

Public Document Pack

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Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol a Democraataidd



To: Cllr Ron Hampson (Chairman)

CS/NG

Councillors: Amanda Bragg, David Cox,
Peter Curtis, Ron Davies, Glenys Diskin,
Rosetta Dolphin, Jim Falshaw, Alison Halford,
George Hardcastle, Ray Hughes, Brian Lloyd,
Mike Reece, Gareth Roberts and Sharon Williams

20 September 2012

Sharon Thomas 01352 702324
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Dear Sir / Madam

A meeting of the **HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** will be held in the **DELYN COMMITTEE ROOM, COUNTY HALL, MOLD CH7 6NA** on **WEDNESDAY, 26TH SEPTEMBER, 2012** at **10.00 AM** to consider the following items.

Yours faithfully

Democracy & Governance Manager

A G E N D A

- 1 **APOLOGIES**
- 2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**
- 3 **MINUTES** (Pages 1 - 8)
To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2012.
- 4 **LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY** (Pages 9 - 50)
Report of Director of Community Services

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The Council welcomes correspondence in Welsh or English
Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawau gohebiaeth yn y Cymraeg neu'r Saesneg

- 5 **SECURE/INTRODUCTORY TENANCY AGREEMENT** (Pages 51 - 98)
Report of Head of Housing
- 6 **QUARTER 1 SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORTS** (Pages 99 - 140)
Report of Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator
- 7 **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 141 - 152)
Report of Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator -

Agenda Item 3

HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE **27 JUNE 2012**

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA on Wednesday, 27 June 2012

PRESENT: **Councillor Ron Hampson (Chairman)**

Councillors Amanda Bragg, Peter Curtis, Ron Davies, Glenys Diskin, Jim Falshaw, Alison Halford, George Hardcastle, Ray Hughes, Brian Lloyd, Mike Reece, Gareth Roberts and Sharon Williams

SUBSTITUTES: Councillors Ian Dunbar (for David Cox) and Arnold Woolley (for Rosetta Dolphin)

ALSO PRESENT: Members of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny and Planning & Development Control Committees were invited and the following attended the meeting:- Councillors Haydn Bateman, Christine Jones, Richard Lloyd, Paul Shotton, Carolyn Thomas and David Wisinger

CONTRIBUTORS: The Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Housing, Director of Community Services, Head of Housing Services, Head of Planning, Housing Renewal Manager, Housing Strategy Manager, Asset and Property Maintenance Manager and Team Manager Advice & Homeless Services

IN ATTENDANCE: Environment & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Committee Officer

9. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**

No declarations of interest were made.

10. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 30 May 2012 had been circulated to Members with the agenda.

Matters Arising

Councillor G. Hardcastle said that Councillor G.H. Bateman had substituted for him and not for Councillor R. Hughes as was indicated in the minutes.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the foregoing, the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

11. **WELSH GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER (HOMES FOR WALES - BETTER LIVES AND COMMUNITIES)**

The Head of Housing Services and the Head of Planning provided a presentation on the Welsh Government White Paper (Homes for Wales – Better Lives and Communities). The main features of the presentation were as follows:

- Main Aims
- Increasing the supply of new homes
- Factors to consider
- Empty Homes
- Improving the quality of existing LA homes
- Improving the Private Sector Rented Sector
- Factors to Consider
- Tackling Homelessness
- Other actions and proposals – not law
- Other planned developments
- Links to other policy areas
- What are we doing already?
- Timetable

Councillor A.M. Halford thanked the officers for the presentation and said that there was a clear need for Planning and Housing Teams to work together which she felt should be encouraged. She highlighted a problem where the private rented sector were not able to find out the background of tenants because of the Data Protection Act and asked whether anything could be done to identify those who had damaged previous properties that they had been tenants of. The Head of Housing Services said that it was hoped, for the more challenging tenants, that a support mechanism would be put in place to ensure that they complied with the terms of their tenancy agreement. The Housing Renewal Manager commented on a voluntary tenancy accreditation scheme which could be considered; this was a similar scheme to the one in place for landlords.

In response to comments made on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) subsidy system, the Head of Housing Services said that once an outcome had been agreed between Welsh Government and Westminster Government settlement it would be discussed with the Local Authority on how the payments would be distributed in Wales. She said that Councils would not be significantly better off initially as authorities would be required to take on some debt but she confirmed that additional resources could be used to invest in housing stock for the future.

On the issue of payment of Council Tax for empty properties, Councillor J. Falshaw suggested that extra consideration should be given to families where bereavement was the reason for the empty property. He also felt that mortgage lenders and local authorities should liaise more closely to avoid repossessions where difficulties with mortgage payments were being experienced. He said that it was important to understand why properties were empty and that owners should be encouraged to bring properties back into use. The Cabinet Member for Housing said that during January to March 2012, four residents who had attended mortgage hearings had not been evicted from their properties following

negotiation. On the issue of mortgage payments, the Team Manager Advice & Homeless Services advised that some mortgage lenders did provide notification where problems were being experienced and the Authority would then contact the mortgagee. It was found that those who used the service were able to resolve the issues which had been raised and were not evicted from their property.

On the issue of empty homes, the Housing Renewal Manager said that the aim was to have a strategic joined up approach and he said that a specific officer was in post to find the best solution for the property owner.

Councillor I. Dunbar commented on the changes to benefits and felt that it would result in increases in homelessness; he asked what was in place to protect those affected. The Head of Housing Services explained that the proposed changes meant that where properties were under-occupied by one bedroom or more, a reduced benefit payment would be made. Work was ongoing with colleagues in the Housing Benefit team to draw up a list of those affected to identify how they could be helped. It would be a significant challenge for the local authority as there would be a mis-match between the number affected and the number of smaller properties available. She added that in the private rental sector, changes were already underway and tenants aged under 35 only received an amount of benefit equivalent to that for a bedsit. The Team Manager Advice & Homeless Services said that the average loss for a tenant in a one bed roomed property was £10 per week which increased to £19 for a two bed property. Councillor Dunbar queried what would be the alternative for people who could not pay and the Chairman responded that there had been situations in the past where the Council had been faced with a large bill for bed and breakfast accommodation. He felt that these changes would result in a similar situation and said that it was important that extra staff were recruited in the Welfare Rights Section.

The Head of Housing Services said that a number of different schemes were being piloted to identify measures to prevent people losing their homes.

Councillor P. Curtis commented on properties which could be difficult to sell through no fault of their owner which could be charged higher Council Tax rates if they were unsold after more than 12 months. He raised concern at the suggestion to extend the “threatened with homelessness” definition from 28 to 56 days.

Councillor C.A. Thomas said that there should be a strong evidence of need when considering sites for property development and that attention be paid to property type. She felt that there was insufficient discussion at pre-planning stage and that there was a low supply of one bedroom accommodation coming forward. She referred to page 6 of the White Paper and queried what Community Land Trusts meant. On the issue of properties which were empty for more than 12 months, she suggested talking to estate agents and that discussions be undertaken on the possibility of renting the property out. On page 21 it was reported that the typical age for a first time buyer was 29 with the average income being between £32,000 to £34,000; she felt that this was not correct for Flintshire and asked that representation be made to Welsh Government (WG) to advise them of statistics for age and income for the area.

In response to comments on working with estate agents, the Head of Housing Services said that one option was for the authority to consider establishing a Social Letting Agency. She advised that Community Land Trusts were schemes where houses were built on community owned land. She also confirmed that information on average income and ages for Flintshire would be provided to WG.

The Leader of the Councillor said that the document was an exciting and radical approach and the change of focus should be welcomed. He said that the co-operative approach and pioneer schemes operating in Europe would be an exciting opportunity for Flintshire. He said that the common denominator was private land and that the opportunity to identify land as part of the Local Development Plan (LDP) provision was critical. He referred Members to paragraph 4.42 of the White Paper and said that the HRA Subsidy system was an opportunity for local authorities.

Councillor H.G. Roberts expressed disappointment at the content of the White Paper. He highlighted paragraph 4.69 and the proposal to use enforcement measures to bring properties back into use and commented on two properties in his ward where because of issues with the owners, the properties on either side could not be let. He also raised concern at the statement in the White Paper that there would be no homelessness by 2019.

In response to a question from Councillor Halford on paragraph 4.70 and the ability to charge more council tax on properties which had been empty for more than 12 months, the Director of Community Services said that the Authority was not currently permitted to do so.

In conclusion, the Head of Housing Services asked that Members forward any comments or views to either herself or the Head of Planning by Friday, 13 July 2012.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the comments provided by Members are considered when responding to the Welsh Government consultation; and
- (b) That any additional comments or views be forwarded by Members to the Head of Housing Services or Head of Planning by Friday 13 July 2012.

12. DELIVERING PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL

The Director of Community Services introduced the report to seek the support of Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee for a revised Private Sector Housing Renewal & Improvement Policy including the proposal to introduce equity loans and also repayment loans at an interest rate of 4% for the first year.

He detailed the background to the report and explained that the current policy had been implemented on 1 April 2010. The format of the new policy had been substantially altered to make it easier to read and understand and also to minimise duplication which existed within the previous policy. The existing policy

had moved the Council from providing traditional housing grants, to a system of interest free loans for all assistance, with the exception of Disabled Facilities Grant which remained mandatory; paragraph 2.04 detailed the number of loans which had been granted and the value of those loans. Approval was given to tender for a suitably qualified organisation to manage a portfolio of interest bearing and equity loans last year. The successful organisation which won the tender was Street UK Ltd. A Task and Finish Group was formed and a series of meetings were held and the valuable contributions from the group contributed to the formation of this draft Policy.

The Director detailed the four themes which the policy centred around and he explained that the review of the existing policy identified that there were gaps in provision which existed and these were detailed in the report. Discussions had been held with Street UK Ltd and they had recommended that interest rates for the repayment loans be set at 4%. On the issue of Empty Homes Support, the Director explained that Welsh Government had committed £10m to an empty homes recyclable loan fund. The fund would provide interest free loans to property owners who wished to renovate an empty property for the purpose of rent or sale; £2.4m had been allocated to the North Wales authorities.

Councillor A.M. Halford commented on the work which had been undertaken but said that she did not feel that the Policy was easier to read and understand. She highlighted page 23 in particular where it appeared that the wording had been duplicated and commented on the final sentence at the bottom of the page where it was reported that the loan had been suspended. In response the Housing Renewal Manager said that he had felt that a table form for the wording was more effective and that summary leaflets were to be produced for each category in addition to the policy document. He confirmed that the Council's empty homes loan was suspended until such time as the additional resources from the WG houses into homes initiative were spent. A failure to spend this money could result in Flintshire losing out. However, the suspended loan had to be included within the Policy document to prevent the need to return to Cabinet at a later date to reintroduce that particular loan.

Following questions from Councillor G. Hardcastle on Street UK and Independent Financial Advisors, the Housing Renewal Manager said that 57 English authorities used Street UK Ltd and with the inclusion of Flintshire, Denbighshire and Gwynedd Councils, this brought the total up to 60. He added that on the issue of Independent Financial Advisors, there was an initial cost for residents but experience had shown that there had only been a 30% take up of this facility. A loan administrator who operated in Wales had not bid for the contract.

RESOLVED:

The Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee support the revised Private Sector Housing Renewal & Improvement Policy, including the proposal to introduce equity loans and repayment loans at an interest rate of 4% for the first year.

13. QUARTER 4 AND YEAR END SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORTS

The Head of Housing Services introduced a report for Committee to note and consider the 2011/12 Quarter 4 (January to March 2012)/Year End service performance reports, note the draft year end position of the Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges (SARC) and note the progress made against the Improvement Targets contained within the performance reports.

The Head of Housing Services gave a short presentation on the performance, outlining work which had been undertaken to improve performance and areas where improvement was needed, as outlined within the report.

Councillor A.M. Halford congratulated the Director of Community Services, the Head of Housing Services and their teams for the document. She highlighted page 81 and raised concern that the development of a Gypsy Traveller Strategy for Flintshire had been delayed. She also explained that the previous Chairman of Audit Committee had indicated that the red/amber/green status did not reflect whether the data provided was improving or worsening. This was highlighted on page 67 which showed the data for non-urgent repairs as 'red' even though there had been an improvement in the average days taken to carry out the non-urgent repairs. The Head of Housing Services welcomed the comments made on the red/amber/green designation. The Housing Strategy Manager said that the needs assessment had been completed and that the new Gypsy Traveller strategy had been rescheduled for delivery in September 2012.

In response to a series of questions from Councillor G. Hardcastle, the Head of Housing Services said that three teams were undertaking agile working and these included the Asset Management Team, Housing Renewal Team and the Housing Strategy Team. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) was to be discussed at the Forward Work Programme workshop but she added that the aim was to have additional resources for the ASB service to fulfil the commitment to tenants. Councillor Hardcastle had also felt that the outcomes for current tenant rent arrears (page 59) and non-urgent repairs (page 67) should be amber and not red; the Head of Housing Service agreed with this. Councillor P. Curtis felt that it was important to leave the status as red where improvement had been made but not sufficiently to warrant changing the status to amber; he felt that this applied to sickness levels which he highlighted as a concern.

Councillor A. Bragg queried how well the Welfare Rights service was publicised. In response the Team Manager Advice & Homeless Services said that it was advertised widely but that the areas that were deemed to be the highest priority were targeted. The Director of Community Services said that considerations were being given as to whether an 'invest to save' bid could be submitted to expand the team.

RESOLVED:

That the comments/observations of the Committee are fed back to the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee who are responsible for the overview and monitoring of improvement targets.

14. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Environment & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator introduced the report to consider the Forward Work Programme for the Committee.

The Facilitator reminded the Committee of the Forward Work Programme Planning workshop scheduled for Monday, 2 July 2012. A workshop on Common Housing Register had also been arranged for 25 July 2012.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

15. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and ended at 12 noon.

16. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press in attendance.

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Chairman

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 26TH SEPTEMBER 2012

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

SUBJECT: DRAFT FLINTSHIRE LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY
2012-2017

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider proposals within the Draft Local Housing Strategy attached at Appendix 1

2.00 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This strategy is based on evidence from a number of sources including research commissioned by the Council comprising Flintshire's 2012 Housing Market Needs update.
- 2.2 Extensive consultation has been undertaken in developing this strategy and details of consultations undertaken are included in Section 11 of this report.
- 2.3 This strategy was jointly written with Wrexham County Borough Council, which has a similar housing profile and demographic trends to Flintshire. This partnership shared resources and highlighted opportunities for joint working in line with the Welsh Government's 'Making the Connections' principles and the Housing White Paper's promotion of effective regional collaboration.
- 2.4 Effective delivery of the strategy is dependent on responding to and complimenting other local and national policies. Locally, the strategy compliments the Flintshire Community Strategy 2009-2019 and the Flintshire Regeneration Strategy 2009-2020 where housing is seen as playing a crucial role in delivering these objectives.
- 2.5 The Welsh National Housing Strategy 2010: Improving Lives and Communities – Homes in Wales has three objectives and Flintshire's strategy has adopted these as its own. These are:
Provide more housing, more choice
Improve homes and communities
Improve housing-related services and support

The Welsh Government's Housing White Paper reinforces the national strategy.

- 2.6 As the national strategy sets the housing framework for the Flintshire Local Housing Strategy, the Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) frames the strategy in planning guidance. The UDP will specifically provide for the housing needs of the county through the provision of 7400 new dwellings over the plan period of 2000-2015. This provision will include a range of housing including affordable and special needs.
- 2.7 The 2008 credit crunch, subsequent global financial crisis and UK recession have created a very uncertain economic environment. This can be seen in a fall in private investment in housing coupled to reductions in mortgage finance, public subsidy and reducing public sector capital grants. Year on year reductions in Social Housing Grant will mean that the council and its housing association partners will need to find innovative ways to fund and build new affordable housing.
- 2.8 Although house prices have fallen since 2007, buying a house for the average first time buyer is not more affordable. Local wages, in the public and private sector, have seen small rises or have been frozen. As a result, an increasing number of people on 'reasonable' incomes cannot access the housing market due to limited mortgage products for first time buyers with most lenders requiring a 20% deposit. While it is difficult to get a mortgage due to stricter lending criteria and larger deposits, home ownership can still be more affordable than open market rent. There is consequently a need to carry out more research to assess the changes in aspirations and attitudes of Flintshire households to home ownership.
- 2.9 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 came into force on the 8th March 2012 and introduces significant reforms to the social security system. The act will change the way Flintshire and other local organisations provide services to low income and vulnerable people.
- 2.10 Flintshire is developing a comprehensive and long-term Welfare Reform Strategy which will link to the Housing Strategy in areas where the impact of the Act may lead to increases in: homelessness; demand for housing related support, welfare benefit and budgeting advice; evictions in both private and social sectors; demand for smaller accommodation; numbers of Houses in Multiple Occupation; and, pressure on the private rented sector as well as social rented housing.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

Flintshire's Strategy – A Quality Home for Everyone

Objective 1

Provide more housing, more choice

- 3.1 Flintshire's ambition is to increase the supply and variety of affordable homes by at least 740 new homes over the next five years. It will increase the number of affordable homes for purchase or rent and give more choice by broadening the range of homes and tenancy options to suit people at different stages of their lives, income levels and circumstances. This will also include increasing the supply of supported housing. Extra Care housing gives older people more choices, compliments existing sheltered housing and increases flexibility in approaches to supporting older people at home. Research shows that approximately 300 further units of Extra Care accommodation are currently needed and this is expected to increase by a further 10% by 2033. There are no extra care apartments in North West Flintshire and unmet need in North East and South Flintshire. Currently additional schemes are being considered.
- 3.2 Flintshire's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) requires 7400 new homes, 30% of which should be affordable. Flintshire's local planning guidance note LPGN9 further requires, the developer to consider affordable home types in the following preference order:-
- 1st Social Rented – through RSL
 - 2nd Shared Ownership – through an RSL or other bona fide management organisation
 - 3rd Subsidised Market Homes – provided as low cost discounted housing for sale
 - 4th Private Rented – provided as low cost rented accommodation.
- 3.3 Flintshire offers a range of affordable housing options with developers and other partners. These are Social and Affordable Rental, Rent to Save, Shared Equity, First Time Buyer Loans, Homebuy and homes built as gifted units or using commuted sums. These continue to be developed in partnership with developers and Registered Social Landlords.
- 3.4 Flintshire will continue to explore new approaches to provide more affordable homes, designed to overcome the current financial barriers to accessing the housing market. These will be linked to investment with partners in renewal and regeneration schemes such as Flint Town Centre, the Deeside Housing Renewal Area and the Deeside Growth Zone.
- 3.5 In line with the Housing White Paper we will investigate alternative affordable housing options for people to meet their needs. This will include community land trusts, cooperative housing tenure and self-build.
- 3.6 Flintshire's current Social Housing Grant (SHG) programme, 2011-2014, amounts to £5.142 million and will build 102 new social rented homes. Uncertainty remains on future SHG funding levels beyond 2014.

Objective 2

Improve homes and communities

- 3.7 Improving the quality of the housing stock in Flintshire is at the core of ensuring the suitability and sustainability of its communities. The investment required in order to achieve the WHQS in the council's housing stock is well documented and following the completion of a private sector house condition survey in 2010 the level of investment required in private property is much clearer.
- 3.8 It is Flintshire's ambition to invest at least £49m in its own properties on WHQS improvements over the five years from 2013 to 2018. This investment will be prioritised on:
- Renewing 4880 kitchens
 - Upgrading and renewing 3550 central heating systems
 - Renewing 1300 bathrooms
 - Up grading 4667 smoke detectors
 - Investing £1m per year on disabled adaptation

This investment will generate 100 jobs and 10 apprenticeships through the use of local contractors helping to ensure that as much as possible of the investment remains within the local economy.

- 3.9 A Wales Audit Office report in January 2012 highlighted that 51% of local authority homes will reach WQHS by 2017. A new target date of 2020 for all social housing to reach WHQS has been established by the Welsh Government. Flintshire will work with the Ministerial task force established to consider options to achieve the target. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) subsidy arrangements were brought to an end in England in April 2012 and English authorities are now all self-financing. Welsh Ministers have expressed their commitment to ending the HRA arrangements in Wales.
- 3.10 Flintshire's Housing Association partners are working towards delivering WHQS across all their homes. The three housing associations in Flintshire would achieve the standard for 100% of their properties as follows:
- Pennaf by 2014/2015
 - Tai Clwyd by 2014/2015
 - Wales & West 2012/2013
- 3.11 It is Flintshire's ambition to improve the quality and standard of all existing houses and rented accommodation, including their energy efficiency. Everyone has the right to live in a home, which is in good repair, has ready access to all necessary amenities, and is free from physical hazards.
- 3.12 The Flintshire Private Sector House Condition Survey carried out in

2010 found that 32% of private property failed the Decent Homes Standard and over 24% had at least one Category 1 hazard. The council does not have sufficient funding to tackle the backlog of repair and renovation so its Private Sector Renewal and Improvement Policy, adopted in 2012, has prioritised and targeted action to support the strategy in achieving its objectives by:

- targeting action to vulnerable households living in non-decent homes, in line with Private Sector Stock Condition Survey findings
- increasing the proportion of homes that meet the decent homes standard by working with all stakeholders and service providers
- providing equity and low cost loans to vulnerable and lower income homeowners to make their homes decent
- reducing the health effects of poor housing conditions through a combination of advice, financial assistance, and appropriate enforcement action, ensuring that residents live in safe, warm and comfortable homes
- promoting the take up of a range of energy saving measures provided by a range of agencies to improve home energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty
- promoting improvement and conversion of empty residential properties and obsolete commercial buildings to bring back in to use and increase the supply of affordable homes
- achieving a well maintained and managed private rented sector through the All Wales Landlord Accreditation Scheme by encouraging the professional development of landlords, through incentives, education, and advice

3.13 In the private sector Flintshire will offer a wide range of advice, loans and grants to owner occupiers and landlords to eliminate the most serious hazards, bring empty properties back into use and increase energy efficiency. The planned investment programme will be aligned with available funding from CESP, Arbed, Green Deal and other energy efficiency initiatives. Flintshire, with Denbighshire and Wrexham, is considering a fuel brokerage scheme to reduce the cost of heating oil to its tenants.

3.14 The Council will continue to regenerate Flintshire's existing homes through the Connah's Quay, Shotton and Queensferry Renewal Area and the Townscape Heritage Initiative.

3.15 Flintshire will review the capacity and location of the enforcement team within the organisation; raising the profile of landlord accreditation to professionalise the sector; review activity on illegal evictions; introduce additional licensing of HMOs; and, introduce fee earning services to support increased capacity within housing enforcement.

3.16 The Council will establish effective partnerships with landlords and corporate investors to increase provision of housing. The council will

protect the health, safety and welfare of private tenants through advice, negotiation, agreement and appropriate incentives. Enforcement action will be taken, if these methods have been exhausted, as a last resort.

Objective 3

Improve housing-related services and support

- 3.17 It is a national strategic priority to provide better services to make it easier for people to find suitable accommodation, particularly people from minority groups.
- 3.18 It is Flintshire's ambition to provide better services to improve people's lives through: collaboration and innovation to improve access to a suitable home; offer the best advice and support to sustain people in their home, whatever the tenure; and, promote independent living generally and specifically for an aging population by developing additional extra care schemes.
- 3.19 Good quality, local housing advice helps people make informed decisions on suitable housing provision. The establishment of a common access point for all North Wales aims to remove the barrier of multiple waiting lists and allocation policies. The Housing White Paper promotes further development of accessible housing registers. Flintshire is part of the North Wales Single Access Routes to Housing Project (SARTH). It is working with three other North Wales' councils and five housing associations to create a common access route to housing, bringing benefits to residents, local authorities and housing associations. The pilots for this project are expected to start in late 2013.
- 3.20 Flintshire will be examining options for the establishment of a social lettings agency as part of our strategy to increase the size of the private rental sector. A Lettings Agency involves letting property to a chosen tenant on behalf of the owner and dealing with all aspects of the let from then on, including the acceptance of any legal and financial liabilities. The difference between a Social Lettings Agency and a high street agency is that the target client base are people who are homeless, or may become homeless. Through this route Flintshire intends to help private landlords rent to target groups, such as young people, at affordable local housing allowance rates.
- 3.21 Flintshire is the most significant provider of Gypsy Traveller pitches in North Wales with 58% of authorised pitches. This is 15% of the total for Wales. The North Wales Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment found that demand for sites occurred along the main travelling routes through North Wales in Rhyl, Bangor, Colwyn Bay and Holyhead. No new locations were requested in Flintshire.

Flintshire will however continue to develop Gypsy Traveller services

by:

Managing Riverside Caravan Site

Managing unauthorised encampments

Coordinating support & welfare services to the community

Consider the expansion of the current site at Riverside, Queensferry to increase the number of residential pitches and provide short-stay transit pitches.

