

Public Document Pack

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Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol a Democraataidd



To: Cllr Ron Hampson (Chairman)

CS/NG

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

14 November 2013

Sharon Thomas 01352 702324
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Dear Sir / Madam

A meeting of the **HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** will be held in the **DELYN COMMITTEE ROOM, COUNTY HALL, MOLD CH7 6NA** on **WEDNESDAY, 20TH NOVEMBER, 2013** at **10.00 AM** to consider the following items.

Yours faithfully

Democracy & Governance Manager

AGENDA

- 1 **APOLOGIES**
- 2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**
- 3 **MINUTES** (Pages 1 - 4)
To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2013 (copy enclosed).
- 4 **SARTH** (Pages 5 - 44)
Report of Director of Community Services enclosed.

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

- 5 **IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING REPORT** (Pages 45 - 84)
Report of Housing and Learning Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator enclosed.
- 6 **MID YEAR SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT** (Pages 85 - 114)
Report of Housing and Learning Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator enclosed.
- 7 **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 115 - 122)
Report of Housing and Learning Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator enclosed.

HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE **16 OCTOBER 2013**

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at Flintshire Connects, High Street, Holywell on Wednesday, 16 October 2013

PRESENT: Councillor Ron Hampson (Chairman)

Councillors: Amanda Bragg, Peter Curtis, Rosetta Dolphin, Jim Falshaw, George Hardcastle, Ray Hughes, Brian Lloyd, Gareth Roberts and Sharon Williams

APOLOGIES: Councillors: David Cox and Ron Davies

CONTRIBUTORS: Cabinet Member for Housing, Director of Community Services and Head of Housing

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

25. FLINTSHIRE CONNECTS

Prior to the meeting, the Committee took part in a tour of the facilities. The Head of Housing explained that Flintshire Connects aimed to offer integrated face-to-face, high level services provided by multi-skilled employees whilst supporting the revitalisation of town centres across Flintshire and working collaboratively with partners to provide a holistic approach. A further three centres were due to be opened across Flintshire the following year with involvement by other agencies such as North Wales Police, Communities First, Job Centre Plus, Deeside College and Credit Union. Members spoke positively of the service which had been established in Holywell in relation to the centralised location, partnership working and excellent employees and facilities available.

The Chair commented on the recent 'Inspire' awards which celebrated achievements for outstanding performance in various areas of Housing. In thanking the Director of Community Services and Head of Housing for this excellent event, he referred to the significant improvements which had been made in the service. Councillor George Hardcastle also spoke in support of the event which had been organised by Hannah Fargher and said that the awards were a credit to the workforce of the Council and particularly Housing. The Cabinet Member for Housing remarked that the awards had been given as a result of employees nominating their colleagues.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

No declarations of interest were made.

27. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2013 had been circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED:

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

28. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 30 YEAR BUSINESS PLAN

The Director of Community Services presented the final revised Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan which had been submitted to the Welsh Government (WG). There were two potential options to achieve the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) either by securing a 2022/23 deadline with no borrowing or for a 2020/21 deadline with prudential borrowing. In detailing the background in the report, he referred to the team effort on this matter including work undertaken by Rachael Corbelli on the business plan.

Following the request by WG for all Councils to review their original requests for borrowing capacity in light of the changes arising from the HRA Subsidy review, Flintshire had reduced this figure from £50m to £45m. The Head of Housing explained that although a settlement of £1.85bn had been reached by WG on the 'buy out' figure to be divided equitably amongst councils, the final outcome was not yet known, however it was hoped that this would be positive in revenue terms for Flintshire.

The Director reported that a significant amount of work had been undertaken, led by senior Members and officers, to demonstrate achievement of the WHQS within the timescale. The ending of the HRA Subsidy system was likely to be a further benefit although the extent of this was yet to be confirmed.

In response to questions from Councillor George Hardcastle on boilers and smoke alarms, the Director explained that the decision to extend the expected life cycles of these appliances was a viable approach also taken by other Councils and had been borne out of practical experience. Boilers would continue to be checked annually and the longer life cycle meant that unnecessary replacement was avoided where the appliance remained in working order. The Head of Housing spoke of the positive financial impact of this, including labour costs, and confirmed that boilers which failed would be replaced.

Councillor Gareth Roberts felt that this change could be justified if improved boilers were used with improved running costs. In response to comments, the Head of Housing provided clarity on non-traditional stock.

Councillor Rosetta Dolphin asked about the frequency of smoke alarm testing and whether testing on smoke alarms and boilers was undertaken at the same time. The Head of Housing said that the Council had a legal responsibility to test electrical appliances within a set timeframe and would provide a separate response by email.

When asked about the potential to use the borrowing from WG to build houses, the Director advised that the amount requested would allow some flexibility but that this would be reliant on the business plan. The Cabinet Member for Housing said that this tied in with the current review of HRA land and garage sites. The Head of Housing said that any proposals to develop would need to take into account the necessary skills to take this forward, however the priority was to demonstrate to WG that the WHQS could be achieved by 2020.

In response to a question on the removal of the Right to Buy (RTB) option on housing, the Cabinet Member for Housing said that evidence was required on why a particular area would need the exemption. The Head of Housing said that any developments made through the HRA would include social housing units and that discussions would need to be held with WG on the rules to restrict RTB.

Councillor Ray Hughes welcomed the report and asked that Members' thanks be passed on to all those involved. He spoke of the need for the Council to re-build where there were pockets of land available, particularly to provide options to those affected by the Bedroom Tax.

Whilst Councillor Peter Curtis hoped for a positive outcome, he recognised the priority to achieve the WHQS and said that options must be realistic in view of the current financial climate.

In response to comments on the potential to build houses, the Head of Housing stressed that any borrowing costs would be met by rental income.

The Chair suggested that Carl Sergeant AM be invited to a future meeting of the Committee. In response to a query on Stock Condition Surveys, the Head of Housing advised that appointment interviews were scheduled for the following week, with results expected before Christmas. She provided an explanation on the use of data from the surveys, in line with practice in other councils.

On the Capital Programme, the Head of Housing referred to the review of the Asset Management Strategy now taking place to meet the 2020 target. A report with proposals and options on the Asset Management Strategy would be brought to a future meeting for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the revised Business Plan and that Flintshire is now able to achieve the Wales Housing Quality Standard by 2020/21.

29. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Housing & Learning Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator introduced a report to enable the Committee to consider the Forward Work Programme. She confirmed that the budget consultation meeting for the Committee would be held on 12 December 2013 and suggested some changes to the Programme.

Following recent consideration by Cabinet, the item on Governance Arrangements for a Local Housing Company would be brought forward to the next meeting on 20 November 2013. The items on the Draft Asset Management

Strategy and Tenant Satisfaction Survey Results/Action Plan would be deferred to 8 January 2014 and the Sheltered Housing Improvement Project would be moved to 5 February 2014.

The Facilitator explained that she was liaising with a colleague on a suitable date for the joint meeting with the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee. A date for a joint meeting with the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee was being progressed by the Head of Adult Services and would include a site visit to Llys Jasmine. Both meeting dates would be advised in due course. In response to a query raised by the Chair, the Director of Community Services reported that Llys Jasmine had opened and was expected to be fully tenanted by late November 2013.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Work Programme be updated accordingly.

30. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press or public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.20 am)

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Chairman

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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

DATE: **WEDNESDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2013**

REPORT BY: **DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**

SUBJECT: **SARTH**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 This report updates members on the development of the Single Access Route to Housing Project across the North East Wales sub region and seeks support to continue with the project and implement the policy locally.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 SARTH (Single Access Route to Housing) is a partnership project between all the major social landlords in north east Wales, covering the local authority areas of Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham.

2.02 The partners include all those councils plus Cartrefi Conwy, Clwyd Alyn, Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd, North Wales Housing and Wales and West Housing Associations.

2.03 In 2011, the Welsh Government supported a project to explore the options for a sub regional common housing register and policy. A Regional Steering Board was created with senior officer representatives from all the project partners and a project manager was recruited in January 2012. Flintshire held a workshop in July 2012 for Housing Overview and Scrutiny in order for members to feed into proposals. In November 2012, Cabinet gave approval for Flintshire to put the policy out to public consultation. Members were invited to attend a workshop in April 2013 as part of that consultation and an update report was circulated to members in July 2013 providing feedback on the consultation results.

The aim of the SARTH Policy and Register

2.04 All partners recognise there is high demand for rented homes in the region and too few vacancies to meet demand. The overall aim of SARTH is to simplify access to a range of affordable housing options which is transparent, legal, efficient and accessible to all sections of the community. The allocation of social housing must be fair,

consistent, and prioritise those people within our communities according to their housing needs.

- 2.05 The SARTH policy does not only include a revised allocation policy but includes some changes to the way the register is currently managed. This includes a move away from a focus purely on social housing and a move toward providing advice on realistic housing options. Currently, Flintshire receives approximately 30 housing applications a week compared to circa 10 homes available for letting each week. All these forms are inputted and the number of points confirmed to the applicant. Many of these applicants have low points and are unlikely to be allocated housing in their chosen areas.
- 2.06 The SARTH policy aims to provide the most useful, consistent and accessible advice and information to everyone who comes to the council for housing and/or housing advice. The aim is to help customers make the most informed choice about how to find a home to meet their needs. The advice provided will cover the whole range of affordable housing options including social housing, private rented accommodation, home ownership and other alternatives. This approach helps to manage expectations and for customers to understand fully their realistic housing options.
- 2.07 The draft policy is simpler to understand than the current points based system. Applicants are given reasonable preference determined by a banding scheme which lists people in date order of their application within each band. Reasonable preference is given to those who fall within the statutory categories such as homelessness, overcrowding, living in unsanitary conditions, medical grounds or hardship.
- 2.08 The priority given to applicants within the banding scheme will vary according to whether the applicant has an urgent housing need, whether the applicant has a local connection and the date order of the application. Applicants who are not in the categories entitled to reasonable preference will not be given any priority in the banding scheme and will not be recorded on the housing register. However, advice and assistance will be provided to assist those applicants in finding affordable housing that meets their need. The policy allows for applicants to be dropped to a lower banding where their behaviour affects their suitability to be a tenant.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

Public Consultation

- 3.01 The public consultation on the Common Allocation Policy took place between 4th March and 30th April 2013. This included each partner sending surveys to 10% of applicants on the register and 10% of tenants in their housing stock. Each partner placed the survey and draft policy on their website. There were local consultation events, a

regional stakeholder event and coverage in the local press.

3.02 There were 450 survey responses. Below is a summary of the findings from the main questions:-

- 90% of people responding stated they agreed with the proposal for a single register.
- 80% of people agreed with the proposal to only put people with a recognised housing need on the register.
- 82% of people agreed with the proposed banding scheme
- 89% of people agreed that people with a local connection be given priority over those with no local connection.
- 92% agreed that an applicant's past behaviour should count against them when applying for a new home.
- 79% of people agreed with the proposal to remove people from the register if they turn down two suitable offers.
- 95% of people agreed with having a separate accessible housing register which would match people with a disability with appropriate properties.

3.03 Following the consultation there were some amendments to the policy in line with feedback received. The Draft Common Allocation Policy was submitted for legal opinion in August 2013 and the regional steering group has now agreed that this final version be submitted for political approval by all the partner organisations. The policy will remain subject to annual review.

Regional Policy and Register

3.04 The core aim of the regional project has been to develop a Joint Allocation Register and a Common Allocations Policy across the North East Wales sub region. Currently all the partner organisations have their own IT systems. This is not an obstacle to the implementation of a Common Allocation Policy. However, the development of a regional register to support the policy is more complex and requires an IT system to be purchased or developed. The regional project has carried out some work to consider the most appropriate IT solution to support the policy and attended a number of demonstrations on IT packages that could support a regional register. There has been no financial commitment from all partners to contribute to a regional system at the moment.

3.05 In light of additional pressures facing Local Authorities, Flintshire believes there needs to be additional work to identify cost savings and benefits of a regional register before investment in a new IT system can be proposed. However, the regional policy can be implemented with county based common housing registers where the Local Authority can host the system for the Housing Associations in the Local Authority.

Local Development

- 3.06 Flintshire County Council is committed to continuing with the regional project but would also like to seek approval to move ahead locally with the implementation of the new policy in Flintshire for the Local Authority and Flintshire Housing Associations. A local register would support local service delivery which is closely aligned to the existing housing options teams. The feedback results detailed in this report demonstrate support for the new policy and support for the changes to the current approach to managing applications including the option for enhanced housing options to be provided to applicants and only those with an identified housing need to be added to the register.

Housing Solutions

- 3.07 Flintshire County Council has taken a step towards delivering the enhanced service by piloting a central housing register team. This provides a central point for application processing and queries about access to social housing. The team is located in Housing Options so early support and advice can be provided where it is identified there is a threat of homelessness.
- 3.08 The proposal is that the Central Housing Register Team and the Housing Options Team join to form a 'Housing Solutions Model' which will deal with all requests for housing by assessing an individual's requirements and needs, and advising them on the most suitable option. The team will not input applications with no identified housing need but will advise and assist on other options. For applicants with low needs, advice will be given on areas where there is a likelihood of properties becoming available. The proposal would see applicants seeking housing and/or housing advice being referred to the Housing Solutions Team for an initial assessment rather than applications being sent out automatically by other teams or departments. This will provide an opportunity for applicants to be advised on their housing options and for better matching of applicants to available housing. The proposal will reduce the number of applications processed where the applicant has little chance of being allocated housing either due to the chosen areas or the level of housing need.
- 3.09 This reconfiguration of the service will ensure that Flintshire County Council is prepared for the changes to Homelessness Legislation in 2015. From that time, the Local Authority will have a duty to provide full advice and assistance to all those who approach the Local Authority in housing need. This need can be met without extra cost by staff spending less time inputting data and more time giving advice and assistance and better matching applicants to areas. This early work will assist Flintshire County Council to manage the additional burden of the legislation change without needing to invest in additional staff resources.

3.10 The outcomes will include:-

- A significant improvement in customer service
- Reduction of duplication and unnecessary work
- A triage system that will manage expectations by providing realistic options
- Better matching of applicants to areas with available properties and promotion of hard to let properties

Medical Panel

3.11 The proposal includes implementing a leaner approach to administering the Flintshire County Council Medical Panel. The panel has seen an increase in applications in the last twelve months. This has not been an increase in cases where re-housing is urgent and necessary. The award of medical points can be perceived as a way to increase points for applicants and therefore increase the chance of being allocated a property. Some medical forms are submitted and are not awarded any points. This increase in forms has put a strain on the medical panel and incurred additional pressure on staff time attending and managing the panel. A lean review has been undertaken which has analysed the current process and costs and benchmarked with neighbouring Local Authorities.

3.12 Implementing the recommendations from the review would realise an estimated £3,500 reduction in annual costs of medical panel. The review proposes a new form which is simpler to complete and makes a clear link between the medical need and the current housing situation. The review also suggests that lower level issues be assessed by the Housing Asset Officer and Housing Occupational Therapist. The review suggests that better use is made of internal expertise including mental health services and Occupational Therapy. This is particularly relevant as some doctors have started applying a charge for supporting letters. These changes would be supported by a robust appeals process.

Housing Register

3.13 The proposals above to adapt local management of the register can commence from January 2014. However, the full move across to a common housing register shared with Housing Associations will require a more phased approach. The current housing register is based on a points system and contained within Capita Open Housing. The proposal would be to progress the implementation phase to prepare for a move across to the new banding system. This would include working with Flintshire Corporate IT colleagues to develop a test system that could run behind the existing register so that any impacts can be assessed with a full move over potentially planned for the end of 2014. The IT development will need to include options for

hosting the register and providing access to Housing Associations. Corporate IT and Business Systems colleagues will be fully involved in the development and consideration of options. The SARTH project is a standing agenda item at the Housing IT Steering Group. The necessary IT development time would give officers in the team the opportunity to carry out cleansing work on the current register by contacting people on the register to discuss their current application and status and ensure all information is fully up to date and explain the changes to the register and allocations policy.

