

# Public Document Pack

Gareth Owens LL.B Barrister/Bargyfreithiwr  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services  
Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol a Democraataidd



To: Cllr Richard Jones (Chairman)

CS/NG

Councillors: Haydn Bateman, Marion Bateman,  
Clive Carver, Peter Curtis, Ian Dunbar,  
Ron Hampson, Patrick Heesom, Trefor Howorth,  
Richard Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Paul Shotton,  
Ian Smith, Nigel Steele-Mortimer and  
Arnold Woolley

12 April 2013

Tracy Waters 01352 702331  
tracy.waters@flintshire.gov.uk

Dear Sir / Madam

A meeting of the **CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** will be held in the **DELYN COMMITTEE ROOM, COUNTY HALL, MOLD CH7 6NA** on **THURSDAY, 18TH APRIL, 2013** 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 - 12)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2013.

---

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

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

- 4 **CUSTOMER SERVICES AS A FLINTSHIRE FUTURES WORKSTREAM**  
(Pages 13 - 16)  
Report of Head of ICT and Customer Services enclosed.
- 5 **FAIR DEBT POLICY** (Pages 17 - 28)  
Report of Head of Finance enclosed.
- 6 **REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2012/13 MONTH 10** (Pages 29 - 70)  
Report of Head of Finance enclosed.
- 7 **WORKFORCE INFORMATION QUARTER 3 - OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2012** (Pages 71 - 78)  
Report of Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development enclosed.
- 8 **INFORMATION COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE DATA PROTECTION AUDIT**  
(Pages 79 - 82)  
Report of Democracy and Governance Manager enclosed.
- 9 **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 83 - 88)  
Report of Housing and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator enclosed.

## **CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**14 MARCH 2013**

Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA on Thursday, 14 March 2013

### **PRESENT: Councillor Richard Jones (Chairman)**

Councillors: Haydn Bateman, Marion Bateman, Clive Carver, Ian Dunbar, Patrick Heesom, Richard Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Paul Shotton, Ian Smith, Nigel Steele-Mortimer and Arnold Woolley

### **SUBSTITUTES:**

Councillors: Joe Johnson for Trefor Howorth and Mike Reece for Peter Curtis

### **APOLOGY:**

Councillor Ron Hampson

### **ALSO PRESENT:**

Councillor Billy Mullin (Cabinet Member for Corporate Management) and Councillor Robin Guest

### **CONTRIBUTORS:**

Leader of the Council, Chief Executive, Karen Lees from Wales Audit Office for Minute number 83, Head of Finance, Accountant, ICT Operational Services Manager, Customer Services Team Leader and Head of Legal and Democratic Services

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Member Engagement Manager, Housing and Learning Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Committee Officer

## **81. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**

No declarations of interest were made.

## **82. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 28 and 31 January 2013 and 14 February 2013 had been circulated to Members with the agenda.

### **14 February 2013**

Councillor M. Bateman thanked officers for the response that she had received to her question on the overspend of £0.044m in relation to additional superannuation costs but explained that she required further information. It was agreed that she would speak with the Head of Finance following the meeting.

Councillor H. Bateman asked whether the gas engines at the landfill sites had been inherited or purchased by Flintshire County Council. The Member Engagement Manager explained that they were inherited when Flintshire County Council took over Alyn & Deeside District Council in 1996.

Councillor P. Shotton thanked officers for the response he had received on the Flintshire County Council Bond Scheme and welcomed the help that it provided to young people.

Councillor P.G. Heesom referred to the comments of the Leader of the Council at the previous meeting on the need to approach the redesign of the management structure in a methodical manner. He felt that this was a high priority in the future of the Council and requested that it be taken forward as early as possible and that it be as inclusive as it could be. The Leader of the Council reminded Members that the Chairman of this Committee was a representative on the Flintshire Futures Board and that updates would be reported back to Members.

Councillor A.I. Dunbar said that it was important that meetings were not arranged to clash with meetings already in the diary and referred to a recent meeting of Planning Strategy Group which had to be cancelled due to a clash of meetings. The Member Engagement Manager advised that he would speak to Councillor Dunbar following the meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**83. IMPROVEMENT ASSESSMENT LETTER (WAO)**

The Chief Executive introduced Karen Lees from the Wales Audit Office (WAO) to the meeting. He explained that the report had been approved by Cabinet and noted by the Audit Committee at its recent meeting.

Ms. Lees introduced the report to advise the Committee of the Council's Improvement Assessment Letter 2013 from the Auditor General for Wales. She explained that the assessment had been undertaken to establish whether the Council was working effectively and efficiently.

Ms. Lees provided a detailed presentation on the report and highlighted the following areas:-

- the Council had discharged its improvement planning duties under the Local Government Measure but it should ensure that it acted more in accordance with Welsh Government Guidance.
- the 10 priorities which represented the Council's Improvement Objectives complied with at least one of the seven 'aspects of improvement' described in the measure.
- the presentation of the plan could be improved to achieve the delivery of two functions to provide an internal management tool and an external facing document for the public
- the Council acknowledged that, in any particular year some of its Improvement Objectives would receive greater attention and priority than others so that its focus in a single year was more sharply defined to encourage citizens to engage more fully with the Council's planning and performance.

- The Annual Performance Report complied with the measure but it was reported the Council should ensure that it acted more in accordance with Welsh Government Guidance.
- The report was published on time and included an explanation of how its content contributed to the Council's statutory duty to 'make arrangements to secure continuous improvement and account for it'.
- Flintshire's performance in 2011-12 was better than the national average in over two-thirds of the statutory and non-statutory national indicators.
- The report included a clear overall assessment, using a 'Red, Amber, Green' (RAG) colour coding, of how well the Council considered that it performed during 2011-12 against each of its 10 Improvement Objectives.
- it was a long and detailed document and although it was clearly written on the whole, it did not enable the reader to grasp readily a succinct evaluation of what the Council intended to achieve during the year, the resulting benefits to the public and what needed to be improved in the future.
- Social Services and Education had produced mature service-specific analyses of their performance, but this maturity was not fully replicated in the Council's Annual Performance Report.
- the Council's on-going review of its governance arrangements was wide-ranging and well-evidenced and the accuracy of the Council's performance data had improved but there remained scope to improve the use of data in the Council's self-evaluation.

In conclusion, Ms. Lees said that there were no formal recommendations in the letter but four proposals for improvement had been suggested.

Councillor A.P. Shotton, the Leader of the Council, reiterated the comments made at the Cabinet meeting and welcomed the comments made by the WAO in the Assessment Letter. He emphasised the importance of taking the comments on board and addressing the issues raised when publishing an updated Improvement Plan.

The Chief Executive welcomed the report and reflected that the letter overall represented a 'clean bill of health'. There were no statutory recommendations and a response had been made on the four proposals as good and established local practice. The first proposal on priorities and resources was significant; the remaining three proposals were more technical. He commented that the Improvement Plan would be better published for the municipal year not the financial year. A selection of priorities for the year would be made by the Cabinet within the Plan with an extract summary published on the Council's website for public interest and engagement.

Councillor P.G. Heesom referred to the governance arrangements and said that in his opinion, the corporate management structure was no longer fit for purpose. In referring to the Annual Performance Report he felt that the Council had a duty to be fairly critical. He said that the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was an essential part of the framework. In referring to the Estyn self-evaluation process, he said that there were issues which needed addressing and he felt that the assessment was worse than the adequate score which had been reported. The Leader of the Council welcomed some of Councillor Heesom's comments and concurred that the MTFP was important but said that the

objectives for the year could not be done in isolation and that work which was being undertaken would be reported on in due course. The Chief Executive said that the work on the MTFP would be far-reaching. On the self evaluation process on education he said that it had been done well as a process and added that the Council was no longer in the 'adequate' banding following the Estyn monitoring visit.

In response to the comments made, Ms. Lees said that the Council could be more outcome focused and that the term 'adequate' for education was not a negative phrase but was used because the strengths had been outweighed by the need for improvement.

Councillor A. Woolley welcomed the report but raised concern that 'plain language' was not always used in the report.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

**84. PROPOSED REGIONAL EMERGENCY PLANNING SERVICE**

The Chief Executive introduced a report to allow the Committee to comment on the report which had been submitted to Cabinet on 19 February 2013.

He reminded Members that it was a small service which had a low financial value and risk. It was reported that in North Wales, the configuration was five separate service units with a shared service in Flintshire and Denbighshire. He spoke of the recent issues which the Emergency Planning Service had been involved with which included the recent floodings at St. Asaph. The proposal was to provide a regional service with a sub-regional service structure, a regional manager leading one hub and the other being led by a Deputy regional manager and an Emergency Planning Officer in each local authority. The Chief Executive felt that the proposal for a regional service would give Flintshire a more resilient service, would lead to improved partnership working and would meet Ministerial expectations. He suggested that an annual monitoring report could be considered by the Committee and that a report following any major incidents be submitted to Members.

The Chairman spoke of his experience of emergency planning and explained that local input was still needed in the development of a regional plan. He concurred with the suggestion for Committee to receive an annual update and a debrief report when necessary. Councillor A.I. Dunbar raised concern that a regional manager would not be based at both hubs. The Chief Executive responded that he was confident that this would work well and reiterated the comments about the need for local knowledge when developing the plan. Councillor A. Woolley referred to one of the recommendations that Flintshire would host the new service and lead the transition to the new service. He commented on the need to ensure that there were adequate resources in place to carry out the work required. He raised concern that the reduction of regional costs to £75,000 per annum would be consumed by inflation but welcomed the

overall intent. The Chief Executive confirmed that updates would be provided to a future meeting in the transition and post-implementation stages.

In response, the Chief Executive said that saving money was not the objective of the plan but said that there would be a minor cost benefit. He explained that resilience and best use of resources were challenges for the future but commented on examples of cross border working, 'gold' incidents which involved many of the emergency services and on occasions mutual aid agreements.

Councillor M. Bateman sought assurance that the Health Service would be able to cope in an emergency. In response, the Chief Executive said that testing had shown that all of the emergency services worked well together but that it was likely that non-critical health services would be suspended during an emergency. The Leader of the Council referred to paragraph 3.06 where it was reported that once the service was established, consideration would be given to the potential of joint services with Police, Fire and Health.

Councillor R. Lloyd asked if there were any plans for the Emergency Planning Officers to meet with Town and Community Councils. The Chief Executive suggested that the Emergency Planning Officers could be invited to attend Town and Community Council meetings if it was felt that there was a need.

In response to a query from Councillor C.S. Carver on savings for Flintshire County Council, the Chief Executive said that the proposals were broadly cost neutral and added that it was not assumed that every collaboration would save money for all parties involved. He added that Category one responders included ambulances and that Category two responders would include Welfare Services.

Councillor P. Shotton felt that the Committee should record its admiration to the North Wales Fire & Rescue Service, Police and Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) for their work in the rescue following the recent flooding in St. Asaph.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the report be received;
- (b) That an annual report be submitted to the Committee on the new service and a further information report being made at the point of transition; and
- (c) That feedback following any major incidents be reported to Committee.

**85. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2012/13(MONTH 9) AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2012/13 (QUARTER 3)**

Revenue Budget Monitoring 2012/13 (Month 9)

The Head of Finance introduced a report to provide Members with the most up to date Revenue Budget Monitoring information (Month 9) for the Council

Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) in 2012/13 which was being submitted to Cabinet on 19 March 2013.

The projected year end underspend of £0.856m on the Council Fund was an increase in the underspend reported at Month 8. Appendix 1 showed a summary of movement from Month 8 and reported that the majority of changes were in Community Services. Two requests for carry forward were being recommended to Cabinet for Legal & Democratic Services and ICT & Customer Services. Appendix 7 provided details on the movements of unearmarked reserves to leave a projected level of Contingency Reserve at 31 March 2013 as £0.445m. The Head of Finance explained that this amount was in addition to the Base Level of reserves of £5.564m and the amount of £0.770m approved by Cabinet on 19 February 2013 for the impact of the provision for Mutual Municipal Insurance scheme of arrangement. An underspend of £0.471m on the HRA was also reported but there were delegated powers arrangements in place for it to be spent on investment in the housing stock.

