a three-year window (2012-13 to 2014-15). This has included identifying both unavoidable pressures and efficiencies. In particular, it is worth noting, that following a *Flintshire*

Futures project, which reviewed and challenged budgets across the whole organisation, the Council has identified just over £2 million of further efficiencies.

- 46 The latest medium-term financial plan predicts funding shortfalls of £1.718 million in 2012-13 rising to £4.132 million in 2013-14 and £7.388 million in 2014-15. It is in this context that the 2012-13 budget is being set.
- 47 Work has also been ongoing to develop a capital strategy and 10-year capital programme and to ensure that both revenue and capital expenditure plans are fully integrated and that the revenue implications of capital expenditure proposals are understood and built into the financial plan.
- 48 In comparing the Council's current position, in understanding its financial outlook and having a clear framework to manage its resources, with this time last year, the Council has made considerable progress, albeit from a relatively low base. However, critically, there is further work outstanding to ensure the Council is well-placed to meet the financial challenges ahead.
- 49 The current focus is on setting a balanced budget for 2012-13, and in the immediate future, this is rightly the priority. However, the Council needs to, shortly thereafter, identify the specific ways in which it will meet the funding shortfalls in 2013-14 and 2014-15 to allow sufficient lead in time for more difficult decisions and plans to be actioned to yield the savings at the appropriate time.
- 50 In addition, the Council should consider whether it wants to identify a greater level of savings, than just to meet the funding shortfall, in order to allow it to redirect resources to areas of highest priority to further the achievement of its objectives.
- 51 Essentially, the Council needs to fully establish the financial implications of the *Flintshire Futures* and any other efficiency projects to assess whether they are sufficient to meet the funding shortfall and create capacity or whether other initiatives are required in addition. The Council is currently working on this.
- 52 The *Flintshire Futures Programme* is the Council's programme to modernise and reshape service delivery and respond to the challenging financial future facing local government. The programme was initially co-ordinated by a consultant appointed jointly with Wrexham County Council. At Flintshire they developed a programme which focused on two sub-programmes: a 'Change' programme to increase efficiency; and a 'Choice' programme focused on collaboration and alternative methods of delivery. An initial group of short, medium and longer-term projects was identified and an approach to structured project planning adopted.
- 53 Since then the programme has continued to develop. The contract with the consultant has ended, and the work is now managed through the part-time leadership of two heads of service, who have been appointed as assistant chief executives. The Council is also amending the approach to project planning to ensure it reduces complexities and is time-efficient. A new approach is being developed.

A total of 57 projects structured around four themes have been identified. The themes are:

- Corporate change
- Service change
- Regional collaboration
- Local county collaboration

- 54 The programme includes many projects that are being developed within services and across services. The initial aim was to identify 5 to 10 per cent savings for the Council but it is unclear what savings will be realised from individual projects. The *Flintshire Futures Programme* Team consists of officers who are seconded, mainly on a part-time basis, to support delivery of the projects.
- 55 There is limited councillor engagement with the programme although high-level reports have been provided for the Executive. The reports to the Executive have not reported the changes to the programme management and lacked specific information about the levels of savings and efficiency to be achieved by the projects or the programme. Whilst the programme is regularly referred to in budget monitoring reports, there has not been any specific report on the programme to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and no scrutiny of the programme is included in the work programme for the committee for 2011-12. Some information was included in a Workforce Bulletin in December 2011, but the programme does not have a fully developed communications strategy to ensure that effective and timely internal and external information is provided about the programme and its many projects.
- 56 The Council's *Annual Performance Report* says that all the projects are underway and have project sponsors and management arrangements in place. Following the appointment of the heads of service, there is currently a 'stock-take' taking place which is likely to lead to some projects being downgraded and a greater focus on projects with the potential to make the most difference.
- 57 In the Auditor General's *Corporate Assessment Update* letter, he said, 'it is yet not clear whether the programme has sufficient political support or the capacity for effective delivery'. Whilst the additional leadership and the stock-taking are appropriate steps forward, these concerns remain.
- 58 The Council faces significant challenges in the management of its non-domestic building stock and its housing stock. The Council accepts it has too many non-domestic buildings that are costly to maintain, have inflexible working spaces and buildings that are no longer in the right place. It has established a project within the *Flintshire Futures Programme*, to improve asset management through rationalisation of offices, agile working and the creation with partners of 'community hubs' where services can be accessed by the public. The Council's assessment is that progress on its asset management work is 'amber'.
- 59 The Council has also prepared a draft *Housing Asset Management Strategy 2012-2018* that sets out the Council's plan for maintaining its housing stock, taking into account the investment needs of homes across the county and the money available for improvements from the Housing Revenue

Account. The strategy says that a survey of the Council's homes showed that an investment of around £166 million is required to bring the properties up to the Welsh Quality Housing Standard in five years. The Council can expect to have £49 million available for capital expenditure in the same period. This funding shortfall is one factor in decision of the Council to undertake a housing stock transfer ballot, which is considered further later in this report.

The Council has improved local strategic partnership working and is continuing to develop collaborative working with neighbouring councils and through regional projects although the cost efficiencies to be achieved are, as yet, uncertain

60 The Council has an objective 'to achieve the greatest possible cost efficiencies through regional and sub-regional collaboration to reinvest in local public service'. For 2010-11, it assessed its progress against this objective as 'adequate'.

The Council is playing a key role in the development and rationalisation of strategic partnerships

61 The Council plays a key role in the local statutory partnerships: the Local Service Board; the Children and Young People's Partnership; the Community Safety Executive; and the Health, Social Care and Well-being Partnership. It has also helped lead the development of the Regeneration Partnership, the Flintshire Housing

Partnership, and the Voluntary Sector Compact. It has led the development of a governance framework for the partnerships which is being followed.

62 The partnerships are increasingly seeking to use outcomes-based accountability to consider how they will measure their achievements. It will be important to develop an outcomes-based approach so that the achievements through partnership can be assessed. At present, it is too early to evaluate the contribution that partnership rationalisation will have on delivering clearer outcomes.

63 The Council has played a significant role in developing and leading arrangements for regional rationalisation and sub-regional consolidation of the statutory partnerships. These developments are progressing well with the merger of some local partnerships and the establishment of a regional Safer Communities Board. The Council has also played an important role in the development of the first joint Flintshire and Wrexham *Community Safety Partnership Plan 2011-2014*. A project group was established in June 2011 to explore options for collaboration and merged arrangements for Flintshire and Wrexham Youth Justice Services and this work is progressing.

64 Regular reports on partnership arrangements are provided for the Executive Board. The Community Profile and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee was created in 2010-11 to 'consider the Council's relationships with other public service providers and our partners'. During 2010-11, the committee held meetings with the North

Wales Police, Glyndwr University and the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service. It has also considered update reports on partnership work and specific reports on projects and developments.

Local Service Board projects are developing

- 65 The Local Service Board has had a Carbon Reduction and Adaptation Planning project since 2009. The Council was also one of four councils chosen to be part of a Climate Change Adaptation Planning pilot project, supported by the WLGA, Welsh Government, Environment Agency, Countryside Council for Wales, and the UK Climate Impact Programme. Through this pilot project, the Council has worked with the Local Service Board to identify the shared climate change risks for the Council and its partners in Flintshire.
- 66 The Council is also working with partners on the Local Service Board project on preventing and reducing poverty and disadvantage, which is focusing on benefit and debt advice. It is seeking to provide improved access for citizens to advice and other support.

Collaboration with neighbouring councils in delivery of services is increasing

- 67 The Council has increased local collaboration with neighbouring councils. Developments include:
- the Council providing a joint occupational health service for itself and Wrexham County Borough Council;
 - the Food Waste project with Denbighshire and Conwy councils which has identified a preferred bidder to deliver the project;

- a joint Wrexham and Flintshire Local Safeguarding Children Board, established in April 2011;
- a North East Wales Emergency Duty (social work) Team for Wrexham, Denbighshire and Flintshire councils;
- a 'purchase to pay' (P2P) e-procurement system is being jointly procured with Wrexham Council; and
- the Council has entered into a joint management arrangement with Denbighshire County Council for the management of a procurement service.

- 68 The Council is the host body for the North East Wales Play Community Project (NEW Play) which is a multi-agency partnership developing an infrastructure for children's play space and delivering play activities across Wrexham, Denbighshire and Flintshire. The NEW Play project will employ eleven staff funded for three years from July 2011 through the Big Lottery Fund *Child's Play Programme*.

Regional collaboration projects are being developed

- 69 With other councils in North Wales, Flintshire is part of the North Wales Regional Leadership Team and is involved in four programme boards, each of which has a number of projects for regional collaboration (see [Exhibit 1](#)).

Exhibit 1: Regional collaboration projects

The four regional programme boards are developing a range of projects

Programme board	Progress
Education and Related Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School Improvement Service (A second phase is expected to extend the scope of the service)• Collaboration in Library Services
Social Care and Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commissioning Hub• Supporting People Services• Telecare• Workforce Development• ICT support for client records (PARIS and RAISE)
Environment and Regulatory Services Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fleet Management• Transforming Transport• Waste• Taith Extension• Economic Development
Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legal Services• ICT• Procurement• Single Person Discounts• Emergency Planning

70 The Council is continuing to play a leading role in the North Wales Residual Waste Treatment Project. The project is progressing well and is currently in the process of identifying a preferred bidder to deliver a residual waste treatment provision for five North Wales councils.

71 Flintshire is the lead council for the Shared North Wales Minerals and Waste Planning Service which became operational from April 2011. A report on progress and lessons for future collaborative services was presented to the Executive in November 2011. The financial benefits of the service are to be reviewed after the first year.

72 The North Wales Adoption Service for all six North Wales councils was established from April 2011.

The Council is working towards meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and to address weaknesses in implementing its Welsh Language Scheme

73 Under the public sector duties of the *Equality Act 2010* all public bodies are required to set equality objectives by April 2012 and publish a strategic equality plan. We found mixed awareness of the *Equality Act 2010* amongst senior officers. However, work is being undertaken by the Council to engage stakeholders to identify and prioritise local equality objectives.

74 The *Annual Performance Report* and the Council's *Annual Equality Report 2010-11* identify a wide range of equalities actions that show the Council's commitment to achieving its equalities objectives.

75 Equalities impact assessments have been introduced and some full assessments have been undertaken, although these are not yet consistently completed and the quality of the assessments is varied.

76 The Welsh Language Board and the Council have identified eight priority areas that require action to enable the Council to address fundamental weaknesses and risks in implementing its *Welsh Language Scheme*. The Welsh Language Board says 'the Council has made progress in all eight areas, but a significant amount of work remains to be done to achieve the requirements of the Scheme, particularly in relation to business planning, performance management and the implementation of a *Welsh Language Skills Strategy*. The board praised the Council for assessing the language requirements of all public-facing posts. Although the number of Welsh speakers that currently occupy those posts designated 'Welsh essential' is low, the Council is committed to filling the posts with Welsh speakers when they become vacant.' The Council is undertaking an assessment to inform actions to be taken in 2012-13 to address issues in business planning, performance management and other areas identified.

Work is planned to develop an improved corporate approach to public engagement

- 77 The Wales Audit Office undertook a review of arrangements for public engagement in Flintshire as part of an all-Wales study. The findings were reported in the Auditor General's *Corporate Assessment Update* letter in August 2011. The conclusion was that 'whilst there are positive examples of consultation by some services, the Council's corporate approach to engaging with the public is underdeveloped and does not follow a coherent methodology. The Council is not consistently using evaluation to improve the effectiveness of its consultation or of service delivery.'
- 78 As a result, the Council has endorsed the new *National Principles of Public Engagement in Wales* developed by the Welsh Government and Participation Cymru (a partnership of public and third sector organisations) and is planning to develop an improved corporate framework for public engagement. It is awaiting the publication, in early 2012, of the Wales Audit Office national study on public engagement and associated good practice.

The Council is progressing with changes aimed at improving customer access although it is at an early stage, and the extent of benefit and the value for money is not yet clear

- 79 The Council's objective 'to achieve the highest standards of customer services and care through our customer services strategy' is to be met through:
- the introduction of 'Flintshire Connects' (customer access points);
 - a 'Channel Shift' project to enable customers to switch to using self-service forms of business, such as transaction via the Council's website; and
 - improving customer services through the development of customer contact centres such as the Streetscene customer contact centre.
- 80 The Council assessed its overall progress on this objective in 2010-11 as 'good' although some aspects of the priority were 'amber' meaning they were progressing but behind schedule. By mid 2011-12, all three main elements were assessed by the Council as making good progress with full confidence in the likelihood of achieving the intended outcomes.
- 81 Workshops for councillors have been held on these developments and the Executive Board has agreed to the location of the first Flintshire Connects facility in Holywell. However, the Council has not yet set out the clear business cases for the Flintshire Connects project showing the full costs and

benefits of the project, the specific outcomes that can be expected, and the success measures that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the developments.

- 82 The improvement plan 'outcomes' for this objective are actions (for example, 'introduce the first phase of the Flintshire Connects programme'), not outcomes, and lack suitable success measures against which improvements for citizens can be assessed. The Council is continuing to work on the development of outcome-based success measures. A benefits realisation exercise for the Flintshire Connects project is being carried out for completion by the end of February 2012.
- 83 Flintshire Connects and the 'Channel Shift' development have become two projects within the *Flintshire Futures Programme*. The Council intends to produce six Flintshire Connects facilities and Holywell has been identified as the possible location for the first facility with an anticipated opening in June 2012. The Holywell facility is being planned with involvement from North Wales Police, Communities First and Deeside College.
- 84 The Council has undertaken visits and exercises to help develop the vision and learn from other contact centres in Wales and in England. However, the information provided to councillors does not indicate the benefits achieved for customers or the costs of the different centres visited.
- 85 A report for the Executive Board on the proposed development indicated that the first facility would require £275,000 capital and additional initial revenue expenditure. At present, it is estimated that there may be additional revenue costs of £75,000 in the first year of the project but that over a five-year period total staffing savings of £300,000 might be achieved. The limited financial information appears very provisional and an insufficient basis for the business case for such a major development. The Council believes that the benefits realisation exercise, and the experience of developing the first centre at Holywell, will inform the financial planning of other centres.
- 86 The Channel Shift project is at a very early stage of gathering data and information. The intention is to encourage residents contacting the Council to shift from face-to-face contact to telephone or the website.
- 87 The Council is progressing with the development of a contact centre for handling all telephone calls about the Streetscene service. It is expected that the contact centre will begin early in 2012.
- 88 The *Customer Services Strategy 2010-13* was agreed in May 2010 and presents high-level objectives as well as outline proposals. The strategy highlights the need for the Council to 'understand the needs of our customers better and ensure that our plans are in tune with their needs'. It says that 'as well as how customers want to access the Council we also have to understand:
- When they prefer to contact us
 - Why they are contacting us
 - What they are contacting us about'

- 89 The Council has been undertaking some work to develop its understanding of its 'customers' and their changing needs but what it has learned and how this will influence the pattern of developments to improve access to services has not yet been reported.
- 90 The strategy highlights the average costs of face-to-face, telephone and online transaction costs in England and Wales and has used these as the basis for its proposals. However, the costs that apply for Flintshire have not been calculated and the Council considers that it would be very difficult and counterproductive to do so. The Council believes that implementation of the proposals in the customer services strategy will allow for improvements in measuring the cost of contact. The ability to understand the costs of services will be an important aspect of decisions on the future arrangements for customer contact. This will apply to the Flintshire Connects facilities and the Channel Shift projects.

There is good progress in some priority areas but elsewhere progress is mixed and some services are not yet delivering provision at the expected levels

91 The conclusion from our reviews of how the Council is delivering improvement in priority areas is that there is good progress in some priority areas, but elsewhere progress is mixed, and some services are not yet delivering provision at the expected levels of service.

There is mixed progress in achieving improved support for people in need but significant developments are underway in adult social care and housing services

92 This section covers how well the council is delivering improvement in its support for people in need. The Council's main objectives to support people in need are:

- to promote independent, healthy and fulfilled living in the community with the highest-quality personalised and supportive social and health care services;
- to meet housing need in the county and to work with partners to ensure a sufficient supply of quality and affordable homes and housing services in the social, mixed tenure and private sector housing markets; and
- to protect and grow the local and regional economy, to be a prosperous county and to provide help and support for those vulnerable to poverty.

93 The Council appointed a new Director of Community Services, who started in July 2011, after an 18-month period in which the vacant post was covered by the Chief Executive and the three heads of service. The director's responsibilities include the statutory role of Director of Social Services and overall leadership of social services and housing services.

The Council is seeking to address weaknesses in and to develop both adult and children's social services, and has adopted a plan for transformation of adult social care

94 The Council assessed its performance in 2010-11 in promoting independent, healthy and fulfilled living with the highest quality social and health care services as 'adequate'.

95 The CSSIW provides an annual review and evaluation for each council in Wales following the submission of a report by the Director of Social Services. The overall summary from the CSSIW review for 2010-11 said:

- 'There is strong commitment to collaborative working and in exploring new ways of delivering services. Children's services has continued to develop improved ways of engaging with children and young people, whilst adult services have embarked on a programme of transformation in continuing to shift the focus to prevention, promoting independence and reablement.
- However, this is a testing time for the Council with significant challenges in the year ahead.
- For adult services in particular, changes in the health board structures in North Wales and the creation of the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board has affected local momentum, but there are signs that this is improving. Greater clarity of longer-term commissioning intentions for learning disability services is required and this remains a priority.
- A number of key performance indicators in children's services reveal that some of the care management processes require sustained attention in order to deliver the

best outcomes for children and young people. Despite some progress, too many have not reached the standards previously set, with a number falling significantly. It is recognised that the incorporation of the PARIS information system into practice affected the accuracy of recording earlier in the year, and that this has impacted upon overall performance indicator reporting. The educational achievement of looked after children has improved, but this needs further attention and should remain a key priority for the Council.'

Adult social services are facing a testing time but a plan for transformation has been agreed

96 Since the appointment of the new director, the Council has increased its actions to address weaknesses in adult social care service in the short and long term.

97 The Council's *Annual Performance Report* notes that:

- *Good Health, Good Care in Flintshire 2011-14*, the next health social care and well-being strategy has been approved; and
- the number of users of the reablement service has increased as did the percentage of carers assessed and provided with a service.

98 The report acknowledges that, in 2010-11, slower progress was made in supporting people through direct payments and in achieving improved delivery of adaptations.

99 The CSSIW review and the Council's quarterly performance reports for 2011-12 identify a number of service areas for adults where performance is below expectations. To increase the pace of change towards a focus on prevention, promoting independence and reablement the Council has agreed a 'Transforming Social Services for Adults' (TSSA) plan.

100 During the first half of 2011-12, the adult care service has made savings of approximately £250,000 through vacancy management. Managers are taking on additional work to mitigate the impact. It has been reported that these vacancies will remain and contribute to the flexibility required for TSSA, both through service redesign and efficiency savings.

101 A number of other actions are also expected to contribute to improvement:

- A review of the service user journey through adult social care services is being undertaken using 'Lean' methodology and is due to be completed by February 2012.
- The Council is following an 'improvement target action plan' to focus attention on key areas of performance.
- The Council is also involved in the plans to develop a regional commissioning, procurement and monitoring hub for high-cost, low-volume residential care in the following service areas:
 - Children's Services
 - Learning Disabilities
 - Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment
 - Mental Health

- In mid 2010-11, the Council has reported that work is progressing ahead of schedule with modernisation and expansion of the warden service. The recommendations to pilot an expanded service have been approved by councillors with a six-month pilot starting in November 2011.

Some progress has been made in Children's Social Services, but the Council acknowledges that further improvement is needed

- 102 The Council's *Annual Performance Report* shows mixed progress in children's services. Its performance report for mid 2011-12 shows many actions and indicators are assessed as 'amber' meaning activity is in progress but behind schedule.
- 103 The CSSIW review noted positive work with young carers and that regular internal reviews were carried out to test compliance with assessment and care management policies and procedures. But, the CSSIW also said:
- 'care management, particularly of looked after children needs to improve;
 - assessment, planning and timely reviewing of cases of children in need is an essential means of safeguarding and preventing potential escalation of difficulties and consequently requires immediate and ongoing improvement; and
 - there is further work required to improve the quality of data, which is still not completely accurate and reliable.'
- 104 The CSSIW review also noted 'that the Speaking Out for Children in Care Group and the Care Leavers' Support Network are established and used effectively to review and improve services. The *Pride of Flintshire*

Awards event is highly regarded and celebrates the achievements of looked after children.'

- 105 The merger of the Flintshire and Wrexham Local Safeguarding Children Boards became effective from April 2011. Progress is being reported to the Council's Social Care and Health Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and will also be will be subject to ongoing monitoring and review by the CSSIW.
- 106 The CSSIW will be inspecting children's assessment and care management arrangements in March this year.
- 107 In mid 2011-12 the Council has reported good progress with improving arrangements for out-of-county placements for children. This has led to a forecast that there will be an underspend in the budget for placements.

The Council is making reasonable progress in meeting housing need but it acknowledges that further improvement is needed

- 108 The Council has assessed its performance in 2010-11 as 'adequate' for its objective 'to meet housing need in the County and to work with partners to ensure a sufficient supply of quality and affordable homes and housing services in the social, mixed tenure and private sector housing markets'. Most of the specific actions assessed were rated as 'amber' meaning that progress was being made but behind schedule.
- 109 The priorities for this objective have been:
- to deliver an affordable housing supply through the affordable housing strategy;
 - to make a marked and rapid improvement in the quality, flexibility and performance of

- housing management and repairs and maintenance services and to improve the financial performance of the Housing Revenue Account; and
- to determine the future of the Council's housing stock through a tenant ballot and a strategy to achieve the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.
- 110 The Council is making progress in all these priorities but continues to face significant challenges.
- 111 The Council's performance in providing affordable housing in 2010-11 was close to the average for Wales, although below the targets the Council had set for itself. In addition to its own continuing work to provide affordable properties in the county, the Council is also working closely with other councils and partners. These include:
- A joint review of the local housing strategy in conjunction with Wrexham County Borough Council – and a joint consultation event was held in November 2011.
 - A 'Common Access Routes to Housing' Project involving Conwy, Denbighshire and Wrexham Councils, in addition to the registered social landlords active in the area.
 - Glyndwr University has commenced a joint Local Housing Market Assessment update. This was commissioned jointly with Wrexham Council.
 - A regional housing register and common allocations policy is being developed and currently involves Flintshire, Wrexham, Denbighshire and Conwy Councils in addition to several registered social landlords.
- Procurement of loans administrator – this is a collaborative project involving Flintshire, Denbighshire and Gwynedd Councils.
- 112 There has been progress with improving many aspects of landlord services including dealing with urgent repairs. However, performance in addressing voids (empty properties), rent arrears and non-urgent repairs is still below expected levels.
- 113 The Council has made continued progress towards a housing stock transfer ballot. Whilst the timetable has slipped, at the end of November 2011 the Council agreed to proceed with the 'stage 1' consultation beginning in January 2012. Subject to the consultation, it is intended the ballot should go ahead in February and March 2012. This will be an important step in improving the quality of the housing stock.
- 114 There has been good consultation with tenants about their priorities for improvement. The Council has agreed and published plans for £49 million of expenditure on the housing stock in the five years from 2013 if tenants decide to not transfer to Dee Housing, a new not-for-profit registered social landlord. If tenants decide to transfer to Dee Housing, £166 million would be spent on the stock in the same period.
- 115 Despite this work, the Council forecasts that only 26 of its houses will fully comply with the Welsh Quality Housing Standard by 2020. Flintshire is one of only three councils in Wales which is forecasting that its stock will not be fully compliant with the standard by the end of the decade.

The Council has made some progress in the support it is able to offer people who are vulnerable to poverty. But the Council still faces significant challenges in delivering these services, and more could be done to co-ordinate activities

- 116 Part of the Council's improvement objective 'to protect and grow the local and regional economy, to be a prosperous county and to provide help and support for those vulnerable to poverty' is related to the 2010-11 priority to reduce extreme poverty and make the best use of local resources to provide advice and extend benefits take-up.
- 117 The Council's *Annual Performance Report* indicates the status of this work is 'amber' meaning that progress is being made but behind schedule. It refers to the Council and its partner organisations developing work through the Local Service Board on the theme of 'maximising income' for people.
- 118 The Local Service Board work aims to improve the provision of welfare advice from different agencies and to achieve a more co-ordinated service. A pilot service started in October 2011 and an 'outcomes based accountability' approach is being used. However, the success measures have not yet been set for this work.
- 119 The Council's own Welfare Advice Casework Service has supported an increased number of people. In the first half of 2011-12, the service helped Flintshire residents with benefits claims and tribunals to obtain £1.3 million. The Money Advice Caseworker Service also provided help to more people who faced possible homelessness as a result of debts.
- 120 The performance of the Council in administering council tax and housing benefits plays an important part in the Council's work to support people in need and reduce poverty. Significant concerns were raised by the Wales Audit Office in 2010 about the administration of benefits and the grant claims made for recovery of benefits. The Council has worked with the Department of Work and Pensions Performance Team to review and streamline processes. Good progress has been made and audit work on the 2010-11 housing and council tax benefit subsidy claim identified significantly fewer issues. There has been substantial improvement in the performance of the benefits service.
- 121 The Council has identified that the planned national welfare reforms will present a further significant challenge to efforts to reduce poverty. The Council's *Improvement Plan 2011-12* has altered the focus of the 'poverty' aspect of the improvement objective to include managing welfare reform. The main sub-objectives are now to:
- implement the Families First initiative;
 - work on a North Wales approach to develop a shared methodology to determine care fees in the future; and
 - develop a strategy to manage the impacts of welfare reform (in conjunction with the Local Service Board project).
- 122 These actions are wrongly described as 'outcomes', as these are actions or tasks. Appropriate outcome measures have not yet been agreed.

123 The Families First initiative has been implemented across Flintshire, Wrexham and Denbighshire, bringing additional resource to family support services and new models of intervention and is progressing. Its principal focus is on supporting families through interventions at the preventative and protective stages. The programme aims to drive improvements to family support design and delivery and, in so doing, reduce the numbers of families developing more complex needs and thus requiring more intensive and costly interventions.

124 The Auditor General's *Annual Improvement Report* covering 2009-10, which was published in January 2011, noted that 'not enough has been done to bring together the many ways in which the Council can contribute' to tackling poverty. This remains an issue. However, the proposed Welfare Reform Strategy will link together all the various anti-poverty initiatives that the Council and its partners are currently managing. The strategy will aim to 'implement a long-term strategic approach to promote the positives and mitigate the negatives of the welfare reforms upon Flintshire's residents, local communities, service providers and the local authority'.

The performance of pupils is below the expected levels in some aspects of education whilst standards and prospects for 14 to 19 year olds are good. Significant developments taking place in leisure and play services but risks remain

125 This part of the report sets out how well the Council is improving the way in which it helps people to develop. Overall, we found the performance of pupils is below the expected levels in some aspects of education whilst standards and prospects for 14 to 19 year olds are good. There are significant developments taking place in leisure and play services but risks remain.