- 3.14 The proposed timescales above are outlined in a project plan attached at appendix 2. The plan details the high level activities required to implement the policy and register in Flintshire.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 To support the new allocations policy for Flintshire County Council (appendix 1)
- 4.02 To support continued involvement in the regional project and the Contribution of £10,000 in 2014-15 for the Regional Project Officer post.
- 4.03 To support the phased implementation of the new allocations policy and register in Flintshire as detailed in the project plan (appendix 2)

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 Flintshire has contributed £10,000 to the project for 2013-14 and it is expected that the 2014-15 contribution will remain the same. The £10,000 funding in 2014-15 has been identified through staff vacancies whilst finalising the restructure. Flintshire remains committed to exploring the most efficient way of implementing the new register and policy from existing council fund resources.
- 5.02 The project represents a significant opportunity to gain efficiencies in terms of sharing the costs for maintaining a register with the other SARTH partner organisations in the longer term. Implementing the policy locally will require investment in IT development which will be carried out in-house. If there is a need to revisit the IT requirements, we anticipate that we should be able to access the regional funding for this purpose.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 6.01 The proactive work being undertaken by the Housing Solutions Team will assist applicants access affordable housing and mitigate the increase in homelessness at the earliest opportunity.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None specifically associated with the content of this report

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 A full project wide Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken with assistance from Tai Pawb. Further testing of a system will provide more specific impact assessments to be carried out at a local level.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None specifically associated with the content of this report

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 Applicants currently on the register will be contacted about proposed changes. Nobody currently on the register will be removed unless they no longer wish to remain on the register.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 The policy has been subject to wide consultation in 2013.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1: The SARTH Policy

12.02 Appendix 2: Project Plan for Implementation

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

None

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Common Allocations Policy

A Single Access Route to Housing for north east Wales

All the major social landlords in the local authority areas of Conwy County Borough, Denbighshire and Flintshire have come together to design a single access route to housing. The partners in this collaboration are:

- Conwy County Borough Council
- Denbighshire County Council
- Flintshire County Council
- Cartrefi Conwy
- Clwyd Alyn Housing Association
- Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd
- North Wales Housing
- Wales & West Housing

All partners recognise that there is high demand for rented homes in the region and too few vacancies to meet demand. We must be realistic about this. It requires us to do two things:

Firstly, we will provide the best, most useful, consistent and accessible advice and information to everyone who comes to us looking for housing. We aim to help customers make the most informed choice about how to find a home to meet their needs. This advice must cover the whole range of affordable housing options, including social housing, private rented accommodation, home ownership and other alternatives.

Secondly, we will allocate our social housing stock in a transparent, fair, consistent and accessible way, which prioritises the people in our communities according to their housing needs and which meets our legal requirements.

Working together to these ends, we can share our strengths and good practice and place the customer at the heart of everything we do. We will simplify the access route to advice and to housing with one clear purpose: to help people find a home to meet their needs.

Overview of the Common Allocations Policy

This Common Allocations Policy (CAP) has been developed by all partners in collaboration and sets out how partners will achieve the following aim:

- To allocate our social housing stock in a transparent, fair, consistent and accessible way, which prioritises the people in our communities according to their housing needs and which meets our legal requirements.

Legal Context

This policy is fully compliant with the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 which provides the legislative policy for allocations policy. The following aspects of this Act have guided the development of this policy:

- Section 167(2) of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, requires that this policy ensures that housing is allocated so that reasonable preference is given to people who fall within certain categories (as defined in section 8 below).
- Section 167(2) also provides that additional preference may be given to people falling within these categories who have urgent housing needs.
- Section 167(2A) provides that within the group of applicants who must be given reasonable preference, priority may be given to applicants who have a local connection with the local authority area as defined in section 10 below.
- Section 167(2A) provides that within the group of applicants who must be given reasonable preference, priority may be reduced where there is evidence of any behaviour by an applicant (or a member of their household) which effects their suitability to be a tenant or because of financial resources available to the person, which it would be reasonable for them to use to meet their housing needs.

The partners to this policy have also taken into account the contents of the “Code of Guidance for Local Authorities: Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness 2012”, published by the Welsh Assembly in August 2012.

Consistency combined with a local approach

The common allocation policy delivers a uniform assessment of housing need across the region, providing fairness and consistency to the customer, taking into account people’s individual needs and expressed preferences.

The policy has been designed so that each partner is able to target the housing stock in each county at the people in their own communities who are most in housing need.

There is a consistent application process for customers. Each partner with properties in an area chosen by an applicant will be aware of the application and able to give the applicant the appropriate priority in the allocation process.

The common approach delivers both choice and ease of access to customers and an efficient means for partners to consistently meet housing need.

The Housing Register and the Banding Scheme

The policy is founded on the principle that reasonable preference in the letting of housing accommodation will be given to those persons who fall within the statutory categories set out in section 8 below. The relative priority given to applicants within these categories is determined by the banding scheme, according to whether they have an urgent housing need, whether they have a local connection and the date order of their application.

Applicants who are not in the categories entitled to reasonable preference will generally not be given any priority in the banding scheme and will not be recorded on the housing register. This is because of the limited supply of social housing and the responsibility to prioritise those in housing need. However, the advice and information offered to all customers will allow them to seek alternatives which will give them a greater chance of finding new accommodation.

Realistic Housing Options Advice

An enhanced housing options advice service will be provided for everyone who contacts any of the partners looking for somewhere to live.

When they first contact us, all customers will be asked where they would like to live and what their needs and preferences are. They will be advised of the full range of options open to them in their chosen areas and can then decide where their best options lie, whether via social housing or another alternative, taking into account supply and demand.

Advice and information on how to make an application and how houses are allocated will be available free of charge. Any assistance that a person may need to apply for housing will also be free of charge.

An applicant shall also be entitled, upon request, to such general information as will enable them to assess:

- How their application is likely to be treated under this policy (including in particular whether they are likely to be regarded as a member of a group of people who are to be given preference).

- Whether housing accommodation appropriate to their needs is likely to be made available to them and, if so, how long it is likely to be before such accommodation becomes available for allocation to them.

Fair and Equal Access

All partners are committed to providing equality of opportunity to all applicants who apply for housing and this policy has been subject to an equality impact assessment. This policy does not discriminate against any person on the grounds of race, gender, sexuality, age, disability, class, appearance, religion or religious beliefs, responsibility for dependents, unrelated criminal activity, being HIV positive or having AIDS, or any other matter which might cause a person to be treated with injustice.

All partners will comply with the statutory requirements relating to equal opportunities and all relevant codes of practice. The monitoring of allocations under the policy will take place to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and equitably. All applicants applying for social housing across the authorities will have their housing need assessed in a uniform way. Whenever we communicate with customers we will do so in the most appropriate language for the customer and will employ alternative forms where appropriate.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all allocations of social housing made by partner landlords in the local authority areas stated in the introduction. However, this policy does not cover exchanges arranged between existing council and RSL tenants.

Part One: Introduction

1. Guiding Principles

The policy is based on the following guiding principles:

- To ensure that preference for social housing is given to those in housing need and that those in greatest need are given the highest priority.
- To give higher priority to applicants with a local connection to the area for which they are making an application than to those who have no such connection
- To ensure that the system is fair, confidential and accessible to all potential applicants.
- To make the best use of all the available housing stock
- To ensure consistency in the way in which applicants are treated by all the partner organisations
- To provide a responsive service that treats everyone as an individual
- To empower applicants and support them to make informed and realistic choices about where they want to live
- To provide appropriate, accurate and realistic advice relating to the availability of affordable housing at the point of application
- To maximise applicant satisfaction and improve the applicant service

2. Choice

Applicants can exercise choice in relation to social housing. They will be asked to indicate the types of property they wish to be considered for in terms of location, property type and floor level. The property type they are eligible for will be determined not only by their preference but also by their household, as described in section 13 below.

3. Applications from people with support needs

Partners are committed to ensuring that applicants with support needs are provided with the correct level of support to enable them to access housing and to maintain their tenancy. To this end partners will be working with the relevant statutory and voluntary partners in order to agree an appropriate model for ensuring that support needs are addressed.

4. Confidentiality

- 4.1. Members operating the policy will take reasonable steps to verify information provided by applicants in support of their applications. This may include undertaking a home visit and making enquiries of third parties such as health professionals or previous landlords.
- 4.2. Information provided by applicants will be retained securely and confidentially by all partner organisations.
- 4.3. Applicants may request a copy of information held by partners about their application, which will include information provided by third parties unless there are exceptional circumstances where it is necessary to protect the identity of the third

party concerned. In such exceptional circumstances, every effort will be made to convey to the applicant the information that has been obtained from the third party in a reduced form.

- 4.4. Partners will share relevant information with other partners prior to an offer of housing.
5. **False Information**
Applicants who give false or misleading information may have their application rejected or their tenancy terminated. In some cases this may also result in criminal prosecution, substantial fines and even imprisonment.

Part Two: Eligibility

6. Eligibility for allocation of social housing

- 6.1. Unless an applicant falls within one of the specified ineligible groups referred to below, applications for social housing will be considered from any person or persons over the age of 16, including existing tenants.
- 6.2. In compliance with the provisions of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) the following categories of applicant are ineligible for the allocation of social housing:
 - Applicants subject to immigration control, unless they have been granted a status which renders them eligible, e.g. persons with refugee status, persons who have been granted Humanitarian Protection, persons who have been granted Discretionary Leave to Remain and persons who have been granted Exceptional Leave to Remain.
 - Applicants from abroad who are not subject to immigration control and who are not habitually resident in the Common Travel Area (i.e. the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and the Republic of Ireland). Exceptions to this are outlined in Regulation 5 of the Allocation of Housing (Wales) Regulations 2003.
- 6.3. As provided by section 160A(7) of the 1996 Housing Act (as amended by the 2002 Homelessness Act), the following category of person may be deemed to be ineligible for the allocation of housing accommodation:
 - Applicants, or members of their household, who have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to render them unsuitable to be a tenant of a partner landlord. The only behaviour that can be regarded as unacceptable is behaviour by the person that would have entitled a local authority to an outright possession order, if the person had been a secure tenant of the local authority at the time.

In assessing whether an applicant is ineligible due to unacceptable behaviour, the partner landlord will consider:

1. Where there is evidence of unacceptable behaviour, was it serious enough for a possession order to have been granted (which includes

consideration of the statutory discretionary grounds for possession and questions of reasonableness)?

2. Was the behaviour serious enough to render the applicant or household member unsuitable to be a tenant (which involves consideration as to whether an immediate possession order was made or might have been made as opposed to a suspended order)?
3. Does the behaviour continue to be unacceptable at the time of application?

Partner organisations will act reasonably and consider each application on its merits. We will take into account the applicant's personal circumstances (and those of the applicant's household), including his or her health and medical needs, dependents and any other factors relevant to the application. In particular, the partners will consider any mitigating circumstances relating to mental or physical disability, or mental health. Previous unacceptable behaviour may not justify a decision to treat the applicant as ineligible where the applicant can show that the behaviour has improved.

- 6.4. Applicants deemed ineligible for housing will be provided with advice and guidance regarding their housing options from the Housing Options team when they contact the service.
- 6.5. Applicants deemed ineligible for housing will be notified of the decision and grounds of this in writing. They will also be informed of their right to request a review and their further right to appeal any decision upon review.
- 6.6. Where the assessing partner has reason to believe that the applicant may have difficulty in understanding the decision, arrangements will be made for the information to be explained in person, with appropriate support or translation where necessary. Furthermore, in cases where the partner has reason to believe that the applicant cannot be sent written notification or has not received it, the partner will make available at their offices a written statement of the decision and the reasons for it, so that the applicant or someone who represents the applicant may collect it within a reasonable time.

Part Three: The Allocations Scheme

This policy uses a banding scheme in order to prioritise applicants. The scheme is described in this section. It follows housing law regarding reasonable preference, additional preference and local connection. It also makes provision for reducing priority under certain circumstances. These concepts are explained in the following sections.

7. The shared housing register

- 7.1. As set out in the introduction, each customer contacting a partner organisation will be given housing options advice to enable them to consider their best options for finding accommodation. The advice will be tailored to individual circumstances, including whether the customer is in housing need. All customers may make an application for social housing.
- 7.2. The banding scheme is designed to give priority to applicants in housing need. The categories of housing need in the scheme are based on the reasonable preference categories set out in section 167 of the 1996 Housing Act, which are stated in section 9 below. Applicants who are given a banding will be recorded on the housing register, whose purpose is to manage applications from people in housing need.
- 7.3. Applicants who do not fall into any of the categories in the banding scheme will be given no preference for housing and will not be recorded on the housing register. Other housing options available to them will be made clear.
- 7.4. Customers who are eligible for the allocation of social housing but not given any priority in the scheme and not recorded on the register are still eligible to apply for social housing in situations where a vacancy occurs which cannot be let to anyone in any of the bands. In such situations, partner landlords may seek to let the property via other means, for example by advertising. In this case, any customer eligible for the allocation of social housing (including those not on the register), would be able to apply to live in the property and have their application considered.

8. Reasonable preference

The banding scheme ensures that reasonable preference is given to those applicants who fall within on or more of the following categories:

- 1) those who are homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the 1996 Act; this includes people who are intentionally homeless, and those who are not in priority need;
- 2) those who are owed a duty by any housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2), or 195(2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any housing authority under section 192(3);
- 3) those occupying unsanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions;
- 4) those who need to move on medical or welfare grounds including grounds relating to a disability; and
- 5) those who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the housing authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship to themselves or to others.

9. Additional preference

The allocation policy gives additional preference to people who fall within the reasonable preference categories and who are deemed to have urgent housing needs.

10. Local Connection

10.1. For determining priorities in allocating housing accommodation to people who fall within the five reasonable preference categories, any local connection (within the meaning of section 199 of the 1996 Act, as amended by section 315 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008) that an applicant has with a relevant local authority area, or in rural areas with a community council area, will be taken into account, in the manner set out in this section.

10.2. In this policy, by the phrase “local connection” is meant a connection between a person and a local authority area, i.e. Conwy, Denbighshire or Flintshire.

10.3. An applicant may have a local connection to a local authority area if the applicant or a member of their household has a connection for any of the following reasons:

- They have been resident in the local authority area for the previous 12 months.
- They were resident in the local authority area for 3 out of the previous 5 years.
- They have family associations in the area. Family associations normally arise when someone has a parent, adult child, brother or sister who has resided in the area for a period of at least 5 years at the date of application and both the person and the locally residing relative in question indicate a wish for them to be near them.
- They either provide support for or receive support from some person or organisation resident in the local authority area.
- They have been in employment in the local authority area for the last 12 months.
- They have been offered a job in the local authority area but have a disability and are unable to take up the job offer because of the difficulty of finding adequate accessible housing in the area
- They need to move to the local authority area so that a member of their household with a disability can attend a school or receive specialist support, but are unable to do so because of the difficulty in finding adequate accessible housing in the area. The need must be as a consequence of the disability and the need to move to that local authority area must be evidenced.
- They are serving in the Armed Forces and are either employed or resident in the local authority area.

- They are serving in the Armed Forces or are former members of the Armed Forces who are not currently employed or resident in the local authority area but have previously been resident in the local authority area, including residency as a result of a former posting in the area while serving in the Armed Forces.
- 10.4. In the situation where a local authority partner has accepted a duty towards an applicant under homelessness legislation, the applicant will be deemed as having a local connection to the relevant local authority area for the purposes of this allocation policy.
- 10.5. An applicant may have a local connection to one local authority area within the north east Wales region but not to another. As a result, if an applicant applies to more than one county, they may be placed in different bands with respect to different local authority areas.
- 10.6. Partners will retain the capacity to refine local connection criteria in particular circumstances via the use of local lettings policies, as per section 17 below.

11. The banding scheme

- 11.1. The banding scheme consists of four bands, from one to four in descending order of priority.
- 11.2. The band which an applicant can be placed in depends on whether they fall within one or more of the reasonable preference categories (as defined in section 8), whether they have an urgent housing need (as defined in section 9) and whether they have a local connection (as defined in section 10). When a property becomes available for letting, all applicants for whom the property is suitable (see section 13 below on the allocation of vacant properties) will be ranked in order of priority as follows. Applicants in band one will be given highest priority and then applicants in band two and so on. Within each band, applicants will be ranked by order of the date of their application for housing or the date of their application to transfer, with the applicant waiting the longest given highest priority.
- 11.3. The banding scheme is described in the appendix to this policy. The bands are summarised as follows:
- Band 1 is for applicants who fall within one or more of the reasonable preference categories, have an urgent housing need and have a local connection
 - Band 2 is for applicants who fall within one or more of the reasonable preference categories, do not have an urgent housing need and have a local connection. The only exception is that applicants who are intentionally homeless and entitled to reasonable preference will not be placed in band two even if they have a local connection, unless they fall within one of the other reasonable preference categories (i.e. categories 3, 4 or 5 in section 8).
 - Band 3 is for applicants who fall within one or more of the reasonable preference categories, have an urgent housing need but do not have a local connection.
 - Band 4 is for:

- a. applicants who fall within one or more of the reasonable preference categories but do not have an urgent housing need and do not have a local connection and;
- b. applicants who are intentionally homeless and have a local connection, but do not have an urgent housing need and, aside from being intentionally homeless, do not fall within any other reasonable preference category.

11.4. Exceptional circumstances may arise in which a partner landlord determines that a management move is necessary for one of their tenants. This may only be done when the circumstances or the urgency of the circumstances are not adequately covered by the banding scheme. In this situation, the partner landlord may allocate a property to the particular resident in preference to applicants on the common register, irrespective of the banding scheme or date of application. Such management moves must be authorised and will be audited.

12. Reduced priority

12.1. In compliance with provisions set out in the 1996 Housing Act, section 167 (2A), this policy allows that certain applicants who are entitled to reasonable preference may have their priority within the allocations scheme reduced because of any behaviour of the applicant (or a member of their household) which effects their suitability to be a tenant. This definition is distinct from that which entitles landlords to deem an applicant ineligible for social housing, as set out in section 6 above.