Councillor P.G. Heesom referred to the two entries in appendix 7 for approvals made in 2011/12 and asked whether these had now been dispensed with. In response the Head of Finance said that the £1.500m referred to in appendix 7 had been ringfenced at the end of the last financial year and had been the subject of a report to Cabinet in January 2013 which identified allocations to a number of Invest to Save projects. Councillor Heesom highlighted the risk of planning decisions which were the subject of appeal which were reported as being costs for the appeal in relation to the Croes Atti site. He said that he had been advised that the costs were £0.040m and not £0.020m as reported and were due to the Council's failure to determine the application. He also paid tribute to the work of the Head of Housing and the commitment that had been given following the result of the housing transfer ballot.

Councillor A. Woolley queried whether any of the underspend on the Council Fund could be used to reinstate the swimming subsidy of £0.023m in 2013/14. The Leader of the Council explained that an element of the budget underspend had already been included in the figures to achieve a balanced budget for 2013/14. The Head of Finance advised that of the unearmarked reserves, £0.297m had been approved by Council on 1 March 2013 for funding of one-off costs in the 2013/14 budget proposals and said that it was important to reiterate the difference between one-off costs and recurring costs such as the swimming subsidy. In response to a question from Councillor M. Bateman on whether the amount set aside for Single Status was adequate, the Chief Executive felt that the reserve was sufficient to pay the one-off costs currently costed.

Councillor P. Shotton welcomed the recent review of the changes on the 'bedroom tax' to exclude foster carers and those serving in the Armed Forces and asked whether the 'bedroom tax' was having an effect on homelessness. The Head of Finance explained that it was not yet in place but coming into effect from 1 April but would be monitored in the HRA. In response to a question from Councillor G.H. Bateman on the problems with the performance of the gas engines at the landfill sites, the Chief Executive explained that the amount of £0.145m would remain static and that an amount was included in the budget to meet it year on year.



## Capital Programme 2012/13 (Quarter 3)

The Head of Finance introduced the report to provide Members with the latest Capital Programme information for 2012/13 which would be submitted to Cabinet on 19 March 2013.

The table set out how the programme had changed during 2012/13 for both the Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Detailed cumulative information relating to each programme area was provided in Appendix A and summarised in the table on page 108. Rollover requests from 2012/13 to 2013/14 of £3.657m were being recommended to Cabinet. Detailed discussions had taken place with Directorates to ensure that the projects were contractually committed as agreed by Cabinet, following input from Overview & Scrutiny on Capital Programme Management; Appendix C provided further detail. The financing resources were summarised in the report along with the Council Fund Capital Receipts (cumulative) actual against estimate. The Head of Finance reminded Members that all of the information in this report had been factored into the starting position for the Capital Programme agreed at County Council on 1 March 2013.

Councillor P.G. Heesom raised concern about the allocation of £0.025m for Clwyd Theatr Cymru and asked how this could be justified. The Head of Finance responded that it was an allocation within the capital programme for a building which had to be maintained by Flintshire County Council as it was in the ownership of the Council. It was a small allocation for essential works and was not for investment in major capital expenditure. She added that it was possible to capitalise revenue expenditure but the amount in question would not meet the test for prudential borrowing. The Chief Executive explained that 60% of the core revenue funding for the Theatr was provided by the Arts Council and 40% by Flintshire County Council.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

## **86. QUARTER 3 SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORTS**

The Chairman introduced a report to request that the Committee consider the 2012/13 Quarter 3 service performance reports and note the progress made against the Improvement Targets contained within the performance reports.

### Finance

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

Councillor P.G. Heesom commented on the Finance workstream of Flintshire Futures and the need to align this with work to be undertaken on the Medium Term Financial Plan. He also highlighted problems with being able to access Lotus Notes and asked for an update on whether new software was to be

purchased. The ICT Operational Services Manager responded that he was aware of issues with Lotus Notes version 8 and that the continued use of Microsoft software was being considered.

Councillor A. Woolley raised concern at the evidence from the recent Universal Benefit pilot schemes held throughout the country where Housing Benefit had been paid to the recipient instead of the landlord and the problems that this had raised due to increases in rent arrears. He asked if anything could be done to voice the concerns raised to endeavour to get the decision reversed. The Head of Finance responded that the Head of Housing had spoken recently on the risk which was a concern for the HRA and explained that payment of rent to the tenant rather than the landlord was already in place for private tenants. She gave assurance that the concerns had been, and would continue to be, registered through professional and stakeholder groups.

Councillor A.P. Shotton, the Leader of the Council, said that the issues around Welfare Reform had been raised at Group Leader's meetings and he spoke of national lobbying through the Welsh Local Government Association on exemptions to the 'bedroom tax' for Foster Carers and those serving in the Armed Forces, which he welcomed. He was due to meet with Iain Duncan-Smith, the Work and Pensions Secretary, and assured Members that he would raise the concerns of Members with him. He reiterated the concerns following the results of pilot schemes which had been undertaken, particularly on Universal Credit. He raised concern about social landlords who may experience difficulties if they did not receive the rental payments that they were owed because they were paid to the tenant. He commented on the work being undertaken with the Flintshire Credit Union and the Discretionary Housing Payments which could be available to tenants in the short term.

### Legal and Democratic Services

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

Councillor C.S. Carver commented on problems that he had experienced recently about receiving electoral registration updates. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that he had spoken to the Electoral Services Manager who had advised him that the problem was due to issues with Citrix and the software package required to produce the report. He explained that he would highlight the issue again. Councillor Carver also referred to problems experienced by a Member who regularly travelled by taxi and asked whether checks were in place to ensure that the Council was not being overcharged. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services said that he would ask Member Services to look at the overall costs of taxi journeys undertaken by Members.

In response to a query from Councillor M. Reece on the changes from Electoral Registration for each household to the requirement of each individual to register for elections, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services said that individual forms would be issued for each elector in the household. The Chief

Executive said that this decision had been reached nationally but it was expected that it would produce a lower elector registration rate for elections.

Councillor Heesom felt that a review of Overview and Scrutiny Committees was required to ensure that their effectiveness. On the issue of the 'Learning Exchange Team' (LET) he felt that two political groups had been omitted and he hoped that this would be reviewed in due course as he felt that it was discriminatory. The Chief Executive concurred that a review may be required and questioned the future need for a Committee dedicated to housing. The Member Engagement Manager said that nominations had been sought for the LET following a recent meeting of the Democratic Services Committee.

### ICT and Customer Services

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

Councillor Shotton, the Leader of the Council, commented on the Flintshire Connects project and the funding of the scheme through the Invest to Save fund and the further development of the project into other areas including Flint and Connah's Quay.

Councillor Carver asked for an update on the provision of electronic devices to Members to view their agendas for meetings. The ICT Operational Services Manager said that there was a business case and that the technology provided for the Corporate Management Team could be replicated for Members. The Leader of the Council said that the issue was raised at a recent Group Leader's meeting and would be discussed again at a future meeting. The Chief Executive reminded Members that a decision would need to be made by all Members but said that even though it would reduce the amount of papers circulated it would not reduce the use of paper copies completely.

Councillor P. Shotton commented on the pilot scheme for a national e-invoice scanning solution sponsored by the Welsh Government with Remploy being the service provider. In response to a query from Councillor R. Lloyd the Customer Services Team Leader provided further information on the procurement and development of a Flintshire 'app' for customers to contact the Council via a mobile device. She advised that it was hoped to be able to test the 'app' in the next six to eight weeks.

### Human Resources and Organisational Development

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

Councillor Carver raised concern about the costs of the Single Status Agreement and said that he had been advised that implementation of the project was expected between April and June 2013. The Chief Executive responded that

the costs were significant and that the Project Board would be discussing the timeline at its next meeting. He explained that the effective date could be earlier than the implementation date and added that Members would be updated when information was available to share with them. Councillor Heesom spoke of the importance of linking the Single Status Agreement with the Equal Pay Strategy and asked for an early update on the scale of equal pay claims.

The Chairman referred to the increase in sickness absence levels across all directorates which he felt was a concern. The Chief Executive said that there had been a slight improvement in Corporate Services but concurred that some other figures were disappointing in this quarter.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

**87. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Member Engagement Manager introduced the report to consider the Forward Work Programme of the Committee.

The Member Engagement Manager reminded Members of the Appraisals Workshop that had been scheduled for 10am on Thursday, 28 March 2013. He detailed the items for the next scheduled meeting of the Committee on 18 April 2013 and explained that during earlier discussions it had been agreed that the Regional CCTV report and an update on the financial risks to the Council as a result of Welfare Reform would also be submitted to that meeting. During a further discussion, it was agreed that the Welfare Reform Update would be submitted to the meeting scheduled for 13 June 2013.

Councillor A.I. Dunbar asked for an update for Members to allow them to respond to questions that were being asked by residents on the effects of the Welfare Reform changes; the Chief Executive confirmed that a written response could be provided.

Councillor P.G. Heesom raised concern about the effects of equal pay claims and Single Status. The Chief Executive explained that confidential workshops would need to be held with Members to ensure that they were fully aware of the outcomes prior to consideration at a future Full Council meeting.

The Chairman reminded Members that they could suggest items for future meetings of the Committee if there were any specific issues that they wanted to raise.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the report be received;
- (b) That the Regional CCTV report be considered by the Committee at its meeting on the 18 April 2013;

- (c) That a report on the financial risks to the Council as a result of Welfare Reform be submitted to the Committee meeting scheduled for the 13 June 2013;
- (d) That a written update be provided to Members on Welfare Reform.

**88. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE**

There was 1 member of the press and 1 member of the public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 12.59 pm)

.....  
**Chairman**

This page is intentionally left blank

## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**DATE:** THURSDAY, 18 APRIL 2013

**REPORT BY:** HEAD OF ICT AND CUSTOMER SERVICES

**SUBJECT:** CUSTOMER SERVICES AS A FLINTSHIRE FUTURES WORKSTREAM

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To provide an update on the Customer Services Workstream within the Flintshire Futures Programme.

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

2.01 The Council has developed the Flintshire Futures Programme as its corporate programme for modernising and transforming the organisation and to make best use of its resources and secure efficiencies. Within this programme are a number of workstreams Customer Service being one.

2.02 This report provides information on progress made on the various projects within the Customer Services Workstream. All align with and contribute to the implementation of the Council's Customer Services Strategy which is monitored by this Committee.

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01 Within the Customer Services Workstream we are ensuring that whatever changes we make we will put our customers at the heart of everything we do, in line with the Council's improvement priorities. We are aiming to improve customer access, customer service standards and customer engagement across the organisation.

3.02 Although improving the customer experience is our primary goal we are at the same time planning to make efficiencies by encouraging use of self service digital access and challenging our processes to ensure we standardise, simplify and automate wherever possible.

#### **3.03 Customer Access**

The focus of the work to date is in improving customer access to services and information. We recognise that we have to provide choice in terms of how, when and where services are available and although encouraging digital self service, we are also improving face to face and telephone access.

- 3.04 Flintshire Connects is focussed on face to face customer service. Our vision is “Delivering improved customer facing services to the residents of Flintshire in partnership with others and through the provision of accessible, modern and community based facilities.”
- 3.05 The central aim of the project is to improve customer service by providing more “joined up” and improved access to Council and other public-facing services in local towns, and at the same time enabling flexible working and decentralisation of Council staff and services to locations which best meet our customers’ needs. Efficiencies will be driven by developing generic job roles for customer facing staff, reducing journey times (and cost), and sharing office premises costs with partner agencies.
- 3.06 Whilst the primary focus of the project is about improving the customer experience it will also play a key role in regenerating our town centres. Flintshire Connects offers a clear opportunity to use a Council programme to act as both a catalyst for, and support to regenerating our town centres. Flintshire Connects centres providing access to Council and other partner services will be a new presence within our towns, they will create both a demand for space and additional new footfall.
- 3.07 We opened our first Flintshire Connects facility in Holywell on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2012. It has been well received and we have seen a gradual increase in customers using the facility, around 400 per week. North Wales Police have relocated to Connects from Holywell police station, Job Centre Plus have a regular presence there, Communities First are based at the facility and Deeside College are using meeting room space for community learning.
- 3.08 We are now planning new Connects facilities at Flint, Connah’s Quay and Buckley following the County Council decision in March to extend the network. We have secured £700k of Invest to Save Funding from Welsh Government, and Job Centre Plus have confirmed that they will be operating permanently from the Flint Connects Centre with discussions on-going with other partners for all 3 facilities.
- 3.09 The Contact Centre opened in March 2012. We had some initial problems mainly due to underestimating the volume of calls due to the operational changes made to waste collection. We are now seeing high performance with targets for call handling being consistently met. The contact centre received on average 800 calls per day over the recent severe weather period. In addition to Streetscene we have recently implemented contact centre facilities for Housing Repairs, Revenues & Benefits and Leisure.
- 13.10 Another project within the Customer Services Workstream is Channel Shift, which is about encouraging customers to use digital self service



facilities to access services and information. The development of the new Council Website has commenced with a target date for implementation of September, 2013 and the Flintshire “App” for mobile devices will be launched in July, 2013.