126 The Council's improvement objective is 'to secure a modern and high performing range of learning, cultural, play and leisure opportunities for all ages with our schools, colleges and other partners'. The Council assessed its performance for this objective in 2010-11 as good. Most of the sub-objectives were assessed as 'green', meaning that targets had been met or actions completed. The exceptions were for primary school modernisation (amber), secondary school modernisation (red), the Leisure Strategy (amber), and risks to the future viability of the Clwyd Theatr Cymru (amber).

127 In October 2011, Estyn carried out an inspection of local authority services for children and young people, and the summary of their findings is below.

128 Estyn reported that 'elected members have not worked satisfactorily to reorganise secondary schools, reduce surplus places and make better use of resources'. In

December 2011, the Council approved the options for the area reviews of secondary school provision in the Holywell, Queensferry/Connah's Quay and Buckley/Mynydd Isa and Mold areas. The public consultation process, which had been halted in August 2011, is to be reopened in February 2012.

- 129 The performance of pupils in Flintshire was ranked first in Wales for the proportion achieving five GCSE passes at grades A*-C including English/Welsh and mathematics in 2010 and 2011. However, when contextual information, such as the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, is taken into account too many schools perform below expected levels.

Estyn has assessed the performance of pupils as below expectation in some aspects of education

- 130 Estyn has made the following assessment of the education performance of pupils:

- 'When contextual information is taken into account the performance of pupils in Flintshire, in 2011, is slightly below average in key stage 1 (age 7) and average in key stage 2 (age 11). In key stage 3 (age 14), performance is well below average. At key stage 3, three-quarters of Flintshire secondary schools are below average and one-third are in the bottom quarter for their performance. There have been too many schools in the bottom 25 per cent over the last two years and too few schools in the top 25 per cent. Performance at key stage 4 (age 16) is above average on three of the five measures and below average on the other two.

- The Welsh Government sets expectations for performance based on free-school-meal entitlement. Flintshire has met only one out of nine of these expected benchmarks for the three years to 2010. Benchmark information for 2011 is not yet available.
- Attendance in secondary schools is good. Rates have remained high over the last three years and are the highest in Wales. Attendance in primary schools is above the Wales average although the trend over the last three years shows a decline. There are few permanent exclusions from most schools in Flintshire. However the rate of fixed-term exclusions is too high and these learners miss too many days of school.'

Estyn judged the education services for children and young people and their prospects for improvement as adequate

- 131 Flintshire was inspected by Estyn, the education and training inspectorate for Wales, in October 2011. Inspectors judged that 'the local authority's education services for children and young people are adequate because:

- Since 2007, performance in Flintshire schools has improved at a similar rate to that of Wales in key stages 1, 2, and 3. In 2011, the percentage of pupils gaining the core subject indicator (CSI – the expected performance in English, or Welsh, mathematics and science in combination) was above the average for Wales. In 2010, performance at key stage 4 improved at a faster rate than that of Wales as a whole on four of the five main indicators.

- There are few permanent exclusions.
- The authority works well with a range of partnerships including the Local Service Board, Youth Offending Team, Children and Young People's Partnership, 14-19 network, and with other neighbouring authorities.

However:

- Overall standards are adequate. In 2011 at key stage 3 three-quarters of Flintshire secondary schools are well below average and one-third are in the bottom quarter for the core subject indicator. There have been too many schools in the bottom 25 per cent over the last two years and too few schools in the top 25 per cent.
- In 2011 performance at key stage 4 declined on three indicators.
- In key stages 1, 2 and 3 the gap in performance between boys and girls is wider than that across Wales.
- The local authority does not perform to expected Welsh Government benchmarks when compared to similar authorities on free school meal rankings in key stage 1 and in key stage 3. It has average performance at key stage 2. At key stage 4, the authority has only met or exceeded its expected benchmarks once in the last three years. This is an important area for improvement.
- There are a range of areas requiring improvement in the primary sector, including declining attendance, behaviour, quality and standards, and financial management.

- Too many schools require some level of follow-up activity after Estyn inspections, including one primary school being placed in significant improvement and another in special measures.
- Elected members have not worked satisfactorily to reorganise secondary schools, reduce surplus places and make better use of resources.

132 Inspectors judged that the local authority has adequate prospects for improvement because:

- standards declined in 2011 on three key stage 4 indicators;
- the pace of securing improvements is often slow;
- it is not clear how the authority will address all the areas for improvement it identifies in its self-evaluation report; and
- elected members have been unwilling to act strategically in the needs and interests of children and young people, particularly with regard to their secondary school modernisation strategy.

However:

- senior officers have recently put new initiatives in place to improve the performance of pupils in receipt of free school meals and vulnerable pupils; and
- the authority is establishing good working relationships with five other authorities in the North Wales regional consortia to establish a regional school effectiveness service.

133 Inspectors recommended that, in order to improve, the authority should:

- Improve standards and performance to reduce the percentage of schools that are in the bottom 25 per cent when compared to similar schools across Wales and reduce the gap in performance between boys and girls.
- Improve the standard and quality of provision in primary schools by:
 - addressing a trend of declining attendance;
 - reducing fixed term exclusions; and
 - reducing school balances and deficits in line with national guidelines.
- Improve how senior officers and all elected members work together to:
 - improve standards for all learners;
 - improve self-evaluation and reporting to members; and
 - reorganise secondary schools, reduce surplus places and make better use of resources.
- Reduce the number of days' education that learners in Flintshire miss due to fixed term exclusions of six days or more in all of its secondary schools.
- Improve the monitoring arrangements for the Children and Young People's Partnership to effectively track the progress of children and young people.
- Prioritise all areas for improvement identified in its self-evaluation of education services.'

In January 2011, Estyn found the current provision for 14 to 19-year-old learners in Flintshire, and the prospects for improvement, were good

134 Estyn carried out an area inspection for Flintshire in January 2011 which examined:

- the quality and availability of a specified description of education or training for persons who are aged 15 or over;
- the standards achieved by those receiving that education or training; and
- whether the financial resources made available to those providing that education and training are managed efficiently and used in a way which provides value for money.

135 Estyn found that the area's current provision of learning for 14 to 19-year-old learners in Flintshire was good because of:

- good attainment of 14 to 19-year-old learners;
- high levels of learner participation, attendance rates, and the high proportion of 16 year olds continuing in education and training or moving on to employment;
- developing collaboration between schools and other sectors to widen the range of courses on offer to learners;
- well-developed partnership working to provide a wide range of non-formal and informal learning activities; and
- good-quality support for learners, targeted to meet specific needs and providing learners with informative advice on the options available to them.

136 The area's prospects for improvement were good because of:

- a strong commitment by partners and stakeholders to partnership working, built on firm foundations through extensive consultation and engagement;
- a clear understanding of the challenges that lie ahead and a strong commitment to changing the current pattern of provision at post-16;
- a good track record in developing collaboration between providers and sectors;
- well-developed quality assurance procedures, resulting in a clear and accurate understanding of current performance and areas in need of improvement; and
- the way self-evaluation processes inform improvement planning.

137 Inspectors recommended that, in order to improve, the local authority and providers of education and training need to work together to:

- rationalise provision for 16 to 19-year-old learners to eradicate unnecessary small classes and duplication;
- secure further improvements in the attainment of learners in schools at key stage 4 and especially post-16;
- continue to extend post-16 Welsh-medium provision in Deeside College and North Wales Training, and increase participation levels, so that more learners continue with Welsh-medium learning and assessment at post-16;

- extend across all providers the good practice in the quality assurance of collaborative provision; and
- develop further the way the network centrally collates and uses data and other information to inform strategic planning and to facilitate the evaluation of impact and progress.

Significant developments are taking place in aspects of play, leisure, and culture, but some risks remain

138 There is good progress in improving leisure facilities but financial risks remain. The Council's Partnering Agreement with Alliance Leisure Services Ltd (a private sector provider of leisure services) is leading to significant improvement in the quality of leisure facilities in the county. The cost of the improvement is funded through the increases in income from increased usage of the leisure centres. The Council and its partner have worked well to deliver the improvements in leisure facilities, and there is increased usage at Deeside Leisure Centre, where most improvement work has been completed.

139 The Council's mid 2011-12 performance report notes that there is a projected in-year Leisure Services overspend of £180,000. Overall usage of the leisure centres (excluding the renewed indoor facilities at Deeside Leisure Centre) had reduced. At three centres, the Council reduced reception staffing to achieve savings. This meant users have to pre-book and these centres have since seen a larger-than-average reduction in usage. The Council has assessed that there is now a new strategic risk for 'leisure – revenue funding' which is rated as 'red'.

140 The 'Sport Flintshire Team' at the Council has been recognised as being the best team of its kind in Wales – and the fourth best in the UK in the summer/autumn 2011. The team delivers sports and active recreation activities and opportunities. This excellent achievement has been attained through the Quest accreditation scheme – the industry standard for sport and leisure across both the public and private sectors.

141 The Council and other partners have been awarded Big Lottery grant funding for the NEW Play project. The project will be delivering peripatetic play provision across Flintshire, Wrexham and Denbighshire, targeting 15 play deprived communities over a fixed three-year period.

142 The Council's *Play Strategy* was approved in July 2011, but elements of the strategy are not adequately funded. The Council has reported that the long-term viability and sustainability of the Play Unit's current service provision is at risk, both in terms of fixed play equipment and community play work. The annual repair and maintenance budget for play areas is insufficient for the long-term sustainability of the sites. Match-funding arrangements for 2011-12 have been agreed with a number of town and community councils to fund refurbishment of 18 play areas. However, this is a small proportion of the total 178 sites. The possible ending of Welsh Government Cymorth funding in March 2012 will have severe implications regarding the delivery of future community play work.

143 During 2010-11, the Council approved a report on the Clwyd Theatr Cymru, together with updated governance arrangements for the theatre and business plan for 2011-12. The Council-owned theatre receives approximately £1 million funding per year from the Council, and funding from the Arts Council Wales. Significant development work is required to maintain the theatre building and, as a result of this, a new strategic risk entry for the Council's risk register was agreed. The risk is rated as 'amber'. A feasibility study for the development of the theatre is to be carried out.

The Council is addressing challenges and delivering improvements to help create and maintain a safe, prosperous and pleasant county

144 This part of the report sets out how well the Council is improving the way in which it creates and maintains the area as a safe, prosperous and pleasant place. The Council's objectives are:

- to make our communities safe and to safeguard the vulnerable, with children and older people being priority groups;
- to protect and grow the local and regional economy, to be a prosperous county and to provide help and support for those vulnerable to poverty; and
- to protect, plan and develop sustainable natural and built environments.

The Council is making good progress in helping make communities safe

- 145 The Council assessed its progress in making communities safe as 'good'.
- 146 Reasonable progress is being made in most aspects of the Public Protection Service and in 2010-11 the Council inspected all high-risk businesses that were due for a programmed inspection. This included all four categories of inspection – trading standards, food hygiene, animal health and health and safety.
- 147 The Council's mid 2011-12 performance monitoring report suggests the Council is on track in 2011-12 to meet most targets, except for health and safety inspections. The lower performance for health and safety inspections is reported as due to the need to undertake reactive work and because vacant posts within the service have reduced the number of officers available to undertake the work. The Council has been active in taking prosecutions where necessary and has made successful prosecutions in relation to trading standards, animal health and noise nuisance offences.
- 148 The Council's Community Safety Partnership has recently worked with Wrexham's Community Safety Partnership to develop the first joint Flintshire and Wrexham *Community Safety Partnership Plan 2011-14*. This sets out the strategic community safety priorities for both areas, and reflects the views of residents in the communities.

- 149 The Council and its partners have been working together to align the planning cycles for each organisation on community safety matters. This helps to target resources more efficiently and to address shared priorities.
- 150 Generally, crime and anti-social behaviour is reducing in Flintshire. However, residents remain concerned about crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse. The Council has also had a leading role in the development of a regional Safer Communities Board, which will take a key role in developing regional community safety policy and strategy.

The Council is playing a positive and effective role in work to develop the local and regional economy

- 151 The Council has assessed its progress in 2010-11 in promoting the economy as good.
- 152 The county has a strategically important position in the economy for Wales and the north-west of England and the Council is actively engaged with economic development partners. It is a respected partner, and has been able to play a leading role in helping Welsh and UK Government engagement with the business community in the area.
- 153 The Executive Board and senior officers have shown a high level of engagement and commitment to the objective of developing the local and regional economy. This engagement has contributed to the decision that there should be a new enterprise zone, the Deeside Growth Zone, focused on advanced manufacturing from April 2012. The Council will work with partners to set out a programme

to secure investment and jobs in the area. The Council has played a leading role in the Flintshire Regeneration Partnership and in the successful *Flintshire Business Week* events.

- 154 Town plans are being developed for each town in the county and the *Rural Development Plan* is also guiding projects in rural areas. Town plans for Buckley and Shotton/Connah's Quay have been completed.
- 155 The economic downturn is having an impact on the county with rising unemployment amongst 18 to 24 year olds. However, major investments, such as the planned £350 million Airbus North Factory, will continue to bring employment to the area.

The Council is making good progress in service changes to improve its services to protect the environment

- 156 The Council assessed its performance in its objective 'to protect, plan and develop sustainable natural and built environments as good'.
- 157 After a review of services, the Council has developed an integrated 'Streetscene' service which is a joined-up approach bringing together a number of services that are important in maintaining the local environment. This initiative has the potential to deliver a much improved, customer-facing service. In September 2011, a ballot of trade unions' members rejected proposals for operation of the service, and discussions are being held to resolve matters. The Council plans that the new service will go 'live' in early 2012 and this will be supported by a new customer contact centre.

- 158 Data for 2010-11 suggests that the Council's performance was poor for the percentage of municipal waste recycled, good for the percentage of waste prepared for reuse, and close to average for other measures. The Council has introduced changes to its domestic waste collection arrangements, which are intended to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service. There have been some initial problems with ensuring that residents understand and accept the new service. It is too early to assess the impact of the changes on the levels of recycling and other indicators of the effectiveness of the service.
- 159 The Council continues to lead the North Wales Residual Waste Treatment Project and to pursue long-term solutions to waste management.
- 160 The Council has adopted its Unitary Development Plan and will shortly start work on the Local Development Plan after obtaining approval from the Welsh Government for its delivery programme.

The Council is continuing to develop its performance monitoring arrangements but weaknesses remain in outcome measures, reliability of information and in some aspects of reporting and evaluation

161 This section considers how well the Council is evaluating and reporting on its performance and its arrangements to deliver improvement. We found that the Council is continuing to develop its performance monitoring arrangements but weaknesses remain in outcome measures, reliability of information and in some aspects of reporting and evaluation.

The lack of outcome based success measures for some objectives and weaknesses in data reliability weaken the Council's performance management arrangements

The Council is making progress in developing its arrangements for self-assessment and reporting on its improvement objectives but weaknesses remain

162 Councils in Wales are required to undertake self-assessments through a number of specific reports in addition to the ongoing process of performance monitoring and management. Specific self-assessments include:

- the publication of an annual report on performance under the Measure;
- the annual report of the Director of Social Services;
- the review of governance that contributes to the *Annual Governance Statement*; and
- self-evaluations required for regulatory inspections such as Estyn.

163 The Council approved its *Annual Performance Report* on 26 October 2011 and published it on its website in late November 2011. The report:

- includes an assessment of performance under the 10 improvement objectives for 2011-12 and show how these relate to the 40 priorities for 2010-11;
- shows how the Council is discharging its general duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement;
- makes reference to national and local performance indicators and uses a wider set of information to make its assessment; and
- includes comparative information with previous years and other Welsh authorities.

164 The Auditor General has determined that through the *Annual Performance Report* the Council has discharged all of its duties in relation to publishing improvement information under the Measure, except the requirement to publish the report by 31 October. However, the Council should do more to follow Welsh Government guidance, specifically in:

- providing a more consistent use of comparative information – whilst comparative ranking is given for all NSI and core indicators where the Council is ranked in the top and bottom three performers, in the sections on the improvement objectives comparative information is more likely to be given where the Council performs well than for other indicators;

- providing information about how it has considered whether to collaborate and whether collaboration has achieved its intended outcomes; and
 - providing clearer information about the steps the Council will take in the light of its assessment.
- 165 The Council had not developed clear measures of success or a reporting framework for many of the priorities adopted in 2010 (these priorities and the subsequent objectives agreed for 2011-12 are set out in [Appendix 4](#)). Consequently, the *Annual Performance Report* has used the 2011-12 improvement objectives in the report whilst indicating which of the 2010-11 priorities these apply to. The Council has used relevant information on actions, indicators and risks to support its assessment of performance, but these are not all outcome measures.
- 166 The *Annual Performance Report* is long and some sections are not easy to follow. It has also been affected by the changes to the Council's priorities and sub-priorities.
- 167 The Council has developed a new reporting approach based on the 2011-12 improvement priorities. This will provide a clearer framework for considering and reporting the Council's progress against its improvement objectives. To support this, the Council needs to complete current work to ensure that the intended outcomes, not just actions, are clear for each objective and that the accountability arrangements are also clear.
- 168 In addition to regular performance management arrangements the Council undertakes specific self-evaluations as part of the preparation of the annual governance statements, for its Annual Performance Review, and other specific service areas including lifelong learning and social services. The Estyn area inspection of provision for 14 to 19 year olds (see [paragraphs 134-137](#)) found that 'the way self-evaluation processes inform improvement planning' was a strength that contributed to the good prospects for improvement. The engagement of councillors in these arrangements varies: some councillors were involved in the development and approval of the Director of Social Services report for 2010-11; however, whilst the Executive Member for Education was consulted about the self-evaluation prepared for the Estyn inspection of education services, it was not formally approved by the Executive Board or considered by the relevant scrutiny committee.
- 169 Overall, we found that self-assessment is becoming an established part of the way the Council operates and we commend this. The Council has also played a significant role in supporting self-assessment of partnership bodies. The process of self-assessment is developing but will be improved when outcome-based success measures for all objectives are clear.

Performance monitoring and management arrangements are established but could be streamlined

170 The Council has an established framework for reporting performance information.

This includes:

- an agreed set of key improvement targets;
- an outcome agreement with the Welsh Government;
- the Council's improvement objectives;
- its Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges process, setting out 48 significant risks for community leadership, council delivery and council governance;
- directorate and departmental plans and targets; and
- resources management information, including sickness absence, HR, financial and assets information.

171 Quarterly reports are presented to overview and scrutiny committees covering these areas and providing a management assessment. These reports are lengthy.

172 Separate shorter 'exception' reports are presented to the Executive Board. The exception reports focus on areas where performance is below expected levels against improvement targets, together with an update on the strategic assessment of risks and challenges register. Executive members also have access to the reports that go to scrutiny committees. From January 2012, the Council has introduced the new additional reporting on progress on its improvement objectives. These reports are presented to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Board.

173 Councillors told us that the quality of information reports has generally improved. But we found that:

- the quarterly performance reports for scrutiny were overlong, time-consuming to prepare, and took up to 12 weeks to be presented;
- the arrangements resulted in officers being held to account rather than the Executive Board; and
- there were some inconsistencies and weaknesses in the data and information reported (see below).

174 The development of a revised reporting framework focused on the Council's improvement objectives provides an opportunity to streamline the reporting arrangements with a view to improving timeliness, consistency and focus.

Weaknesses were identified in the accuracy of some performance data

175 We found councillors did not always trust the information in performance reports and that weaknesses existed that questioned the reliability of performance data. These included:

- Our audit of the data for the NSIs for 2010-11 identified 6 out of 24 indicators that were audited needed to be qualified. This represents a quarter of the important national indicator information.
- In July 2011, the Council's Internal Audit service undertook a review of the information for indicators that had been amended or qualified by the Wales Audit Office in 2010. This found significant errors and weaknesses in the same group of indicators in 2010-11 and that, whilst systems of control were adequate, the application of the controls was not. Ten significant recommendations for improvement were made.
- Incorrect data was initially submitted by the Council to the CSSIW to support the Director of Social Services report for 2010-11.
- The reliability of HR data has been affected by inaccuracies in staff information in the electronic HR system.

176 The Council needs to do more to ensure that appropriate controls are applied to ensure that data used and reported is reliable.

Appendices



Appendix 1

Status of this report

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) requires the Auditor General to undertake an annual Improvement Assessment, and to publish an Annual Improvement Report, for each improvement authority in Wales. This requirement covers local councils, national parks, and fire and rescue authorities.

This report has been produced by the Auditor General to discharge his duties under section 24 of the Measure. The report also discharges duties under section 19 to issue a report certifying that he has carried out an Improvement Assessment under section 18 and stating whether, as a result of his improvement plan audit under section 17, he believes that the authority has discharged its improvement planning duties under section 15.

Improvement authorities are under a general duty to 'make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of [their] functions'. Improvement authorities are defined as local councils, national parks, and fire and rescue authorities.

The annual Improvement Assessment is the main piece of work that enables the Auditor General to fulfil his duties. The Improvement Assessment is informed by a forward-looking assessment of an authority's likelihood to comply with its duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement. It also includes a retrospective assessment of whether an authority has achieved its planned improvements in order to inform a view as to the authority's track record of improvement. This report also summarises the Auditor General's conclusions on the Council's self-assessment of its performance.

The Auditor General may also in some circumstances carry out special inspections (under section 21), in respect of which he will provide a report to the relevant authorities and Ministers, and which he may publish (under section 22). The Auditor General will summarise audit and assessment reports in this published Annual Improvement Report (under section 24). This will also summarise any reports of special inspections.

An important ancillary activity for the Wales Audit Office is the co-ordination of assessment and regulatory work (required by section 23), which takes into consideration the overall programme of work of all relevant regulators at an improvement authority. The Auditor General may also take account of information shared by relevant regulators (under section 33) in his assessments.

Appendix 2

Useful information about Flintshire and Flintshire County Council

The Council

Flintshire Council spends approximately £312.5 million per year (2011-12). This equates to about £2,087 per resident. In the same year, the Council also spent £28.3 million on capital items.

The average band D council tax in 2010-11 was £1,115 per year. This has increased by 3.18 per cent to £1,151 per year for 2011-12. 68.5 per cent of the dwellings within Flintshire are in council tax bands A to D.

The Council is made up of 70 elected members who represent the community and make decisions about priorities and use of resources. The political make-up of the Council is as follows:

- 22 Labour
- 19 Alliance
- 9 Conservatives
- 9 New Independent
- 9 Liberal Democrats
- 2 not aligned

The Leader is Councillor Arnold Woolley.

The Chief Executive is Colin Everett, and the directors are:

- Director of Environment – Carl Longland
- Director of Lifelong Learning – Ian Budd
- Director of Community Services – Neil Ayling

Other information

The Assembly Members for Flintshire are:

- Sandy Mewies, Delyn, Labour
- Carl Sargeant, Alyn and Deeside, Labour

Regional Assembly Members are:

- Llyr Huws Gruffydd, Plaid Cymru
- Mark Isherwood, Welsh Conservative Party
- Aled Roberts, Welsh Liberal Democrats
- Antoinette Sandbach, Welsh Conservative Party

The Members of Parliament for Flintshire are:

- David Hanson, Delyn, Labour
- Mark Tami, Alyn Deeside, Labour

For more information see the Council's own website at www.flintshire.gov.uk or contact the Council at Flintshire County Council, County Hall, Mold, Flintshire CH7 6NB. Tel: 01352 752121

Appendix 3

Appointed Auditor's Annual Audit Letter to the Members of Flintshire County Council

The auditor appointed by the Auditor General issued the following auditor's letter on 30 November 2011.

Annual Audit Letter to the Members of Flintshire County Council

As you will be aware the Auditor General for Wales will be issuing an Annual Improvement Report (AIR) to each local authority by the end of January 2012 and some of the issues that were traditionally reported in the Appointed Auditor's Annual Audit Letter will be included in that report. Therefore I have taken the opportunity to summarise the key messages arising from the Appointed Auditor's statutory responsibilities into this short letter which forms the Annual Audit Letter. The letter is designed to be a standalone document, but will also be presented to the Council and the public as part of the Annual Improvement Report and therefore discharges my reporting responsibilities under the Code of Audit Practice.

Flintshire County Council complied with its responsibilities relating to financial reporting and use of resources but there is scope to improve financial controls in a number of areas and the Council needs to further develop its future financial planning to help it meet the significant financial challenges ahead

- 1 It is the Council's responsibility to:
 - put systems of internal control in place to ensure the regularity and lawfulness of transactions and to ensure that its assets are secure;
 - maintain proper accounting records;
 - prepare a Statement of Accounts in accordance with relevant requirements; and
 - establish and keep under review appropriate arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.
- 2 The Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 requires me to:
 - provide an audit opinion on the accounting statements;
 - review the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources; and
 - issue a certificate confirming that I have completed the audit of the accounts.
- 3 On 29 September 2011 I issued an unqualified audit opinion on the accounting statements confirming that they present a true and fair view of the Council's and the Pension Fund's financial position and transactions. My report is contained within the Statement of Accounts. Whilst my opinion was unqualified, I included an emphasis of matter in my report on the Pension Fund's accounting statements. A number of matters arising from the accounts audit were reported to members in my Audit of Financial Statements reports and further details will be reported in our detailed report in December.

- 4 From 2010/11 local authorities in Wales are required to produce their accounts on the basis of International Financial Reporting Standards. The introduction of these new standards imposed significant additional demands on the Council's finance staff.
- 5 The following issues were identified during the audit of the Council's accounts:
- The Council did not correctly apply its accounting policy in valuing its housing stock resulting in material misstatements to the accounts. As a result the net book value of the stock was reduced by £127.766 million.
 - The integrity of the financial statements was undermined because a number of the primary statements contained balancing entries.
 - There were a number of general presentational issues that related to the quality of the accounts and supporting records.
 - Whilst we were satisfied that the Council set aside a reasonable accounting estimate, in its financial statements, to meet the potential liability for equal pay, some of the assumptions used to support the estimate need to be better underpinned by factual data.
- 6 The following additional issues were identified regarding the Clwyd Pension Fund accounts:
- The auditor's report was modified to draw attention to the nature of private equity investments held by the Fund. As part of its investment portfolio, the fund had year-end holdings in private equity investments totalling £218.314 million. Because of the inherent uncertainty associated with the valuation of such investments, arising from the absence of a liquid market, the fair value of these investments may differ from their realisable values. As the difference could be material I decided to draw attention to the inherent uncertainty.
 - Our audit work identified that there are significant delays in the processing of new pensions resulting in delayed payment of lump sum and pension entitlements. As a result, lump sum liabilities contained within the draft financial statements were understated by £1.274 million.
- 7 My review of the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness has been based on the audit work undertaken on the accounts as well as placing reliance on the work completed as part of the Improvement Assessment under the Local Government Measure (2009). The main findings from this latter work will be set out in the Annual Improvement Report. In addition I also bring the following issues to your attention:
- The Council continues to develop its medium-term financial plan, following adoption of its financial strategy, but considerable work is still required to set a balanced budget for 2012-2013 and beyond. In addition, not all pressures have yet been fully factored into the forecasts to establish the extent of the funding gap over the next three years.