3.22 The Housing White Paper promotes effective regional collaboration on housing functions and services, including the Supporting People programme. From April 2012 Supporting People funding will be allocated regionally, with shared planning and commissioning of joint projects. The new North Wales regime will merge 2 funding streams, the Supporting People Grant and the Supporting People Programme Grant and be run by a new governance framework. As with other subsidies, Supporting People funding will reduce in the future.

3.23 In view of these changes, Flintshire aims to critically examine current Supporting People provision and articulate how local need will be met in the future. Over the next 12 months, Flintshire will:

- plan a number of short term pilot projects to make the best use of available funding and avoid decommissioning needed services. These will provide individual support and inform the strategic direction of its homeless prevention services
- collaborate with providers and stakeholders on a range of innovative support approaches and options to maximise much needed support from the available resources for as many vulnerable people as possible
- undertake a strategic review of accommodation based and floating support, including an assessment of need, supply and support pathways, to inform the future direction of housing support services

3.24 The overarching priorities for accommodation and services for vulnerable people are set out in the Flintshire County Council Supporting People Strategy 2010-2013. These are:

- To provide a range of support and accommodation models across all vulnerable groups and increase provision in rural areas;
- Ensure existing services are high quality and deliver positive outcomes;
- Link with the Social Housing Grant programme to facilitate new development;
- Improve access to services; and,
- Provide a mix of generic and more targeted services.

3.25

It is a national strategic priority to do as much as possible to prevent homelessness, but where it occurs Flintshire will provide efficient and effective services to help people find accommodation. The provision of

housing-related advice, guidance and support to help people stay in their homes and to help them make best use of their income is essential to achieving this.

- 3.26 The Housing White Paper contains a proposal aimed at placing a statutory duty on local authorities to prevent homelessness, ensure even better help is available for those who do become homeless and to end family homelessness by 2019.
- 3.27 Given the impact of the Welfare Reform Act and the proposals contained within the Housing White Paper it is an objective of the Flintshire Welfare Reform Strategy to review the Flintshire Homelessness Strategy to promote effective partnership working with internal and external providers, ensuring that the authority fulfils its statutory duties efficiently and cost effectively.
- 3.28 The Council will assist residents affected by the Act, to avoid it becoming a barrier to services and housing:
- It will work with other local authorities, using Welsh Government funding to proactively work with private landlords and their tenants who are at most risk of homelessness following reductions in their local housing allowance.
 - Flintshire's Income Maximisation (Welfare Rights) Service will offer specialist advice and representation to an increasing number of residents who are seeking assistance on appealing adverse decisions on their welfare benefit entitlement. Particularly, residents whose incapacity benefit claim has migrated over to employment and support allowance.
 - Flintshire's Housing Benefit Service is identifying tenants in the private rented sectors who will be affected by housing benefit reforms. Vulnerable households, for example where an adult receives a sickness benefit or children reside within the household, are offered advice and support ahead of their local housing allowance being reduced.
 - Plan to increase the number of units of temporary accommodation to house the anticipated increased homeless
 - Profiling of working age LA tenants who claim housing benefit is being carried out to assess those who would be affected by the 'bedroom tax'. Tenants will receive appropriate advice and support to overcome difficulties they may have in maintaining their contractual housing costs
 - Run awareness raising campaigns and provide training for tenants, landlords, members and officers on the Welfare Reform changes and the impact they may have upon residents, local communities and the local authority
- 3.29 The country is at a period where life expectancy is increasing. Consequently all strategies need to reflect locally the national priority of responding to the needs of an aging population. Flintshire has

already shown its commitment to helping vulnerable and older people to live independently and safely in their own homes through the Community Based Accommodation Support Service, which commenced in July 2012. Carrying out adaptations to people's homes to help people live independently will remain a priority, and the Disabled Facilities Grant programme will continue to be a key activity in the council's housing capital programme

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

Endorse the proposals contained within the Draft Local Housing Strategy

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implication other than those noted within the body of the report

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

The Strategy is designed to compliment the Council's current and emerging plans and strategies aimed at mitigating the effects of the Welfare Reform Act and current on-going anti-poverty activities.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

There are no direct environmental implications within the Strategy. The Strategy does however seek to compliment broader energy conservation initiatives and support sustainable housing development.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

The draft Strategy has been subject to the council's equalities impact assessment process

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct personnel implications from this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

Ongoing consultation will be undertaken as the strategy is implemented

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

Two major stakeholder consultation events were hosted jointly with Wrexham County Borough Council. The emerging strategy has been presented to the Health Social Care and Well-Being Partnership and the Children and Young Persons partnership. In addition several meetings with individual groups and representative bodies were held during 2012. Copies of the consultation draft have been circulated to many cross-sector organisations across Flintshire in addition to those operating across North Wales and North West England

12.00 APPENDICES

Flintshire Local Housing Strategy 2012-2017

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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Flintshire Local Housing Strategy 2012 – 2017

A Quality Home for Everyone

5 September 2012 Draft

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Introduction

Housing is central to people's lives. Quality housing contributes directly and positively to neighbourhood sustainability and to people's health and well-being. Flintshire County Council's strategic housing role, over the next five years, is to be the catalyst for sustainable communities that are:

- well designed and built
- not dominated by a single type of housing or tenure
- well connected
- environmentally sensitive
- well-run
- well served
- fair for everyone
- active, inclusive and safe
- thriving

The Flintshire Local Housing Strategy aims to be:

- a strategy for the whole community – public, private and voluntary stakeholders, community groups, tenants, residents, the vulnerable and the excluded.
- a strategy for the whole County – rural, urban, coastal, town and village;
- in support of sustainable development, social, economic and environmental
- in support of economic growth
- a strategy that innovates, for example links jobs and training with housing investment
- value for money, making effective use of public and private resources and set clear priorities for investment and action
- flexible, regularly reviewing progress and continually improving to meet future changes

The Strategy has 3 objectives, More Housing More Choice, Improving Homes and Communities and Better Services to Improve People's Lives.

Delivering the Strategy

The responsibility for housing and housing services falls on many organisations and individuals. Nationally, the UK and the Welsh Government lead, setting housing, planning and welfare policy, backed up by funding, subsidy and grants.

Locally, councils, housing associations, banks, building societies, voluntary sector organisations, charities, businesses and professionals all have an important part to play, to make housing and related services available and accessible.

Most housing is built by private developers, usually for sale, with no public funding involved. Their role is critical to the supply of quality new homes. They can contribute to housing challenges such as climate change and an ageing population, while creating jobs and supporting local businesses.

Individuals, whether they own their home, rent, or rent out a house, have a responsibility to keep the property in good repair. Flintshire's response to climate change relies heavily on individual owner occupiers or private landlords making their homes more energy and carbon efficient.

Delivery plans for the Strategy are lean, flexible and focus on those things that will make the most difference and summarised on page 27.

This Strategy was jointly written with neighbouring Wrexham, which has a similar housing profile and demographic trends to Flintshire. This partnership shared resources and highlights opportunities for joint working, in line with the Welsh Government's 'Making the Connections'¹ principles and Housing White Paper's² promotion of effective regional collaboration.

It is based on evidence from a number of sources including research commissioned by the Council such as the Flintshire's 2012 Housing Market Needs Update. This evidence is summarised in the Flintshire Facts and Figures section on page 23.

Delivering the strategy both responds to and compliments other local and national policies.

Local and National Policy

The **Flintshire Community Strategy 2009 - 2019** has developed a county vision of Flintshire as a place where there is:

- economic prosperity
- health improvement
- learning and skills for life
- living sustainably
- safe and supportive communities

It wants Flintshire to be "where people want to live, work and visit now and in the future."

The **Flintshire Regeneration Strategy 2009 – 2020's** mission is that Flintshire will have a "sustainable, world class, modern economy, based on business enterprise and a highly motivated, well-trained workforce, supported by cutting-edge technology which maximises the area's physical and human

¹ Making the Connections Action Plan, Cabinet Statement 14 June 2005 Sue Essex

² Housing White Paper, May 2012, Huw Lewis, Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage

assets." It sees housing playing a crucial role in delivering its objectives. It notes "an adequate supply of quality homes is essential to the economic success of Flintshire, whilst investing in new and upgraded housing is likely to remain a major contributor to improvement in the physical environment of Flintshire."

The **Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan 2012** outlines the Welsh Government strategic priorities and includes housing investment to generate jobs and growth. These are:

- increasing the supply of social housing and improving existing housing stock
- Arbed and Nest energy efficiency schemes.
- initiatives such as the proposed mortgage guarantee scheme
- the Housing Bond
- Enterprise Zones e.g. Deeside Growth Zone

The **Wales National Housing Strategy 2010 - Improving Lives and Communities - Homes in Wales (WNHS)** has three objectives and Flintshire's Strategy has adopted these as its own. They are:

- provide more housing, more choice
- improve homes and communities
- improve housing-related services and support

The **Welsh Government's Housing White Paper**³ reinforces the **WNHS** and outlines new legislation, for a Bill in autumn 2013. It says "we want to provide more affordable housing, better quality and improved services"

As the **WNHS** sets the housing framework for Flintshire's Local Housing Strategy, the **Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP)** frames the strategy with planning guidance. The UDP aims to "help shape Flintshire's future in a physical and environmental sense, as well as influencing it in economic and social terms", from 2000 to 2015. It was adopted in October 2011 and will specifically provide for the housing needs of the County, through Policy STR4, Housing:

- a) the provision of 7400 new dwellings over the Plan period 2000 to 2015
- b) distributing new housing across the County based on a settlement hierarchy comprising category A (urban centres), B (semi urban / main villages) and C (rural/small villages) and on the capacity of each settlement to accommodate further growth
- c) the provision of a range of type and size of housing sites including key sites at Flint, Mold, Buckley, Connah's Quay, Penyffordd, Broughton, Ewloe, Mancot

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

- d) the provision of a range of housing including affordable and special needs housing
- e) making the most efficient and effective use of housing sites and existing housing stock and facilitating, where appropriate, the residential conversion of existing buildings

It aims to promote new sustainable homes by at the same time:

- resisting unnecessary development along the open country on the A55
- using a sequential approach to identifying land, to prioritise derelict and redundant land and buildings
- using higher densities on land, on locations close to existing services and public transport
- conserving areas of outstanding beauty and biodiversity

Flintshire uses its **Local Planning Guidance Notes** and the **All Wales Residential Design Guide** to give guidance on design for new build. All new dwellings are required to meet code level 3 in the Welsh Government's **Code for Sustainable Homes**.

Flintshire is preparing its **Local Development Plan** to replace the **UDP**. This will be informed by the current **Housing Market Needs Update⁴** and a further full housing needs assessment in 2014.

Housing, the Economy and the Welfare Reform Act

The **2008 Credit Crunch**, subsequent global financial crisis and UK recessions have created an uncertain economic environment. The impact in Flintshire has been:

- A fall in private investment in housing
- A fall in private house building
- A fall in loans and an increase in deposits for house purchase
- A general reduction in public subsidy
- Falling public sector capital receipts with fewer asset sales

The impact of the **UK Government Comprehensive Spending Review 2010** means that year on year **Social Housing Grant** is set to decrease. Flintshire and Housing Associations will need to find innovative ways to fund and build new affordable homes.

Although house prices have fallen since 2007, buying a house for the average first time buyer is not more affordable. Local wages, particularly in the public sector, have seen small rises or have been frozen. Household incomes vary through the County:

⁴ See page 24 for detail

- lower household income bands are in and around the major settlements and along the northern edge of Deeside
- higher income bands are predominantly in the west of the County, along the Wrexham border, and in the settlements inland from the A55 corridor⁵

The 2011 **Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation** reflects this income distribution, with the most deprived areas in the East of the County, bordering the Dee⁶.

An increasing number of people on 'reasonable' incomes, cannot access the housing market due to:

- Limited mortgage products for first time buyers with most lenders requiring a 20% deposit on Loan to Value
- Shared Ownership products are limited and attract a high interest rate and can be unaffordable because people have to pay mortgage and rent

The average age of a first time buyer is now 37 years. This means the anticipated term of the mortgage may have to be shorter to pay it off before retirement, which means monthly repayments will be higher.

Expectations for the private rented sector should be realistic. While it is difficult to get a mortgage due to stricter lending criteria and larger deposits, for those who can, home ownership can still be a more affordable than open market rent. Generally, people in the UK aspire to own their home rather than rent. Since the economic downturn in 2008 and uncertainty in both the housing and jobs market, more people consider renting. The **Housing Market Needs Update**⁷ recommends more research to assess the change in aspirations and attitudes of County households to home ownership.

Research from uSwitch.com⁸ shows fuel poverty varies across the UK. Wales has the highest household percentage in fuel poverty with 32%, double the lowest, London. Wales also has some of the highest energy costs in the UK. In 2010, 15% of the homes and 8,200 households in Flintshire were shown by the Stock Condition Survey⁹ to be in fuel poverty.

⁵ Source Data Unit Wales & Glyndŵr University, Median Household Incomes 2010

⁶ Source Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2011

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

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

⁹ Private Sector House Condition Survey 2010 cpc May 2011

The **Welfare Reform Act 2012** came into force on the 8th March 2012 and introduces significant reforms to the social security system. The aim of the reforms is to make the benefits and tax credits systems fairer and simpler by:

- creating the right incentives to get more people into work by ensuring work always pays
- protecting the most vulnerable
- delivering fairness to those claiming benefit and to the taxpayer

The Act will change the way Flintshire and other local organisations provide services to low income and vulnerable people. Housing providers may need to adjust their allocation policies to change occupancy rates and consider whether to build smaller or shared accommodation for social rent.

Flintshire is developing a comprehensive and long-term **Welfare Reform Strategy**, comprising of four multifaceted projects that collectively aim to mitigate the full negative impacts and enhance the positives of the welfare reforms upon residents, local communities, local authority, partner organisations, etc.

It has carried out its own corporate work on the Act's impact and has identified that the following might increase:

- homelessness
- demand for housing related support, welfare benefit and budgeting advice
- evictions in both private and social sector
- demand for smaller accommodation
- the number of Houses in Multiple Occupation
- pressure on the Private Rented Sector as well as Social Rented Housing

Objective 1 - More Housing More Choice

Flintshire's ambition is to increase the supply and variety of affordable homes, by at least 740 new properties, over the next 5 years. It will:

- offer innovative affordable options designed to overcome the current financial barriers to accessing the housing market
- invest with partners in regeneration schemes such as the **Flint Town Centre Regeneration Project** and the **Deeside Growth Zone**

It is a **WNHS** priority to:

- Increase the number of affordable homes for purchase or rent, in the right location and specifically in rural areas.
- Give more choice by broadening the range of homes and tenancy arrangements to suit people at different stages of their lives, different income levels and circumstances
- Improve the standard of new homes to make them more energy efficient and sustainable.

Flintshire's **UDP** requires 7400 new homes, 30% of which should be affordable. Flintshire's local planning guidance note LPGN9 further requires, the developer to consider affordable home types in the following preference order:-

- 1st. Social Rented - through an RSL.
- 2nd. Shared Ownership - through an RSL or other bona fide management organisation.
- 3rd. Subsidised Market Homes - provided as low cost discounted housing for sale.
- 4th. Private Rented - provided as low cost rented accommodation.

Flintshire's **Rural Housing Enabler** produces local profiles to inform these planning decisions.

The **Housing White Paper** proposes more action to increase the supply of new homes, including the use of a range of innovative funding mechanisms. Flintshire's **Housing Market Assessment Update**¹⁰ recommends a 37% starting point when negotiating affordable homes on any new development.

Flintshire offers a range of **affordable housing options** with developers and other partners. These are **Social** and **Affordable Rental, Rent to Save, Shared Equity, First Time Buyer Loans, Homebuy** and homes built as **Gifted Units** or using **Commuted Sums**.

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

Flintshire's current **Social Housing Grant Programme**, 2011 to 2014, is £5.142 million and will build 102 new social rented homes.

Homes bought under the **Right-to-Buy** scheme in rural areas will only be resold to local families. A new legal agreement is in place when council tenants in rural areas buy their homes. So when home are sold, it must be to another local family. Housing associations can refuse the **Right to Acquire** for their homes in rural areas.

All applicants for the following affordable schemes must register on the **Affordable Housing Register** managed by Cymdeithas Tai Clywd. They conduct a financial assessment on each application.

Affordable Rental properties are available to employed applicants, on a relatively good annual income, who either cannot afford or do not wish to consider home ownership. The rent is higher than social rented properties from the local authority or housing association, where applicants are normally assessed on 'need' basis. It is usually about 80% of a local market rent. In some instances a tenant may rent the property initially, and at a later date purchase the property. 7 Affordable Rental Properties have been provided by the Welsh Housing Partnership during 2011/2012 which is administered by Cymdeithas Tai Clywd.

Flintshire's **Rent to Save Scheme** is a version of **Rent First**¹¹. It is being developed for people who do not have a deposit, by giving them an opportunity to rent a new home and save for a deposit. The rent will be subject to an annual review to keep it inline with market values. 30% of the rent will be retained as savings towards a deposit. The deposit saved over the five year term will then assist them to purchase a shared equity home or a home on the open market. Priority will be given to those who have a local connection. It is proposed to use homes built as Gifted Units, described later in this section on page 10, for this scheme.

The **Shared Ownership/Shared Equity** option is usually offered by a housing association that will hold part of the equity in the property. Lenders usually accept a 5% deposit. Research¹² estimates 80 % of households in the County have an average household income above the threshold needed to afford a 50% Shared Ownership option. So this option will attract households where at least one partner is working.

Flintshire offers its Shared Equity option, with 70% of the property market price mortgaged and rent payable on the remaining share. When the property is sold the council receive their 30% share back. Occupiers can buy the council's share if they wish, so the buyer can 'staircase up' to owning all of

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

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

the property as their income grows. Currently 40 homes have been built for the Shared Equity Scheme in 2012/13 and 100 more are planned for 2013/14. Flintshire's share of the equity will represent an asset of around £5.4 million.

Discounted for Sale/Low Cost Homeownership homes are sold by developers at less than the open market value, generally between 50% and 80% of the open market value. Currently, lenders are asking for a 20% deposit on this type of housing. So in practice, very few households can purchase a home this way. As a result, Flintshire offers shared equity rather than discounted sale.

For a **First Time Buyers Loan** applicants need a minimum annual household income of £26,000. The loan is only for existing homes within Flintshire and does not apply to new build properties. Flintshire's model for its First Time Buyer loan is:

- 1st. An approved applicant obtains a mortgage for the maximum of 80% of the purchase price
- 2nd. Flintshire assists with an equity loan of up to a 20% of the purchase price

The loan can be paid back at any time and has to be repaid in full at the end of 25 years. The loan repayment will reflect the current market value of the property. Flintshire has set aside £100,000 for this scheme in 2012/13.

Flintshire promotes the Welsh Government **Homebuy** scheme to give a loan of 30-50% of the market value of the property depending on location. The full 50% is only available in designated rural areas. The buyer will have to finance the remaining percentage. The loan amount can vary depending on the buyer's financial circumstances and the property's purchase price. There are no repayments or interest on the loan. When the property is sold, the owner then re-pays the same percentage of the property's new market value. Applicants must satisfy Welsh Government eligibility requirements and is subject to available funding.

In line with the Housing White Paper, Flintshire will investigate alternative affordable housing options for people to meet their needs through **Community Land Trusts, Co-operative Housing Tenure** and **Self Build**. This may be an appropriate approach for small village sites identified by the **Rural Housing Enabler**.

The **Gifted Unit** option means a developer builds property for Flintshire CC, to the value of the affordable contribution. The advantages are:

- The homes remain wholly in the ownership of the Council as an asset and an income stream
- The risk of units being sold for full price on the open market if they cannot be sold under affordable schemes is avoided
- Local people can be housed in spite of limited financial circumstances

This option was runner up for a **CIH Cymru Good Practice Award** in 2011. It is expected to provide 26 new homes to the council with an estimated value of £4 million between 2011 and 2013.

If a site is not viable for affordable housing, Flintshire has and will continue to negotiate **Commuted Sums** in lieu of affordable properties. Commuted Sums are expected to raise £0.6 million from 2011 to 2013.

The Commuted Sums will then be used to deliver affordable homes by:

- Funding First Time Buyer Deposits to assist the purchase of existing homes
- Purchasing existing property for applicants on the Affordable Housing Register
- Match funding Social Housing Grant
- Acquiring and refurbishing empty homes
- Funding local mortgage rescue

It is a **WNHS** priority to make "the best use of investment in housing and other regeneration activity to create more jobs and training opportunities, and to improve the look and feel of communities, and the services and facilities available to local people" and to increase the level of private sector investment in housing.

The **Flint Town Centre Regeneration Project** will be funded and delivered by a partnership of private developers, RSLs and the Council over 5 years. After comprehensive consultation and supported by a tenant majority, the Council decided to demolish 214 maisonettes in the Flint Town Centre. They will make way for a mixed development of 170 new homes for sale or rent, enhanced public services and additional retail units. The Council will have nomination rights for any new homes, to ensure that local housing need is met. Any tenants displaced during the regeneration will be offered alternative housing from Flintshire's own stock. Detailed work is currently being undertaken to identify innovative funding streams for the capital investment required as sources such as Social Housing Grant are limited.

The **Deeside Growth Zone** was announced in 2012 as part of the **Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan 2012**. It is proposed to build up to 1,000 new homes designed to attract business and personnel to the Zone. This development will be designed to compliment the regeneration in **Connah's Quay, Shotton and Queensferry Renewal Area**.

Objective 2 - Improving homes and communities

An independent survey¹³ for the **Housing Asset Management Strategy 2012 – 2018** estimated that £166 million was needed to bring all of the council homes up to WHQS by March 2018. The **Private Sector House Condition Survey 2010**¹⁴ found that 32% of private property failed the Decent Homes Standard and over 24% had at least one Category 1 Hazard costing an estimated £120 million and £67million respectively to repair.

Flintshire's ambition is to:

- invest £49 million in its own properties on WHQS improvements
- offer the widest range of advice, loans and grants to owner occupiers and landlords to eliminate Category 1 Hazards, bring empty properties back into use and increase energy efficiency
- regenerate Flintshire's existing homes through the **Connah's Quay, Shotton and Queensferry Renewal Area** and the **Townscape Heritage Initiative**

The **Housing White Paper** encourages more action to achieve the **Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)**. The **Council** does not have the £166 million to do all the work required by the WHQS, so it will spend its **capital programme** of £49 million on the following priority improvements over the 5 years from 2013 to 2018:-

- Renewing 4880 kitchens where required
- Upgrading and renewing 3550 central heating systems where required
- Renewing 1300 bathrooms where required
- Upgrading 4667 smoke detectors where required
- £1 million per year on disabled adaptations

It has budgeted £2.5 million over the 5 years for urgent replacements and health and safety works.

Flintshire aims to use this investment to generate 100 **jobs** and 10 **apprenticeships**, through the use of local contractors.

The planned investment programme will be aligned with available funding from **CESP, Arbed** and other **energy efficiency initiatives**. Flintshire, with Denbighshire and Wrexham, is considering a group **Fuel Brokerage Scheme** to reduce the cost of heating oil to its tenants.

The council has 591 non-traditional homes, mainly Airey, Easiform and Timber Frame homes, high-rise flats and maisonettes. Flint's 3 high-rise blocks

¹³ Comprehensive stock condition survey completed in 2007 and updated in 2011 by Savills UK.

¹⁴ See page 26 for detail

require external as well as internal repairs to bring all the flats to WHQS. External repairs estimated to cost £4 million include:

- Comprehensive concrete repair programme
- Renewal of the mastic in the panel joints and roof finishes
- New insulated roof system
- Application of an over-cladding system to improve thermal performance and provide weather proofing

A further £7 million is required to complete WHQS work on the high rise flats. The 113 Airey, Easiform and Timber Frame homes need funding of £2.8 to bring them up to the WHQS. The Council will pursue options to secure additional funding from Welsh Government, Prudential borrowing and investigate collaborative procurement options with neighbouring councils to achieve WHQS on these and all its other properties.

Flintshire's **Housing Association partners** are working towards delivering WHQS across all their homes. The 3 Housing Associations in Flintshire would achieve the standard for 100% of their properties as follows:

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

It is a **WNHS** priority is to improve the quality and standard of all existing houses and rented accommodation, including their energy efficiency.