**13.11 Customer Service Standards**

Although the focus for the project team has been very much around improving Customer Access there are other complementary pieces of work also in progress. A review of the Council’s customer care standards is underway. New standards and targets will be identified and incorporate the new access channels particularly digital self service which do not currently feature in our customer care standards.

**13.12 Customer Engagement**

The Customer Engagement Project Team has recently been established. Currently an exercise is underway to identify all consultation and engagement activities across the Council. We are aware of good practice particularly in Community Services and want to ensure that if appropriate this can be replicated across other service areas. The project will also look at communication channels which will include social media.

**4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.01 Members are asked to note this report.

**5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 None arising directly from this report.

**6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 None arising directly from this report.

**7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 None arising directly from this report.

**8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 None arising directly from this report.

**9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 None arising directly from this report.

**10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 None arising directly from this report.

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 None arising directly from this report.

**12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 None.

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

**Contact Officer: Chris Guest**  
**Telephone: 01352 702800**  
**Email: [chris.guest@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:chris.guest@flintshire.gov.uk)**

## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** **CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** **THURSDAY, 18 APRIL 2013**

**REPORT BY:** **HEAD OF FINANCE**

**SUBJECT:** **FAIR DEBT POLICY**

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To see input from Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the draft Fair Debt Policy prior to its consideration by Cabinet.

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

2.01 The Council has already developed a Corporate Debt Policy which establishes standard procedures for the collection of debt. The introduction of a Fair Debt Policy is separate to this and is primarily a customer focused policy to assist those in financial difficulty owing single and multiple debts to the Council.

2.02 The purpose of this Fair Debt Policy is to establish guidelines on how the Council will recover debts owed. It sets out the framework for a consistent and sensitive approach to the recovery of debts and importantly, it aims to offer customers who experience payment difficulties with practical payment solutions which take account of the customer's personal circumstances.

2.03 The policy is about putting in place a co-ordinated and consistent approach to collection of debt and moving towards a joined-up approach to assist those in financial difficulty owing single and especially multiple debts to the Council.

2.04 The policy is certainly not a customer charter designed to allow customers to avoid their payment responsibilities but importantly it seeks to strike the right balance between meeting payment obligations and recognising that many customers find it difficult to meet their payments.

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01 The introduction of this policy will ensure that the Council continues to fulfil its responsibility to maximise the collection of council tax, rents, corporate debt and housing benefit overpayments.

- 3.02 The policy also needs to be considered as part of a wider effort to combat poverty, address the risks arising from welfare reform and provide a customer focused approach which is sensitive to the needs of those who find it increasingly difficult to pay.
- 3.03 The introduction of this policy will have a number of benefits for the Council and its customers. It will work towards :
- Allowing for a more joined up and co-ordinated approach to the collection of multiple debts owed to the Council,
  - Encouraging early contact from customers when they are first faced with financial difficulties to avoid debts building up
  - Taking positive action to prevent arrears from occurring in the first place, maximising income and entitlements at an early stage.
  - Providing a commitment to work with customers and/or their representatives, identifying priority debts and setting out reasonable and realistic payment levels, especially in relation to multiple debts, ensuring that payment arrangements reflect the ability to pay as well as the overall level of debt owed.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.01 That Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny considers the Fair Debt Policy as set out in the Appendix and provides any input and comment to Cabinet on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2013.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.01 None.

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

- 6.01 The policy will ensure that recovery action will be taken against deliberate non-payers or those who delay payment without genuine reason whilst always working to identify and assist those who genuinely can't pay.
- 6.02 The Fair Debt policy is designed to ensure that people are not exposed to undue financial hardship as a result of the Council's Corporate Debt Policy and the Fair Debt Policy sets out actions to minimise any hardship.
- 6.03 Where people have fallen or are likely to fall into arrears, the policy will provide a commitment to work with them, and their representatives, to set reasonable and realistic payment levels that they can maintain, ensuring that payment arrangements reflect the ability to pay as well as the level of debt owed.

6.04 The policy is also about putting in place a co-ordinated and consistent approach to collecting single and multiple debts owed to the Council. When either the Council or our advice agency partners become aware of multiple debt cases, Council officers will actively co-operate with each other to agree a single payment plan and to ensure all repayments are sustainable.

**7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 None.

**8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 The Policy is supported by guiding principles to ensure that in the wider public interest recovery action is proportionate, consistent and transparent.

8.02 The Policy aims to allow for a balance to be struck between the potential loss of income due to the Council and the costs of compliance, against the need to maximise income. When recovery is taken the policy will ensure that a consistent approach is adopted, recognising the need to treat everyone as individuals but with very differing circumstances. Transparency is vital in maintaining public confidence in the Council and the policy will provide members of the public with better awareness of what is expected of them in relation to their payment obligations. Importantly, the policy will also promote early contact with the Council to address payment difficulties.

**9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 None.

**10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 None.

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 Lead Officers across the Corporate Services team and Community Services Directorate, working alongside representatives of the Flintshire CAB, have sought to introduce recognised best practice into the policy.

11.02 The Advice Management Board has also been consulted about the introduction and content of this policy.

11.03 The introduction of this policy has also referred to Corporate Resource Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 The Fair Debt Policy appears in the Appendix to this report.

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

None

**Contact Officer:** David Barnes, Revenues Manager  
**Telephone:** 01352 703652  
**Email:** david.barnes@flintshire.gov.uk



# Fair Debt Collection Policy

## **Fair Debt Collection Policy**

### **1. Background & Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this Fair Debt Policy is to establish guidelines on how the Council will recover debts owed. It sets out the framework for a consistent and sensitive approach to the recovery of debts and importantly, it aims to offer customers who experience payment difficulties with practical payment solutions which take account of the customer's personal circumstances.
- 1.2 The Council has already developed a Corporate Debt Policy which establishes standard procedures for the collection of debt. The Fair Debt Policy is separate to this and is primarily a customer focused policy to assist those in financial difficulty owing single and multiple debts to the Council.

### **2. Principles of the policy**

- 2.1 Flintshire County Council is committed to collecting all of the income which is due to the authority as this is an important income stream to support the delivery of services to residents.
- 2.2 It is equally as important for the Council to recognise that customers will have times and circumstances in their lives where they will be unable to meet all of their financial commitments and need the Council to work with them or their representatives resolve the payment difficulties.
- 2.3 The Policy is about putting in place a co-ordinated and consistent approach to collecting multiple debts owed to the Council ensuring that where a customer makes contact to discuss payment difficulties their circumstances will be considered fairly and objectively with a view to agreeing a reasonable payment arrangement, minimising recovery action and working to avoid additional costs to the customer.
- 2.4 The Policy also recognises that collection of debt should be fair to everyone, especially those who pay on time, but that some people may deliberately avoid their payment obligations by delaying payment or choosing not to make payment at all. In all such cases, proportionate measures will be deployed to develop a culture of payment while always encouraging those in need of help to get in touch with the Council at an early stage.
- 2.5 The Policy commits the Council to operating in a fair and equitable way when recovering debts, ensuring that any action taken to recover unpaid debts is always proportionate, consistent and transparent.



- 2.6 In summary, the Policy should ensure that each customer is treated fairly, as an individual and with compassion in cases where genuine financial hardship is experienced

### **3. Types of debt covered by the policy**

- 3.1 The Fair Debt policy covers council tax, council rent, housing benefit overpayments, personal and non commercial debts administered by the Corporate Debt collection service.

### **4. Communication and contact with the council**

- 4.1 Advice and information will always be made available to customers at every stage of the process. The Council will make clear what action is being taken and why.
- 4.2 The Council will also explain to customers what they should do if they are unable to pay and importantly where they can get independent money advice and support for wider debt problems.
- 4.3 Escalation procedures will always give a clear indication to the customer of the next stage in the Councils recovery process including any additional costs to be incurred on the debt.
- 4.4 In cases of non payment, the Council will let know customers in writing promptly and invite them to make contact with the Council at an early stage of the recovery process with a view to making a payment agreement if they are experiencing financial difficulty.

### **5. Benefits, discounts and exemptions and money advice**

- 5.1 The Council will seek to inform customers of their entitlement to means tested and non means tested benefits, discounts and exemptions to ensure entitlements are correct and that no one pays more than they are legally required to.
- 5.2 The Council will provide easily accessible information about benefits, discounts, exemptions and independent money advice and support through a range of communication channels, including public leaflets, inserts with bills, recovery documents and public information via the Councils website.
- 5.3 The Council will actively promote and signpost the services of independent money advice and support agencies and seek to work in partnership with local advice agencies.
- 5.4 The Council will work towards providing Advice Agencies will a single point of contact relevant to each service area so that issues can be taken up and resolved quickly and to better manage multiple debt cases.

## **6. Responsibilities of customers**

- 6.1 The Council expects customers that owe sums to the Council to comply with all legal obligations. The Council is committed to working with customers as set out in this policy and it is the Council's expectations that those owing sums to the Council will contribute to this process by abiding by the following guidance:
- Pay amounts promptly to ensure receipt by the Council by the payment due date
  - Follow instructions provided regarding the making of payments to ensure payments are credited correctly
  - Inform the Council promptly of any change in circumstances that may affect the amount to be paid or the ability to pay
  - Notify the Council promptly if there is a change of address
  - Contact the Council promptly if there are payment difficulties
  - Respect the Council, its employees and its agents and respond to them courteously

## **7. Arrangements for Repayment of Debts**

- 7.1 Throughout the debt recovery process, the Council will focus on the need for personal contact with the customer.
- 7.2 If a customer is unable to pay a debt owed to the Council they should in the first instance contact the Council to discuss their position.
- 7.3 Once the customer has contacted the Council about difficulties they are having with making the payments the Council will seek to establish a repayment plan considered:
- the principles of the fair debt policy
  - the customer's ability to pay relative to the outstanding balances and the cost of recovery
  - the need to repay the debt within a reasonable timescale
  - standard procedures will be followed having due regard to the customer's income and expenditure – when undertaking a detailed assessment of a customer's financial situation an income and expenditure form replicating the form used by the Citizens Advice Bureau. The Council will work towards measuring expenditure against the Bureau's Common Financial Statement to ensure a consistent approach is taken to assessing a customer's financial circumstances.
- 7.4 The Council will try to resolve all queries and make a payment arrangement during the first contact, especially in the case of single debts owed to the Council. Payment arrangements will be confirmed setting out the payment obligations that the customer is expected to keep to.