- The Flintshire Futures programme has been structured to include a mixture of short, medium and longer term projects. However, the financial benefits have yet to be fully quantified and integrated in the financial planning, thereby establishing the contribution of Flintshire Futures to meet the funding gap in the medium term.
- 8 I issued a certificate confirming that the audit of the accounts has been completed on 29 September 2011.
- 9 The financial audit fee for 2010/2011 is currently expected to be in line with those set out in the Annual Audit Outline.

John Herniman
Group Director

For and on behalf of the Appointed Auditor

30 November 2011

Appendix 4

Flintshire Council's improvement objectives and self-assessment

Flintshire Council's improvement objectives

The Council is required by the Welsh Government to make plans to improve its functions and the services it provides. Each year it must publish these plans along with specific 'improvement objectives' that set out the key things the Council intends to do to improve. The Council must do this as soon as possible after 1 April each year.

The Council's Executive Board agreed the improvement priorities of the Administration in May 2010. These 40 priorities and directorate priorities were grouped under 10 improvement objectives in the Council's *Improvement Plan 2011-12*. The improvement plan can be found on the Council's website at www.flintshire.gov.uk. The improvement objectives and the priorities agreed in 2010 are shown below:

Improvement objectives 2011-12	Priorities agreed May 2010
<p>1 To be a modern, efficient and cost effective public organisation through our four resource strategies – the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the People Strategy, the asset management strategy and the ICT Strategy – whilst ensuring our local taxes and fees and charges are fair and affordable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote and maintain a positive and confident reputation for the Council and the County locally, regionally and nationally. • To continue to make progressive change in the culture, efficiency, effectiveness, adaptability and performance of the organisation both corporately and in service planning and delivery. • To develop and follow a resilient medium and longer term financial strategy whilst maintaining an affordable level of council tax for local taxpayers. • To achieve the aims and objectives of the <i>People Strategy</i> with an emphasis on people management practice, management performance, attendance management and agile working. • To implement effective business continuity plans to protect key services. • To maximise the use of the Council's land and asset base for the achievement of Council priorities and to maximise capital receipts or income.
<p>2 To achieve the greatest possible cost efficiencies through regional collaboration to reinvest in local public services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To cope and prosper in the coming years of reductions in revenue and capital for public services and continue to improve and perform as a public services organisation. • To modernise and improve Council procedures and performance in procurement practice, to meet the aims of the <i>Opening Doors Policy</i> of the Welsh Assembly Government for small and medium-sized businesses and to achieve cashable and non-cashable efficiency targets.

Improvement objectives 2011-12	Priorities agreed May 2010
<p>3 To be a modern, caring and flexible employer with fair and equal pay and terms and conditions of employment under a Single Status Agreement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To achieve a legal, acceptable and affordable Single Status Agreement.
<p>4 To achieve the highest standards of customer service and care through our customer services strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To attain high and consistent levels of customer service, and to develop more flexible personal and remote customer contact services through an ambitious customer services strategy. • To reshape and improve the Street Scene Services.
<p>5 To make our communities safe and to safeguard the vulnerable, with children and older people being priority groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To extend the impact of Public Protection Services to safeguard communities and public health. • To achieve a higher level of public confidence in the safety of communities in partnership with North Wales Police and others partners. • To promote citizen responsibility to support the work of the public services e.g. crime prevention, enforcement, community participation and community action. • To safeguard vulnerable adults, older people and children in partnership with statutory agencies and other partners.
<p>6 To protect and grow the local and regional economy, to be a prosperous County and to provide help and support for those vulnerable to poverty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reduce extreme poverty, and make the best use of local resources to provided advice and extend benefits take-up, in partnership with others. • To protect, promote and develop the local economy through the transport and communications infrastructure, land and asset use, and the educational system. • To declare the Council's first Neighbourhood Renewal Area (NRA).

Improvement objectives 2011-12	Priorities agreed May 2010
<p>7 To promote independent, healthy and fulfilled living in the community with the highest quality personalised and supportive social and health care services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote independent and supported living in the community through sustainable and affordable domiciliary care, flexible care support packages, integration of services with other partners. • To provide flexible supported living choices including extended extra care housing provision. • To plan to meet the diverse and complex care needs of society including extended provision of dementia services. • To develop a sustainable and affordable policy for Out of County Places. • To work in partnership with the new Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board to extend and improve access to primary health care, to invest in preventative services and to improve further the integration of health and social care.
<p>8 To meet housing need in the County and to work with partners to ensure a sufficient supply of quality and affordable homes and housing services in the social, mixed tenure and private sector housing markets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deliver an affordable housing supply through the affordable housing strategy. • To make a marked and rapid improvement in the quality, flexibility and performance of housing management and repairs and maintenance services and to improve the financial performance of the Housing Revenue Account. • To determine the future of the Council Housing Stock through a tenant ballot and a strategy to achieve the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.

Improvement objectives 2011-12	Priorities agreed May 2010
<p>9 To secure a modern and high performing range of learning, cultural, play and leisure opportunities for all ages with our schools, colleges and other partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop the School Modernisation Strategy and to achieve, in phases, its aims and objectives whilst securing the highest possible level of 'spend per pupil'. • To achieve the aims and objectives of the School Effectiveness Framework. • To achieve the aims and objectives of the 14-19 transformation strategy and to be effective educational and economic partners with the higher and further education sectors and notably Deeside College and Glyndwr University. • To further develop the foundation phase for pre-school age. • To achieve the objectives of the action plan adopted by the Council in response to the Estyn Inspection of Local Education Services. • To achieve the aims and objectives of the Actif Leisure Strategy. • To agree and fund a scheme to remodel Deeside Leisure Centre • To agree a scheme to remodel Clwyd Theatr Cymru and campaign for national capital funding support.
<p>10 To protect, plan and develop sustainable natural and built environments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To achieve our waste minimisation and recycling targets through the local and regional strategies, thereby avoiding infraction penalties, with high levels of public support and participation. • to adopt the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and progress the replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) with urgency. • to further improve the quality, flexibility and performance of planning development control services. • to improve Council enforcement particularly in environmental services, the cleanliness of the 'public realm' and in planning development control. • to agree a strategy with the Welsh Assembly Government to reduce traffic congestion on the A494/A55 interchange and the connecting County road network as a key part of the national and regional transport plans.

Flintshire Council's self-assessment of performance

The Council's self-assessment of its performance can be found in its *Annual Performance Report 2010-11* which can be found at www.flintshire.gov.uk (search for improvement plan).

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Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru
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Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report 2011

Response to the Recommendations

A: Formal Recommendations

Ref	Recommendation	Response
R1	The Council should report more fully and regularly to the Executive Board on progress in delivering the Human Resources (HR) Strategy and Single Status agreement and ensure capacity and capability are available to achieve intended outcomes and timetables	<p>The Executive has recently received a full review of the People Strategy (note correct title), has re-set the priorities within it and has reviewed the resourcing of the Strategy. Quarterly review reports will be made to the Executive; the progress of the key work-streams within the Strategy will continue to be reported to Overview and Scrutiny within the quarterly performance reports for the HR and OD Division as is current practice</p> <p>The Singles Status project plan, objectives, timelines and decision-making steps and requirements will be reported to both Executive and Overview and Scrutiny in March. The newly elected Council will then be recommended to allocate significant time to building member knowledge, understanding and commitment to reach an Agreement by October 2012 through both formal and informal meetings and briefings</p>
R2	The Council needs to complete its work in quantifying the financial benefits of its programme for efficiencies and organisational change by mid-2012-13 to determine the remaining funding gap (shortfall or surplus) and then establish clear plans to identify further savings or re-direct resources to priorities	<p>This work is in progress through (1) the on-going development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy Plan and (2) the 'stock-take' review of the Flintshire Futures programme for organisational development and change. An interim report will be presented on both in April and the new Council will be invited to review/re-set strategy from June. For priorities see P1 (below)</p> <p>This work under-pins and is reflected in the strategy and the detail of the draft 2012-13 Council Fund Revenue and Capital budgets</p>

B: Proposals for Improvement

Ref	Recommendation	Response
P1	Complete the work in progress to set clear success measures for all improvement objectives and ensure regular, clear reporting	This work is in progress through the review of the Improvement Priorities/Objectives. This review will both meet the recommendation for the current Objectives and grow our capability for performance setting and management for future years. The new Council will need to understand the importance of the work and

		invest in skills and systems to maintain it. Importantly the new Council will need to develop consensus on the priorities and their investment needs
P2	Develop and agree a detailed business plan for improving customer access showing how success measures will be achieved and offer value for money	The Customer Services Strategy is adopted and is in the process of implementation. Success and efficiency measures are being developed for each work-stream of the Strategy as they are adopted and implemented (e.g. channel shift, Flintshire Connects). This is an ambitious Strategy and the Council is calculating risks and benefits for each work-stream as they develop. We must take care not to become 'risk averse' and be prepared to take some calculated risks to improve the organisation for customer benefit and to achieve efficiencies
P3	Ensure its Annual Performance Report is published by 31 October in line with statutory requirements and more fully reflects Welsh Government guidance	The first part (publication) is a technical recommendation on process which will be met provided that all information required by the Council to permit a timely publication is available; the second part (more fully meeting the guidance) will be met through the response to P1 (above) although it should be noted that national guidance and support is under development and is awaited (e.g. self-assessment support)
P4	Improve quality assurance arrangements to ensure that data used to support performance management and monitoring is accurate and robust	This is a technical recommendation to improve further our internal arrangements which are currently sound and functioning

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
DATE: TUESDAY, 27 MARCH 2012
REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
SUBJECT: RESULT OF THE HOUSING BALLOT

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Council of the result of the Housing Ballot.

2.00 BACKGROUND

The Council has been required under Welsh Government policy to ballot its tenants on the options to transfer to a new registered social landlord (Dee Housing) or to stay with the Council.

The Council adopted the Choices Document on 22 November 2011 as the prospectus on which tenants would vote.

The Ballot was administered independently by Electoral Reform Services and ran from 20 February to 20 March 2012.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

The result of the Ballot was announced on the evening of 20 March. The result is summarised in the following official Council statement and is set out in the official confirmation of Electoral Reform Services, the ballot administrator, which is attached as an appendix.

Flintshire County Council has taken a principled neutral stance on the ballot and has not sought to influence tenants one way or the other. The tenants have made their views known - this is local democracy in action.

The tenants of Flintshire have decided to opt to stay with the Council, with 88% of tenants voting in the ballot voting no to a transfer from the Council, and 12% of tenants voting yes.

This is the highest turnout in a housing ballot in Wales with 71% of tenants using their vote.

The County Council will be recommended to accept the outcome of the ballot at its coming meeting on 27 March.

The Council could see this outcome as a resounding vote of trust and confidence in it as a landlord providing good quality housing and support services for local people. Our performance has improved significantly in recent years and this is clearly recognised by our tenants as our customers.

We will now discuss with Welsh Government how we can bridge the funding gap and achieve its policy of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.

The democratic view of the body of tenants is without question given the level of turnout and the margin of the result against transfer. A council cannot agree to transfer its stock and services without a majority of voting tenants being in favour. It is notable that 62.42% of all tenants who were eligible to vote, voted against the option to transfer from the Council.

The new Council will need to meet with Welsh Government Ministers and officials early in its new term to review how it can meet the Welsh Government policy of achieving the Welsh Housing Quality Standard in an acceptable timescale, in partnership, noting that the capital resources under local control are insufficient. In the interim the Council will be obliged to meet the retention business case as set out in the Choices Document and to continue to implement the Asset Management Strategy adopted for Council housing.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

Council is recommended to accept the outcome of the Housing Ballot and to commit to early engagement with the Welsh Government post-election as set out in the report.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate or direct financial implications from the Ballot.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

None directly

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

None directly

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

None directly

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

None directly

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

None directly

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

There has been considerable consultation in the development of the Choices Document and the preparations for the Ballot as reported to Council previously.

12.00 APPENDICES

The notice of poll official result from the Electoral Reform Services organisation dates 20th March.

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

**Contact Officer: Colin Everett
Telephone: 702101
Email: Chief.executive@flintshire.gov.uk**

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Colin Everett
Flintshire County Council
County Hall
Mold
Flintshire
CH7 6NB

20th March 2012

Dear Mr Everett

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL - HOUSING TRANSFER BALLOT

Our report of voting for the above ballot which closed at Noon on Tuesday 20th March 2012 is as follows:

Question

Do you want your home to transfer to a new landlord, Dee Housing?

Number of eligible voters:		8,996
Votes cast by post:	5,681	
Votes cast online:	289	
Votes cast by telephone:	418	
Total number of votes cast:		6,388
Turnout:		71.0%
Number of votes found to be invalid:		6
Total number of valid votes to be counted:		6,382

Result

Number voting YES	766	(12.0% of the valid vote)
Number voting NO	5,616	(88.0% of the valid vote)
TOTAL	6,382	(100% of the valid vote)

Electoral Reform Services can confirm that, as far as reasonably practicable, every person whose name appeared on the electoral roll supplied to us for the purpose of the ballot:-

- a) was sent the details of the ballot and
- b) if they chose to participate in the ballot, had their vote fairly and accurately recorded.

All voting material will be stored for twelve months.

Yours sincerely



Barnaby Ho
Consultant

The Election Centre, 33 Clarendon Road, London N8 0NW
Tel: 020 8365 8909 | Fax: 020 8365 8587
www.electoralreform.co.uk | enquiries@electoralreform.co.uk



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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**
DATE: **27 MARCH 2012**
REPORT BY: **DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT**
SUBJECT: **REVIEW OF THE NEW WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To update Members on the review of the Council's new waste collection service, following the resolution made at the meeting on 31st January 2012.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 At full Council on 31st January 2012, the following resolution was carried:-

"The Council expresses serious concern about the managed weekly waste collection service. Many Flintshire residents have been left without their collection commitments which has created both confusion in our communities and rubbish strewn streets. We recognise the hard work of front-line workers but remain concerned about the manner with which the new waste collection arrangements have been introduced by this administration. Therefore this Council requests the relevant Scrutiny Committee to conduct an immediate inquiry into the adequacy of the new managed weekly collection service and to provide a report upon its findings to a Full County Council meeting"

2.02 At its meeting on 21st February, the Executive approved the following Terms of Reference for the review:-

1. To clarify the expected performance standards for a settled, high performing collection service;
2. To understand the current position against these expected performance standards;
3. To review the actions being taken to address current concerns to meet the expected performance standards, including any recommendations on any changes to service delivery that may be required, and to explore levels of confidence in these actions.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The review has been undertaken by service related officers in conjunction with officers from corporate services to ensure the process was objective and provided meaningful outcomes.

3.02 The review has included surveys of:-

Members - Each Member was invited to submit their comments and concerns on the new service - 29 responses were received

Town & Community Council Survey - The Chief Executive sought feedback on the new service during visits to Town and Community Councils from November and February 2012

Customer survey - Telephone calls were made to customers who contacted the contact centre during week commencing 30th January 2012 to gain feedback on their experience and satisfaction with the service. Staff also carried out face to face interviews at supermarkets across the County on Friday 17th February 2012 - In total 190 response were received from customers

Employee survey - All staff (operational and office based) were invited to submit comments on the new service. These were accepted anonymously if the employee so desired - 15 responses were received

3.03 The results of the surveys were given to Members at a workshop held on 23rd February 2012. At the workshop it was agreed that four consistent headings had emerged from the surveys:-

- Communications and complaints process
- Operational Issues
- Containers
- Missed Collections

3.04 The issues and suggestions from the workshop were then built into Improvement Action Plans, specifying expected delivery dates and nominating officers to deliver the changes where appropriate.

The Improvement Action Plans are summarised under the following areas of control:

1. Changes to Policy
2. Operational/Training issues
3. Vehicle/Containers
4. Communication

The draft Improvement Action Plans are attached **Appendix 4** of attached report to Executive of today's date.

3.05 It is intended that the Improvement Action Plans will in future be

integrated into the Streetscene Service Plan and a further report will be presented to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee to enable the progress made by the service to be considered in six months time.

3.06 The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Review, including the Improvement Action Plan at a special meeting on 7th March 2012. Members of the Committee supported the process undertaken and made the following recommendations:

That the Executive :-

- Confirms that the review process has met the Terms of Reference stated in 2.06 of this report.
- Approves the Improvement Action Plan shown in Appendix 4 for the service resulting from the review.
- Considers a further report on the progress made against the Improvement Action Plan at its meeting in October 2012.

3.07 Once implemented, the Improvement Plans give assurance that the Council will deliver the high performing collection service the public expects.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That the Council notes the attached Executive report, including the Improvement Action Plans, which give assurance that the Council will deliver high performing collection services when they are implemented.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As set out in attached report

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

As set out in attached report

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

As set out in attached report

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

As set out in attached report

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

As set out in attached report

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

As set out in attached report

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

As set out in attached report

12.00 APPENDICES

Appendix A - Executive Report

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

None

Contact Officer: Stephen O Jones

Telephone: 01352 704700

Email: Stephen_o_jones@flintshire.gov.uk

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **EXECUTIVE**

DATE: **27 MARCH 2012**

REPORT BY: **DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT**

SUBJECT: **REVIEW OF NEW WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE**

1.00 **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.01 To inform the Executive of the outcome of the review of the new Managed Weekly Collection Service.
- 1.02 To seek Executive approval of the proposed Improvement Action Plan in respect of the service.

2.00 **BACKGROUND**

- 2.01 In June 2010 the Council adopted its Municipal Waste Strategy. The Strategy contains a number of key actions which were needed to meet the challenging targets set out in the all Wales National Waste Strategy 'Towards Zero Waste'.
- 2.02 On the 15th March 2011, the Executive approved the Councils Household Waste Collection Policy - **Appendix 1** which introduced the new collection service consisting of the following elements:

- A weekly collection of recyclables
 - A weekly collection of food waste
 - A fortnightly collection of general domestic waste
- Alternating with:*
- A fortnightly collection of green/garden waste

The new collection service was designed to increase participation in recycling and reduce our reliance on landfill in order to meet the tough recycling targets set by Welsh Government.

- 2.03 The "rollout" of the new service was achieved by a series of pilot schemes and eventually by a County wide "rollout" which commenced on the 7th November 2011.
- 2.04 The approval process for the new collection scheme required that a review be undertaken to assess the success of the new service. This was planned to take place in March 2012 however, following a debate at full Council on 31st January 2012, the following resolution was carried which brought forward the review:-

"The Council expresses serious concern about the managed weekly waste collection service. Many Flintshire residents have been left without their collection commitments which has created both confusion in our communities and rubbish strewn streets. We recognise the hard work of front-line workers but remain concerned about the manner with which the new waste collection arrangements have been introduced by this administration. Therefore this Council requests the relevant Scrutiny Committee to conduct an immediate inquiry into the adequacy of the new managed weekly collection service and to provide a report upon its findings to a Full County Council meeting"

2.05 The timetable for the review is as follows :-

Executive approval of Terms of Reference	21 st February, 2012
Members Survey	1 st – 20 th February, 2012
T&CC Survey	Jan – February, 2012
Customer Survey	9 th – 20 th February, 2012
Employee Survey	9 th – 20 th February, 2012
Member Workshop	23 rd February, 2012
Special Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee	7 th March, 2012
Report to Executive	27 th March, 2012
Report to Full Council	27 th March, 2012

2.06 The Executive approved the Terms of Reference for the review at their meeting on 21st February 2012 as follows:-

1. To clarify the expected performance standards for a settled, high performing collection service;
2. To understand the current position against these expected performance standards;
3. To review the actions being taken to address current concerns to meet the expected performance standards, including any recommendations on any changes to service delivery that may be required, and to explore levels of confidence in these actions.

2.07 The review has been undertaken by service related officers in conjunction with officers from corporate services to ensure the process was objective and provided meaningful outcomes.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The Councils Household Waste Collection Policy which pre-empted the new service was introduced to ensure the Council achieved the following Welsh Government statutory recycling targets:

- 2012/13 = 52% of all waste produced should be recycled
- 2015/16 = 58%
- 2019/20 = 64%

- 2024/25 = 70%

3.02 Introducing the new full service on 7th November 2011 has had the following impact on waste collections:

- Reducing Landfill by 720 Tonnes per month – compared to the same period last year.
- Collecting 457 Tonnes of food waste per month.
- Collecting 212 Tonnes more recycling compared to the same period last year.
- There is an overall reduction in total waste arisings because the public is already thinking more carefully about what they buy and how they use it and in doing so are creating less waste.
- There has been a reduction in the Council's Landfill Tax cost, partially offset by the cost of treating the food waste collected.

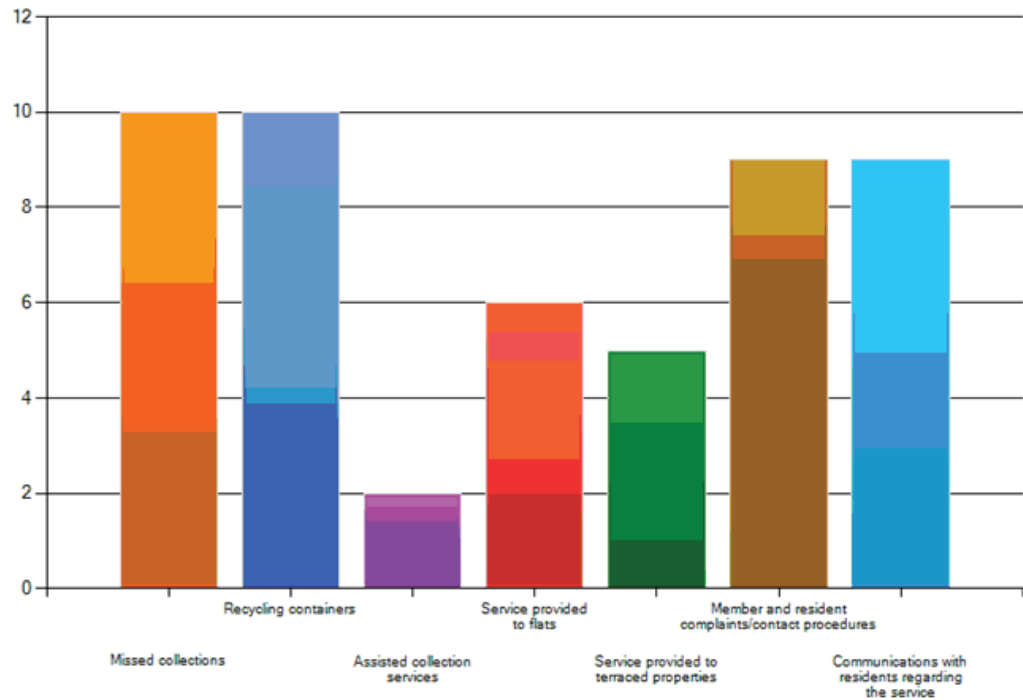
3.03 Calls to the Councils waste contact centre fell to pre-launch levels approximately 12 weeks after the rollout in November 2011 - **Appendix 2.**

3.04 The surveys have been carried out across a range of groups as follows:

- **Members** – Each Member was invited to submit their comments and concerns on the service – 29 responses were received.
- **Town & Community Council Survey** - The Chief Executive sought feedback on the new service during visits to Town and Community Councils from November and February 2012.
- **Customer survey** – Telephone calls were made to customers who contacted the contact centre during week commencing 30th January 2012 to gain feedback on their experience and satisfaction with the service. Staff also carried out face to face interviews at supermarkets across the County on Friday 17th February 2012 – In total 190 responses were received from customers.
- **Employee survey** – All staff (operational and office based) were invited to submit comments on the new service. These were accepted anonymously if the employee so desired – 15 responses were received.

3.05 The Members survey produced the following chart which shows the key issues:-

If you ticked either 'significant concerns' or 'some concerns' in Q1 above please tell us what your concerns relate to? Please tick as many boxes as apply



3.06 The Town & Community Council feedback indicated the following key issues:

Workforce/Training

- Some new local teams do not have local knowledge and need to settle/not be changed.
- Need to have receptacles collected from within cartilage, and returned, on narrow rural lanes.
- Bag receptacles blowing away in high winds.

Policy

- Access to flats/collection methods.
- Inability of some in sheltered housing complexes to take receptacles to communal collection points.
- Medical waste collections not always reliable.

Plant/Equipment

- Paperwaste blowing out of the back of vehicles in high winds and some cans/bottles being spilled when put into vehicles (vehicle design/care of workforce solutions).

Communication

- Concern that food waste is being placed in with residual waste.

3.07 The customer survey highlighted the following key issues:

- Receptacles not being returned after collection
- Not receiving supply of bio bags when tags are displayed on caddy

- Recycling blowing around streets after collections
- Repeated missed collections
- Bags/boxes going missing, long wait for deliveries

3.08 The employee survey highlighted the following key issues:

- Delivering new service with a large number of agency staff
- Round review software did not capture all the properties, in particular some Flats and some rural properties
- Side waste is a big issue, collecting waste which is not built into the time of the rounds
- Underestimated the amount of requests for recycling bags/boxes
- Vehicles were too large to access some areas in particular narrow entry's and some Rural locations

3.09 The responses revealed consistent themes from each of the surveys and these were then considered by the Members workshop under the following headings:

- Communications and Complaints process
- Operations Issues
- Containers
- Missed Collections

Full details of the issues raised and suggestions provided by Members at the workshop are shown on **Appendix 3**.

3.10 The issues and suggestions from the workshop were then built into Improvement Action Plans, specifying expected delivery dates and nominating officers to deliver the changes where appropriate.

The Improvement Action Plans are summarised under the following areas of control:

1. Changes to Policy
2. Operational/Training issues
3. Vehicles/Containers
4. Communication

The draft Improvement Action Plans are attached **Appendix 4**.

3.11 The Improvement Action Plans will in future be integrated into the Streetscene Service Plan and a further report will be presented to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee to enable the progress made by the service to be considered in 6 months time.

3.12 It was intended that the service delivered to Flats within the County was to follow the November 2011 rollout however some changes to collection arrangements became necessary at some of the sites for operational reasons. An Action Plan detailing the proposed rollout to all flats has been prepared

and will be available for Executive and Full Council meeting. This will allow the new arrangements to be introduced to flats over the following 3 month period. The process will follow the recommendations from the current review making sure the lessons learnt from the larger rollout are taken on board.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That the Executive :-

4.01.1 Confirms that the review process has met the Terms of Reference stated in 2.06 of this report.

4.01.2 Approves the Improvement Action Plan shown in Appendix 4 for the service resulting from the review.

4.01.3 Considers a further report on the progress made against the Improvement Action Plan at its meeting in October 2012.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 The Managed Weekly Collections service is anticipated to deliver a further £245k of efficiencies in 2012/13. This is in addition to the £200k that was estimated for 2011/12.

5.02 The 2011/12 efficiency was not fully deliverable due to considerable one-off costs being incurred upon full roll-out in November. Additional labour and vehicle costs have been incurred to deliver the service and significant numbers of new recycling bins and sacks were requested by householders. However, it has been possible to offset all these costs against landfill savings from increased diversion to recycling and food waste.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 None

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 The Managed Weekly Collections Service is reducing the amount of waste taken to landfill and has had a significant impact on the Council's recycling performance.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 The service was subjected to a desk top EIA prior to rollout.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.1 The service will continue to consult with stakeholders and residents regarding the service.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Extensive consultation was undertaken prior to the implementation of the new services and as part of the review process.