Flintshire County Council believes everyone has the right to live in a home, which is in good repair, has ready access to all necessary amenities, and is free from physical hazards. The Council has not sufficient funding to tackle the backlog of repair and renovation. So its **Private Sector Renewal & Improvement Policy 2012 -2015's** priorities are to:

- target action to **vulnerable households** living in non-decent homes, in line with Private Sector Stock Condition Survey findings
- increase the proportion of homes that meet the **decent homes standard** by working with all stakeholders and service providers
- provide **equity and low cost loans** to vulnerable and lower income homeowners to make their homes decent
- reduce the **health effects** of poor housing conditions through a combination of advice, financial assistance, and appropriate enforcement action, ensuring that residents live in safe, warm and comfortable homes
- promote the take up of a range of **energy saving measures** provided by a range of agencies to improve home energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty
- promote improvement and conversion of **empty residential properties** and obsolete commercial buildings to bring back in to use and increase the supply of affordable homes
- achieve a well maintained and managed private rented sector through the **All Wales Landlord Accreditation Scheme** by encouraging the

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

The Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal Team, has three approaches to these priorities:

- advice and advocacy
- provision of financial assistance
- enforcement of housing standards

Advice and advocacy is also given by **Flintshire Care & Repair**, the local Home Improvement Agency and supported with:

- information on Flintshire's website
- leaflets and promotional events in areas, which fall within the 20% of the Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD)
- regular Landlord Forums for private landlords
- landlord training events
- membership of the All Wales Landlord Accreditation Scheme

Financial Assistance is given, where appropriate, to those who are unable to pay for their own improvements. Flintshire supports **the Housing White Paper's ambition to create a nationally branded, locally delivered, Property Improvement Loans scheme**. Home owners will be helped, to release equity available in their homes on an 'equity share' basis. The owner and the Council will share the benefit from any increase in property value. Since the Council is not primarily a lending institution, it does not impose loan terms which would 'guarantee' its profit or investment and therefore potentially discourage applicants.

An eligible applicant, to the Council, will be considered for the following hierarchy of loan types:

- 1st. a **Repayment Loan**
- 2nd. a **Property Appreciation Loan**
- 3rd. a **Flintshire Interest Free Loan**

The first loan to meet the applicant's need, in the above hierarchy, will be offered. Funding is made available to support **vulnerable householders** across the County to tackle **category 1 hazards**. To ensure the future sustainability and maximise this fund, the Council has a range of loans schemes and is phasing out grants. There will be an expansion of this approach over the next few years.

Flintshire will prepare for increased numbers of private rented sector properties and **the Housing White Paper's proposal to introduce a mandatory registration and accreditation scheme for private sector landlords**

to regulate the practices of landlords, lettings agents and managing agents, by:

- reviewing the capacity and location of the enforcement team within the organisation
- raising profile and membership of Landlord Accreditation to professionalise the sector
- reviewing activity on illegal evictions
- additional licensing of HMOs
- introducing fee earning services to support increased capacity within housing enforcement

Partnerships will be made with landlords and corporate investors to improve provision. The Council will protect the health, safety and welfare of private tenants through advice, negotiation, agreement and appropriate incentives. Enforcement action will be taken if these methods have been exhausted, as a last resort.

It is a **WNHS** priority to make the best use of homes that are unoccupied. The **Housing White Paper** proposes legislation to tackle the waste and blight of **empty properties** by giving local authorities discretionary power to increase council tax on properties empty for longer than one year. It also promotes an increased focus on tackling empty homes through the national "**Houses into Homes**" programme and other programmes.

In April 2012, the Welsh Government announced £10 million for the '**House to Homes**' loan fund. Flintshire will be using this fund in conjunction with its own **Empty Homes Scheme** and other initiatives such as the **Flint Townscape Heritage Initiative** to offer the best incentive to empty property owners. Flintshire's 2012 Private Sector Renewal & Improvement Policy targets empty properties with a range of measures:

- an **Empty Property Grant**, up to a maximum of 20K in the Renewal Area. The owner gives the council nomination rights for 5 years
- an **Empty Property Interest Free Loan**, up to a maximum of £10K, which was available countywide. The owner gives the council nomination rights until the loan is repaid. This is repayable on sale or transfer or sooner at the discretion of the property owner
- a Flintshire **Empty Property Repayment Loan** is up to a maximum of £15K, payable monthly at 4% interest over an agreed period between 1 and 7 years. This is a top up loan for in cases where the £10K interest free loan is insufficient to carry out the required works
- The **Welsh Government Houses to Homes Initiative, Interest Free Loan**, can be up to a maximum of £150K per applicant and must be repaid within 3 years. £25K is the maximum cost of repair work per home. Flintshire has been allocated £482K to manage this scheme in 2012/15 which will bring 20 properties back into use

- A loan from housing association partner, **OFFA Ltd** up to a maximum of £5K, available countywide. In return the property must be managed by OFFA and repayment of the interest free loan is through the rent.
- consider the discretionary power proposed in the **Housing White Paper** to increase council tax on properties empty for longer than one year, if this becomes law

It is expected that at least 40 properties will be brought back into use in 2012/13.

Town centres face a challenging future and need to adapt to changing consumer patterns. Flintshire County Council has successfully obtained nearly £1.6 million of public assistance for a **Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)** in Flint town centre. The aim is to revitalise Flint as a place to live, shop, visit and do business whilst preserving and enhancing the town's unique historic and architectural heritage. The Flint THI will offer grant assistance to owners or leaseholders of selected buildings in Flint. It is intended where possible to link this funding to Flintshire's work to reduce empty properties.

In February 2010 Flintshire County Council approved the declaration of the **Connah's Quay, Shotton and Queensferry Renewal Area**. It covers approximately 5,790 properties and has concentrations of households which are some of the most deprived in Wales. A priority is to make best use of potential sites for high quality housing development and remove vacant or poor quality properties.

The **Renewal Area** has 3 main programmes

- **Group Repair** for up to 900 homes
- **Environmental Improvements**
- **Energy Efficiency** measures for up to 500 homes

Running alongside these three themes, Flintshire is using the Renewal Area status and funding to bring the benefits of local jobs and training to this deprived area. Along with other capital public funds, Renewal Area funding is being reduced year on year, and so some of the initial Renewal Area plans will need to be re-evaluated.

It is a **WNHS** priority to improve the energy efficiency of all existing property. The Welsh Government's energy performance programme **Arbed**, has seen £66 million being invested to boost the green economy and improve the energy efficiency of 7500 homes. The recently launched second phase of Arbed will see the Welsh Government investing £45m to reduce fuel bills for 4800 homes in deprived areas of Wales. Flintshire will be continuing its work to insulate as many properties as possible, using a number of different funding streams, **CESP, Arbed, Green Deal** and **interest free loans**. Flintshire has bid through its RSL partners to upgrade 600 homes in Mostyn and Holywell.

Objective 3 - Better Services to Improve People's Lives

Flintshire's ambition is to collaborate and innovate to:

- improve access to a suitable home
- offer the best advice and support to sustain people in their home, whatever their tenure
- promote independent living generally and specifically for its aging population by investing in 4 new **Extra Care Schemes**

It is a **WNHS** priority to make it easier for people to find suitable accommodation, particularly people from minority groups. Social housing is a scarce resource and is allocated mainly to people in housing need.

The **Housing White Paper** promotes further development of accessible housing registers. Flintshire is part of **North Wales Single Access Routes to Housing Project (SARTH)**. It is working with three other North Wales' councils and five housing associations to create a common access route to housing, bringing benefits to residents, local authorities and housing associations.

Good quality, local housing advice helps people make informed decisions on suitable housing provision. This common access point for all North Wales aims to remove the barrier of multiple waiting lists and allocation policies, to streamline an applicant's path to the best housing solution for them. It will make best use of stock in terms of size and type by improving the match with applicants. The pilots for this project are expected to start in late 2013.

Flintshire is reviewing its **Incentive Scheme** to see if changes can be made to reduce over or under occupancy especially bearing in mind the impact of the Welfare Reform Act.

Flintshire is examining options for a **Social Lettings Agency** to increase the number of privately owned properties available. It is intended to help private landlords rent to target groups such as the young at LHA rates.

The **Housing White Paper** proposes ensuring that **Gypsy and Traveller Communities** are provided with new pitches by local authorities where there is clear evidence of need. North Wales is on a popular principle travelling route for them.

The **January 2012 Caravan Count** showed that Flintshire is the most significant provider in North Wales with 58% of authorised pitches. This is 15% of the total for Wales. The **North West Wales Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment**¹⁵ asked where new pitches should be

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

located. It found a demand for sites along the main travelling route through North Wales, in Rhyl, Bangor, Colwyn Bay and Holyhead. No new locations were requested in Flintshire. Flintshire will continue to develop Gypsy and Traveller services:

- Managing Riverside Caravan Site
- Managing Unauthorised Encampments
- Coordinating Support & Welfare Services to Gypsy and Traveller community
- Consider the expansion of the current site at Riverside, Queensferry to increase the number of residential pitches and provide short-stay transit pitches

The **Housing White Paper** promotes effective regional collaboration on housing functions and services, including the **Supporting People programme**. From April 2012 Supporting People funding will be allocated regionally, with shared planning and commissioning of joint projects. The new North Wales regime will merge 2 funding streams, the **Supporting People Grant** and the **Supporting People Programme Grant** and be run by a new governance framework. As with other subsidies, Supporting People funding will reduce in the future.

In view of these changes, Flintshire aims to critically examine current Supporting People provision and articulate how local need will be met in the future. Over the next 12 months, Flintshire will:

- plan a number of short term pilot projects to make the best use of available funding and avoid decommissioning needed services. These will provide individual support and inform the strategic direction of its homeless prevention services
- collaborate with providers and stakeholders on a range of innovative support approaches and options to maximise much needed support from the available resources for as many vulnerable people as possible
- undertake a strategic review of accommodation based and floating support, including an assessment of need, supply and support pathways, to inform the future direction of housing support services

The current **Flintshire County Council Supporting People Strategy 2010 – 2013** sets out overarching priorities for accommodation and services for vulnerable people:

- To provide a range of support and accommodation models across all vulnerable groups, and increase provision in rural areas
- Ensure existing services are high quality and delivering positive outcomes
- Link with the Social Housing Grant (SHG) programme to facilitate new development

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

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

It is a **WNHS** priority to:

- do as much as possible to prevent homelessness but where it occurs provide efficient services to help people to find accommodation
- provide housing-related advice, guidance and support, including financial and debt management advice, to help people to stay in their homes and to help them to make best use of their income

The **Housing White Paper** proposes:

- a statutory duty on local authorities to prevent homelessness, and ensure even better help available for those who do become homeless
- ending family homelessness in Wales by 2019

The **Flintshire Homelessness Strategy, 2009 to 2015**, currently involves a wide range of partner organisations and has four key strategic aims, to:

- focus upon a corporate approach to homelessness prevention through improved strategic and operational working arrangements within the Council and partner organisations in the planning and delivery of social welfare advice and support services
- provide integrated housing support services for vulnerable groups that prevent homelessness and promote the health and well-being of vulnerable adults and families
- improve access to temporary and settled accommodation
- improve performance management arrangements for all aspects of the homelessness service provided by the Council

Given the impact of the **Welfare Reform Act** and the **Housing White Paper's** proposal to give councils a statutory duty to prevent homelessness, ensure even better help is available for those who do become homeless and to end family homelessness in Wales by 2019, it is an objective of **Flintshire's Welfare Reform Strategy** is to review Flintshire's Homelessness Strategy. It will then implement a corporate Homeless Prevention Strategy that promotes effective partnership working with internal

and external providers, ensuring the authority fulfills its statutory duties efficiently and cost effectively.

The Council will assist residents affected by the Act, to avoid it becoming a barrier to services and housing:

- It will work with other local authorities, using Welsh Government funding to proactively work with private landlords and their tenants who are at most risk of homelessness following reductions in their **local housing allowance**.
- Flintshire's **Income Maximisation (Welfare Rights) Service** will offer specialist advice and representation to an increasing number of residents who are seeking assistance on appealing adverse decisions on their welfare benefit entitlement. Particularly, residents whose incapacity benefit claim has migrated over to employment and support allowance.
- Flintshire's **Housing Benefit Service** is identifying tenants in the private rented sectors who will be affected by housing benefit reforms. Vulnerable households, for example, where an adult receives a sickness benefit or children reside within the household, are offered advice and support ahead of their local housing allowance being reduced.
- plan to increase the number of units of temporary accommodation to house the anticipated increased homeless
- **Profiling of working age LA tenants** who claim housing benefit is being carried out to assess those who would be affected by the 'bedroom tax'. Tenants will receive appropriate advice and support to overcome difficulties they may have in maintaining their contractual housing costs
- Run **awareness raising campaigns** and provide training for tenants, landlords, members and officers on the Welfare Reform changes and the impact they may have upon residents, local communities and the local authority

It is a **WNHS** priority to respond to the needs of an **ageing population**.

Flintshire's **Community Based Accommodation Support Service** will help vulnerable and older people to live independently and safely in their own homes. Following extensive consultation FCC's sheltered housing warden service has changed into a community based accommodation support service.

The service individuals receive from the Accommodation Support Officer is based on an assessment of their support needs and is designed to be flexible and responsive, changing as needs change. Two pilots were successfully run in Shotton and Ewloe. A phased roll-out of the new service across the County began in July 2012.

The **Housing White Paper** promotes continued investment in housing adaptations to help people live independently in their own homes. The **Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's)** programme is a key activity in the Flintshire Housing Capital Programme promoting independent living. In 2011, 429 referrals for DFGs were received. 307 jobs were completed at a cost of £2,290,000. This work included 184 wet rooms/showers, 46 stair lifts, 46 ramp/hard standings and 10 extensions. Flintshire will spend in 2012/3 £2.3 million on aids and adaptations for both council tenants and owner occupiers.

Extra Care housing gives older people more choices, complements existing sheltered housing and increasing the flexible approach to supporting older people at home. North East Flintshire is already served by Llys Eleanor Extra Care scheme in Shotton, run by Clywd Alyn with 50 apartments. In partnership with Wales and West, £9.3 million is being invested in Flintshire's second purpose built scheme, Llys Jasmine in Mold, with 61 apartments and 2 bungalows. 15 of these are specifically designed for people living with dementia.

Research¹⁶ shows that approximately 300 further units are needed and this is expected to increase by 10% by 2033. There are no extra care apartments in North West Flintshire and unmet need in North East Flintshire and Flintshire South. Currently, three additional schemes are being considered, one each in Flint, Buckley and Holywell.

¹⁶ Extra Care Housing Strategy Briefing Note July 2012

Monitoring and Evaluation to reflect the Needs of the Users

It is a **WNHS** priority to:

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

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

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

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

Flintshire Facts and Figures

Flintshire the Place

Flintshire, in North-East Wales, borders Denbighshire, Wrexham, the English counties of Merseyside, across the River Dee and Cheshire. It includes urban, rural and coastal landscapes.

The county has exceptional natural assets on its borders. The Clwydian Range is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Dee Estuary is one of the most important wildlife sites in Europe, a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a designated Ramsar Convention wetland of international importance.

Its location is strategic, offering the main thoroughfare between North Wales, the motorway network of North West England and beyond. It is close to Liverpool and Manchester airports and has direct rail connections to Cardiff and London.

Flintshire has emerged as one of Wales's, most important business and manufacturing locations, built on its strengths in industrial processes, advanced manufacturing, aerospace, food and environmental technologies.

Flintshire's People

Flintshire's population is projected to grow, from a current population of 150,637, to 153,210 by 2026¹⁷. The figures include net migration. Flintshire has a history of in-migration due to its border location, relative economic prosperity and attractive environment.

The number of projected households will grow by 4.4%, from 65,880 in 2011, to 68,807 households by 2016¹⁸. In detail projections are:

- single person households will grow the most and are set to increase by 34.4% or 6,986 households
- 1 adult and 1 child, and 1 adult and 2 child households see the next highest rise at 29% or by 631 and 474 households respectively

Flintshire's population is ageing:

- almost half the residents of Flintshire are now over the age of 45
- by 2026, the number of people aged 65 and over is expected to rise 40% by 10,635, and make up about 25% of the population¹⁹
- in the next 10 years, the number of people aged over 85 is set to increase by 110%

¹⁷ Source StatsWales 2008-based Population Projections.

¹⁸ Source StatsWales 2008-based Population Projections.

¹⁹ Source 2008-based Population Projections for Flintshire © Statistical Directorate, WAG.

Within ten years it is estimated that over 80% of people, aged over 60, will be homeowners. Many will be asset rich and cash poor, unable to repair and heat their homes.

Flintshire has the smallest BME community in Wales at 1.9%²⁰

The January 2012 Gypsy Traveller Caravan count showed Flintshire has 58% of authorised pitches in North Wales. 15% of the total in Wales

The Flintshire's 2012 Housing Market Needs Update

The Update²¹ examined estimates and projections of housing need, demand and affordability for the County. The Update proposes its recommendations are a starting point, in line with Planning Policy Wales 2011, for decisions to be negotiated on a site by site basis and local staff knowledge should be valued over the reports statistical analysis. It makes recommendations for new build homes as follows:

- a target of 37% should be affordable
- 19 – 27% should be designed to meet older or disabled residents needs
- they should be detached or semi detached
- they should be 2 bed to meet demographic trends & shortages of this property size
- consider the effect of welfare reform in relation the supply of appropriately bedroomed property

The Update will be used to inform the development of Flintshire's Local Development Plan.

Flintshire Rural Housing Enabler

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

Flintshire's Waiting Lists

Flintshire's waiting lists reflect demand housing and services.

- There are 173 applicants on the Affordable Housing Register

²⁰ Populations Estimates by Ethnic Group 2001 – 2009, WG 2011

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

- Flintshire has a waiting list for its rented homes of 3985. This includes 597 applicants existing tenants who want to transfer to another Flintshire home
- Flintshire's Housing Options Team assisted 966 households with housing related issues in the financial year 2010/11, and 1153 households in 2011/12 a 19% increase. The number of homeless applications during the same period rose by 51% from 105 to 159, due to the impact of the recession and Welfare Reform Act.
- Aids and adaptations allow people to stay in their own home, promote independent living and increase quality of life. In 2011, 429 referrals for Disabled Facilities Grants were received. 307 jobs were completed at a cost of £2,290,000. This work included 184 wet rooms/showers, 46 stair lifts, 46 ramp/hard standings and 10 extensions.

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

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

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

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

Private Tenure and the Private Sector House Condition Survey 2010

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

Other key findings were:

- 76% of homes are in owner occupation
- 9% of homes are privately rented
- the estimated number of Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) is 310 or 0.6% of the stock
- there are 8 known mandatory licensable HMOs

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

- 31% of households are headed by a person over the age of 65
- 31% of households are in receipt of a means tested benefit and are economically vulnerable

The Flintshire Private Sector House Condition Survey 2010²³ found that:

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

The Survey also found there were approximately 1,350 vacant dwellings representing 2.5% of the private housing stock. A data review in 2012 found Flintshire had 531 properties that had been vacant six months or longer.

Gypsy and Traveller Community

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

²³ Private Sector House Condition Survey 2010 cpc May 2011

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

Objective 1: More Housing, More Choice, Projects and Programmes

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

Objective 2 - Improving homes and communities projects and programmes

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

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

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

Objective 3 - Better Services to Improve People's Lives

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

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

Independent Living and Housing for Older People				
Flintshire's Priority Projects/Programmes	Service Area, Partners	Timescale	Outcome	Resources, Funds £000s/yr
Community Based Accommodation Support Service (Warden) service users have a comprehensive support plan to tailor appropriate level of support to their needs & promote and sustain their independent living.	Community Support Services	2012/13	Two pilots in Shotton and Ewloe - outcomes evaluated July 2012. Phased roll-out of the revised service across County.	Accommodation Support Officers
DFG programme	FCC, Housing Renewal	2011/2012	178 owner occupiers	1500
		2012/2013		1500
		2011/2012	188 council tenants	1000
		2012/2013		800
Complete development of Mold Extra Care Scheme	Housing Strategy Adult Care Service, Wales & West	2013	61 Flats and 2 Bungalows. 15 designed for people living with dementia	9300
Develop additional Extra Care Schemes	Adult Care Service	2017/2020	3 schemes	To be agreed

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

DATE: **26 SEPTEMBER 2012**

REPORT BY: **HEAD OF HOUSING**

SUBJECT: **SECURE/INTRODUCTORY TENANCY AGREEMENT**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.01 To provide Members with an updated version of the Secure/Introductory Tenancy Agreement for consideration following earlier proposals in April 2011.

2.00 BACKGROUND

- 2.01 Members will be aware that the initial report last April, documented significant amendments to the Council's Tenancy Agreement. These amendments were later agreed by Executive on the 19 July 2011. It was agreed that the new agreement would not be implemented until after the housing ballot and that the document should be professionally designed.

As twelve months has elapsed since the original approval the agreement has been amended slightly to take into account the latest legal advice. In addition, a Tenant Handbook has been produced to accompany the agreement; this explains all the policies and processes applicable to Council Tenants. The two documents need to be considered together by Members as one compliments the other.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 The revised agreement is attached as Appendix 1. Members will recognise the professional layout and use of colour in the new agreement as it is a considerable improvement upon the current agreement.
- 3.02 Some of the changes to the document are as follows. The list is not exhaustive.
- 3.03 The sequence of the document has been changed to make it flow better and to make it easier for Tenants to refer to.

Plain English has been used throughout and definitions have been included in the margins of the document rather than in a separate list.

- 3.04 The cover emphasises that the Tenancy Agreement is a legal document and the importance of keeping it safe. The second page states that the Agreement is a legally binding contract between Landlord and Tenant; it also includes mention of the Council's legal obligation to provide the document in other forms and languages. This was previously missing from the original draft a copy of which is available in the Members Room.
- 3.05 The final Agreement will be produced in a booklet form with tear out sheets for the "tenancy details" referred to on the contents page of the new document. These details will be signed by both the Neighbourhood Housing Officer and the Tenant with a copy being available for both parties.
- 3.06 More robust measures have been included around allowing not only the Council access to carry out emergency work but also any "agent, representative or contractor". See page 17 of the new document.
- 3.07 The section on "Your Rights" has been expanded to give tenants more information on each Right rather than just a list. (See page 8 to 13 of the new agreement)
- 3.08 Condition 13 of the current agreement does not specify that the Landlord must provide 24 hours written notice to the Tenant of their intention to access the dwelling. This has now been included in the revised agreement (page 17).
- 3.09 Condition 25 of the current agreement fails to give responsibility to persons living or visiting the Tenant not to interfere with fire detecting equipment in communal areas and for ensuring that security and fire doors are kept closed. This has now been included in the revised agreement (page 21).
- 3.10 Following the recent improvements to the agreement Lawyers are giving the document its final health check to ensure it is fully compliant with the law and it is as robust in all areas.
- 3.11 Both the work on the Tenancy Agreement and the Handbook has been undertaken in consultation with the Tenant's Federation. Formal consultation with all tenants will follow and a suggested timetable is shown below.

Implementation process for the new agreement

Preliminary Notice of Variation (PNV) issued to Tenants	Week Com 29 th October 2012
Consultation at Tenants Conference	31 st October 2012
PNV Consultation starts	5 th November 2012
PNV Consultation ends	7 th December 2012
Tenants recommendations are considered by	4 th January 2012
Notice of Variation issued	Week Com 14 th January 2013
New Tenancy Agreement implemented	Week Com 18 th February 2013

- 3.12 The Housing Act 1985, Part IV, gives Local Authorities the right to vary a periodic tenancy by serving a Notice of Variation.

Before serving a Notice of Variation a Preliminary Notice must be served on each tenancy informing the tenant or joint tenants of the Council's intention to vary the Tenancy Agreement; specifying the proposed changes and effects the changes will have and inviting the tenants to comment on the proposed changes. Tenants should be given a reasonable period of time to consider the changes, i.e 4 weeks.

All comments will be considered by the Head of Service and a final version of the Agreement produced.

- 3.13 The Notice of Variation will then be served on all tenants giving them four weeks before the new Agreement comes into force. Any tenant not wishing to accept the new tenancy can give their statutory 4 weeks notice to vacate their Council home.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 Members are asked to support the final draft of the Tenancy Agreement which will be presented to Cabinet for approval.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 Printing cost of the tenancy agreement will be met from existing budgets. Translation cost will be met from existing corporate budgets.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 6.01 None arising directly from this report.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None arising directly from this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 The proposed changes will ensure all tenants are treated fairly regardless of age, sex, gender, religion or sexual orientation.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 Addressed in the body of the report.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Informal consultation with Tenants Federation.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1 – Revised Tenancy Agreement

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

None

Contact Officer: Hannah Fargher
Telephone: 01352 701484
Email: hannahfargher@flintshire.gov.uk



Tenancy **Agreement**

This is an important legal document.
Please keep it safe.



Welcome to your new home

Flintshire County Council would like to welcome you to your new home and community. We hope that you will be very happy as a council tenant.

This tenancy agreement sets out both your obligations as a tenant and those of Flintshire County Council as your Landlord. This agreement is a legally binding contract between yourself and Flintshire County Council.

Full details of the conditions contained in this agreement can be found in your Tenant Handbook.

Available in Audio Tape, Braille, large print and other languages on request.

If you would like this document in another language please contact your Local Housing office or Flintshire Connects Office.

This message will be printed in other languages here.

The English Language version of this Tenancy Agreement (the original version) shall have precedence over any translation which is provided for you or obtained by you. Any translated version of this Tenancy Agreement (except for Welsh) is provided for your convenience only. In the event of any dispute or disagreement in relation to the original version and any version provided for you or obtained by you in any other language, and in the event of any action in relation to a breach of terms of the Tenancy Agreement, the terms of the original version shall prevail.