- 7.5 The Council will seek as much information as possible about the customer's circumstances as considered necessary in order to make the best assessment of their ability to pay and to determine a realistic payment arrangement. More information is likely to be required where an initial assessment indicates the customer is unable to pay the debt over a short period of time and where the debt will not be repaid in full by the end of the financial year in which pay is due.
- 7.6 Where a customer refuses to divulge any information that is considered essential to assessing their ability to pay then no payment agreement will be entered into.
- 7.7 Customers and/or advice agencies working on behalf of the customer will be encouraged to notify the Council of multiple debts and agree a co-ordinated payment plan covering all debts owed to the Council. In turn, Council Officers will actively co-operate with each other to agree a single payment plan and to ensure all repayments are sustainable.
- 7.8 Whilst the benefits of agreeing a co-ordinated payment plan will be explained to the customer, the Council recognises that the customer has the right to deal with debts separately if they so choose.
- 7.9 Payment plans for multiple debts owed to the Council will be designed to allow customers to initially make payment towards priority debts owed to the Council (Rent payments and Council Tax) and then towards all other debts owed to the Council. In appropriate cases, where have wider debt problems, the Council will signpost customers to external advice agencies.
- 7.10 For customers entering into single payment agreements for multiple debts owed to the Council, except where repayments are established through court orders or agreed rates of deduction from benefits, repayments will normally be distributed in direct proportion to the priority and then lower debts outstanding to each service area.
- 7.11 Where the level of repayment required cannot be met the Council will work towards the use of an income and expenditure form officer using a common financial statement to access the financial means of the customer.
- 7.12 If no contact is made then the Council will contact the customer in writing promptly to set out the consequence of not paying the debt. The Council will stress the importance of the customer contacting the Council at an early stage to discuss the issue

## **8. Late or missed payments**

- 8.1 If for what ever reason the customer is unable to make a payment they will be encouraged to contact the Council prior to the payment failing to be made.
- 8.2 Where a payment arrangement has been agreed but payment is not received in accordance with the agreement, before further action to recover the unpaid debt is considered, the Council will write to the customer promptly to request payment of the sums due and explaining the consequences of failing to pay.
- 8.3 The Council will also encourage the customer to make further contact to discuss any payment difficulties or change in circumstances. A reasonable period of time will be provided to the customer to bring the payment agreement up to date or to make further contact with the Council.
- 8.4 Where a customer fails to bring a payment agreement up to date or persistently fails to keep to a payment agreement the Council will consider taking further steps to recover the unpaid debt and a further payment agreement will not normally be considered unless the customer's circumstances have significantly changed.

## **9. Enforcement and bailiff action**

- 9.1 The Council will use Debt Recovery Services to recover debts where customers have persistently failed to pay.
- 9.2 The use of bailiffs to recover debt will only be considered by the Council when all reasonable attempts to recover the debt have been exhausted. In all such cases, the Council will use only reputable and appropriately appointed organisations that have been contracted to the Council through a full procurement exercise.
- 9.2 All bailiff organisations will comply with the Council's agreed Code of Practice as set out by the Council.
- 9.3 The Council and the bailiff firm will ensure that all bailiffs and have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of all relevant legislation, case law and powers, and at all times act in accordance with them.
- 9.4 Bailiffs and employees, contractors and agents of the bailiff firm must be aware that they represent the Council in their dealings with customers. They will always act in a responsible, professional and courteous manner and be aware that their behaviour, appearance and attitude have a great influence on the success of the debt recovery process.

- 9.5 The bailiff will at all times use their professional judgement to refer back to the Council if he considers that, due to the personal circumstances of the debtor, it would be inappropriate to proceed to levy distress.

## **10. Monitoring and Review**

- 10.1 It is proposed that a Fair Debt working group will be established to monitor the effectiveness of this policy. The group will consist of senior managers within the Council responsible for debt recovery and debt recovery specialists from the Citizens Advice Bureau.
- 10.2 The group will meet initially on a quarterly basis to discuss the implementation of the policy and thereafter to review and update the policy as and when the need arises.

This page is intentionally left blank

## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE  
**DATE:** THURSDAY, 18 APRIL 2013  
**REPORT BY:** HEAD OF FINANCE  
**SUBJECT:** REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2012/13 MONTH  
10

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To provide Members with the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2012/13 (Month 10) report.

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

2.01 The Revenue Budget Monitoring 2012/13 (Month 10) report will be presented to Cabinet on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2013. A copy of the report is attached as Appendix A to this report.

### **3.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.01 Members are asked to note the report.

### **4.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.01 As set out in the report.

### **5.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

5.01 None.

### **6.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

6.01 None.

### **7.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

7.01 None.

### **8.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

8.01 None.

**9.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

9.01 None.

**10.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

10.01 None.

**11.00 APPENDICES**

11.01 (A) Revenue Budget Monitoring 2012/13 (Month 10) report.

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

**Contact Officer: Gary Ferguson**  
**Telephone: 01352 702271**  
**Email: [gary.ferguson@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:gary.ferguson@flintshire.gov.uk)**



**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:**           **CABINET**

**DATE:**               **TUESDAY, 23 APRIL 2013**

**REPORT BY:**       **HEAD OF FINANCE**

**SUBJECT:**           **REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2012/13 (MONTH 10)**

**1.00   PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01   To provide members with the most up to date revenue budget monitoring information (Month 10) for the Council Fund and the Housing Revenue Account in 2012/13.

**1.02   INDEX OF CONTENTS**

Section 2	Executive Summary
Paragraph 3.01	Council Fund Summary Table
Paragraph 3.06	Risks and Assumptions
Paragraph 3.07	Carry Forward Request
Section 4	Non Standard Inflation / Central Contingencies
Section 5	Unearmarked Reserves
Section 6	Housing Revenue Account
Appendix 1	Council Fund - Movement in Variances from Month 9
Appendix 2	Community Services -Variances Summary
Appendix 3	Environment -Variances Summary
Appendix 4	Lifelong Learning -Variances Summary
Appendix 5	Corporate Services -Variances Summary
Appendix 6	Central & Corporate Finance -Variances Summary
Appendix 7	Council Fund Unearmarked Reserves Summary
Appendix 8	Housing Revenue Account -Variances Summary

**2.00   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

2.01   Members are requested to note the projected year end position as estimated at Month 10 which is :

- Council Fund - Net underspend of £1.305m (£0.856m underspend at Month 9)
- Housing Revenue Account - Net underspend of £0.491m (£0.471m underspend at Month 9)

### 3.00 **CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01 The table below shows a projected in-year underspend of £1.305m :-

TOTAL EXPENDITURE AND INCOME	Original Budget	Revised Budget	In-Year Over / (Under) spend		Non Ring-fenced		Ring-fenced	
			Month 9	Month 10	Month 9	Month 10	Month 9	Month 10
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Directorates								
Community Services	58.437	58.469	(1.382)	(1.813)	(0.592)	(0.947)	(0.790)	(0.866)
Environment	31.794	32.487	(0.052)	(0.059)	(0.052)	(0.059)	-	-
Lifelong Learning	109.219	109.935	0.674	0.724	1.216	1.240	(0.542)	(0.516)
Corporate Services	17.469	17.649	0.251	0.180	0.251	0.180	-	-
Total Directorates	216.919	218.540	(0.509)	(0.968)	0.823	0.414	(1.332)	(1.382)
Central and Corporate Finance	25.759	24.138	(0.347)	(0.337)	(0.347)	(0.337)	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>242.678</b>	<b>242.678</b>	<b>(0.856)</b>	<b>(1.305)</b>	<b>0.476</b>	<b>0.077</b>	<b>(1.332)</b>	<b>(1.382)</b>

3.02 It is important to note that the projection above does not take into account any additional costs associated with the extreme weather conditions at the end of March, the impact of which will be reported in future monitoring reports.

3.03 The Original Budget column reflects the budget approved by Council on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2012. The Revised Budget column reflects in-year virements which have been approved in compliance with Financial Procedure Rules.

3.04 The significant in-year projected variances to date are detailed in Appendices 2 - 6 (Council Fund) and Appendix 8 (HRA), and in addition to giving the reasons for the variances, the actions required to address each variance is provided. The significant changes for the Council Fund from Month 9 are detailed in Appendix 1.

3.05 In line with the management commitment to reduce the projected in-year overspend there has been progressive improvement in the projected outturn position since a projected overspend of £1.053m was reported to Cabinet on 18th September 2012 within the Month 3 budget monitoring report.

### **RISKS / ASSUMPTIONS**

3.06 In addition to the effects of the extreme weather at the end of March (see 3.02) the in-year over / (under) spends shown in the table at paragraph 3.01 reflect the following risks and assumptions :-

#### **1. Community Services**

- Social Services for Adults
  - Occupational Therapy service - increased demand
- Social Services for Children
  - Out of county placements - demand led with volatility influenced

by numbers and high values of individual placements, however current procurement practices and existing facilities within the county are positively influencing costs and numbers of placements respectively

- Family Placement - increases in foster care places / court orders for Residence and Specific Guardianship
- Housing Services
  - Homelessness - projected high demand influenced by current economic climate and recent welfare reform

## 2. Environment

- Planning
  - A number of planning decisions are the subject of ongoing appeals which may have the potential for costs to be awarded against the Council

## 3. Lifelong Learning

- Facilities
  - Catering - overspend projected but possible mitigation from project plans following APSE review
- Development & Resources
  - Free school meals & remissions - influenced by economic factors
- Ringfenced budgets
  - Out of county placements - demand led with volatility influenced by numbers and high values of individual placements, however current procurement practices and existing facilities within the county are positively influencing costs and numbers of placements respectively
- Leisure Income
  - Income levels for the new leisure facilities are being monitored carefully on a weekly basis. Any variation, either positive or negative, could have a material effect on the projected outturn.

## 4. Corporate Services

- Welfare Reform
  - The Welfare Reform changes have the ability to influence a number of budgets across the Council and this is being kept under review
- Municipal Mutual Insurance Ltd (MMI)
  - A contingent liability was recorded in the 2011/12 Statement of Accounts which recognised a possible future requirement to provide for Flintshire County Council's share of liability relating to a scheme of arrangement set up in 1992 - Provision has been made in the 2012/13 accounts for £0.770m based on an estimated level of future liability as required by the Accounts and Audit regulations, as approved by Cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2013

### **3.07 REQUEST FOR CARRY FORWARD - CORPORATE SERVICES**

ICT & Customer Services - An underspend of £0.011m in respect of the Capita One project has been identified. This is a regional project for North Wales Authorities, led by FCC for which agreed contributions have been received from our partner Authorities. We are therefore committed to delivering the specified level of service. Capacity issues have led to project delays and therefore the £0.011m balance remaining in the account will be required in 2013/14 to allow the project to continue. It is requested therefore to carry forward the sum of £0.011m to 2013/14.

### **4.00 NON STANDARD INFLATION**

4.01 Included in the budget are amounts for non-standard inflation. These budgets are being monitored closely and the current position for each element is outlined below:

- £0.078m in respect of Energy for Street Lighting - this budget is being held centrally and at this stage is expected to be allocated in full.
- £0.300m in respect of Energy - most of this budget has previously been allocated to services and the remaining £0.060m is currently being reviewed and will be reported in future monitoring reports.
- £0.196m in respect of Fuel - it has been confirmed that the full amount will be required and the allocation of this budget is reflected in this report.
- £0.133m in respect of Food - it has been confirmed that the full amount will be required and the allocation of this budget is reflected in this report.

### **5.00 UNEARMARKED RESERVES**

5.01 The 2011/12 final outturn reported to Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> July showed unearmarked reserves at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 (above the base level of £5.476m) of £0.992m, after taking into account commitments in 2012/13 :

- Use of £0.973m to meet one-off / time limited costs
- Ringfencing of £1.500m to support Organisational Change costs

5.02 Appendix 7 details the movements to date on unearmarked reserves and the level of contingency sum available. As a result of the movements the current projected level of the contingency reserve at the end of March 2013 is an amount of £0.894m.

### **6.00 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT**

6.01 On 21<sup>st</sup> February 2012, the Council approved a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2012/13 of £26.671m. The budget provided for a closing balance of £0.867m, which at 3.25 % of total expenditure satisfies the prudent approach of ensuring a minimum level of 3 %.

6.02 The 2011/12 final outturn reported to Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2012 showed a closing balance at the end of 2011/12 of £1.857m, which was £0.753m more than when the 2012/13 budget was set. This had the effect of increasing the closing balance for 2011/12 by the same amount.

6.03 There is an overall projected underspend of £0.491m and a projected closing balance at Month 10 of £1.346m, which at 4.9 % of total expenditure satisfies the prudent approach of ensuring a minimum level of 3 %.

6.04 Appendix 8 details the reasons for significant variances occurring to date and the actions planned to deal with them.

## **7.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.01 Members are recommended to :-

- a) Note the overall report
- b) Note the Council Fund contingency sum as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013 (paragraph 5.02)
- c) Note the projected final level of balances on the Housing Revenue Account (paragraph 6.03)
- d) Approve the request for carry forward of underspend to 2013/14 as detailed within paragraph 3.07

## **8.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.01 The financial implications are as set out in Sections 3.00 - 6.00 of the report.