12.00 APPENDICES

- 12.01
- Appendix 1 – The Councils Household Waste Collection Policy
 - Appendix 2 – Call levels
 - Appendix 3 – Summary of issues raised and suggestions provided by Members
 - Appendix 4 – Improvement Action Plans

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

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Flintshire County Council

HOUSEHOLD WASTE COLLECTION
POLICY

2011



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POLICY FOR HOUSEHOLD WASTE COLLECTION

1.0 Legislation

1.1 Under the terms of the Environmental Protection Act, 1990, Flintshire County Council (the "Council") is classed as a Waste Collection and Disposal Authority, and as such, under section 45 (1), has a statutory duty to collect household waste from all domestic properties in the County. Under Section 46(4) of the Act, the Council has specific powers to stipulate:

- The size and type of the collection receptacle(s);
- Where the receptacle(s) must be placed for the purpose of collecting and emptying;
- The substances or articles which may or may not be placed within the receptacle(s).

2.0 Household Waste Collection Eligibility

2.1 Each household in Flintshire accountable for paying council Tax shall be entitled to a waste collection service.

2.2 Places of religious worship, registered charities and community halls (where no business activity takes place for profit) may be entitled to the standard waste collection service offered to householders.

3.0 Collection Frequency

3.1 The Council is in the process of implementing a Managed Weekly Collection (MWC) service. This is expected to be fully implemented in 2011. Inevitably, this means that householders in the County will have different collection services until everyone is included in the scheme.

3.2 The collection of non recyclable waste and garden waste will take place on alternate weeks. However, collections of non recyclable waste will revert to weekly over the Christmas and New Year holiday period.

3.3 Food waste will be collected weekly.

3.4 Dry Recycling material will be collected on a weekly basis.

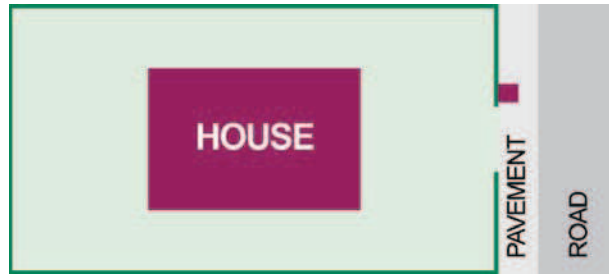
4.0 Containers for the Storage of Waste Materials

- 4.1** All containers supplied to householders for the purpose of any waste/recycling collection service shall always remain in the ownership of the Council. When householders move home they will be required to leave all wheeled bins and recycling boxes at the property ready for the new occupant to use. The only exemption to this are garden waste bins (Brown Bins) that have been purchased by the householder from the Council.
- 4.2** Householders are responsible for the storage, safe keeping and cleaning of waste containers provided by the Council.
- 4.3** Once the full MWC service is available County wide, each householder shall be entitled to the following containers free of charge to store their waste:
- 1 x 180 litre black wheeled bin for non recyclable waste. Only waste produced by a household on a normal day to day basis should be placed in this wheeled bin (i.e. it should not contain non standard items such as bulky waste, commercial waste or recyclable waste).
 - 1 x 55 litre blue recycling box (for plastic bottles, mixed cans and mixed glass). Households requesting additional recycling capacity shall be given reusable woven sacks for separating plastic bottles and mixed cans (box will be used for glass)
 - 1 x 60 litre blue reusable plastic sack (for paper and cardboard). Additional recycling capacity will be available on request.
 - 1 x 25 Litre caddy for the storage of food waste and a smaller 7 Litre caddy for use in the kitchen. Householders will also be supplied with a roll of 52 biodegradable bags for food waste. Householders will be supplied with additional bags free of charge on request.
 - 1 x 140 litre brown wheeled bin for green garden waste.
If an additional bin is required please see paragraph 4.12
- 4.4** All containers supplied by the Council should only be used for the storage of items as prescribed by the Council. Failure to do so will result in the Council retrieving the container(s) from the households.
- 4.5** Households must separate their waste items into the appropriate containers as per instructions given by the Council. Failure to do so may result in material being rejected or the container not being emptied. If the householder fails to correctly segregate their waste materials into the prescribed containers as specified, the waste will not be collected and this shall not be classed as a missed collection. Following such an incident the householder must place the waste items in the correct container which will then be collected during the next scheduled collection.

- 4.6** Where operationally possible all households will be included in the MWC service. However some locations, where specific collection points have been identified by the Council will be provided with communal wheeled bin(s) free of charge for the purpose of storing waste materials.
- 4.7** Any request to provide a new wheeled bin or recycling box (e.g. due to damage or if a new property has been built etc) shall be made by initially contacting the Council. Replacement wheeled bins or recycling boxes shall be delivered to householders as soon as practicable after the request has been made.
- 4.8** If a householder wilfully damages a wheeled bin or recycling box then they may be charged for a replacement.
- 4.9** Where a household has 6 or more permanent occupants, they may make a request for a larger, 240 litre wheeled bin for the storage of non recyclable waste. This service shall be subject to annual review and the 240 litre wheeled bin will be exchanged for a standard 180 litre wheeled bin once the number of permanent occupants reduces below 6. The provision of a larger wheeled bin for this purpose shall be subject to availability.
- 4.10** Where a household with less than 6 permanent occupants believe they have a need for a larger bin (240 litres) than the standard 180 litre wheeled bin, applications can be made to the Council for consideration.
- 4.11** Only 1 wheeled bin for non recyclable waste will be supplied and emptied per property.
- 4.12** Where a household produces large quantities of green garden waste, they may purchase an additional 140 litre wheeled bin for the storage of this material. The provision of additional wheeled bin for this purpose shall be subject to availability. Households will be restricted to 2 wheeled bins for garden waste.

5.0 Collection Point

- 5.1** All wheeled bins, food containers and recycling boxes/bags must be placed at the kerbside of the property without causing obstruction. The kerbside is defined as the nearest road/highway to the property (typically the pavement). The collection point for householders with long private drives will be the point where their drive meets the road/highway.



- 5.2** If wheeled bins, food containers and recycling boxes/bags are left on the highway for collection, it is the householder's responsibility to ensure that they do not cause an obstruction. The Council will not accept liability if any incidents occur as a result of wheeled bins, food containers and recycling boxes/bags being placed out ready for collection by householders.
- 5.3** Where required, separate arrangements will be made for a specific collection point for flats, properties with narrow access or hard to reach properties etc. These specific collection points will be advised to the householder by the Council.
- 5.4** Wheeled bins and recycling containers will be returned to their point of origin by the collection crews immediately after collection (or to a safer position if necessary).
- 5.5** The householder must collect their wheeled bins/recycling boxes after they have been emptied and return them to within the boundary of their property on the day of collection.
- 5.6** The Collection point may be changed under certain circumstances - see 'Assisted Collections' in paragraph 8.0.

6.0 Collection Day and Time

- 6.1** Wheeled bin and recycling collections will generally take place on the same day each week on a day prescribed by the Council.
- 6.2** All wheeled bins and recycling boxes must be presented at the kerbside, ready for collection on the appropriate collection day by 07.00 hours. Wheeled bins and recycling boxes may be presented at the kerbside, the night before the scheduled collection.
- 6.3** The Council may change collection days from time to time e.g. over the Christmas and New Year period, following inclement weather or as part of any new routing programme..
- 6.4** On some occasions the waste collection service will have to be suspended due to a service disruption (e.g. during heavy snow, industrial action, fuel shortage etc). The Council will make every effort to minimise the level of disruption to householders and will try to rectify any missed collections during the week of the disruption.

- 6.5** Where the Council is unable to recover any missed waste collections due to a service disruption, householders should retain their waste materials until the next scheduled collection when they will be picked up. Households have the option to use their nearest Recycling Park.

7.0 Presentation

- 7.1** All waste must be presented in Council approved containers to ensure its safe collection from the kerbside. Lids on wheeled bins must be shut when the waste is collected in order to ensure that all health and safety concerns are addressed.
- 7.2** Any waste jammed in a wheeled bin that does not fall out following the normal mechanical emptying process on the waste collection vehicle will not be taken. In these cases householders will have to loosen the materials themselves ready for the next scheduled collection.
- 7.3** The Council reserves the right not to empty any wheeled bin which has been overfilled and/or presented with its bin lid open.

Side Waste:

- 7.4** All non recyclable waste must be contained within the Council supplied black wheeled bin. No excess side waste will be collected during the normal collection. Following the emptying of the black wheeled bin, any side waste left by the householder will be placed by the refuse crew into the now empty bin ready for the next collection. The crew will leave an information tag on the bin informing the householder of this action. This will also be reported to the waste support team to be recorded.

Enforcement:

- 7.5** If the householder continues to leave side waste and/or the lid of the wheeled bin is presented open, then this will again be reported to the waste support team. A member of the team will visit the householder to provide advice and support. A letter confirming the advice/actions agreed at the visit will then be issued to the householder.
- 7.6** Following the visit; if the householder continues to leave side waste and/or the lid of the wheeled bin is presented open, then a warning letter will be sent to the householder regarding the potential for enforcement action.

7.7 If the householder continues to ignore the advice stated within the final warning letter and continues to leave side waste and/or the lid of the wheeled bin is presented open then the matter will be passed to the Enforcement Team who may then Issue a Fixed Penalty Notice under Section 47ZA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

8.0 Assisted Collections

8.1 Where, through frailty or incapacity, a householder cannot present their 180 litre wheeled bin or recycling boxes at the kerbside, and subject to there being no other able bodied person living at the property, the householder may make a formal request to the Council for an Assisted Collection. If an Assisted Collection is approved by the Council then a suitable collection point on the property shall be agreed with the householder.

8.2 Assisted Collections will be restricted to those households who are in genuine need following approval of an application to the Council. The Council may review the need for this service by the householder on a periodic basis.

9.0 Missed Kerbside Collections

9.1 If a wheeled bin or recycling container is placed out ready for collection on the correct collection day and time, and is not picked up by the Council, then this will be classed as a missed collection.

9.2 Where a genuine missed collection is reported the Council will endeavour to return and collect within 24 hours of notification.

9.3 Where it is proven, the householder has failed to place the bin out for collection on the designated day and time; the Council reserves the right to charge the householder for a return visit.

10.0 Clinical Household Waste Collection

10.1 The Council shall provide a free collection of clinical household waste from householders upon request from the relevant healthcare provider, via a prescribed application form.

10.2 The Council shall provide a suitable container for the householder to store their clinical waste.

10.3 An agreed collection point, day of collection, frequency of collection and any other specific instructions regarding this service, will be agreed between the Council and the householder.

11.0 Bulky Household Waste Collection

11.1 The Council provides a bulky waste collection services for householders:

- Bulky Waste Collection – This is a chargeable service 1 to 5 items (or up to 10 bin bags). Extra items, up to a maximum of 5 are an additional charge. The cost for each of these services will be as noted in the Council's Fees & Charges which are produced every year.
- Subsidised Bulky Waste Collection – Householders in receipt of Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, State Pension or Guaranteed Pension Credits will be given free collections. Proof of benefit is required. This is limited to 10 items within any 12 month period.

11.2 Following a request for a bulky household waste collection service, the collection shall take place on designated day.

11.3 Householders must comply with the instructions given to them by the Council for the bulky waste collection service. These shall include the following:

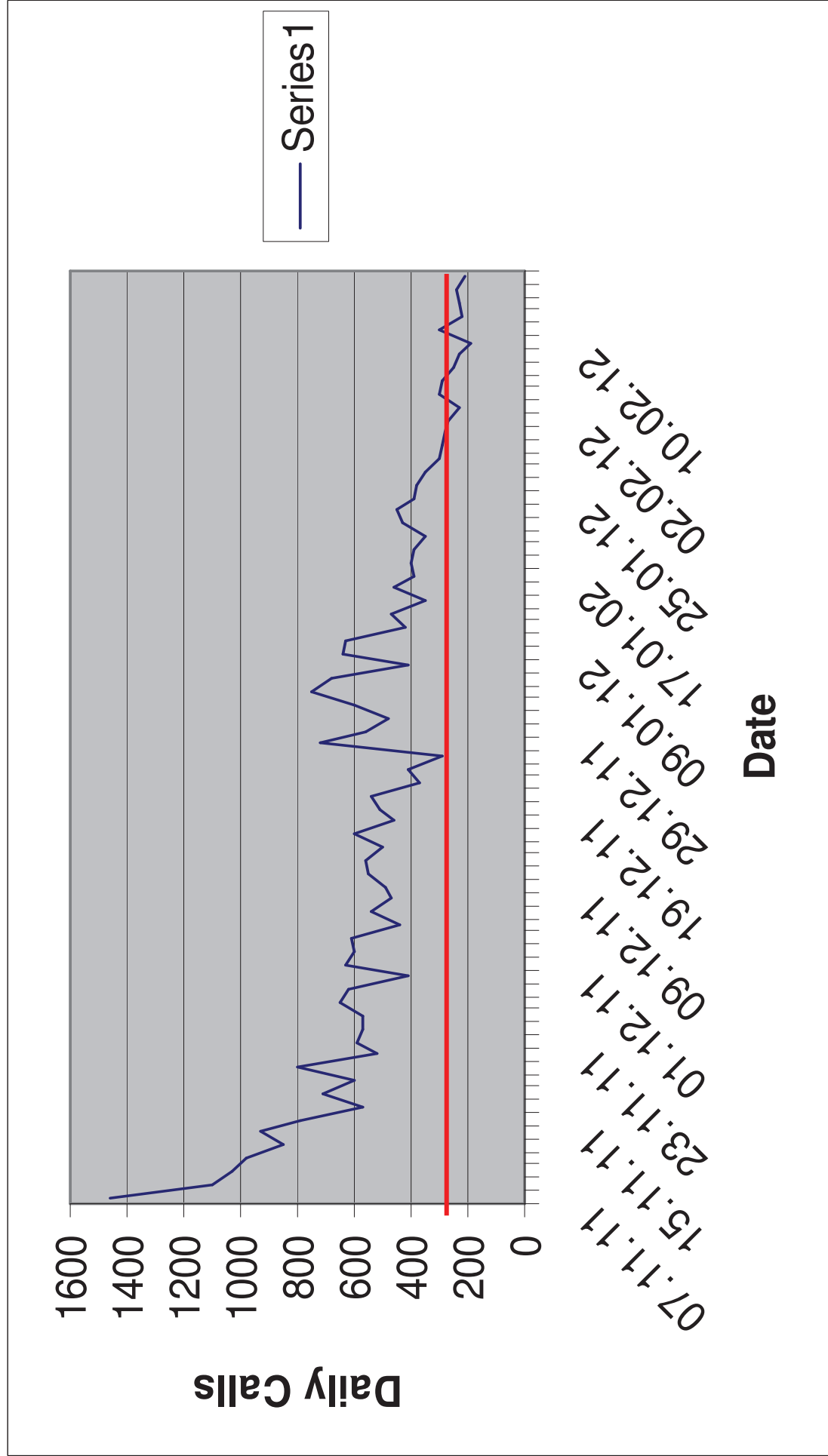
- Typical examples of bulky waste that will be accepted under this service include the following: mattress, bed frame, chair, table, fridge, freezer, TV, carpet, hi-fi, cupboard, standard cooker, sideboard, lamp, children's toy, computer, bookcase etc.
- For the avoidance of doubt, a three piece suite will count as three items.
- Small waste objects should be placed into a box, sack or suitable container and this will then be counted as one item.
- Only the items listed during the original request to the Council will be collected. Additional items will not be collected.
- No commercial or industrial waste will be collected.
- All items must be presented for collection by 07.00 hours on the specified day of collection.
- All items of waste must be left at the edge of the curtilage of the property, as close to the highway as possible, and presented in a safe fashion which does not cause any obstruction or danger to the

public. The Council will not enter houses to collect waste items. The collection point for properties with difficult access e.g. flats, shall be agreed with the Council before collection.

- The Council reserves the right to refuse the collection of any waste items that may cause harm or may have an affect on the health and safety of waste collection staff.
- For the avoidance of doubt Home Improvements including kitchen/ bathroom renewals, fitted wardrobes and any soils & rubble from landscaping works are not classed as bulky waste and households should make the appropriate arrangements with a contractor to ensure duty of care for their safe disposal.

Environment Department – Streetscene

Appendix 2 Call Levels to Waste Contact Centre since Nov 7th (Final rollout of new service) – Red Line shows normal call level



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**MANAGED WEEKLY COLLECTION WORKSHOP
23 FEBRUARY 2012**

BREAK AWAY SESSION

THEME: MISSED COLLECTIONS

	ACTION
<p>WORKFORCE/TRAINING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure operatives know their own rounds. • It was suggested that operatives should know more than one round, so that during times of sickness/annual leave operatives can cover rounds they know, which will help reduce the risk of missed collections. • Training should be given to operatives on the policy/procedures. • Have individual team (round) targets, to promote friendly competition, eg. Least number of missed collections per round in a month. 	<p>01</p> <p>01</p> <p>06</p> <p>06</p>
<p>POLICY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit the policy if missed collections continue to see if there are any gaps in the policy. • Develop a procedure from the policy for operatives and local members to have, which may be more easily understood. • Identify and record the reason for the missed collection so that the remedy can be targeted properly, and record the remedy, e.g. it may not always be the fault of the operatives, there will be occasions when resident forget to put their bins out for collection. 	<p>P1</p> <p>P1</p> <p>P2</p>
<p>COMMUNICATIONS INTERNAL/EXTERNAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be a clear process of communication from the manager through to the individual operative who collects the bin. There may be instances when that individual operative is not aware of the missed collection. • Two way communication between officers and local members. If members report a problem, the officer should feedback the outcome. • Residents in receipt of assisted collections should be communicated 	<p>C1</p> <p>C8</p> <p>V6</p>

<p>with on the process; there are examples of assisted collection labels being placed in home windows and not on the bin, which may increase risk of a missed assisted bin collection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local members should be familiar with the expected standards, eg how soon a bin will be emptied following a missed collection. Regular quarterly performance reports to the relevant scrutiny committee to monitor improvements on missed collections. 	<p>P1</p> <p>08</p>
<p>VEHICLES/EQUIPMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tracking system should identify missed collection properties. Ensure the numbers of missed collections are logged on the software system to identify repeat occurrences. Introduce assisted collection addresses onto the tracking system. 	<p>V6</p> <p>05</p> <p>V6</p>
<p>Workforce and Training</p> <p>Consistent messages by all officers – ensuring that whatever advice/information is given by a contact centre officer, the same is given by supervisors, by operatives, by managers etc. this will provide members with confidence to then deliver the same messages in their communities.</p> <p>Improve daily communication between managers – supervisors – crews – not tool box talks but on daily operational issues which need to be addressed</p> <p>Continue to receive feedback and then full analysis of that feedback (Hilary)</p>	<p>C1</p> <p>C1/06</p> <p>C7</p>
<p>Policy</p> <p>The policy for flats needs to be developed and then clear consistent and timely communications with crews, residents and members.</p>	<p>C5/C2</p>
<p>Vehicles and Equipment</p> <p>Provide more telephone lines to receive volume of calls</p> <p>When calls are in a queue can the system tell them where in the queue they are – e.g. you are now the 10th call in the queue.</p> <p>Not advocating an automated telephone service – but there could be the opportunity in times of significant disruption for a short message on</p>	<p>C12</p> <p>C12</p> <p>C12</p>

answering (similar to Scottish Power during power cuts) that advises what the disruption is and what areas it is affecting. This would not stop customers progressing through to the service in the normal way after the message.	
<p>Communications – Internal and External Learn from pilot which was a good example. There was however acknowledgement that the pilots were smaller areas and so more direct communications were easier to achieve.</p> <p>Clear and consistent information in all communications – whatever we say on the website, should be exactly the same as the leaflets, as the stickers, in YCYC, as what officers and members are saying, etc.</p> <p>Information to members must be timely. For example any changes to services around Christmas should be communicated to Members at least a month, possibly more, in advance so that it gives them opportunity to include the messages in their own newsletters.</p>	<p>Comment</p> <p>C2</p> <p>C3</p>
Members very keen to work together with officers to deliver the messages within their communities but the information they are given needs to be consistent and timely to provide members with the confidence to be the service ambassadors out in the community.	C3
Avoid wherever possible changes to the services (Christmas) so as not to confuse people. Discussion around how practical that is considering that Christmas Day and New Years Day always follow on the same week day and so some residents could be 3 weeks without a collection. General debate was to consider ways perhaps to address the Christmas Day and New Years Day collections without disrupting other service days.	<p>C3</p> <p>Comment</p>
General agreement that recycling must be collected over the Christmas period but that brown bin collections should be suspended to allow resource to be directed into residual and recycling collections.	C3
Record the number of missed collections per property – at present the service accepts calls for missed collections but it doesn't record the number of times that property has been missed.	05
Non collection of waste (as a result of Policy) needs to be communicated to the household so they understand why their waste is not being collected. The same information needs to be communicated to contact centre staff so that if a call is received from the household to report a missed collection then they know not to record it as one.	C4
Work more closely with other internal departments, say Housing, to learn when properties have changed tenancy.	C5
Estate specific collections. Particularly around social housing estates, flats	C5

etc. Provide landlords with information leaflets on collections that can be handed out to new tenants.	
Provide leaflets to local estate agents to go out with new buyer packs.	
Consider the opportunity to create a new Flintshire resident pack. Triggered by people registering at a new property for Council Tax a welcome pack to be dispatched that would not necessarily only include information on Waste Collection but on a whole range of council services.	C5
Best method of communication Generally felt that using as many channels as possible to get the word out was best but that stickers on bins or leaflets through doors was the most effective method direct communication. There was acknowledgment however that we couldn't keep issuing stickers on bins as they would quickly become unsightly and any new messages would become lost in the plethora of old messages.	Comment
Members welcomed the direct line to Hilary but also felt that a direct email (just for member use) say waste@flintshire which would go direct to Hilary and her team (for when she is absent) would be very helpful.	C7
Introduce a contact card for members with the direct number and email address.	Done
Develop a text services for Members advising when there are problems, such as a broken down vehicle which is delaying collections in their area. They will then be able to answer any resident queries.	C8
More use of social media – twitter – delays as mentioned above could be 'tweeted'. Acknowledgement that the service as a twitter site but that it isn't yet activated.	C9

Environment Department – Streetscene

Improvement Action Plan – New waste collection service

Communications

Ref	Issue	Member Suggestion	Action	Timescale	Responsible Officer
C1	In consistent messages by officers - ensuring that whatever advice/information is given by a contact centre officer, the same is given by supervisors, by operatives, by managers etc.	Improve daily communication between managers, supervisors and crews to ensure that whatever advice/information is given by a contact centre officer, the same is given by supervisors, by operatives, by managers etc. Continue to receive feedback and then full analysis of that feedback (Hilary)	Weekly update for all staff through periods of change Existing Member contact arrangements to remain	Immediate	Kevin Gardiner
C2	Clear and consistent information in all communications	Formal check process for all external communications – includes independent customer	Agreed	Immediate	Kevin Gardiner
C3	Information to members must be timely. For example any changes to services around Christmas should be communicated to Members at least a month, possibly more, in advance so that it gives them opportunity to include the messages in their own newsletters.	Produce annual operational plan with key dates i.e. Christmas calendar's to be sent out on December 1 st – 8 th . Process to be approved through Executive as part of service review.	Agreed	1 st July	Gabrielle Povey

C4	Residents unsure why waste is still in their bin	Non collection of waste (as a result of Policy) needs to be communicated to the household so they understand why their waste is not being collected. Stickers to be posted on bins	Review of communications process and stickering arrangement	July 2012	Gabrielle Povey
C5	Collections at flats and Housing estates unclear	Produce estate specific collection leaflets, particularly around social housing estates, flats etc. Provide landlords with information leaflets on collections that can be handed out to new tenants.	Agreed	July 2012	S Jones
C6	New residents unsure of collection arrangements	Consider the opportunity to create a new Flintshire resident pack. Triggered by people registering at a new property for Council Tax a welcome pack to be dispatched that would not necessarily only include information on Waste Collection but on a whole range of council services.	Agreed	April 2013	Gabrielle Povey
C7	Members need to contact service	Introduce a direct email (just for member use) say waste@flintshire which would go direct to Hilary and her team (for when she is absent)	Agreed	Immediate	Hilary Williams

C8	Members unaware when collections will be made due to vehicle breakdowns and other issues with the service	Develop a text services for Members advising when there are problems, such as a broken down vehicle which is delaying collections in their area. They will then be able to answer any resident queries. Use of automated telephone message to impart information eg change to service because of bad weather, collection running late similar to utility companies model (eg power cuts)	Staff to phone Members if problems arise pushing collections beyond 5pm	Immediate	Kevin Edwards
C9	Resident unsure on changes to collection arrangements	More use of social media – twitter – delays as mentioned above could be ‘tweeted’. Acknowledgement that the service as a twitter site but that it isn’t yet activated.	All ready in place	December 2011	Gabrielle Povey
C10	Bins left blocking the footway	Better information to residents on where to put their containers in terms of driveways, access, kerbside and pavements rather than cartilage. Where new local arrangements are agreed ensure that this is communicated to the operatives	Information provided as part of yearly calendar replacement	December 2012	Gabrielle Povey
C11	Non English speaking residents unable to understand service	Clear communications must be sent out to foreign communities – Trevor Jones from the PPP unit has worked a lot with the Polish communities and may be of some help	Review information as part of communication plan	December 2012	Gabrielle Povey
C12	Callers don’t know how long until an officer will answer in busy periods	When calls are in a queue can the system tell them where in the queue they are – e.g. you are now the 10 th call in the queue.	Consider suitability of CRM this service	July 2012	Denise Naylor

Environment Department – Streetscene

Improvement Action Plan – New waste collection service

Vehicle/Containers

Ref	Issue	Member Suggestion	Action	Timescale	Responsible Officer
V1	Containers blowing away.	Interim arrangements to stop blue bags blowing away eg put blue bag in the weighted white sacks, turn blue boxes upside down and put recycling bags underneath, put the blue bags in the handles of the wheelie bin	Implement suggestion Toolbox talks to start immediatly	Immediate	Kevin Edwards
		Introduce weighted bags for all future replacements	Implement suggestion – 3 month delivery	June 2012	Gabrielle Povey
V2	Containers are unsuitable	Trial new containers Stacked recycling bins Smaller wheelie bins for single occupants New blue bag with velcro fastening for paper	Identify suitable area and trial new containers	1 st July	Gabrielle Povey
V3	Bins blown into road with potential to damage	Reflective strips should be attached to dark bins – if they're	Proposal to be discussed with insurance company	July 2013	Kevin Gardiner

	vehicles	blown into the road then they're a traffic hazard and difficult to see			
		Replacement bins to get strips Provides strips to residents to fix to their bins			