12.2. Categories of behaviour which may result in applicants being given reduced priority are as follows (in each case the behaviour may be on the part of any member of the household):

- Applicants who have engaged in anti-social behaviour and who have not maintained a satisfactory undertaking to address that behaviour.
- Applicants who have been convicted of using their home for immoral or illegal purposes.
- Current tenants who have been subject to action for breach of tenancy.
- Tenants wishing to transfer where their current property is in such poor condition that it cannot be re-let within a reasonable timescale.
- Applicants who have rent arrears owing to a current or previous landlord and who have not made and maintained a satisfactory arrangement to repay the debt.
- Applicants who have deliberately provided false or misleading information or failed to disclose information relevant to their application. In these cases applicants will be asked to complete a new application. The date of this new application will be taken and they may be given reduced preference for the new application.
- Applicants who have refused two reasonable offers. In this case applicants will be removed from the register and if they re-apply may be given reduced priority.

- Applicants who are deemed to have deliberately worsened their housing circumstances. For example, this may apply where an applicant gives up settled accommodation in order to move into less settled or overcrowded accommodation.
 - Applicants who have behaved in a way which affects their suitability to be a tenant (or whose household contains a member who has done this).
- 12.3. In compliance with provision set out in the 1996 Housing Act, section 167 (2A), this policy also allows that certain applicants who are entitled to reasonable preference may have their priority within the allocations scheme reduced because of financial resources available to the person, which it would be reasonable for them to use to meet their housing needs. This may apply for example when the person has legal or financial interests in a property and/or sufficient income or savings.
- 12.4. In deciding whether to reduce priority, the administering organisation will act reasonably and consider each application on its merits. It must have regard to the applicant's personal circumstances (and those of the applicant's household), including his or her health and medical needs, dependents and any other factors relevant to the application. In particular, it must consider any mitigating circumstances relating to mental or physical disability, or mental health.
- 12.5. When considering cases of behaviour, previous behaviour may not justify a decision to reduce preference where that behaviour can be shown by the applicant to have improved.
- 12.6. All decisions regarding reducing priority must be approved by a senior officer of the administering organisation. Cases of reduced priority will be monitored and the process reviewed as part of the annual review.
- 12.7. The sanction imposed on an applicant if a decision is taken to reduce priority will be to reduce priority to band 4. Applicants who are already in the lowest band cannot have their priority reduced.
- 12.8. In circumstances where an applicant has their priority reduced they will be provided with appropriate advice and guidance and support.
- 12.9. Applicants who are given reduced priority will be notified of the decision and the grounds of this in writing. They will have the right to appeal and to ask for the decision to be reviewed. If a decision is reviewed, the applicant will be informed of the decision of the review and the grounds for it.
- 12.10. Applicants who have their priority reduced because of unacceptable behaviour will be informed that if they change their behaviour and present satisfactory evidence of this, they will have the sanction removed. In this situation, the date of application for the purposes of ranking of applicants in any shortlist will be the date when the reduction of preference was removed.
- 12.11. Rehousing of some applicants with an offending background may be subject to Multi Agency Public Protection Agreements (MAPPA). In such circumstances housing allocation arrangements will be based on the appropriate risk assessment criteria with the relevant agencies concerned.

13. Allocation of vacant properties

13.1. At the point of application, applicants are asked about their choice of area and property type. However, each property type is usually only let to particular categories of household. The guidelines for this matching are given below.

13.2. Some types of property are designated for specific categories of applicant. The main examples of this are:

- Designated sheltered housing schemes have age restrictions which apply to tenants and members of their households.
- Homes that have been purpose built, adapted or are considered accessible by people with mobility needs will be offered first to people whose physical needs are suited to the property.
- Houses will normally only be let to families with children, where this is the children's principal home.
- Some flats and maisonettes will have restrictions regarding pets

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13.3. Applicants will normally be registered for property types on the basis of the table below. Note that a household would be eligible for an additional bedroom for each child or other member of the household over 16, where they are not members of a couple. Couples are expected to share a bedroom.

Household make up	Number of bedrooms
Single person	1 bedroom or bedsit
Pregnant women (in couple or single)	1 or 2 bedroom
Couple	1 bedroom
Couple or single parent with one child under 16	2 bedrooms
Two person household not in couple	2 bedrooms
Couple or single parent with two children under 16 of same sex, or with two children of opposite sex, both under 10	3 bedrooms
Couple or single parent with two children under 16 of opposite sex, with at least one child over 10	3 bedrooms
Couple or single parent with three children under 16	3 bedrooms
Couple or single parent with four children under 16, in any of the following cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all of same sex; - 2 boys and 2 girls - 3 of one sex and 1 of the other sex, where at least 2 children of different sex are under 10 	3 bedrooms
Couple or single parent with four children under 16, 3 of one sex and 1 of the other sex, where either the 3 of one sex are all over 10 or the child of the other sex is over 10	3 bedrooms
Couple or single parent with five children under 16	3 bedrooms
Couple or single parent with more than five children under 16	4 or more bedrooms

The table above is a general guide only and procedure may vary in areas due to local demand, supply, special circumstances or any local letting policies. Situations which may require a variation from the table include:

- Where there is a limited supply of properties with a small number of bedrooms relative to demand and there is a reasonable supply of properties with a large number of bedrooms relative to demand, applicants may be considered for and offered properties with more bedrooms than they require;
- Where an applicant is in urgent need, but the supply of suitable properties is limited, they may be considered for and offered properties with more bedrooms than they require;
- Where an applicant is homeless, but the supply of suitable properties is limited, they may be considered for and offered properties with more bedrooms than they require.

- Where pregnancy or the age of household members mean that the household would qualify for a larger property within a reasonable period of time, applicants may be allowed to register for properties which they would currently under-occupy.

In each case an affordability assessment will be made and the applicant's ability to afford the rent would be taken into account in determining whether to offer the property.

13.4. Applicants who require an additional bedroom for a non-resident carer will normally be registered for properties with an additional bedroom.

14.1.1. **Who Can Be Considered As Part of The Household** When assessing an application the partners will consider the circumstances of the household. A household is considered to be:

- Persons who are part of the household at the date of registration, or at the start of the tenancy in the case of existing tenants, and are still in occupation
- Partners who are living together in a relationship
- Children born since the registration date, or the start of the tenancy, or other dependent children joining the household where the applicant or tenant is the principal carer of the child. Evidence will need to be produced to confirm dependent relationship(s). Tenants must inform the organisation of any change to their household
- An adult relative who has become a member of the household because they are in need of support and cannot live independently. (this also applies to transfer applications)
- Housing applications from partners who are not living together due to lack of space in either of their accommodations will be considered as a household with both accommodations being taken into account when assessing the application

15.1.1. **Offers and refusals** Applicants have a choice as to whether to accept an offer of a property. If a property is refused without good reason, housing options will contact the applicant to discuss their reasons. If as a result of two unreasonable refusals, it is considered that the applicant's requirements are unlikely to be met, the applicant will be removed from the register, subject to right to review. They will be notified of this decision and the grounds in writing and of their right to review. Where necessary, this notification will be done in an alternative language or form. Any re-application may be given reduced priority.

15.2. Applicants owed a duty under homelessness legislation may be offered a property which falls outside their preferred options. Such offers will be made in line with the relevant statutory procedures. If such a reasonable offer is refused, then the applicant may have their priority within this policy reduced, in line with the section on reduced priority. In these circumstances applicants are entitled to a time limited review and if this found in their favour, they would be reinstated.

16. Removal from the register

16.1. Under certain circumstances, applicants may be removed from the register. These are as follows:

16.2. Applicants who have provided false or misleading information or failed to disclose information relevant to their application. In these cases applicants will be asked to complete a new application. The date of this application will be taken and they may be given reduced preference for this new application, as stated above

16.3. Applicants who have refused two reasonable offers. In this case they will be removed from the register and if they re-apply may be given reduced priority.

16.4. Applicants who fail to respond to correspondence including offer letters within the set response times. These applicants will be removed from the register through a formal notification and appeal process.

17. Local Lettings Policies

17.1. The policy recognises that partners may wish to include policies designed to tackle local housing issues through the use of local letting policies.

17.2. All local lettings policies will be based on a sound evidence base and will be developed after a robust assessment of this evidence base has been carried out.

17.3. Examples of local housing issues which may require local lettings policies include:

- concentrations of deprivation
- under occupation
- overcrowding
- facilitating tenant employment through job related moves
- the needs and sustainability of rural communities, for example where affordability of housing is an issue.
- allowing transfers for existing social tenants even where they do not have reasonable preference.
- Some properties, usually in defined locations, can only be let subject to additional occupation criteria as they are subject to a Planning Obligation under s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- Regeneration areas
- Large new developments

17.4. The development of local lettings policies will follow the protocol which accompanies this policy and may be modified from time to time. This protocol and local lettings policies will be reviewed and monitored via a mechanism set up by the partner organisations.

18. Monitoring and review of Allocations policy

18.1. The operation of the policy will be monitored on an on-going basis. It will also be subject to an annual review. Where appropriate, recommendations for alterations will be submitted for approval. These would then have to be ratified by each partner before being adopted.

19. Reviews and appeals

19.1. An applicant has the right to be informed, upon request, of any decision about the facts of their case which is likely to be, or has been, taken into account in considering whether to allocate housing accommodation to them.

19.2. An applicant has the right to request a review of any decision made in relation to their housing application, including:

- (a) any decision about the facts of their case which is likely to be, or has been, taken into account in considering whether to allocate housing accommodation to them;
- (b) any decision as to their eligibility for the allocation of social housing;
- (c) any decision as to the assessment of their application in relation to the banding scheme;
- (d) any decision made in relation to removing an applicant from the register in accordance with section 16;
- (e) any decision in relation to reducing priority in accordance with section 12;
- (f) any decision made by one of the local authority partners in relation to whether there is reason to believe that they are homeless or threatened with homelessness and, if so, any consequent decisions relating to eligibility for assistance, to any duties owed, to notifying or referring to another authority, to the suitability of accommodation offered or any other matter relevant to their housing application.

19.3. On a request for a review being duly made, the partners shall review the decision.

19.4. Applicants will be informed of the decision of the review and the grounds for it.

Appendix: The Banding Scheme

The criteria for determining which band an applicant is placed in are set out below. All decisions taken will be consistent with this scheme.

<p>BAND 1</p> <p>This band applies to those applicants who meet the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. They fall within one or more of the 5 reasonable preference categories set out in section 8 of this policy; AND2. They have an urgent housing need (as in the examples below); AND3. They have a local connection as defined in section 10 of this policy
<p>Examples of Urgent Housing Need:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Urgent medical, welfare or disability related need <p>Applicants whose household includes someone who:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">has a medical condition which is life-threatening or likely to become so, and which is directly linked to their housing conditions and likely to improve with rehousinghas been assessed by the relevant practitioner as having a need to move urgently to an accessible property.Has a serious physical or mental illness, disability or medical condition or behavioural disorder, which is causing serious dysfunction to themselves or the family unit such that they are completely unable to cope in their present accommodation and re-housing would alleviate the problem. For example, terminal illness or advanced progressive condition.Is hospitalised and is unable to return to their home as it is totally unsuitable for their long term needs by way of design, location and/or is unsuitable for disabled adaptations.is disabled and unable to access essential facilities within the property e.g. bathing or WC, or access to the property itself is totally unsuitable. The property cannot be economically adapted to meet their needs.needs to move to provide support to a relative or person with serious illness, disability or medical condition and that person can only cope in their present accommodation with the applicant's support.is living in overcrowded accommodation which leaves the person vulnerable to serious infection, for example where they are suffering from late stage HIV.

idence will be required in these cases to support the validity of the claim

2. Loss of home as result of a disaster:

Awarded to applicants with a reasonable prospect of an accommodation offer within a relatively short period who suddenly and permanently lose their existing home as a result of a disaster.

3. Leaving armed forces or serious injury whilst serving in armed forces:

- (a) Any applicant who needs to move to suitable adapted accommodation because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability which he or she, or a member of their household, has sustained as a result of service in the Armed Forces.
- (b) People needing accommodation because of leaving the armed forces and the loss of military accommodation. People who have left the armed forces under Discharge as of Right (DAOR) are excluded from this provision and will not be given band one status under this category.

4. People accommodated by the local authority in care or approved supported housing who are deemed ready to move on

5. Urgent cases where the household needs access to social housing to prevent a child from being taken into/remaining in care

Examples include:

- (a) Foster parents who urgently need accommodation to take a child..
- (b) Cases where a child care plan has identified the need for accommodation to prevent the child being looked after by the authority (e.g. for child in need/looked after child/child protection).

6. Existing tenants who are either under-occupying by one or more bedroom and wish to transfer to a smaller property or who are occupying an adapted property which they do not need, provided that one of the following applies:

- They are suffering financial hardship because of welfare reform;
- Their moving would release a property for someone in urgent need who would otherwise probably have to wait an unreasonably long time to be

re-housed.

7. Homeless due to violence or threat of violence :

Those owed a full homelessness duty as a result of violence or threats of violence likely to be carried out and who as a result require urgent re-housing including:

- (a) Victims of domestic or other violence;
- (b) Victims of hate incidents (including crimes and non-crimes in policing terms and this will cover victims of hate violence, threats of violence and hate harassment of any kind;

Witnesses of crime, or victims of crime, who would be at risk of intimidation amounting to violence or threats of violence if they remained in their current homes.

8. Exceptional case of urgent need where the circumstances or the urgency of the circumstances are not dealt with elsewhere in this scheme.

Such cases may or may not be transfer tenants. Each case will be judged, authorised and recorded according to the agreed procedure and regularly monitored.

AND 2

This band applies to those applicants who meet the following criteria:

- 1. They fall within one or more of the 5 reasonable preference categories set out in section 8 of this policy; AND**
- 2. They have a local connection as defined in section 10 of this policy; AND**
- 3. They do not have an urgent housing need**

The only exception is that applicants who are intentionally homeless and entitled to reasonable preference will not be placed in band two even if they have a local connection, unless they fall within one of the other reasonable preference categories (i.e. categories 3, 4 or 5 in section 8)

Examples of those who will fall within this band are as follows:

- 1. Applicants who are homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, with the exception of applicants who have become homeless intentionally under the definition of intentionality contained in section 191 of the 1996 Act.**

This category includes homeless applicants both in priority need and not in priority need, provided they have not become homeless intentionally.

The definition of homelessness used is contained in sections 175-177 of the Housing Act 1996 Part 7. Under this definition a person who does not have accommodation which is legally and physically available to them to occupy and which is reasonable for them to occupy would be classed as homeless. This includes the following:

- Applicants who have no accommodation available to them where they can live with other people who normally live with them as a member of their family or other people who might reasonably be expected to live with them.
- Applicants who have accommodation available to them but the partners agree that it would not be reasonable for them to continue to occupy it.
- Applicants who have accommodation but they cannot secure access to it or, in the case of a moveable structure such as a caravan, there is no lawful place they can live in it.

People will be accorded this status depending on an assessment by the relevant local authority's homelessness team or the team of a contracted out service as applicable. Applicants who refuse a reasonable offer made to them under homelessness legislation may have their priority reduced.

2. Applicants who are owed a duty by a local housing authority under section 193(2) or 195(2) of the Housing Act 1996, who are occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3) of the 1996 Act, or who are unintentionally threatened with homelessness within 56 days and are in priority need.

This category includes applicants who are:

- (a) unintentionally homeless and in priority need and who have been accepted as being owed a full duty under section 193(2);
- (b) unintentionally homeless and not in priority need but for whom accommodation has been made available by the authority under section 192(3);
- (c) unintentionally threatened with homelessness in the next 56 days and are in priority need (this includes those unintentionally threatened within 28 days, in priority need and owed a duty under section 195(2) of the 1996 Act).

This category does not include applicants who have become homeless, or are

threatened with homelessness, intentionally.

People will be accorded this status depending on an assessment by the relevant local authority's homelessness team or the team of a contracted out service as applicable. Applicants who refuse a reasonable offer made to them under homelessness legislation may have their preference reduced.

3. Applicants suffering from unsatisfactory housing conditions

This category includes the following:

- (a) Applicants whose current property:
 - (a) lacks a bathroom with facilities or the facilities are located in an insanitary location e.g. within kitchen;
 - (b) lacks a kitchen and/or appropriate facilities;
 - (c) lacks an inside W/C;
 - (d) lacks a hot or cold water supply to the property due to defect with the property;
 - (e) lacks an electrical supply due to defect with property;
 - (f) lacks a gas supply due to defect with property where such a supply is required to operate existing or necessary services such as heating.
- (b) Applicants who share facilities with occupiers who are not part of the applicant's household on a permanent basis. This applies to the sharing of a kitchen, bathroom/shower or toilet.
- (c) Applicants living in overcrowded housing. A housing situation is deemed to be overcrowded if it lacks at least one bedroom. This must be on a permanent basis. The following are taken to be minimum bedroom requirements:
 - a. A married couple or couple living together need one bedroom.
 - b. A married couple or couple living together with a child under 12 months need one bedroom.
 - c. A single person over the age of 16 or a single parent needs one bedroom (applicable to a single parent with a child under 12 months).
 - d. A child 10-16 can only share a bedroom with a child of the same sex.
- (d) Applicants who have been referred by environmental health for re-housing because they are living in accommodation where category 1 hazards exist.