## **9.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

9.01 None.

## **10.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

10.01 None.

## **11.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

11.01 None.

## **12.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

12.01 None.

## **13.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

13.01 None.

**14.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

14.01 None.

**15.00 APPENDICES**

15.01 Council Fund - Movement in Variances from Month 9 - Appendix 1  
Council Fund Variances - Appendices 2 - 6  
Council Fund - Movements on unearmarked reserves - Appendix 7  
Housing Revenue Account Variances - Appendix 8

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

**Contact Officer:** Sara Dulson  
**Telephone:** (01352) 702287  
**Email:** sara.dulson@flintshire.gov.uk



**COUNCIL FUND - REVENUE BUDGET 2012/13**  
**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Budget Monitoring (Month 10)**  
**Summary of Movement from Month 9**

	£m	£m
<b>Month 9</b>		
Out of County Ringfenced Budget	(1.327)	
Service Directorates	0.818	
Central and Corporate Finance	(0.347)	
<b>Variance as per Executive Report</b>		<b>(0.856)</b>
<b>Month 10</b>		
Out of County Ringfenced Budget	(1.318)	
Service Directorates	0.350	
Central and Corporate Finance	(0.337)	
<b>Variance as per Directorate Returns</b>		<b>(1.305)</b>
<b>Change Requiring Explanation</b>		<b>(0.449)</b>
<b><u>Community Services</u></b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning Disability (Ringfenced Budgets) - the movement from month 9 reflects the projected costs of current care packages.</li> <li>• Professional Support (Children Services) - the main movement from month 9 is due to a reduced projection relating to leaving care maintenance payments and grants (-£0.051m) to individuals as well as a reduction in projected pay cost (-£0.030m) due to a number of changes including two new vacancies, the delayed filling of two other vacancies, an extended secondment and revised projections for three staff on long term sick leave. The balance is made up of a number of smaller variances.</li> <li>• Support Services (Mental Health Service) - the movement from month 9 is due to a reduced projection for Support Worker pay and travel costs (-£0.026m) and additional income (-£0.013m) relating to additional funding secured for a post. The balance (-£0.021m) is made up of a number of smaller movements.</li> <li>• Resources and Regulated Services (Disability Services) - the movement from month 9 is mainly due to an increased income projection (-£0.105m). The balance is made up of a number of other variances.</li> <li>• Other minor changes of less than £0.025m</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(0.056)</li> <li>(0.079)</li> <li>(0.060)</li> <li>(0.111)</li> <li>(0.125)</li> </ul>	
		<b>(0.431)</b>

**Environment**

- |                                   |                |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| • Minor changes of less than £25k | (0.007)        |
|                                   | <b>(0.007)</b> |

**Lifelong Learning**

- |  |              |
|--|--------------|
| • Out of County Pooled Budget - the movement since month 9 of £0.026m is mainly due to 2 new placements and some minor changes between estimated costs and actual expenses.  | 0.026        |
| • Leisure - An increased pressure of £0.030m relates to Deeside Ice Rink income. £0.010m relates to income on Toning and £0.035m relates to other minor pressures on income budgets across centres. The remainder of the pressure relates to increased expenditure (£0.049 on repairs and maintenance, £0.009m on purchases, £0.003m on Water, £0.004m on security services, £0.005m on alarm security systems and the balance of £0.034m relates mostly to increased employee costs). | 0.179        |
| • Development & Resources - There has been a decrease in the Pupil Benefits projection (-£0.030m) relating to Free School Meals as meal numbers have been lower than anticipated. A saving on the Mobile Classrooms budget has also been identified (-£0.114m). Other minor variances across Development & Resources equate to (-£0.009m)  | (0.153)      |
| • Libraries, Culture & Heritage -<br>Minor Variances   | (0.002)      |
|  | <b>0.050</b> |

**Corporate Services**

- |   |                |
|---|----------------|
| • Legal and Democratic Services - reduction in legal fees (-£0.020m), other minor variances £0.006m.  | (0.014)        |
| • HR and Organisational Development - additional vacancy savings (-£0.029m), minor variances £0.012m.   | (0.017)        |
| • ICT and Customer Services - increased pressure on Support Services costs £0.029m, reduction in additional registrars income (£0.010), other minor variances (-£0.005m). | 0.034          |
| • Finance - additional income - Council Tax Reduction Scheme Transition Grant (-£0.112m), other minor variances £0.038m.  | (0.074)        |
|   | <b>(0.071)</b> |

**Central and Corporate**

- |                                   |              |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| • Minor changes of less than £25k | 0.010        |
|                                   | <b>0.010</b> |

**Total changes**

<b>(0.449)</b>
----------------



COMMUNITY SERVICES

APPENDIX 2

Budget Monitoring 2012/13 (Month 10)

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Resources and Regulated Services (Intake and Reablement)	6.187	5.540	(0.647)	(0.648)	<p>Extra Care projected in year underspend on new scheme (£0.200m) due to timeframe for completion.</p> <p>In-house Domiciliary Care projected underspend of £0.346m due to reduced pay costs from changes to service delivery and greater use of reablement and independent sector care providers. The increase (£0.011m) from month 9 is mainly due to a reduction in projected income (£0.010m).</p> <p>Of the additional variance a projected underspend of £0.167m, an increase of £0.012m from month 9, relates to work which is yet to be undertaken to realign the budgets following the transport review, the outcome of which has been received and is being worked upon, and £0.055m to vacancies within Day Services being a small increase (£0.005) from month 9. This is offset by a projected overspend within Professional Support (£0.137m), reduced from month 9 (£0.002m), which will be addressed as part of TSSA realignment.</p>	The underspend against Extra Care is one-off and non recurring and has arisen due to delays in building works encountered by our partner. Keep under review pending completion of Transforming Social Services for Adults (TSSA) programme and realign budgets as appropriate.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

APPENDIX 2

Budget Monitoring 2012/13 (Month 10)

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Reablement Service (Intake and Reablement)	0.370	0.264	(0.106)	(0.102)	Pay costs being suppressed due to the use of Homecare staff, vacant post and part year appointments (£0.070m) together with additional Health income (£0.029m) offset by various small overspends.	Keep under review pending completion of Transforming Social Services for Adults (TSSA) programme.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

APPENDIX 2

Budget Monitoring 2012/13 (Month 10)

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Locality Teams (Localities)	16.489	16.429	(0.060)	(0.054)	<p>The significant variances lie within:</p> <p><u>Physical Disability Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Purchased Home Care - projected to overspend by £0.113m due to the impact of various care packages.</li> <li>&gt; Purchased Residential Care is projected to underspend by £0.307m which is a reduction (£0.038m) to the underspend reported in month 9 mostly due to an additional commitment (£0.028m) previously included within Disability Services.</li> <li>&gt; Minor Adaptations - projected to overspend by £0.102m reflecting the continuing demand within the service.</li> </ul> <p><u>Older People Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Purchased Day Care is projecting to underspend by £0.101m due to a change in emphasis in service delivery.</li> <li>&gt; Reablement Service is projecting an overspend of £0.075m due to changes in service delivery from TSSA.</li> <li>&gt; Purchased Home Care is projecting an overspend of £0.159m reflecting current care packages.</li> <li>&gt; Purchased Residential Care is projecting an underspend of £0.026m</li> </ul>	<p>Keep under review pending completion of Transforming Social Services for Adults (TSSA) programme. Following phase 1 of TSSA and during the detailed reorganisation of services, it has been decided that most of the PDSI elements included as part of the locality team budgets at the early stages of TSSA will form a separate line under the Disability Services Heading, with only the Occupational Therapy service remaining as part of the locality teams. This will undertaken for 2013/14.</p> <p>A particular difficulty projecting outturns within this service this year is quantifying the impact of the changes in service delivery introduced with TSSA the impact of which will be reflected in 13/14.</p>

COMMUNITY SERVICES

APPENDIX 2

Budget Monitoring 2012/13 (Month 10)

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Resources and Regulated Services (Disability Services)	12.948	12.856	(0.092)	0.019	Independent Sector Purchasing is projected to underspend (£0.198m) an increase of £0.093m from the position at month 9. This is the net impact of a number of changes of which the most significant is an increase to the projected income of £0.105m.	

COMMUNITY SERVICES

APPENDIX 2

Budget Monitoring 2012/13 (Month 10)

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Support Services (Mental Health)	1.931	1.814	(0.117)	(0.057)	<p>The projected underspend comprise of the following significant variances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Residential and Domiciliary Care Service: projected underspend of £0.111m, reflecting current care packages.</li> <li>&gt; Intensive Support Team: projected underspend of £0.022m being mostly underspends on pay (£0.032m) due to temporary secondments and maternity leave offset by the cost of backdated business rates (£0.013m) which were charged following a reassessment.</li> <li>&gt; Occupation and Employment: projected underspend of £0.021m which has moved from an overspend (£0.012m) reported at month 9 due to a review of anticipated support worker pay and associated costs..</li> <li>&gt; Professional Support: a projected overspend of £0.024m, a reduction of £0.021m from month 9 due to additional grant funding (£0.013m) and changes in projected costs and income for Health funded posts (£0.008m).</li> </ul>	

COMMUNITY SERVICES

APPENDIX 2

Budget Monitoring 2012/13 (Month 10)

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Ringfenced Budgets (Mental Health)	0.301	0.182	(0.119)	(0.123)	Reflects current care packages for 2012/13.	Keep under review - potential volatility due to changes in client numbers and demands at short notice from prison or courts. The possibility of re-aligning budget between the two services has been considered and dismissed for now as there are early indications of additional Mental Health clients although at this stage potential costs or start dates are unknown.
Ringfenced Budgets (Learning Disability)	0.466	0.584	0.118	0.174	This reflects the full year impact of a new service user that commenced during December 2011 together with some other changes to care packages. The reduction of £0.057m reported in month 9 is mainly due to reduced projections for purchased residential (£0.028m) and day care (£0.024m) based on revised information on care packages.	
Good Health (Development & Resources)	0.980	1.119	0.139	0.130	The majority of the overspend (£0.104m) is mainly due to one-off redundancy related costs for two staff falling on the service following a restructure. As these redundancies are due to the cessation of grant funding (Joint Working Special Grant), and therefore not generating an ongoing efficiency, the costs are met within the Service. The increase from month 9 is due to the costs of additional works commissioned from the voluntary sector.	Not recurring.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

APPENDIX 2

Budget Monitoring 2012/13 (Month 10)

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Business Systems (Development & Resources)	1.274	1.198	(0.076)	(0.073)	This service now includes the Financial Assessments Team, previously included within Commissioning, who are underspending (£0.045m) due to vacant posts. The balance of the underspend is mostly on pay and is due to vacant posts.	
Family Placement (Children's Services)	1.832	2.157	0.325	0.318	The overspend is mainly as a result of an increase in the number of foster care placements within the service. It is also due to the increasing number of court orders for Residence and Special Guardianship orders which invariably attract an ongoing allowance for the carers.	A review of the Family Placement Team has commenced the outcome of which will inform future planning and possible efficiencies.
Other Residential (Children Services)	0.526	0.461	(0.065)	(0.055)	The projected underspend relates to the opening of Arosfa being later than anticipated. The increase (£0.010m) to the underspend projected at month 9 is due to the final costs for the refurbishment works at Arosfa being less than anticipated.	Keep under review due to the potential for additional costs relating to transport charges.
Grants (Children Services)	0.115	0.067	(0.048)	(0.046)	The projected underspend relates mostly to an underspend (£0.051m) within third party payments.	

COMMUNITY SERVICES

APPENDIX 2

Budget Monitoring 2012/13 (Month 10)

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Professional Support (Children's Services)	5.374	5.534	0.160	0.239	Comprises Fieldwork, Resources, Children's Integrated Disability Service (CIDS) and General. Fieldwork is overspending (£0.299m) due to the Children and Young Adolescent Support team (£0.271m) - client payments (£0.163m) reduced (£0.056m) from month 9, staff pay costs (£0.094m); client payments includes the costs for two high cost individuals (£0.120m) and is demand led. Resources is underspending (£0.041m) due to staff costs within Family Placement Team (£0.035m); other under and overspends within the service offset each other. CIDS overspend (£0.051m) mainly due to increased use of direct payments leading to an overspend (£0.092m) offset by underspends on staff (£0.025m) and transfer payments (£0.010m). General is projected to underspend (£0.148m) due to legal/court costs (£0.022m), transport costs (£0.021m), pay costs remain on budget; Children First underspend (£0.081m) and Corporate Parenting (£0.019m).	Keep under review. The Head of Service (Children) has instigated a review into the specifics around these two service users.  Due to the overspend within Children Services spending is kept to a minimum where possible.