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Section 1

Tenancy Details Form

The purpose of the tenancy details form is to ensure that you and the Council agree to meet the conditions of this agreement.

Both the introductory and secure tenancy details forms record the following information:

- Our name and address
- Your name and address
- The address of the property to be rented
- Type of property
- Start date of your tenancy
- Type of tenancy
- Rent for this property
- Your signature
- Our signature
- Your payment details

If you accept the conditions set out in this tenancy agreement, you will need to complete either the introductory tenancy details form or the secure tenancy details form which can be found at the end of this agreement. You will be told by your Neighbourhood Housing Officer which one applies to you.

Section 2

Information About Your Tenancy Agreement

Your tenancy agreement

When you sign this tenancy agreement, you will become our tenant and live in the property under the conditions of this agreement. This tenancy agreement sets out your tenancy type. The conditions contained in this tenancy agreement applies to all types of tenancy unless otherwise stated. You will be responsible for any breach of these conditions by members of your household, including lodgers and sub-tenants and your visitors.

It is important that ***you know and understand*** what conditions you are agreeing to. If there is anything you do not know and understand you should **seek advice** from Flintshire County Council, a solicitor, a Law Centre, the Citizens Advice Bureau, a Housing Advice Centre or Shelter.

If you **breach** a tenancy condition, we may take steps to end your tenancy. There are some circumstances (for example, cases of noise nuisance) where you may also be **breaking the law** and we will take any appropriate action.

'You' means the tenant of the property, and where there are joint tenants, each and everyone of them.

Your right to live in the property

This agreement gives you the right, as a tenant, to live in the property unless there is a legal reason for us to take action against you to recover possession of the property. For example this might happen if:

- You break any of the conditions of this agreement.
- You stop using the property as your principal or only home.
- You have given false or fraudulent information to get the tenancy.
- We need to carry out redevelopment or major repairs to the property, which we cannot do unless you move out.
- There is a legal ground for possession under the Housing Act 1985, the Housing Act 1996 or any other law.

Joint tenancies

If you are a joint tenant we can enforce the tenancy conditions against both or all the joint tenants **together** or as **individuals**. As a joint tenant you also have **equal rights and obligations**. This means each tenant is responsible for making sure that rent is paid and either tenant can be held responsible if this Tenancy Agreement is breached.

Type of tenancy

There are two types of tenancy namely; introductory and secure.

If we give you a introductory tenancy, the **first 12 months** of your tenancy period is a trial period. During this trial period the courts will allow us to end your tenancy as long as we have followed the correct legal procedures. We may extend this trial period in certain circumstances.

As an introductory tenant you will have **fewer rights** than a secure tenant these are explained on pages 8 to 11 of this agreement. If we gave you this tenancy while you were part way through an introductory tenancy with another housing provider, you must serve the rest of the 12- month trial period and any extended period before you become a secure tenant with us. When the trial period and any extended period has come to an end, you automatically become a secure tenant unless we have issued court proceedings to end your tenancy.

If we give you a secure tenancy or you become a secure tenant you will have **extra legal rights** set out on page X of this agreement.

As a secure tenant you must still behave responsibly and keep to the conditions of this Agreement. If you **breach the conditions** of this agreement we have the right to take you to court where a judge would then decide if we could **evict** you or **demote your tenancy**.

'demote your tenancy' means you could lose your original tenancy status and be evicted more easily.

'Us' means
Flintshire
County
Council.

Third parties

This agreement does not give rights to anyone except you and us, and anyone who legally takes over our duties or your tenancy.

Data protection

We will keep to the Data Protection Act 1998 when we deal with personal and sensitive information. This means we will use your personal information in line with the law.

Notices

Tenants who wish to serve Notices and other communications (including notices in proceedings) on the Council should do so in writing and send or deliver the Notices to:

**Community Services Directorate
County Offices
Chapel Street
Flint
Flintshire
CH6 5BD**

The Tenant accepts that a Notice of Seeking Possession, Notice to Terminate or other formal Notice relating to the tenancy served on him or her is good service, if the Notice is posted, delivered or left at the premises, and addressed to the tenant. The Notice would be deemed served on the tenant within 48 hours of being delivered to, posted to or left at the premises.

Section 3 Your Rights

Regardless of whether you are an introductory or secure tenant, you have certain legal rights. This section sets out your legal rights.

Rights for both introductory and secure tenants

Right to live in the property

No tenant can be made to leave their home unless ordered to do so by a court. It will usually be because the tenant has not kept to the terms of the Tenancy Agreement or has broken the law. The court process is different depending on whether you are an introductory or a secure tenant.

Right to repair

You can get certain urgent repairs done quickly and at no cost to you. You can also expect to have certain urgent repairs carried out within set times under the Right to Repair regulations. These are repairs which, if not completed on time, would seriously affect your health or safety. You will be told if a repair you requested is classified as a **'qualifying repair'**.

A list of **'qualifying repairs'** is contained in the *Tenant Handbook*

Right to Succession

If the tenancy of your home has not already passed from one person to another following a **death**, the tenancy of your home will pass automatically to the remaining joint tenant or to your husband, wife or civil partner providing they are living with you at the time of your death.

'Succession' happens when a tenant dies and their tenancy is passed onto another person.

If there is no remaining tenant, spouse or partner, the tenancy can pass to a relative (your parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew or niece) providing you can establish to our satisfaction that they have been living with you continuously for the previous twelve months prior to date of death. Note that, in accordance with the Housing Act 1985, only **one person** may succeed to a tenancy. A member of your family who is entitled to succeed, may be required to move to alternative accommodation if we consider the property is not suitable for their needs.

'Assign'
means the
transfer of
your tenancy
to someone
else

Right to assign

You have the right to assign your tenancy to someone else, but only if you have our written permission and only if it is permitted under section 91 & 92 of the Housing Act 1985 (if you have a secure tenancy) or section 134 of the Housing Act 1996 (if you have an introductory tenancy). If you want to assign your tenancy, you should write to your Neighbourhood Housing Officer, with your reasons for transfer to see if it is allowed.

Right to your information

We must treat all **personal information** about tenants as confidential. However, by law, we must **share essential information with certain public bodies**. You can see information which relates to you and is held by us on file or on computer, provided you give us reasonable notice. We have the right to make an administrative charge for this.

If you are unhappy about any information or expression of opinion recorded in your files, you can ask for it to be corrected or removed. If we disagree with your request, you can insist that your views on the matter are added to the records.

Your right for involvement

You have the right to start or join a **local tenants group**. You can contact your Customer Involvement Officer for information about groups in your area or about how to start one.

Your right to consultation on housing management matters

We must by law, provide you with information about your Tenancy Agreement and about certain policies and procedures. We must also inform you about how well we are carrying out work in line with standards set down by the National Assembly for Wales. We will keep you **informed** about what is happening by sending you leaflets and regular newsletters.

We must **consult** you about any changes to your Tenancy Agreement, any modernisation or improvement planned for your home, or any changes to our housing management policies. We do not have to consult you before making changes to rent or other charges but we must give you notice of those charges. When we do consult you, we will, where possible offer you choices - not just give you information about decisions already made.

We will ask you for your comments and look into what you say before a final decision is made. The methods of consultation may include; visits by staff or consultants, letters, surveys to residents, meetings, open days or exhibitions.

Your 'right to manage'

You and your neighbours may choose to form a **tenant management co-operative** which could take over managing one or more aspects of the housing service. Your new organisation must be approved by National Assembly for Wales. A consultation process would be conducted before such a change could take place.

Extra rights for secure tenants only

A 'mutual exchange' is where tenants agree to swap properties and tenancies.

Right to mutually exchange

You can exchange homes with another Council tenant or a tenant of a housing association (nationwide). You must get **written permission** from us and any other landlord involved. We will give permission except where there are specific reasons.

Right to improve

You can carry out improvements to your home provided you have our **written permission** before you start work. We may apply some reasonable conditions when we give our permission. We can only refuse to give permission for certain reasons, and we will tell you the reason if we refuse you. If you leave your home, you may get compensation for certain types of improvements you have carried out. However if you cause damage to the property as a result of your improvements you must repair or replace any damage caused.

A 'lodger' is someone who shares your home as a member of your household.

'Sub let' is means granting somebody a right to have private use of part of your home.

Right to take in lodgers

You can take in lodgers provided you first get our **written permission** and do not overcrowd your home. However you must inform us and the **Unified Benefit Advisory Service** of the name, age and sex of any intended lodger and of the part of your home they will occupy.

Right to sublet

You can sub-let **part** of your home (not the whole) but only if you first get our **written permission**. However you must **inform us** and the **Unified Benefit Advisory Service** of the name, age and sex of any intended sub-tenant and of the part of your home they will occupy.

Right to an alternative landlord

You and your neighbours may choose another landlord to manage or own your existing home. The landlord must be approved by the **National Assembly for Wales** and must be willing to buy your home. A rigorous consultation process would be conducted before such a change could take place.

Right to buy

You can buy your home from us provided you have been a **secure tenant** for at least **5 years** and you are not facing Court action for breach of your tenancy conditions. Members of your family who are living with you may be able to buy your home with you. You may get a discount. The amount of discount depends on the total amount of time you have spent as a tenant of the Council or other right to buy landlord, and whether the property is a house or a flat.

The **maximum discount** possible is **£16,000**. However houses specially built or adapted for disabled or older people, or people with special needs may be excluded from the right to buy.

Section 4 Rent and other charges

Your rent is used to pay for the housing services you receive. It is important that everyone pays their rent regularly and on time so that we can afford to provide high quality services. This section tells you about your obligations to pay your rent.

Our obligations:

1. If we collect the gas charge, electricity charge, tenancy support charges, water and sewerage charges, septic tank charge, contents insurance, or the concessionary TV licence and other services as part of your total rent we will pay them to the appropriate organisations.
2. We will give you at least 4 weeks notice in writing if we increase or decrease the **rent**.
3. We may increase or decrease the **other charges** which are included in the rent with **less** notice than 4 weeks.
4. You will be told in writing at least one week before any change to these **service charges**.
5. We will give you an up to date **rent statement** four times a year and whenever you ask for one.

Your obligations:

6. You must pay your rent regularly and on time. Rent is due **weekly in advance** on a **Monday**.
7. Your rent **may include charges** for gas, electricity, water and sewerage , septic tank, contents insurance, or the concessionary TV licence and other services , if it does not you must pay for them direct
8. You agree that, if **support services** are included as a condition of occupancy, you will accept, pay for and make use of the agreed support services provided by us on your behalf.
9. You must pay any **rent arrears** due in accordance with any agreement entered into with us. This also applies to any arrears accrued from a previous tenancy you have held with us.

Section 5

Repairs and Improvements

Looking after your home is a joint responsibility between us and you.

We are responsible for most repairs, maintenance and servicing needed to the property, but you are responsible for a number of minor repairs and for the decorating the inside of your home. Full details of our responsibilities for the work we will carry out can be found in the Tenant Handbook.

Our obligations:

1. We must **keep in good repair** the structure and exterior of the property.
2. We will **decorate the outside** of your home and the shared parts when necessary or according to planned maintenance programme, unless you have done the work yourself.
3. We will keep **communal grounds** and **landscaped areas** that are our responsibility clear and tidy.

Your obligations:

4. You must **report promptly** to us any defects in the property which are our responsibility to repair and not allow the property to fall into disrepair through neglect.
5. If you report a repair and then **fail to keep the appointment** without giving at least 24 hours notice we may **recharge** you for our expenses i.e travelling costs, wasted labour costs.

6. You must **keep in good repair** all parts of the property which we are not obliged to repair, and not allow the property to fall into disrepair through neglect.
7. If you have **failed to do repairs** which are your responsibility, we will give you notice in writing of the work which must be done and a reasonable time in which it must be completed. If you don't, we may do the work and make you pay for it.
8. You must **let us or our representatives, agents or contractors access the property** to carry out necessary repair inspections, repairs, improvements, planned programmes, gas servicing and safety checks, and to complete tenancy audits and inspections , as long as:
 - You have had at least 24 hours notice in writing (unless there is an emergency); and
 - They show you their proof of identity.

If there is an emergency (such as, where somebody may be in danger, there is a risk of damage to the property, or the adjoining property) we will not give you any written notice and you must let us enter your home immediately. We reserve the right to force entry in to the property without giving you any notice. We will only gain entry if you are not there to let us in immediately, or if you refuse to let us in. If we do gain entry, we will make the property secure when we leave it.

9. You or any members of your household or your invited visitors must not **damage the property**. If you or they cause any damage, you must put it right to our satisfaction. If you don't, we may do the work and make you pay for it.
10. You must not **knock down, alter or remove** any part of the property without our **written permission**.
11. You may **carry out improvements** to your property only with our written permission first. You must also obtain and comply with any required Building Regulations and Planning Permission. Where the improvements affect the gas or electrical systems the work must be carried out by an appropriately qualified and registered person or contractor.

Section 6 Using Your Home

Everyone has the right to live in an area that is clean, safe and pleasant. This section tells you about your obligations to ensure this standard is maintained.

Our obligations:

1. We may provide, or arrange to be provided **support services** to help you maintain your tenancy and maintain the security and safety of your home, as agreed with you. These support services may be provided by us or an agency on our behalf.

Your obligations:

1. You must use the property as **your only or main** home throughout your tenancy.
2. You must obtain our written permission to use any part of the property for any trade, **business** or other purpose except as your home.
3. You must not allow more people to live in your home that the Council considers reasonable and so cause **overcrowding** as defined by the Housing Act 1985 and its amendments
4. You must tell us if you will be away from your home for more than 28 days. This is to make sure we know you have not just **abandoned your property**. If your job means that you are away from the property for long periods, you may want to discuss this with us.

5. You must keep both the **inside** and **outside** of your property in a **clean and sanitary condition** to our satisfaction. Also you must ensure that all refuse and unwanted household items are disposed of in a safe and hygienic manner. If your home has a recycling bin or bin chute, you must use it in line with our recycling policy.
6. You are responsible for **decorating** the inside of your home and keeping it in a reasonable state of decoration.
7. You must keep your **garden** tidy by cutting the lawns and trimming the hedges and bushes. If the garden is overgrown and there is not a good reason why you have not maintained it, we may do the work and charge you for it. Or, we may take court action against you and charge you the cost of this action. You must not store rubbish, furniture or household appliances in the garden area. We will give you seven days notice to remove the items. If you do not remove them within seven days, we may do it for you and charge you. Or, we may take court action against you and charge you our costs.
8. You must not alter, replace or plant any **hedge** or **tree**, or put up a **fence** without getting our written permission.
9. You must not erect any **shed, greenhouse, pigeon loft or garage** in your garden without the our written permission.
10. You must not erect or fix a **radio or TV aerial, satellite dish or earth wire** to the outside of the property without our written permission.

11. If you live in a sheltered housing accommodation, you and the people you are responsible for must not smoke in the shared areas of the building where “**No smoking**” signs are displayed. These areas include any stairwells, corridors, lifts and landings, and any shared bathroom, lounge or kitchen facilities.
12. You must not store any quantity of **flammable material or gas** in the property, sheds, garages or outhouses except where it is reasonably needed for normal domestic use, in which case it must be stored safely.
13. Tenants of Castle Heights, Richard Heights and Bolingbroke Heights in Flint must not bring in, or use, fireworks or any **domestic bottled gas** in the building.
14. You must co-operate with us to ensure that all the communal areas are kept in a **clean and tidy condition, free of obstructions, and free of litter** and rubbish.
15. You, or members of your household or your invited visitors must not interfere with any fire evacuation signs or **equipment** for detecting or putting out **fires**.
16. You, or members of your household or any visitors must ensure that **security/fire doors are kept shut** at all times.
17. You must not **park** or allow anyone else to park, any motor vehicles, caravans, boats, trailers etc., in your garden without our written permission. Permission will then only be granted at our discretion and then only where there is a properly constructed hard standing and dropped kerb in place.

17. You, or members of your household or your invited visitors, must **not park any private motor vehicles** on the communal areas except where we have marked a parking area or with our written permission.

18. **Any other vehicle, or caravan, motorhome, boat or trailer** may not be parked on the communal areas except on marked parking areas and garage sites and then only with our written permission.

19. You, or members of your household or your invited visitors, must not do **major vehicle repairs** or park an unlicensed or unroadworthy vehicle on communal areas.

Section 7

Being a Good Neighbour

As a tenant you must respect and be considerate to your neighbours. Everyone has the right to live the way they wish to, providing they do not interfere with people living near them, or break the law. In most cases it would be expected that people resolve their own problems peaceably, but if this fails then we **will** take action against you, if you, or anyone living with you or visiting your home (including children), break any condition of this tenancy agreement by behaving in a way that causes alarm or distress to other people in the area or are convicted of an offence you committed at the property or within the surrounding area or estate. Possible courses of action may include - formal warnings, demotion of tenancy, injunctions or possession proceedings.

Our obligations:

1. We will not interfere with how you use your home as long as you keep to the terms of this agreement or unless there is any other reason under the Housing Acts of 1985 and 1996 or any other law where we may need to.
2. We will investigate any complaints of nuisance, harassment or victimisation and take appropriate action.

'Nuisance' means behaviour that is harmful, offensive, annoying, disagreeable, or interferes with the quiet enjoyment of another person

Your obligations:

3. You (or anyone living with you or visiting the property) must not act in any way which is anti social or is likely to cause a **nuisance** to any other person. Examples of nuisance include, but are not limited to:

- **Throwing** items from windows, balconies or walkways
- **Loud music** or **loud noise** from a TV, radio, hi-fi or musical instruments
- **Loud arguing** and **shouting** and **door slamming**
- Playing ball games
- **Dog** barking and fouling
- **Offensive, abusive** and **threatening** behaviour
- Annoying car maintenance or broken down vehicles
- Offensive intoxication
- Burglar alarms
- DIY work

'Harassment' means behaviour that uses violent words or actions against a person or groups of people.

4. You must not commit or threaten any form of **harassment** against any other person. This includes harassment on the grounds of sex, gender, age, religion, race and disability. Examples include, but are not limited to;

- **Racist** behaviour or language
- Using or threatening to use **violence**, including **domestic violence and abuse**
- Repeatedly using **abusive** language
- **Damaging** or threatening to damage another person's home or possession
- Writing threatening or abusive **graffiti** or **letters**
- **Intimidation**

5. You must not use, or allow the property and communal parts of the building to be used, for any **illegal or immoral** activity. Examples of such activities include but are not limited to:

- **Prostitution**
- bringing in, storing, producing or selling **drugs**
- storing or selling **stolen goods**
- the use of **dangerous weapons** such as any type of **gun or rifle, catapult or crossbow**

6. You must not use abusive language or threatening or violent behaviour towards us, **our representatives, agents or contractors** carrying out their duties.

7. You must obtain our **written permission before** you keep or look after any **animals, birds or livestock** in the property. Certain types of property are not suitable for keeping animals, birds or livestock. We have a list of addresses that will determine whether permission will be granted. If permission is granted, any animals, birds or livestock being kept or being looked after must not cause a nuisance, annoyance or disturbance to any other persons. If they do become a nuisance, annoyance or disturbance we may ask you to remove them from your property.

Section 8

Changes to Your Circumstances

By law we must make sure that any personal information we hold about you is accurate and up to date. To ensure our records of you are accurate and up to date, you must tell us of any changes to the occupation of your home or changes to your tenancy. To help you with this you may request a form from us. Some forms may be found in your tenant handbook.

1. If you **change your name by deed poll** or get **married and change your name** you must show us your deed of name change or your marriage certificate before we can change your name on your tenancy agreement.
2. You must tell us the **birth of any children** or if **somebody moves in** with you on a permanent basis. They will be added to the occupancy records for your tenancy.
3. You must tell us if **somebody leaves** or stops living with you at the property. Their details will then be removed from the occupancy records.
4. If you are already a Council tenant and want to **add someone to your tenancy**, you will need to complete a joint tenancy application form. The granting of a joint tenancy is always at our **discretion** and will only be granted when it is in **the interests of the Council** to do so.
5. We can't just **remove 'a party'** from your tenancy. This can be done only by written agreement of all joint tenants, a court order as part of family proceedings, or by succession.

Section 9

Ending Your Tenancy

When you decide to end your tenancy:

1. You must give us at least **4 weeks notice** in writing when you want to give up your tenancy. The notice must be signed by you. If you are joint tenants, either or any one of you can end the tenancy by giving the written notice which will be binding on both or all of you.
2. The **last day** of your tenancy must be a **Sunday**. You must return the **keys** to the Council offices before 12 noon on the **Monday** following the last day of the tenancy. If you fail to do this, additional rent will become payable.
3. Usually you must pay the rent and all charges for the **whole period of notice**, even if you have moved out and returned the keys before the Monday on which the notice period ends. If you fail to clear any outstanding rent and charges before you move out we will take action to recover the debt.
4. At the end of your tenancy you must give us **vacant possession** of the property. You must clear the property of all your furniture and belongings, leave it in good repair and in a clean and tidy condition and return the keys to the Council offices.
5. If you fail to **clear the property** and/ or leave it in a state of disrepair, we will charge you for the cost of removing items that you leave behind and for any work that is necessary. We will not be responsible for any items that you leave behind.

6. You must not leave anybody living in your home when you move out, such as a **lodger**. If you do so, we will take court action to remove them from the property and you and your lodger will have to pay the costs.

When we want to end your tenancy:

7. **Introductory tenants only**

If you have an introductory tenancy, we can only end your tenancy with a court order. We will only ask the court for a possession order against you if you break the conditions of this tenancy agreement or there is any other reason under the Housing Act 1985, the Housing Act 1996 or another law why we need possession of your home.

If you break your tenancy conditions, we may serve a 'Notice to Terminate' on you. This notice will say that the court will be asked to make an order for possession and give the reasons why the action is being taken. It will give you the date after which possession proceedings will start. This will be at least four weeks after the notice is served.

8. **Secure tenants only**

We would have to show that we had valid reasons to evict or demote your tenancy. These are called '**grounds**' and are defined by law. A copy of these grounds are contained in **Schedule 1** at the back of this Tenancy Agreement. You would have the right to put your case at a court hearing. Before going to court we would have to serve you with a Notice of Intention to seek Possession or Notice of Intention to Demote your tenancy setting out our reasons for serving the Notice.

Death of a tenant

9. In the event of your death, the tenancy may pass on to your spouse or civil partner, a joint tenant or member of your family if they are qualified to succeed.

10. In the event that there is no one qualified to succeed at the time of your death, the tenancy becomes part of your estate. If you have left a will, the tenancy can be brought to end by a personal representative of your estate. The personal representative must give at least four weeks notice in writing ending on a Monday. Your estate is also responsible for other conditions of this agreement set out in clauses 2.0 to 9.5 of this agreement.

11. In the event that there is no will, known as 'intestate', legal responsibility for your tenancy passes to the Public Trustee. We will end the tenancy by serving a 'Notice to Quit on the Public Trustee. A copy of this notice will be given to any next of kin that you may have.

Section 10 **Complaints, Comments and Compliments**

Complaints Procedure

To make a complaint about a council service follow these simple steps:

Step 1 Contact the service you have been dealing with or the Customer Services Team (01352 703020). Your complaint will be recorded on a central database and if it is not possible to resolve the matter immediately it will be acknowledged within 5 working days. The service will aim to provide a full response to you within 10 working days from receipt of your complaint.

Step 2 If you are not satisfied with the response you receive from the service, contact the Customer Services Team (01352 703020) who will ensure that your complaint is considered by a senior officer within the service or the Corporate Complaints Officer. You will then receive a response within 20 working days.

Ombudsman

If you feel that the Council has failed to address or resolve your complaint to your satisfaction you can contact the The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, 1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed, Bridgend, CF35 5LJ. Telephone 0845 6010987(local call rate), fax 01656 641199, e-mail ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk

Compliments and Comments

If you wish to make a comment or compliment please contact the relevant service or the Customer Services Team (01352 703020). All compliments and comments are recorded on a central database for monitoring purposes and forwarded to the appropriate service for necessary action or acceptance.

Section 11 **Schedule 1**

Grounds for possession

If you are a tenant, whether your tenancy is permanent or temporary, your landlord must get a court order to evict you. If they try to force you to leave (e.g. through violence or cutting off your gas or electricity supplies) this could amount to Unlawful Eviction and you would be entitled to sue for compensation.

If you have a permanent tenancy (i.e. you are a Secure Tenant) then before going to court your landlord will need to send to you a written notice to say that they intend to go to court to get a Possession Order and why. This notice is called a "notice of intention to seek possession" and must be written in a certain way.

However, in some cases even if your landlord did not serve this notice the court might still allow them to obtain a possession order, if the court thinks it is fair for them to do so. You should be given proper notice before your landlord starts possession proceedings and your

landlord must usually start proceedings within 12 months of the date the notice says court proceedings will be started.