Note that all customers residing in insanitary or hazardous housing will be referred to environmental health in order to resolve the problem and enable the customer to remain in their home. The person would only be referred for re-housing if, despite their best efforts, it is the opinion of environmental health that the problem cannot be resolved within a reasonable period of

time.

4. People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including grounds relating to disability)

The following categories of applicant would qualify:

- a) Applicants whose household includes someone with a medical condition which is directly linked to unsuitable housing and where re-housing is necessary to significantly improve their health.
- b) Current accommodation presents access problems to a member of the household which have a detrimental impact on their welfare, which cannot be resolved in the current property and would be significantly alleviated if they were suitably re-housed. Such cases would be assessed by the relevant practitioner as requiring a move to an accessible property.
- c) Applicants whose household includes someone who has social care needs which are not being met and re-housing is necessary to significantly improve their care.

5. People who need to move to a particular locality, where a failure to do so would cause hardship

Cases include:

- a) It is unreasonable for the applicant to stay in their current property due to exceptional financial hardship.
- b) The applicant or member of their household is at risk of being admitted to residential care or hospital if re-housing is not made.
- c) The applicant needs to move due to relationship breakdown and there is a need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children associated.
- d) The applicant is a care leaver, vulnerable and has a high housing need that is best met by the provision of long term settled housing. Applicants must be a former 'relevant child' as defined by the Children Leaving Care Act 2000.
- e) The applicant or member of their household has permanent employment which cannot continue unless they live in a specific locality within the area and are otherwise adequately housed.
- f) The applicant is giving or receiving essential support, which can only be delivered if they live in a specific locality within the area.

6. Exceptional case of housing need where the circumstances are not dealt with elsewhere in this scheme.

Such cases may or may not be transfer tenants. Each case will be judged, authorised and recorded according to the agreed procedure and regularly monitored.

AND 3

This band applies to those applicants who meet the following criteria:

- 1. They fall within one or more of the 5 reasonable preference categories set out in section 8 of this policy; AND**
- 2. They have an urgent housing need; AND**
- 3. They do not have a local connection as defined in section 10 of this policy**

Examples of urgent housing need are as follows:

1. Urgent medical, welfare or disability related need

Applicants whose household includes someone who:

- (a) has a medical condition which is life-threatening or likely to become so, and which is directly linked to their housing conditions and likely to improve with rehousing
- (b) has been assessed by the relevant practitioner as having a need to move urgently to an accessible property.
- (c) Has a serious physical or mental illness, disability or medical condition or behavioural disorder, which is causing serious dysfunction to themselves or the family unit such that they are completely unable to cope in their present accommodation and re-housing would alleviate the problem. For example, terminal illness or advanced progressive condition.
- (d) Is hospitalised and is unable to return to their home as it is totally unsuitable for their long term needs by way of design, location and/or is unsuitable for disabled adaptations.
- (e) is disabled and unable to access essential facilities within the property e.g. bathing or WC, or access to the property itself is totally unsuitable. The property cannot be adapted to meet their needs.
- (f) is living in overcrowded accommodation which leaves the person vulnerable to serious infection, for example where they are suffering from late stage HIV.

vidence will be required in these cases, in line with the agreed procedures, to support the validity of the claim

2. Loss of home as result of a disaster

warded to applicants with a reasonable prospect of an accommodation offer within a relatively short period who suddenly lose their existing home as a result of a disaster.

3. Leaving armed forces or serious injury whilst serving in armed forces

- (a) Any applicant who needs to move to suitable adapted accommodation because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability which he or she, or a member of their household, has sustained as a result of service in the Armed Forces.
- (b) People needing accommodation because of leaving the armed forces and the loss of military accommodation. People who have left the armed forces under Discharge as of Right (DAOR) are excluded from this provision and will not be given band one status under this category.

4. People accommodated by the local authority in care or approved supported housing who are deemed ready to move on

5. Urgent cases where the household needs access to social housing to prevent a child from being taken into/remaining in care

Examples include:

- (a) Foster parents who urgently need accommodation to take a child. Cases where a child care plan has identified the need for accommodation to prevent the child being looked after by the authority (e.g. for child in need/looked after child/child protection).

6. Exceptional case of urgent need where the circumstances or the urgency of the circumstances are not dealt with elsewhere in this scheme

Such cases may or may not be transfer tenants. Each case will be judged, authorised and recorded according to the agreed procedure and regularly monitored.

AND 4

This band applies to those applicants in either of the following cases:

- a. **They fall within one or more of the 5 reasonable preference categories set out in section 8 of this policy AND they do not have a local connection as defined in section 10 of this policy AND they do not have an urgent housing need;**
- b. **They are intentionally homeless and have a local connection, but do not have an urgent housing need and, aside from being intentionally homeless, do not fall within any other reasonable preference category.**

Examples of those who will fall within this band are as follows:

- 1. Applicants who are homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.**

This category includes homeless applicants both in priority need and not in priority need, and who are homeless either unintentionally or intentionally.

The definition of homelessness used is contained in sections 175-177 of the Housing Act 1996 Part 7. Under this definition a person who does not have accommodation which is legally and physically available to them to occupy and which is reasonable for them to occupy would be classed as homeless. This includes the following:

- Applicants who have no accommodation available to them where they can live with other people who normally live with them as a member of their family or other people who might reasonably be expected to live with them.
- Applicants who have accommodation available to them but the partners agree that it would not be reasonable for them to continue to occupy it.
- Applicants who have accommodation but they cannot secure access to it or, in the case of a moveable structure such as a caravan, there is no lawful place they can live in it.

People will be accorded this status depending on an assessment by the relevant local authority's homelessness team or the team of a contracted out service as applicable.

- 2. Applicants who are owed a duty by a local housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) of the Housing Act 1996 (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured**

by any such authority under section 192(3) of the 1996 Act.

This category includes applicants who are:

- (a) unintentionally homeless and in priority need and who have been accepted as being owed a full duty under section 193(2);
- (b) unintentionally homeless and not in priority need but for whom accommodation has been made available by the authority under section 192(3);
- (c) threatened with homelessness in the next 28 days and owed a duty under section 195(2) of the 1996 act (i.e. have not intentionally become so threatened and are in priority need);
- (d) are owed a section 190(2) duty, have been assessed as being in priority need, but are intentionally homeless and have been provided with accommodation for a period of time to enable them to secure their own accommodation.

People will be accorded this status depending on an assessment by the relevant local authority's homelessness team or the team of a contracted out service as applicable.

3. Applicants suffering from unsatisfactory housing conditions

This category includes the following:

- (a) Applicants whose current property:
 - a. lacks a bathroom with facilities or the facilities are located in an insanitary location e.g. within kitchen;
 - b. lacks a kitchen and/or appropriate facilities;
 - c. lacks an inside W/C;
 - d. lacks a hot or cold water supply to the property due to defect with the property;
 - e. lacks an electrical supply due to defect with property;
 - f. lacks a gas supply due to defect with property where such a supply is required to operate existing or necessary services such as heating.
- (b) Applicants who share facilities with occupiers who are not part of the applicant's household on a permanent basis. This applies to the sharing of a kitchen, bathroom/shower or toilet.
- (c) A housing situation is deemed to be overcrowded if it lacks at least one

bedroom. This must be on a permanent basis. The following are taken to be minimum bedroom requirements:

- a. A married couple or couple living together need one bedroom.
 - b. A married couple or couple living together with a child under 12 months need one bedroom.
 - c. A single person over the age of 16 or a single parent needs one bedroom. (applicable to a single parent with a child under 12 months).
 - d. A child 10-16 can only share a bedroom with a child of the same sex.
- (d) Applicants who have been referred by environmental health as residing in insanitary or hazardous housing posing a category 1 hazard, where it has been impossible for the environmental health department to satisfactorily resolve the issue.

Note that all customers residing in insanitary or hazardous housing will be referred to environmental health in order to resolve the problem and enable the customer to remain in their home. The person would only be referred for re-housing if, despite their best efforts, it is the opinion of environmental health that the problem cannot be resolved within a reasonable period of time.

4. People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including grounds relating to disability)

The following categories of applicant would qualify:

- a) Applicants whose household includes someone with a medical condition which is directly linked to unsuitable housing and where re-housing is necessary to significantly improve their health.
- b) Current accommodation presents access problems to a member of the household which have a detrimental impact on their welfare, which cannot be resolved in the current property and would be significantly alleviated if they were suitably re-housed. Such cases would be assessed by occupational therapy as requiring a move to an accessible property. These cases will be managed through an accessible housing register.
- c) Applicants whose household includes someone who has social care needs which are not being met and re-housing is necessary to significantly improve their care.

5. People who need to move to a particular locality, where a failure to do so would cause hardship

Cases include:

- a) It is unreasonable for the applicant to stay in their current property due to exceptional financial hardship.

- b) Applicants who need to downsize because they are unable to afford their current property due to welfare reform.
- c) The applicant or member of their household is at risk of being admitted to residential care or hospital if re-housing is not made.
- d) The applicant needs to move due to relationship breakdown and there is a need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children associated.
- e) The applicant is a care leaver, vulnerable and has a high housing need that is best met by the provision of long term settled housing. Applicants must be a former 'relevant child' as defined by the Children Leaving Care Act 2000.

6. Exceptional case of housing need where the circumstances are not dealt with elsewhere in this scheme.

Such cases may or may not be transfer tenants. Each case will be judged, authorised and recorded according to the agreed procedure and regularly monitored.

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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

DATE: **WEDNESDAY 20TH NOVEMBER 2013**

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

SUBJECT: **IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING REPORT**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To note and consider elements of the 2013/14 Mid Year Improvement Plan Monitoring Report relevant to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The report covers the period April – September 2013.

1.02 To note the following:-

- The levels of progress and confidence in meeting the Council's Improvement Priorities and their impacts including the milestones achieved.
- The measures which evidence achievement and the baseline data, and targets.
- The baseline risk assessment for the strategic risks identified in the Improvement Plan and the arrangements to control them.

1.03 To enable Members to comment on the new approach to performance reporting.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The new style Improvement Plan adopted by Council in June 2013 which is aligned to the new three year Outcome Agreement, focuses on the priorities which are expected to have the most impact during 2013/14.

2.02 In addition to the Improvement Plan Monitoring Report, bi-annually performance highlight reports will be presented from the Heads of Service. These will be similar to those previously produced for quarterly reporting.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The Improvement Plan Monitoring Report gives an explanation of the progress being made towards delivery of the impacts set out in the Improvement Plan. The narrative is supported by measures and/or milestones which evidence achievement. In addition, there is an assessment of the strategic risks and the level to which they are being controlled.

3.02 For Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee the following Improvement Plan sub-priority reports are attached at Appendix 1 - 5:-

- Extra Care Housing
- Modern, Efficient and Adapted Homes
- Achieve the Wales Housing Quality Standard
- Welfare Reform
- Fuel Poverty

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That the Committee consider the 2013/14 Mid Year Improvement Plan Monitoring Report, highlight concerns and feedback details of any challenge to the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee who are responsible for the overview and monitoring of performance.

4.02 That the Committee comment on the newly introduced improvement plan performance monitoring approach.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 There are no specific financial implications for this report; however the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan is aligned to resource the priorities of the Improvement Plan.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 There are no specific anti poverty implications for this report, however poverty is a priority within the Improvement Plan 2013/14.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 There are no specific environmental implications for this report; however the environment is a priority within the Improvement Plan 2013/14.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 There are no equalities implications for this report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 There are no personnel implications for this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 Publication of this report constitutes consultation.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Corporate Management Team and the Performance Leads from across the Authority have contributed to help shape the new approach to reporting.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1 – Extra Care Housing
Appendix 2 – Modern, Efficient and Adapted Homes
Appendix 3 – Achieve the Wales Housing Quality Standard
Appendix 4 – Welfare Reform
Appendix 5 – Fuel Poverty

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

None.

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APPENDIX 1

Priority: Housing
Sub-Priority: Extra Care Housing
Impact: Helping more people to live independently and well at home

We said in 2013/14 that we would:

1. Extend our extra care supported living service from 1 to 2 schemes increasing provision from 50 housing units to 113 housing units by opening Llys Jasmine in Mold to follow Llys Eleanor in Shotton.

Progress Status	Progress RAG	G	Outcome RAG	G
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Llys Jasmine is due for handover week commencing 23rd September with tenants moving in on a planned staggered basis from 7th October.

As of the beginning of September 48 apartments at Llys Jasmine have been allocated, including 12 of the 15 for people with dementia. Further information is being sought to aid the Panel decision of another 5 applicants of whom 2 have dementia. A further 20 applications are being prioritised for assessment; enquiries and applications are still being received. It is envisaged that Llys Jasmine will be fully occupied by Christmas 2013.

Llys Eleanor, the first extra care scheme in Flintshire, is fully occupied with an actively managed waiting list for apartments. As voids occur the waiting list is considered to ensure the scheme remains viable in terms of mix of needs. All new applicants to Llys Eleanor have been informed of the option of applying to Llys Jasmine

The Extra Care Housing Strategy for Flintshire includes an exploration of future needs within Flintshire. It indicates that approximately 300 units of accommodation are required and this figure can be expected to increase by 10% by 2033. Demand is likely to be still higher and we can expect demand for accommodation with care to be in excess of 1,200 by 2033 of which a third may be for Extra care housing.

A further two extra care schemes are currently being taken through the procurement process.

- Tenant feedback

The learning from the development of Llys Eleanor has informed the planning and progression of Llys Jasmine as summarised in the

Equality Impact Assessment. Examples of changes incorporated as a result of this learning include:-

- more parking spaces
- more lifts
- wider paths away from windows with appropriate surfaces to differentiate private and public space
- mixed tenure options
- extra security
- a range of activities and décor / designed to appealing to males and females

Tenant feedback is gathered through a range of mechanisms including

- “Tea with Tom” meetings with the Scheme Manager open to all tenants, to gather feedback on the running of the scheme
- Regular meetings with the Activity Coordinator to which all tenants are invited to give comment on the activity programme and elicit suggestions for future events
- Formal feedback through individual Care Plan Reviews undertaken by Adult Social care
- Flintshire’s Customer feedback compliments and complains process: no complaints received to date; compliments include a range of positive feedback in the form of cards one of which referenced life-saving emergency aid being delivered by the on-site care team to a tenant who made a full recovery

Achievement will be Measured through:

- Scale and take-up of provision to meet demand
- Tenant feedback

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans: (Lead officers – Director of Community Services, Head of Housing, Head of Adult Social Services)

Open Llys Jasmine – September 2013

Develop a tenant satisfaction scheme by January 2014

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2012/13 Baseline Data	2013/14 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	Current Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
Full occupation: i) Llys Jasmine – 63 units ii)Llys Eleanor – 50 units	Director of Community Services / Head of Housing / Head of Adult Social Services	i) N/A ii)100%	i) 100% ii) 100%	i)100% ii)100%	i) N/A ii)100%	G	G
Tenant feedback: >90% rate of tenant satisfaction (Annual measure)	Head of Housing / Head of Adult Social Services	N/A	90%	90%	N/A	G	G

2. Develop a new and sustainable business model for more schemes, now there is no longer Welsh Government capital funding available, with plans for further schemes in the Flint and Holywell catchments.

Progress Status	Progress RAG	G	Outcome RAG	G
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Council is progressing appointment of a Social Housing Partner to support developments in Flint & Holywell. It expected a partner will be appointed by the end of October 2013. Further actions will be timetabled once the partner is in place and is able to advise on key milestones and realistic timetables.

Achievement will be Measured through:

- development of a new business model
- development of agreed plans for new schemes

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans: (Lead Officer – Director of Community Services)

- Appoint partner – November 2013
- Develop new business model – December 2013
- Develop agreed plans for new schemes – February 2014

Risks to Manage

1. How we can fund the building of new schemes with local partners and using local assets without national capital grant.
2. How we can switch revenue resources from more traditional to new housing and care services.
3. Keeping up with demand for alternative housing models from an ageing population.
4. Keeping up with specialist demand such as meeting the specific needs of those with dementia.

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Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood (L)	Impact (I)	Gross Score (LxI)		Likelihood (L)	Impact (I)	Gross Score (LxI)				Likelihood (L)	Impact (I)	Gross Score (LxI)
H	H	R	Council is progressing appointment of a Social Housing Partner to support developments in Flint & Holywell. It expected a partner will be appointed by the end of October 2013. Actions will identified and listed against these risks following this appointment.	H	H	R		Head of Housing		H	H	R

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APPENDIX 2

Priority: Housing
Sub-Priority: Modern, Efficient and Adapted Homes
Impact: Improving the choice and quality of local housing

We said in 2013/14 that we would:

1. Agree a new model of private finance to deliver an increased number of affordable homes.

Progress Status	Progress RAG	A	Outcome RAG	G
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Flintshire is exploring a variety of financial models available to the Council to facilitate housing development in Flintshire without the requirement for public grant subsidy. The Council needs to ensure that the right types of housing offered in the right locations are delivered to meet the needs of new and existing households, and therefore a range of models need to be both evaluated and made available to satisfy individual schemes and locations. Of particular interest and focus at present is in finding the best model for Flint Town Regeneration Plan. It is hoped that one or more options for this can be proposed to council for consideration in November 2013.