COMMUNITY SERVICES

APPENDIX 2

Budget Monitoring 2012/13 (Month 10)

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Out of County Pooled Budget (Children's Services)	3.711	2.909	(0.802)	(0.785)	Costs reflect existing placements up until March 2013. This reflects known reductions in payments to providers following re-negotiation of contracts. The movement since month 9 reflect one placement ended (£0.013m) and other changes reflecting changed outturn projections that cancel each other out.	<p>The focus of high cost placements is now a North Wales project and will continued to be reviewed. The in house project requires sign off by the two directors at the next meeting.</p> <p>The impact of these changes on the Children Services Fostering and Leaving Care budgets has not yet been quantified. Further details are awaited.</p>
Ring-fenced Budget (Housing Services)	0.377	0.314	(0.063)	(0.056)	This reflects current projection of the anticipated demand on the service this financial year.	Keep under review. One off and non recurring due to anticipated rise in presentations in 13/14 due to Welfare Reform impact and projections that the full budget will be required for further temporary accomodation units in the future.
Homelessness (Housing Services)	0.488	0.389	(0.099)	(0.081)	Review of expected spend undertaken and revised in line with trend.	
Housing Support Services (Housing Services)	0.193	0.133	(0.060)	(0.061)	Salaries reviewed to take into account breaks in employment and posts not being filled in 2012/13.	

COMMUNITY SERVICES

APPENDIX 2

Budget Monitoring 2012/13 (Month 10)

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Resident Wardens (Housing Services)	1.236	1.110	(0.126)	(0.127)	Budget based on restructure. Salaries carry vacancies for the new structure yet to be implemented.	Restructure approval required.
Other variances (aggregate)	3.671	3.596	(0.075)	0.006	Various minor variances.	Continue to review but not expected to be recurrent.
<b>Total :</b>	<b>58.469</b>	<b>56.656</b>	<b>(1.813)</b>	<b>(1.382)</b>		

## Budget Monitoring 2012/13 (Month 10)

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Period 9 (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Industrial Units	(1.479)	(1.410)	0.069	0.082	Shortfall of Industrial Unit Rental Income, due in the main to Gaz de France decommissioning the Shotton Power Station site. Income shortfalls are partly mitigated by savings in vacant posts at Deeside Enterprise Centre.	Keep Unit rental income closely monitored throughout the year
Property Holdings	0.090	0.054	(0.036)	(0.036)	Budget provision at the former Ty'r Binwydden site has been utilised to finance additional R&M at Custom House CP, dilapidation works at Glanrafon and legal fees for the Bailey Hill site.	Review of site budgets necessary in line with asset management programme
Property Asset & Development	0.530	0.471	(0.059)	(0.054)	Net Vacancy Savings	
Car Parks	0.025	0.074	0.049	0.028	Car Park income shortfalls at Holywell and Mold have slightly increased at Period 10 but are partially offset by a reduced maintenance programme. Back pay totalling £15k is anticipated for Car Park Attendants regarding overtime payable at an enhanced rate for Saturday working.	
Highways Maintenance	2.712	2.766	0.054	0.051	Cost associated with attending flooding events following substantial rainfall at various times since July.	

## Budget Monitoring 2012/13 (Month 10)

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Period 9 (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Waste Disposal & Waste Collection	9.118	9.360	0.242	0.249	<p>Delivery of the new Streetscene Service resulted in unexpected additional operational costs which have been mitigated by increased recycling levels, which not only reduce landfill and tipping charges but increases the level of recycling income received.</p> <p>One off Agency and staff backfilling costs as a result of the on-going investigation within Waste have been incurred and in addition, the energy generation from Gas at the landfill sites has been affected by problems with the performance of the Gas Engines at both landfill sites. This has resulted in a £145k shortfall against the income target.</p> <p>Work to realign budgets across the service is on-going and will be in place for 2013/14 onwards.</p>	Keep tonnage levels closely monitored to establish if further savings can be achieved to further mitigate the costs.
Fleet Services	(0.026)	(0.061)	(0.035)	(0.038)	Outturn based on actual recharges to date projected to financial year end with these charges also reflected in all Environment client budgets.	
Planning Control	0.367	0.428	0.061	0.060	The costs associated with Planning appeals i.e. specialist advice and legal fees have been partially offset by Planning fee income £28k in excess of target.	Partially offset by salary savings within the Planning service

## Budget Monitoring 2012/13 (Month 10)

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Period 9 (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Service Development & Support	0.236	0.216	(0.020)	(0.020)	Part time salary savings	
Management Support & Performance	1.164	1.046	(0.118)	(0.118)	Vacancy Savings relating to 5 posts (2 x Sc4, Sc6, SO1 & M6) ahead of Service Review implementation offset by the cost of Modern Apprentices from September 2012.	Provision will be made within Service budgets for the Modern Apprentice costs in 2013/14.
Public Protection	3.543	3.314	(0.229)	(0.217)	Vacancy Savings totalling £230k (3 x EHO 2 x EO 1 x Admin) ahead of the Service Review being implemented, offset by income shortfalls in Pollution Control.	
Markets	(0.099)	(0.081)	0.018	0.021	Rental income shortfalls from outdoor pitches & car boot events due to poor weather conditions.	
Other variances (aggregate)	16.306	16.251	(0.055)	(0.060)	A number of variances of no more than £0.048m individually.	
<b>Total :</b>	<b>32.487</b>	<b>32.428</b>	<b>(0.059)</b>	<b>(0.052)</b>		

This page is intentionally left blank

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Out of County	2.659	2.143	(0.516)	(0.542)	Following a request from the Out of County Management Board, several high cost placements have reduced with the continued involvement of Commercial and Clinical Solutions.	
Libraries, Culture and Heritage	2.848	2.816	(0.032)	(0.030)	There has been an in year adjustment to the book fund to address the Directorate budget overspend.	

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Leisure Services	4.137	5.008	0.871	0.693	<p><b>Leisure (pressure of £0.871m)</b>  <b>There are a number of historic budget issues which also adversely effected the Leisure outturn position in 11/12.</b></p> <p>In line with the national picture, income from ice skating at Deeside Leisure Centre has reduced by £0.173m over the last 4 years, this is despite inflationary increases in admission prices and promotions.</p> <p>Three posts within Leisure Services are unbudgeted due to timing delays caused between the Leisure Services Restructure and the JEQ results, this amounts to £0.120m including on-costs.</p> <p><b>The following pressures have been identified during 2012/13:</b></p> <p>The relocation of Leisure Services Staff to Deeside has assisted in making a significant saving from relocation (vacating Connah's Quay offices). However, this has increased occupancy costs for Leisure Services for cleaning, maintenance, mileage, telephones etc by £0.025m which is unfunded.</p>	<p>A tariff review is being undertaken across the whole of Leisure Services.</p> <p>Work is being conducted to review operational efficiency and performance at all facilities.</p> <p>Following receipt of JEQ results:            Analysis of affordability of proposed new staffing structures.            Revisit organisational design principles.</p> <p>The in year recharges for these services are to be revisited and recharged accordingly.</p>



Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Delegated Schools Budgets	77.957	77.957	0.000	0.000	<p>A review of music licensing has identified additional liabilities resulting in a cost increase of £0.037m.</p> <p>Leisure centre income figures have not met those anticipated by the Alliance Business Plan. Future income projections are now based on actual income to date allowing for continued increases each month as facilities become more popular.</p>	<p>A budget pressure bid for this has been submitted for 2013/14.</p> <p>New processes for authorising expenditure have been implemented. Income figures will continue to be monitored closely. We are also hoping to implement P2P earlier than anticipated to introduce more controls on expenditure for 2013/14.</p>

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
School Improvement Service	10.422	10.467	0.045	0.044	<p><b>Early Years</b> Efficiencies of <b>£0.066m</b> have been secured to assist the overall in year position including photocopying, travel and catering. The realignment of sustainability funding has resulted in fewer requests for emergency funding from nurseries and playgroups.</p> <p><b>SLAs (pressure of £0.151m)</b> Following an agreement at DMT, budget holders have taken a number of measures to reduce expenditure in areas where schools have not taken up SLAs.</p> <p><b>School Improvement Service</b> A number of minor efficiencies equating to <b>£0.116m</b> in total are projected. These relate to influenceable expenditure on supplies and ICT and to recharges for staff seconded to the Welsh Government and RSEIS.</p> <p><b>Schools Related (£0.100m)</b> Music Services are forecasting an overspend of <b>£0.113m</b> based on current levels of income and expenditure. Minor other schools relating savings equate to <b>£0.013m</b>.</p>	<p>Work is currently being undertaken to re-draft SLAs.</p> <p>The Music Services project group has produced a report proposing an operational model for the service moving forward into 2013/14.</p>

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
					<b>ICT Unit</b> The ICT Unit has managed to reduce expenditure on a one-off basis by <b>£0.024m</b> to assist in reducing the Directorate overspend.	
Development & Resources	11.912	12.268	0.356	0.509	<b>Service Units (pressure of £0.051m)</b> A pressure of <b>£0.226m</b> is currently anticipated on pupil benefits (free school meals and remissions) because of changes in the economic climate. A saving of <b>£0.114m</b> has been made on the Mobile Classroom budget. Minor reductions in other projected expenditure equating to <b>£0.053m</b> have also been made.  <b>Facility Services - pressure of £0.383m</b> The Catering Service is developing radical proposals to modernise via projects such as on-line payments for parents, rebranding, targeting increased take-up strategies, improved/themed menu's, cost reduction/procurement. The draft APSE review has been used to form the basis of this strategy.  The Cleaning Service is unable to recover the surplus generated from the Law Courts contract and some other smaller sites. A large income target still exists which is unattainable with a lower level of cleaning activity taking place.  <b>Youth Service</b> The Youth Service has reduced projected expenditure across all areas by <b>£0.037m</b> .	Both elements of the budget are being carefully monitored and pressure bids have been submitted as part of the 2013/14 budget process.  Service needs to continue to implement the agreed strategy for efficiencies.  This is the subject of management action and service redesign and a budget pressure bid for 2013/14.

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
	109.935	110.659	0.724	0.674	<b>Management &amp; General Admin</b> There have been a number of minor reductions in projected expenditure in Management & General Admin. These equate to <b>£0.041m</b> .	
<b>Total :</b>						

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Chief Executive	2.346	2.336	(0.010)	(0.010)	(£0.016m) vacancy savings. £0.014m pressure relating to a voluntary sector contribution towards Dangerpoint. (£0.008m) other minor variances.	

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Finance	4.351	4.656	0.305	0.379	<p><b>£0.028m</b> pressure relating to the Royal Mail price increases of 39% in April 2012.</p> <p><b>£0.269m</b> pressure relating to workforce costs in Revenues &amp; Benefits because of additional work in preparation for Welfare Reform and the new Council Tax Support Scheme.</p> <p><b>£0.035m</b> pressure relating to a benefits system software upgrade.</p> <p><b>£0.025m</b> investment in Agile Working (Revs &amp; Bens).</p> <p><b>£0.042m</b> pressure relating to additional audit days.</p> <p><b>£0.048m</b> pressure on reallocations due to income budgets no longer being achievable.</p> <p><b>(£0.112m)</b> additional income for Council Tax Reduction Scheme Transition Grant.</p> <p><b>(£0.084m)</b> vacancy savings relating to the Corporate Finance Review.</p> <p><b>£0.054m</b> other minor variances.</p>	Finance to investigate alternatives to Royal Mail. The additional workforce costs relating to welfare reform are one-off and will be reduced where possible.