Your landlord must have a reason for trying to get you out of the property. The law says that if you are a secure tenant there are certain reasons (grounds) which may entitle your landlord to get a possession order. If your landlord cannot show any of these grounds (see below) they will not be entitled to a possession order to evict you. If you have a temporary tenancy only or you are not a tenant at all then it is not necessary for any particular ground to be shown.

Ground 1

You have not paid the rent which is properly due from you and it is reasonable for the court to make a possession order. If you can show, for example, the rent arrears are due to late housing benefit payments which will be paid eventually, or the rent was wrongfully increased etc., then your landlord will probably not be entitled to a possession order. If by the time the case reaches court all the arrears have been paid by you then again your landlord will not get an order under this ground. Alternatively if your landlord can show you have not kept to part of your tenancy agreement then they will be entitled to an order if the court thinks it is reasonable for them to be allowed to evict you. Your landlord can also use this ground if they can show that you have broken one of the terms of your tenancy agreement which you are obliged to follow, (e.g. payment of water rates, avoiding anti-social behaviour etc).

Ground 2

If you or someone living with you has been causing nuisance or annoyance to any of your neighbours or anyone else visiting the area. However, your landlord has to show it is reasonable for the court to make a possession order. Also, your landlord can apply for possession if your behaviour is illegal, or amounts to an arrestable offence, or if you have used the property for "immoral or illegal purposes", such as drug dealing. Again this is subject to the reasonableness test. In addition, if you were living in the property with your partner and your partner left because of your violence or threats of violence and it is unlikely your partner will be coming back, your landlord may be able to obtain a possession order against you. However, they have to give written notice not only to you, but also to your partner before they can start court proceedings. The domestic violence ground cannot be used by same sex couples.

Ground 3

You or someone living with you has allowed the property to fall into a bad state of disrepair. If it is the fault of someone living with you and you have not taken steps to get them out of the property then your tenancy could be at risk. However, your landlord has to show it is reasonable for the court to make a possession order.

Ground 4

You or someone living with you have not taken care of furniture which your landlord provided for the property. Your landlord must show it is reasonable for an order to be made.

Ground 5

You or a joint tenant obtained your tenancy by giving false statements, deliberately or without caring if the statements were true. If your landlord can show they would not have otherwise given you the tenancy they may be able to get a possession order. However, your landlord must show it is reasonable for a possession order to be made.

Ground 6

You exchanged your property for another council tenant's property and money was paid, your landlord may get possession. Even if the exchange was made with a member of your family who was previously the tenant. However, your landlord must show it is reasonable to make a possession order.

Ground 7

Your property forms part of a building which is used mainly for other purposes other than housing and the property was let to you (or someone who held the tenancy before you) as part of their employment with one of the following:

- a) A Local Authority
- b) New Town Corporation
- c) Urban Development Corporation
- d) Development Board for rural Wales
- e) Governors of an aided school

AND

You or a person living with you have acted in a way which conflicts with the purpose for which the building is used and no longer makes it suitable for you to continue

to live in the property. For example, if you were a school caretaker and you were provided with a property in the grounds of the school and you were found to have stolen from the school. Your landlord (who would also be your employer) could get a possession order under this ground. Your landlord must still show it is reasonable to evict you.

Ground 8

You moved into the property because works were being carried out on your previous property and you understood that you would have to return to that property when the works were finished. If you refuse to leave and return to your original property a possession order may be made against you. However, you can refuse to return if the works have not in fact been completed or you understood that you were being given the new property permanently. Your landlord must show it is reasonable to evict you.

Ground 9

If you are living in an overcrowded property which breaks the law, then your landlord may apply for a possession order. However, your landlord must offer you a suitable property elsewhere. You may be able to argue that your landlord should not get a possession order because they have not offered you another place to live or the place they have offered is not suitable.

Ground 10

Your landlord intends to demolish, reconstruct or carry out substantial work to the building or part of the building or land around the building in which you live and cannot do this while you are living there. If you agree to leave voluntarily then there is no reason for your landlord

to get a possession order. You should be allowed to return to the property once the works are completed. Your landlord should offer you suitable accommodation elsewhere.

Ground 10A

The property is in an area which has a redevelopment scheme and the property or part of it is affected by that scheme. Your landlord can get possession if he / she offers you suitable alternative accommodation.

Ground 11

Your landlord is a charity and if you carried on living in the property this would go against the principles or objects of the charity. However, your landlord must offer you suitable alternative accommodation.

Ground 12

Your property forms part of a building or is connected to a building which is used for other purposes and you are employed by your landlord and your property was let to you as part of your employment (e.g. school caretaker). Your landlord can get possession if your employment has come to an end and your landlord needs the property for some other person who will be employed. To take advantage of this ground your landlord must be either a Local Authority, New Town Corporation, Urban Development Corporation, Development Board for rural Wales or Governors of an aided school. Your landlord must satisfy the court that you will have other accommodation to go to and that it is reasonable to order possession.

Ground 13

Where your property is specially adapted for the disabled and there is no longer a disabled person living there and your landlord needs the property for a disabled person then your landlord may get a possession order. Your landlord must convince the court that there will be other suitable accommodation for you to go to and that it is reasonable for the court to make a possession order.

Ground 14

Where your property was let to you by a Housing Association or Housing Trust because you had special housing needs and you no longer have these needs or you have been offered permanent accommodation elsewhere and your landlord needs the property for someone else with special housing needs. Your landlord will need to show there is other suitable accommodation you could go to and that it is reasonable for the court to make a possession order.

Ground 15

If your property was let to you because you have special needs and there are special facilities based near the property to help you. Your landlord will only get possession if they show there is no longer anyone living in the property with special needs and the property is needed for someone else with special needs. Your landlord will need to show that other suitable accommodation is available to you and it would be reasonable for a court to make a possession order.

Ground 16

In some cases if you "succeed" to the tenancy on the death of the previous tenant your landlord may be able to get a possession order if the property is too big for just you. But the landlord must have served notice on you between the 6th and 12th month after the death of the previous tenant. Your landlord must still show there is other suitable accommodation for you to go to and that it would be reasonable for a court to make a possession order.

If the tenancy was passed over to you before the tenant's death your landlord will not be able to use this ground. Also if you were married to the tenant who has died, or you succeeded to a fixed term tenancy the council cannot use this ground.

Tenancy Details Form - Secure

This form contains details of the tenancy between:
us **Flintshire County Council** of County Offices, Chapel Street, FLINT CH6 5BD and
you (full name(s) of the tenant(s) in **BLOCK CAPITALS**.

① _____

② _____ Relationship to ①: _____

The property rented in this agreement is at:

Type of property: _____

Start date of tenancy: _____ / _____ /20 _____

Type of Tenancy: This tenancy is a **secure** tenancy

Rent for this property: The basic rent (not including any service charges) for the
property at the start of this agreement will be: £ _____

Other charges due as part of your total rent £ _____ (water and sewerage)

Service charges included as part of your total rent
£ _____ (Heating) £ _____ (T.V.)

(These 'Other Charges' are not eligible for Housing Benefit)

Total rent: £ _____

Payment: The total rent is due on Monday each week (for the week ahead).

I/We have inspected the property and accept the tenancy from the above date.

I/We have received, read and understood the conditions of tenancy and agree to abide by
them.

I/We understand that if I/We have given false information, you may prosecute and you may
take steps to end the tenancy.

Your signature: ① _____ Date: _____ / _____ /20 _____

② _____ Date: _____ / _____ /20 _____

On behalf of Flintshire County Council

Name: _____ Position: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____ / _____ /20 _____

Tenancy Details Form - Secure

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I/We understand that if I/We have given false information, you may prosecute and you may
take steps to end the tenancy.

Your signature: ① _____ Date: _____ / _____ /20 _____

② _____ Date: _____ / _____ /20 _____

On behalf of Flintshire County Council

Name: _____ Position: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____ / _____ /20 _____

Tenancy Details Form - Introductory

This form contains details of the tenancy between:
us **Flintshire County Council** of County Offices, Chapel Street, FLINT CH6 5BD and
you (full name(s) of the tenant(s) in **BLOCK CAPITALS**.

① _____

② _____ Relationship to ①: _____

The property rented in this agreement is at:

Type of property: _____

Start date of tenancy: _____ / _____ /20 _____

Type of Tenancy: This tenancy is a **introductory** tenancy

Rent for this property: The basic rent (not including any service charges) for the
property at the start of this agreement will be: £ _____

Other charges due as part of your total rent £ _____ (water and sewerage) £ _____ £ _____ £ _____
--

Service charges included as part of your total rent £ _____ (Heating) £ _____ (T.V.)

(These 'Other Charges' are not eligible for Housing Benefit)

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I/We understand that if I/We have given false information, you may prosecute and you may
take steps to end the tenancy.

Your signature: ① _____ Date: _____ / _____ /20 _____

② _____ Date: _____ / _____ /20 _____

On behalf of Flintshire County Council

Name: _____ Position: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____ / _____ /20 _____

Tenancy Details Form - Introductory

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us **Flintshire County Council** of County Offices, Chapel Street, FLINT CH6 5BD and
you (full name(s) of the tenant(s) in **BLOCK CAPITALS**.

① _____

② _____ Relationship to ①: _____

The property rented in this agreement is at:

Type of property: _____

Start date of tenancy: _____ / _____ /20 _____

Type of Tenancy: This tenancy is a **introductory** tenancy

Rent for this property: The basic rent (not including any service charges) for the
property at the start of this agreement will be: £ _____

Other charges due as part of your total rent £ _____ (water and sewerage) £ _____ £ _____ £ _____
--

Service charges included as part of your total rent £ _____ (Heating) £ _____ (T.V.)

(These 'Other Charges' are not eligible for Housing Benefit)

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I/We understand that if I/We have given false information, you may prosecute and you may
take steps to end the tenancy.

Your signature: ① _____ Date: _____ / _____ /20 _____

② _____ Date: _____ / _____ /20 _____

On behalf of Flintshire County Council

Name: _____ Position: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____ / _____ /20 _____

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: WEDNESDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2012

REPORT BY: ENVIRONMENT & HOUSING OVERVIEW &
SCRUTINY FACILITATOR

SUBJECT: QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To note and consider the 2012/13 Quarter 1 service performance reports produced at the Head of Service / Divisional level under the adopted business model of the Council. The reports cover the Quarter 1 period (April to June 2012).

1.02 To note the position of the Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges (SARC) contained within the performance reports.

1.03 To note the progress made against the Improvement Targets contained within the performance reports.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The quarterly performance reports seek to provide the reader with the 'narrative' of quarterly performance, which gives the context for overall performance. These reports are a quarterly review of service plans.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 Copies of the detailed Quarter 1 (April to June 2012) performance reports are attached at **Appendix 1** Housing Services.

3.02 Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges

Each quarterly performance report contains an update of each of the relevant strategic risks and challenges. This update has been provided by each of the lead responsible officers and is available for comment and review.

3.03 A draft revised SARC summary position of the present Red (high risk), Amber (medium risk) and Green (low risk) status for all of the reported strategic risks and challenges is provided at **Appendix 2**.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That Members consider the 2012/13 Quarter 1 performance reports produced by the Heads of Service, highlight and monitor poor performance and feedback details of any challenge to Corporate Resources O&S Committee who are responsible for the overview and monitoring of improvement targets.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None as a result of this report.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

None as a result of this report.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

None as a result of this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

None as a result of this report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

None as a result of this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

Not applicable.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

Not applicable.

12.00 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Housing Services
Appendix 2 - Q1 SARC Summary

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

Contact Officer: Samantha Roberts
Telephone: 01352 702305
Email: samantha.roberts@flintshire.gov.uk

Quarterly Performance Report – Housing Services

Report Author Head of Housing Services
Report Date 6 August 2012
Report Period Quarter 1: 1 April 2012 to 30 June 2012

Introduction

The report is produced on a quarterly basis and provided to Executive members for review and assurance and will be available for Overview and Scrutiny Committees as part of their Forward Work Programmes.

The report provides managerial assessment as an overview of the key messages within the report and then provides evidence and data to inform that assessment from the following sources:

- Performance Targets
- Outcome Agreement
- Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges
- Internal and external regulatory reports
- Customer satisfaction and feedback
- Awards and accreditations
- Resource Management (HR, ICT, Finance, Assets)

Key Notes



The use of key note boxes is to highlight areas of interest or to respond specifically to enquiries from previous reports.

Record of Amendments

Date	Amendment	Amended by
30/07/12	Draft report for review by Head of Service.	Simon Abbott
02/07/12	Amendments requested by Head of Service	Simon Abbott
03/08/12	Amendments for approval by Director	Simon Abbott
08/08/12	Amendments for approval by Director/HOS	Sue Dolman
09/08/12	Final version for submission to Corporate	Simon Abbott
16/08/12	Commentary to CD14 added	David Humphreys
28/08/12	Acceptance revisions for Corporate	Simon Abbott

Document Contents

The report contains the following sections:

Foreword & Summary Sections

- 1 Foreword** This section contains an executive summary of key information for the Housing Service.
- This foreword will also highlight (where relevant) emerging risks that need to be considered as new SARCs and signpost readers to supporting commentary where necessary with in the detailed sections for the service areas.
- 2 Summaries** This section presents a summary progress for each of the following:
- Improvement Plan
 - Performance and Outcome Indicators
 - Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges (SARCs)
 - Service Plan

Detail Sections

- 3-9 Service Area Information** A section for each area will be provided for service areas where the summary shows items off-track. Sections may also be included for those areas to report progress and risks on items not included in the summary.

Appendices

- Appendix A Performance Graphs** Performance graphs for main indicators are shown in this appendix. Only performance graphs showing a red or amber status will be included in the detail sections where explanation of issues affecting performance can be detailed.
- Appendix B Supplementary Data** Supplementary data such as demand profiles will be contained in this section when required.

1 Foreword

Report highlights for this quarter are the following items:

Voids

The outturn for letting of void properties has again significantly improved again this quarter. The average turnaround time of 44.1 days represents an improvement of 7.5 days from that reported in Q4. Since starting the implementation of the lean review on voids the turnaround time has been reduced by a staggering 110 days. Credit must be given to the Housing Lean Team, Voids Team and Neighbourhood Management Teams for their hard work in making this happen.

Gas Servicing

We are pleased to report that we have again achieved our target in this area. Success can be attributed to the introduction of an 11 month servicing programme. All gas appliances are scheduled for servicing one month before the expiry of their gas safety certificate. This means that any tenants not allowing access to the properties can be taken through stringent no access procedures to ensure appliances can be serviced before the expiry of certification.

Homelessness

Despite the ever increasing pressure on the service the team are still managing to perform well in most areas

Our commitment to securing alternative temporary accommodation to keep our use of bed and breakfast to a minimum can be demonstrated by comparing our use of bed and breakfast to that of other neighbouring authorities.

In order to minimise the levels of use of bed and breakfast we will need to actively progress the re-designation of some of our existing stock as well as continuing to develop good relationships with our private sector landlords.

Welfare Reform

Work continues on a collaborative project with Denbighshire and Wrexham, using Welsh Government funding for three posts to help mitigate the effect of Welfare Reform. This project has recently being audited by Shelter on behalf of the Welsh Government. Whilst we are waiting for the official outcomes of the audit, early indications show that the auditors were impressed with the breadth and quality of work being undertaken and aim to cite areas of the project as best practice. Their final report will consider other projects funded across Wales. Ours was selected for the audit sample as it is the only funded project that is collaborative.

Rent Collected

Performance in the first quarter has been disappointing but can be attributed to a larger than expected carry over of former tenant arrears and current tenant arrears at year end. In addition direct debit payments for quarter 1 were credited to rent accounts in week 14 just after the end of the quarter. This will continue to be an area focus and we are confident that performance will improve as year progresses.

Non Urgent Repairs




Work to address the backlog of repairs will be complete in August but this has caused a dip in the performance this quarter as many of the very old tickets have been actioned. A significant improvement will be reported from quarter 3.













2 Summaries

2.1 Improvement Plan

The following shows a summary of progress on the areas of the authority's improvement plan undertaken by Housing Services. Commentary will be provided for any areas showing a Red or Amber status in the detail sections.




RAG Status for Improvement Plans

RAG	Progress	Outcome
	Limited Progress - delay in scheduled activity; not on track	Low - lower level of confidence in the achievement of outcome(s)
	Satisfactory Progress - some delay in scheduled activity, but broadly on track	Medium - uncertain level of confidence in the achievement of the outcome(s)
	Good Progress - activities completed on schedule, on track	High - full confidence in the achievement of the outcome(s)






Council Priority	Target Date	Progress RAG	Outcome Confidence	Commentary
7. To promote independent, healthy and fulfilled living in the community with the highest quality personalised and supportive social and health care services				
7.6 Modernise the warden service	March 2012			Completed.
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				
8.1 Lead the Deeside Housing Renewal Area programme (also 5)	March 2021			
8.2 Further improve the Council's housing management and housing repairs service	On-going			
8.3 Increase the supply of affordable housing for first time buyers and people with special needs as a priority	March 2021			Toolkit in this area is working well but needs to be documented.
8.4 Extend the range of options in private sector housing	TBC			Dependent on the Local Housing Strategy which is now expected for completion September 2012
8.5 Develop a regional housing register and common allocations policy	April 2013			Participation in the regional project is continuing.









2.2 Performance and Outcome Indicators

The status of the indicators are summarised for this quarter below:

RAG	Description	This Quarter
	Target missed	2
	Target missed but with in acceptable range	6
	Target achieved or succeeded	5




Graphs and commentary will be offered in the relevant detail section for only those indicators shown with a RAG status of either Amber or Red. Graphs for all indicators are included in Appendix A – Performance Graphs. An asterisk (*) indicates that the indicator is an *improvement* target.

Community Support Services						
Indicator	Annual Target	Q4 Outturn	Q1 Target	Q1 Outturn	RAG	Change
HHA/002 Timelessness of discharging homelessness duty	220 days	154.08 days	220 days	163 days		Downturn
HHA/008 Homelessness presentations decided within 33 days.	90%	85.29%	90%	96.55%		Improved
HHA/016* Average number of days families with children spent in B&B	7	4	7	16.6 days		Downturn see page 25
HHA/017A Average number of days all homeless households spent in B&B	25 days	12.22	25 days	26.70 days		Downturn see page 25
HHA/017B Average number of days all homeless households spent in other temporary accommodation	280 days	237 days	280 days	199.13		Improved

Housing Neighbourhood Management (these indicators relate to section 8.2 of the Improvement Plan)						
Indicator	Annual Target	Q4 Outturn	Q1 Target	Q1 Outturn	RAG	Change
HLS/006a* Rent Collection, Permanent Accommodation	97.50%	95.51%	86.00%	96.29%		Improved see page 16
HLS/012a Current tenant rent arrears	3.00%	3.63%	3.60%	3.98%		Downturn see page 16
HLS/013* Percentage rent loss due to empty property	2.00%	2.32%	2.00%	2.20%		Improved see page 19
HLS/014* Letting Times	42.00 days	51.59 days	42.00 days	44.10 days		Improved see page 20
Housing Asset Management (these indicators relate to section 8.2 of the Improvement Plan)						
Indicator	Annual Target	Q4 Outturn	Q1 Target	Q1 Outturn	RAG	Change
HLS/10a Emergency repairs	0.50 days	0.48 days	0.50 days	0.55 days		Downturn see page 22
HLS/10b Urgent Repairs	8.50 days	9.31 days	8.50 days	8.87 days		Improved see page 22
HLS/10c* Non-urgent repairs	35.00 days	56.42 days	35.00 days	82.16 days		Downturn see page 23
HPMM8 Percentage of gas installations with a valid safety certificate	99.00%	99.35%	99.00%	99.20%		Maintained

















2.3 Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges (SARCs)





The table below summarises the position of SARCs at the end of the reporting period.

RAG	Description
	High Risk
	Medium Risk
	Low Risk

Commentary will be offered in the relevant detail section for only those SARCS that:

- Are showing a Red RAG status
- Where the RAG status has changed since the last reporting period
- Where the Green Predictive Date has changed since the last reporting period
- Where there has been considerable change or additions of secondary risks and activity

SARC	Previous Status	Current Status	Green Predictive
CL04 Affordable Housing			September 2012
CD08 Connah's Quay, Shotton And Queensferry Housing Renewal Area			March 2020
CD12a Housing Strategy (see page 32)			TBC
CD12b Housing Management			TBC
CD12c Housing Repairs And Maintenance Services			April 2013
CD12d Homelessness			TBC
CD12e Sheltered Housing			November 2013
CD14 Housing Ballot			Achieved March 2012

<p>CD26 Disabled Facilities Grants</p>			<p>March 2013</p>
<p>CD38 Welfare Reform (This is a corporate risk. Whilst work is progressing against the SARC and the Welfare Reform Strategy the certainty of the risk and forecasted severity of its impact dictates that this will continue to be shown as red for foreseeable future.)</p>			<p>TBC</p>

2.4 Service Plan

Progress has been made in all areas of the service plan. The following table shows which areas have incurred slippage or have been subject to a revised timetable and references the page number of commentary where applicable:

Improvement Area	On Track	Commentary
Service Wide		
1a Staff Management	✓	
1b Customer Focussed Service	✓	
Neighbourhood Housing Management		
2a Quality of Life in Neighbourhoods	✓	
2b Maximisation of Rental Income	✓	
2c Best use of Housing Stock	✓	
2d Regional Housing Register	✓	
2e Customer Involvement in Neighbourhood Management	✓	
Housing Asset Maintenance		
3a Implement Staff Restructure	x	See page 24
3b Improve Reputation and Performance of Repairs Service	✓	
3c Develop Information on Our Housing Stock	✓	
3d Improve the Quality of Our Housing Stock	✓	
3e Customer Involvement in Housing Asset Management	✓	
Community Support Services		
4a Expanding Community Based Support Services	✓	
4b Homelessness & Advice Services	x	See page 27
4c Service Review	✓	
4d Customer Involvement in Community Support Services	✓	

Housing Renewal		
5a Empty Homes	✓	
5b Private Sector Housing Strategy	✓	
5c Develop the Capacity for Renewal Services	✓	
5d Customer Involvement in Housing Renewal	✓	
Housing Strategy		
6a Local Housing Strategy	✓	
6b Affordable Housing	✓	
6c Performance Support	✓	
6d Business Systems	✓	
6e Customer Involvement in Housing Strategy	✓	

3 People & Customer Indicators

3.1 Sickness & Absence

Community Services Directorate

Within the Community Services Directorate, levels of absence have decreased overall in Quarter 1 to 7.23% in comparison to 7.51% reported in Quarter 4 for period 2011 / 12 into 2012 / 13.

The absence rate for the Directorate has increased slightly when compared with the same period last year. This equates to 3.02 days lost per FTE in 2011/12 compared to 4.12 days lost per FTE at the start of this financial year. The target for the Council has been revised to 9.8 days per FTE and if the trend continues for this financial year the Community Services Directorate is projected to reach 16.48 days lost per FTE which far exceeds the target.

The Community Services Directorate Management Team continues to carry out the actions identified in the Attendance Management Strategy. This includes monitoring attendance on a quarterly basis at DMT and identifying areas where Departmental Attendance reviews are to be conducted. Further work will be carried out within the Directorate to further raise the profile of Attendance Management and the impact of absence on both services and staff who attend work on a regular basis.

Housing Services

When reviewing absence levels by service, levels of absence have decreased in Housing to 5.16% Quarter 1 from 8.90% in Quarter 4. When compared to Quarter 1 absence rates for 2011/12 there has been an increase from 3.98% to 5.16% in 2012/13. This equates to 2.94 days lost per FTE at the end of this period. If this trend continues Housing Services are projected to reach 11.78 days lost per FTE which is above the Council target.

Community Support Services have the highest levels of absence per FTE in Quarter 1 at 3.84 days lost followed by Housing Management at 3.29 days and then Housing Asset Management at 2.81 days lost per FTE.

A number of long term absences resulted in an increase in Quarter 4 across Housing services. These absences have been reviewed and this has had a positive impact on the absence levels in Quarter 1.

The 100% attendance pilot in Housing is continuing and will be reviewed again at year end 2012/13.

3.2 Training & Appraisals

In the 3 months to 30 June 2012 Housing Services staff undertook 248 days of training (compared to 208 days for the same period in 2011/2012). The service is continuing the change of emphasis with more time being taken up on training linked to customer service.

The following qualifications are currently being undertaken during this quarter:

- 2 x FdSc Housing Studies
- 1 x FdSc Applied Computing
- 1 x BA (Hons) Advice Studied (Distance Learning)
- 7 x NVQ Level 2 - Customer Service
- 1 x NVQ Level 3 – Management
- 2 x NVQ Level 3 – Business Administration
- 2 x Level 3 Awards in Understanding the Principles and Practice of Assessment

In the 12 months between 1 July 2011 and 30 June 2012, 50% of staff have had appraisals. The breakdown for each service area is as follows:

Team	Done	Due	%
Senior Management Team	6	7	86%
NHM South	10	13	77%
NHM North, East & Income	20	32	63%
Repairs	61	164	37%
Community Support Services	37	54	69%
Renewal	10	15	67%
Strategy	1	4	25%
Total	145	289	50%

It has been a made priority for all service areas to focus on completing appraisals and this will be subject to regular review by the head of service.