V4	Vortex problem – when the trucks are filled, sometimes turbulence inside will blow the rubbish back out onto the street	Investigate and produce revised working arrangement to avoid	Agreed	July 2012	Kevin Edwards
V5	Vehicles too big for some roads	Ensure vehicles are fit for purpose – bigger vehicles make for shorter collection times, but may be unsuitable for narrow streets and lanes			
		Full review of fleet suitability	Agreed	Dec 2012	Kevin Gardiner
V6	Reliance on paper system for assisted collections	Introduce assisted collection addresses onto the tracking system	Agreed	December 2012	Kevin Gardiner

Environment Department – Streetscene

Action Plan – New waste collection service

Operational/Training Plan

Ref	Issue	Member Suggestion	Action	Timescale	Responsible Officer
O1	Lack of knowledge of rounds	Reinforce buddy working groups to more effectively share knowledge throughout the workforce	Buddy groups introduced	July 2012	K Edwards
		Operatives should know more than one round, so that during times of sickness/annual leave operatives can cover rounds	Training on additional rounds	July 2012	K Edwards
O2 O3	Drivers unable to find properties for repeated missed collections	Maps of previously missed collections should be given to drivers to help find the more obscure addresses	Provide maps for repeated missed collections	Immediate	K Edwards
O3	Food waste removed from containers and stacked or carried on the street	Food waste must be disposed of correctly – currently several bins are emptied onto the street in a heap before then being lifted onto the wagon. This is obviously unhygienic and unpleasant for residents	Tool box talks and continued training	Immediate	K Edwards

O4	Avoid wherever possible changes to the services (Christmas) so as not to confuse people	General agreement that recycling must be collected over the Christmas period but that brown bin collections should be suspended to allow resource to be directed into residual and recycling collections.	Review Christmas arrangements	July 2012	Kevin Gardiner
O5	Repeated missed collections per property	Record the number of times that property has been missed on works ticket.	Number recorded on second and subsequent missed collections	Immediate	Hilary Willaims
O6	Workforce not engaging with the new collection arrangements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employee Workshops to be held that discuss general County wide issues eg service standards, baseline performance standards 2. Tool Box talks/Area Teams to impart relevant area based information, to be reactive to problems and proactive in solutions, deviation from baseline standards where problems identified. 3. Training should be given to operatives on the policy/procedures. 4. Have individual team (round) targets, to promote friendly competition, eg. Least number of missed collections per round in a month. 	Agreed	July 2012	K Edwards
			Agreed	On going	K Edwards
			Agreed	July 2012	K Edwards
			Possible future development		S Jones

O7	Workforce not returning bins correctly and leaving lids open	Stress importance of closing lids on wheelie bins and food waste bin at tool box talks	Tool box talks and continued training	Immediate	K Edwards
O8	Members unsure on the performance of the service	Regular quarterly performance reports to the relevant scrutiny committee to monitor improvements on missed collections.	Missed collection information will be included in the Streetscene standards and will be reported from Q1	1 st July 2012	S Jones
O9	Side waste collections	Clear instructions to staff, operational teams, Members and the public need to be provided once the decision to collect has been made. This decision needs then to be consistently applied	Notify all staff and operational teams once decision is made Inform Members and public	Once agreed	K Gardiner

Environment Department – Streetscene

Improvement Action Plan – New waste collection service

Policy

Ref	Issue	Member suggestion	Action	Timescale	Responsible Officer
P1	Lack of clarity on policy and standard by Members	Revisit Policy to reassess baseline standards	Review policy and communications in update report to Scrutiny	Sept 2012	S Jones
P2	Missed collections are not always the fault of the Council – what should happen then	Identify and record the reason for the missed collection so that the remedy can be targeted properly, and record the remedy, e.g. it may not always be the fault of the operatives, there will be occasions when resident forget to put their bins out for collection	Identify process for missed collections when not the responsibility of crew. This will be achieved by electronic system on vehicle	1 st Dec 2012	S Jones
P3	Introducing 6 day working	Consider Saturday collections for flats and rural areas	Agreed	1 st Oct 2012	S Jones
P4	Introduce flats to new arrangement	The policy for flats needs to be developed and then clear consistent and timely communications with crews, residents and members.	Agreed	Action plan - 19 th March 2012 Delivery July 2012	S Jones S Jones

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Environment Department – Streetscene

Action Plan – Rolling out the New MWC service to flats and properties of multiple occupancy

Action	Outcome	Timescale	Comments
Identify sites – draft list to be provided to Members	Ensure all flats and properties of multiple occupancy are included	By 30 th March	Members are asked to check all of the known flats or properties of multiple occupancy in their ward are included
Develop Routing options to maximise efficiency of rounds	Ensure all properties are included and that the round operates to maximum efficiency	By 5 TH April	Work has already commenced and will be fine tuned once the sites have been confirmed
Site visits to identify infrastructure improvements that may be required and property specific waste handling arrangements. The visits will be carried out by Recycling Officers from within the service	Clear indication of collection arrangements at each property	By - 20 th April	A high proportion of this work has already been completed by the Recycling Officers
Infrastructure improvements i.e. provision of compounds and hard standings for containers - Approval 'in principle' for this work has been obtained from the Councils own Housing Stock Manager and from the local Housing association. It is not expected that the volume of work will be high and the work will be carried out by the Streetscene workforce	All sites are able to receive the new service	By – 25 th May	
Produce property specific handouts, providing information to residents on the new waste collection arrangements and details of the new collection day.		By 25 th May	
Deliver new publicity material to all properties including speaking to residents to explain the new collection and recycling arrangements	Ensure all residents are aware of the new service delivery arrangements	28 th May – 8 th June	Members will also be provided with the collection details for the facilities in their Ward
Route Training for Drivers and Operatives	Build up knowledge of rounds ahead of commencement	During May	
Deliver new bins/recycling containers	Operation to be carried out by Streetscene staff to ensure the containers are available in time for the delivery of the new service	6 th – 8 th June	
New Service commences		11 th June 2012	Date chosen to avoid the confusion surrounding any Bank Holiday collection changes.

Environment Department – Streetscene

Action Plan – Rolling out the New MWC service to flats and properties of multiple occupancy

Background

The new Managed Weekly Collection Service has now been introduced to the majority of Flintshire residents. Because of the complexity of the final phase of the project, flats and properties of multiple occupancy were excluded from the rollout, which took place in November 2011. (Although some collection arrangements did change in order to link into local changes to residential collections)

It is now essential that these properties are now offered the new service, to ensure the Council maximises the recycling opportunities offered to all of its residents and in order to meet the statutory Recycling Targets which come into effect in 2012 -13

Service Delivery

The service to flats will be provided in the most cost effective an efficient way possible. The new rounds will be designed to reduce abortive travelling and maximise the efficiency of the collection on the round. The new round will operate over 6 days, in line with the new working arrangements for the Streetscene service which come into effect on April 1st 2012.

The programme for delivering the new service is shown on the attached Action Plan

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

DATE: TUESDAY, 27 MARCH 2012

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: BOUNDARY COMMISSION 2013 REVIEW OF
PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN WALES

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To invite Council to make a response to the current consultation of the Boundary Commission on the Review of Parliamentary Constituencies in Wales.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 At its meeting on the 31st January 2012 Members considered a report outlining the Boundary Commission's 2013 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies in Wales together with details of the process and timetable (a copy of that report is appended at Appendix 1).

2.02 The Commission published its initial proposals on the 11th January 2012 in accordance with the provisions of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 as amended by the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011.

2.03 The period for consultation ends on 4th April 2012. Public Hearings have been held in Caernarvon, Cardiff, Llandrindod (21/21st March), Wrexham and Swansea to give people the opportunity to make representations about any of the Commission's initial proposals and to present any counter-proposals.

2.04 Each hearing has been chaired by an independent Assistant Commissioner selected by the Commission. A verbatim transcript taken at each of these hearings of all the representations made, and any visual aids used at a presentation will be attached to the transcript of that hearing.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The primary legislation is restrictive - the number of constituencies in Wales will be reduced from 40 to 30 and each constituency must have an electorate as at the review date that is no smaller than 72,810 and no larger than 80,473 (the statutory range).

3.02 Members are encouraged to review the proposals and consider whether any specific comments, objections or alternative proposals should be submitted to the Commission.

3.03 Once all the representations have been submitted to the Commission these will be published on the Commission's website. Following this there will be a further statutory four-week period during which further written comments can be made to the commission. There will not be any further public hearings at this point.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 Council is invited to make a consultation response.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 None directly associated with this report.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 None directly associated with this report.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None directly associated with this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 None directly associated with this report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None directly associated with this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 As outlined within the Appendix.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Initial consultation period, as outlined in Appendix, 11th January to 4th April 2012.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1 - County Council report dated 31st January 2013.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Contained within the Executive Office, County Hall, Mold.

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 16

REPORT TO: **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**
DATE : **31 JANUARY 2012**
REPORT BY: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**
SUBJECT : **BOUNDARY COMMISSION - 2013 REVIEW OF
PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN WALES**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To inform Members of the process and timetable for the Boundary Commission's 2013 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies in Wales.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 On 4th March 2011 the Commission announced the 2013 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies in Wales in accordance with the provisions of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 as amended by the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011.

2.02 The Commission has now published its initial proposals for public consultation. These proposals take account of developments since the last general review and in particular the fundamental change to the legislation.

2.03 The Commission has published initial proposals for the whole of Wales in a single document.

2.04 A new requirement of the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 is that the Commission must submit a periodical report on a general review of all the constituencies in Wales by 1 October 2012 and by 1 October every 5 years after that date.

2.05 In summary, the proposals are for constituencies in Wales to be reduced from 40 to 30. Each constituency must have an electorate as at the review date that is no smaller than 72,810 and no larger than 80,473 (the statutory range) as per the legislation.

2.06 A summary of the initial proposals is appended to this report. Full details can be found within the Boundary Commission's report deposited at County Hall, Mold, the Public Library, Wepre Drive, Connaught Quay and at www.bcomm-wales.gov.uk.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 Initial Proposals

The Commission is required to consider representations about their initial proposals

for the Review within 12 weeks of their publication on **11 January 2012**. The period for submitting representations will end on **4 April 2012**.

- 3.02 In submitting any objections to the proposals, the Commission is asking for alternative proposals to be outlined; an objection accompanied by a counter-proposals will carry more weight than a simple statement of objection.

Public Hearings

- 3.03 The Commission is required to conduct at least two and no more than five public hearings in Wales. The public hearings in Wales shall be concerned with proposals for Wales, and shall between them cover the whole of Wales.
- 3.04 A public hearing is intended to provided an opportunity for people to make representations about any of the Commission's initial proposals and to present any counter-proposals.
- 3.05 Representations at each public hearing are likely to be based on proposals for the area closest to the location of the hearing, but this does not preclude making representations that relate to any part or the whole of Wales.
- 3.06 Each hearing is chaired by an independent Assistant Commissioner selected by the Commission.
- 3.07 The dates and locations of the public hearings are as follows:

Location	Venue	Date
Swansea	The Liberty Stadium	15-16 February 2012
Cardiff	The Millennium Stadium	22-23 February 2012
Wrexham	Glyndwr University	29 February - 1 March 2012
Caernarfon	Celtic Royal Hotel	7-8 March 2012
Llandrindod	The Pavilion	20-21 March 2012

- 3.08 Individuals wishing to make an oral representation at one of the hearings are encouraged to book in advance with the Commission by contacting the Commission direct with the preferred date and time. The Commission will write to all of those who make a request with further information about the hearings and provide an allocated timeslot. It if is not possible to fit all requested representations at one particular venue, the nearest alternative venue will be offered.
- 3.09 A verbatim transcript taken at each public hearing of all the representations made, and any visual aids used at a presentation will be attached to the transcript of that hearing.

Secondary consultation period

- 3.10 As soon as possible after the initial 12 week consultation on the Commission's initial proposals, the Commission will publish on its website all of the representations that it has received (including transcripts of the public hearings) in both Welsh and English.
- 3.11 Once the representations have been published there will be a further statutory four-week period during which people can submit to the Commission written comments on those representations it received during the initial consultation period, for example, challenging or supporting assertions made in a representation. There are no public hearings at this stage.
- 3.12 Once translated and redacted the Commission will publish all the written representations received during the four-week secondary consultation period.

Redaction and Privacy Policy

- 3.13 The Commission wishes to publish as much of the representations and other correspondence that it receives. However, the need for transparency needs to be balanced against the protection of an individual's right to privacy and the statutory requirement for the Commission to protect an individual's personal data. The Commission has therefore created a redaction policy which will apply to all representations received (*page 56 of the Initial Proposals*).

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 Members are asked to note the process and timetable for the Boundary Commission's 2013 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies in Wales.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 None directly associated with this report.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 6.01 None directly associated with this report.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 7.01 None directly associated with this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.01 None directly associated with this report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.01 None directly associated with this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 As outlined within the report.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Initial consultation period, as outlined, 11 January 2012 to 4 April 2012.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 None.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Contained within the Executive Office, County Hall, Mold.

Contact Officer: Chief Executive
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Chapter 4 Summary of proposals

- The new legislation has reduced the number of parliamentary constituencies in Wales from 40 to 30.
- No existing constituency would remain unchanged under the initial proposals. For many areas the proposed changes are considerable.
- The UKEQ is 76,641 with a tolerance of between 95% and 105% of this figure (72,810 and 80,473 respectively). There are presently 39 constituencies below the minimum number of electors and one (Cardiff South and Penarth BC) which falls within the statutory range. Under the proposals all constituencies would be within the statutory range with 19 constituencies below the electoral quota and 11 above the electoral quota.
- 15 existing constituencies would be wholly contained within a new constituency (Alyn and Deeside, Blaenau Gwent, Brecon and Radnorshire, Bridgend, Cardiff West, Ceredigion, Dwyfor Meirionnydd, Llanelli, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney, Neath, Rhondda, Torfaen, Vale of Glamorgan, Wrexham and Ynys Mon).
- Under the proposals 6 Unitary Authorities would be wholly contained within a new constituency (Blaenau Gwent, Ceredigion, the Isle of Anglesey, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire and Torfaen). There are 7 Unitary Authorities in Wales which fall below the maximum of the statutory electorate range and which therefore could be included wholly within a new constituency. These are Blaenau Gwent, Ceredigion, Denbighshire, the Isle of Anglesey, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire and Torfaen.
- There would be 6 constituencies over 1,000 km² (Caerfyrddin, Ceredigion and North Pembrokeshire, Glyndwr and North Powys, Gwynedd, South and West Pembrokeshire, and South Powys). 3 of these constituencies would be between 2,000 and 3,000 km² (Caerfyrddin, Ceredigion and North Pembrokeshire, and Glyndwr and North Powys), and 2 constituencies over 3,000 km² (Gwynedd and South Powys).
- 10 of the existing names would be retained.
- 877 of the 881 electoral divisions in Wales would be wholly contained within a new constituency. It has been considered appropriate to split 4 electoral divisions in order to adhere to Rules 2 and 5 (Llansamlet, Penycae and Ruabon South, Ponciau and Tremeirchion would be split into the communities).

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

DATE: TUESDAY, 27 MARCH 2012

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: FLINTSHIRE ARMED FORCES DAY AND THE
CREATION OF AN ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY
COVENANT

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To inform Members of the possibility of Flintshire hosting an Armed Forces Day and the adoption of an Armed Forces Community Covenant.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 A report is being submitted to the Council's Executive on the 27th March 2012 about the possibility of Flintshire hosting an Armed Forces Day and the creation of an Armed Forces Community Covenant. A copy of the report is attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

2.02 Further details on the decision of the Executive will be reported to Members at the meeting.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 As contained within the attached report.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 Members are asked to note the contents of the appended Executive report.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 None directly associated with this report. In the event of a successful bid to host the 2013 event, funding of up to £10,000 can be applied for to assist with the organisation/publication of the event, direct from Welsh Government.

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 directly associated with this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 As outlined within the Executive report.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 As outlined within the Executive report.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1 – Executive report dated 27 March, 2012.

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

As contained within the Chief Executive's office.

Contact Officer: Sharron Jones
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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: EXECUTIVE

DATE: 27 MARCH 2012

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: FLINTSHIRE ARMED FORCES DAY AND THE
CREATION OF AN ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY
COVENANT

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To update Executive on the possibility of the Council hosting an Armed Forces Day event in Flintshire, and the adoption of an Armed Forces Community Covenant.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 At its meeting on the 31st January, 2012, the County Council received a Notice of Motion from Councillor A.P. Shotton about Flintshire Armed Forces Day as follows:

"We welcome the announcement by Carl Sargeant AM, Welsh Government Minister for Local Government to fund an Armed Forces Day event in North Wales and call upon this Council to prepare a bid to host an Armed Forces Day event within the County of Flintshire".

2.02 The Council resolved:

"That the Council welcomes the announcement by Carl Sargeant AM, Welsh Government Minister for Local Government to fund an Armed Forces Day event in North Wales and calls upon this Council to prepare a bid to host an Armed Forces Day event within the County of Flintshire and, parallel to that activity, to undertake the creation of an Armed Forces Community Covenant between Flintshire County Council and its local armed forces community, such as already exist in Hampshire, North Yorkshire, Oxfordshire, Portsmouth and the Vale of Glamorgan, so that such Armed Forces Community Covenant could be formally launched at the proposed Armed Forces Day Event."

Armed Forces Day

2.03 This year's Armed Forces Day (AFD) 2012 will be held in Cardiff on 30th June 2012. This will be the seventh year having begun in 2006

with a simple Veterans badge presentation; the event has grown year on year with increased public support.

- 2.04 This Council's interest in hosting the 2013, or a subsequent event, has been formerly registered with the Welsh Government (WG) and the current organising committee although the detail has yet to be agreed around the establishment of a North Wales Organising Committee and the bidding process. Funding of up to £10,000 can also be applied for following the recent announcement by the Local Government Minister.
- 2.05 Armed Forces Day is celebrated on the 30th June of each year. AFD is not only an opportunity for the general public to show their appreciation towards members of the Armed Services, it is also a day in which the whole family can join in and enjoy the many and varied displays that will be taking place.
- 2.06 The programme of events is likely to include a Flag Raising Ceremony, military displays, individual and team competitions with sponsorship from local companies, where applicable, together with a public parade, possible veteran badge presentations, refreshments and entertainment. Various organisations and charities may also be invited to exhibit display stands.
- 2.07 It is anticipated that the Flintshire event will also include the launch of the Community Covenant.

Community Covenant

- 2.08 A Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local armed forces community. It is intended to complement the Armed Forces covenant which outlines the moral obligation between the nation, the government and the armed forces, at a local level. At present, there are four English authorities who have signed covenants and one Welsh, the Vale of Glamorgan.
- 2.09 In the document Welsh Government Package of Support for the Armed Forces Community in Wales, the Welsh Government has stated that it is committed to supporting the Armed Forces Community in Wales and endeavours to ensure that they suffer no disadvantage in accessing public services in Wales.
- 2.10 The Armed Forces Bill will place a statutory duty on the Secretary of State for Defence to lay before Parliament an annual Armed Forces Covenant report. In doing so, the Secretary of State will be required to obtain and include the views of the Welsh Government.
- 2.11 In Wales, there are estimated to be at least a quarter of a million members of the Armed Forces Community, which includes serving personnel, reservists and cadets as well as their families and ex-

service personnel. As part of the Welsh Government's commitment supporting the armed forces, June Milligan, the Director General, Local Government and Communities has been appointed as the 'Welsh Armed Forces Advocate' to represent Wales within the network of Armed Forces Advocates in Government Departments and the Devolved Administrations. To maintain a high profile, Champions for veterans and armed Forces have been established in every Health Board and Trust in Wales. Their role is to advocate for veterans and service personnel to ensure that their needs are reflected in local service plans and will improve links between health and social care, veterans' groups and the UK government to the benefit of veterans. In North Wales, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) has appointed the Rev Hywel Davies, who is an independent board member as the armed forces champion.

2.12 At its Council meeting on the 24th February 2012, the WLGA presented a report about a proposal for a Memorandum of Understanding between Welsh Local Government and the Armed Forces Community in Wales. The purpose of the report was to inform Members about the UK Government's Armed Forces Covenant and the Welsh Government's Package of Support for the Armed Forces Community in Wales and sought the opportunity to develop covenants.

2.13 The report also sought views on a proposal to develop a Memorandum of Understanding between Welsh Local Government and the Armed Forces Community in Wales. A copy of the WLGA report is attached as appendix to this report; a formal resolution is awaited.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The starting point for any Community Covenant is signing the Community Covenant pledge. This document sets out what a Community Covenant seeks to achieve in a particular area and is essentially the establishment of a partnership agreement which is signed by representatives from all parts of the community. The lead signatories are a senior representative(s) of the Local Authority and one from the Services, on behalf of the armed forces community. The pledge may also be signed by those representing veterans, such the Royal British Legion.

3.02 Elements of a Community Covenant from a local authority point of view could include ensuring that members of the Armed forces community do not face disadvantage in accessing school places, social care, housing and health care. What can actually be included will differ from authority to authority. It is suggested that a task group be set up to ascertain what Flintshire would be able to include as our 'Community Covenant offer' which could then be discussed with Armed Forces and Veterans' representatives.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 The Executive is recommended to:

- (i) note the Council's intention to submit a bid to host the 2013 event; and
- (ii) endorse the approach to create an Armed Forces Community

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 None directly associated with this report. In the event of a successful bid to host the 2013 event, funding up to £10,000 can be applied for to assist with the organisation/publication of the event, direct from Welsh Government.

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 directly associated with this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 As outlined within the report.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 None.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1 - WLGA report: "Proposal for a Memorandum of Understanding between Welsh Local Government and the Armed Forces Community in Wales"

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Welsh Government Package of Support for the Armed Forces Community in Wales ISBN 978 0 7504 6726 1

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Proposal for a Memorandum of Understanding between Welsh Local Government and the Armed Forces Community in Wales

Purpose

1. To inform Members about the UK Government's Armed Forces Covenant and the Welsh Government's Package of Support for the Armed Forces Community in Wales and the opportunity to develop Community Covenants. The report will also seek views on a proposal to develop a Memorandum of Understanding between Welsh local government and the Armed Forces Community in Wales.

The Armed Forces Covenant

2. In 2011 the UK Government (Ministry of Defence) published *The Armed Forces Covenant: Today and Tomorrow* which sets out, "An enduring covenant between the people of the UK, Her Majesty's Government and all those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces of the Crown and their families". This Covenant recognises that the Armed Forces defend the realm on behalf of the Government, sacrificing some civilian freedoms, facing danger and sometimes suffering serious injury or death as a result of their duty. It recognises that in return the nation has a moral obligation to the members of the Naval Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force, together with their families who also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of the Armed Forces and therefore deserve respect and support, and fair treatment.
3. The Covenant sets out that those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration may be appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most, such as the injured and bereaved. This obligation of supporting the Armed Forces Community involves the whole of society: voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations, and individuals. The two key principles underpinning the Covenant are 'no disadvantage' and 'special consideration'.
3. In November 2011 the Welsh Government published their *Package of Support for the Armed Forces Community in Wales*. The Welsh Government document should be read in conjunction with and compliments the MOD's Covenant and sets out specific policies that the Welsh Government plans to implement in the coming year and beyond in areas and services that are devolved. To date, the Welsh Government has taken and is taking the following actions:
 - Contributed to the production of an annual **Armed Forces Covenant Report** which will report how the Government is supporting the Armed Forces Community and this will allow progress to be reported against the initiatives included in the Package of Support
 - Appointed an **Armed Forces Advocate** for Wales (June Mulligan, Director General Local Government and Communities)
 - Established an **Expert Group** on the needs of the Armed Forces Community in Wales which meets biannually, chaired by the Minister for Local Government

and Communities and with members from a number of organisations representing the Armed Forces. Its purpose is to consider the public service needs of the Armed Forces Community; whether existing service delivery meets their needs on equal terms with civilian society; and what scope there may be for making services more responsive to their needs

- Improved **communication** with the Armed Forces Community to ensure they receive the information on services and support they are entitled to
- Welsh regulation, inspection and audit agencies will provide the checks and balances with regard to local authorities, health etc on how they are operating.

4. The following provides information on the initiatives being taken by Welsh Government and its expectations of public services in addressing issues affecting the Armed Forces Community in Wales as set out in their *Package of Support*:

- **Recognition:** Support for Armed Forces Day
- **Participation as Citizens:** improving the ability of service personnel to vote (through the Elections Planning Group, Returning Officers in Wales will be encouraged to support a scheme which encourages Service personnel to register to vote through post or a proxy vote)
- **Healthcare:** there are a number of specific issues to be addressed in this area including mental health needs; waiting lists; prosthetic limbs; combating stress; bereavement; information services for discharged personnel
- **Education:** Admission authorities must treat a Forces family as meeting the residency criteria for a schools catchment area so long as they can provide evidence that they will shortly be posted there; and financial support for Service leavers to study at university
- **Childcare:** local authorities have duties to assess the sufficiency of childcare provision locally and secure sufficient childcare, including for parents working atypical hours
- **Housing:** service personal and veterans have priority status in the Homebuy scheme where housing problems result from events linked to service; preventing homelessness amongst veterans is a commitment in the Welsh Government Homelessness Ten Year Plan and a directory of services for veterans is to be published and access to housing advice before discharge
- **Benefits and Tax:** billing authorities give a 50% council tax discount on second homes owned by Forces personnel who live in accommodation provided by MOD
- **Transition:** supporting Reservists
- **Support after service:** automatic entitlement to Blue Badges for seriously injured Service personnel and veterans; eased access to concessionary travel for seriously injured Service personnel and veterans; 'Be the Boss' enterprise support for ex-service personnel which supports people to pursue either self employment or a business idea; recruitment of veterans
- **Working with wider society:** Following the publication of the Armed Forces Covenant which encourages public service providers, the private sector and voluntary bodies to offer targeted support for their local Armed Forces Community, the Welsh Government wish to develop and support a new Community Covenant Scheme and work with local authorities, LSBs and WLGA to support the Covenant and enhance the arrangements.

Community Covenant and Community Covenant Grant Scheme

5. A **Community Covenant** is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community and is intended to compliment the Armed Forces Covenant. The aims of the Community Covenant are to encourage local communities to support the Service community in their area and increase understanding and awareness amongst the public of issues affecting the Armed Forces Community. While many activities are already held in support of the Service Community, for example, by participating in Armed Forces Day, the Community Covenant does not replicate such support but aims to encourage the civilian community to extend their support throughout the year and on longer term projects that benefit their local community. The aims of the Community Covenant are to:
 - Encourage local communities to support the Armed Forces Community in their areas;
 - Nurture public understanding and awareness amongst the public of issues affecting the Armed Forces Community
 - Recognise and remember the sacrifices faced by the Armed Forces Community
 - Encourage activities which help to integrate the Armed Forces Community into local life
 - To encourage the Armed Forces Community to help and support the wider community, whether through participation in events and joint projects or other forms of engagement.
6. As highlighted above, the Welsh Government is keen for local authorities and their partners to develop Community Covenants as so far, in Wales, the Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council is the only, local authority which has launched a Community Covenant and details of this can be found at http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/living/armed_forces.aspx. Further details on establishing a Community Covenant and examples of good practice are available from www.mod.uk/covenant.
7. The Ministry of Defence has also made available a **Community Covenant Grant Scheme** to deliver financial support to projects at the local level, which strengthen the ties or the mutual understanding between members of the Armed Forces Community and the wider community in which they live. £30 million is available from the MOD until 2015 and applications are invited for sums from £100 to £250,000 however it is envisaged that bids will be for smaller amount of funding to support local projects that deliver tangible benefits..