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Legal & Democratic Services	3.341	3.196	(0.145)	(0.131)	<p>£0.005m pressure translation of Constitution.</p> <p>(£0.118m) Members Special Responsibility Allowances.</p> <p>(£0.015m) Members Training &amp; Travel Expenses.</p> <p>£0.053m Salary changes.</p> <p>£0.020m Legal Advice Jillings.</p> <p>(£0.020m) Legal Fees charged.</p> <p>(£0.070m) other minor variances.</p>	<p>Request to carry forward Case File &amp; Jaws b/fwd from 11/12 (£22k).</p> <p>Request to carry forward underspend for Community Review Consultation (£10k).</p>
Human Resources & Organisational Development	2.199	2.233	0.034	0.051	<p>£0.051m pressure CRB checks.</p> <p>£0.014m pressure Corporate Training.</p> <p>£0.046m loss of income from external organisations.</p> <p>(£0.076m) Vacancy Savings.</p> <p>(£0.001m) other minor variances.</p> <p>Risk of pressures will arise if funding is not made available for OD, iTrent implementation and Single Status project team costs.</p>	<p>A budget pressure for CRB checks has been submitted as part of the 2013/14 budget process.</p> <p>Request to carry forward £170k Modern Trainee budget which will be required in 2013/14.</p>

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
ICT & Customer Services	5.412	5.408	(0.004)	(0.038)	<p>£0.006m pressure relating to the final Design &amp; Print costs.</p> <p>£0.032m pressure in relation to the Print Rationalisation Project.</p> <p>(£0.067m) vacancy savings relating to ongoing service reviews.</p> <p>£0.066m pressure relating to internal admin support recharges.</p> <p>(£0.014m) efficiency in relation to additional registrars income.</p> <p>(£0.027m) other minor variances.</p> <p>The risk of a pressure may arise if funding is not made available for the Holywell Flinshire Connects operational costs.</p>	<p>Request to carry forward: £46k for Event and Log Management (project delay). £16k for Egress Switch Secure Email (project delay). £46k for remaining 20% of Civica EDRMS contract as milestones have yet to be achieved. £359k for PSBA (project delay to ensure benefits from advances in broadband technologies are maximised). £11k for the Capita One Project (this is a regional project fund to support a regional service not FCC budget).</p>
<b>Total :</b>	<b>17.649</b>	<b>17.829</b>	<b>0.180</b>	<b>0.251</b>		



## Budget Monitoring 2012/13 (Month 9)

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Financing & Funding (insurance, banking etc.)	2.365	2.357	(0.008)	(0.032)	There is additional windfall income of £0.081m, which takes account of the recent settlement by Welsh Government of the Council's claim for additional costs for staff time incurred on the Housing stock transfer consultation/ballot project. Windfall income levels will be monitored closely and reported on in future monitoring reports.	Levels of unbudgeted income will continue to be monitored closely and reported on in future monitoring reports.
					A saving of £0.061m has been identified due to a budget provision within an insurance fund (relating to a potential liability for historic asbestos issues) which is now not required	Keep under review
					Additional windfall income of £0.090m had previously been anticipated in respect of settlement of an outstanding claim re. overpayment of VAT due to the impact of legal challenges to custom and practice elsewhere. A recent Tribunal decision found in favour of HMRC in respect of one of the outstanding cases, although it is considered that there are grounds for appeal. This remains one of several ongoing cases which may bring additional "windfall" income to the Council in the future, although it is now considered less likely that it will be in the current financial year.	A number of outstanding VAT claims which may result in "windfall" income will be kept under review pending legal determinations and possible appeals.

## Budget Monitoring 2012/13 (Month 9)

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
					<p>The base budget provides for additional windfall income of £0.152m. The amount received to date suggests that we there will be a shortfall of £0.100m against this sum. One of the reasons for this is the levels of successful appeals against NDR valuations has reduced sharply in the current year with a consequent impact on the retrospective rebates of NDR in respect of Council properties.</p> <p>An overspend on additional superannuation costs of £0.044m in respect of added years granted to former employees early retirements prior to the 1996 Local Government reorganisation.</p> <p>A decrease in other miscellaneous Expenditure of £0.010m.</p>	
Corporate - other	2.758	2.483	(0.275)	(0.261)	<p>An overspend of £0.079m against the regional transformation fund following external audit requirements of the lead authority (Conwy CBC) on accounting treatment of balances.</p> <p>A small surplus of £0.045m from the phased funding strategy to address the Council's share of the Clwyd Pension Fund deficit following the 2010 actuarial valuation.</p>	<p>This is a one-off budget pressure in 12/13. Notification by Conwy of the change in treatment was not received until after the 12/13 budget was approved.</p>

## Budget Monitoring 2012/13 (Month 9)

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
					An underspend of £0.240m resulting from salary budget efficiencies previously achieved following historic service reviews	
					An increased surplus of £0.032m on the rebates recovered from use of the Matrix framework for procurement of agency	
					An underspend of £0.021m resulting from salary budget provision for incremental pay awards for Directors and second tier officers which will not now be utilised this year.	
					Other minor variances amounting to a net underspend of £0.016m.	
Central Loans & Investment Account	14.200	13.869	(0.331)	(0.331)	Increased interest received on temporary investments £0.060m, increased internal interest received on prudential borrowing £0.025m, increase in other internal interest £0.005m Reduction in interest payable on variable rate market loans and internal interest payable £0.176m, reduction in Minimum Revenue provision (MRP) £0.013m, reduction in prudential borrowing costs £0.052m	
Central Service Recharges	(2.054)	(1.776)	0.278	0.278	Shortfall of £0.192m of internal income recovered from trading accounts and the HRA, plus £0.085m impact of review of internal recharges from Service Level Agreements.	Support Service basis and allocations are currently being reviewed as part of the Finance Workstream of Flintshire Futures.

## Budget Monitoring 2012/13 (Month 9)

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Other variances - aggregate	6.869	6.868	(0.001)	(0.001)		
<b>Total :</b>	<b>24.138</b>	<b>23.801</b>	<b>(0.337)</b>	<b>(0.347)</b>		

APPENDIX 7

**Movements on Council Fund Unearmarked Reserves**

	£m	£m
Total Reserves as at 1 April 2012	9.029	
Less - Base Level (inclusive of increase of £0.088m agreed as part of the 2012/13 budget)	<u>(5.564)</u>	
Total Reserves above base level		3.465
<u>2011/12 approvals</u>		
Less amount approved in 2011/12 as being ringfenced for Investment in Change	(1.500)	
Less allocation from contingency reserve to meet one-off / time limited costs in 2012/13 (approved in 2012/13 budget and allowed for in calculation of 2011/12 final outturn on contingency reserve)	<u>(0.973)</u>	
		(2.473)
<u>2012/13 approvals</u>		
Less - allocation from contingency reserve as a one-off investment to support the new Leisure facilities in their first year of operation (approved in Month 3 report)	(0.361)	
Less - Impact of provision for MMI scheme of arrangement - as approved by Cabinet on 19 <sup>th</sup> February	(0.770)	
Plus release of an amount previously earmarked for a specific purpose (no longer needed due to receipt of a capital grant)	<u>0.025</u>	
		(1.106)
Add Projected underspend as at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2013		<u>1.305</u>
Amount available for delegation to Cabinet		1.191
Less - Amount approved by Council on 1 <sup>st</sup> March for funding of one-off costs in the 2013/14 budget proposals		(0.297)
<b>Projected Level of Total Contingency Reserve as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013</b>		<b>0.894</b>



Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Finance and Support	2,506	2,261	-245	-241	Support recharges revised downwards to reflect 2011/12 costs. Vacancy savings.	Work is ongoing to progress accuracy and timeliness of the HRA support recharges.
Repairs and Maintenance	8,778	8,629	-149	-151	Materials revised downwards due to lower than anticipated spend through the cold weather. The projection for transport costs has been reduced following a more up to date picture of actual costs in the financial ledger.	
Landlord Services	303	250	-53	-52		
Rents	-25,560	-25,558	2	1	Variance based on 14 more properties than anticipated at budget.	
Capital Financing	2,349	2,259	-90	-90	Reduction on projected interest on loans charge.	
CERA	4,652	4,687	35	35	A further £0.250m has been transferred from balances to CERA as agreed with Cabinet Members. This is to fund £0.125m for damp fans and £0.125m for external refurbishment works.	
Other variances (aggregate)	7,974	7,983	9	27		
<b>Total :</b>	<b>1,002</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>-491</b>	<b>-471</b>		

This page is intentionally left blank



## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** **CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** **THURSDAY, 18 APRIL 2013**

**REPORT BY:** **HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**SUBJECT:** **WORKFORCE INFORMATION QUARTER 3 - OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2012**

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To provide Scrutiny Members with an update for the third quarter 2012/13. This report provides details of the following:

Establishment  
Headcount  
Agency  
Early Retirements (First and third quarter reports only)  
Turnover  
Diversity  
Absence

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

2.01 The format of the detailed Workforce Information report was approved by Scrutiny on 9 March 2009 and agreed by Corporate Management Team on 26 March 2009.

2.02 This report now includes additional details on agency workers, including number of placements, level of spend and the savings which have been achieved through the Matrix contract and information on Early Retirements, the latter being reported bi-annually (first and third quarter reports).

2.03 The format of this accompanying report has been adapted to provide commentary on changes and trends that have occurred during the quarter on an exceptional basis.

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **Establishment**

3.01 There have been three main changes to this report:

1) Positions for relief and school supply workers have been identified and removed

2) Removal of occupied positions where the individual had not been paid in the previous 12 months, as at 28 February 2013

3) All positions which were vacant as at 30 June 2012. There is an assumption, in these cases, that if positions are still vacant after six months that they are no longer be required.

This work has resulted in a reduction in all three areas i.e. the number of positions has dropped by 32.44%, the number of vacancies has dropped by 35.3% and the total number of occupied positions has dropped by 30.72%.

Moving forward, the actions taken in steps (2) and (3) above will be monitored on a monthly basis. It is anticipated that this work will provide a more accurate position on vacancies, despite on-going organisational change.

### **Headcount**

3.02 There are no major changes in trends to report.

### **Agency**

3.03 The statistics below provide a breakdown of spend and net savings per month during the third quarter.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Spend £</b>	<b>Net Savings £</b>	<b>Net Savings %</b>
<b>October</b>	£307,857.73	£37,228.21	12.09%
<b>November</b>	£326,594.21	£38,540.39	11.80%
<b>December</b>	£316,917.46	£38,107.04	12.02%

3.04 Figures taken from Matrix on 31<sup>st</sup> December indicate 175 placements were active, a decrease of 26% when compared to figures for the same date in the previous financial year.

<b>Year</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
October	278	200
November	252	173
December	237	175

3.05 In line with the AWR (Agency Workers Regulations), temporary workers are entitled to equal treatment after 12 weeks in the job, this relates to basic employment and working conditions. The Council monitors the number of placements exceeding 12 weeks and where appropriate have taken steps to reduce those that exceed this duration. Figures taken from the Matrix placement report at the end of December 2012 indicate that the number of placements over 12 weeks has dropped by 4% in comparison with figures for December 2011.

3.06 The Agency net savings for the third quarter for the financial year 2012/13 are £95,938.84, compared to £111,891.36 savings for the same quarter in the

financial year 2011/12. This is mainly due to 10.5% reduction in spend this quarter, when compared to the same period in the previous year.

- 3.07 In October 2012, the contract between Flintshire County Council and neutral vendor, Matrix SCM, was extended for an additional period of 12 months. This was in agreement with collaborative partners, Denbighshire County Council and Wrexham County Borough Council.

#### **Early Retirements**

- 3.08 There were 7 Early Retirements for the period July to December 2012. All of these Early Retirements were on the grounds of redundancy, with a total cost of £76,635.04.

These figures are based on pension strain only and may be subject to change based upon the receipt of late paperwork and the delay in payments being made in the next period.

#### **Turnover**

- 3.09 The turnover this quarter is at the lowest for this year so far and it is almost half the rate when compared to the same period last year.

Of this quarter's turnover, the largest group of leavers have been as a result of individuals leaving voluntarily.

#### **Diversity**

- 3.10 Following through on our commitment given in the Strategic Equalities Objective this quarter shows an extension in the number of protected characteristics reported in the Diversity section.