3.3 Customer involvement

The service is celebrating its success in gaining first prize in a TPAS Cymru Award this year for mainstreaming tenant involvement. We aim to continue build on this work, and over the course of this year, the service is improving customer involvement across all teams.

To this end a Customer Involvement Group has been formed with representatives from all service areas who are working their way through a programme of workshops and discussions to ensure customers are put at the heart of all services.

Group members are to work alongside managers and teams to develop customer involvement plans for their service areas. Also, by creating a link between customer involvement and service plans we ensure that it is subject to robust reporting processes and that members are informed of our achievements.

It is pleasing to note that each service area has identified a specific area of work for customers to shape and influence. Examples of these include:

Neighbourhood Housing Management	An east area tenants forum will be developed to gain a better understanding of resident's views, needs and priorities to help guide future delivery of services and initiatives. The Forum will focus on improving the quality of life for local people and reducing crime and anti social behaviour.
Repairs & Maintenance	"Village Voices" will be developed who will assist in the identification and reporting of repairs issues in their communities and act as local champions/liasons between the customer and the repair and maintenance service.
Neighbourhood Renewal	A wide range of stakeholders will be invited to share their views and influence the development of an Empty Homes Strategy and Policy to help the service identify solutions for bringing the counties empty homes back into use.

Customer involvement is not required for its own sake but for the improvement it can bring to the quality of services. It is hoped that by engaging customers in these projects the service will be able to raise satisfaction levels, improve standards and deliver a more efficient service.





3.4 Complaints

It is disappointing to see that the number of complaints answered within 10 day deadline of 70% is under the 80% target. Of these complaints 67% were about repairs and these accounted for 44% of the out of target responses. All teams will be giving complaints additional priority in the coming quarter.

4 Neighbourhood Management

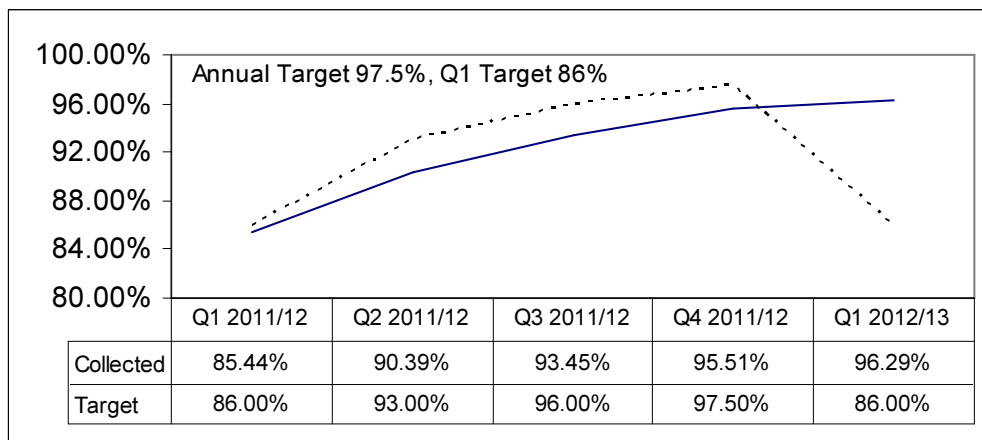
4.1 Performance Commentary

The targets (with the exception of HLS/006a) were not met for the following indicators for Neighbourhood Management:

-  **HLS/006a**
Rent Collection, Permanent Accommodation
-  **HLS/012a**
Current tenant rent arrears
-  **HLS/013**
Percentage rent loss due to empty property
-  **HLS/014**
Letting Times

Supporting information for these indicators is provided below:

HLS/006a Rent Collection, Permanent Accommodation



An upward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

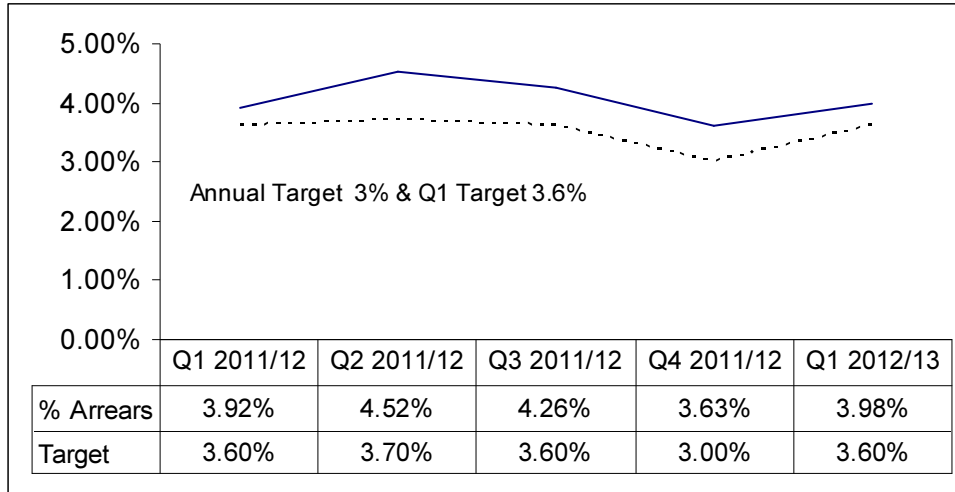
We have reviewed the way that we previously calculated and reported on this performance indicator. Based on the HouseMark guidance for this performance indicator, we are reporting 96.29% of rent collected for Q1. This figure represents the percentage of rent collected that was due for current tenants.

Whilst this figure shows a marked increase against the Q1 11/12 figure, this is felt to be a much fairer reflection on how we are doing and will mean that the Q2, Q3 and Q4 figures will not be subject to the large incremental performance indicator increases reported in previous years. This will also enable us to consider benchmarking against other organisations through HouseMark.

In relation to former tenant rent arrears, the Q1 figure was 1.28% of the total rent collectable for the year. As contained within the 2011/12 Service Plan, work is continuing with the Procurement Unit to tender for an outside collection agency to

recover former tenant rent arrears, so it is anticipated that we will be reporting an improved performance in this area later in the year.

HLS/012a Current tenant rent arrears



A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

The quarter 1 performance figure of 3.98% compares well with the Q1 2010/11 figure of 3.92%. This Q1 current tenant arrears figure of £1.21m, when compared to the Q1 2010/11 figure of £1.14k.

However, as stated in the commentary for HLS006, if we take into account the Direct Debit payment which for 2010/11 fell within the Q1 figures, then we would have been reporting a difference of approximately £20k.

Due to the Direct Debit payment falling into wk14, the below banding table shows the wk14 comparison (rather than wk13), as this gives a much clearer snapshot of the current rent arrears situation.

Arrears Band	No of Accounts WK 14 11/12	No of Accounts WK 14 12/13	Total Amount Outstanding WK14 11/12	Total Amount Outstanding WK14 12/13
0-300	3,583	3,051	£275,769.50	£249,649.08
300-600	496	446	£212,402.25	£189,055.69
600-1000	247	257	£192,210.74	£201,390.14
1000-2000	209	209	£289,521.57	£290,168.09
2000-3000	63	76	£152,295.26	£179,262.67
3000-4000	18	22	£61,682.25	£73,990.60
4000-5000	6	12	£27,307.72	£53,712.49
5000-6000	1	1	£5,008	£5,651.30
6000-7000	1	-	£6,211	-
7000-8000	-	1	-	£7,633.84
Total	4624	4075	£1,222,408.29	1,250,513.90

The above banding table shows that:

- The overall number of rent accounts in arrears has continued to reduce;
- The number of accounts owing less than £1,000 has continued to reduce;
- The number of rent accounts over £1,000 has increased;
- The case showing in the £7,000-8,000 banding was due to a large Housing Benefit deduction being made direct from a rent account – this deduction has subsequently been reversed so it no longer affects the rent arrears outstanding balance;
- The largest arrears case has fallen a banding.

The Income Team are continuing to concentrate on two particular areas during 2012/13:

- Continuing the good work in tackling low level rent arrears cases;
- Reducing the number of arrears cases owing over £1k.

The 2012/13 targets for both individual and Income Team levels has been set at a 10% reduction in the end of year figure. This equates to a target figure of £950k, which would be a reduction in monetary terms of £105k. Whilst this is seen as a challenging target, the reduction in rent arrears over the past 5 months would indicate that this is an achievable target.

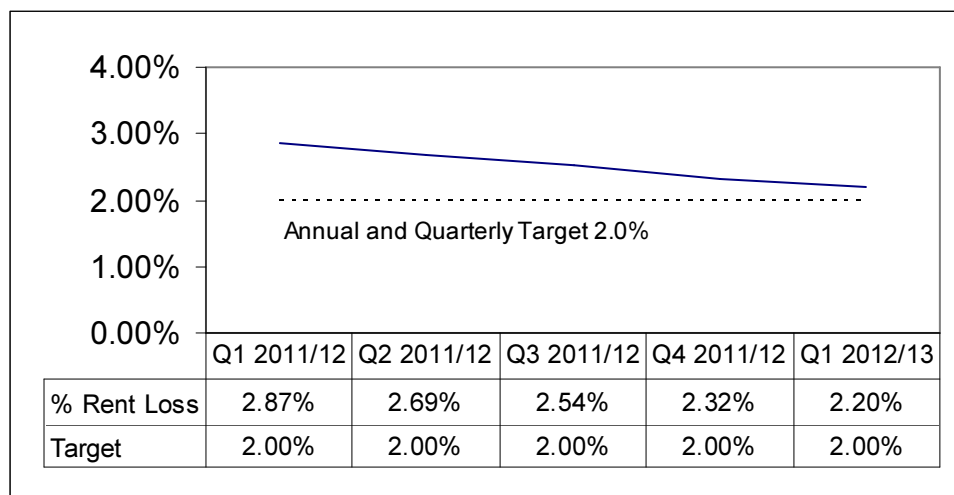
As contained within the 2011/12 Service Plan, work is continuing with the Procurement Unit to tender for an outside collection agency to recover former tenant rent arrears.

Work is also ongoing to identify the names and addresses of the current tenants who will be affected by the introduction of the Welfare Reform Act and in particular, the reduction of Housing Benefit for any working age tenants who are under occupying their home by one of more bedrooms. There is also a North East Wales project which is looking at ways that housing organisations (including Flintshire CC) can reduce the impact of Welfare Reform. It is clear that policy decisions will need to be made in the

near future on how the authority will deal with any tenants who have a shortfall in their Housing Benefit payments due to the introduction of the Welfare Reform Act.

Overall analysis of the figures shows that performance is expected to continue steadily improving through Q2 and Q3.

HLS/013 Percentage rent loss due to empty property



A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

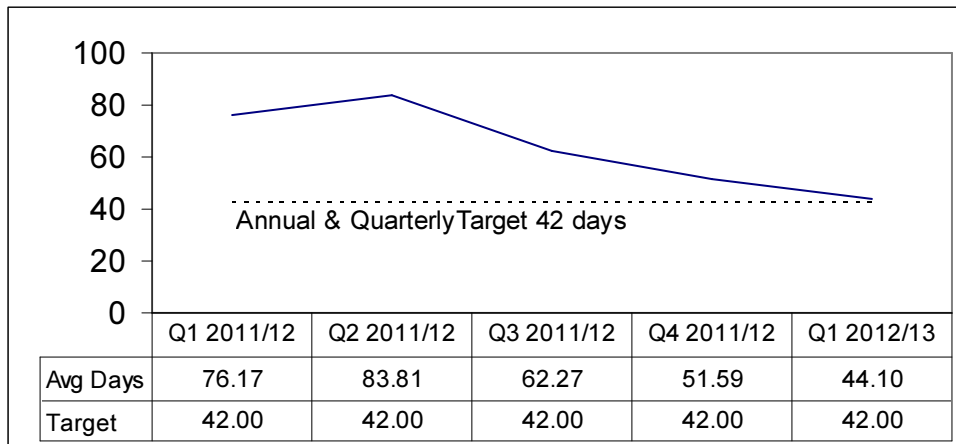
It is pleasing to see that the quarter 1 performance shows continued and sustainable improvement against last years quarterly figures. The Q1 performance of 2.20% a reduction in the rent loss compared to the Q1 11/12 figure of 2.87% and the Q4 11/12 figure of 2.32%.

There were a total of 134 lets for Q1 12/13, which is a decrease when compared to the previous quarter (Q4) total lets of 156. The analysis below shows that there was an increase in the number of properties that became void during Q1 (compared to the previous quarter), but that the overall number of lets over the past 12 months has been higher than the number of properties that have become void.

Quarter	Became vacant	No of lets
Q1 12/13	147	134
Q4 11/12	136	149
Q3 11/12	137	160
Q2 11/12	126	125
Total	546	568

It is clear that to continue improving performance in void rent loss and to ultimately reach the year end target set of 2%, the number of lets need to be at a higher level than the number of new voids for the remainder of the year.

HLS/014 Letting Times



A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

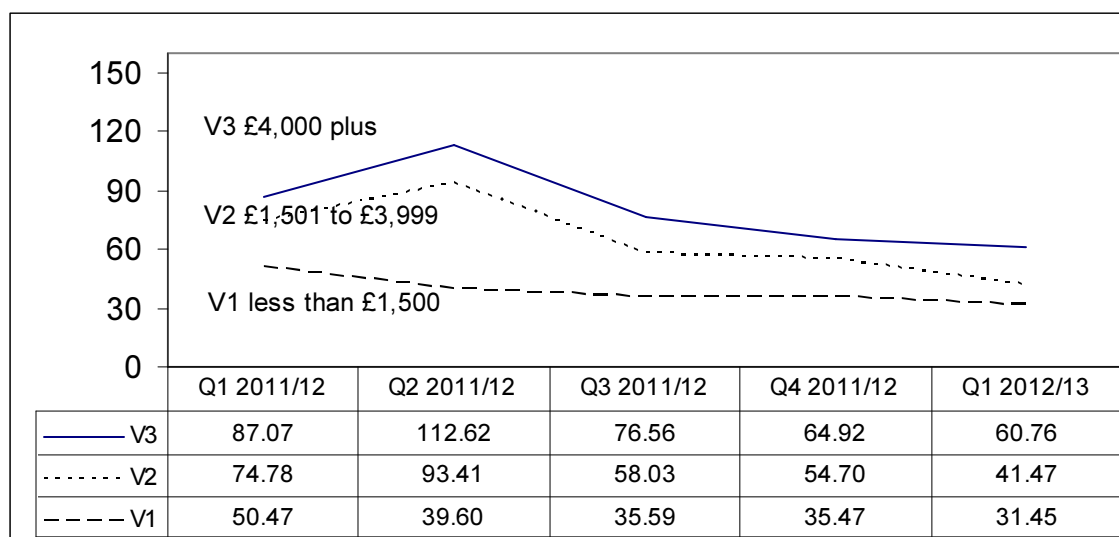
It is pleasing to note that the overall figure for the turnover on day to day voids has again improved from Q4 to Q1 by over 7 days, which is a significant reduction from the Q4 performance and takes the performance very close to the target of 42 days.

As reported previously, we are no longer replacing kitchens automatically in empty properties. Neighbourhood Housing Officers are also still continuing to let properties and give 1 rent free week where necessary to ensure the tenant has time to decorate, connect to gas and electrics supplies, and order oil without impacting on void times. Both of these initiatives have had a positive effect on performance.

The table below shows the numbers of days (rounded) for each stage of the letting process.

	Waiting Days	Work Days	Letting Days
Q4 2010/11	24	32	22
Q1 2011/12	30	30	15
Q2 2011/12	37	31	16
Q3 2011/12	25	26	11
Q4 2011/12	18	22	11
Q1 2012/13	15	21	7

As can be seen above, the average duration for all three areas have reduced. In particular, the average number of days to let a property has reduced down to the original target set of 7 days. This is a reflection of the hard work and focus of the Neighbourhood Housing teams in letting properties within the 7 days target, wherever possible.



The above graph shows the biggest improvement in V2's, but there have been improvements in all three categories.

There were 14 void properties during Q1 which cost over £6k to repair and as such have not been included in the above performance figures, as they are being considered as major repairs.

V2 properties (costing between £999 and £3,499 to repair) were again the biggest group in Q1 (as with Q4) with 55 properties, compared to 17 V3 properties and 11 V1 properties.

This performance indicator still remains a priority for both the Housing Asset Management service and the Neighbourhood Management service.

4.2 Service Plan Updates

Progress is being made in line with the service plan in this area without exception.



4.3 Internal and External Regulatory Reports

No reports for this section.

5 Housing Asset Maintenance

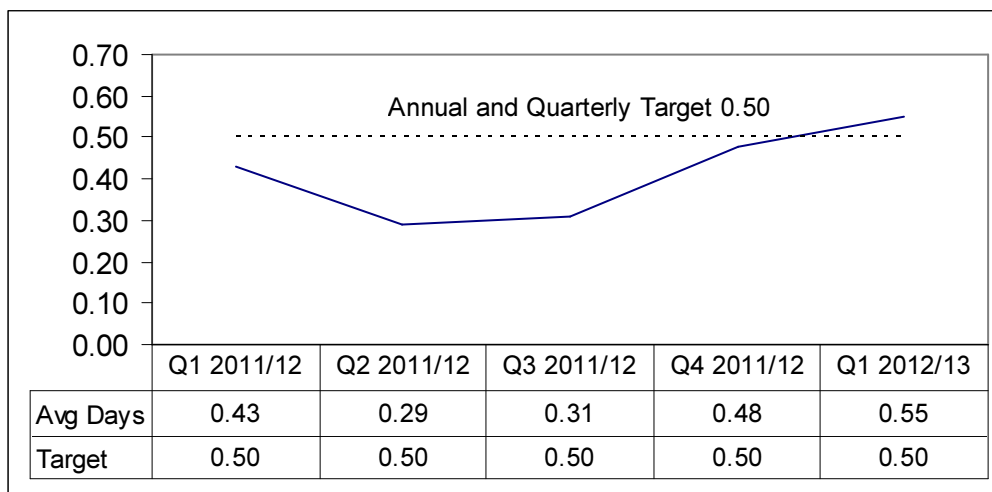
5.1 Performance Commentary

It is pleasing to note that performance in the emergency and urgent categories has improved from quarter 2. Targets were not met for the following indicators for Housing Asset Management:

-  **HLS/10a**
Emergency repairs
-  **HLS/10b**
Urgent repairs
-  **HLS/10c**
Non-urgent repairs

Supporting information for these indicators is provided below:

HLS/10a Emergency Repairs



A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

The outturn of 0.55 days in emergency repairs has narrowly missed the target of 0.5 days. The reason for the downturn this quarter can be attributed to staff training and the implementation of mobile working.

Staff training on the use of mobile technology has had a detrimental effect on performance across all three priorities. The table below shows a significant increase in the total hours spent on training last year and in this quarter alone an additional 237 hours has been spent on training that is attributable to mobile working.

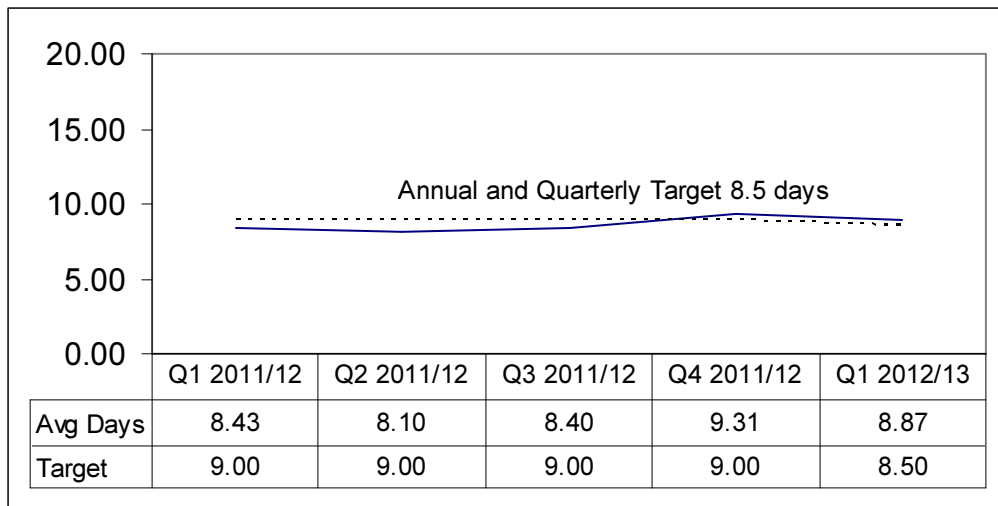
Training Days Comparison					
2010/11	2011/12	Increase	Q1 2011/12	Q1 2012/13	Increase
1375	3092	124.87%	694	931	34.14%

In addition to this a substantial amount of time has also been lost through the malfunctioning of the mobile software, which on occasions can suspend hundreds of

job tickets in the ether. It requires the operative with a validations sitting at a terminal trawling through job tickets to manually retrieve the information from the system.

The software supplier, Capita, have issued us with a new version which should resolve the issues. The new version is currently being tested prior to its implementation which is scheduled for the end of August.

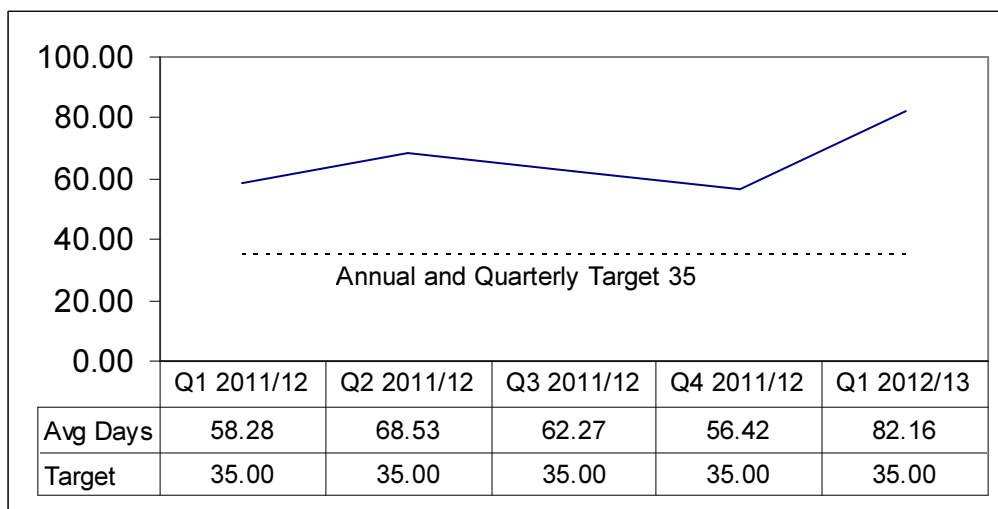
HLS/10b Urgent repairs



A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

The outturn of 8.87 days in non-urgent repairs whilst narrowly missing this year's more ambitious target of 8.5 days does represent a significant improvement on the Q4 outturn of 9.31 days. It must also be noted that staff training for the implementation of mobile working has reduced productivity in this quarter as explained in HLS/10a above.

HLS/10c Non-urgent repairs



A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

Work continues to address the backlog of non-urgent repairs and as expected the success of this has reflected negatively in the outturn this quarter due to the older jobs distorting the average. However as shown from the following table when

splitting the backlog from the day to day repairs it can be seen that the average time for the new jobs is well within the target.

Q1 Breakdown of Non-Urgent Repairs	Number of jobs	Average Days
Backlog of repairs	1249	182.91
Day to day repairs	1770	11.06

The number of out of target non urgent repairs is currently C500, which on an annual jobs completed figure of 46,000 is about 3 days work. These jobs have been prioritised for completion over the last few months and those jobs which are planned works but have been incorrectly classified as non urgent repairs have been collated and options to address these are currently being prepared.

The jobs completed out of target range from 35 to 858 days, the majority of which are between 35 and 400 days, however, there are a number of very old jobs that have been completed that have had a significant effect on the overall average.

5.2 Service Plan Updates

Work continues on all areas of the service plan for this area. Below is commentary on areas of deviation from the timetable of delivery of the service plan.

3a) Implement Staff Restructure

The plan to remove vehicles from some staff members by the end of June has met strong opposition from trade unions and is currently subject to an appeal, the removal of vehicles is linked to the implementation of the restructure, which is now anticipated to be end of September subject to the receipt of job grades from the JEQ team.

5.3 Internal and External Regulatory Reports

No reports for this section.