Proposal for a Memorandum of Understanding with the Armed Forces

8. On 8th February 2012, the WLGA and Welsh Government held a joint conference entitled "Supporting our Armed Forces Community" which was attended by local authorities, health boards and health professionals and a wide range of organisations representing the Armed Forces, their families and veterans in Wales. Chaired by Cllr John Davies, WLGA Leader and with presentations from the Welsh Government Minister, the MOD, Cllr Janice Charles from the Vale of Glamorgan, Brigadier Napier, Commander (160) Wales Brigade and Air Vice Marshall Matt Wiles, the aims of the event were:
 - To consider any issues of concern to the Armed Forces Community in Wales and how public sector bodies can work together and interact in the community and ensure their needs are fully integrated

- To provide an opportunity to learn about the Armed Forces Community Covenant in action and the experience of implementing and managing the process.
9. Participants at the conference were extremely positive about the opportunity provided by Community Covenants in developing more positive relationships with the Armed Forces Community and some the strong messages which came through the day was the need for improved and on-going communication and understanding between the Community and public services in Wales. The workshops held (on housing, education and health) also offered for a more detailed dialogue on the concerns and aspirations of the Armed Forces Community
10. In discussing the way forward at the end of the conference, and following discussions with a number of local government representatives who were in attendance, Cllr Davies proposed that in starting to take forward the issues that had been raised, and to build on the willingness and goodwill that had been evident throughout the day, that he would be seeking the agreement of WLGA Members to offer the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (or a similar agreement) between Welsh local government and the Armed Forces Community which could set out a high level commitment to work together and could also be a first step in encouraging local authorities in Wales to further develop their relationships locally with the Armed Forces Community. Such an understanding would also demonstrate the commitment of Welsh local government to helping to deliver relevant commitments in the Armed Forces Covenant and the Package of Support.

Recommendations

11. Members are asked to:

- (a) Read and comment on the content of this report**
- (b) Note the information on the development of Community Covenants and encourage a discussion within your authority on the opportunity to develop a Community Covenant with the Armed Forces Community locally**
- (c) Support the proposal to offer the development of a Memorandum of Understanding between Welsh local government and the Armed Forces Community in Wales.**

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

DATE: TUESDAY, 27 MARCH 2012

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT

SUBJECT: COMMENCEMENT ORDER FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.01 To formally complete work on the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), and to request that the Welsh Government prepare secondary legislation authorising the Council to commence preparation of a Local Development Plan (LDP).
- 1.02 Following the adoption of the UDP in September 2011, the work associated with preparing the UDP ended. Therefore, the Council is now in a position to request the Welsh Government (WG) to prepare a Local Commencement Order for preparing the LDP. Whilst essentially a purely procedural matter, this is nevertheless an important step as the Council cannot undertake any formal work or make any formal decisions in accordance with its duty to prepare a LDP until the Order is in place.

2.00 BACKGROUND

- 2.01 The Council adopted the UDP on 28 September 2011 under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and the miscellaneous regulations adopted under the said Act, namely, the Town and Country Planning Regulations (Development Plan) 1991 (as amended).
- 2.02 The requirements of Part 6 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 was implemented in Wales in October 2005. This legislation makes it a requirement for every local planning authority in Wales to prepare a LDP for its area. This replaces the requirement to prepare a UDP under the 1990 Act. When the LDP is adopted, it will replace the UDP and the LDP will then be the development plan for the Flintshire Planning Authority area.
- 2.03 In accordance with the transitional provisions of Article 6 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase (Commencement No. 4 and Consequential, Transitional and Savings Provisions) (Wales) Order 2005 and in order to implement the new legislation, the Council must first formally make a decision not to undertake any more work on the

UDP and to discontinue using its powers under the former legislation. Subsequently, the Council must write to the WG, formally requesting them to prepare the necessary secondary legislation (Local Commencement Order), to authorise a formal movement towards preparing a LDP.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 Once an Order has been made by the WG the Council can begin the process of preparing its LDP. One of the first elements of this will be to assess the current evidence base and to address any shortcomings in the information that the Council will require in order to base its plan on a 'sound' footing.
- 3.02 In accordance with the Town and Country Planning Regulations (Local Development Plans) 2005 and national planning policy guidelines in Local Development Plans 2005, work will soon commence on preparing the Delivery Agreement (DA) for the Local Development Plan, which includes a community engagement strategy and timetable for its preparation. It is understood that WG cannot express a formal opinion on this document until the Council has been formally authorised to prepare the LDP. It is intended to report on the consultative draft version of the DA to the Council prior to its release for public consultation later this year. The conclusions of the public consultation along with the final draft version of the DA will also be submitted to a meeting of the Council during 2012.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 4.01 The Director of Environment is authorised to inform the Welsh Government that the Council has completed using its powers to prepare a UDP under the Town and Country Planning Act (as amended)1990.
- 4.02 The Director of Environment is authorised to ask the Welsh Government to prepare the secondary legislation (Local Commencement Order), authorising the formal commencement of preparing the LDP.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial costs for the Council arising from the need for the WG to prepare the secondary legislation. The financial implications of preparing a LDP will be the subject of a future report.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

None

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

None

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

None

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

None

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

None

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

None

12.00 APPENDICES

None

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

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended); Town and Country Planning Regulations (Development Plans) 1991 (as amended); Planning and Compulsory Purchase (Commencement No. 4 and Consequential, Transitional and Savings Provisions) (Wales) Order 2005; Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Wales) 2005; Local Development Plans Wales 2005.

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 27 MARCH 2012**

REPORT BY: **DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT**

SUBJECT: **UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN SUPPLEMENTARY
PLANNING GUIDANCE**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To bring back to the Council for approval, supplementary planning guidance (SPG) relating to the adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The guidance for approval relates to SPG covering policy S11 Retention of Local Facilities, and a development brief for the UDP housing allocation HSG1(19) Compound Site Broughton. A further development brief relating to UDP housing allocation HSG1(38) Former Sewage Works, Sychdyn will be brought to a future meeting once matters relating to the consultation on the draft brief are fully resolved.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 Members will recall that during the process of progressing the UDP to adoption, the Council resolved to prepare specific supplementary planning guidance to support the adoption of the UDP. These SPG related to:

a) the development of supplementary guidance to support the interpretation of UDP policy S11 Retention of Local Facilities, given concerns that the policy itself required more robust guidance to assist interpretation;

b) the development of supplementary guidance in the form of development briefs to provide detailed guidance on the development of two housing sites allocated in the plan - the Compound Site, Broughton, and the Former Sewage Works, Watts Dyke Way, Sychdyn.

2.02 Each SPG has been drafted in consultation with the respective Local Members and, in line with the advice of the Welsh Government, has been the subject of a Council resolution and public consultation exercise, in order to afford the guidance significant weight as a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications. The representations received on each brief during the consultation and any resulting changes to the guidance are shown as appendices to the attached guidance.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 Members are asked to note that only one representation was received in relation to the SPG for policy S11 Retention of Local Facilities, which made a very specific request for the need for detailed independent assessment of all applications proposing a change of use of a business such as a pub, where the assessment should assess how a business has operated and also comment on how it could be made to operate in a more viable way. In response this is not seen as either necessary or appropriate and would certainly be too onerous when applied to all applications. The current methods of assessment as set out in the guide are felt to be both adequate and proportionate.
- 3.02 Given the limited amount of change required to this SPG following consultation, Members will note that it has been set out in its 'final' format in appendix 1 for approval.
- 3.03 In contrast, the SPG relating to the development brief for the Compound Site in Broughton attracted more significant comments during the consultation exercise. Whilst the details of these comments are attached to the draft brief in appendix 2 of this report, the main issue raised relates to the degree to which the significant bund to the rear of the site can be justified for retention. This was put in place to protect the residential amenity of existing residents when the site was used as a construction compound for the shopping park.
- 3.04 Now that the site is also proposed for housing, any previous inherent conflict of uses has been removed. On this basis, it is very difficult to envisage how a case to retain this bund in its entirety can be made, particularly when the main emphasis of the brief should now be to move such 'protection' forward to the frontage of the site, where housing will now be in closer proximity to the shopping park. It is in this location that the brief should and does emphasise the need for a green 'buffer' to act as a green corridor, to visually contain the site and assist with separation from the retail park, and to also serve as a noise barrier.
- 3.05 Members are asked to note the importance of approving the content of the draft brief in appendix 2, as approximately half of the site is the subject of a current planning application and the brief is therefore important not only to set out the context for how the remaining half of the site should be designed and developed, but also to act as a material consideration in the determination of the current application.
- 3.06 Members will have noted that this brief is not in its final format, as shown for the SPG relating to S11. Subject to Members agreement of the content of the brief, which is the most critical aspect of their consideration, delegated authority is sought by officers to format the document in the house style shown for S11.

- 3.07 Finally, in relation to the SPG relating to the development brief for the Former Sewage Works site, Sychdyn, there are some outstanding matters relating to the consultation carried out on the brief still to be fully resolved. Once these are complete, the brief will be brought forward for approval by Members to a Council meeting in the near future.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 That Members approve the attached SPG in appendix 1 relating to policy S11 Retention of Local Facilities, as supplementary planning guidance for use as a material planning consideration in determining planning applications.
- 4.02 That Members approve the attached SPG in appendix 2 relating to guidance for the development of UDP housing allocation HSG1(19) Compound Site, Broughton, as supplementary planning guidance for use as a material planning consideration in determining planning applications.
- 4.03 That Members give the Director of Environment delegated authority, following consultation with the Executive Member for the Environment, to format (and where necessary typographically correct) the wording of each SPG above into the appropriate house style for subsequent publication.

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.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

- 11.01 A public consultation exercise was carried out for each SPG lasting six weeks. Key stakeholders were also contacted directly.
- 11.02 The local ward Members comments have been incorporated into the Development Brief for the Compound Site, Broughton.

12.00 APPENDICES

- 12.01 Appendix 1 – SPG S11 Retention of Local Facilities
Appendix 2 – SPG Development Brief for the Compound Site, Broughton

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Adopted Flintshire UDP
Minutes of FCC meeting held on 11th November 2010

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Local Planning Guidance Note

No.24 Retention of Local Facilities

This guidance note explains the approach the Council will take when dealing with proposals which will result in the loss of local facilities to other uses. It is the Council's aim to ensure all reasonable steps have been made to retain local facilities in an attempt to promote sustainable communities.

Background

Facilities which perform a social as well as an economic role are an important asset to any community. These facilities can include a:

- » local shop;
- » post office;
- » public house;
- » primary healthcare facility;
- » petrol filling station;
- » children's nursery;
- » community centre; or
- » other building performing a social or economic function.

The decline of local facilities is attributable to a variety of circumstances including changing consumer patterns, increased mobility and economies of scale. However the presence of local facilities is considered an important component in maintaining sustainable communities. The continued presence of local facilities often prevents the need to travel to the larger retail and commercial centres and serves as a vital service to the less mobile, the young and the elderly sections of the community. For instance local shops can also serve as an outlet for complimentary services, including a post office.

There is a wealth of help and support available for current shop owners and community groups wishing to stem the decline of local facilities (Appendix 1 provides details). There is no one approach that is suitable for all, essential however, is the drive and enthusiasm of those involved to ensure the continued viability of a village shop with concerted effort and action. For instance, the Plunkett Foundation is a charity dedicated to the protection of local shops and has experience in helping groups save facilities.

Policy

The Flintshire Unitary Development Plan recognises the importance of retaining local facilities for community life, particularly where local people do not have easy access to any alternatives, with the inclusion of policy S11 Retention of Local Facilities. Policy S11 (as shown in Appendix 2) does not seek to prevent alternative uses but rather ensure that all reasonable consideration has been given to the possibility of retaining the facility, in the context that the retention of local services is considered essential to promoting sustainable communities. The Council considers it is reasonable that economic viability is among the material considerations it will take into account when determining planning applications.

The Council's position is supported by the national policy context. Planning Policy Wales (February 2011) in paragraph 10.3.9 states "The economic and social role of local shops, village shops and public houses should be taken into account when considering applications for a change of use of existing shops into dwellings or other uses. In rural areas local planning authorities should adopt a positive approach to applications for conversion of suitable village properties to shops and for extensions to village shops designed to improve their viability. A positive approach should also be taken, subject to amenity considerations, to re-establishing a public house in villages which have completely lost such provision. The lack of public transport in rural areas should not preclude small-scale retail or service development where this will serve local needs."

Technical Advice Note 6 Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities, section 5.1 states "To ensure that communities are sustainable in the long term rural residents need to have reasonable access to essential local services. Planning authorities should support the provision of local facilities, especially where they would be of benefit to rural residents distant from existing facilities. Multi-purpose use may be an appropriate way to ensure service viability, particularly in more remote areas. Planning authorities should adopt a positive approach to planning proposals designed to improve the viability, accessibility or community value of existing services and facilities. They should support the retention and expansion of these local facilities..."

The application of the policy

Policy S11 will be applied to all applications which propose the loss of buildings or premises that are currently, or were last in use as a local facility, regardless of their condition and appearance.

Demand for the retention of facilities from a social and economic perspective is the thrust behind the policy however the Council feels that the viability of the facility is fundamental to its attractiveness and retention as a local facility. Therefore the Council aims to evaluate the viability of the facility by building up a picture of the potential of the facility and in that process it maybe relevant to question why the facility is not living up to its potential. It is possible with a different approach or even management for facilities to continue to serve local communities as well as provide a decent living for those running them. As a result the Council will require any application changing the use of a local facility to be accompanied by a 'statement of efforts' and 'proof of marketing'.

Statement of efforts

The statement of efforts is an opportunity for the applicant to substantiate their view that the facility is no longer a commercial proposition and that nobody could reasonably be expected to make a living from it.

The applicant or a suitably qualified representative (e.g. a Chartered Surveyor) must describe and certify the reasonable efforts made to sell or lease the property as a local facility at a reasonable and realistic price, reflecting the economic market during that period of marketing. Reference to an inadequate return on investment or lack of market demand will not be sufficient justification alone to demonstrate that the facility cannot be retained and used for the benefit of the community.

In the statement of efforts the Council would also expect the applicant to provide an explanation of the social role of the facility in the community; the nature of the facility and the products it sells; why the facility is no longer economically viable; the attempts made to safeguard the facility such as diversification; and the distance to alternative local facilities of the same or a similar nature available.

Proof of marketing

In order to satisfy the proof of marketing the applicant must provide evidence to demonstrate that the facility has been widely marketed for sale or lease as a going concern, through an agent/surveyor, at a reasonable price that reflects its current market value for the authorised use for at least 12 months and that no equitable offer has been refused.

The 'proof of marketing' must include:

- i. A copy of all the sales particulars for the marketing period.
- ii. Details of the number of viewings.
- iii. Details of any offers received and an explanation of why they were dismissed.
- iv. Where a dining facility is provided, details of the market aimed at and the number of covers available.
- v. The opening times for the facility.

The 'proof of marketing' must also include evidence to substantiate the following:

- i. The facility has been regularly advertised in the local press and regional press, specialist trade papers and any free papers covering relevant areas. Initially this should be intense (weekly) advertising in local papers for the first month and subsequently monthly insertions for the remaining 11 months.
- ii. The premises have appeared continuously on the agent/surveyor's website, own papers and lists of commercial/business/retail premises.
- iii. There has been an agents/surveyor's 'for sale' or 'to let' advertisement board on the site frontage throughout the period. In instances where there has been a decision not to display an advertisement board applicants must explain the reasoning for not doing so.
- iv. Local property agents, and where the facility in question is a shop or pub, specialist commercial/retail agents have been sent mail shots or hard copies to find out whether there is demand for such facilities/premises in the area.
- v. Local businesses/local community groups (where relevant) have been contacted and sent mail shots or hard copies to explore whether they can make use of the building (or part of) as alternative or additional community accommodation.
- vi. Details of the last 3 years trading accounts with a separate breakdown of the income from food and drink sales. The books may need to be checked by an independent auditor. This should be financed by the applicant.

If an application for the change of use of a local facility is received before marketing has begun then it is appropriate that the price should be agreed with all parties before marketing begins. Use may be made of an independent valuer such as a District Valuer, paid for by the applicant and instructed by the Council.

The following information will also be taken into account:

- » Public opinion.
- » The effect the loss of the facility would have on certain groups in the community and their reliance on the continuation of the facility.
- » The impact on travel patterns and use of the private car which may result from the loss of the facility.
- » The impact the change of use may have on the viability of a community.
- » If the building is listed or in a conservation area, the impact of any alterations or the change of use itself.
- » Constraints e.g. visitor potential, location, area served, building condition, parking provision, etc.

The Council will, if necessary, seek specialist advice when assessing the viability of facilities. The Council may feel the need to extend the period of marketing in times of flat or falling markets.

Conclusion

The objective of the policy and this guidance note is not to cause financial hardship to owners of such facilities. Rather, the aim of the Council is to adopt a precautionary approach to ensure that all reasonable efforts have been made to retain local facilities. By following the advice in this guidance note, applicants will be providing pertinent information to aid the determination of a planning application in a timely manner.

Appendix 1

Business support and advice in Flintshire

Flintshire County Council provide a range of services to Flintshire's business community by encouraging new businesses to start up and existing businesses to grow and work with a wide range of partner organisations to develop and deliver initiatives. A range of financial assistance may be available to support businesses depending on its size, area of work and business location. Flintshire County Council's Business Development Team provides up to date information on available funding for new and expanding businesses.

Tel: 01352 703 055

Email: businessdev@flintshire.gov.uk

<http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/>

Business support, information and advice from the Welsh Assembly

FS4B is an information service provided by the Welsh Assembly Government. It contains details of support around finance, premises, training, tendering and free business workshops, along with information resources, link directories, business news and events. Formerly known as Business Eye. Search their Grants and Support Directory for potential sources of help.

Redundancy Action Scheme.

Did you know that ReAct funding could be the first step to starting your own business? Although ReAct funding cannot be used to set up the business itself, the Vocational Training award can be used to pay for any course that will help you become better equipped to succeed. You might want to go on a course to learn a trade or you might want to improve your business skills and start a marketing or accountancy course.

<http://business.wales.gov.uk>

Pub is the Hub

The Pub is The Hub is an initiative which encourages local authorities, local communities, licensees, pub owners and breweries to work together to support, retain and locate services within rural pubs. Pub is the Hub assists with guidance on availability of project funding, and having a thorough understanding of the pub business, is able to advise on the best way to progress with each individual project.

<http://www.pubisthehub.org.uk/>

Plunkett Community Shop Network

The Plunkett Foundation is the only national organisation supporting community-owned village shops across the UK. There are now over 260 community owned shops trading in England, Scotland and Wales. Most of these have been established through the support of the Plunkett Foundation.

<http://www.plunkett.uk.net/>

Appendix 2

S11 Retention of Local Facilities

Development which will lead to the loss of a shop, post office or public house or other building which performs a social as well as an economic role will be permitted only where:

- a. similar facilities exist in the neighbourhood or village which are equally as conveniently accessible to local residents; or
- b. where this is not the case, the property has been advertised at a reasonable price for sale or lease in its existing use for a period of at least one year without success.

Existing facilities are important in community life, especially where local people may not have easy access to any alternatives. The need to travel for local residents can be minimised by retaining provision of facilities within new housing areas or villages through careful consideration of applications for the conversion of shops, post offices and public houses to other uses. This policy seeks to retain such facilities but recognises that some are closed out of economic necessity and prove difficult to sell or let.

A period of at least one year is required for the marketing of local facilities to ensure that every reasonable attempt has been made to retain the use for the benefit of the community. It will be a matter for the applicant to prove through the use of evidence submitted to the Local Authority that: a comprehensive and sustained marketing exercise offering the local facility as a going concern, has been undertaken; that the marketing exercise has run for a continuous period of at least one year before the planning application is submitted; and that the facility has been offered for sale or lease locally, and in the region, in appropriate publications.

Local Planning Guidance Note 24: Retention of Local Facilities - Summary of representation and the Council's response

One representation was received by Mr R. A. Dewey of Bob Dewey Planning.

Mr Dewey commented that **the policy fails to include any independent objective assessment of why a particular pub is not making a profit**. Mr Dewey stated that too often landlords fail to realise that they are in a service industry and tailor their business differently particularly in a volatile market, afterall they may have only one chance to keep a customer.

Mr Dewey requests that the guidance is changed so that every application includes an independent assessment by a business advisor nominated by the council analysing the way in which the business has operated and commenting upon and recommending what should/could have been done to make it more viable.

A follow-up report one year later should be commissioned to reflect what changes had resulted and the impact upon the viability. This must happen before the application is registered.

The Council's response

As with any proposal it is for the LPA to make an independent assessment. The guidance on 'statement of efforts' and 'proof of marketing' (the content of which are not disputed by the representee) will in most cases provide the LPA with sufficient detail to evaluate the viability of the facility. In those instances where the LPA requires specialist independent advice then the guidance note allows for that. However it is the Council's opinion that requiring every planning application proposing a loss of a local facility to be independently assessed by a specialist is too onerous.

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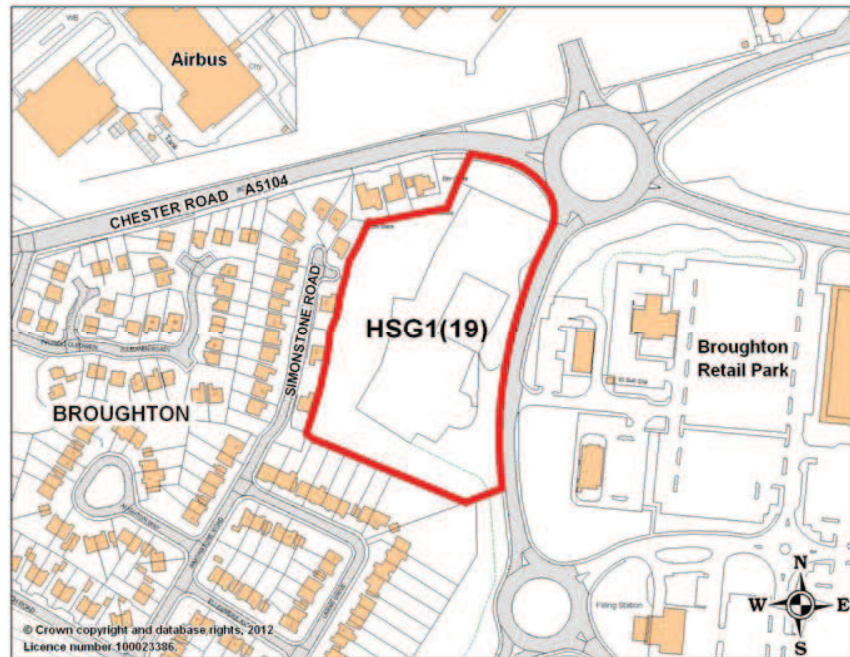
**DEVELOPMENT BRIEF FOR HOUSING AT
THE COMPOUND SITE, WEST OF BROUGHTON
RETAIL PARK, BROUGHTON**

Developers must have regard to this development brief when preparing a scheme for this site. Any differences must be justified by the developer.

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DRAFT DEVELOPMENT BRIEF FOR HOUSING AT THE COMPOUND SITE, WEST OF BROUGHTON RETAIL PARK, BROUGHTON



1. Purpose of Brief

1.1 Type of development

This brief relates to the proposed residential development of the former Compound site in Broughton which could potentially yield up to 54 dwellings. However due to the landscaping and noise mitigation measures required, the site is expected to yield in the region of 48 dwellings in total. The main objective of this brief is to guide the residential development of the land to ensure the scheme provides a high quality sustainable residential development with a high standard of landscaping which ensures a high level of amenity for residents. The brief seeks to ensure that the amenity of both the existing and proposed houses is not detrimentally affected by the adjacent Retail Park, and that the landscaping is appropriate to its location and makes a positive contribution to the area. In line with the requirements of Policy HSG10 of the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP) the site will be required to provide 30% .

1.2 Site Description

Broughton is a Category B settlement with an indicative growth band of 8-15% over the UDP plan period and had some 2,055 dwellings as at 2000. It is a sustainable settlement being well served by employment and public transport and has a reasonably good range of services and facilities. The Council therefore recognises that it is an appropriate area in which to locate a proportion of the County's future housing growth.

The site comprises approximately 1.8 ha of land and lies between Broughton Retail Park to the east and the residential area of Simonstone Road to the west. It was used as the construction compound during construction of the shopping park, which was a temporary use, and is separated from the existing housing development off Simonstone Road to the west, by a landscaped bund along the western edge of the site which was a condition of the retail park planning permission. The net developable area of the site will be less than this as provision for landscaping and noise mitigation, particularly along the road frontage to the north and east, needs to be incorporated. Part of the existing landscaped bund will also be retained. Overall it is estimated that the area which can be developed for housing excluding this provision will be around 1.6 ha, which at approximately 30 dwelling per hectare could yield in the region of 48 dwellings.



Aerial Photo showing the site

2. Status of the Brief

In line with the advice of the Welsh Government the brief has been the subject of a Council resolution and public consultation exercise and should therefore be afforded considerable weight as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The representations received and how the brief has been amended to take account of issues raised is summarised in Appendix ii).

3. Planning Context and Planning History

The Flintshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP) is the relevant development plan and was adopted in September 2011. The site is allocated for residential development in the UDP.

Recent Planning History:

046818 (northern part of site) – erection of supermarket and non-retail unit – withdrawn 17/12/09
046564 (southern part of site) - erection of budget hotel and restaurant / public house withdrawn 11/1/10
048764 (northern part of site) - erection of supermarket and non-retail unit – refused 20/2/12

4. Relevant Development Plan Policies and Guidance

The development of the site will be assessed against a number of policies and relevant guidance. These are listed in Appendix i), although it should be noted that the development plan (UDP) should be read as a whole. The Council also has a suite of Local Planning Guidance Notes and the relevant notes are also set out in Appendix i).

5. Site Analysis and Planning Requirements



Looking east towards retail park

5.1 Location and Landscape Context

Location Context

The relatively level site of 1.8 ha is located at the north western edge of Broughton and currently consists of vacant land which is the former construction compound relating to the development of the retail park. On the western side is a landscaped bund and the side adjoining the access road to the retail park is relatively open with the exception of a close boarded timber security fence. The centre part of the site comprises a concrete slab which remains from when the site was used as a construction compound. The site is bounded on the eastern and southern side by existing residential development and the retail park lies to the east of the site.