Following the Equalities Act 2010 coming into effect nine protected characteristics were introduced. These being:

Age  
Gender  
Disability  
Ethnicity  
Religion or belief  
Sexual orientation  
Transgender  
Marital status  
and  
Pregnancy and maternity

#### **Absence**

- 3.11 With regards to the third quarter's absence the number of days lost has increased slightly when comparing it to the same period last year. The late submission of paperwork from the Directorates confirming that employees have returned back to work, usually leads to this figure reducing as we move through year.

#### Average FTE Days Lost

	2008/ 09 Actual FCC	All Wales Avg Whole Year 2008/09	2009/ 10 Actual FCC	All Wales Avg Whole Year 2009/10	2010/ 11 Actual FCC	All Wales Avg Whole Year 2010/11	2011/ 12 Actual FCC	All Wales Avg Whole Year 2011/12	2012/ 13 Actual FCC	2012/ 13 Target FCC
Qtr 1	2.63		2.42		2.27		2.27		2.52	2.30
Qtr 2	2.37		2.33		2.19		2.17		2.13	2.00
Qtr 3	3.28		3.03		2.87		2.89		3.26	2.50
Qtr 4	3.32		3.04		3.03		3.21			3.00
Whole Year	11.61	11.5	10.83	10.9	10.36	10.34	10.54	10.9	7.91	9.80

- 3.12 An additional absence report has been introduced this quarter. This report shows the breakdown of absence reasons by long and short term periods.

This report aligns to the breakdown developed as part of our benchmarking work across Wales. This means that each service area can now compare its long and short term absence at each level of the Organisation, throughout Wales.

There is a continued programme of attendance management reporting and action planning across each Directorate. Absences reporting, containing trigger reports, produced on a monthly basis are issued to managers. With the support of the HR team focus is made on frequent, short term absences, long term absences and return to work interviews, with employees, to understand any underlying issues affecting attendance at work.

Whilst various services within the Council have been challenging the use of the category 'Other' to report on the reasons for absence, managers and employees will be required to state and record the actual reason for absence with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> May. This will enable more specific information to be captured to improve the analysis and to allow for appropriate measures and interventions to be implemented.

Where necessary, capability measures are taken to address poor attendance. This includes first stage disciplinary through to dismissal.

The review of the Attendance Management Strategy has been completed and focused work is being undertaken between HR / Occupational Health and Directorate Management Teams to implement early interventions to reduce levels of sickness absence, e.g. Environment and Community Services. The Physiotherapy pilot in Streetscene has commenced but it is too early at this stage to evaluate the impact.

**100% Attendance - Flintshire**

3.13 When looking at the third quarter 67% of all employees have had 100% attendance. This represents a reduction when compared with the same quarter last year. Overall this means that 7,442 employees did not have any sickness absence during the third quarter of 2012/13.

	2010/11 Actual	2011/12 Actual	2012/13 Actual
<b>Quarter 1</b>	78	77	75
<b>Quarter 2</b>	78	84	80
<b>Quarter 3</b>	65	75	67
<b>Quarter 4</b>	69	67	
<b>Whole Year</b>	40	42	

**100% Attendance by Directorate**

3.14 When looking at each Directorate, Corporate Services and Lifelong Learning have the highest rates of 100% attendance at 74% and 72% respectively. These figures are between 7% and 5% higher than the rate for the Council.

	2011/12					2012/13				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Whole Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Whole Year
<b>Community Services</b>	74	78	70	65	34	69	71	63		
<b>Corporate Services</b>	79	86	80	73	44	81	83	74		
<b>Environment</b>	76	78	77	70	45	76	74	66		
<b>Lifelong Learning</b>	76	82	77	70	43	78	79	72		
<b>Schools</b>	77	89	74	65	45	76	85	65		

**Community Services**

3.15 Long term absence continues to have the most significant impact across all services. Senior Managers and HR are agreeing targeted interventions to improve attendance across the Directorate. One of the proposals to be discussed is the development of a pathway to enable employees to return to the workplace as soon as possible. This pathway will involve early intervention by managers to identify alternative work opportunities where employees are temporarily unable to return to their substantive role for health reasons. These supportive measures should result in employees returning to work much sooner.

**Corporate Services**

3.16 Absence continues to be pro-actively managed by respective DMTs in line with the Attendance Management policy. Days lost are marginally down on a “like for like” basis with 2011/12 for the third quarter in a row. There is no complacency and attendance remains high on respective DMT agendas.

### **Environment**

- 3.17 Absence levels have increased in 4 out of the 6 service areas in Quarter 3 compared to Quarter 2. Short-term, recurring absences continue to be a priority with interventions including the actioning of dismissals across the respective service areas. Long-term absences have also increased and management teams are working with HR and Occupational Health colleagues to establish the long-term prognosis of those cases in order to expedite ill-health dismissals where appropriate. Work is being undertaken within the Directorate to challenge the use of 'Other' as a reason for absence.

### **Lifelong Learning**

- 3.18 There has been an increase in the absence levels in Lifelong Learning in quarter 3 compared to quarter 2, although this does reflect last year's trend. Monthly meetings to monitor sickness absence and the actions being undertaken within service areas continue. A further dismissal was made on grounds of ill health capability this quarter.

### **Schools**

- 3.19 Within Schools, the levels of absence have increased by approximately half a day when compared with the same period last year. Despite this, Schools have the second lowest level of sickness absence this quarter when compared to the Council as a whole.

## **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.01 Members note Workforce Information Report for the third quarter 2012/13.

## **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.01 Increased accuracy of reporting of the employed workforce and agency workers will allow the Council to better understand and therefore both plan and manage the largest single cost of service delivery.

## **6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

- 6.01 None.

## **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

- 7.01 None.

## **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 8.01 This increased reporting and monitoring within this area will result in more informed analysis of the impact our policies and procedures have across these groups.

## **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.01 None.

**10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 None.

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 Already undertaken with Corporate Management Team and Equalities Unit.

**12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 Available in Members' Services.

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

**Contact Officer: Helen Stappleton**  
**Telephone: 01352 702720**  
**Email: [helen.stappleton@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:helen.stappleton@flintshire.gov.uk)**

This page is intentionally left blank



## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE  
**DATE:** THURSDAY, 18 APRIL 2013  
**REPORT BY:** DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE MANAGER  
**SUBJECT:** INFORMATION COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE  
DATA PROTECTION AUDIT

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To inform the committee of the audit being undertaken by the Information Commissioner's office (ICO).

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

2.01 The ICO is the body responsible for both providing advice and guidance on the Data Protection Act and issuing sanctions for breach of the Act. The ICO does not have the power to unilaterally audit local authorities Data Protection arrangements. It does however, approach local authorities for their agreement to carryout such an audit. Flintshire was approached and agreed to such a voluntary audit.

2.02 In a telephone conference on the 28 February it was agreed that the following three areas would be covered by the audit :-

- Records Management - The processes in place for managing both electronic and manual records containing personal data. This will include controls in place to monitor the creation, maintenance, storage, movement, retention and destruction of personal data records.
- Data Sharing - The design and operation of controls to ensure the sharing of personal data complies with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the good practice recommendations set out in the Information Commissioner's, Data Sharing Code of Practice.
- Training and Awareness - The provision and monitoring of staff Data Protection training and the awareness of Data Protection requirements relating to their roles and responsibilities.

2.03 The ICO wanted to work within Community Services and to concentrate on one team within Children's Social Services and one team within Adult Social Services. The teams that the Council has chosen are the Family Placement Team and the North West Locality Team.

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01 Two staff from the ICO are conducting a range of interviews with relevant staff on the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> April. A member of the Council's Internal Audit Team will attend some of the interviews to help develop the Council's own Data Protection audits for the future. Following the on-site visit a report will be prepared with recommendations to improve existing arrangements. A summary of the report will subsequently appear on the ICO's website. The findings of the audit will be reported to this committee and subsequently to the Audit Committee.

### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.01 To note the position.

### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 None as a result of this report.

### **6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 None as a result of this report.

### **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 None as a result of this report.

### **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 None as a result of this report.

### **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 None as a result of this report.

### **10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 None as a result of this report.

### **11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 None as a result of this report.

### **12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 None

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

E-mail from David Webster dated 1 March 2013.

**Contact Officer:** Peter Evans  
**Telephone:** 01352 702304  
**Email:** peter.j.evans@flintshire.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** **CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** **18<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2013**

**REPORT BY:** **HOUSING & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FACILITATOR**

**SUBJECT:** **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

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

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

2.01 Items feed into a Committee's Forward Work Programme from a number of sources. 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, or by County Council, or Directors. 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 or 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 Programme of the Committees of which they are members. By reviewing and prioritising the forward work programme Members are able to ensure it is member-led and includes the right issues. A copy of the Forward Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration which has been updated following the last meeting.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.01 That the Committee considers the draft Forward Work Programme attached as Appendix 1 and approve/amend as necessary.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 None as a result of this report.

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

6.01 None as a result of this report.

#### **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 None as a result of this report.

#### **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 None as a result of this report.

#### **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 None as a result of this report.

#### **10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 N/A

#### **11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 Publication of this report constitutes consultation.

#### **12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 Appendix 1 – Forward Work Programme

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

None.

**Contact Officer:** Ceri Owen  
**Telephone:** 01352 702305  
**Email:** [ceri.owen@Flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:ceri.owen@Flintshire.gov.uk)

**Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee**  
**FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13**

Page 85

DATE	SUBJECT	O&S FOCUS	REPORT FROM
Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup> May 2013	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2012/13 Month 11	Monitoring	HF
	Annual Improvement Report 2012 by the Auditor General for Wales	Information and discussion	CE
	Management and leadership Development Programme	Information and discussion	H of HR & OD
	Physiotherapy pilot progress report	Information and discussion	H of HR & OD
	Procurement as a Flintshire Futures workstream	Monitoring and development	H of HR & OD
	Workforce Information Q4	Monitoring and development	H of HR & OD
	Regional Closed Circuit Television Service	Information and discussion	CE
	Forward Work Programme	Development and confirmation	MEM
Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> June 2013	Q4 performance Reporting	Monitoring and development	MEM
	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2013/14 Month 1	Monitoring	HF
	Welfare Reform Update	Information and discussion	HF
	Finance as a Flintshire Futures workstream	Monitoring and development	HF
	Forward Work Programme	Development and confirmation	MEM

**Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee**  
**FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13**

Page 86

Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> July 2103	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2012/13 (final out turn)	Monitoring	HF
	Medium Term Financial Plan	Information and discussion	HF
	Assets as a Flintshire Futures workstream (6 monthly update, as per the resolution of the committee on 17/1/13)	Monitoring and development	HAT
	Forward Work Programme	Development and confirmation	MEM
September 2013	Workforce as a Flintshire Futures workstream (6 monthly update, as per the resolution of the committee on 17/1/13)	Monitoring and development	H of HR & OD
	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2013/14 Month 3	Monitoring	HF
	Q1 Performance Reporting	Monitoring and development	MEM
	Forward Work Programme	Development and confirmation	MEM
October 2013	Customer Services as a Flintshire Futures workstream (6 monthly update, as per the resolution of the committee on 17/1/13)	Monitoring and development	H of ICT&CS
	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2013/14 Month 4	Monitoring	HF
	Forward Work Programme	Development and confirmation	MEM
November 2013	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2013/14 Month 5	Monitoring	HF
	Procurement as a Flintshire Futures workstream (6 monthly update, as per the resolution of the committee on 17/1/13)	Monitoring and development	H of ICT&CS
	Forward Work Programme	Development and confirmation	MEM



**Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee**  
**FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13**

December 2013	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2013/14 Month 6 Q2 Performance reporting Finance as a Flintshire Futures workstream (6 monthly update, as per the resolution of the committee on 17/1/13) Forward Work Programme	Monitoring Monitoring and development Monitoring and development Development and confirmation	HF MEM HF MEM
January 2014	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2013/14 Month 7 Assets as a Flintshire Futures workstream (6 monthly update, as per the resolution of the committee on 17/1/13) Forward Work Programme	Monitoring Monitoring and development Development and confirmation	HF HAT MEM

Page 87

**Legend:** CE = Chief Executive; HF = Head of Finance; H of HR&OD = Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development; H of ICT&CS = Head of ICT & Customer Service; H of L&DS = Head of Legal & Democratic Services; HAT = Head of Assets & Transportation; MEM = Member Engagement Manager

This page is intentionally left blank