6 Community Support Services

6.1 Performance Commentary

It is pleasing to see despite both the increased demand for accommodation and the decreased availability of suitable and affordable accommodation in the private rented sector that we are managing to maintain a Green RAG status on the majority of our indicators. Unfortunately the following indicators are a casualty of the current economic climate this quarter:



HHA/016

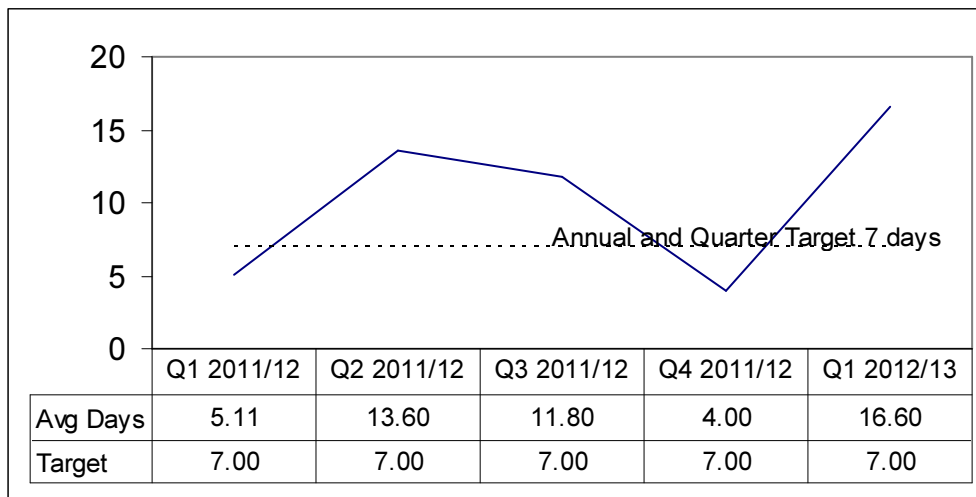
Average number of days families with children spent in B&B



HHA/017A

Average number of days all homeless households spent in B&B

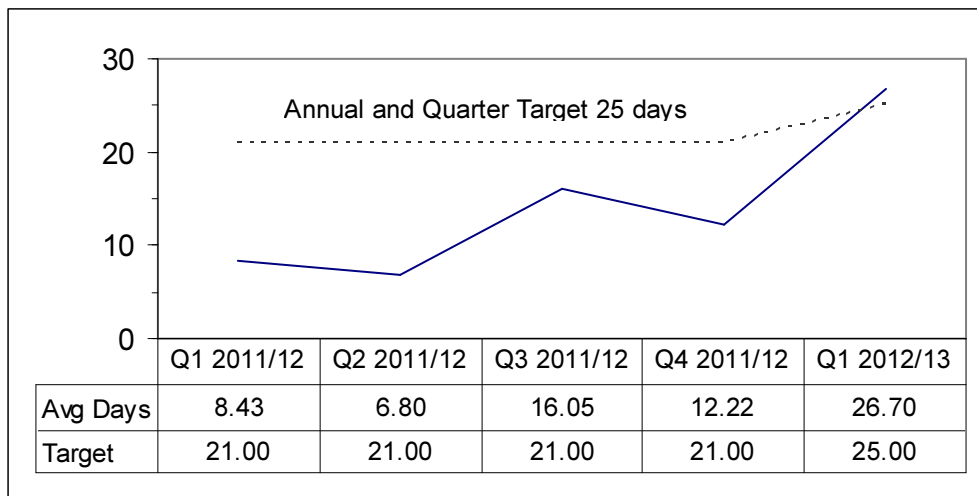
HHA/016 Average number of days families with children spent in B&B



A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

In total there were 5 households placed in bed & breakfast during this quarter. Four families were moved on to more appropriate alternative accommodation within 2 weeks, however, there were particular health issues with one family which meant that a lengthy stay in bed and breakfast was unavoidable.

HHA/017a Average number of days all homeless households spent in B&B



A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

This quarter the client base contained a large proportion of single households who are becoming increasingly harder to place due to a shortage of accommodation. It must be noted that Bed & Breakfast is the only form of temporary accommodation available to this client group.

We aim to reduce the time people stay in bed & breakfast accommodation by using our own stock as temporary housing. We have currently identified 5 properties across the County consisting of 2 family size houses and 3 properties suitable for single people. These properties will be available to let within quarter 2. In addition a further 3 bed property has been made available as shared accommodation, specifically for young people. This property is affordable and allows them to move on from hostel accommodation. It is worth remembering that we still need to look at the further utilisation of our own stock at particular the re-designation of some of our sheltered housing stock.

6.2 Service Plans

Progress is being made in line with the service plan in this area without exception.

6.3 Internal and External Regulatory Reports

No reports for this section.

7 Income Maximisation Unit

7.1 General Update

Successes

- The social security benefits and tax credits income generated for residents by successful welfare rights interventions totalled £600,000. This figure comprises of £500,000 in on-going annual payments and £100,000 in one-off lump sum payments.
- Over 400 Flintshire residents received specialist advice and assistance from a welfare rights worker with their welfare benefit and/or tax credit problem. Of these residents, 88 received advice and representation in connection with appealing an adverse decision on their benefit entitlement before a First-Tier Tribunal.

Challenges

- *Impact of the Welfare Reform Act 2012* - effectively managing the increased demand from Flintshire residents who are experiencing changes to their welfare benefit entitlement. At the end of June 2012, there were 112 residents on the caseworker service waiting list.
- *Increased Government funding to the Court Service to reduce the UK wide backlog of appeals* – the Court Service with their additional resources are now preparing appeals quicker. However, the specialist caseworker service, due to the increasing number of requests from residents for assistance with appealing adverse decisions, is struggling to gather medical/other supporting evidence and prepare the appellant's submission, etc, before the appeal is listed for hearing by the Court Service.

Future

- Maximising the use of advice resources within internal/external services through effective partnership working and through the development of initiatives being progressed by the Flintshire Advice Management Board, such as the 'Single Access Gateway'.
- Undertake a lean review of the Advice and Homelessness service – examining the journey of customers who access the caseworker service and developing an integrated database.

7.2 Service Plan Updates

4b Homeless & Advice Services

Progress is being made in line with the service plan in this area with the exception of the recruitment of a programme manager to run four projects aimed at mitigating the impact of welfare reform.

As no suitable candidates were found through the recruitment process current management resource is being used (part-time) from both the Housing Benefit and Housing Options to lead on the projects. This will be supported through other staff members as needed.

8 Housing Renewal

8.1 General Update

The Housing Renewal area continues to build on the good work delivered last year. The following areas are worth highlighting this quarter:

Countywide Home Repair and Renovations

The Service continues to deliver home repair and renovation support across the County. During this quarter 28 people came forward requesting assistance. 18 property surveys were undertaken and scheduled work will now be taken forward for loan support. A total of 8 loans were completed during this quarter, with a total work value of £85,282. Enquiries for support have seen a small decrease from the last quarter and the service will be exploring promotional activities alongside the launch of the new equity and non equity repayment loans during quarter 2.

Delivery of Disabled Adaptations

Performance in this area continues to improve, with the average number of days from referral to Housing Renewal to completion on site of 98 days compared to 240 days in quarter 2 of last year. This significant improvement can be attributed to a review of the disabled adaptations process, which identified areas where delay could easily be addressed. An example of a change made was that staff from Housing Renewal now complete grant applications with service users to ensure accurate information and timely return whereas previously it is estimated that this saves at least 20 working days. A total of 67 disabled adaptations were completed during the quarter.

Connah's Quay, Shotton and Queensferry Renewal Area

The existing Group Repair contract came to an end during this Quarter, with a total number of 104 properties completed since work first began. A tender has been put together for a new contractor to deliver the 2nd Phase of the Group repair scheme and to date 120 of the 180 eligible properties have been surveyed. The tender exercise will be completed in September, with the aim that contractors will be appointed and start work on site during Quarter 3. The tender documentation ensures that maximum use of both local labour and supply chains takes place. There will also be provision made for local apprenticeships as part of the ongoing work. A further commitment to promoting opportunities for local people is included within our environmental schemes, which have received 132 hours of work from volunteers and 36 hours work by local school children in this Quarter.

Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP)

The energy efficiency measures being installed as part of Phase 2 of the CESP programme comprising Connah's Quay and Greenfield commenced in this Quarter. A total of 16 new heating systems and 3 external wall insulations took place. A further 190 properties have been surveyed and 38 additional enquiries have been received. There was a total Council spend of £66,500 in this Quarter and an additional £41,954 of CESP monies were levered in from NPower. All CESP works must be completed by the end of Quarter 3 before the introduction of a replacement funding mechanism. The vast majority of the CESP work will take place in the next Quarter and a more detailed report will be provided at that stage.

Empty Homes

Welsh Government have finalised the arrangements for delivery of the national House into Homes Initiative. Funding of £10m is being provided for interest free loans across Wales, with the aim of returning 5000 long term vacant properties back in to use over the next 5 years. The funding will be devolved across the 6 regions and Flintshire has been asked to lead for North Wales region. This will involve the Housing Service managing a £2.4m recycling loan fund across the region, which includes Flintshire's share valued at £482K. In terms of the scheme, Flintshire has already received expressions of interest from 9 property owners, with total loans valued at £475K. Those applications need to be assessed to ensure they meet the scheme criteria. However, assuming they do, Flintshire's allocation is already committed and a waiting list will be prepared.

Work has progressed on the enhancing the empty homes service for the county. A data cleansing exercise as seen all properties suspected as being empty across the county surveyed. Just short of 1400 properties have been surveyed based on council tax data. From the surveys 882 properties have been closed on the empty homes system. The actual number of properties identified as empty is 554, these are now subject to the empty homes procedures aimed at bringing them back into use.

8.2 Service Plan Updates

Progress is being made in line with the service plan in this area without exception.

8.3 Internal and External Regulatory Reports

No reports for this section.

9 Housing Strategy

9.1 General Update

The following are brief updates on Housing Strategies main functions:

Local Housing Strategy

Work on the Local Housing Strategy progresses and will be presented to Scrutiny Committee in September

Gypsy & Travellers

The work on meeting the needs of the Gypsy & Traveller community in Flintshire remains a priority for this service area.

Excellent work has been carried out by the Housing Options Team in developing a good working relationship with the occupants and management of the Riverside site. Housing Strategy is currently seeking solutions to ensure a management agreement is put into place acceptable to both the authority and the gypsy council.

The results of the North Wales Gypsy & Traveller Needs Assessment, will be reported to members in autumn

Affordable Housing

The delivery of affordable housing for the county is progressing well, with 16 properties both delivered and completed on between March and June this year. Thirty more properties are scheduled for delivery by November with 14 of these already allocated to people registered on the Affordable Homeownership Register.

The following provision for affordable housing from private developers has been secured through the planning process:

- 140 shared equity units (council retains 30% equity)
- 26 gifted units
- £700k in commuted sums

The timetable for the development of these schemes is dependent on external factors such as the economic climate and the availability of mortgage products.

Work also continues successfully to market affordable housing initiatives including the delivery of the county's second Homebuyers Fair to be held 8 September 2012. In Q1 66 new registrations were accepted onto the register bringing the current total to 255.

Performance Support

Work is underway to explore opportunities and implement new benchmarking arrangements for the service along with the enhancing management information arrangements for all service areas.

Specific projects to support performance and service improvements across the county include new lean reviews, improvement of procedures and IT systems for empty homes, and supporting the roll out of CBASS to replace the warden service.

Business Systems

Current work in this area includes enhancements to the IBS system to support the continued rollout of mobile working and enhancing the reporting functionality of the system.

9.2 Service Plan Updates

Progress is being made in line with the service plan in this area without exception.

9.3 Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges (SARCs)

CD12a Housing Strategy

The development of the Local Housing Strategy is progressing and is due for presentation to Scrutiny Committee in September 2012.

Housing Strategy represents the authority on a number regional and local boards to identify and develop opportunities between housing, the economy, health and the environment. Whilst the Local Housing Strategy will indirectly influence the plans, these areas still require focus. It will be a priority to formalise requirements and plans to address these areas over the next quarter.

It must be recognised that although not linked to strategic work there does exist pockets of good practice across Housing some examples in relation to housing and the economy are as follows:

- Apprenticeships opportunities – tendering for the programme of capital works to council stock is creating apprenticeship opportunities for local people.
- Housing Renewal – tendering for phase 2 of the renewal area seeks to make use of local labour and suppliers.
- Affordable Homeownership – work with private developers is delivering affordable housing for the county without use of public funds, through the use planning legislation.

CD14 Housing Ballot

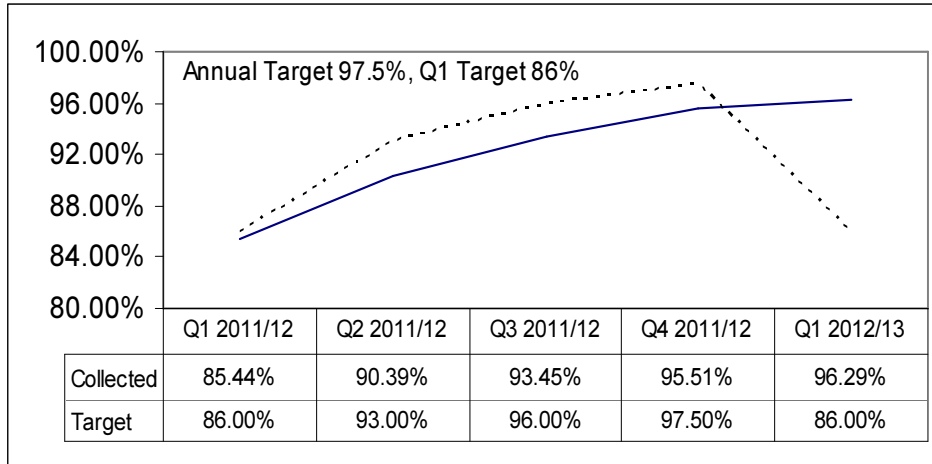
The housing ballot was concluded in March 2012 with the council's tenants voting to remain with Flintshire County Council. The Council will continue to maximise housing investment and improve services.

9.4 Internal and External Regulatory Reports

No reports for this section.

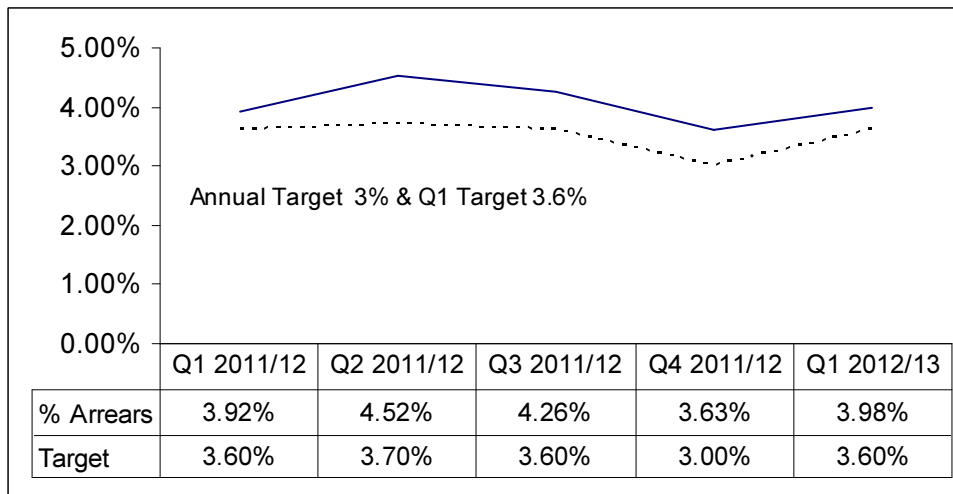
Appendix A – Performance Graphs

HLS/006a Rent Collection, Permanent Accommodation



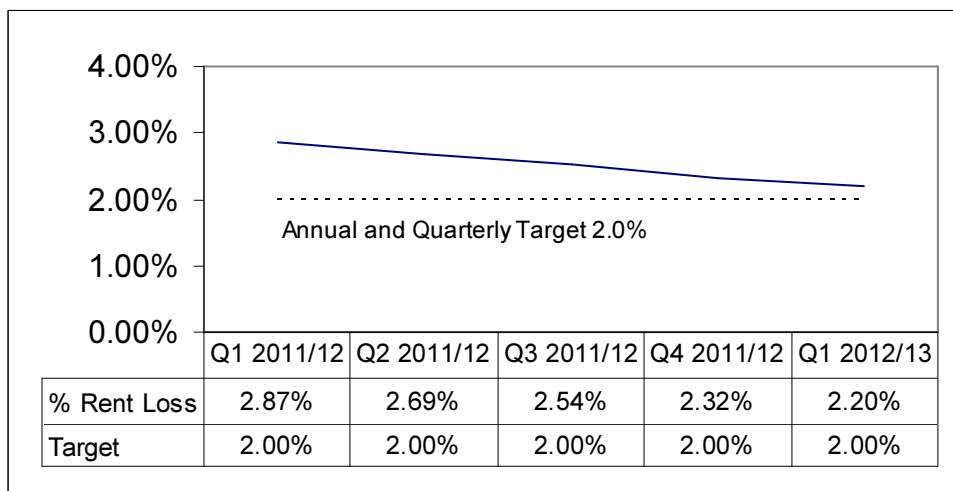
An upward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HLS/012a Current tenant rent arrears



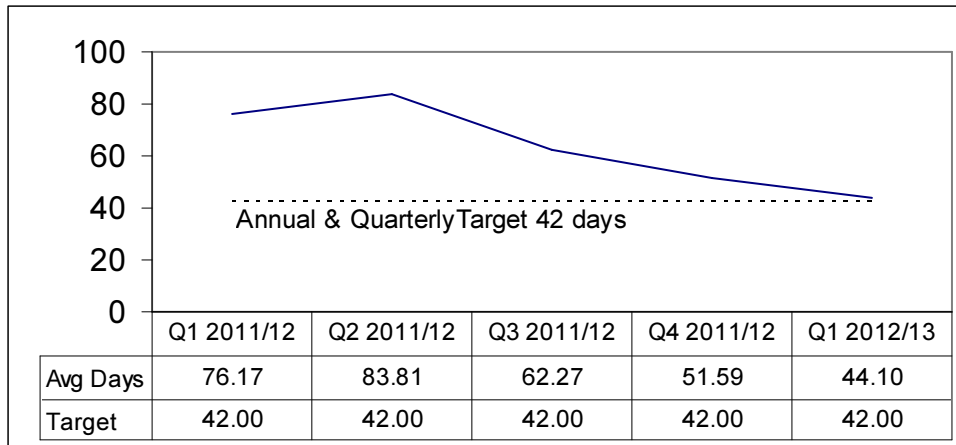
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HLS/013 Percentage rent loss due to empty property



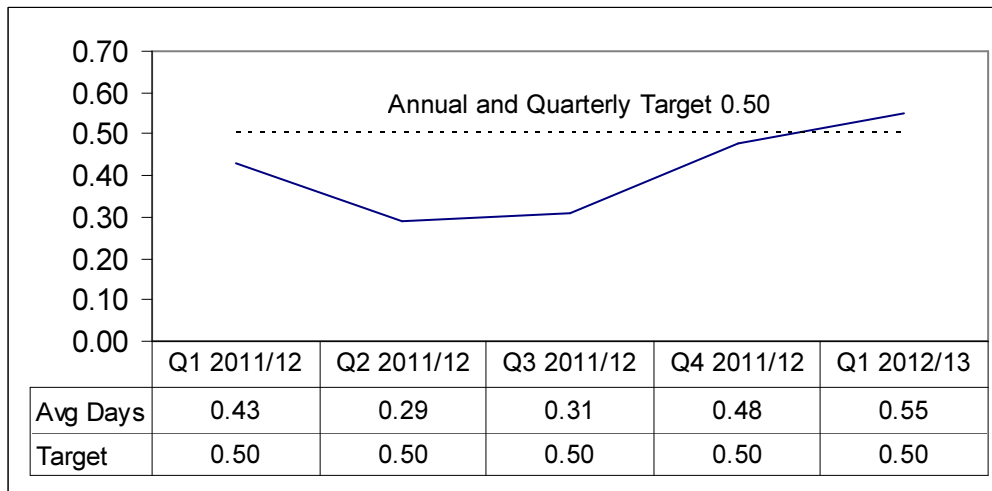
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HLS/014 Letting Times



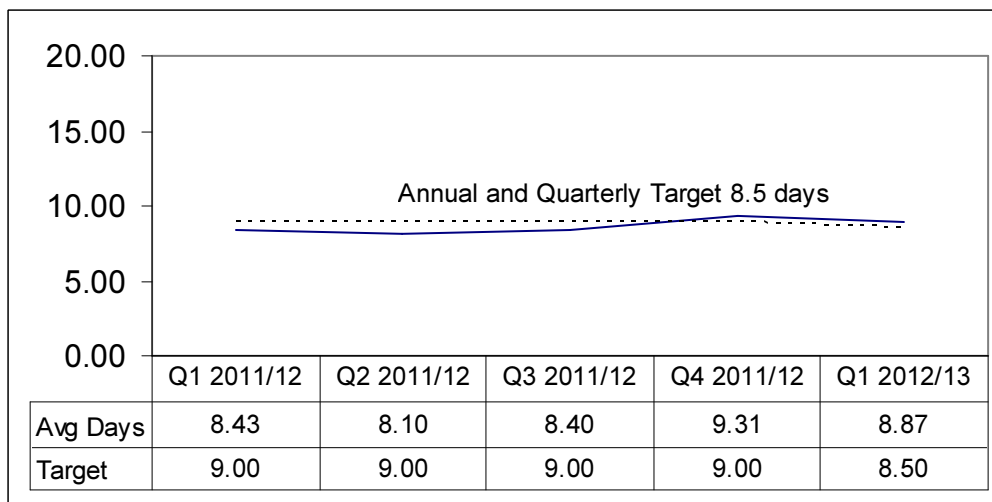
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HLS/10a Emergency Repairs



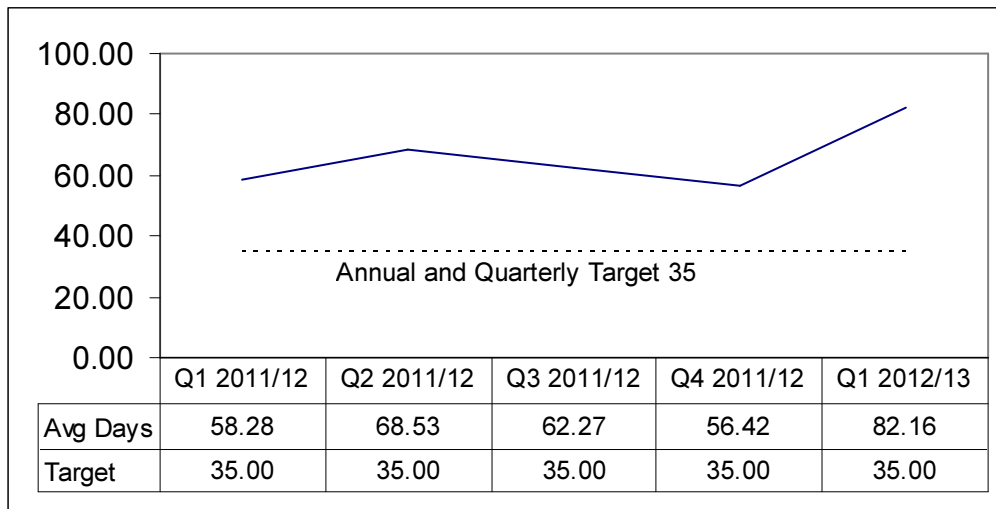
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HLS/10b Urgent Repairs



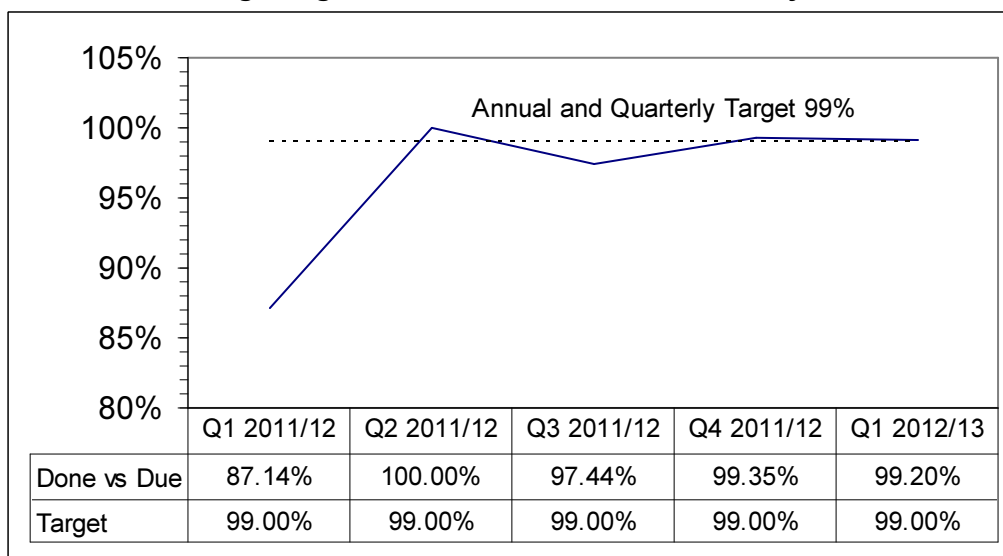
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HLS/10c Non-urgent repairs