Achievement will be Measured through:

- Gaining formal approval for a new model
- Approval for the Flint Town Centre regeneration plan

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans: (Lead Officer – Head of Housing)

Gain approval for new funding model – September 2013
 Gain approval for Flint Town regeneration plan – October 2013

Page 5

Risks to Manage

Ensuring that we prevent delays in planning approvals for affordable housing developments.

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Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)
M	M	A	Preplanning meetings are now in place with planning and the affordable housing officer to help assist applications to progress smoothly through the planning process.	L	M	G		Head of Housing		L	M	G

Risks to Manage

Ensure the availability of private finance for development of affordable homes.

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)			(L)	(I)	(LxI)	
M	H	R		M	H	R	Gain approval for a range of new funding models to encourage viable schemes for the county.	Head of Housing		L	L	G

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Risks to Manage

Encouraging developers to build a range of affordable housing in the current economic climate

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)
H	H	R	Preplanning meetings are now in place with planning and the affordable housing officer to help assist applications to progress smoothly through the planning process.	M	H	R	Gain approval for a range of new funding models to encourage viable schemes for the county.			L	M	G

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2. Develop a strategy to grow and sustain the private rented sector

Progress Status

Progress RAG

A

Outcome RAG

G

PRS Strategy

The draft Private Rented Sector (PRS) strategy is in development. Further elements linked to the strategy include a PRS forum event scheduled for October 2013 aimed at redefining and re-launching the Flintshire PRS forum. A corporate private rented sector working group with the remit to develop corporate service standards, policies and processes in relation to the sector will be established to coordinate activities within the council.

Empty Homes

Flintshire Housing Renewal continues to lead the North Wales Region for Houses into Homes and during Quarter 4 2012/13 it was confirmed that a further £10M is being made available to the initiative across Wales. The North Wales Region will again be awarded £2.3M and approximately £480K of that will be made available to Flintshire. The first 6 properties under the 2012/13 scheme have been completed in Flint and the Housing Service has agreed a 5 year lease on them to assist with decanting tenants from the Maisonettes.

Flintshire's application waiting list of £560K, which would provide loans for a further 21 units of accommodation will be dealt with in date order once the 2013/14 resource is made available.

As the 3% target for returning empty properties back in to use was comfortably met during 2012/13, with a final outturn on 5.96%; a more challenging target of 6% has been set for this year. Unfortunately, a lack of staffing capacity in the area of empty homes has mean that little progress against this target has been made in Quarter 1. However, the post of Empty Homes Officer will be backfilled in Quarter 2 and we forecast that significant progress will be made in Quarter 2 and that we will still meet the annual target of 6%.

Achievement will be Measured through:

- Formal approval for a strategy to grow and sustain the private rented sector approved by the end of 2013
- Bringing of 30 empty homes back into use for residential living

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans: (Lead Officer – Head of Housing)

Develop and implement a Private Rented Sector improvement strategy and associated action plan – September 2013

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2012/13 Baseline Data	2013/14 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	Current Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
Number of empty homes brought back into use.	Head of Housing	32	30	30 (120 cumulative)	2	A	G

Risks to Manage

Maximising our joint resources with our partners

Page 60	Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
	Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score
	(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)
	H	H	R	1. The review of joint and collaborative working in the PRS with neighbouring authorities is scheduled for completion by Dec 2013.	H	H	R	1. Establish a corporate private rented sector working group to develop corporate service standards, policies and processes in relation to the sector.	Head of Housing		M	M	A

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Priority: Housing
Sub-Priority: Achieve the Welsh Housing Quality Standard
Impact: Improving quality of life for our tenants through improved housing

We said in 2013/14 that we would:

1. Agree a revised business plan with Welsh Government to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)

Progress Status	Progress RAG	G	Outcome RAG	G
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Flintshire County Council has agreed a revised business plan with Welsh Government to achieve the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by 2020. A number of surveys are to be procured to validate figures provided in the business plan and to inform a revised 7 year work programme for achievement of WHQS. These include: -

- Revised Stock Condition Survey – Currently out to tender
- Asbestos Consultancy and Surveying – Currently out to tender
- Communal Heating – Due to go out to tender in Nov

The revised business plan will commit to circa £103m over the next 7 years to achieve WHQS. As per the current work streams the initial focus will be on the internal components of the properties with the external and environmental programmes to begin following the completion of the internal work schemes.

The agreed business plan highlights a number of alternative funding streams and efficiency and income generation targets to contribute towards achieving outcomes contained within the business plan i.e. ECO Funding, service charges.

Previous risk identified – Understanding what our options are should Welsh Government not agree Flintshire’s revised Business Plan – The risks have been revised on the basis that the business plan submitted has been agreed by Welsh Government.

Achievement will be Measured through:

- Agreement of a revised business plan with Welsh Government – Achieved

Next steps:

Pursue options to secure additional funding to maximise investment capacity in the housing stock – April 2014

Risks to Manage:

1. Outcomes of Stock Condition Survey
2. Securing additional funding such as ECO finance
3. Realising efficiencies and income generation targets identified in the business plan

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Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)			(L)	(I)	(LxI)	
H	H	R	1. Gaining political approval for efficiency and income generation proposals.	L	M	G	1. Options for prudential borrowing. 2. Revise business plan following outcomes of Stock Condition Survey	Head of Housing		L	L	G

2. Deliver the capital programme ensuring value for money

Progress Status

Progress RAG

G

Outcome RAG

G

During the financial year 2012 / 2013, a number of capital works targets were met within budget and market conditions enabled FCC to exceed our target numbers for the same value: -

- Heating upgrades - 600 homes planned - 1100 delivered
- Kitchen replacements - 922 planned - 1100 delivered
- Smoke detectors - 884 planned - 2400 delivered
- Bathroom replacements - 56 planned - 62 delivered

In 2013/14 the expectation is that the original commitments will again be exceeded: -

- Heating upgrades - 600 homes promised - 1000 in programme
- Kitchen replacements – 922 promised - 1000 in programme
- Smoke detectors - 884 promised - 1000 in programme
- Bathrooms – 0 promised – 60 in programme

Programme expenditure 2013/14 is currently in accordance with initial forecasts. Against a budget of £12m for the financial year actual spend at September 2013 is £4m. A number of work streams were profiled to commence later in the financial year and these also remain on target.

As part of the Housing Asset Management service review a Tenant Liaison Officer was appointed in July 2013.

Progress on the key milestones is as follows: -

- The tender for asbestos consultancy and surveying has now been developed and is currently out to tender with a return date of Oct 13.
- To ensure performance of the works programme, monitoring is in place for contract progress and budget management. Monthly project meetings are held with each contractor to review progress and performance against KPI's. Delivery targets are set and progress against these targets is monitored by the project managers.
- A tender has been developed to undertake a revised Stock Condition Survey. The specification is currently out to tender and due to be returned w/c 7th Oct. The survey will verify previous Stock Condition Data, survey a further 10% of the internal condition of the properties and focus on the external aspects of the stock in order to inform the environmental work streams that will form part

- of the revised works plan to meet WHQS by 2020.
- Following the return and review of the updated Stock Condition Data a revised 7 year programme will be developed to meet the WHQS by 2020.
 - An Asbestos Management Strategy has been developed together with an operational plan for implementation.

Achievement will be Measured through:

- Performance management of our works programme

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2012/13 Baseline Data	2013/14 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	Current Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
Capital Programme expenditure on improvement work streams	Head of Assets & Transportation	N/A	£12m	N/A	£4m	G	G

Risks to Manage:

Ensuring Contractors perform effectively.
Meeting customer expectations

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Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)
M	M	A	1. Effective budget monitoring and management 2. Robust management of contractors for programme delivery. 3. Ensuring effective arrangements and resource for customer liaison. Tenant Liaison Officer appointed in July 2013.	L	L	G	1. Review resource requirements in line with revised 7 year works programme.	Head of Assets & Transportation		L	L	G

3. Develop a Housing Asset Management Strategy by January 2014.

Progress Status	Progress RAG	G	Outcome RAG	G
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A revised Asset Management Strategy is being developed alongside the completion of an updated Stock Condition Survey. The outcomes of the Stock Condition Survey together with the information gathered for the Asset Management Strategy will then inform a revised 7 year Capital Investment Programme to achieve WHQS by 2020.

The Stock Condition Survey is currently out to tender and due to be returned in Oct with results due in December 2013.

A new risk has also been identified in terms of welfare reform and the need to identify measures within the Asset Management Strategy to mitigate the potential impact.

Achievement will be Measured through:

- An effective strategy to maintain and improve the housing stock

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans: (Lead Officer – Head of Assets and Transportation)

Asset management strategy including options for energy funding, WHQS, regulation and compliance etc. – January 2014

Risks to Manage

Ensuring that the Council finds the resources required to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by 2020
Ability to address the impact and change in demand due to Welfare Reform

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)			(L)	(I)	(LxI)	
H	H	R	1. Ensuring other services i.e. Housing Management input to the Asset Management Strategy to plan for the impact of Welfare Reform and other regeneration issues.	L	M	G	1. Revisit and revise business plan to address future impacts of Welfare Reform i.e. re-modelling of existing accommodation. 2. Options for prudential borrowing	Head of Assets & Transportation		L	L	G

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APPENDIX 4

Priority: Poverty
Sub-Priority: Welfare Reform
Impact: Protecting people from poverty

We said in 2013/14 that we would:

1. Help prevent people from becoming homeless

Progress Status	Progress RAG	G	Outcome RAG	G
------------------------	---------------------	----------	--------------------	----------

The Housing Options service has implemented new working practices to make best use of the resources within the team. The team now work to a rota system which means two officers are on duty every day dealing with all enquiries and carrying out interviews. The rest of the team are able to focus on their open cases and take a more proactive approach to prevention and discharging duty including home visits, landlord liaison, payments from homeless prevention fund and referrals to welfare rights and accommodation support. This increase in activities has enabled the service to maintain the spend on B&B below the same four month period in the previous year.

Achievement will be Measured through:

- The percentage of all potentially homeless households for whom homelessness was prevented for at least 6 months

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2012/13 Baseline Data	2013/14 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	Current Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
Homeless Prevention for 6 months (HHA/013)	Head of Housing	83.41%	90%	90%	N/A (annual)	N/A	G

Risks to Manage

1. Meeting the growing costs of homeless prevention
2. Rent arrears rising if tenants are unable to afford to pay their rent
(these risks are combined and therefore both covered below, if tenants are able to afford rent, this lessens the demand and therefore cost of providing homelessness prevention and use of B&B's)

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)
H	H	R	1. Staff across the service have had HomeSwapper training to help assist tenants to downsize. 1,2 2. Work undertaken with Revenues & Benefits to identify affected customers whose arrears are increasing at the most rapid rate and staff have been making regular contact with those people. 2 3. A new system to ensure that those requesting re-housing as a result of welfare reform receive an equal quota of allocations has been introduced. 1, 2 4. Advice and assistance has been given to affected tenants who may qualify for discretionary housing payment. 1,2	H	H	R	1. Development of the Local Support Services Framework in readiness for implementation of Universal Credit 1,2 2. Introduce measures to improve financial capability & access to affordable credit within households impacted by welfare reforms. 1,2 3. A Private Rented Sector strategy is currently in development and will consider how we can work with landlords as part of a long term solution. 1,2	Head of Housing		H	H	R

2. Provide advice and support services to help people protect their income

Progress Status	Progress RAG	G	Outcome RAG	A
------------------------	---------------------	----------	--------------------	----------

The Welfare Rights Team have assisted residents to claim additional welfare benefit income totalling £573,000 during this quarter, boosting household income and spending power within the local economy. However, the service is experiencing problems managing the demand from residents requesting specialist advice to appeal adverse decisions on their benefit entitlement. Compared to the same period in the previous year the demand has increased by over 50%.

Achievement will be Measured through:

- Number of Flintshire residents assisted by Flintshire County Council's Welfare Rights Unit to claim additional Social Security and Tax Credits
- Number of residents supported to successfully challenge adverse benefit decisions
- Number of residents accessing money management training
- Number of residents helped to move to more affordable accommodation
- Amount of additional Social Security and Tax Credits paid to Flintshire Residents as a result of the work undertaken by Flintshire County Council
- Amount of debt managed as a result of advice provided by the Flintshire Money Advice Service

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Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2012/13 Baseline Data	2013/14 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	Current Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
Amount of additional Social Security and Tax Credits paid to Flintshire residents as a result of the work undertaken by FCC (WEL/001)	Head of Housing	£2,000,000	£2,200,000	£3,500,000	£573,000	G	G

The following indicators are provided for information and monitoring only and are not suitable for target setting and performance RAGs

Number of Flintshire residents assisted by FCC to claim Additional Social Security and Tax Credits	Head of Housing	1,200	N/A	N/A	351	N/A	N/A
Number of residents supported to successfully challenge adverse benefit decisions	Head of Housing	110	N/A	N/A	35	N/A	N/A
Number of residents accessing money management training	Head of Housing	N/A	N/A	N/A	11	N/A	N/A
Number of residents helped to move to more affordable accommodation	Head of Housing	N/A	N/A	N/A	6	N/A	N/A
Amount of debt managed as a result of advice provided by the Flintshire Welfare Rights and Money Advice Service	Head of Housing	£3,500,000	N/A	N/A	£1,537,281	N/A	N/A

Risks to Manage

1. The Welfare Rights and Money Advice Service being able to meet demand
2. Local neighbourhood services may suffer as residents have less income to spend
(these risks are combined and therefore both covered below)

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)
H	H	R	1. Advice and assistance has been given to affected tenants who may qualify for discretionary housing payment	H	M	R	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and implement a welfare reform training/coaching programme to raise awareness amongst internal and external service providers. 2. Implement and manage a communication strategy ensuring information on the welfare reforms is disseminated to all stakeholders 3. Review and improve casework procedures for Welfare Rights team to ensure we maximise the use of current resources 	Head of Housing		H	M	R

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APPENDIX 5

Priority: Poverty
Sub-Priority: Fuel Poverty
Impact: Protecting people from poverty

We said in 2013/14 that we would:

1. Develop a regional ECO scheme with key partners

Progress Status	Progress RAG	G	Outcome RAG	G
------------------------	---------------------	----------	--------------------	----------

A regional Energy Company Obligation (ECO) framework, initially focussed on social housing external wall insulation works, was developed in partnership with Wrexham, Denbighshire and Conwy councils and procured by Wrexham Council. The framework was established in August 2013 and we await documentation being sent to our legal and procurement teams to confirm the process of participation in this. Achievements will be measured as part of the other activities in this improvement plan, in terms of measures installed, and carbon and heating bills reduced (see priority titled *Achieve the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.*)

Achievement will be measured through:

- Delivery of a regional ECO scheme

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans: (Lead Officer – Head of Housing)

- Delivery of a regional ECO scheme – August 2013 (Completed)
- Achievements are measured as part of the other activities in this improvement plan, in terms of measures installed, and carbon and heating bills reduced please see sub-priority “Achieve the Welsh Housing Quality Standard”.

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Risks to Manage - We could be unsuccessful in establishing an ECO partnership.