The retail park and access road are adjacent to the site to the east and the Airbus site is to the north. Therefore noise pollution could potentially be an issue for residents. As a result, noise pollution mitigation measures will be required in the design of the development and any houses located near to the main road may

require sound insulation, and there will be a requirement for alternative noise reduction measures such as an earth bund and appropriate landscaping scheme. Acoustic surveys will be required and the Council's Environmental Health section should be consulted on this issue.



Site Ownership

The site is currently in two separate ownerships. This is not a constraint to the development of the site and the use of this development brief will help to create an overall scheme which is consistent and of a high standard. In terms of the provision of affordable housing and other financial developer contributions, these will be provided proportionally in relation to the overall site area of each part of the site. Both parts of the site also will be expected to provide the required landscaping area referred to below, along the eastern boundary in particular, and if two separate schemes are put forward they should have regard to the other in terms of access, layout, orientation etc. An example of this would be the location of a play area in the centre of the site which can be mirrored on each side of the separating boundary.

Landscape Context

A carefully designed landscaping scheme for the site will therefore be required in order to provide the best amenity for residents. The existing landscaped bund raises two issues, which are firstly the protection of amenity and secondly the retention of a wildlife and green space feature. The landscaped bund afforded protection to the amenity of existing residents when the site was in use as a construction compound. In bringing forward the housing allocation on the site, it is considered unnecessary for the bund to be retained in its entirety as there is no inherent amenity conflict between existing and proposed housing development subject to satisfactory separation distances etc being achieved.

It is clear that over time the landscaped bund has developed in terms of the vegetation and now forms an extension of the present strategic landscaped buffer along the eastern edge of properties on Larne Drive and consequently the bund in this location should be retained. In the absence of any protected species however, it is considered that there is scope for part of the bund to be removed. It could be narrowed to increase the developable area of the site, but should be retained in a form which ensures adequate screening and continued amenity for the residents of Larne Drive and to continue to provide its function as a landscaping feature, visual relief and green corridor. The form of the retained bund should pay particular regard

to the retention of the vertical aspect of the current bund. Given the different layout and orientation of properties along Simonstone Road, the retention of the bund in this location is not considered to be essential and there is scope for all, or at least part of it, to be removed. However, bearing in mind that along the frontage of the site is a culvert which cannot be built on, and in order to compensate for the loss of the bund on the western side of the site, a replacement green corridor or buffer should be provided along the frontage. This feature will ensure the continuation of the existing green corridor, with the exception of a small break for the vehicular access / accesses. It will also ensure visual containment of the development, assist with separation from the retail park, provide an attractive entrance to the site, as well as providing a noise barrier. Issues relating to the maintenance of both the retained bund and the replacement green corridor are matters for the detailed planning application stage.

The requirements of UDP policy D3 Landscaping should be complied with. Details of the landscaping should include measures to encourage biodiversity and offer appropriate links through the development from the existing development in the settlement and from the retail park.

The provision of landscaping will provide opportunities for an increased variety of flora and fauna, which will enhance the biodiversity of the site. The planting of species in scale with the development is an important consideration and generally plant species should be native. All main structure planting strips should include a proportion of evergreen planting to maintain shelter and colour throughout the year. The existing trees and shrubs within the site should be retained where possible and there are no nature conservation designations or ecological constraints to the development.

5.2 Urban Context

The site occupies a position at the north eastern edge of the residential part of Broughton where there is a marked change of character and land use with the retail park to the east and Airbus to the north. Broughton is characterised by medium density residential development and the built form of the settlement mainly consists of a range of relatively modern buildings of varying design and storey heights. However there are also a number of traditional buildings which are characteristic of this part of the County.

Dwellings in the immediate area to the south west of the site are a range of detached and semi-detached with medium sized gardens and a density in the region of 23 dwellings per hectare. Broughton is a well established settlement at the centre of a strategic area of growth (the 'Dee Triangle') as recognised by the Wales Spatial Plan and the West Cheshire-North East Wales Sub Regional Spatial Strategy. Over the last decade or so, the Broughton area has seen a number of major developments come forward that have played a key role in improving and sustaining the region's economy. Broughton is considered to be a sustainable location for further growth, given the availability of services and facilities and good public transport links. It is well served by employment and retail provision and has a good range of community facilities and services.

Achieving a 'sense of place' is important in terms of reflecting the best of vernacular layout patterns in the area rather than a continuation of standard housing developments. All new developments are expected to comply with GEN1 General Requirements for Development, D1 Design Quality, Location and Layout and D2 Design. Also, new developments should take into account all new guidance published by the Welsh Government which relates to residential streets, housing, design, designing for security and safer, more inclusive environments.

5.3 Sustainable Development

Solar considerations The location and orientation of the site generally can take advantage of available solar radiation in the proposed buildings. The buildings should therefore be designed to take advantage of this in order to maximise heating gain.

Wind considerations The presence or absence of wind may have a greater impact than solar gain in the heating of buildings, particularly during colder months. The use of strategic planting, embankments and the careful locating of buildings is an effective method of reducing the impact of wind blowing across the site, therefore reducing the amount of heat loss.

Energy The initial consideration should be the reduction of energy use, followed by how renewable energy sources can be used to provide the energy required. Policy EWP3 requires that renewable energy generation measures are incorporated onto the development in order to achieve a 10% reduction in carbon emissions. Developers will be expected to look in detail at the most suitable way of incorporating renewable energy on this site, be aware that the suitability of different renewable energy technologies may vary across the site, and that more than one form of renewable energy provision may be appropriate.

Resource efficiency The use of energy efficient, low maintenance and sustainable materials will be encouraged whenever practicable. In terms of a sustainable layout, one possible option could be to locate taller building/s to the north of the site and to provide more and larger windows on the south facing elevation, with few on the northern elevation. This would maximise the solar gain and assist in reducing the noise pollution from the road to the north of the site.

Materials In order to ensure that the new development does not detract from the local environment, traditional local buildings materials should be used. In general the older houses in the area are red brick with slate roofs, more recent houses are often brick with either slate or tile roofs. Also some houses are rendered. Simple details on buildings can make a big difference to their appearance and the way a development fits in with the surroundings. For example simple brick detailing can add to the character of a dwelling by reflecting the traditional character of the area. Detailing around doors and windows, as well as their proportions, is an important design feature, for example in the use of the traditional material for lintels and sills. Boundaries, walls, fences etc, are to be carefully considered to enhance the identity of the area and to define the private / public realm.

Code for sustainable homes

In line with current guidance, all residential properties will have to reach Code Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes as a minimum and developers are encouraged to exceed this. However it may be that Code Level 4 is a requirement by the time an application comes forward as the Welsh Government are moving towards dwellings becoming more sustainable as soon as possible.

5.4 Highways and Access

Vehicular access to the site will be from the Broughton Retail Park link road at the eastern boundary of the site. The Head of Assets and Transportation states that the development should have a 'strong' residential frontage onto the link road to reinforce the 30mph speed limit and that two access points could be achieved into the site from the link road. This could potentially lead to an appropriate scheme and given that the site is currently in two ownerships would allow for the development of the site at different times. Locating any access point directly opposite the existing access to the retail park should be avoided and each access should be separated by at least 30m along the link road.

An access should adopt the following criteria:

- a minimum entry radii of 7.5 and a 2.4m x 43m visibility splay;
- The carriageway width at the entrance should be 5.5m; and
- The gradient of the access from the edge of the existing carriageway should be a maximum of 1 in 24 for a minimum distance of 10m and then 1 in 15 thereafter.

In order to prevent vehicles wishing to turn right into the site from delaying the free flow of traffic, the provision of a 'Keep clear' marker will be required as part of a S106 agreement so that at busy times they can cross the opposite carriageway.

The site is in close proximity to bus stops at Airbus and Tesco, with services between Mold – Chester, Holywell – Chester and Connah's Quay – Chester, providing good accessibility to several local towns and villages. There are currently no rights of way on the site. Footpaths and cycleways should be well signposted and allow safe use during night and day. All routes and provision of facilities must allow for full access and protection to disabled residents and visitors.

It is important that the development is accessible by all forms of transport, in particular pedestrians and cyclists. Pedestrian access into and within the site is a key requirement and will encourage the use of modes of transport other than the private car. The development should link into footpaths and cycle ways, those existing and those to be developed in the area. All footpaths and cycle ways should be designed to have a predominately open character for security reasons and shrubs, other than ground cover should not be planted immediately adjacent to footpaths and cycle ways. Paths should be well lit at night, especially those routes which link the housing areas with the settlement centre. Key routes should be suitably landscaped to provide attractive routes, which will encourage walking and cycling.

In line with the 'Safe Routes in Communities' initiative (previously Safe Routes to School), walking routes to school should be considered at the planning application stage, with measures identified to assist pupils along the route and the development

should have an identified link for walking / cycling. Given the fact that there is no complete footway from the site to the school, developers should contact the Highways section in relation to how this can be provided and a financial contribution may be required towards the provision of this.

Every effort should be made to make the site as accessible as possible to a wide range of potential users, including those with sensory or physical disabilities. Although the site has good public transport links and is within walking and cycling distance of local facilities, provision of car parking will still need to be accommodated. The layout should provide appropriate levels of parking within the curtilage of dwellings in line with the Council's adopted car parking standards, which as follows are a maximum of:

Size of house	Number of parking spaces
1 bedroom dwelling	1.5 car space per unit
2 bedroom dwelling	2 car spaces per unit
3 + bedroom dwelling	3 car spaces per unit
Flats	1 car space per unit + 1 car space per 2 units for visitors
Elderly person / retirement dwellings or flats	1 car space per unit + 1 car space per 3 units for visitors

In line with policy AC18 of the UDP reduced requirements may be applied.

5.5 Services and Infrastructure

The developer will need to discuss the establishment and location of services and infrastructure with the relevant utilities companies to ensure the correct and appropriate servicing of the site.

Drainage. Welsh Water have no objection in principle to the development of the site. However they have some concerns over the current capacity of the sewerage system in the area. It is not in their current work programme to undertake works to improve this system however it may be possible for the developer to fund the accelerated provision of replacement infrastructure or to requisition a new sewer under Section 98-101 of the Water Industry Act. Upgrading works to the sewerage system are required prior to the development of the housing. Developers should discuss this with Welsh Water / Dwr Cymru at an early stage. Details of foul sewer and surface water disposal will be subject to approval of detailed design. To ensure that no surface water run off enters the sewerage system and to reduce surface water run off from the site, a separate Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDs) will be required to serve the development. These are matters which can be considered within the planning application process and in the light of UDP policies GEN1 General Requirements for Development and EWP16 Water Resources.

Surface Water. As mentioned above, surface water should be dealt with by means of a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDs), in accordance with good practice. There are a number of methods which can be used and developers should consider integrating a variety of these. The landscaping scheme could be developed in conjunction with the SUDs. CIRIA has produced a number of documents which

provide guidance on the type and application of the different type of SUDS and Environment Agency Wales can also advise on this. Any SUDS system for residential development will be designed in accordance with “Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems – Design Manual for England and Wales” published by CIRIA. This will have to be designed to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency Wales and Welsh Water Dwr Cymru, and to minimise the impact on the water quality and quantity of the receiving watercourse. Adoption of the SUDS measures will be required by Welsh Water Dwr Cymru or by Flintshire County Council, in which case a capitalised maintenance charge will be required. However, the Council will not adopt the SUDS provisions in isolation from any public open space.

Supply and distribution of water. Any development of the site may have an impact on the water network infrastructure in the area. This will have to be investigated prior to any development of the site.

Electricity / Gas / Telephone / Internet. There are no known problems with the supply of gas or electricity to the site, nor with the telephone / internet system. The developer should check with the relevant service provider the provision for connection to these services.

Street Lighting. The provision of street lighting will be necessary within the site. An element of low level lighting may be necessary in some areas of public open space. The main routes through the development should be well lit to ensure safety. Street lighting should be highly energy efficient and its design in keeping with the site design and layout.

Education facilities. Developer Contributions as part of a S106 Agreement will be required to be made in respect of Education provision and the relevant section of the Council will be able to advise on this. Broughton Infants and Junior School (capacity 450 pupils) is approximately 575 m from the centre of the site in a direct line.

The most recent figures (January 2012) indicate that Broughton Infants and Junior School currently has 439 pupils. This means there are only 11 surplus places and with 13 primary school places expected from the allocated site a commuted sum would be required for the school. There is a surplus of places at St David’s High School so no contribution would be required for this at present. Developers should contact the Director of Lifelong Learning at the time of making a planning application in order to ascertain the most up to date figures and how much would be required in terms of the commuted sum.

Public Open Space. New development is generally required to provide open space and appropriate play facilities in accordance with the relevant policies and guidance, although in some cases an off site payment is appropriate. Although there is an existing recreation facility at Broughton Hall Road which caters for the play requirements of the proposed development, this cannot currently be accessed by a safe, continuous footpath from the site and therefore the provision of a new facility on this site will be required unless a safe footway is provided.

The creation of on-site public open space within the development will result in these areas requiring adoption by the Council, which will be subject to a legal agreement.

Evidence of the arrangements made for the long term maintenance of any paths, landscaped areas and other open space will also be required.

Private Open Space Garden dimensions will be determined by considerations including the density of development, design objectives and the need to provide a complementary range of house types.

5.6 Affordable housing

Affordable housing is required in line with Policy HSG10 of the UDP. This policy requires the developer to enter into negotiations with the Council where there is a demonstrable need for affordable housing to meet local needs to provide 30% affordable housing. The affordable housing will be required on site and the units should not be developed as a separate area, but should be integrated throughout the development. Locations of the proposed affordable housing units be indicated within the planning application. The affordable housing will be provided by a range of housing types and not just as flats or apartments. Although the site is currently in two separate ownerships, both parts will be expected to provided affordable housing proportionally to a level of 30% of the overall capacity of the site.

5.7 Layout and Design

The layout of the housing requires it to contribute to achieving the sense of place described above. A range of dwelling house types, including bungalows, terraced, semi-detached, and mixed storey heights as well as a good mixture of floor areas, should be considered as this will ensure that a sustainable density of dwellings per hectare is achieved and provide for every market sector. There is a clear demand for a wide range of housing types and developers should ensure that appropriate provision is made, bearing in mind that the size, shape, position, style and detail of housing has an impact on its surroundings.

Both the layout and design of the development should be of a high standard and quality sustainable materials used throughout. Good design requires an understanding of the local context and creating a locally distinct sustainable development. A detailed Design and Access Statement will be required to undertake a robust contextual analysis of the site, its surroundings and constraints and demonstrate the process and options considered in devising the design principles of the development proposed. In line with current guidance, detailed statements must be included to support any planning application and should incorporate examples of design used to influence the development proposal. The housing should be well designed and fit for purpose, enhances its setting and becomes an integrated part of the settlement and community. The character of the development should reflect the vernacular of the area, although designs which are of a high standard but innovative will also be considered. If existing local buildings and layouts are not of a good design they should not be reflected within the development, as developers should rather look to improve the area.

In siting buildings and open spaces it should be ensured that public facades face onto public areas and private facades face private areas. This ensures that private gardens do not back on to public spaces, paths or roads, but rather the front of the property (or public face) will face on to the public area and any potential conflict between the different uses is avoided. Views into the site should also be considered.

To fit in with the surrounding development, the majority of buildings should be no more than two storeys. If a developer wishes to provide some dwellings of 2.5 storeys within the overall scheme this may be acceptable but the overall form and relationship of the existing dwellings, the orientation of dwellings and use and position of dormers and roof lights will be carefully considered in order to protect the amenity of existing residents. Inappropriate layouts and designs will not be accepted in respect of this. Housing on the site must meet the current requirements as set out in the relevant Local Planning Guidance Note which refers to matters such as plot ratio, private usable garden space and privacy distances as well as preventing overshadowing to adjoining areas

Guidance on the design and layout of new developments can be found in documents such as Planning Policy Wales, TAN12 Design, Energy Saving Trust guidance on estate layout to maximise passive solar gain etc. A more comprehensive list can be found in the Appendix. The Council would welcome the proposal being taken through the Design Commission for Wales' (DCfW) review panel. The DCfW is a national organisation, established in 2002 by the Welsh Government established to champion good design and a high quality built environment. Early consultation with the DCfW is essential, when the proposed project is at a formative stage, and when the expertise and advice available can be most effective. Typically this is in the pre-application stage, once the basic design approach has been defined.

A high standard of landscaping and design is required, together with possible noise reduction measures in order to achieve maximum amenity for the residents of the site.

5.8 Housing Density and Mix

The layout of housing should create a sense of place. National and local guidance requires the efficient use of land. High density development can be achieved through good design without overcrowding, congestion or loss of residential amenity. In line with policy HSG8 the highest appropriate density should be sought on the site in terms of making the most efficient use of land whilst having regard to the characteristics of the site and its surroundings. A good range of house types, having regard to policy HSG9, should be sought in terms of dwelling types and sizes, to ensure that a variety of market sectors are catered for and an interesting and varied form of development is achieved.

5.9 Noise

A key issue in the development of the site is ensuring satisfactory standards of amenity for both existing residents and new residents, having regard to noise levels and general activity associated with the road system and retail park. As a result, noise mitigation measures will need to be considered as an integral part of the layout and design of the development. These measures will need to be agreed with the Council's Public Protection Officers and be informed by an appropriate noise assessment study in accordance with the criteria specified in Annex A of TAN 11 Noise. Possible measures could include a landscaped bund, acoustic fencing and noise attenuation measures within individual properties, however this needs to be balanced with ensuring that there is an attractive frontage to the site and that the site is not shut off from the local area and community. To avoid cutting off the site with a

large fence or wall, the layout of the proposed properties should be carefully considered, with a wide landscaped area running parallel and adjacent to the main road, which would increase the distance from the noise source. The use of an acoustic fence or vegetation to the north of the site may be appropriate given the proximity to the Airbus site and the fact that it would not overshadow any houses, although the visual aspect of this from outside the site should be carefully considered. Measures within individual house (particularly those close to the road) can include high specification double glazing, increased sound insulation, mechanical ventilation, locating sensitive rooms away from the road and locating the gardens behind the houses away from the road.

6 Summary

Due to the location adjacent to the retail park and the concerns that have been raised in relation to this (particularly to noise mitigation), a clear layout and landscaping scheme must be provided to protect the amenity of future residents in terms of separation between the site and the retail park and any potential noise issues. The developer will be required to show how this can be achieved. It is also important that the developer has regard to the retail park and that the landscaping scheme also enhances the entrance to the retail park. They will also have to show how the site can be accessed via means other than the private car.

Development of the site's layout should reflect the principles of sustainable development and incorporate the appropriate landscaping to provide the required separation between the site and the retail park. All developments should seek to conserve natural resources, be energy efficient and minimise pollution. As a minimum the dwellings will be required to meet the requirements of Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes as contained within current national guidance. However developers should aim for a higher level and note that the Welsh Assembly Government intends to require higher levels in future and it may be that by the time an application is submitted, attaining Code Level 4 or higher may be a requirement.

In respect of sustainable development, the following should be considered: climate, energy, resources, biodiversity and community. A sustainability statement will be required as part of the Design and Access statement setting out how the principles of sustainable development have been incorporated from the outset.

Planning Application Requirements

Any planning application will need to be accompanied by the following:

- Planning Statement (including an assessment of the proposal in light of this brief)
- Design and Access Statement
- Noise assessment
- Landscaping
- Transport Statement
- Code for Sustainable Homes pre-assessment

Design and Access Statement A design and access statement will be required to accompany a planning application. It must clearly demonstrate how the development has taken account of this development brief and should explain how the design has been created specifically for this development. The statement should demonstrate how the overall design reflects the best of the urban form of the settlement. The advice in TAN12 Design should be closely followed.

S106 Agreements and Planning Conditions. Any relevant S106 Agreements and planning conditions which are required should be related in scale and kind to the proposed development. Developers may reasonably be expected to pay for or contribute to the cost of infrastructure which would not have been necessary but for the development. The effect of such infrastructure investment may be to confer some wider benefit but payments should be consistent with the scale of the proposed development. The agreement may contain contributions in cash or the provision of facilities and services in line with Policy requirements.

7 Further Information

Developers are encouraged to contact the Flintshire County Council's Planning Service to discuss details of any proposed scheme. Any application will be dealt with primarily by the Development Management Team, but policy guidance can be obtained from the Development Plans Team, who will also be consulted on the application and pre-application inquiry.

Planning address & contact

Highways

Play Unit

Housing

Public Protection

Dwr Cymru

EA Wales

APPENDIX

Appendix i)

Relevant Development Plan Policies and Guidance

(Please note these are only the most relevant references and other policies and guidance may apply)

Flintshire Unitary Development Plan Policies

STR1	New Development
STR2	Transport and Communication
STR4	Housing
STR10	Resources
GEN1	General Requirements for Development
D1	Design Quality, Location and Layout
D2	Design
D3	Landscaping
WB6	Enhancement of Nature Conservation Interests
AC1	Facilities for the Disabled
AC2	Pedestrian Provision and Public Rights of Way
AC3	Cycling Provision
AC18	Parking Provision and New Development
HSG1	New Housing Development Proposals
HSG8	Density of Development
HSG9	Housing Mix and Type
HSG10	Affordable Housing within Settlement Boundaries
SR5	Outdoor Playing Space and New Residential Development
EWP2	Energy Efficiency in New Development
EWP3	Renewable Energy in New Development

Local Planning Guidance Notes:

2. **Space Around Dwellings**
3. **Landscaping**
9. **Affordable Housing**
11. **Parking Standards**
12. **Access for All**
13. **Open Space Requirements**
19. **SUDS**
20. **Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy for Householders and Small Businesses**
22. **Planning Obligations**

National Guidance:

Planning Policy Wales 2010
TAN8 Renewable Energy
TAN11 Noise
TAN12 Design
TAN16 Sport, Recreation and Open Space
TAN18 Transport
TAN22 Sustainable Buildings

Other:

West Cheshire – NE Wales Regional Spatial Strategy
Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems – Design Manual for England and
Wales (CIRIA)
Passive Solar Estate Layout (Energy Saving Trust)
Code for Sustainable Homes

Appendix ii)

COMPOUND SITE
RESPONSES TO DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

ORGANISATION	ISSUE	REPRESENTATION	REASONED RESPONSE	DECISION AND ACTION
Broughton and Bretton Community Council	Landscaping bund	What proposals are there for the protection of the existing bund?	n/a	<p>The landscaped bund raised two issues which are firstly the protection of amenity and secondly the retention of a wildlife and green space feature.</p> <p>The landscaped bund afforded protection to the amenity of residents when the site was in use as a construction compound. In bringing forward the housing allocation on the site it is considered unnecessary for the bund to be retained in its entirety as there is no inherent amenity conflict between existing and proposed housing development subject to satisfactory separation distances etc being achieved. To the south of the site the houses on Larne Drive have rear gardens some 26m in length, and have an approximate area of 240sq m which is considerably in excess of the prescribed 70sq m private garden space for a 3 bed dwelling in its LPG Space about Dwellings. The dwellings to the west of the site on Simonstone Road are in close proximity to the site boundary. Notwithstanding that they have been sited and designed so that their side elevations face onto the site, there is a need to ensure that suitable separation distances and associated amenity are achieved, either through the retention of part of the bund or through the extension of their plots into the site.</p> <p>It is clear that, given the passage of time, the landscaped bund has developed in terms of the vegetation and now forms an extension of the present strategic landscaped buffer along the eastern edge of properties on Larne Drive. In an otherwise built up area, the landscaped bund provides visual relief and performs a green corridor function. In the absence of any protected species, it is considered that there is scope for all, or at least part of the bund to be removed. However, bearing in mind that along the frontage of the site is a culvert which cannot be built upon, a replacement green corridor or buffer should</p>

Appendix ii)

				be provided along the site frontage. This feature will ensure the continuation of the existing green corridor, with the exception of a small break for the vehicular access and can be continued into the adjoining site. The green corridor can be designed so as to act as a noise attenuation feature between housing and the retail park and also as a nature conservation and recreational feature.
	Safe routes to school	Will the developer be required to provide a safe route to school for the development?	n/a	Response from the road safety manager is as follows: Regarding new developments, as part of the Safe Routes to School initiative it was recommended that walking routes to school are considered at the planning stage, with measures identified to assist pupils along the route i.e. link paths, traffic speed controlling measures, pedestrian crossing facilities etc. all new developments should have identified links for walking / cycling and such routes will be suitable for school children as well as the general public. It should be noted that the initiative has recently been re-named 'Safe Routes in Communities'.
	Section 106 agreement	When imposing S106 agreement, will the new formula apply?	n/a	This will depend on when an application is received and on the progress with the Education Contributions LPG
	Highway access	What measures will be required to prevent vehicles turning into the estate from delaying the free flow of traffic?	n/a	Highways view is that there wouldn't be a problem during 'free flow' conditions, only at busy times when the traffic is fairly stationary. The provision of a 'Keep Clear' marker on the road would prevent there being a hold up and a S106 agreement could require this to be provided by / funded by the developer.
	Density	What will be the maximum density permitted?	n/a	The indicative density for a settlement B category is 30/ha, however any scheme will be considered on its individual merits.

ORGANISATION	ISSUE	REPRESENTATION	REASONED RESPONSE	DECISION AND ACTION
Development Securities	Landscaping bund	There is no justification for the landscaping bund to be retained as it was constructed to protect existing dwellings from the retail park and compound but the compound is now to be replaced by housing.	Accept	Remove reference to the net developable area being 1.25 ha which reflects the existence of the bund and amend the potential capacity as a result.
	Planning context	UDP has now been adopted and the relevant text now needs to be amended to reflect this	Accept	Development brief should be amended to reflect the adoption of the UDP. Update sections 3 and 4 and appendices (i) and (ii) as appropriate
	Noise pollution	There are no significant noise issues to address and the requirement for an acoustic survey, acoustic fencing and appropriate landscaping scheme are not justified.	Don't accept	The Council's environmental health section stated that there are likely to be noise issues relating to road traffic and the commercial operations on the retail park. They would therefore expect a noise survey to be carried out and a suitable scheme for noise mitigation to be provided which will depend on the noise survey and report recommendations. Depending on the noise exposure category the properties fall into, any scheme would be expected to include such things as enhanced glazing (possibly with acoustic vents), some sort of an acoustic barrier on the northern and eastern boundaries. To avoid cutting off the development with a large fence or wall, the layout should be carefully considered.
	Public open space	There is no justification for the mention of allotments	Accept	Remove reference
	Education facilities	There are more up to date figures available than those in the brief	Accept	The most up to date figures will be incorporated prior to the publication of the final version of the development brief. Reference will be made to the status of the revised LPG on educational contributions.
	Site ownership	There is no reference to the fact that the site is held in two separate ownerships and is therefore likely to be developed by two different parties at two different times.	Accept	Reference should be made to the fact that the site is in two different ownerships and a methodology set out which explains how a good quality scheme could be achieved e.g. access points, layout, orientation, affordable housing.