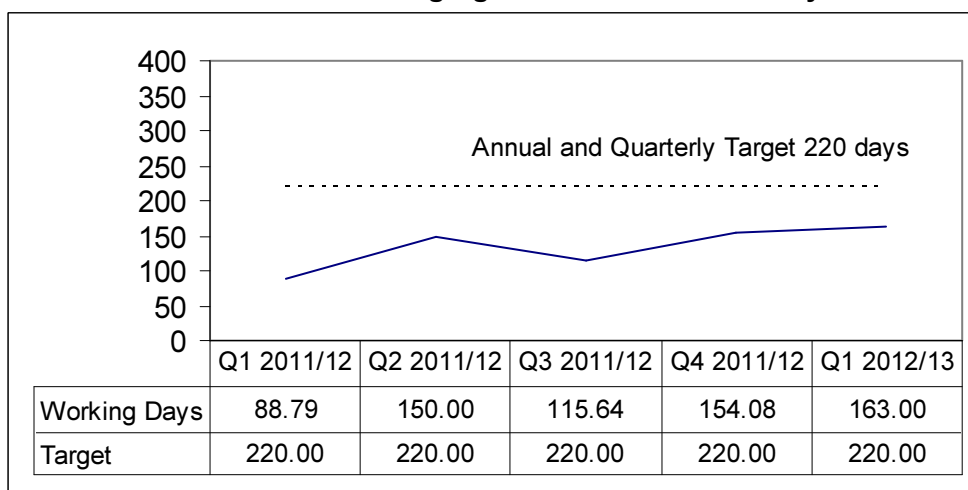
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HPMM8 Percentage of gas installations with a valid safety certificate



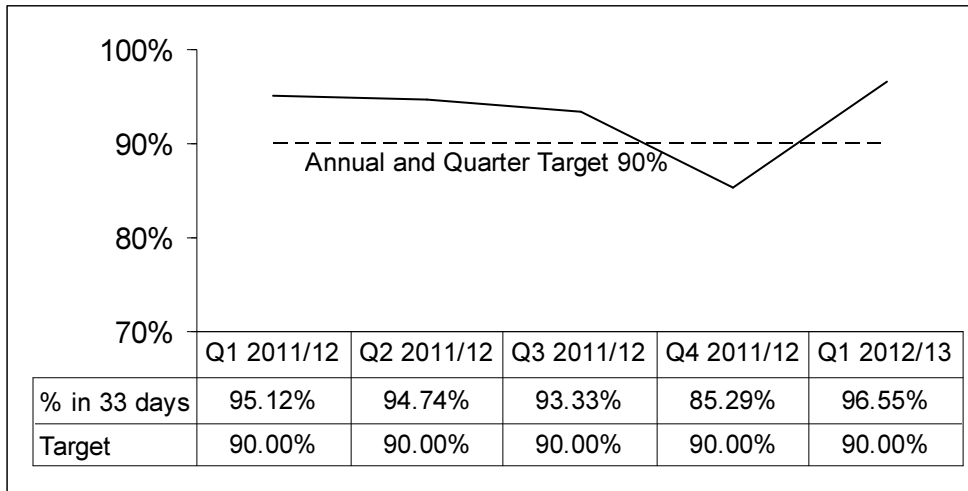
An upward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HHA/002 Timeliness of discharging full homelessness duty



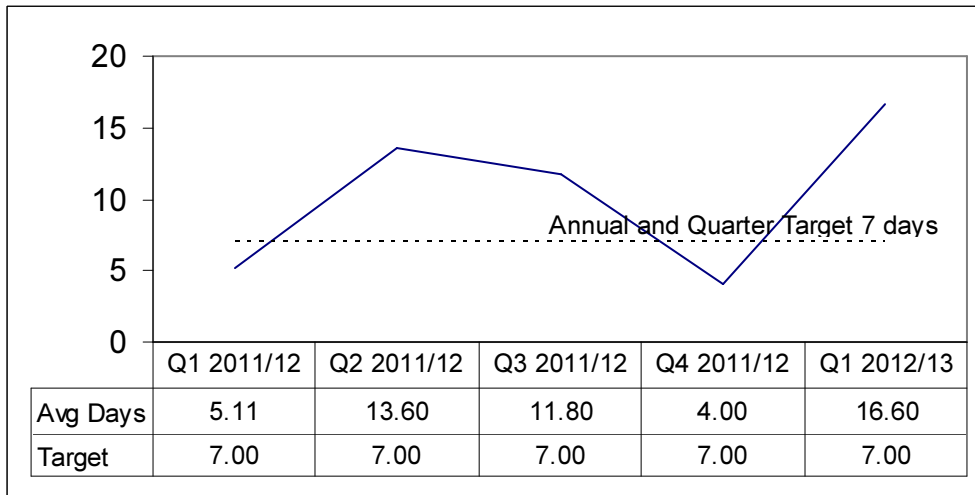
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HHA/008 Homelessness presentations decided within target



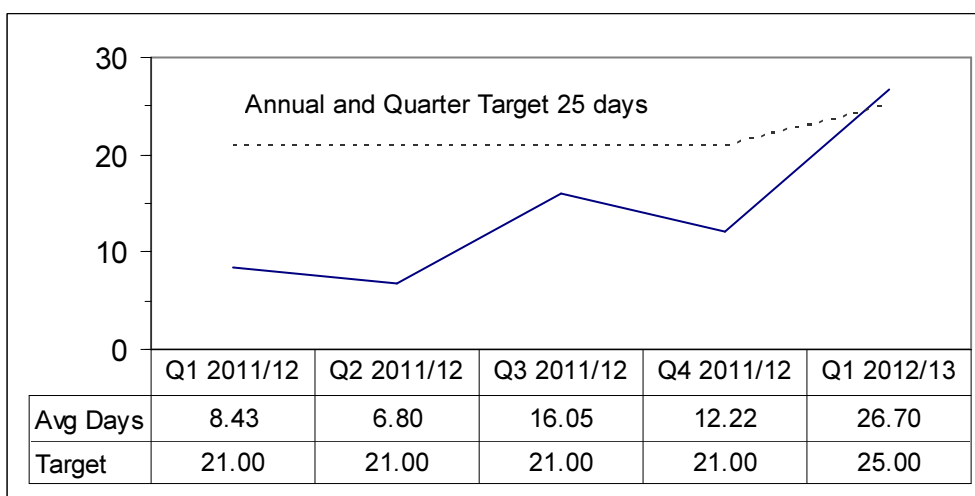
An upward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HHA/016 Average number of days families with children spent in B&B accommodation



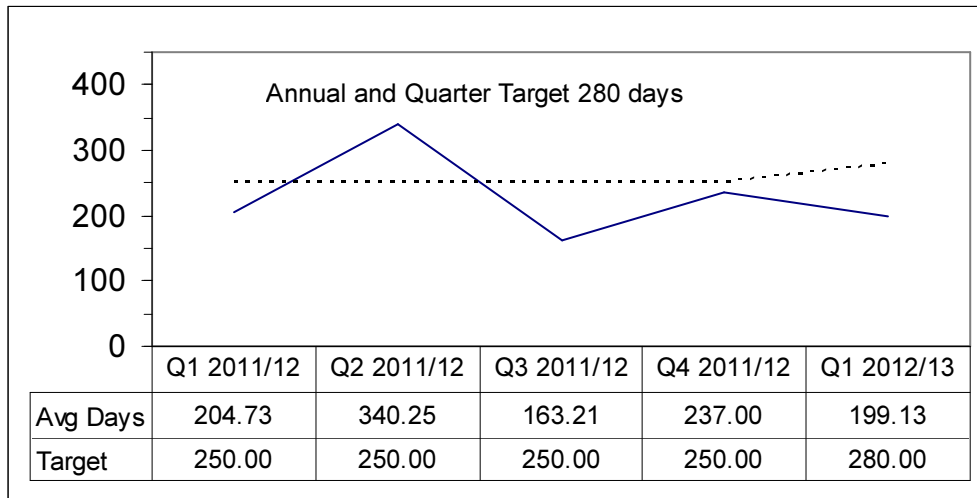
A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HHA/017a Average number of days all homeless households spent in B&B accommodation



A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

HHA017b Average days all homeless households spent in other temporary accommodation



A downward direction of travel in this graph represents an improvement.

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Strategic Assessment of Risks & Challenges' RAG Summary (Refresh)

Risk Title		2012-2013						Predictive Green/Amber
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1		
Risk Reference	Community Leadership	June 11	Sept 11	Dec 11	Mar 12	June 12	Predictive Green/Amber	
CL04	Affordable Housing	A	A	A	A	A	SEP 2012	
CL05	Social Care For Older People	A	A	A	A	A	TBC	
CL07	Relationship with Local Health Board & Public & Primary Health	A	A	A	A	A	APR 2013	
CL08	Climate Change & Flood Risk Management	A		A	A	A	TBC	
CL09	Economic Regeneration	A	A	A	A	A	TBC	
CL10	County Town Network Regeneration & Protection	G	G	G	G	G	FEB 2011	
CL11	Integrated and Public Transport Infrastructure (External)	A	A	A	A	A	DEC 2013	
CL12	Skills Needs of Employers	A	A	G	G	G	OCT 2011	
CL14	North Wales Regional Waste Treatment Partnership	A		A	A	A	2016/17	
CL15	Clwyd Theatr Cymru (CTC)	A	A	A	A	A	JUL 2012	
Risk Reference	Council Delivery	June 11	Sept 11	Dec 11	Mar 12	June 12	Predictive Green/Amber	
CD02	Streetscene	A	A	A	A	A	DEC 2012	
CD03	Transision from UDP to LDP	A	A	G	G	A	SEPT 2017	
CD04	Planning Protocol	G	G	G	G	G	MAR 2012	
CD05	Highways Infrastructure	A	A	A	A	A	TBC	
CD06	Transport Arrangments For Service Users	A	A	A	A	A	DEC 2013	
CD07	Depot Provision	A	A	A	A	A	DEC 2014	
CD08	Connah's Quay, Shotton & Deeside Housing Renewal Area	A	A	A	A	A	MAR 2020	
CD10a	Leisure - Revenue Funding		R	R	R	R	TBC	
CD10b	Leisure - Capital Projects		A	A	A	A	TBC	
CD10c	Leisure - Play Strategy		A	A	A	A	TBC	
CD12a	Housing Strategy	A	A	A	A	A	TBC	
CD12b	Housing Management	A	A	A	A	A	TBC	
CD12c	Housing Repairs and Maintenance Services	A	A	A	A	A	APR 2013	
CD12d	Homelessness	A	A	A	A	A	TBC	
CD12e	Sheltered Housing	A	A	A	A	A	NOV 2013	
CD14	Housing Ballot	A	A	A	G	G	MAR 2012	
CD19	Gypsies and Travellers	A	A	A	A	A	TBC	
CD20	School Buildings/School modernisation	R		R	R	R	2018	
CD22	School Improvement - Regional Project		A	A	A	A	APR 2013	
CD23	Procurement of Independent Sector placements for looked after children	A	A	A	A	A	TBC	
CD26	Disabled Facilities Grants	A	A	A	A	A	MAR 2013	
CD27a	Waste Management Targets/Food Waste Treatment Project	A	A	A	A	A	2016/17	
CD27c	Waste Management Operations	A	A	A	A	A	2016/17	
CD27d	Waste Management (AD Waste)	G	G	G	G	G	SEP 2011	
CD34	Severe Winter Weather	A	A	A	A	A	TBC	
CD37	Food Waste Treatment Project			A	A	G	APR 2014	
CD38	Welfare Reform				R	R	TBC	
Risk Reference	Council Governance	June 11	Sept 11	Dec 11	Mar 12	June 12	Predictive Green/Amber	
CG05a	Asset Management - Strategic	A	A	A	A	A	2015/16	
CG05b	Asset Rationalisation		A	A	A	A	2015/16	
CG06	Medium Term Financial Strategy	A	A	A	A	A	TBC	
CG07	Financial Management and Control	A	A	A	A	A	TBC	
CG08	ICT Strategy	A	A	G	G	G	ACHIEVED & MAINTAINED	
CG09	Information Governance	A	A	A	A	A	TBC	
CG10	Human Resources and Management	A	A	A	A	A	NOV 2012	
CG11	Single Status and Terms and Conditions of Employment	A	A	A	A	A	NOV 2012	
CG13	Customer Focus	G	G	G	G	G	ACHIEVED & MAINTAINED	
CG16	Workforce and Succession Planning	A	A	A	A	A	NOV 2012	
CG18	Procurement	A		A	A	A	MAR 2013	
CG19	Business Continuity (including Winter Disruption)	A	A	A	A	A	APR 2013	
CG22	Flintshire Futures		A	A	A	A	MAR 2013	
CG23	Data Protection				R	R	TBC	

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: WEDNESDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2012

REPORT BY: ENVIRONMENT & HOUSING OVERVIEW &
SCRUTINY FACILITATOR

SUBJECT: FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 Experienced Overview & Scrutiny Members will be aware that items feed into a committee's Forward Work Programme from a number of sources. Individual Members can suggest topics for review by Overview & Scrutiny committees; members of the public can suggest topics; items can be referred by the Cabinet for consultation purposes; items can be referred by the County Council, or Directors can request that a committee gives a view on a particular topic. Other possible items are identified from the Cabinet Work Programme and the Strategic Assessment of Risks & Challenges.

2.02 In identifying topics for future consideration, it is useful for a 'test of significance' to be applied. This can be achieved by asking a range of questions as follows:

1. Will the review contribute to the Council's priorities and/or objectives?
2. Are there issues of weak or poor performance?
3. How, where and why were the issues identified?
4. Do local communities think the issues are important and is there any evidence of this? Is there evidence of public dissatisfaction?
5. Is there new Government guidance or legislation?
6. Have inspections been carried out?
7. Is this area already the subject of an ongoing review?

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 Overview & Scrutiny presents a unique opportunity for Members to determine the Forward Work Programmes of the committees of which they are Members.

3.02 As agreed by the committee a workshop was held on 2 July 2012 to determine the committees forward work programme for the coming year. Attached at Appendix 1 and 2 are the minutes and draft forward work programme resulting from the workshop for the committee to consider and approve

4.00 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.01 That the Committee considers the minutes and draft Forward Work Programme (attached as Appendix 1 & 2) and approve/amend as necessary.

5.00 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable.

6.00 **ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

Not applicable.

7.00 **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

Not applicable.

8.00 **EQUALITIES IMPACT**

Not applicable.

9.00 **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable.

10.00 **CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

Not applicable.

11.00 **CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

Publication of this report constitutes consultation.

12.00 **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Minutes of workshop, 2 July 2012.

Appendix 2 – Draft Forward Work Programme

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

None

Contact Officer: Samantha Roberts
Telephone: 01352 702305
Email: Samantha.roberts@flintshire.gov.uk

Housing Overview & Scrutiny
Forward Work Programming Workshop

Monday 2nd July 2012 at 10.00 am
Clwyd Committee Room

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors: George Hardcastle (Chair) Amanda Bragg, David Cox, Peter Curtis, Jim Falshaw, Alison Halford, Brian Lloyd, Mike Reece and Gareth Roberts.

OFFICERS PRESENT:

Clare Budden, Head of Housing
Gavin Griffith, Housing Renewal Manager
Samantha Roberts, Environment & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator
Janet Kelly, Overview & Scrutiny Support Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors Ron Hampson and Rosetta Dolphin

Item	Discussion	Action
	<p>Sam welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the purpose of the meeting was to draft a Forward Work Programme for the coming year. This would then be shared with the full Committee at its next meeting in September, in which approval would be sought. Consideration would be given to items suggested by Clare and Gavin in addition to the Cabinet Forward Work Programme for the next 6 months.</p> <p>Clare referred to the September meeting and suggested items she would like to be considered :-</p> <p>Local Housing Strategy Anti-Social Behaviour Policy Tenancy Agreements Service Plan for Housing These items have not been to Committee because of the Elections.</p>	
	<p>AH referred to Vehicle Tracking and asked how this was progressing. Sam suggested this included in the 6 monthly updates on Repairs & Maintenance.</p>	

Item	Discussion	Action
	<p>The following items were raised by Members for inclusion in the draft Forward Work Programme:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travis Perkins <p>Clare confirmed that this could be included within the Repairs & Maintenance Report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrears • Grass Cutting <p>A discussion followed on the grass cutting issue and the different costings, equipment and manpower required. Concerns were raised by Members regarding verges (visibility issues) pensioners' properties (collection of cuttings) and a suggestion that the use of households brown bins could assist. Clare confirmed that different costings are being obtained.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sickness <p>There was a discussion on the reporting of sickness information within the quarterly performance reports and Members felt the figures should include short and long term figures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRA Subsidy • Welsh Housing Quality Standard <p>Clare reported there are major changes in social housing which needed discussing and that the July meeting of the Committee had been changed to an All Member workshop to look at the Common Housing Register.</p> <p>Clare suggested the Housing Strategy, Tenancy Agreements and New Tenant Handbook could be grouped together.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheltered Housing <p>This was raised by PJC and Clare confirmed there was a workshop / working group arranged and that an update report will go to Scrutiny, with a suggested date of February.</p> <p>and suggested this be linked to the December meeting with Housing Renewal Area, HRA Subsidy system and Homelessness/Welfare Reform</p> <p>.</p> <p>Sam suggested a Workshop in December/January as updates on the Housing White Paper will be available then.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welfare Reform <p>Clare updated Members on the Solar Panels Scheme and the issue of Fuel Poverty and suggested this item be placed on the agenda for January / February. Members agreed</p>	

Item	Discussion	Action
	<p>and suggested information on uptake by residents, cost effectiveness etc. would be useful. JF suggested figures over a 5 year period because of the current poor summer.</p> <p>AH asked if Water Meter would link into Fuel Poverty, Clare agreed and suggested Tenant & Residents involvement, better stakeholder input and involving young people could also be put in for February's meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Sector Housing <p>Gavin commented that this needed to be included early next year.</p> <p>Sam referred to the January meeting which only had Neighbourhood Housing Renewal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gypsies and Travellers <p>A discussion on this issue and the problems being faced continued and it was suggested to invite David Humphreys to give an update to Committee maybe for the October meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 106 agreements <p>There was agreement that a workshop would be the best setting for discussing this issue and linked to the Housing White Paper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Government Housing White Paper "Homes for Wales" <p>It was agreed that a workshop would be the best setting for this maybe in December/January.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empty Properties <p>This could be linked with Private Sector Housing Renewals and suggested it be scheduled for January.</p>	
	<p>Sam thanked the Members for the input and read out what had been discussed</p> <p>September meeting:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Housing Strategy Tenancy Agreements Quarterly performance reporting Service Plan 	

Item	Discussion	Action
	<p>October meeting:- Repairs and Maintenance (including Travis Perkins, Non-urgent repairs and Vehicle Tracking) Gypsy Travellers Estate Management (including grass cutting And gardening scheme).</p> <p>December meeting:- HRA Subsidy update Homelessness/Welfare Reform</p> <p>December /January : Workshop on Housing White Paper</p> <p>January meeting:- Fuel Poverty (including water meters) Private Sector Housing Renewal & Empty Homes.</p> <p>February meeting:- Tenant Involvement Sheltered Housing</p> <p>April meeting:- Adopted and un-adopted land (including Garage sites) In-house DFG's</p> <p>Anti Social Behaviour Policy – September or October</p> <p>Sickness – Clare suggested more information be included in the quarterly reports and ask for an item for the September meeting to include short and long term absence.</p> <p>It was agreed to keep March clear to allow for additional items.</p> <p>25th July – All Member Workshop Common Housing Register</p> <p>meeting closed at 11.20 am</p>	

HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

CURRENT FWP

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report	Scrutiny Focus	Responsible / Contact Officer	Submission Deadline
26 Sept 2012	Quarterly Performance Reporting	To consider Q1 performance outturns for improvement targets.	Performance Monitoring	Director of Community Services	17 Sept 2012
	Local Housing Strategy (LHS)	To consider proposals within the Draft Strategy	Strategic development	Housing Strategy Manager	
	Tenancy Agreement	To receive an update on the introduction of a more robust tenancy agreement following earlier proposals in April '11, and the result of the Housing Ballot	Improvement	Neighbourhood Housing Manager	
31 Oct 2012	Repairs & Maintenance	To enable Members to monitor the approach and effectiveness of repairs and improvements to the Council's housing stock, with emphasis on Travis Perkins, Non-urgent repairs and the vehicle tracking system.	Service Improvement	Housing Property & Maintenance Manager	22 Oct 2012
	Estate Management Services	To receive and consider areas for improved services including grass cutting, the	Service Improvement	Head of Housing	

HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

	Anti-Social Behaviour	Gardening Scheme, and stock re-designation proposals. To receive and consider the new policy.	Policy Development	Neighbourhood Housing Manager	
5 Dec 2012	Quarterly Performance Reporting	To consider Q2 performance outturns for improvement targets	Performance Monitoring	Director of Community Services	26 Nov 2012
	HRA Subsidy	To receive an update on the potential amendments to the HRA subsidy, to include proposals to meet the WHQS	Service Delivery	Head of Housing	
	Gypsy/Travellers Needs Assessment	To consider the needs assessment that will inform the development of the Strategy	Strategic	Housing Strategy Manager	
23 Jan 2013	Homelessness & Welfare Reform	To consider the implications of Welfare Reform on Homelessness, and the proposals to mitigate the impact.		Head of Housing	14 Jan 2013
	Sustainability in Housing	To consider work undertaken within Housing Services, and future proposals including the	Service Improvement	Head of Housing	

HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

	Private Sector Housing Renewal	<p>potential use of water meters.</p> <p>To consider progress on the delivery of Flintshire's first Renewal Area, general service development and county wide projects, to include work on empty homes.</p>	Strategic	Housing Renewal Manager	
21 Feb 2013	Resident Involvement	To consider proposals to improve resident involvement	Policy Development	Neighbourhood Housing Manager	12 Feb 2013
	Sheltered Housing Improvement Project	To receive an update following the implementation on the new service	Service Improvement		
21 March 2013	Quarterly Performance Reporting	To consider Q3 performance outturns for improvement targets.	Performance Monitoring	Director of Community Services	12 March 2013
	Collaborative Working within Housing Services	To receive and consider current and future collaborative initiatives.	Collaboration	Head of Housing	
24 April 2013	Adopted/Un-adopted land	To consider HRA land that adopted and un-adopted together with management of garage sites.	Member request	Head of Housing	15 April 2013
	Repairs & Maintenance In-House DFG's	To enable Members to monitor the approach and	Service Improvement	Head of Housing	

HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

		effectiveness of repairs and improvements to the Council's housing stock, to include proposals for the delivery of in-house DFG's as previously approved.			
5 June 2013	Quarterly Performance Reporting	To consider Q4, year end outturns for improvement targets.	Performance Monitoring	Director of Community Services	29 May 2013
10 July 2013	To be determined				1 July 2013

HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

ITEMS TO BE SCHEDULED as agreed by Committee

Item	Purpose of Report	Responsible / Contact Officer
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REGULAR ITEMS

Month	Item	Purpose of Report	Responsible / Contact Officer
Quarterly / Annual	Performance Reporting	To consider performance outturns for improvement targets against directorate indicators.	Director of Community
Six monthly	Update on Repairs and Improvements	To enable Members to monitor the approach and effectiveness of repairs and improvements to the Council's housing stock, to include void management.	Head of Housing
Quarterly	Sheltered Housing Improvement Project	To receive progress with the review on sheltered accommodation.	
Six monthly	Private Sector Housing Renewal	To consider progress on the delivery of Flintshire's first Renewal Area, general service development and county wide projects.	Head of Housing
Quarterly	Collaborative Working within Housing Services	To receive and consider current and future collaborative initiatives.	Head of Housing

HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

APPENDIX B

STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT OF RISKS AND CHALLENGES TOPICS ALLOCATED TO OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

SECTION 1 - COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Category	Risk Reference	Title	Committee
Strategic Partnerships	CL04	Affordable Housing	Housing

SECTION 2 - COUNCIL DELIVERY

Category	Risk Reference	Title	Committee
Environment	CD08	Shotton and Deeside Renewal Area	Housing
Housing	CD12a	Housing Strategy	C&H
	CD12b	Housing Management	C&H
	CD12c	Housing Repairs & Maintenance	C&H
	CD12d	Homelessness	C&H
	CD12e	Sheltered Housing	Housing
	CD14	Housing Ballot	C&H
	CD19	Gypsies and Travellers	C&H
Social Care	CD26	Disabled Facilities Grants	S&H and Housing (joint meetings)