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)
H	H	R	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with Wrexham and other partners to develop ECO framework. 2. The overall cost of establishing the framework is split so that the most active partners contribute a larger proportion of the cost. This is to encourage involvement of less active partners. 3. There is limited obligation on partners to commit to using the framework. Partners are not forced to use the framework. 4. The framework has been tendered based on volume coming from social stock. This allows the Councils to control 	L	M	G	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There may be a need to develop further ECO Frameworks or bespoke contracts, depending upon the performance of the 4 successful contractors and the types of work packages required. 2. Until the first mini-tenders are run it is unknown whether the framework will allow the Council to benefit from more specialist/ targeted investment. Any adjustment in strategy is easily achieved through a revision to the Private Sector Renewal & Improvement Policy. 3. ECO funding levels may fluctuate as funds diminish or 	Head of Housing		L	L	G

2. Help residents in the private sector to access funding support to improve the thermal efficiency of their homes

Progress Status	Progress RAG	G	Outcome RAG	G
<p>The provision of external wall insulation is progressing well across Connah's Quay and Greenfield with expected completion in Q3. 43 jobs have been created or sustained through the programme with 29 (6 council) out of the 90 scheduled properties complete. Anticipated cumulative annual heating bill savings currently stand at £12,725.</p>				
<p>The scheme to support local installers until the new Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding has delivered positive results with over 104 owner occupied or private rented homes receiving insulation or heating works through six local small or medium sized enterprises. Anticipated annual savings in energy bills of over £24,000 have been created from a Council investment of £44,000.</p>				
<p>The gas infill scheme in Sealand Manor was also completed in quarter one with 22 owner occupied or private rented homes having their oil, LPG, electric, and solid fuel heating systems replaced with gas boilers. This resulted in annual heating bill savings of £6,600 anticipated.</p>				
<p>In total, as of 1st September 2013, 268 properties (191 private and 77 council) have received insulation or heating improvement measures. Anticipated annual heating bill savings of £77,615 have been secured.</p>				
<p>A sustainable long term service plan is in development reflecting the changes in home energy efficiency funding. This plan builds on the experience, challenges and successes of previous years. There is a high demand for the service and capacity to identify and secure appropriate funding streams is the biggest constraint on meeting this demand. The measures that improve homes most and are most attractive to residents have been identified and are the focus of the delivery strategy. Ensuring a steady return of capital also features as a critical success factor in ensuring that the operational priority of supporting fuel poor households can continue.</p>				
<p>It is anticipated that over 450 properties will receive improvement measures in 2013/14 (anticipated annual heating bill savings of over £100k) with a total project spend of well over £1million.</p>				

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Achievement will be measured through:

- Number of households accessing Eco and other energy efficiency funding

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2012/13 Baseline Data	2013/14 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	Current Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
£75,000 anticipated annual energy bill savings secured	Head of Housing	£270,245	£75,000	£75,000 per year	£77,615	G	G
Annual carbon emission reduction of 5,000 tonnes	Head of Housing / Head of Transportation and Assets	17,412 tonnes	5,000 tonnes	5,000 tonnes per year	4928 tonnes	G	G
Total number of measures installed through ECO and other energy efficiency funding	Head of Housing	920 measures	200 measures	200 measures per year	268 measures	G	G

3. Deliver energy efficiency measures to Council homes.

Progress Status	Progress RAG	G	Outcome RAG	G
------------------------	---------------------	----------	--------------------	----------

77 council properties have been improved so far through the programme, including 6 solid wall insulation, 70 lofts and 1 cavity wall. The Council is on track to deliver the aspirational target of 200 homes receiving measures by end of financial year 2016/17.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Number of Council homes receiving energy efficiency measures

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2012/13 Baseline Data	2013/14 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	Current Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
Number of Council homes receiving energy efficiency measures	Head of Housing	363 homes	77 homes	200 homes	77 homes	G	G

Risks to Manage - Residents may not take up the energy efficiency measures available as we hope (links to activities 2 & 3)

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood (L)	Impact (I)	Gross Score (LxI)		Likelihood (L)	Impact (I)	Gross Score (LxI)				Likelihood (L)	Impact (I)	Gross Score (LxI)
H	H	R	1. The Council has evaluated previous programmes and identified the most cost effective measures based on capital cost and potential savings. These measures form the basis of the 2013/14 service delivery strategy.	L	M	G	1. Continue to evaluate performance and undertake customer research to identify the measures that will benefit residents most and that are most desirable.	Head of Housing		L	L	G

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Risks to Manage - Available funding might fall short of public demand (links to activities 2 & 3)

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsib le	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)		
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)
H	H	R	1. A robust 3 year business plan has been developed to ensure that the service can be sustained. 2. The business plan is based on meeting the Councils spend to save ration of £1 spent for every £5 saved or secured through external funding. 3. Discussions with stakeholders have taken place to emphasise the benefit of continuing investment in domestic energy efficiency.	L	M	G	1. Sufficiently skilled staff need to be retained / developed to ensure there is the capacity to continue to identify and secure funding opportunities and to ensure that delivery of programmes meets the standards of the Council, service users and funding providers. 2. Progress needs to be evaluated against the business plan to determine whether the model is working or not. 3. Public demand needs to be evaluated regularly to ensure appropriate investments are made. 4. Maintain a strong communications plan to provide transparency to existing and potential service users. This will include referrals to other services/fund providers including local contractors with access to ECO funding.	Head of Housing		L	L	G

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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

DATE: **WEDNESDAY 20TH NOVEMBER 2013**

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

SUBJECT: **MID YEAR SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.01 To note and consider the 2013/14 Mid Year Service Performance Report produced at the Head of Service/Divisional level under the adopted business model of the Council. The report covers the period April – September 2013.
- 1.02 To enable Members to comments on the new approach to performance reporting.

2.00 BACKGROUND

- 2.01 The new style Improvement Plan adopted by Council in June 2013 which is aligned to the new three year Outcome Agreement, focuses on the priorities which are expected to have the most impact during 2013/14.
- 2.02 In addition to the Improvement Plan Monitoring Report, bi-annually performance highlight reports will be presented from the Heads of Service. These will be similar to those previously produced for quarterly reporting.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 A copy of the detailed Mid Year Service Performance Reports for the Housing Services is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.02 The contents of the half yearly Head of Service reports include:
- Improvement Priorities that do not have an in-year priority
 - Service Plan progress
 - Corporate measures e.g. absence management
 - Reporting against findings from external regulatory bodies e.g. Wales Audit Office, Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales or Estyn
 - Improvement Targets
 - National Strategic Indicators (NSIs) – as part of the new Outcome Agreement

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That the Committee consider the 2013/14 Mid Year Service Performance Reports produced by the Heads of Service, highlight and monitor poor performance and feedback details of any challenge to the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee who are responsible for the overview and monitoring of performance.

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 Publication of this report constitutes consultation.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Not applicable.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1 – Housing Services Mid Year Performance Report

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

None.

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APPENDIX 1

Housing Services
Mid Year Head of Service Report
2013/14

Record of Amendments

Date	Amendment	Amended by
24/10/2013	Draft report for review by Head of Service.	Simon Abbott
30/10/2013	Amendments to appraisals, housing options and Appendix	Simon Abbott
05/11/2013	Added staff figures.	Simon Abbott

Introduction

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

The approach is based on exception reporting to summarise key information that the Head of Service feels Members should be aware of, including both good and poor performance. Emerging issues / operational risks are also highlighted where necessary. The report is split into 3 distinct sections:

Foreword & Summary Sections

Improvement Priorities & Service Plan Monitoring

This section is used to discuss the progress being made towards the Improvement Priorities which do not have an in year focus and therefore are not included within the quarterly progress report on the Improvement Plan. It is also used to highlight good news and key issues (including operational risks and the actions necessary to control them) arising from monitoring the progress being made towards delivering the service plan.

Internal and External Regulatory Reports

This section summarises regulatory work reported in the half year and its outcomes and intended actions arising from recommendations.

Corporate Reporting

This section summarises the performance in relation to corporate issues e.g. sickness absence, appraisals, complaints, data protection training

Appendices

Appendix A NSI & Improvement Target Performance Indicators

Summary table of the performance for the NSI and Improvement Targets. Graphs and commentary are included in section 1 for those indicators shown with a red RAG status.

1 Improvement Priorities & Service Plan Monitoring

1.1 Housing Services General

It is pleasing to see good progress and improved performance in many areas during the year to date. Progress and highlights are included by service area. Some service wide highlights are as follow:

Performance Outturns

The number of indicators reported this quarter has increased from 13 to 23, with 15 of these indicators showing as Green. For the first time, indicators are reported for the following areas:

- Accommodation Support (Warden Service)
- Income Maximisation (Welfare Rights)
- Supporting People
- Housing Renewal
- Housing Strategy

Quarterly Performance has both improved and been maintained in many of our areas and is reflected in the performance outturns. The RAG status of our indicators this quarter is 15 Green, 6 Amber and 2 Red.

Inspire Awards

The Annual Housing Inspire Awards were held during October and provided an opportunity for all service areas to join together and celebrate their achievements to date.

Staff gave praise to the winners of the Most Outstanding Team (Housing Asset Management) for their hard work and determination in improving performance. The Housing Employee of the Year Award was gratefully received by Lisa Pearson an Administration Assistant for the Service. It was also pleasing to see the Welfare Rights Service receive recognition for their work around welfare reform and the help they provide to our most vulnerable residents.

113 staff received awards for 100% Attendance At Work with just under 90 Officers gaining recognition for long service to the Council.

The event boosted morale and showed appreciation to our staff for their hard work and commitment to delivering good quality services to our customers.

1.2 Neighbourhood Management & Income Collection

Income

The Income Team have been working to address both tenants with high arrears, and also intervening in cases where tenant who have previously not needed to pay anything, have been required to make payments from April 2013. Whilst this has impacted on performance, it was anticipated, however there had been potential for arrears to be markedly higher.

It is pleasing to note that whilst the full impact of the Council's planned interventions to mitigate the impact of welfare reform have not yet fully taken effect, the initial work that has been done, has so far mitigated against what could have been a more accelerated increase.

Examples of work undertaken in an attempt to mitigate against the effects of Welfare Reform include:

- Work undertaken with Revenues & Benefits to identify affected customers whose arrears are increasing at the most rapid rate and staff have been making regular contact with those people
- A new system to ensure that those requesting re-housing as a result of welfare reform receive an equal quota of allocations has been introduced, and the Council is making good progress in re-housing affected households, although this is restricted by the number of suitable properties available
- Advice and assistance has been given to affected tenants who may qualify for discretionary housing payment and a new triage system has been established with Accommodation Support and Welfare Rights to enable front line Income Officers to give basic advice, thus referring on those with more complex needs to reduce the risk of backlogs in the requirements for specialist advice services.

Furthermore continued good performance in addressing very high arrears cases, has seen the number of those cases reduce, which has offset some of the increase in the cases owing less than £1,000.

Further planned improvements have been recently implemented, or are due to be. This includes a "specialist welfare reform response team" and a "specialist housing officer" who will concentrate on assisting customers to realise the solutions that they had stated met their needs the best, for example transferring to another property or finding and agreeing a suitable mutual exchange.

In summary, whilst performance is not where the Council would want it to be, in the light of the initial impact of the welfare reforms and current performance, the Council can be cautiously optimistic that the potential impact to the Housing Revenue Account which was initially forecast will be mitigated for the most part by the interventions that have been put in place.

Operational and Void Management

The management of bulk waste was transferred to the Housing Management Teams during May and has contributed to a reduction in the time taken to complete void works.

Earlier in the year it was highlighted that the service could benefit from utilising social enterprises in the management of its voided properties. During the summer, discussions took place with "Flintshire Refurbs" who have expressed an interest in delivering a furniture recycling / clearance service for the department. Procurement rules have meant that the work is required to be tendered in order to give all organisations an opportunity to price for the work.

A draft specification has been produced which will be enhanced through the use of the new HAM Schedule of Rates which covers all aspects of the void process ranging from garden clearance to rubbish disposal. It is anticipated that a new pricing schedule will produce greater efficiencies, in addition the work will be time managed via IBS resulting in greater accountability for contractors.

Work on the development of the new schedules will commence in November with a view to obtaining prices before the new year.

Improvements to Dealing With Complaints

A desk top exercise has commenced to review the work carried out by the corporate lean team to understand how Housing can improve the way it manages the complaints process. It is clear that a number of requests for service are being fed through the CCC system meaning that the number of complaints recorded are higher than the actual figure, in addition work is required to understand how the service can view complaints positively in order to learn from mistakes made. Good practice is being sought from other local authorities to help this work progress.

STAR Survey

A STAR survey was carried out in the Summer to provide the service with feedback about Tenant Satisfaction levels.

Summary of Main Findings

- In general tenants are happy with the services provided by Flintshire County Council Housing Services.
- There are very few significant differences in performance between the Neighbourhood Housing Teams.
- In nearly all measures those in sheltered housing give higher satisfaction ratings than those in general needs accommodation.
- Bungalow dwellers are the happiest in general, followed by those living in flats and the least satisfied are those in houses.
- There are not many instances where the satisfaction ratings differ significantly between the genders.
- As a general rule, the older the tenant the happier they are with the services provided by the Council's Housing Services.
- The HouseMark Core Questions to be submitted for bench marking purposes all score well, although repairs and maintenance and responsiveness a little less well.

What has been pleasing from the results is that overall tenant satisfaction levels have improved since the status survey carried out in 2010.

	2010	2013
Satisfied with the housing service	74%	81%
Satisfied with their neighbourhood	86%	88%
Satisfied with the quality of your home	80%	83%
Feel rent provides value for money	81%	84%
Satisfied with repairs and maintenance	67%	71%
Satisfied that we listen to your views and act on them	65%	63%

It is now necessary for the service to identify specific areas of weakness in order to address the parts of the service where satisfaction is lowest.

Customer Involvement

The service is researching Customer Involvement Software to help manage and identify residents who are interested in setting housing policy and participating in workshops and consultation exercises.

The IBS module allows individuals to be flagged for participation in policy setting, and to be invited to meetings. Attendance at these meetings can be measured, along with follow-up invites to subsequent meetings.

Analysis of a number of modules will be necessary before any decision is made to purchase.

Team Locations

The benefits of bringing together the three Neighbourhood Housing Teams has been explored and it is now clear that the North Team have seen value in working from County Offices, Flint and being in close proximity to their colleagues in Housing Options and Repairs. It is envisaged that the South Team will follow suit later in the year and the East Team will develop more agile working arrangements so that they are more flexible and accessible to our customers across the Deeside strip.

A new Housing Register Team has been established (under a 6 month pilot project) in order to streamline the process for managing housing applications across the County. The pilot is coming to an end and is about to be reviewed in preparation for SARTH (Single Access Route to Housing).

Estate Caretaker Review

A review of Estate Caretaking Services was completed this year resulting in a new branding of the Caretakers to enable them to be more visible in the community. The 3 teams of 2 staff have always focussed their attention towards their patch (north, south and east) and since the review have been able to share the skills across the County sometimes working in teams of more than 2. The Review has resulted in

random samples of tenants being contacted to measure their satisfaction levels with the services provided, to date the results have been pleasing.

Anti-Social Behaviour

The work in Neighbourhood Management in relation to the Service Plan has been ongoing. The new ASB Policy has now been approved by cabinet and is being implemented across the three area teams, with policy briefings being carried out throughout September.

The new IT System React is now almost ready to go live, and the first wave of training for the Super-Users has been carried out, with ordinary users due to be trained shortly before go-live. The system is set to go live in November 2013. This will enable far better case management and performance management in relation to ASB Cases.

The work to create a new team of 3 specialist officers is well underway, with the existing officer making arrangements to move to the central Flint location, and two additional officers being appointed. Unfortunately one individual has withdrawn and so a second set of interviews will now be held.

The Hate Crime Policy and the Domestic Abuse Policy both contained as sub-policies with the ASB Policy were approved, and work is now underway to improve services in relation to these, which includes better reporting facilities, management of risk, and more joined up services.

New Tenancy Agreement

The New Tenancy Agreement is on track for implementation, with an initial news article to tenants advising that the Notice of Variation would be sent soon. This is currently being drafted by Trowers & Hamlin and should be issued imminently.

1.3 Housing Asset Maintenance

Performance and Reputation

Performance improvement continues within Housing Asset Management as outturns in all repair categories have again achieved the targets set. Emergency repairs, urgent repairs and non-urgent repairs have all achieved the targets in quarter 2 and have further improved since quarter 1. The outturns on urgent and non-urgent repairs are the lowest achieved and a significant achievement for the service. Performance has consistently improved since quarter 1 2012/13, and this is particularly evident in the non-urgent repairs category where the outturn was 82 days in Q1 12-13. Performance in this category at Q2 13-14 stands at 24 days which is a reduction of 58 days in 15 months.

It is also important to note that as we move towards HouseMark benchmarking the percentage of repairs completed within target continues to improve across all indicators as we positively continue to strive towards top quartile status.

Gas Servicing and No Accesses

Some Improvement has also been seen in the performance on gas servicing since quarter 1. This however remains a priority as we aim to achieve the set target of 100%. A great deal of work has been on-going between Housing Asset Management and Neighbourhood Housing Management to improve processes and reduce the number of properties in the no access procedure. Extended hours were utilised to contact residents where access has been an issue and this has had a positive impact for the quarterly performance outturn. Further improvements continue to be made for this priority area.

Service Review

The service review and restructure in Housing Asset Management has been fully implemented and this is a significant move forwards for the service. This will provide stability to staff within the service and also offers a fit for purpose staffing structure that compliments revised and improved working procedures and practices. All posts now have revised job descriptions which are also more people and performance management focused. Alongside the service review the trades staff were also issued with revised contracts which removed the requirement to work and additional hour per week in return for an additional 6 annual leave days. The new contract also addressed any variations in start and finish times brought about by historic agreements and contracts.

Extended Hours

Housing Asset Management have also developed and delivered an extended service for customers which enables repairs to be carried out until 6pm should residents wish. This will prove of particular benefit to those tenants who have commitments during the normal service hours of 8am and 4pm.

New Schedule of Rates

A revised schedule of rates has also been implemented within the service. The new schedule of rates will bring about a number of benefits for the service and will form a large part of the required culture change within Housing Asset Management. The new schedule of rates has significantly reduced codes, amended times that will only be visible in the back office systems and will encourage a culture different to the

previous bonus scheme working practices. Through a reduced schedule, trades staff will be encouraged to self assess significantly more jobs and carry out the work required on the same visit rather than the current practice which encourages a large amount of inspections before work is carried out.