ORGANISATION	ISSUE	REPRESENTATION	REASONED RESPONSE	DECISION AND ACTION
Stuart Milne Homes	Landscaping bund	The bund was built to serve a purpose which no longer exists	Accept	<p>The landscaped bund raised two issues which are firstly the protection of amenity and secondly the retention of a wildlife and green space feature.</p> <p>The landscaped bund afforded protection to the amenity of residents when the site was in use as a construction compound. In bringing forward the housing allocation on the site it is considered unnecessary for the bund to be retained in its entirety as there is no inherent amenity conflict between existing and proposed housing development subject to satisfactory separation distances etc being achieved. To the south of the site the houses on Larne Drive have rear gardens some 26m in length, and have an approximate area of 240sq m which is considerably in excess of the prescribed 70sq m private garden space for a 3 bed dwelling in its LPG Space about Dwellings. The dwellings to the west of the site on Simonstone Road are in close proximity to the site boundary. Notwithstanding that they have been sited and designed so that their side elevations face onto the site, there is a need to ensure that suitable separation distances and associated amenity are achieved, either through the retention of part of the bund or through the extension of their plots into the site.</p> <p>It is clear that, given the passage of time, the landscaped bund has developed in terms of the vegetation and now forms an extension of the present strategic landscaped buffer along the eastern edge of properties on Larne Drive. In an otherwise built up area, the landscaped bund provides visual relief and performs a green corridor function. In the absence of any protected species, it is considered that there is scope for all, or at least part of the bund to be removed. However, bearing in mind that along the frontage of the site is a culvert which cannot be built</p>

				<p>upon, a replacement green corridor or buffer should be provided along the site frontage. This feature will ensure the continuation of the existing green corridor, with the exception of a small break for the vehicular access and can be continued into the adjoining site. The green corridor can be designed so as to act as a noise attenuation feature between housing and the retail park and also as a nature conservation and recreational feature.</p>
Affordable housing	It is important to recognise that the site falls into 2 ownerships and their proposal would be for 24 2 storey units which would mean that there is no requirement for affordable	Don't accept		<p>The allocation as a whole will be taken into account regardless of the different ownerships. If separate applications come in then each should have a proportion of affordable housing. Otherwise, two smaller applications could be submitted creating in the region of 45-50 units with no affordable housing provision made at all.</p>
Noise mitigation measures	The noise mitigation measures proposed are too excessive	Don't accept		<p>The Council's environmental health section stated that there are likely to be noise issues relating to road traffic and the commercial operations on the retail park. They would therefore expect a noise survey to be carried out and a suitable scheme for noise mitigation to be provided which will depend on the noise survey and report recommendations. Depending on the noise exposure category the properties fall into, any scheme would be expected to include such things as enhanced glazing (possibly with acoustic vents), some sort of an acoustic barrier on the northern and eastern boundaries. To avoid cutting off the development with a large fence or wall, the layout should be carefully considered .e.g. a service road running parallel to increase the distance from the noise source.</p>
Footpaths	There are none through the site and land ownership would prevent creating new ones.	Accept		<p>There are no existing footpaths through the site which connect with existing links, but the possibility of providing one should be explored by the developer. It may be the case that no appropriate footpath can be</p>

				provided and the development brief should be amended to reflect this. It should be ensured that footpaths along the frontage are linked into existing footpaths.
			Accept in part	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Accept that it should be updated to reflect adopted plan. ii. Educational contributions will depend on when the education LPG is formally adopted by the Council. iii. Don't accept that POS should be off site given the lack of safe pedestrian footpath to the nearest site. iv. Accept re: provision of allotment space
	Public open space / educational contribution	Any requirements should be in line adopted policy and guidance, not draft. For POS an off site contribution is more appropriate given the site. Ref to allotments should be removed.		

Appendix iii)

Checklist

ROADS AND PARKING	
• Access	
• Pedestrian / cycling links	
• Public transport	
• Traffic calming	
• Parking Standards	
• Access for Emergency Services	
LANDSCAPING	
• Detailed plan	
• Predominant use of native or drought resistant species	
• Maintenance agreement	
• Provision / financing of open space	
DESIGN	
• TAN12 Design	
• Sustainable development	
• Privacy and amenity	
• Passive solar design and site layout	
• Noise mitigation measures	
• Security and community safety	
DRAINAGE	
• Upgrade of system	
• Separate surface water system	
• SUDS - including permeable paving & attenuation tanks	
• Low water use fittings	
ENERGY CONSERVATION	
• Passive solar orientation and design	
• Energy efficiency	
• Sustainable materials	
• Code for Sustainable Homes assessment	
• Renewable energy	

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

DATE: TUESDAY, 27 MARCH 2012

REPORT BY: HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: PAY POLICY STATEMENT

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.01 To seek approval on the Council's Pay Policy Statement, to be effective from 1 April 2012.

2.00 BACKGROUND

- 2.01 Under the Localism Act 2011, Councils in England and Wales are required to prepare and agree a Pay Policy Statement. The statement needs to set out the Council's policies on remuneration for Chief Officers, how the statement will be published and accessed, the Council's policies for the remuneration of its lowest paid employees and the relationship between remuneration for Chief Officers and other employees.
- 2.02 Pay Policy Statements must be produced and published on an annual basis in advance of the beginning of each financial year. The first Pay Policy Statements are required to commence on 1 April 2012 for the forthcoming financial year 2012 / 2013.
- 2.03 The provisions of the Act do not apply to employees of Local Authority Schools and consequently, teaching employees will not be brought into the scope of the statement.
- 2.04 The provisions of the Act bring together the need for increasing accountability, transparency and fairness in the setting of local pay which will enable the tax payer to understand and access information on remuneration levels across all groups of Council employees

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 The attached Pay Policy Statement has been drafted in accordance with the requirements of 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 and incorporates all existing pay arrangements for the workforce groups within the Council including Chief Officers and the lowest paid employees.

- 3.02 It is acknowledged that further developmental work will need to be done in relation to pay and reward arrangements within the Council. For example, the Council recognises that there is currently a significant differential between the pay grades for Green Book and other workforce groups when compared with Chief Officers (Directors and Second Tier Officers). In designing a new pay and grading structure for Green Book employees as part of Single Status, the intention will be to develop a 'Single Pay Spine' which will reduce the gap so that there are clearer relativities between workforce groups and senior management and greater prospects for internal succession planning and career progression.
- 3.03 The implementation of Single Status for Green Book employees will result in a new equality proofed pay and grading structure. Robust arrangements for maintaining the new pay and grading structure, to ensure that there is no pay discrimination and that all pay differentials can be justified, will be introduced.
- 3.04 The Council is developing a new Market Supplement Policy, to ensure that the Council is able to offer competitive rates to attract and retain talented people where there may be limited availability of particular skills or expertise in the market place.
- 3.05 The above developments will be reflected in the Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2013 / 2014.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the County Council approves the attached Pay Policy Statement for 2012 / 2013, acknowledging that there is work in progress to achieve a complete set of pay and reward arrangements which will be reflected in subsequent Pay Policy Statements.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 There are no new financial implications for the Council arising 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 or the attached Pay Policy Statement.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 None arising directly from this report or the attached Pay Policy Statement.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None arising directly from this report or the attached Pay Policy Statement.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 None as the attached document captures existing pay and reward arrangements only.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Not applicable.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Pay Policy Statement is attached as Appendix 1.

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

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Pay Policy Statement 2012/13



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1. Introduction and Purpose

The Local Government Act 1972, (section 112) sets out the Council's 'power to appoint officers on such reasonable terms and conditions as the Authority thinks fit'. This Pay Policy Statement sets out the Council's pay policy in accordance with the requirements of 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011, which requires English and Welsh local authorities to produce and publish a Pay Policy Statement for 2012/13 and for each financial year after that, detailing the:

- Council's policies towards the remuneration of Chief Officers;
- publication of and access to information on the remuneration of Chief Officers;
- Council's policies for the remuneration of its lowest paid employees;
- relationship between the remuneration of its Chief Officers and other employees.

The Council is a large complex organisation with a multi-million pound budget. It has a very wide range of functions and provides and /or commissions a wide range of services. Whilst a consistent approach to remuneration will be adopted across the Council, there may be differences to reflect specific circumstances at a local, Welsh or UK national level.

This Pay Policy Statement reflects the current position as at 1 April 2012. The Council is currently working towards achieving a Single Status Agreement for Green Book employees which is planned for implementation part way through the financial year 2012/13 and will therefore impact on the Pay Policy arrangements for the next financial year 2013/14.

2. Legislative Framework

The Council will comply with all relevant employment legislation including the Equality Act 2010, Part Time Employment (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000, the Agency Workers Regulations 2010, the Working Time Regulations 1998, the National Minimum Wage Rates and, where relevant, the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Earnings) Regulations 2006. The Council will ensure through the Single Status Agreement that there is no pay discrimination within its pay structures and that all pay differentials can be objectively justified through the use of equality proofed Job Evaluation.

3. Scope of the Pay Policy Statement

The Localism Act 2011 requires authorities to develop and make public their pay policy on Chief Officer remuneration (including on ceasing to hold office), and their pay policy for the 'lowest paid', explaining the relationship between remuneration of chief officers and other workforce groups.

In the interests of transparency and accountability, the Council has chosen to produce a wider policy statement covering all employee groups (with the exception of school staff appointed by a school governing body) including employees appointed under the terms and conditions agreed with:

- The National Joint Council for Local Government Services;
- The Joint Negotiating Committee for Local Authority Craft and Associated Employees;
- The Joint Negotiating Committee for Youth and Community Workers;
- JNC for Chief Officers;
- JNC for Chief Executives.

4. Background and Principles

The Council is committed to an open and transparent pay policy which will enable the tax payer to understand and assess information on remuneration levels across all groups of Council employees.

In Flintshire County Council, the term 'Chief Officer' covers the Chief Executive, Directors and the Heads of Service. Throughout the document, the term Chief Officer refers to all three job roles.

The statement is effective from 1 April 2012 and will be subject to review on a minimum of an annual basis in accordance with the relevant legislation prevailing at that time.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development will have the authority to review the policy within the one year period, to make any minor amendments required by legislation.

The following supporting information is available on the Council's website at www.flintshire.gov.uk:

- **Remuneration data**

- (i) All Employee pay scales
- (ii) Individual remuneration details for senior employees (see footnote on page 8) whose remuneration is over £60,000 per annum and the number of employees whose remuneration exceeds £60,000 as required under the Accounts and Audit (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2010

- **Policy documents**

- (i) Honoraria Policy
- (ii) Policy Statement on Redundancy and Severance Payments (including additional pension payments)

- **Development of a Pay and Reward Strategy**

The primary aim of a pay and reward strategy is to attract, retain and motivate suitably skilled employees so that the organisation can perform at its best. The biggest challenge for the Council in the current circumstances is to maximise productivity and efficiency within current resources. Pay policy is a matter of striking a balance between setting remuneration levels to secure a sufficient supply of appropriately skilled individuals to fill the Council's wide range of posts, and ensuring that the burden on the public finances can be fully and objectively justified.

It needs to be recognised that at the more senior grades in particular, remuneration levels need to attract of a suitably wide pool of talent and retain suitably skilled and qualified individuals once in post. It should be recognised that the Council will often be seeking to recruit in competition with other public and private sector employers.

The Council is a major employer in the County and the region. The availability of good quality employment on reasonable terms and conditions and fair rates of pay has a beneficial impact on the quality of life in the community as well as on the local economy. The Council should be a role model in setting a benchmark example on pay and conditions to other employers.

In designing, developing and reviewing pay and reward strategy the Council will seek to balance these factors to have a workforce which will help it met its objectives for public services. This Pay Policy will be reviewed an annual basis.

- **Pay Structure**

- **Job Evaluation**

Job evaluation is a systematic way of determining the value/worth of a job compared to other jobs within an organisation. It aims to make a systematic comparison between jobs to assess their relative worth in a rational pay structure ensuring pay equity. For all jobs that are not nationally prescribed, and are not Chief Officer posts, the Council uses the Greater London Provincial Committee (GLPC) Scheme.

Based on the application of the job evaluation process, the Council currently uses the nationally negotiated pay spine as the basis for its local grading structure. This determines the salaries of the large majority of the non-teaching workforce, together with the use of other nationally defined rates where relevant. There have been no increases in salary on the national pay spine since 2009.

- **Chief Officer Job Evaluation**

For Chief Officers, the Council uses the Hay Scheme for job evaluation purposes. The Council undertook reviews of all Chief Officers roles and associated pay arrangements in 2007 and 2008.

All other pay related allowances are the subject of either nationally or locally negotiated rates, having been determined from time to time in accordance with collective bargaining machinery and/or as determined by Council Policy.

- **Honoraria**

There may be occasions when an employee is asked to carry out additional duties to those of their substantive post for a period of time. In such circumstances an additional payment may be made in line with the Council's Honoraria Policy.

5. Responsibility for Decisions on Remuneration

Where there are significant changes to remuneration arrangements which are locally set, such proposed changes will be agreed by full County Council.

6. Remuneration of Chief Officers

For the purposes of this statement, senior management means 'Chief Officers' as defined within S43 of the Localism Act. The posts falling within the statutory definition are set out below, with details of their basic salary as at 1st April 2012.

The pay and grading structures for Chief Officers were reviewed in two phases. The first tier (Chief Executive and Directors) was reviewed in 2007/08 and the second tier (Heads of Service) was reviewed in 2008/09. Specialist advice was provided by the Hay Consultancy Group on the conduct of the reviews. The Council was able to access data on comparative market rates within the public sector to ensure that the pay and grading arrangements were sufficiently competitive to recruit and retain capable employees, that the differentials between grades were justifiable and that the pay and grading structures were affordable and appropriate. These pay and grading structures, and the associated arrangements, were approved by full County Council prior to implementation. The salary rates for each Chief Officer post are as follows:

- (i) **Chief Executive**

The salary falls within a range of 1 – 4 incremental points between £120,737 rising to a maximum of £131,233.

- (ii) **Directors**

The salaries of posts designated as Director fall within a range of 1 – 3 incremental points between £89,132 rising to a maximum of £97,328.

(iii) **Heads of Service**

The salaries of posts designated as Head of Service fall within a range of 1 – 7 incremental points between £63,519 rising to a maximum of £81,960.

The Head of Finance and Head of Legal and Democratic Services hold additional statutory responsibilities (Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer respectively) and fall within the higher range of 4 - 7 incremental points between £71,715 rising to a maximum of £81,960. All other Heads of Service fall within the range of 1 - 4 incremental points between £63,519 rising to a maximum of £71,715.

Progression through the incremental scale is subject to satisfactory performance, which is assessed on an annual basis. The level of remuneration is not variable dependent on the achievement of defined targets.

Additions to Remuneration for Chief Officers

The Council does not offer any bonuses or any additional performance related pay to its Chief Officers.

In addition to basic salary, the details below define 'additional pay' which is chargeable to UK Income Tax and does not solely constitute reimbursement of expenses incurred in the fulfillment of duties:

- The Returning Officer for the County Council is the Chief Executive. Returning Officer duties are not part of the Chief Executive's substantive role. Fees for these duties are paid separately and are determined by the full Council.
- Lump Sum for Essential Car User – see Appendix 1 (this may change as a result of the implementation of a new Single Status Agreement).
- Where membership of an approved professional body is deemed to be essential for an employee to carry out their duties, the employee will be reimbursed for the cost of the professional membership fees. Reimbursement can only be for one professional body per person and only one claim can be submitted each financial year.

Severance Payments for Chief Officers and all Employees

The Council's approach to discretionary payments on termination of employment of Chief Officers and all employees, prior to reaching

normal retirement age, is set out within its policy statement in accordance with Regulations 5 and 6 of the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) Regulations 2006 Regulation 12 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contribution) Regulations 2007.

Any other payments falling outside the provisions or the relevant periods of contractual notice for Chief Officers shall be subject to a formal decision made by a committee or panel of elected members with delegated authority to approve such payments.

7. Recruitment of Chief Officers

The Council's policy and procedures with regard to recruitment of Chief Officers is set out within Article 15, 15.01 sub section (b) of the Constitution. When recruiting to all posts the Council will take full and proper account of equality in accordance with our Diversity and Equality Policy and Recruitment procedures. Determination of the remuneration to be offered to any newly appointed Chief Officer will be in accordance with the pay structure and relevant policies in place at the time of recruitment.

New appointments will normally be made at the minimum of the relevant grade, although this can be varied where necessary to secure the best candidate.

Where the Council remains unable to recruit Chief Officers under a contract of service, or there is a need for interim support to provide cover for a vacant substantive Chief Officer post, the Council will, where necessary, consider engaging individuals under 'Contracts for Service'. These will be sourced through a competitive procurement process. The Council does not currently have any Chief Officers engaged under such arrangements.

8. Publication of Pay Policy Statement

Upon approval by the full Council, this statement will be published on the Council's Website at www.flintshire.gov.uk and the Council's Internal Infonet site. In addition, for senior employees¹ where the full time equivalent salary is at least £60,000, the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts sets out the amount of:

- pensionable pay;
- any expense allowance;
- total remuneration excluding pension contributions;
- employer's pension contributions;
- total remuneration including pension contributions.

¹ For the purpose of the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts Senior Employees are defined as the Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and Statutory Chief Officers (Head of Finance and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services).

9. Remuneration of the Lowest Paid Employees

The lowest paid persons employed under a contract of employment with the Council are employed on full time (37 hours) equivalent salaries in accordance with the minimum spinal column point currently in use within the Council's grading structure. As at 1st April 2012, this is £12,145 per annum. The Council employs Apprentices who are not included within the definition of 'lowest paid employees' as they are employed under a separate 'apprenticeship' / learning fixed term contract and paid at the current minimum wage.

10. Pay Relativities within the Council

This Pay Policy Statement includes the ratio (multiple) of pay between the Council's top earner, who is the Chief Executive, and the median earner. The multiple between the median full time equivalent earnings and the Chief Executive is 1:6.58.

For this calculation pay includes all taxable earnings for the given year including base salary, variable pay, bonuses, allowances, and the cash value of any benefits in kind.

This multiple will be monitored each year within the Pay Policy Statement

As part of its overall and ongoing monitoring of alignment with external pay markets, both within and outside the sector, the Council will use available benchmark information as appropriate.

Salary Scales

Chief Executive Pay Scale

Scale	SCP	Salary 01/04/2007 and continuing
CEO Point 01	1	£120,737.00
CEO Point 02	2	£124,234.00
CEO Point 03	3	£127,734.00
CEO Point 04	4	£131,233.00

Chief Officer Pay Scale

Scale	SCP	Salary 01/04/2008 and continuing
Director Grade 1	1	£89,132.00
Director Grade 2	2	£93,742.00
Director Grade 3	3	£97,328.00

Second Tier Officer Pay Scale (Heads of Service)

Scale	SCP	Salary 01/11/2008 and continuing
Point 01	1	£63,519.00
Point 02	2	£66,593.00
Point 03	3	£69,154.00
Point 04	4	£71,715.00
Point 05	5	£76,325.00
Point 06	6	£79,399.00
Point 07	7	£81,960.00

Flintshire County Council Pay Scale (Green Book)

Scale	SCP	Salary 01/04/2009 and continuing
Scale 1	4	£12,145.00
Scale 1	5	£12,312.00
Scale 1	6	£12,489.00
Scale 1	8	£13,189.00
Scale 1	10	£13,874.00
Scale 1/Scale 2	11	£14,733.00
Scale 2	12	£15,039.00
Scale 2/Scale 2a	13	£15,444.00
Scale 2a/S3	14	£15,725.00
Scale 2a/Scale 3	15	£16,054.00
Scale 3	16	£16,440.00
Scale 3	17	£16,830.00
Scale 4	18	£17,161.00
Scale 4	19	£17,802.00
Scale 4	20	£18,453.00
Scale 4	21	£19,126.00
Scale 5	22	£19,621.00
Scale 5	23	£20,198.00
Scale 5	24	£20,858.00
Scale 5	25	£21,519.00
Scale 6	26	£22,221.00
Scale 6	27	£22,958.00
Scale 6	28	£23,708.00
Senior Officer 1	29	£24,646.00
Senior Officer 1	30	£25,472.00
Senior Officer 1	31	£26,276.00
Senior Officer 2	32	£27,052.00
Senior Officer 2	33	£27,849.00
Senior Officer 2/Management 1	34	£28,636.00
Management 1	35	£29,236.00
Management 1/Management 2	36	£30,011.00
Management 1/Management 2	37	£30,851.00
Management 2	38	£31,754.00
Management 2/Management 3	39	£32,800.00
Management 3	40	£33,661.00
Management 3	41	£34,549.00
Management 3/Management 4	42	£35,430.00
Management 4	43	£36,313.00
Management 4	44	£37,206.00
Management 4/Management 5	45	£38,042.00
Management 5	46	£38,961.00
Management 5	47	£39,855.00
Management 5/Management 6	48	£40,741.00
Management 6	49	£41,616.00
Management 6	50	£42,519.00
Management 6	51	£43,414.00
Senior Management 1	52	£44,697.00
Senior Management 1	53	£45,989.00
Senior Management 1	54	£47,275.00
Senior Management 1	55	£48,564.00
Senior Management 2	56	£49,859.00
Senior Management 2	57	£51,150.00

Senior Management 2	58	£52,437.00
Senior Management 2	59	£53,733.00
Senior Management 3	60	£55,012.00
Senior Management 3	61	£56,306.00
Senior Management 3	62	£57,602.00
Senior Management 3	63	£58,884.00

Craft & Associated Employees (excludes apprentice grades)

Scale	Salary 01/04/2009 and continuing
Band 1 - Electrician	£21,418.12
Band 1 - Joiners & Builders	£19,191.48
Band 1 - Labourer	£17,495.00
Band 1 - Plumber	£20,357.82
Band 2 - Diag/Electrician	£23,326.67
Band 2 - Joiners & Builders	£21,206.06
Band 2 - Labourer	£19,615.61
Band 2 - Plumber	£22,266.37
Band 2 - Plumber (Gas Qual)	£23,326.67
Band 3 - Diag/Electrician	£24,917.12
Band 3 - Joiners & Builders	£22,584.46
Band 3 - Plumber	£23,856.82
Band 3 - Plumber (Gas Qual)	£24,917.12

Youth & Community Officers

Scale	SCP	Salary 01/09/2009 and continuing
Y&C Officers Point 01	1	£33,555.00
Y&C Officers Point 02	2	£34,653.00
Y&C Officers Point 03	3	£35,751.00
Y&C Officers Point 04	4	£36,871.00
Y&C Officers Point 05	5	£38,009.00
Y&C Officers Point 06	6	£39,120.00
Y&C Officers Point 07	7	£40,256.00
Y&C Officers Point 08	8	£41,547.00
Y&C Officers Point 09	9	£42,258.00
Y&C Officers Point 10	10	£43,357.00
Y&C Officers Point 11	11	£44,450.00
Y&C Officers Point 12	12	£45,546.00
Y&C Officers Point 13	13	£46,633.00
Y&C Officers Point 14	14	£47,731.00
Y&C Officers Point 15	15	£48,831.00
Y&C Officers Point 16	16	£49,933.00
Y&C Officers Point 17	17	£51,042.00

Youth Workers

Scale	SCP	Salary 01/09/2009 and continuing
Point 01	1	£14,143.00
Point 02	2	£14,733.00
Point 03	3	£15,324.00
Point 04	4	£15,917.00
Point 05	5	£16,509.00
Point 06	6	£17,100.00
Point 07	7	£17,697.00
Point 08	8	£18,291.00
Point 09	9	£19,047.00
Point 10	10	£19,636.00
Point 11	11	£20,591.00
Point 12	12	£21,525.00
Point 13	13	£22,489.00
Point 14	14	£23,485.00
Point 15	15	£24,166.00
Point 16	16	£24,875.00
Point 17	17	£25,574.00
Point 18	18	£26,279.00
Point 19	19	£26,975.00
Point 20	20	£27,673.00
Point 21	21	£28,461.00
Point 22	22	£29,352.00
Point 23	23	£30,219.00
Point 24	24	£31,091.00
Point 25	25	£31,968.00
Point 26	26	£32,847.00
Point 27	27	£33,726.00
Point 28	28	£34,613.00
Point 29	29	£35,496.00
Point 30	30	£36,377.00

Essential Car User Allowance from 1 April 2010

	<u>451 - 999cc</u>	<u>1000 - 1199cc</u>	<u>1200 - 1450cc</u>
Essential Users			
Lump sum per annum	£846	£963	£1,239

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
DATE: TUESDAY, 27 MARCH 2012
REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF LIFELONG LEARNING
SUBJECT: SCHOOL MODERNISATION INTERIM REPORT

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To provide an interim report on the progress of the consultations for the three area schools reviews.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The Council commissioned a refreshed consultation process for the three designated area schools reviews (Buckley, Mynydd Isa and Mold; Holywell; Queensferry, Shotton and Connah's Quay), to run from February to April 2012, at its meeting on 16 December 2011.

2.02 The first stage and informal consultation process was to be a combination of (1) public meetings for parents and students both for individual schools and for schools consortia (2) private meetings for teachers and school based employees (3) private meetings for governing bodies (4) special in-school sessions for students and pupils (5) an open invitation for contributions through the media of the published documents, the Council website and the local media.

2.03 The area review consultation documents were shared with all elected members for comment prior to publication. The information for all three area reviews, and full background information, is available on the Council website.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The series of nine public and various private meetings has been concluded. The special sessions within schools for students and pupils are taking place. The deadline for comments (letter, e.mail and returned pre-published response forms) is 27 April.

3.02 The public and private meetings have been well attended and well conducted. The improved process has not attracted the criticism of the earlier consultations held in mid-2011 and the objective of restoring trust and confidence in the consultation process has been met. The meetings have all been recorded and the database of preferences for

the options set out in the consultation, and the qualitative comments which underpins the preferences of individuals, is being built up. All preferences and feedback received by 27th April will be included in the database ready for consideration by the new Council from May/June.

It would be premature to comment decisively on the options for each area review before the first stage consultation process draws to an end. It should be repeated that additional evidenced options over and above those published can be proposed for consideration (including those raised at the public meetings for the Buckley, Mynydd Isa and Mold, Queensferry, Shotton and Connah's Quay areas). Reflections at an early stage would be:-

- Buckley, Mynydd Isa and Mold: there is strong local interest in exploring further the options for the retention and development of Elfed High including alternative community uses for surplus accommodation; strong local resistance to the co-location of Westwood Primary with Elfed High;
- Holywell: strong local interest in exploring further the co-location and new build options for Holywell High, Ysgol Perth y Terfyn and Ysgol y Fron;
- Queensferry, Shotton and Connah's Quay: strong local resistance to the option to amalgamate John Summers High and Connah's Quay High; strong local interest in exploring the options for a 6th Form 'Hub' at Connah's Quay High; strong local interest in exploring further the development of John Summers High as a 3-16 school.

3.03 No further public meetings are planned for the pre-election period and proposals to explore further those options which appear to be feasible and supportable will be prepared for the new Council once the first stage consultation period has ended.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That the progress report be noted.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 None directly at this stage.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 None directly at this stage.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None directly at this stage.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 None directly at this stage.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None directly at this stage.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 As set out in the report.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 As set out in the report.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 None.

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

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