Appraisals Aligned to Restructure

The Housing Asset Management Team have also developed a revised plan for appraisals within the service. The revised plan will deliver an effective appraisal for every member of staff within the service and is currently on schedule.

Further Highlights

During the first two quarters the service has also:

- Commenced the process of commissioning an up to date Stock Condition Survey
- Agreed a revised business plan with Welsh Government for the achievement of Welsh Housing Quality Standards
- Achieved a number of awards at the Housing Inspire Awards including Most Outstanding Service

Risks

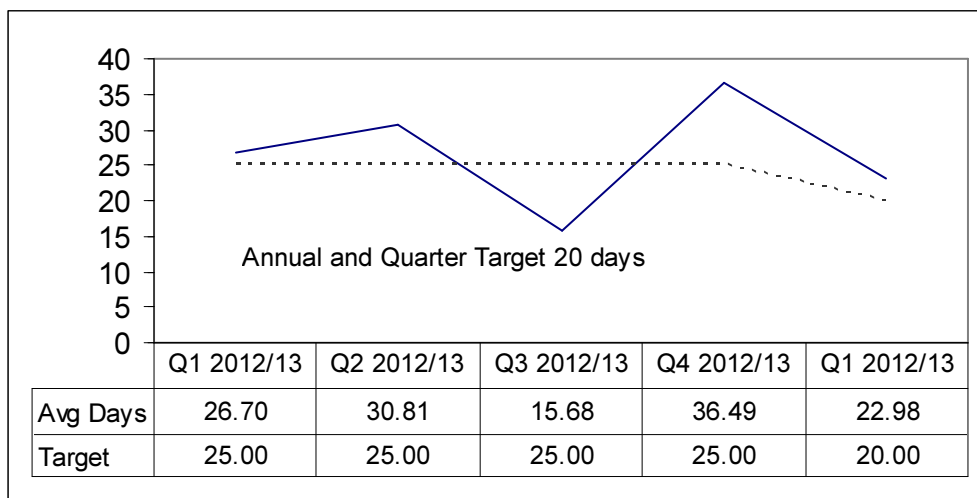
Sickness absence remains a risk and priority area for the service in particular with cases of long term absence. Managers and team leaders are working hard with colleagues in HR to follow procedures and progress each case. Capacity in certain areas due to recruitment issues are also a risk to the service performance and absence levels.

1.4 Community Support Services

Housing Options

It is pleasing to see despite challenges faced in the light in Welfare Reform and the wider economic climate that we are still maintaining many of our indicators at a status of Green and Amber. Unfortunately the following indicator is showing a red status this quarter:

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



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

The areas of concern across the last two quarters are performance related to the length of stay in temporary accommodation and all households in B&B. There remains a risk for these areas in the coming months due to the availability of two bedroom houses. Most households in temporary accommodation qualify for 2 bed houses. The availability of affordable accommodation poses a risk to discharging duty within target timescales.

The two areas are related as the challenge in moving households into permanent social housing has an effect on the availability of temporary accommodation which in turn increases the risk of needing to accommodate families with children in B&B accommodation.

The Housing Options service has implemented new working practices to make best use of the resources within the team. The team now work to a rota system which means two officers are on duty every day dealing with all enquiries and carrying out interviews. The rest of the team are freed up to focus on their open cases and take a more proactive approach to prevention, discharging duty and reducing stays in B&B accommodation.

There are developments moving forward to identify alternative solutions to providing interim accommodation and reduce reliance on B&B placements. This area will be a key focus for improvement as changes to homeless legislation will increase the pressure on this indicator.

Despite the number of presentations remaining the same as the previous year, there has been an increase in the number of homeless applications. There were 78 applications compared to 63 the previous year. This shows despite concentrated efforts prevention techniques are proving ineffective for a number of highly complex cases.

Welfare Reform

Mitigating the impact of the ongoing welfare reforms remains a priority for the service. A range of operational activities is now being implemented to assist residents affected.

Through the Empowering Flintshire's Communities Project, a welfare reform training and development programme is being delivered to internal and external services ensuring staff have the knowledge to be able to provide the initial reassurance to service users on welfare reform issues.

"Home Swapper" training has been provided to staff across Housing Services to enable them to promote the service and actively assist tenants to move to affordable accommodation.

The Welfare Reform Response Team continued to proactively target advice and support to residents who face increasing difficulties in maintaining their contractual housing costs. At the end of September 2013, the team had supported 115 households, primarily those impacted by the Benefit Cap and by the Spare Room Subsidy (bedroom tax) to implement solutions to lessen the various impacts created by the welfare reforms. The wider welfare reform agenda moved on a pace following the announcement that from the 28 March 2014, Flintshire will become a 'universal credit pilot area' and some unemployed claimants served by Shotton Jobcentre Plus office will make claims for universal credit. To ensure there is a coordinated and cost effective framework of service provision, at the local and regional level, to support residents to prepare for; make; and manage universal credit claims, the council is working in partnership with the DWP and external service providers.

Welfare Rights

During quarter one, the Welfare Rights and Money Advice Team assisted residents in claiming additional welfare benefit income totalling £9,332 per week (£485K per annum), boosting household income and spending power within the local economy.

The team also helped residents access one-off payments totalling £89k, however the service is experiencing problems managing the demand from residents requesting specialist advice to appeal adverse decisions on their benefit entitlement. Compared to the same period in the previous year, the demand has increased by over 50%.

During quarter two, the Welfare Rights and Money Advice Team helped residents to access additional benefit income totalling £10,115 per week (£525k per annum). Residents were also helped to claim £154k in one-off lump sum payments.

Supporting People

The Supporting People Team is leading on regional work in commissioning young people services. This sees the team sharing some of the innovative approaches Flintshire has developed for supporting young people at risk of homelessness.

The Accommodation Support Officers have seen a significant increase in the number of referrals from households in need of support to maintain independent living and prevent homelessness.

This is the first time this team has reported on quarterly targets and it is pleasing to see that all targets have been exceeded in quarter one and two. The annual target around maintaining independence will provide information on the effectiveness of the support provided.

Supporting People have been notified of the Welsh Government's intention to implement further grant reductions, in addition to the reductions already facing the programme as part of redistribution. This will present challenges to the team to ensure services continue to meet the needs of vulnerable people within the county. The team are currently identifying ways in which services can be delivered in collaboration with other Local Authorities, on either a regional or sub-regional basis, in order to maintain levels of support, however, it may also be necessary to decommission services that are deemed not strategically relevant. Further information will be included in the Local Commissioning Plan which is currently in development.

CBASS

The restructure of the Community Based Accommodation Support Service was agreed by Cabinet in quarter one. This is the first time the service has reported on targets and it is pleasing to see that the service has met target. The new reporting requirement has provided a wealth of management information including support capacity within different hubs as well as across the service.

An additional 28 people in the private sector and general needs properties are receiving support and an additional 160 support visits were carried out in quarter 2. The service has been promoted to the Social Services for Adults First Contact Team to ensure that we target those most in need of support to live independently.

1.5 Housing Renewal

The Housing Renewal area continues to build on the good work delivered during the 2012/13.

Countywide Home Repair and Renovations

The Service continues to deliver home repair and renovation support across the County. During these 2 quarters 59 people came forward requiring assistance, an increase of 3 from the same period last year. Eight property surveys were undertaken; which is in line with the previous quarter and scheduled work will now be taken forward for loan support. This fall in surveys is due to DFG's being prioritised and the loss of one Building Surveyor in May of Quarter 1. A total of 23 loans were completed during quarter 1 and 2, with a work value of £105,482. Due to the continuing strong demand for loans, there was a need to bring in some additional staffing resource during Quarter 2, so that the Service can continue to meet need and expectation. Unfortunately, demand is forecasted to outstrip the available finance in 2013/14.

Delivery of Disabled Adaptations

Performance in this area continues to be under close scrutiny, with the average number of days from referral to Housing Renewal to completion on site being 177 days. During the reporting period of Quarter 1 and 2, 121 disabled adaptations were completed. The value of the owner occupier DFG's were £320,933. This area remains a priority for improvement and in recognition of the fact that timescales have slowed over Quarters 3 and 4 of 12/13, additional surveying resource is being shared across disabled facilities work and home loans.

Flintshire's first Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme

The contract with for the provision of external wall insulation is progressing well across Connah's Quay and Greenfield. During Quarter 1 and 2, 349 properties have received measures, with a scheme value of over £1.2M. The programme is larger than anticipated and will provide annual heating bill savings of approximately £116,909 for the households involved. Further ECO works will take place through the regional framework, which went live in Quarter 2.

Delivery of the Connah's Quay, Shotton & Queensferry Renewal Area

The Housing Renewal Service has tendered the work to deliver the group repair scheme. The Scheme will be awarded in smaller work packages, to provide greater opportunity for local SME's to win this work. The first work package will consist of 30 properties and the scheme will run across Connah's Quay, Shotton and Queensferry and commence in Quarter 3. The scheme will now be delivered over the period 2013/15, as opposed to being completed within this financial year, as previously proposed.

Empty Homes

As the 3% target for returning empty properties back in to use was comfortably met during 2012/13, with a final outturn on 5.96%; a more challenging target of 6% has been set for this year. Unfortunately, a lack of staffing capacity in the area of empty homes has meant that little progress against this target has been made in Quarter 1.

The post of Empty Homes Officer was backfilled in Quarter 2 and we forecast that significant progress will be made in Quarter 3 and 4 and that we will still meet the

annual target of 6%. At the time of writing report a total of 20 properties have been returned to use during 2013/14 (a further 13 since the end of Q2) giving us confidence in meeting our target for this year.

Service Plan Updates

All areas of the service plan are on track with the exception of the following:

5b) Private Sector Housing Strategy

This item has been rescheduled for Q3 of 2013/14, as it is to be informed by the WLGA Private Rented Sector Improvement Project

5c) Develop the capacity for Renewal Services

This area is subject to the JEQ process and has been rescheduled to Q3 of 2013/14.

1.6 Housing Strategy

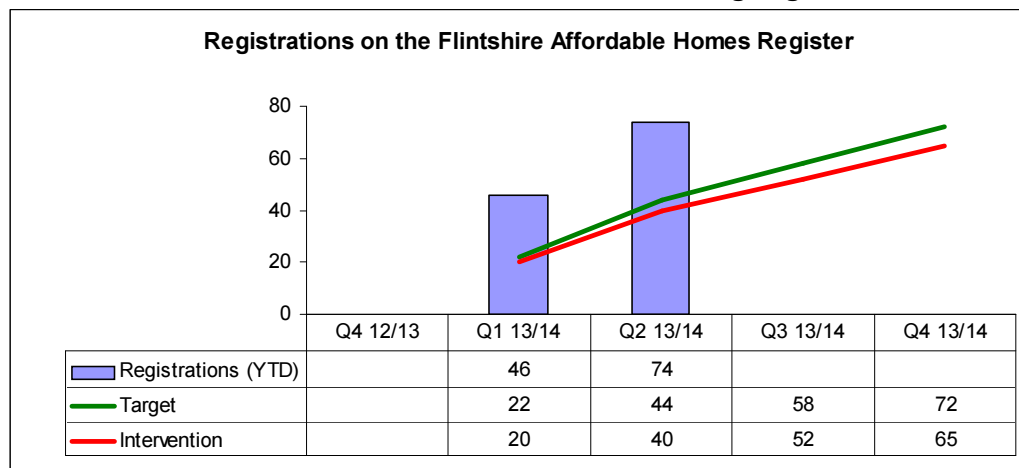
Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is an in year priority for the service and the progress and risks on activity in this area has been covered in more detail in the Improvement Plan Progress Report.

New indicators for Housing Strategy's role in affordable housing provision have been added to reporting for 2013/14 in line with the improvement plan. It is pleasing to see that 2 out of the three indicators have been met for their reporting debut as shown in the Appendix. Performance in these areas are highly positive.

The following indicator however is a victim of external factors caused by the current economic climate:

IP8.4.1b Households housed from affordable housing register



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

This indicator will always be at the mercy of external factors such as access to lending and the build schedule of the developers. To ensure cash flow developers will only build in line with market demand and sales on their developments. Recent media reports on increased mortgage lending have yet to have a direct impact upon sales rates on developments within Flintshire however this will be monitored in forthcoming quarters.

All 18 properties that became available for occupation during Q1 have been occupied during the quarter. The authority has also received 6 gifted units on the White Lion site in Penymynydd, with a further 4 due from the Groves site in Pennyfordd in November 2013. The formation of a housing company is being considered by the council to facilitate the letting of these properties. As such we are pleased with performance and progress in this area.

Social Housing Grant

This year a total of £1.58 million of grant funding has been secured for qualifying development projects.

The project to provide nine 2 bedroom apartments on the Borough Grove site in Flint is on track with an expected delivery of December 2013. The development is a

Clwyd Alyn scheme which received £525k of SHG funding in 2012/13. Whilst it is normal for Flintshire County Council to receive 50% nomination rights on these properties, the authority has been successful in negotiating 100% first let allocations as this forms part of the Flint Town Regeneration Plan. The council retain its 50% nomination rights on subsequent lets.

Implementation of the Local Housing Strategy

Implementation of the LHS is progressing with subsidiary plans currently being prepared or implemented. A mid-term strategy review is being prepared and is on schedule.

Expanding the Private Rented Sector

A Private Rented Sector development event has been held aimed at providing information for current and prospective private landlords in addition to consulting with private landlords on possible services the council may offer to support growth in the sector.

A Private Sector Officer was appointed in September 2013 with the remit of engaging with private landlords and supporting growth in the sector.

Options for redefining and re-launching the Flintshire Private Landlord Forum are under consideration and options are being considered from other local authority areas. Similarly joint and collaborative working opportunities are being explored with neighbouring authorities

Customer Involvement

A mid-term strategy review is being prepared to identify areas for further member, customer and stakeholder involvement. The housing service plan has been drafted to reflect the content of the Council Improvement Plan and carry through the Council's purpose to all aspects of service improvement and delivery.

Gypsies & Travellers

An officer working group has been established to coordinate the involvement of a range of services in drafting a comprehensive Gypsy & Traveller strategy. The timetable has however been amended to reflect the Welsh Government consultation on a number of Gypsy & Traveller matters. A draft publication will go out for consultation early 2014.

Further improvements to the Council owned site at Riverside, Queensferry will commence in November 2013 funded by Welsh Government grant.

Options to expand the provision of Gypsy & Traveller sites in the county are progressing and will include options for residential sites as well as transit/stopping place provision.

Flintshire currently chairs the North Wales Gypsy & Traveller Coordination Group established to create effective links between the north Wales local authorities.

2 External & Regulatory Reports

2.1 Customer Service Excellence Award

The Housing Renewal Service have now completed the full accreditation process and been awarded the Customer Service Excellence Standard. This is the first team within Flintshire County Council to undertake and achieve the award.

The assessors final report commented:

“ Flintshire County Council Housing Renewal Service is a service that provides high levels of customer service. They demonstrated equally high levels of customer satisfaction and this was confirmed in the submission of evidence provided for the desktop review and the outcome of on-site assessment discussions with the Head of Housing services, senior management team, customers, staff and partners.

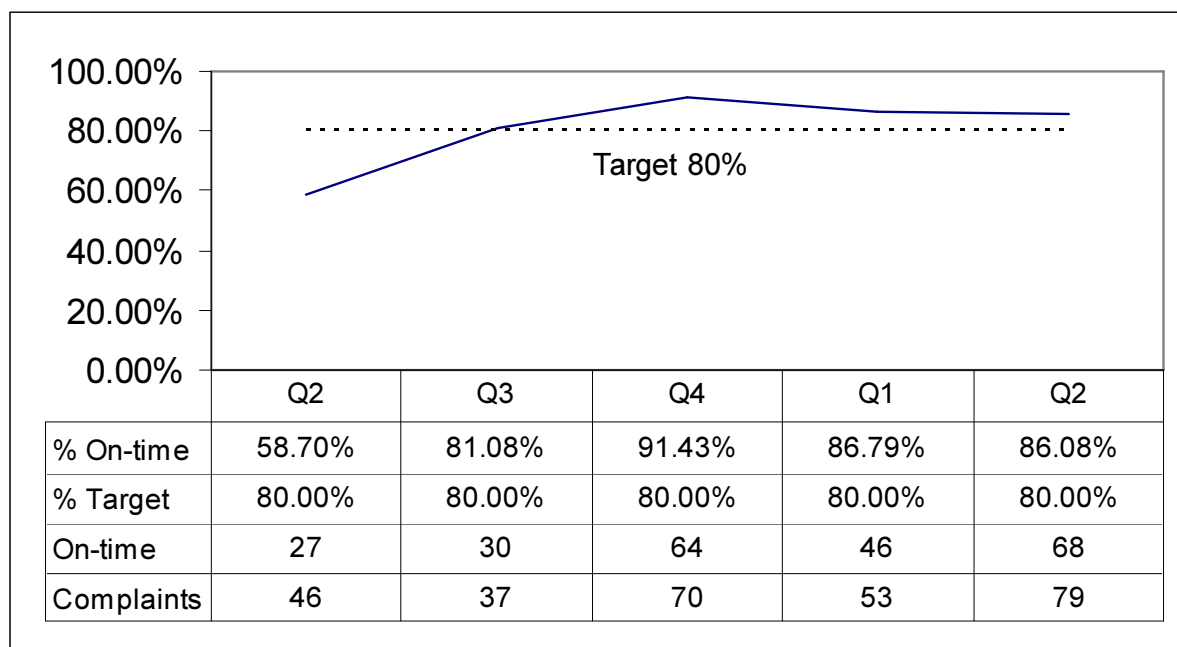
There is a desire by the staff I had the opportunity to meet to provide the best possible experience for their customers and there is also a commitment to keep the customer at the heart of the service delivery.

The senior management team provide high levels of support to their staff in the delivery of services. Feedback from customers interviewed at the on-site assessment confirmed that both the Housing Renewal staff and contractor staff provided excellent levels of customer service at the time their property refurbishments were undertaken.

There was evidence that the Housing Renewal Service is committed and inspired in delivering the best possible customer experience

3 Corporate Reporting

3.1 Complaints



It is pleasing to see that our performance has remained above target for the last four quarters. The average response time to complaints in housing for Q1 was 7.6 days and 6.9 days in Q2 against a target turnaround time of under 10 days.

Complaints performance and using learning from complaints to improve services is service plan priority for 2013/14.

3.2 Staff Appraisals

The breakdown for each team is as follows:

Service Area	Complete	Due	Q3 %	Q4 %	
Senior Management Team	6	6	100%	100%	
NHM East	10	10	100%	100%	
NHM North	7	11	73%	64%	↓
NHM South	11	11	100%	100%	
Income Team	7	7	100%	100%	
Welfare Rights & Welfare Reform Team	12	13	100%	92%	↓
Housing Options	11	11	100%	100%	
CBASS (Warden Service)	41	42	100%	98%	↓
Supporting People	7	7	100%	100%	
Housing Renewal	11	14	88%	79%	↓
Housing Strategy	2	2	100%	100%	
Total	125	134	96%	93%	↓

It is disappointing that appraisals have slipped in some service areas this quarter, it will be a priority for managers to bring these up to date in Q3.

Housing Asset Management have rescheduled their appraisal programme in line with their restructure to help support staff into their new posts and ensure their training needs and objectives are aligned with the requirements of their new job descriptions. There are 150 appraisals due across this service area. These have been removed from the above table as not to skew the figures. The progress against plan will be reported separately in the forthcoming quarters using the table below.

Quarter	Planned (Quarter)	Completed (Quarter)	Planned (YTD)	Completed (YTD)
1	-	-	-	-
2	45	11	45	11
3	105		150	
4	-		150	

Appraisals are off track in some areas due to delays in deployment, recruitment and in implementation of the new structure. Appraisals remain a focus area for this service area.

3.3 Sickiness & Absence

Attendance improving in Housing. Managers are focussing on absence management across all service areas with support from HR.

Section	Days per FTE Q1	Days per FTE Q2
Community Support Services	4.65	0.38
Housing Asset Management	2.12	2.81
Housing Renewal	0.52	1.09
Housing Strategy	0	0
Neighbourhood Housing Management	1.78	0.92

3.4 Staff Turnover

Staff turnover statistics for Q1 and Q2 are as follows:

Quarter	Q1	Q2
Community Support Services	2.90%	2.70%
Housing Asset Management	3.99%	0.87%
Housing Renewal	6.45%	14.29%
Housing Strategy	0.00%	0.00%
Neighbourhood Housing Management	2.11%	0.00%

3.5 Equality Monitoring

Further data analysis is required to establish a profile of customers by Protected Characteristics. This is linked to the activities of the Directorate Equalities Group where priority has been given to improving customer data collection.

Housing Service contribution to the Council's Strategic Equalities Plan remain on target.

Equality Impact Assessments are being carried out in accordance with the requirement for policy reviews, new policies, plans and strategies.

3.6 Welsh Language Monitoring

The housing service has ensured compliance with the Council's Welsh Language scheme and this has extended to incorporating the Welsh language in business planning and performance reporting. Work is also proceeding in preparing for compliance with the Welsh Language Measure standards scheduled for implementation in 2014-2015. In preparation for this the housing service has been shadowing the bulk of Community Services in its adoption of approaches embedded within the 'More than just words' initiative. Further work will be carried out on provision of Welsh language services at the front line where customers request interviews etc. through the medium of Welsh

Welsh conversation groups are being held on a weekly basis to help staff improve their Welsh language skills.

3.7 Data Protection Training

The Information Commissioner's audit of DPA compliance has revealed no significant areas of concern. Any recommendations requiring action at service level will be implemented in accordance with the ICO's timetable.

A rolling programme of DPA training is being conducted across the housing service statistics for this will be provided in the full year Head of Service Report.

Appendix A – NSI & Improvement Target Performance Indicators

Key

R	Target missed
A	Target missed but within an acceptable level
G	Target achieved or exceeded

The RAG status of the indicators for the half year position are summarised as follows:



Paragraphs and commentary are included in section 1 for those indicators shown with a red RAG status.

Note 1 – NSI = National Statutory Indicator Imp T = Improvement Target

Note 2 – Change (Improved / Downturned) is based on comparison with the previous quarter. Where it is more appropriate to compare performance with the same period in the previous year this should be stated in the commentary.

Indicator	NSI / Imp T (Note 1)	Annual Target 2013/14	2012/13 Q2 Outturn	2013/14 Q1 Outturn	2013/14 Q2 Outturn	2013/14 Q2 Target	RAG	Change e.g. Improved / Downturned (Note 2)	Commentary
Housing Management									
HLS/006a Rent Collection, Permanent Accommodation	N/A	97.50%	96.38%	95.60%	96.87	90%	G	Improved	It is pleasing to see that we have achieved our target on income collection
HLS/012a Current tenant rent arrears	N/A	3.00%	4.20%	3.78%	4.04%	3.90%	A	Downturn	It is disappointing that we have not achieved the target for this indicator however, compared to the same period last year the performance is actually an improvement despite the impact of

Indicator	NSI / Imp T (Note 1)	Annual Target 2013/14	2012/13 Q2 Outturn	2013/14 Q1 Outturn	2013/14 Q2 Outturn	2013/14 Q2 Target	RAG	Change e.g. Improved / Downturned (Note 2)	Commentary
									Welfare Reform. Working together with the Welfare Rights and the Neighbourhood Management Team in providing support to tenants affected by the under occupancy charge (bed tax). The next few months leading up to quarter 3 will be challenging.
HLS/013* % rent loss due to empty property	N/A	1.80%	2.20%	1.69%	1.43%	1.80%	G	Improved	It is pleasing to sustained improvement in this area.
HLS/014L* Letting Times	IMP T	35 days	50.29 days	48.84 days	37.73 days	35 days	A	Improved	The service has been able to demonstrate improved performance between Q1 and Q2. The boost in void performance can be attributed to a change in both processes and management together with improved co-ordination of work between Housing Management & the Voids Team.
Housing Asset Management									
HLS/10a Emergency repairs	N/A	0.50 days	0.56 days	0.48 days	0.33 days	0.50 days	G	Improved	It is pleasing to see sustained improvement in this category.
HLS/10b* Urgent Repairs	N/A	8 days	8.08 days	8.6 days	6.7 days	8 days	G	Improved	The outturn for this quarter represents a significant improvement against both Q1 and Q2 last year.

Indicator	NSI / Imp T (Note 1)	Annual Target 2013/14	2012/13 Q2 Outturn	2013/14 Q1 Outturn	2013/14 Q2 Outturn	2013/14 Q2 Target	RAG	Change e.g. Improved / Downturned (Note 2)	Commentary
HLS/10c* Non-urgent repairs	N/A	32 days	43.63 days	28.2 days	23.99 days	32 days	G	Improved	Sustained improvement in this area represents a major improvement and is almost half the turnaround time that the service was delivering in Q2 2012/13.
HPMM8 Percentage of gas safety checks completed	N/A	100%	98.85%	97.19%	97.94%	100%	A	Improved	A slight improvement as been achieved in Q2 when compared to Q1. The management team are working more closely with Housing Management and are working extended hours to deal with those households that the technicians are struggling to gain access to.
Community Support Services									
HHA/002* Timelessness of discharging homelessness duty	N/A	180 days	55.36 days	248.67 Days	189.76 days	180 days	A	Improved	This quarter there has been a lot of excellent partnership working between housing options, Estate Management and CAHA which has resulted in homelessness duties being discharged to 17 households which is an improvement from the previous quarter. However, there are future challenges for the service in order to discharge duties to families currently living in temporary housing. Approximately 90% of families residing in temporary accommodation require 2 bed accommodation to avoid being affected by the single room subsidy (bedroom tax).

Indicator	NSI / Imp T (Note 1)	Annual Target 2013/14	2012/13 Q2 Outturn	2013/14 Q1 Outturn	2013/14 Q2 Outturn	2013/14 Q2 Target	RAG	Change e.g. Improved / Downturned (Note 2)	Commentary
HHA/008 Homelessness presentations decided within 33 days.	N/A	90%	96.97%	100%	100%	94.44%	G	Maintained	It is pleasing to see that the target has been achieved so far for year to date.
HHA/016* Average number of days families with children spent in B&B	N/A	14 days	34 days	11 days	20 days	14 days	A	Downturn	Despite a significant improvement from the previous year, it is disappointing that we are not meeting the target for this indicator. Only 10 families were placed across the 6-month period. However, in August we did have a couple of families who exceeded the time limit in emergency accommodation because they were assessed as requiring supported accommodation which provided assistance with independent living skills and had to wait for limited availability.
HHA/017A Average number of days all homeless households spent in B&B	N/A	20 days	30.81 days	22.98 days	36.11 days	20 days	R	Downturn	This area is of concern and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future. There are developments being taken forward to identify alternative options to B&B for providing suitable interim accommodation. This area will remain a focus for improvement as the changes to the homeless legislation will add further pressures to this indicator.

Indicator	NSI / Imp T (Note 1)	Annual Target 2013/14	2012/13 Q2 Outturn	2013/14 Q1 Outturn	2013/14 Q2 Outturn	2013/14 Q2 Target	RAG	Change e.g. Improved / Downturned (Note 2)	Commentary
HHA/017B* Average number of days all homeless households spent in other temporary accommodation	N/A	280 days	252.60 days	343.11 days	208.31 days	280 days	G	Improved	Excellent work has been undertaken in assisting clients to move into more permanent accommodation. However approximately 90% of our families remaining in temporary accommodation only meet the criteria for 2 bed housing. If we are unable to secure this type of accommodation, it will seriously affect the ability to secure future temporary housing for the clients accessing emergency B&B accommodation.
WEL/001 Increase in weekly Benefits	N/A	£38,462	New 2013/14	£9,332	£19,477	£19,231	G	Improved	At the end of quarter two, through successful outcomes to their welfare rights interventions the team had generated a £19,447 increase in weekly welfare benefit income for Flintshire residents. This equates to an additional income of £1.01million annually.
SP/001 Utilisation of Supporting People Grant	N/A	100%	New 2013/14	24.81%	58.89%	40%	G	Improved	It is pleasing to see that in Q1 we exceeded the interim target of 20% and in Q2 exceeded the target of 40%.
SP/002 Average days awaiting Supporting People Service	N/A	14 days	New 2013/14	1.73 Days	3.41 days	14 days	G	Achieved	For both quarters this year we have beaten our target turnaround time for service delivery.

Indicator	NSI / Imp T (Note 1)	Annual Target 2013/14	2012/13 Q2 Outturn	2013/14 Q1 Outturn	2013/14 Q2 Outturn	2013/14 Q2 Target	RAG	Change e.g. Improved / Downturned (Note 2)	Commentary
IP7.6.2 Allocation of available warden service support	N/A	70%	New 2013/14	75.44%	85.2%	70%	G	Improved	It is pleasing to see that we have exceeded the performance target for both quarters for allocation of warden hours in delivering face to face services.
Housing Renewal									
PSR/004 Empty Homes	IMP T & NSI	6% 32 homes	Reported annually 2012/13	0%	1.42% 7 homes	2% 10 homes	A	Improved	During Q1 all homes suspected of being empty for six months or more on 1 April 2013 were surveyed to create a baseline for reporting in Q2. A total of 7 of 490 empty homes (1.42%) were brought back into use during Q2 through direct action.
IP8.1.1 Surveys for targeted properties	N/A	120 homes	New 2013/14	120 homes	120 homes	120 homes	G	Achieved	All targeted properties were surveyed as planned in Q1.
IP6.3.2 No of homes improved for energy efficiency	N/A	200 homes	New 2013/14	189 homes	349 homes	120 Homes	G	Achieved	It is pleasing to see that to date we have surpassed the cumulative target for 2013/14. Work to date is estimated at delivering a carbon saving of 8,776 tonnes and a reduction in annual heating bills of £116,090 for homes improved.
Housing Strategy									

Indicator	NSI / Imp T (Note 1)	Annual Target 2013/14	2012/13 Q2 Outturn	2013/14 Q1 Outturn	2013/14 Q2 Outturn	2013/14 Q2 Target	RAG	Change e.g. Improved / Downturned (Note 2)	Commentary
IP8.4.1a New affordable housing register registrations	N/A	72	New 2013/14	46	74	44	G	Achieved	It is pleasing to see that that within the first six months of this financial year that a total of 74 new registrations have been accepted onto the register and 11 more are under review. This both surpasses the quarter and annual targets.
IP8.4.1b Household housed from affordable housing register	N/A	60	New 2013/14	6	18	30	R	Downturn	Delivery of approved developments continues to be an ongoing issue due to the current economic climate and the need of developers to build in line with demand - see page 16 for more information.
IP8.4.2b % value of affordable provision through Section 106	N/A	30%	New 2013/14	30%	30%	30%	G	Maintained	It is pleasing to see that so far this year, despite the economic climate we have managed to secure the full 30% provision for affordable housing through the planning process.

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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

DATE: **WEDNESDAY, 20TH NOVEMBER 2013**

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

SUBJECT: **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 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 for a 'test of significance' to be applied. This can be achieved by asking a range of questions as follows:

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

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 Overview & Scrutiny presents a unique opportunity for Members to determine the Forward Work 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.

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CURRENT FWP

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report	Scrutiny Focus	Responsible / Contact Officer	Submission Deadline
8 January 2014	Draft Asset Management Strategy	To consider stock investment and proposals to provide high quality sustainable housing stock to meeting WHQS.	Service Improvement	Head of Housing	30 December 2013
	Tenant satisfaction survey results and action plan	To consider the tenant satisfaction survey results and benchmark then with the last independent survey and agree an action plan to address any issues identified.	Performance Monitoring	Head of Housing	
	Anti-Social Behaviour and Neighbourhood Management	To consider progress in delivering the revised Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy.	Performance Monitoring	Head of Housing	
5 February 2014	Collaborative Working within Housing Services	To receive and consider current and future collaborative initiatives	Service Delivery	Head of Housing	28 January 2014
	Sheltered Housing Improvement Project	To consider progress following the review of sheltered accommodation.	Performance Monitoring	Head of Housing	

5 March 2014	Private Sector Housing Renewal	To consider progress on the delivery of Flintshire's first Renewal Area, general service developments and county wide projects	Performance Monitoring	Head of Housing	26 February 2014
	Universal Credit Implementation Update	To receive a report on the implementation of Universal Credit	Service Delivery	Head of Housing	
16 April 2014	2013/14 Quarter 3 Improvement Plan Monitoring Update	To consider Q3 performance outturns for improvement targets	Performance Monitoring	Director of Community Services	8 April 2014
	Update on the Repairs and Maintenance Service	To monitor the approach and effectiveness of repairs and improvements to the Council's housing stock, to include void management.	Performance Monitoring	Head of Housing	
	Welfare Reform	To consider the impact that Welfare Reform is having on the Council, Council tenants and other residents in Flintshire and work the Council is undertaking to manage and mitigate the impact as far as possible.	Service Delivery	Head of Housing	
21 May 2014					13 May 2014

<p>10 June 2014</p>	<p>Quarterly Performance Reporting</p>	<p>To consider Q4/Year End performance outturns for improvement targets</p>	<p>Performance Monitoring</p>	<p>Director of Community Services</p>	<p>3 June, 2014</p>
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Joint meeting with the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee – date to be confirmed

- Empty Homes
- Adopted/Un-adopted land and review of garage sites

Joint meeting with the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee – December, 2013 (possible site visit to Llys Jasmine)

- Disabled Facilities Grants – and the use of removable 1 bedroom/bathroom pods
- Supporting People
- Telecare
- Extra Care

REGULAR ITEMS

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

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

SECTION 1 - COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Category	Risk Reference	Title	Committee
Strategic Partnerships	CL04	Affordable Housing	Housing

SECTION 2 - COUNCIL DELIVERY

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

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